

# **Fields of the Dead**

**A One-Round Mid-Rank Adventure for Heroes of  
Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido  
Month of Shiba, 1139 (Late Summer)**

**by Jim Spell and Cory Mills  
Module Number SoB29  
Release Date: 11/15/2012**

When the pursuit of power overcomes piety, even the grave provides no safety...

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS is a registered trademark of Alderac Entertainment Group. Scenario detail copyright 2012 by the author and Alderac Entertainment Group. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without permission.

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 Mid rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank Three.

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 Two): Reduce the zombies' Fear effect to 2, their Armor TN to 10, and their Reduction to 3. Reduce the oni's damage to 6k2. Reduce the TNs to resist the Taint by 5.

**High End Party** (most/all characters Rank Four): Increase the zombie's base damage by +2k0 and increase their Reduction to 7. In the final encounter, increase the School Rank of each revenant by one, giving them access to new Techniques (primarily of concern for giving the Hida the ability to make attacks as a Simple Action) and increase the damage of the oni to 9k3.

## Adventure Summary and Background

Earlier this summer, an army of rebellious peasants marched on Ootosan Uchi and met in battle with a force comprised of the First Imperial Legion and loyal samurai from every Clan. The rebels were soundly defeated, with more than two-thirds of their forces slain outright on the field, but the cost in life was high on both sides, and many of the leaders of the rebellion survived. Shortly after the battle, the returned spirit Hantei Okucheo, with the assistance of the Crab and the support of daimyo from almost every Clan, claimed the title of Imperial Regent for the Empress Toturi Tsudao. This has thrown the Empire into a state of confusion, and the pursuit of the rebels has not received a great deal of support in the face of more immediate political concerns.

Several factions in the Empire made use of the peasant uprisings to further their own agendas, most of them with no concern for the actual well-being of the populace. Among these, a Tainted monk sought to spread the mark of Jigoku through the rebels with his blasphemous teachings. For the most part, he was unsuccessful, but a handful of the ashigaru accepted either his philosophy or the power it promised, and one

of them succeeded at tapping into a well of dark power during the battle. Sentaro, the ashigaru maho-tsukai, was able to summon an oni as well as raise a large number of his fallen comrades to fight at his command – both tasks that would have challenged a more-experienced tsukai.

The Jade Champion, Kuni Utagu, dispatched one of his more experienced magistrates to investigate the powers of Jigoku being used on the battlefield so near to the Imperial Capitol, but due in no small part to the political turmoil, has been largely unable to follow up on the investigation. When the maho-tsukai's presence in the area is brought to Utagu's attention, in combination with the existence of an ancient graveyard from the earliest days of the Empire, he will turn to some of the samurai attending court in the capitol for assistance with the matter.

The PCs will be asked to assist the Jade Magistrate with locating and securing the cemetery and ensuring that it does not fall into Sentaro's hands. In the process, they will face other forces that have taken an interest in the maho-tsukai's actions.

NOTE FOR GMS: This module is presented slightly out of chronological order. The Introduction section takes place after the court scenes, but is presented first in order to begin the module with a highly-charged, horrific action scene. The purpose is to thrust them into an immediate and somewhat frightening scene at the start of the session to reinforce the monstrous nature of the creatures they will be facing. If the players do not seem willing or able to play the first scenes in the order presented, it is suggested that the GM simply swap the two sections so as to play them in chronological order – start with "Part One" and play the "Introduction" after it. There are also notes on timing for comparison, assuming the typical four-hour slot. Bear in mind that all tables are different, and adjust accordingly.

## Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- Mod certs for "Cold Hands, Stone Heart"; in particular, any PCs with either "Haunted: Sakura" or a "Goryo Ancestor" should be taken note of.
- Any returned spirit PCs, particularly those from Meido or Toshigoku. Special note should be taken of the time-frame they were originally born and died in.
- Mod certs for "Emperor's Favor".

# Introduction

*An unseasonable late summer storm breaks just before your arrival at the “Fluffy Duckling”, a roadside inn a day’s ride north of Ootosan Uchi. Like most Rokugani buildings, it sits on wooden posts above ground level as protection from earthquakes. A prosperous, comfortable business, the storm has evidently driven most of its custom away as you find yourselves the only guests when you arrive. The innkeeper, a happy, plump woman by the name of Yuma, greets you with every courtesy and has servants show you to rooms and the bathhouse. “The magistrate-sama left word that he would meet you for dinner, sama. In the meantime, we have tea or sake as well as baths to drive off the chill from this horrible storm.”*

The PCs were originally sent by their lords to Ootosan Uchi to take part in a minor Imperial court; however, while there, the Jade Champion requested their assistance with a serious matter, and thus they find themselves here. (The next section, Part One, details the court and the meeting itself; it is suggested that the GM run these sections in chronological order rather than the one presented here if the players seem unwilling to go along with the “flashback” concept.)

It is possible that some PCs may have a method for alleviating the weather described above. However, due to the intensity of the storm, it will require more than one use of any effect (or spell) that would allow them to control the weather to do more than simply reduce the strength of the storm. Yoritomo shugenja, for example, would have to spend five spell slots and three Void Points to banish the storm entirely, and even at that, it will begin to return by the time they are speaking with Daisuke.

As promised, the inn will provide warm drinks, hot baths, and a place to change into dry clothing. Eventually, the PCs will meet the Jade Magistrate for dinner. (PCs who insist on wearing armor to dinner will be subject to an Honor loss as a major breach of etiquette – 6 points for Honor Rank 7 or higher, 0 for Honor Rank 0, 2 points for any other Honor Rank. Any PC who insists on carrying weapons other than their wakizashi will incur the same penalty.)

*Kuni Daisuke is a blocky, weathered samurai in his mid-thirties. His hair, a wild thatch of black, is bound away from his face, which is covered in the typical Kuni face paint, reminiscent of a kabuki mask. Under the white and blue markings, however, a faint smile gives the indication that he has somewhat more*

*humor than normal in a Crab, let alone the dour Kuni. One of the inn’s servants moves around the table, pouring tea or sake as appropriate.*

If any of the PCs used a special ability to modify the weather, they may make **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** rolls at a TN of 40 to hear movement under the floor during the next section of box text. This will allow them to avoid the surprise penalty in the first Round. Multiple uses may grant Free Raises, at the GM’s discretion. Otherwise, it is assumed that the sound of the wind and rain masks any sounds the zombies make as they are crawling under the building.

*A peal of thunder shakes the building as Daisuke moves to the head of the table. He gives a slightly ironic smile as he glances up, then shakes his head ruefully. The magistrate settles himself in to his place, setting a thick sheaf of scrolls on the table and taking up a steaming cup of sake with the other hand. “Greetings, samurai. I am Kuni Daisuke, Jade Magistrate under the command of Jade Champion Kuni Utagu. I understand that you are to assist me in securing-” His words break off at an exclamation from the servant, and the sound of shattering ceramic. The floor under her splinters, and she vanishes into the hole. Hands clutch at the edges of the hole, gray-green flesh peeled away from blackened bones at the end of the fingers, and widen the opening. Heads begin to rise above the floor, lambent eyes gleaming behind featureless porcelain masks. Rising to his feet, Daisuke begins to thunder orders, “Zombies! Re-” He is cut off as the ground beneath him splinters away as well, dropping him into a blackness under the floor, surrounded by clutching shadows.*

The players should roll initiative, almost certainly at the penalty for surprise (-20 for the first Round). After Initiative, the TN to resist the zombies’ Fear 3 effect is 20. There are two zombies for every PC, though four are already engaged with Daisuke and two are tearing at the servant. Each of the victims will take 20 Wounds at the start of the Reactions Stage every Round, which will kill the servant at the end of the second Round and Daisuke at the end of the fourth, unless the PCs do something to assist. Though these particular specimens are somewhat more capable than normal zombies, they still move with a lurching hesitation. Rather than rolling Initiative, they should act at the start of the Reactions Stage – they act “first” by setting up the conflict, but any Techniques or abilities that trigger off relative Initiative scores will treat them as having the lowest Initiative.

The zombies attack primarily by Grappling in groups – they should focus on the PC who presents the greatest

danger, in particular any that manage to destroy a zombie on the first turn. The zombies receive a Free Raise on their attack for every additional zombie attacking a target. PCs who are grappled will “throw off” one zombie by succeeding at the Contested Roll to determine control, and one additional zombie for every five points they exceed the total by. As long as they are held by any zombies, they will remain grappled and take 4k2 damage (+1k0 to the damage roll for every zombie after the first) during the Reactions Stage of every Round. For simplicity’s sake, only one (at most two) of the PCs should be Grappled at any time.

The zombies attacking Daisuke and the servant girl are on the ground roughly four feet below the floor of the inn. At the GM’s discretion, any PC attacking them may receive a Free Raise for the Called Shots to remove the head or the mask instead of the normal +1k0 for attacking from higher ground. Should the PCs free him, Daisuke will default to using Jade Strike against the zombies, though he should be injured (possibly severely) and will only use it to directly break masks if the PCs do so first (or they are in dire need of his assistance).

## Zombie

A dead, decaying corpse animated by blasphemous magic. Its clothes are in tatters, save for a pristine white porcelain mask covering the face. The hands reach for its victim, flesh stripped from the ends of the jagged bone, leaving blackened claws instead of fingers.

Air 0	Earth 3	Fire 1	Water 1
Reflexes 2		Agility 3	Strength 3
<b>Initiative:</b> 2k2		<b>Attack:</b> 5k3 (unarmed, Complex)	
<b>Armor TN:</b> 15		<b>Damage:</b> 4k2 (claw)	
<b>Reduction:</b> 5			
<b>Wounds:</b> 72 (Dead)			
<b>Taint Rank:</b> 3			
<b>Special Abilities:</b>			

- **Beheading:** A zombie can normally only be destroyed by literally hacking it to pieces (reducing it to Dead), but it can be instantly destroyed by severing its head. This requires three Called Shot Raises and doing at least 18 Wounds
- **Unmasking:** Alternately, removing the porcelain mask on the zombie will end the spell giving it movement, and it will return to death. This may be accomplished if a character controls a Grapple with a zombie and takes a Complex Action to remove the mask. Striking the mask in combat may have the same effect; it requires three Called Shot Raises to strike the mask, and the mask will be broken if it takes more than 5 Wounds of damage (past its own

Reduction of 10). At the GM’s discretion, Raises may be used to specifically target the mask with spells.

- **Fear 3**
- **Undead**

This encounter is primarily intended to break up the “standard” order for modules and to scare the players a little; the combat should take less than an hour (assuming the typical time constraints), and should present relatively small danger to the PCs.

As a reminder, the basic Grapple rules are printed here, with the modifications for this encounter: A character may initiate a grapple by making an attack roll using **Jiu-jutsu / Agility**. This is always a Complex Action unless the character possesses an ability that specifically renders grapples a Simple or Free Action. To successfully initiate a grapple, the attacking character must hit the target’s Armor TN with his attack roll. This attack roll ignores the benefits of armor to the Armor TN. If the attack is successful, both the attacker and the target are considered to be in a grapple. When characters are involved in a grapple, one of them is in control. Initially this is the character who initiates the grapple, but it can change every round. A grappled character must try to control the grapple at the beginning of his Turn. All characters involved in the grapple must make a Contested **Jiu-jutsu / Strength** Roll. The character with the highest result on this roll is considered to be in control of the grapple until the next character’s Turn. (In this encounter, the zombies make a single grapple roll, but success for the PC only allows them to Break the hold of one zombie, plus one for every 5 they exceed the zombies’ roll by.)

A character who has control of a grapple may do one of the following things on his Turn:

**Hit:** As a Complex Action, the character may inflict normal unarmed damage on any one other participant in the grapple. This damage cannot benefit from Raises, as there is no attack roll being made. Free Raises can still be applied, however.

**Throw:** As a Complex Action, the character may throw one opponent, causing them to become prone anywhere within five feet of the character performing the throw. This removes the thrown character from the grapple.

**Break:** As a Simple Action, the character may immediately remove himself from the grapple.

**Pass:** As a Free Action, the character may do nothing, choosing to maintain the grapple and retain control.

Immediately after the final zombie is dealt with, the GM should move to the court that actually began this sequence of events. Accumulated Wounds, spent Void Points, and expended spell slots should be kept track of, but obviously will not apply for the court (as it takes

place before the Introduction). Any PCs who took more than five Wound Ranks (Injured, +15) must make an **Earth** roll at a TN of 15. Failure means that they will acquire 1k1 points of Taint at the end of the module.

## Part One: Court of the Autumn's New Moon

*Late summer has brought you once again to Ootosan Uchi. Though there is still a great deal of turmoil in Rokugan following the events of the summer, the business of the Empire must continue. Otomo Yoshinaka, the youngest brother of the Otomo family daimyo, has announced that the famous "Autumn Moon Court" has been moved to a more central venue – specifically, his estate in the Imperial Capitol – and you have been sent by your daimyo to attend this event.*

The conflict between the Emerald Champion and the Imperial Regent (primarily over the latter's rise to that position) has not come to open fighting, primarily due to the newly-appointed Imperial General. This has led to an environment of political uncertainty, as most of the daimyo of the Empire have yet to decide which side to support, if any. Even those who have done so have a vested interest in discovering as much as possible about the positions of the other daimyo. Additionally, there are a large number of other conflicts at work in the Empire – each Clan is involved in at least one matter, and the PCs have been sent by their daimyo to discover what they can about where the other daimyo are lending their support.

Officially, the court's new host has relocated the "Autumn Moon Court" as a 'favor' to the former Crane hosts – as they are new parents, it is being spoken of as if they are otherwise occupied. Any mention of the events that took place at last year's court (detailed in SoB15 "Cold Hands, Stone Heart") is severely frowned upon and considered ill-suited for the elegant surroundings of the capitol.

The public purpose of the court is to determine the styles for the coming court season – another of Yoshinaka's claims to changing the venue is to allow enough time for the artisans of Rokugan to make more impressive works, and to allow word to travel to even the furthest provinces. During the first few days, however, the multiple conflicts in the Empire limit any single theme from taking hold. Eventually, however, the prevalent political issue finds its way to the forefront. Representations of "the Sun" begin to

circulate, and catch on with the court as the theme is further refined: those supporting the Imperial Regent sport images that evoke Amaterasu, while samurai vocal in their defense of the Emerald Champion display symbols more in tune with Yakamo. Even those who have maintained their neutrality seem to accept the theme, as it allows them to proclaim it by wearing Sun-themed garments that have no identifying iconography.

If the PCs wish to find a "Sun" themed court kimono, they may do so for 7 koku from a Crane shop named "*Windswept Leaves*" (in elegant styles cut for shugenja, courtiers, and yojimbo for all Clans). This kimono includes a matching peaked courtier cap, a broad kataginu, a silk fan, and any other important accessories necessary for High Court functions. The proprietor, a flamboyant older gentleman named Asahina Benjiro, will very politely praise any political figure the kimono is intended to represent (Benjiro will artfully dodge any questions of his own allegiance). PCs may take a "Minor Obligation: Crane Clan" to get a reduction of 4 koku on the price. Male characters may attempt to seduce Benjiro if they wish with a promise of dinner and sake at his place that evening (and a **Temptation [Seduction] / Awareness** at TN 25, with a Free Raise if they have an Earth of 3 or higher) to gain the same discount. Making good on that promise will gain the PC Asahina Benjiro as an Ally (with Devotion 1, and Influence 1).

Another, less expensive shop, "*Daruma's*", has "Sun" themed court kimono as well. These, Kasuga Kinuhime (the oily proprietor with her hair in a tight bun) exclaims, are by an up and coming designer named Sanzo, and are a most excellent fashion statement for only 4 koku. A **Craft: Tailoring / Perception** roll of TN 20 will show that the quality is average at best, making the kimono only worth about 2 koku, though bringing the price down is a **Commerce (Haggling) / Awareness** roll of TN 25. A **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** roll at TN 20 will allow the PC to know that there is a Tsi artisan by the of name Sanzo, known for his fabulous kimonos (among other crafts). If pressed, Kinuhime will declare that she does not know if it is the same person – these kimono were shipped in from Ryoko Owari last week.

Wearing an out-of-season songbird kimono means the PC must call a raise on any speaking social rolls while in court (affecting rolls with NPCs at the GM's discretion). Wearing a kimono that is not a court kimono (such as those gained during previous visits to Ootosan Uchi in either "Emperor's Favor" or "Confusion at Court") means the PC loses 5 points of Glory (if they are a courtier, they lose Glory equal to their Courtier Skill Rank plus their Courtier School Rank as it is

specifically their duty to be prepared for this sort of thing). This is one of the largest court venues in the Empire, and showing up in anything less is an insult to the host (monk characters are exempt, of course, but shugenja are not).

## Rumors

Any PCs who wish to discover what they can about the doings of the Empire at large 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:

- Rumors abound that the Empress has left the capital in order to tour the Empire for her education. Though there have been no confirmed announcements regarding her itinerary, it has been noted that the Emerald Champion is devoting nearly all of his attention to Tsudao's personal safety, and trusting the myriad other duties of his position more and more to other samurai – as the Imperial General demonstrates.
- The disagreement between the Emerald Champion and the Imperial Regent has dominated the political landscape. Rumors have sprung up across the Empire of the Regent's forgotten reign, but every mention of it is countered with reminders of Kakita Toshiken's consistent failures to defend the Imperial Family. Both sides have been vocal in their support of the Empress, and though a few sanctioned duels have been fought over the issue, Imperial General Seppun Murayasu has made it clear that he will not allow open war over this issue to weaken the Empire.
- The Imperial Legions under the command of Seppun Murayasu have continued to put down peasant uprisings across Rokugan. With every engagement, the Legions eliminate more threats to the stability of the Empire, though the leader of the army that marched on Otosan Uchi earlier in the summer is still at large. Reports indicate that the relatively few captured rebels speak of a spiritual leader they call the "Young Crow" as a source of inspiration. There are no confirmed sightings of this man, or even a consistent description of the blasphemies that have no doubt incited the peasantry into open revolt, but the symbol used by the uprisings makes the connection clear. The Brotherhood of Shinsei has claimed to have no information on the matter, but their sympathy for the peasantry is something that many samurai have taken note of.
- In order to ensure their duties can be fulfilled without difficulty, Seppun Murayasu has assigned

the 3<sup>rd</sup> Imperial Legion to the command of Kakita Toshiken, and the 7<sup>th</sup> to Kuni Utagu. By providing forces to both the Emerald Champion and the Jade Champion (who has made his support of the Regent fairly public), the Imperial General is maintaining his policy of impartiality in their conflict while reminding their supporters that he commands another eight Legions that he intends to use to maintain peace between their factions.

- A minor earthquake struck the lands north of the capitol last month. The few villages in the area escaped significant damage, but most agree that the spirits are indicating their displeasure at the recent unrest in the mortal realm.
- Two of the dignitaries present at the court are Kakita Takezo, head sensei of the Kakita Iaijutsu Academy, and Mirumoto Uso, daimyo of the Mirumoto family and head sensei of the Mirumoto Bushi School. The two men have been corresponding for nearly a year, and rumors indicate that they are preparing a martial collaboration between their Schools.
- The Dragon did not send troops against the Phoenix again this year, and it is believed that this is due to the difficulties they have encountered on the Dragon Heart Plain. There are unconfirmed reports of peasant unrest, ronin armies, a portal to another Realm (though it cannot be agreed whether the other Realm in question is Toshigoku, Gaki-do, or Jigoku itself), and even a gaijin invasion. The Dragon have been characteristically silent on whatever issues they have been dealing with, but there is no doubt that the Phoenix are likely to take full advantage of the respite to shore up their already strong defenses.
- Though his duties have kept him busy across the Empire these last few months, Kakita Toshiken has assigned troops (both Imperial Legion and his own personal guards) to four different cities across the Empire: Kyuden Tonbo, Ryoko Owari, Toshi no Meiyo Gisei, and Ookami Toshi. Whether this is related to stories of the primarily Lion Empress' Guard beginning to scout more actively for recruits from the Dragon, Crane, Unicorn, and Scorpion Clans is uncertain, but given the relationship between the Champion and the Regent, it is unlikely he will wish to return to Otosan Uchi in the near future.

## Speaking with the Delegates

The PCs will have the opportunity to speak to some of the more important guests here, should they chose. As their daimyo have sent them explicitly to discover what they can about where other daimyo stand on the various conflicts in the Empire, they may well take advantage

of the opportunity. Some information on these conflicts can be found in Appendix #2 as reminders for both players and GMs. Note that, due to time constraints, it is recommended that each player be given one audience. This is at the GM's discretion, and more proactive players should be rewarded by allowing them to take opportunities that other players are passing up; multiple PCs working together should be allowed as well. It is recommended that this section take no more than an hour and a half, in order to fit into the typical timeslot; groups playing without such constraints are at the GM's discretion, but as a general rule, a PC should not be allowed more than one attempt for an audience allowed each day. (Consider that at a six-person table, each player having a ten-minute audience takes an hour.)

As this is a court taking place in the Imperial Capital, at the home of a highly-placed and well-connected courtier, there are a number of samurai of note present. In general, arranging an audience with any NPC requires the PC to either go through the appropriate channels (represented by an **Etiquette [Bureaucracy] / Awareness** roll) or by relying upon their own station and reputation (represented by a **Glory / Status** roll). The "Audience TN" will be noted in each NPC's information. PCs receive a Free Raise if they are trying to arrange an audience with a member of their own Clan, and will automatically succeed if they attempt to speak with their own daimyo (if they have an Oath of Fealty to one of the NPCs, they are assumed to be part of their retinue anyway). PCs may also gain two Free Raises on any of these rolls by appealing to their host; gaining a Minor Obligation to Otomo Yoshinaka will ease their access to any other NPC, does not require speaking with length to Yoshinaka himself, and may even be done after failing one of the above rolls, but may only be done once over the course of the court.

The following NPCs are those most likely to attract attention from the PCs. Additionally, each Great Clan has at least one representative present; information on the Clan delegates can be found in Appendix #3.

- **Yasuki Kiromayu, Imperial Treasurer** (Status 7.0, Glory 5.2, Yasuki Courtier 4, Audience TN 35): Very little is known about Kiromayu, save that he was appointed as one of Imperial Chancellor Otomo Mitsuhide's first acts. He is a quiet man in his middle thirties, clad in a resplendent golden kimono at odds with his comfortably homely features. He has no strong opinions concerning the division between Toshiken and Okucheo, but will enquire cautiously about the feelings of those who speak with him. Making a strong point for one side or the other is a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness**

TN 40 roll, which he will take into advisement. His personal loyalty is to the Imperial Chancellor, who has provided him with an opportunity to serve the Empire on a much larger scale; in general, he believes that Okucheo has given O-Ushi a similar opportunity and is very slightly in favor of it. On the topic of the fighting between the Crab and the Crane, Kiromayu feels some concern (as the Yasuki feud is behind a significant portion of the conflict), but honestly believes that it is a temporary situation; despite the Crane's financial advantages, he does not think they will be able to turn that into military force sufficient to the task.

- **Ide Tadaji, Imperial Advisor** (Status 9.0, Glory 6.8, Ide Emissary 5, Audience TN 40): Tadaji is an older courtier, with a graying beard and a club foot, but his demeanor is friendly and his voice is a smooth, comforting rumble. He is studiously neutral as regards the conflict between the Regent and the Emerald Champion, but will find a way to enquire upon the PC's position. Supporting one side or the other allows the PC to make a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** TN 40 roll, which he will take into advisement. (Tadaji is suspicious of Okucheo, sensing that several of the unfortunate events of the last few years have been mysteriously unsolved, but he lacks any kind of evidence or testimony to support accusations.) If asked about the fighting between the Unicorn and Lion, he shakes his head slowly. *"Samurai are warriors. By his actions, I suppose that Moto Gaheris-sama is striving to demonstrate before the Empire that he, too, is a samurai at heart, no matter where he was born."* He will not speak against the Unicorn Champion, but any PC who wishes to persuade him to support an agenda of peace between the Unicorn and Lion may roll **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** at a TN of 25.
- **Otomo Yoshinaka, Imperial Scion** (Status 6.0, Glory 2.1, Otomo Courtier 3, Audience TN 20): He is more than happy to discuss politics with the PCs, but will do so quietly in a private area of the garden. However the PC leans when it comes to issues such as the conflict between Okucheo and Toshiken, he will express himself positively without committing to one side or the other. He is, of course, quite proud of his garden and estate. If the PCs speak about the probable results of the court, they may roll **Courtier / Awareness** at a TN of 25 to detect some dissatisfaction in him concerning the theme. Rolling more than 40 allows them to realize this is due to the theme itself rather than it being used to support the conflict (he actually quite approves of that; he just wishes it hadn't been "the Sun" chosen to reflect it). Anyone trying to use special abilities to get a read on



Yoshinaka, including techniques such as the Kitsu's *Eye of the Ancestors*, will find him hard to pin down on *anything* specific, except that he is not Tainted. If pressed for a more concrete answer, there is none that the PC can detect, except that something feels... off.

- **Mirumoto Uso, Dragon Daimyo and Sensei** (Status 7.0, Glory 8.4, Mirumoto Bushi 5/Swordmaster 3, Audience TN 45) or **Kakita Takezo, Crane Sensei** (Status 6.0, Glory 5.8, Kakita Bushi 5/Kenshinzen 2, Audience TN 45): These two men are spending a great deal of time together with their students, working on their project. The TN represents the difficulty in getting one of them alone. However, anyone who wishes to speak with them may instead simply approach them in the dojo; they must still succeed at the roll, but the TN drops to 25 (and the Etiquette Emphasis becomes Courtesy) before other modifiers. Information regarding their positions can be found in the following section.

## In The Dojo

Most bushi will likely be interested in the dojo found on the sprawling grounds of Yoshinaka's estate. Though their host is a courtier and has little interest in martial pursuits himself, he does maintain a sizable personal guard (suitable to his station), and there are other guests who are more interested in training than in participating in the negotiations.

In the *karesansui* (dry garden) overlooking the dojo, the PCs can find three men and a woman (two of the men surrounded by the glow that marks returned spirits), having a brisk and in-depth discussion regarding the minutiae of iaijutsu dueling. They will pause and bow to any PC who steps down into the garden. Those PCs who succeed at the Audience roll (as note above) are invited to join the group. (PCs trained in either the Kakita or Mirumoto Bushi Schools gain a Free Raise, as will PCs that have a recommendation by another PC who has been granted inclusion.) All are dressed in the white *gi* of the dojo.

A **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** at a TN of 20 will allow the PC to recognize the following people:

- Mirumoto Uso, daimyo of the Mirumoto family and head sensei of the Iron Mountain Dojo. Mirumoto trained bushi will immediately recognize him; PCs who played "A Day to Mourn" should as well. He is in his mid-twenties, with a full head of black hair and a loose topknot.
- Kakita Takezo, a returned spirit, head sensei of the Kakita Dueling Academy. PCs that played "Cold Hands, Stone Heart" will recognize him. Some

players may have him as an Ally, and he will greet them by name. He has a warm smile and long flowing white hair.

- Mirumoto Kissaki, a returned spirit from the Dawn of the Empire and a sensei at the Iron Mountain Dojo. This is a player character in the campaign, so others may recognize him. If any do, he will greet them by name. He is a tall man with the shaved head of a monk.
- Kakita Kyruko, the young niece of the Kakita family daimyo. She is a duelist of some renown (some would say "notoriety"), and PCs may have met her in "Ancestral Dictate". She is a beautiful woman of eighteen, with the light blue eyes the Crane are famous for, and with three official duels to her credit. (Several other, unofficial, duels are whispered about, but to date no substantial charges have been filed, perhaps due to her familial connections.)

The PCs are made welcome, and introductions will be made as necessary. The low table is kept mostly clear – there is little in the way of refreshment, only some simple tea; the younger samurai (Kissaki and Kyruko) have open scrolls and pens at their places, taking notes for the discussion in between occasional demonstrations of basic kata for the analysis of the senior sensei.

*Once all of the niceties are performed as appropriate, Mirumoto Uso speaks in a quiet, precise voice. "You arrive at a most auspicious time. The honorable Takezo-sensei and I have been collaborating on a martial project for the better part of the last year, a project I first began undertaking with his predecessor. We hope to develop a series of kata to help unify the Clans in this great time of strife and division. A gift from our Schools to the Empire, a celebration of the thousand years of steel that has defended Rokugan. But as neither the Kakita nor the Mirumoto has done this alone, we welcome any input you may have."*

This is a brainstorming session for the Thousand Years of Steel series of Kata that the Dragon and Crane are jointly developing. There are plans for five kata, and they are currently discussing what focus will benefit from the kata and comparing it to existing kata (see page 259 of the core rulebook for kata examples). Assisting in this discussion involves the following:

- 1: Propose a simple focal point for a kata. For example: Iaijutsu, TN, Initiative, Kyujutsu, Damage, etc. Choose a Ring and a Rank as appropriate.
- 2: Propose the kata concept mechanically utilizing the *Intelligence* trait. For example, an "Iaijutsu" kata would be **Iaijutsu / Intelligence**, while "Initiative"

might be **School Rank + Reflexes / Intelligence**. Some of these may be more challenging to determine than others. The TN for the roll is 10x (the proposed Rank of the Kata) +10, minimum 30.

3: Work on the basic mechanics of the kata in character. The PCs are not developing the actual mechanics, but merely demonstrating the concept utilizing the *Agility* trait (as above). The TN for this roll is 10x (the proposed Rank of the Kata) +15, minimum 35.

Success means the PCs suggestion is valid and noted by the sensei of the respective schools. Record the successful kata foci for later reporting, and PCs who succeed receive the advantage “Standing Invitations: Iron Mountain Dojo & Kakita Dueling Academy” to continue kata development. They also gain an amount of Glory equal to the Rank of their proposed Kata.

The PCs may also seize the opportunity to speak with the sensei concerning the political issues at play in the Empire. They will be somewhat guarded in their responses, but will not significantly change their replies whether they are separated from the rest of the group or not.

#### Kakita Takezo

Takezo is a returned spirit from the ninth century (around the time of the Unicorn’s return to Rokugan). Like many spirits, he chose to remain in the Empire to lend his experience; upon the seppuku of Kakita Kaiten, he found himself the most accomplished available instructor to take over the Kakita Academy and chose to do so. For the most part, he is focused on his duties and has few strong opinions on the current political situations. He disapproves of Hantei Okucheo’s rise to power, but is also more than somewhat concerned by the rising anti-spirit sentiment that is growing prevalent in the Emerald Champion’s supporters. As far as the Crane’s aggression toward the Crab is concerned, as a loyal bushi he feels he has little option but to follow orders for his Clan, however, on the whole he would prefer to settle the dispute in the court “in a more civilized fashion.” As far as the divide among the Crane itself is concerned, Takezo would prefer to avoid involvement, but will follow the lead of his current family daimyo, Kakita Yoshi. Persuading Takezo to take a side in any of the above issues will require a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 30. If asked about Kakita Nori (Takezo’s young student, possibly met at last year’s court), Takezo will say “*Nori is studying calligraphy with my wife at the moment. His musical skill is improving, as is his ability with the sword. We expect great things from him.*”

#### Mirumoto Uso

As the Mirumoto family daimyo, Uso is the de facto Champion of the Dragon Clan in most matters. Though he has not been particularly active politically, Uso is quietly opposed to the Imperial Regent. He has made no overt public declarations along those lines (and has no plans to do so in the near future without his Champion’s advice). Alone among the Clans, no Dragon daimyo has yet spoken in support of the Hantei. The decision for the Dragon to attack the Phoenix was ultimately Uso’s, as he agreed with the Dragon Agasha’s desire to avenge the Clan’s honor. Still, Uso hopes that open war can be avoided, and not only because he has no desire to strain the Imperial laws governing conflict between the Clans. Uso wishes to find a reasonable compromise with the Phoenix, but will not order a complete cessation of hostilities without some form of agreement.

Should the PCs wish to develop actual mechanics for the kata, they will need to speak to the Campaign Admin about such things as balance and playability.

#### The Ghost

During lunch on the fourth day, PCs who have the disadvantage “Haunted: Sakura” or “Goryo Ancestor” will notice the following:

*In the garden, under a large willow tree on the far side of the koi pond, sit three young girls. One, dressed in the finest gold, sits with the others, clad in light sky blue, having a childish tea party. As you look closer, the girl in blue turns her head slowly towards you and smiles broadly... too broadly... as the girl in gold beckons you over.*

As the PC makes his way over, a quick **Courtier (Gossip) / Intelligence** roll at TN 20 will allow the PC to recognize that the girl in gold is Chisae, the niece of the host and the Otomo Daimyo (the daughter of one of their sisters).

Any PCs who are Haunted by Sakura will see one of Chisae’s companions as Sakura; any PCs who have an ancestor who has become a Goryo will perceive the other companion as that ancestor. Multiple PCs with these certs will have overlapping perceptions, at the GM’s discretion. This scene should be fairly short and simple, all told.

- **Chisae, the Otomo Princess:** Chisae is a young lady of court, about eight years old. She is polite, prim, and proper, already doing well to hold her own and acting as a courtier should. She uses the proper –sama for samurai older than her because she is *always so very polite*.

- **Sakura the Ghost:** Sakura was once a vengeful goryo who was set upon the path of righteousness by the PC's Compassion during the module "Cold Hands, Stone Heart". She is attempting to learn what it means to be a samurai, but hundreds of years as a vengeful spirit have driven her mad, and some of that is reflected in her creepy demeanor.
- **The Goryo Ancestor:** This is the PC's ancestor spirit who was attacked by Sakura during "Cold Hands, Stone Heart", was "killed" in the spirit world and is now forced to be a goryo also (they attack the PC every night for not defending them in that module, per the cert). Whatever the PC described earlier, the goryo version will have a deathly pale complexion, purple-black rings around his eyes and throat. Their eyes will be full of murderous intent, as they are now a spirit of eternal vengeance. However, there may be something human left in them after all, if the PC can but bring them back...

*"Samurai-sama," Chisae says, bowing politely while pouring tea for her guests, and for you. "We were just speaking of what it means to be a samurai. Could you please explain to us: what is 'Honor'?"*

*Her companions look on VERY intently as Chisae politely offers you a pink teacup decorated with running ponies.*

What the PC chooses to say here is important, and roleplaying matters – the (two) ghosts are absorbing what the PC says and taking it to heart. In addition to the roleplaying answer, the PC must also make a **Lore: Bushido / Intelligence** roll TN 20. If the PC succeeds on both, have the PC write on their mod tracking sheet and the "Goryo Ancestor" cert, or near where they wrote down "Haunted: Sakura", the word **Honor**, then initial and date it. If the PC called Raises on the roll, add a +(number of raises) behind it.

*Across the koi pond, a small gong resonates, reminding the courtiers that they have 15 minutes of lunch left – some have begun to move inside already. As you look back to Chisae and her companions, the latter is gone, replaced by two other young girls in light blue, smiling and sipping their tea. "Thank you for your wisdom, samurai-sama," they say in harmony. A cool wind rustles the leaves of the willow tree, carrying the faint sound of giggling with it.*

### Dinner at the Makoto

On the evening of the fifth day, the PCs are attending dinner at the fabulous *Makoto* restaurant. A **Courtier / Intelligence** roll TN 20 will let the PC know that the restaurant travels to wherever the Emperor is – though

if anyone asks the hostess about this point, Otomo Daiko will be happy to point out that the Regent is in residence in Otosan Uchi, and should the PC bring up Tsudao's location she will politely rebut with *"and I am most confident Her Highness will return home from her field trip soon enough"* before excusing herself to other duties. (She is wearing a highly fashionable Amaterasu kimono.)

Dinner is, to put it simply, immaculate. The simplest dishes here are *perfect*, making the haute cuisine of Otomo Yoshinaka's estate seem like day-old fisherman's bait, and even the simple music from the adjacent chamber is everything music should, *must*, be. Any PC with Idealistic, or a Fascination or Compulsion related to any kind of food, drink, or music, must make a **Raw Willpower** roll at TN 20 to maintain composure and not embarrassing themselves like some star-struck country rube, losing a point of Glory and a point of Honor for their loss of Face.

Close to the end of dinner, but before everyone leaves for the geisha houses and after-parties, each of the PCs receive a small note from the waiter, inviting them to the *Azure Heron*, a small, quiet, exclusive geisha house in the Crane district. The letter is signed by Kakita Takezo, the Crane sensei.

The entrance to the Azure Heron is a simple doorway tucked next to the upscale "*Windswept Leaves*" fashion house, marked only by a small blue crane in flight, and looking like any of the other townhome residences. Inside and up the well-worn stairs is a small room, very tasteful but elegantly simple. An older gentleman politely introduces himself as Kakita Pei and asks for the PCs' invitations. Upon delivery of the invitation, another silent man in light blue, introduced as Daidoji Machio, will accept their swords for safe keeping (failure to comply causes a loss of Honor as a major breach of etiquette) as they are escorted to a comfortable waiting room by an *achingly* beautiful geisha named Tse, who entertains them with Three Acorn sake and a simple, haunting tune on her biwa before demurely excusing herself.

Not two minutes after Tse leaves does the door slide open, revealing three men – Kakita Takezo, Mirumoto Kissaki, and Kuni Utagu, the Jade Champion. The PCs may make a **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** roll at a TN of 20 to recognize them (if they have not previously encountered them), but if it seems like none of the PCs realize who the samurai are, Mirumoto Kissaki (as the junior samurai present among the three) will courteously offer introductions.

*"Greetings, samurai; thank you for joining us on such*

*short notice,” Kuni Utagu says, as the three men bow, enter, and close the door behind them. They sit, Utagu dominating the room with his scowling presence.*

(PCs who do not bow low to the Jade Champion lose 2 points of Honor, or 6 points if their Honor is higher than 5.9.)

*“I am sure you are curious as to why I have summoned you here in such a way,” the Jade Champion says, pouring himself a cup of sake. “Let us cut through the frivolities of court. You may be aware that the peasant army that threatened the capitol had maho-tsukai traveling among them. One of these foul creatures survived the battle, and I ordered one of my magistrates to follow his trail as soon as I learned of the situation. He has been sighted in a small town a few days north of here, and my magistrate is en route. While speaking with these two men, comparing notes from the battle, something came up that demands investigation. According to Kissaki-san, there was once a large cemetery in that area; one that is not on the Imperial maps. Duty requires us to be here, but you are free for the moment. I would ask that you meet with Daisuke, a Jade Magistrate who has been one of my most trusted subordinates for years. Help him find this graveyard and report back to me, so that we may secure it against the maho-tsukai who no doubt intends to use it for some unholy purpose.”*

The PCs will have questions, ones which the two returned spirits and the Jade Champion will answer to the best of their ability:

- What can you tell us of this cemetery? *Kissaki replies: “It was once a sprawling graveyard, mainly for sailors who washed ashore. It was ancient a thousand years ago, and even then it was enormous – easily comparable to Ryoko Owari in size, if not larger.”*
- Where is it? *Kakita Takezo murmurs, “Consulting the maps, and certain archivists of my acquaintance in the capital, it should be on a promontory overlooking the ocean, north of a small port town called Treacherous Pass City. Both are surrounded by desolate, unpopulated hills; which is likely how the cemetery was... overlooked for so long.”*
- Why is it no longer on the maps? *Kakita Takezo shrugs his shoulders. “As best we can tell, it fell into disuse after the decree changing funeral practices from burial to cremation, sometime in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. One can only assume that the regional maps it was listed on were lost or*

*destroyed.” Utagu snorts roughly. “After the Battle of Stolen Graves, you mean, when the Bloodspeaker taught we to take more care of our departed.”*

- Why do we need to investigate this? *Kuni Utagu speaks gravely, “I need you to help my magistrate search the area, and find this graveyard so that I can have my Jade Legion secure it. We cannot have a place such as this in the Empress’ back yard, particularly with a powerful maho-tsukai in the area. Whatever you find, report it to me personally.”*
- Can we borrow horses? *Utagu growls “You don’t have one already? Your Clan should provide.” Takezo softly interjects, “However, there is a stable in town that should rent steeds out at a reasonable rate, given the nature of your business.”* The PCs can rent horses for 2 koku if they wish to, with the recommendation of the Jade Champion.
- We do not have a shugenja with us. *Kuni Utagu mutters something indistinct under his breath. “Have no fear. Daisuke-san is a Kuni. He will know the appropriate rites if the darkness tries to feast on your entrails.”*
- Since we are hunting for maho-tsukai, will we need jade? Can we wear our armor? *Kuni Utagu nods brusquely “Yes. I will provide you each with a finger of jade if necessary, and your travel papers will be written accordingly.”*
- If the PCs seem inclined to refuse (based on their lack of skill or personal cowardice), Utagu will look to them with barely-concealed contempt. *“Are you refusing a direct request by the Jade Champion?”*
- Attempting to pressure money out of him will earn them some enmity, but Utagu will comply. *“If it is coin you want, coin you shall receive.”*

PCs that refuse a direct request from the Jade Champion lose 2 points of Honor per Honor Rank, gain “Sworn Enemy: Jade Champion”, and cannot continue the adventure (making their participation in part one inexplicable unless they change their mind). Publicly stating that refusing his request is due to his support of the Imperial Regent will lose the character 3 points of Status per Status Rank, gain them two Ranks of Infamy, and add “Sworn Enemy: Imperial Regent” to their problems. Those with a Position as Jade Yoriki who refuse will lose that title and a full Rank of Status. Any recalcitrant PCs should be encouraged to participate.

PCs who wish to have more than one item of jade (jade finger or jade dust) may get one, and only one, more by

spending a Favor from any source (though Crab Favors make the most sense).

***“If that is all,” the Jade Champion says, rising to his feet. “Please make preparations to leave in the morning.”***

If the PCs requested anything, he will have any equipment and documentation sent to the PC with the highest Status. They will travel through the day with little difficulty, taking them to the “Fluffy Duckling” roadside inn where they are to meet with Kuni Daisuke.

## Part Two: Dragon’s Guard City

At this point, the action should resume just after the combat at the “Fluffy Duckling.” This portion of the module should be fairly straightforward, with the PCs simply gaining answers to the fundamental facts of the module and getting them into place for the final confrontation – again, under the normal time constraints, Part Two should hopefully take no more than a half hour.

If he survived, Daisuke will accept or offer healing as necessary, pick up a bottle of sake from the wreckage, and coolly suggest the group finds another table for their briefing as soon as they are recovered from the attack. Looking at the mess, he will idly order the innkeeper to find eta to dispose of the remains and continue on about his business with little more comment than ***“Well, I guess we know that he’s expecting us...”*** (If he died, the sheaf of scrolls he placed on the table has the following information – it is his casefile on Sentaro, the ashigaru-turned-mahotsukai.)

Daisuke has spent the last month tracking the mahotsukai who revealed themselves at the battle earlier this summer, interviewing survivors, investigating his home, and following any sign of his passing through the area. Sentaro was a veteran ashigaru who fought at the Battle of Volturnum. He was born in a town north of Otosan Uchi called alternately “Treacherous Pass City” or “Dragon’s Guard City.” There was little to distinguish him as a young man; he survived the battle in the Shadowlands and returned home without any significant distinction. His record in his home province is simple; a single listed infraction (failure to turn over the appropriate portion of his taxes, punished with a public flogging), but after that, he appeared to be a model citizen. There is nothing in the information that Daisuke could uncover to indicate either why Sentaro

would have joined the peasant uprising or why he would have turned to the Shadowlands. Or, unfortunately, when he became Tainted. One of the locals that Daisuke spoke with in the city during his initial investigations (Shu, the innkeeper of an establishment called the “Smiling Carp”) contacted him earlier in the week and informed him that Sentaro had been seen in town.

It is Daisuke’s intention to travel to Treacherous Pass City and speak with his contact, then determine what he can about the cemetery. After learning everything the PCs have to tell him about the graveyard, he will answer whatever questions the PCs may have to the best of his ability; he is a highly professional magistrate, who served as a shugenja assistant to the Kuni Witch-Hunters before Utagu became the Jade Champion and appointed him as a magistrate, so he is a quite experienced investigator and well-used to working with other Clans in order to apprehend suspects. Daisuke does possess somewhat more sense of humor than common among the usually-dour Kuni, but apart from a few mild jokes or a sarcastic witticism or two, will largely contain himself while “on the job”. Once all available information has been distributed, he will dismiss the PCs with a simple ***“We have an important task ahead of us, samurai. Rest well, and we ride hard in the morning.”***

### A Hard Ride

True to his word, Daisuke will have the servants ensure that the PCs are awake well before dawn the next day. If the PCs do not have horses, he will sigh and shake his head slightly. ***“Largest city in the Empire... you might have found steeds somewhere.”*** In any event, once the party is ready to travel, he will lead them out at a brisk pace.

Traveling to Treacherous Pass City overland is a fairly straight-forward affair; the PCs must travel northeast along the Treacherous Pass Road. The journey is uneventful as the scenery changes from the suburban sprawl of Otosan Uchi to the rural surrounding villages and farmlands.

***The lands north of Otosan Uchi are mostly plains and rolling hills, shading to steep crags and high precipices as you approach the ocean. The lines and layers of earth in the cliff faces are jagged; the obvious signs of a long history of tectonic turmoil. The areas not cultivated by the peasantry are covered by thin trees, shrubs, and grass clinging to crumbling, foreboding hillsides. Soon enough even these give way to rough, unpleasant mountains in either direction; the road to Kiken na Roka Toshi looks more like a deep wound in the earth than anything else. Villages***

*along the route are impoverished and scarce, but it is almost impossible to determine whether this is due to the depopulation from the summer's fighting or a result of local conditions.*

A **Lore: History / Intelligence** roll at TN 20 (at the GM's discretion, other Lore Skills can substitute as appropriate) will inform the PC that the area is sparsely inhabited due to the unusually high frequency of earthquakes. Otosan Uchi itself is highly prone to them, but this region suffers from a lack of infrastructure to support regular rebuilding. Any PC wishing to speak to the earth spirits will find them agitated, disturbed, and easily upset – the PC will have to call a Raise on the roll to simply keep the earth spirits from trembling angrily. They will arrive in Kiken na Roka Toshi around dusk the next day.

*In and of itself, Treacherous Pass City is not a large place. Coming around the hill along the winding pass, the city takes up a large portion of the small valley in which it is situated, and many of the heavy stone structures appear carved from the hillsides. What is more noticeable, though, is the sheer expanse of docks that extend into the sea – easily enough to hold the small fleet of merchants and fishermen who are busily pulling in to unload their catch of the day.*

*The guards at the gate, a pair of burly ronin, wave you in with a smile. "Welcome to Dragon's Guard City, samurai-samas. I might suggest the House of the Smiling Carp to stay at during your visit," one says. "They've got the best sake in town!"*

### The Independent Port

The House of the Smiling Carp is located on the border between the dock and warehouse districts, the merchant district, and the nobles district (though in truth, many of the "nobles" here are mostly wealthy merchants, and the houses are empty except for the staff). It is a large and well-appointed sake house, constantly busy from the flow of sea trade moving along the coast, and rooms can be had for 2 bu to 5 bu per night, depending on the accommodations. The food is good, but not particularly noteworthy, and the common room is lively with sea captains, merchants, and merchant patrons, mostly of the Mantis, Tortoise, Phoenix, and ronin.

The proprietor is a florid, plump, smiling peasant by the name of Shu, who will greet the PCs with respect and joviality. His mood will dip slightly when asked about the information he has for the Jade Magistrate (or, obviously, if Daisuke is with them) – not because of a guilty conscience, but because he knows that the matter is serious and he is generally, and, probably, reasonably, frightened by anything smacking of the

Taint. (Suspicious players may roll **Investigation / Awareness** at a TN of 20 or **Courtier / Awareness** at a TN of 25 to determine the source of Shu's nerves.)

*"It's simple enough told, sama," the innkeeper stammers out, wiping sweat from his face with the rag he was using to clean tables. "That Sentaro you were looking for, he was here last week. Asked around town about some graveyard to the north. Headed that way, probably toward Broken Hill Village, a few days ago."*

Asking more questions of Shu will be relatively unproductive; as an innkeeper, he is a common source for rumors, but his information tends to be lacking in significant detail as a result.

Daisuke intends to spend the night in town and head for Broken Hill Village in the morning, but he also plans on doing some looking around before retiring for the night. He won't refuse to allow a PC to accompany him, though his initial suggestion if asked would be to cover more ground by splitting up.

Asking around town will allow the PCs to gather information, similarly to asking for Rumors. They may roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** at a TN of 15 to gain information in town. They may instead roll **Lore: Underworld / Awareness** at a TN of 10. They gain a Free Raise for each of the following that applies to the PC: being a Ronin, monk, a Merchant Patron, or a naval officer, or having the Hero of the People Advantage. They gain one piece of information from the following list for a success, plus an additional piece for every 5 they beat the TN by:

- No one has heard of a giant cemetery, and many people panic at the mere thought of it. The only village north of here is Shousaka Mura, or Broken Hill Village, about 2 days north.
- Treacherous Pass City is also known as Dragon's Guard City, named for a tale once told by a famous storyteller about a small girl who gave a ryu (dragon) a rice ball. The dragon promised in return that her family and all her descendants would know peace for a thousand years. The girl's descendants had since then been numbered among the most prominent fishermen in Rokugan. The city rose to become a very successful Seppun controlled fishing port, with enough docks to moor a small fleet.
- Dragon's Guard City is an important port for the region, not only because of the excellent fishing but because of the dangerous waters in the area (mentioned by the superstitious sailors as "Suitengu's Garden"). The sea lanes are very

specific here, due to the historically high number of shipwrecks outside them – to stray from the lanes means almost certain catastrophe. This is the only safe harbor for many, many miles in either direction.

- Most of the peasants here work in the village and do not leave the valley. The surrounding countryside is very unstable and dangerous. Even the thieves and bandits do not venture out into the mountains, for fear of landslides. Only the poorest of the poor, the firewood scavengers, make their living beyond the few scattered villages along the Treacherous Pass.
- The earth spirits in this region are easily upset and perpetually angry. Long ago someone discovered prayer offerings of strong shochu will appease them, but like any alcohol-induced calm, it never lasts.
- (The PCs will only hear this information if they roll higher than a 30; Daisuke will learn of this if he is asking around, but will not think to share it unless asked by the PCs) A young, battered ashigaru came through town recently. He had an unsettling aura about him, and the locals were glad to see him depart, particularly because he was also asking about the graveyard. He bought a cart and a few slabs of clay and left, heading north.

Once again, Daisuke will want to be moving at first light. After learning what can be learned, he will head back to the inn and sleep; any PC that wishes to remain out particularly late should probably be Fatigued the next day due to the combination of travel and lack of rest, at the GM's discretion (an Earth Roll may negate this, at a TN of 20).

*The badlands north of Treacherous Pass City are bleak and barren, becoming more steep and harsh as you go north. The road is wide and smooth, but winding, hugging deep valleys and haphazard cliffs, under the omnipresent gaze of broken mountain peaks. The millennia have not been kind here, and the twisted earth shows it. Fast-growing evergreens and scrub trees cling to the crumbling ground, growing at odd angles.*

### Broken Hill Village

The PCs will reach Broken Hill Village a short way before dark on the second day (or early afternoon, if they were able to speed up travel). The village itself is a ramshackle collection of huts sitting on the edge of a rough precipice; very literally, the hill broke in half and slid down into the valley below. The village headman, a dirty but smiling man named Koteki, greets Daisuke and the PCs warmly, if quietly.

A Phoenix trade caravan is in town, trading food and supplies for the black *go* stones mined from the nearby slate quarry. There is no inn here, but there is a small temple in the center of town with enough space for the PCs to stay. A **Lore: Lore: Theology (Fortunes) / Intelligence** roll at TN 20 will recognize it as a Temple to O'Saigo (named "*O'Saigo-ji*"), the Fortune of Going Last (the player with the black stones in Go goes second, hence the relation), though this information can be gotten without a roll simply by asking.

A **Games: Go / Perception** roll TN 15 will show that these pieces are of exceptionally high quality and very well-made; they are easily worth a koku alone in the major cities of the Empire, though Shiba Gobai (the caravan master) is paying much, much less for them. Hagglng for the contract for the Go stones is a Contested **Commerce / Willpower** roll against Shiba Gobai's 8k3 (manipulating, blackmailing, or bullying him in some way gives the PC two Free Raises – he is not one for confrontation).

Treating the peasants in the village well does not require a roll; it simply requires the PC to be polite. PCs with the Hero of the People Advantage should have the locals going out of their way to be helpful. Koteki will inform them (away from the others) that he's heard rumor of an old graveyard, but he chalked it up as just another firewood gatherer superstition- they have so many, it's hard to keep track of them all. He will of course go fetch the elderly head of the firewood-gatherer family for them, should they ask. He returns with a hunched old man named Monomi, who walks with a gnarled cane and has piercing black eyes. Monomi tells them the following tale:

*"When I was a young man, my brother and I were tasked with finding new groves of forest to harvest firewood from – they aren't very common around here, so exploring was an important duty. Normally we gather from the west and the south, because the terrain is easier, but Jin and I decided to try our luck going north east, toward the ocean. We scaled one of the mountains to look around and saw, in the distance, a small forest. When we got there, it was... eerie. Ancient trees, old stone ruins, broken graves, fog... but a bounty fallen wood everywhere. While we harvested, Jin was... well, he was attacked; killed. I didn't see what it was, because of the fog, but... I fled. I mentioned it to a passing magistrate some time ago, but she ignored me. Such is the karma of the poor." He frowns momentarily off into the distance, old shame and anger mixed on his face and set in an expression of resignation. "We do not go there*

*anymore. You should not go there either. The land is cursed."*

The PCs will likely have questions. Monomi will answer to the best of his ability, though there are limitations:

- What kind of monsters? *"I didn't see. Jin was dragged off screaming into the fog. I am not a brave man; I ran away."*
- Where is the cemetery? *"As I was running away, the fog parted for just long enough for me to see old tombs beyond the forest. The cemetery just went on forever; I thought I had died and gone to hell..."*
- Where is this forest/how do I get there? *"If you must go, go northeast, following the creek to Hofun-ji Mountain; climb it. You will see the forest in the distance, to the northeast. If you follow the largest ridgeline you see, you'll avoid the ravines. Go through the forest, and you will find what you seek."*

A **Lore: Theology / Intelligence** roll TN 30, with a Free Raise for returned spirits, will allow the PC to know that a "hofun" is a type of ancient megalithic grave – a pyramid-shaped hill with a flat top. This style has changed over the centuries, but the rectangular "Temple on a Hill" base style would be familiar to the players). Also, the suffix -ji also refers to a Temple.

The rest of the evening is one full of campfire stories and drinking. Should anyone wish to play *go*, Gobai does not play, but every villager here does, rolling between 5k2 (children) and 10k4 with the Emphasis (elders) depending on the age of the participant; Koteki is the best here, rolling 10k5 with the Emphasis. The PC may choose whichever color they wish. They don't have much else to do here but play and drink, and since maintaining O'Saigo-ji involves playing *go*, the villagers at Broken Hill have become rather exceptional at the game. It should be noted that all of the peasants here will concede their games against members of the samurai caste (for obvious reasons) unless their opponent specifically tells them not to first.

Choosing black, being polite, and rolling more than 30 on the **Games: Go / Intelligence** roll in O'Saigo-ji will attract the attention of the Minor Fortune, giving one PC a Rank of Luck to use against an opponent with higher Initiative during this mod.

Outside the warm firelight of the temple, a blanket of thick fog obscures the world; hiding everything more than a dozen steps away from sight.

It is an hour after dawn before the fog lifts enough to permit safe off-road travel, but even then, it chokes the valleys. If the PCs were polite to the villagers, they will have a guide; a lithe young woman named Aijou will escort them down the creek and to the mountain's base. The passage is safe, if rocky and wet; the creek is but a wisp of water, pooling and running off in the distance. The damp, musty air has made the slate river rocks slippery underfoot. Thin trees dot the grassy hillsides, which disappear up into soupy fog. Daisuke can make the rolls in this section if the PCs cannot and he is with them; if the PCs do not succeed, he is likely to withhold his recommendation.

Without a guide, spotting Hofun-ji Mountain is difficult. The mountain is crumbling and overgrown, obscured by the omnipresent fog. An **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll TN 25 or **Hunting / Perception** TN 20 will find it, if Aijou does not point it out. Failure means the PCs are lost and must backtrack to the village to ask for help, which will cost them all 2 points of Honor (3 if their Honor is above 6.0). Aijou will under no circumstance climb the Forbidden Mountain.

Hofun-ji Mountain is a giant pyramid of a hill, tall and wrapped in fog; the wet grass and thin trees make the climbing difficult. Visibility extends to about 5 feet away, ten if the PC has a lantern. Making it up the mountain requires an **Athletics (Climbing) / Stamina** roll, TN 20. Riding a horse up the Mountain is a **Horsemanship / Willpower** roll, TN 25. Failure means slipping and tumbling down the rocky slope until the PC (and possibly the horse) hits a tree and stops, taking 3k3 damage; damage over 30 creates a Permanent Wound of some kind: twisted knee, concussion, broken bone, or what have you, which requires a **Medicine (Wound Treatment) / Intelligence** roll of TN 25 to treat (or the "Regrow the Wound" spell) before the wound itself can be healed.

*Tackling Hofun-ji is an exercise in patience if anything – the angle of the slope is fairly steep but uniformly consistent, unusual for something of this magnitude. While there are trees and grass present, the terrain itself is practically smooth, especially compared to the surrounding rough crags and twisted peaks. After two hours of relentless, monotonous climbing up the crumbling hillside and wet grass, the fog begins to dissipate; you are still nowhere near the top.*

The sky above is a flat sheet of gray, possibly threatening rain. Climbing the mountain above the fog is less slick, and from here climbing is an **Athletics (Climbing) / Stamina** roll TN 15 or a **Horsemanship /**



**Willpower** roll TN 20; the consequences for failure are the same as above but with 4k4 damage, as there is nothing to stop them from being swallowed by the fog below.

*There is no peak to Hofun-ji, just a wide, square table, easily as large as a small village. There are no trees, no grass, no wind, no sun, no life; only massive stones. The dreary sky has begun to mist, turning the thin, chill air clammy. All around, snarling black mountains rise from the blanket of fog.*

An **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** TN 20 will spot, in the distance to the northeast, a dark patch of woods just barely poking up from the fog, which can be reached by a ridgeline from the north of Hofun-ji. A TN 30 will allow the PC to find an enormous rectangular granite pillar in a cleared circle of megalithic stones, tipped over and broken, half-buried in the rocks. A **Lore: Theology / Intelligence** roll (with a Free Raise for returned spirits, monks, and shugenja) TN 25 will let the PCs know that the pillar is an archaic style of cemetery marker. The name on the pillar, if there is one, is face-down and too heavy to move, rendering the name on the pillar unreadable.

Climbing down from Hofun-ji requires one **Athletics (Climbing) / Stamina** roll TN 15 or a **Horsemanship / Willpower** roll TN 20, with similar penalties to falling as climbing up. Following the ridgeline to the forest requires a **Hunting / Perception** roll, TN 20. The ridgeline itself starts high but begins a slow descent into the dense fog and mist. As the sun begins to fade behind the mountains, a safe campsite can be found just inside the edge of the forest, in the cold shadow of a moss-laden boulder.

The forest itself is full of exceedingly tall, misshapen trees, whose canopy disappears high into the fog, and the forest floor is a deep blanket of moss and fallen autumn leaves. Firewood can be found everywhere, but it is damp and does not burn well, and as such the meager light from a campfire cannot push back the smothering fog. The air is heavy and thick as silent darkness settles in for the night. While on watch, the PCs can make an **Investigation (Notice) / Intelligence** roll, TN 15. Success means the PC realizes that they are hearing *nothing*. No insects, no wildlife, no breeze.

## Part Three: Silence of the Grave

*Late in the night, in the still silence of the sleeping world, a loud boom echoes in the distance. The*

*ground trembles angrily in response, sending water from the forest's canopy crashing down all at once, followed by loose leaves, green, yellow, red, and brown, all fluttering lazily to the earth below. After a very long pause, another boom sends the earth kami shaking again in protest; then another, and another. The intervals between the noises are drawn out, but far too regular to be natural occurrences, and they do not seem to end. Boom. Boom. Boom.*

(A suggestion for the GM to add some drama to the scene is to physically shake the table with each “Boom”, both above and in the following sections. Naturally, some caution should be taken, depending on the playgroup and what may be on the table – a little drama is a good thing, but cleaning soda off of character sheets or rulebooks is not a fun chore.)

A **Raw Intelligence** roll, TN 15, with a Free Raise for PCs who have experience with demolitions (such as those who have fought and served on the Carpenter Wall, or shugenja with destructive Fire spells) will let the PC recognize the sounds as distant explosions.

Following the sounds through the gray forest involves a **Hunting / Reflexes** roll, TN 25, to avoid being injured on the slumbering landscape. A lantern of any kind will give the PC a free raise, and failure means slipping for 3k1 damage (if a player is on horseback, the damage goes to the horse instead). A **Lore: Theology / Perception** roll TN 25 will allow the PC to spot moss-encrusted grave markers, half-sunk into the earth and leaning haphazardly, which become more and more plentiful as they through the forest. An ancient stone torii arch, looms above as the PCs pass under it, and as they go, the booming gets slowly louder.

If there are any returned spirits in the party, PCs may make a **Raw Awareness** roll, TN 10 to notice that the returned spirit(s) begins to glow less golden and more silver as they move further into the forest. PCs who are Haunted will also begin to see dim, shadowy outlines of their ghostly ancestors (though other PCs will not, even if they are themselves Haunted).

*As the terrain begins to slowly ascend and the fog begins to thin, more of the landscape becomes visible. The mossy ground becomes much more uneven, but paths through the trees and stones become more apparent, making the journey easier. An enormous broken statue of a now-headless man sits in the lotus position, surrounded by crumbled pillars and covered in moss and small white flowers. The head itself lays half-buried, staring out peacefully. White stones peek out of the leaves and moss – now obviously the*

*tops of tall marble grave markers, buried and forgotten under a thousand years of time.*

*A bright light flashes on a distant hill.*

### **BOOM**

It is still very dark and gray, with no sign of the moon or the stars, but the trees have thinned and there are obvious paths between the headstones now, making travel in the mist easier, as visibility now extends to about 30' away. As the PCs ascend the hill, the fields of tombstones that just barely peeked out of the moss earlier are now more exposed and visible, quickly becoming a nest of columns, crypts, sepulchers, and other grave markers stand in weathered white marble.

Advancing up the slope, more details of the scene will become clear, both as their eyes adjust to the gloom and the light gradually increases. They will see the soft yellow glow of torches warming the fog. As they near, they will be able to see a fairly large crowd in a clearing, though it is hard to make out the total number. A number of the graves and crypts they pass have been destroyed and plundered; the doors and roofs broken, the ground dug up. Closer inspection reveals dirt and shattered stone lay scattered; the graves were broken from the inside. Ahead, there are the faint sounds of chanting and scratching. Shadows flicker at the edges of perception, and any returned spirit PC must succeed at a **Void** roll with a TN of 15 or become Fatigued (per pg. 89 of the 4<sup>th</sup> Edition L5R rulebook).

*Atop the hill is a large mass of what appear to be peasants; some busy at work, some not. Many stand statue-still, while others dig, clawing at the dirt with their hands: finding graves, pulling out the ancient, rotten corpses, and roughly throwing them into a crude pile. Each of the laborers wears a plain white porcelain mask that gleams eerily in the torchlight. The torches cast a soft yellow glow in the center of the horde, illuminating the fog and a handful of human forms. A tall, red-robed figure chants in a rising cadence, while behind him three armored forms kneel in wait. A stooped, bestial creature crouches over a final prostrate body; vast, grasping claws flex at the ends of a dozen arms and burning eyes stare furiously at the chanting tsukai, but swirling bands of red mist seem to contain its rage.*

*Before the maho-tsukai stands a large pile of blackened stone rubble surrounding a smoking hole in the burnt ground. The body of what once was a giant of a man has been removed from the hole and lies on the ground, the torchlight shining a sickly yellow upon him and his golden mask and armor. He*

*does not move, or even seem to acknowledge the events around him.*

*The tsukai's ritual comes to a fever pitch as he places a bloody handprint on the man in the golden armor's face. The earth trembles softly, angrily; the corpse comes to life, ancient leather creaking as he squeezes the hilt of his sword, eyes open behind the mask, ablaze with power that turns to lock the one who touched him in a contest of wills.*

The PCs will not have been noticed yet. If the players make an immediate attempt to interfere before determining the situation, move on to Initiative Rolls and begin the combat as below. If they take a moment to look around (Daisuke's preference, if they stop to ask), they may make a few Skill Rolls to gain some information. There is a limit to how much time they have, however; should they start to take significant time in their preparations, the GM should move the encounter along (in particular, Haichi will automatically notice the casting of any spells by the PCs.)

- The simplest is a basic **Lore: Shadowlands** or **Lore: Maho / Intelligence** at TN 10: The laborers and "peasants" standing around are all zombies, likely having been raised by the maho-tsukai in the middle. The PC will also realize the creature in the middle is an oni, bound by a spell cast by one of the tsukai. Additionally, rolling a 25 or higher on the Lore: Shadowlands will allow them to realize that it is a unique oni unseen in the Empire previously. 25 or higher on Lore: Maho allows them to recognize that the red-robed spirit is casting "Puppet Master" in an attempt to take control of a self-willed undead, and that it is taking longer than usual, indicating a creature of significant power.
- **Lore: Theology** or **Lore: Masks / Intelligence** TN 20 (with a Free Raise for returned spirits from the year 500 or earlier): The man in the center's mask is gold, worked into the likeness of a face, but the style of mask is very old, and there are no slits for the eyes or mouth: it is an archaic burial mask. The burning eyes are a product of the ritual and spiritual power.
- **Craft: Armorsmithing / Perception** TN 10 (with a free raise for returned spirits from the Dawn of the Empire period): The armor the man is wearing is made of small rectangular plates, also made of gold. This is an *ancient* style of light armor and the precursor to the more modern designs.

- **Lore: Katana or Craft: Weaponsmithing / Intelligence** TN 25 (with a free raise for returned spirits from the Dawn of the Empire period): The sword held by the man in gold is an antique weapon called a *tsurugi*, or broadsword. It is the straight-bladed precursor to the curved katana family of longswords.
- **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** TN 20: The maho-tsukai in the middle has the soft glow of a returned spirit. The rubble in the center are the pieces of a destroyed sepulcher.
- **Lore: Spirit Realms / Intelligence** roll TN 20 (with a Free Raise for returned spirits, though those from the Realm of Meido will automatically succeed): The borders between Ningen-Do and Meido are *very* thin here. This will account for the shadows, the changing colors of the returned spirits, and the disorientation of the returned spirits.

The man in the golden armor and mask is the corpse of Shun Yu, an ancient hero-king from the time before the Fall of the Kami, and the maho-tsukai are attempting to exhume and control him for their own malevolent purposes. However, due to the power of his spirit, Shun Yu cannot be so easily controlled. While he is technically a sort of zombie, he is not Lost or under Haichi's control; he just wants to go back to sleep in Meido without interruption.

If given a chance, Daisuke will tell the PCs that he will prevent the sheer numbers of zombies from overwhelming them by raising a wall (he will spend his first two Rounds casting Wall of Earth) to allow them to focus on the tsukai and his immediate underlings.

### Putting Down the Threat

This has the potential to be a moderately complex combat; it is suggested that there be at least an hour left when beginning it. There are the two maho-tsukai (Isawa Haichi and Sentaro), three revenants, an oni, and several dozen zombies (most of which are not actually attacking). Different outcomes are possible depending on the order in which the PCs attack their enemies, and depending on whether or not Daisuke is with them.

When the PCs move forward, either to attack or negotiate, all of the zombies will turn to look at them in one slow, sweeping motion. The maho-tsukai, Isawa Haichi, exclaims *“Intruders! Deal with them; I’ve got Shun Yu!”* and makes a sharp gesture to the three kneeling figures.

*The air seems to twist and scream as the three armored figures rises smoothly to their feet. The one*

*in the center turns, drawing a katana with a swift, precise grace, and horror strikes you as you recognize the rotted, decaying corpse of Toturi I, Emperor of Rokugan. He locks gazes with you, no expression on the putrescent flesh, and raises his left hand to order the other revenants forward in a heartbreakingly familiar movement. The hand then clutches at the blade, staining the shining steel with black blood.*

If there are any returned spirit PCs, add the following: *One of the shambling forms at the fallen Emperor’s side is even more familiar; your own ancient body, animated by foul, blasphemous magic to stand against you.*

These are three revenants summoned by Haichi; the central one is not Toturi I, nor are any of them actually the bodies of returned spirit PCs – this is an illusion created by a variation on the Air Spell “Your Heart’s Enemy.” After Initiative is rolled, have each PC roll to resist a Fear 4 effect (TN 25). Returned spirit PCs must resist a Fear 5 effect (TN 30), as their horror is compounded by the apparent presence of their own corpse.

Isawa Haichi, the leader of the enemies, is attempting to gain control of Shun Yu, the man in the golden armor, using the “Puppet Master” Maho spell, and is locked in a contest of wills, leaving him little attention for other matters – he can defend himself (and should be treated as though in the Defense Stance), but can take no Complex Actions. After five rounds, he will take control of the ancient hero – if this happens, the PCs are likely in a great deal of trouble.

The three revenants will attempt to keep the PCs away from Haichi, attacking with all their capabilities and Techniques. Any damage taken by the PCs from “the False Toturi” will require them to make an **Earth** roll at TN 15. Failure means the PC gains a point of Taint. (A quick **Lore: Shadowlands / Intelligence** roll will allow the PC to realize this; those who continue to face the fallen “Emperor” in the face of this are likely due an Honor gain for this display of Courage, at the GM’s discretion.) If Haichi is killed, or when “the False Toturi” is removed from the combat, the illusion will break and the Fear effect will cease. Unfortunately for the PCs, killing Haichi will not stop the revenants – he had to use a more powerful compulsion to force samurai (even undead samurai) to his will, and they will fight until they are dropped.

The zombies will shamble toward the PCs, attempting to grapple the PC in groups of 5-8. If the PCs are mounted, the zombies will target the horses. It will take them two Rounds to get there, meaning that unless

Daisuke is interrupted (or is not there at all), he will be able to block them away from consideration, significantly lightening the difficulty of this encounter. If Haichi is slain, they will not fall until the next sunrise, but they will mill around aimlessly, directionless without orders, and will not resist attempts to put them down.

If Haichi is attacked and put into the +5 wound penalty category (when he takes 36 wounds), he will lose the round's Contested Willpower roll with Shun Yu, who will attack him at the beginning of the next turn. The spell keeping the oni in check will crumble at this point (or at Haichi's death), and it will move into the fray, heading for Shun Yu in an attempt to consume his soul and gain his power. Haichi will defend himself, likely focusing on Shun Yu or any PC attacking him, but he is out of Fire spells, having used them all to open the tomb.

When the oni is freed, Sentaro will seek to flee, though he will use his abilities to wreak havoc if he has no other choice, either by raising fallen PCs or by taking command of the zombies himself if Haichi was slain. Sentaro has already taken 36 Wounds, putting him at the +5 Wound Penalty.

Note that PCs that die in this battle may be reanimated by either Haichi or Sentaro with "Summon Undead Champion," and through the thin border between the worlds, their soul will be forced to watch their body turn against them.

Once the oni begins attacking Shun Yu, he will attempt to fight it off. Neither participant will take standard actions; after five Rounds, it will have consumed his soul and will seek to flee the field with its prize. PCs attacking it will cause it to counter-attack with one of its many limbs (as noted in its statblock), but grant Shun Yu the opportunity to cleave into it with his bronze tsurugi (essentially as a Free Action). Each opening given by a PC will allow Shun Yu to cause 20 Wounds to the oni (in addition to any damage they do that gets past its Invulnerability or Reduction).

## Zombie

A dead, decaying corpse animated by blasphemous magic. Its clothes are in tatters, save for a pristine white porcelain mask covering the face. The hands reach for its victim, flesh stripped from the ends of the jagged bone, leaving blackened claws instead of fingers.

Air 0	Earth 3	Fire 1	Water 1
Reflexes 2		Agility 3	Strength 3
<b>Initiative:</b> 2k2		<b>Attack:</b> 5k3 (unarmed,	

Complex)

**Damage:** 4k2 (claw)

**Armor TN:** 15

**Reduction:** 5

**Wounds:** 72 (Dead)

**Taint Rank:** 3

**Special Abilities:**

- **Beheading:** A zombie can normally only be destroyed by literally hacking it to pieces (reducing it to Dead), but it can be instantly destroyed by severing its head. This requires three Called Shot Raises and doing at least 18 Wounds
- **Unmasking:** Alternately, removing the porcelain mask on the zombie will end the spell giving it movement, and it will return to death. This may be accomplished if a character controls a Grapple with a zombie and takes a Complex Action to remove the mask. Striking the mask in combat may have the same effect; it requires three Called Shot Raises to strike the mask, and the mask will be broken if it takes more than 5 Wounds of damage (past its own Reduction of 10). At the GM's discretion, Raises may be used to specifically target the mask with spells.
- **Fear 3**
- **Undead**

## Isawa Haichi

Haichi is an older shugenja in filthy orange and red robes, with bloody hands and the soft glow of a returned spirit. When he returned through Oblivion's gate, he did not know that blood magic invited the Taint, and now is irrevocably corrupted...

Air 4      Earth 4      Fire 4      Water 4      Void 4

Honor 0.0

Status 0.0

Glory 0.0

**Initiative:** 8k4

**Spellcasting:** 9k4;  
10k4+1FR (Air)

**Armor TN:** 37 (Defense  
Stance)

**Reduction:** 0

**Shadowlands Taint:** 6

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

**School/Rank:** Isawa Shugenja 4

**Technique:** *Isawa's Gift:* Gain a Free Raise on all Air Spellcasting Rolls

**Affinity/Deficiency:** Air/None

**Skills:** Calligraphy (Cipher) 3, Defense 5, Lore: Maho 5, Investigation 3, Lore: Theology 2, Medicine 3, Meditation 2, Spellcraft 7

**Mastery Abilities:** +3TN in Defense or Full Defense Stance; +1k0 to Spellcasting Rolls

**Spells:** (only those likely to be cast in combat are included here) Air: Tempest of Air (ML1), False Realm (ML4), Slayer's Knives (ML5); Earth: Armor of Earth

(ML1); Earth's Stagnation (ML1); Maho: Summon Undead Champion (ML1, Earth, p269); Disrupt the Limb (ML1, Water, p269); Spreading the Darkness (ML2, Earth, p271); Puppet Master (ML2, Fire, p271); Essence of Undeath (ML3, Earth 3, p272)

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Touch of Meido

## Sentaro, Maho-tsukai

Whatever he once was, Sentaro is now a Lost sorcerer of surprising ability. The Taint has marked him with scabrous growths over his body, and his thick black hair sticks out in all directions, giving him a mad, wild look. His natural abilities are all the more impressive for being largely self-taught.

Air 2	Earth 4	Fire 3	Water 3	Void 3
Reflexes 3			Strength 4	
Honor 0.0	Status 0.0		Glory 0.0	

**Initiative:** 5k3

**Attack:** 8k3+5 (kama, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 20/27 (Defense Stance) **Damage:** 4k2 (kama)

**Reduction:** 5

**Shadowlands Taint:** 5

**Wounds:** 20 (+0), 28 (+3), 36 (+5), 44 (+10), 52 (+15), 60 (+20), 68 (Down, +40), 76 (Dead)

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

**Technique:** *Power of the Spirits:* When casting a Maho spell, may remove a Void Point from a returned spirit within 30' to gain a Free Raise

**Maho Spells:** Inspire Fear (4k2; Air, ML1; one target gains Phobia 3 [+15 penalty to all TNs] of caster's choice for one hour); Puppet Master (5k3; Fire, ML2; control undead); Summon Undead Champion (6k4), Armor of Obsidian (6k4, Earth; one-shot protection from Jade Spells); Strength of Darkness (6k4, increase physical stats)

**Shadowlands Powers and Mutations:** Above the Elements (+10 to TN of non-maho spells; Tough Hide

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Battle 3, Craft: Farming 3, Defense 5, Heavy Weapons 3, Hunting 3, Jujutsu 2, Knives (Kama) 5, Lore: Maho 5, Spears 4

**Mastery Abilities:** treat Difficult Terrain as Moderate Terrain for movement penalties; may retain previous Full Defense Roll, +3 Armor TN while in Full Defense or Defense Stance; reduce target's Reduction by 2 when using Heavy Weapons; off-hand penalties do not apply to knives; may reduce target's Reduction by 3 if attacking with a spear in the first round

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Magic Resistance III / Gullible, Shadowlands Taint

## Akodo Nobuhito, the False Toturi

One of the poor samurai who happened to be laid to rest here in the early days of the Empire; he has been

covered by an illusion that makes him appear as the deceased Emperor Toturi I because he was a Lion in life. He may not spend Void, but retains the Ring for purposes of calling Raises.

Air 2	Earth 4	Fire 3	Water 4	Void 3*
Reflexes 5		Agility 5	Strength 6	
Honor 5.6	Status -		Glory 5.3	

**Initiative:** 8k5

**Attack:** 10k6 (Katana, Simple)

**Armor TN:** 35 (light armor) **Damage:** 10k2 (katana)

**Reduction:** 8 (light armor and undead)

**Wounds:** 96 (Dead)

**Taint Rank:** 5

**Special Abilities:** Undead; Beheading (as a zombie, save it requires 24 Wounds past Reduction to accomplish)

**School/Rank:** Akodo Bushi 3

**Techniques:** *The Way of the Lion:* May either ignore the portion of an opponent's Armor TN derived from Armor, or gain a Free Raise when attacking. (Do not ignore Reduction from the Armor while choosing the first option.) Gains a bonus of +1k0 to the total of all attack rolls on first melee attack against an opponent in a skirmish, or against any opponent who has declared a Raise on an attack against since last turn.

**Strength of Purity:** May add Honor Rank to the total of any single roll during Turn. May not increase damage rolls in this fashion.

**Strength of My Ancestors:** May make attacks as a Simple Action instead of a Complex Action while using weapons with the Samurai keyword.

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Battle (Mass Combat) 4, Defense 3, Kenjutsu (katana) 7, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: History 4, Sincerity 3

**Mastery Abilities:** reduce Terrain penalties for movement; +1k0 damage with swords, may ready swords as a Free Action, 9s explode on damage with swords

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Leadership

## Hida Nahurio

One of the poor samurai who happened to be laid to rest here in the early days of the Empire; he is a huge bruiser of a Crab in heavy armor. He may not spend Void, but retains the Ring for purposes of calling Raises.

Air 2	Earth 4	Fire 2	Water 2	Void 3*
Reflexes 3		Agility 3	Strength 4	
Honor 1.3	Status -		Glory 4.1	

**Initiative:** 5k3

**Attack:** 8k3 (ono, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 30 (heavy armor) **Damage:** 6k4 (ono)

**Reduction:** 14 (heavy armor, Technique, undead)

**Wounds:** 96 (Dead)

**Taint Rank:** 5

**Special Abilities:** Undead; Beheading (as a zombie, save it requires 24 Wounds past Reduction to accomplish)\

**School/Rank:** Hida Bushi 2

**Techniques:** *The Way of the Crab:* May ignore TN penalties for wearing heavy armor for all Skills except Stealth. When using a Heavy Weapon, gains a bonus of +1k0 to the total of all damage rolls.

*The Mountain Does Not Move:* Gains Reduction equal to Earth Ring.

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Defense 5, Heavy Weapons (Tetsubo) 5, Intimidation 5, Jiujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 3, Lore: Shadowlands 4

**Mastery Abilities:** reduce Terrain penalties for movement; reduce target's Reduction by 2 with Heavy Weapons, Free Raise to Knockdown with Heavy Weapons; +5 to Contested Intimidation Rolls

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Large

### Doji Tamiyo

One of the poor samurai who happened to be laid to rest here in the early days of the Empire; she is a slight, graceful abomination of the elegant Crane she once was. She may not spend Void, but retains the Ring for purposes of calling Raises.

Air 4      Earth 3      Fire 3      Water 2      Void 3

Honor 4.8      Status -      Glory 4.2

**Initiative:** 6k4+10      **Attack:** 8k3 (katana, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 25 (light armor)      **Damage:**

**Reduction:** 8 (armor and undead)

**Wounds:** 57 (Dead)

**Taint Rank:** 5

**Special Abilities:** Undead; Beheading (as a zombie)

**School/Rank:** Kakita Bushi 2

**Techniques:** *The Way of the Crane:* Add twice Iaijutsu Skill Rank to all Initiative rolls. Gains a bonus of +1k1 plus School Rank to the total of all attack and Focus rolls while assuming the Center Stance. This bonus also applies during the Combat Round following one in which assumed the Center Stance.

*Speed of Lightning:* Gains a bonus of +2k0 to the total of all attack rolls against those with lower Initiative.

**Skills:** Defense 2, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu (Focus) 5, Kenjutsu (katana) 5, Kyujutsu 3, Sincerity 3, Tea Ceremony 3

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Quick

**Outfit:** Light Armor, Sturdy Clothing, Daisho, any 1 weapon, Traveling Pack, 10 koku

### Nakitama no Oni

This oni, summoned by Sentaro to assist his researches, seeks the souls of powerful mortals to forge into yokai in the depths of Jigoku. It has massive claws at the end of nearly a dozen limbs that flail with malice against any who attack it.

Air 4      Earth 5      Fire 4      Water 5

**Initiative:** 7k4      **Attack:** 9k4 (claws, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 20      **Damage:** 8k2\* (claws)

**Reduction:** 10 (5 vs magic, 0 vs jade, crystal, or obsidian)

**Wounds:** 25 (+5), 50 (+10), 75(+15), 100 (Dead)

**Taint Rank:** 5

**Skills:** Jiujutsu 5

**Special Abilities:**

- **Counter-attack:** Any PC coming within reach of its grasping claws to make a melee attack runs the risk of an immediate counterattack; the oni may make as many Free Actions to immediately make an attack on any PC that successfully strikes it in combat, with its full dice pool and all additional effects from its attacks.
- **Claw at the Soul:** Those struck by Nakitama no Oni lose one Void Point in addition to any damage taken. If they have no Void Points, they must make an **Earth** roll at a TN of 20 or gain a point of the Taint. Failure by 10 or more on this roll means they are Dazed as well.
- **Invulnerable**

### Shun Yu, Dominated Revenant

(These are the stats that should be used for Shun Yu if Isawa Haichi is uninterrupted in his attempt to fully Taint and control him; Shun Yu will become an extremely powerful revenant and join the battle against the PCs, in addition to Haichi himself being free now to attack the PCs himself.)

Air 5      Earth 7      Fire 5      Water 6

**Initiative:** 10k9      **Attack:** 10k6 (tsurugi, Simple)

**Armor TN:** 35      **Damage:** 10k5 (tsurugi)

**Reduction:** 20 (15 vs magic, 10 vs jade, 5 vs crystal)

**Wounds:** 133 (Dead)

**Taint Rank:** 8

**Skills:** many and varied, but Kenjutsu (tsurugi) 8 is likely the only worth consideration in this context

**Special Abilities:**

- **Invulnerable**
- **Fear 6 (8 to returned spirits from Toshigoku)**
- **Magic Resistance 5** (+15 to the TN of spells)

After the combat, PCs who fought the Oni will find Shun Yu judging their character, and may make a

**Contested Honor** roll against his 6k6 (with a free raise for anyone who helped him defeat Isawa Haichi). The PC who defeats him by the greatest margin will get the following:

*You can feel Shun Yu smile at you behind his solid golden mask as he tosses you his sword. “Bring it back when you’re done,” he says in a deep, leaden voice, before climbing back into his grave and pulling the largest of the stone pieces over as a cover.*

PCs who died over the course of the combat will see an armored figure on a distant hill and will be pulled in that direction: it is Emma-O, the Fortune of Death. Those who chose to fight against the Oni will be offered a place in Emma-O’s personal bodyguard, should they choose.

After the battle, the corpses will still need a proper funeral. As the bodies burn, the fog begins to dissolve with the morning sun. Crumbling tombs and graves stretch in every direction from the mountains to the sea, which glitters on the distant horizon.

Inspecting Shun Yu’s sword will allow the PC to make a **Lore: Katana or Craft: Weaponsmithing / Intelligence** roll at TN 20 (with a Free Raise for returned spirits from the Dawn of the Empire period). Success allows them to identify it as an antique weapon called a *tsurugi*, or broadsword: a straight-bladed, double-edged precursor to the curved katana family of longswords. It has an embossed pattern of flames along the blade and a snarling face on the hilt. A **Calligraphy (High Rokugani) / Intelligence** roll at TN 20 will allow the PC to read the inscription: *“Shun Yu the King of Wo took me from the Pit of Ten Thousand Knives. I flay the wicked.”*

A **Lore: History (Pre-History) / Intelligence** TN 60 (with 4 Free Raises for returned spirits from the Dawn of the Empire) will tell the PC that “Wo” was an apocryphal city-state in Rokugan long before the Fall of the Kami. The legendary city was destroyed for displeasing the Earth Kami and Suitengu, Fortune of the Sea.

The trip back is uneventful.

## Conclusion

How the Jade Champion reacts will depend on the outcome of the mod.

**Success:** The maho-tsukai are dead.

When the PCs return to Otsan Uchi and announce themselves to the Jade Champion, they will be instructed to meet once again at the *Azure Heron* after dinner, and once again, Tse will entertain them with her biwa until the Champion arrives.

Kuni Utagu, Mirumoto Kissaki, and Kakita Takezo will enter the room and sit, dispensing with pleasantries to get down to business. They will answer any questions the PCs may have:

- What of Shun Yu, the sword, and Wo? (If a PC cannot read the blade’s inscription written in the arcane ‘Birds and Worms’ style, which is very similar to High Rokugani, Kakita Takezo can do so.) *“It should be noted,” Kissaki says, hesitantly. “When the Kami fell, it was agreed that none would speak of the time beforehand, to further honor the Kami and the Heavens. There were few written records from the time anyway, as writing was not common, and when the people stopped telling the old stories, they were forgotten in a generation. Some may consider what you hold, and are about to hear quite blasphemous, so I would suggest taking great caution when repeating it.” He takes a breath to compose himself, then continues. “Before the Kami fell to Ningen-Do, there were songs and stories of a mighty hero named Shun Yu and the kingdom of Wo. A noble warrior, he journeyed into Hell to rescue his beloved wife, fought a Bear God, and did many other great things, but he became arrogant and challenged the Gods, who destroyed his city in retaliation for some unknown blasphemy. It was assumed to be an apocryphal tale to encourage respectfulness and reverence, but if you found his grave and his Hell Razor, then apparently... it was all true.”*  
If Kuni Daisuke is given the sword, he will give it to Kuni Utagu, who will then gift it to the PC who most contributed to the fight for safe-keeping.
- What will happen to the cemetery and the area around it? *Utagu responds gruffly, “I will speak to the Brotherhood and other groups to get the graves exhumed and the bodies cremated properly and discreetly. The land needs to be governed, guarded, and re-consecrated, among other things. This may ultimately be delegated to a clan, but that is something to be decided later.”*
- What should we tell our superiors? *Utagu requests, “If you must speak of this in public, say there are ancient ruins and nothing else. Mentioning the cemetery and graves will do nothing but create panic, and we should not spread blasphemous rumors.”*

Anyone speaking publicly about the cemetery or Shun Yu loses a point of Honor for going against the Jade Champion's orders and gains a point of Infamy for spreading blasphemous rumors and inciting panic.

**Partial Success:** The PCs fled the battle.

Kuni Utagu will personally lead a division of the Jade Legion back to the cemetery, but the maho-tsukai will be gone. There will be no sign of Shun Yu and a great number of graves exhumed. He will thank the PCs for their assistance and send them home.

**Failure:** If the PCs do not defeat the maho-tsukai, their corpses will be raised and added to the undead army as undead revenants.

### The End

## Rewards for Completing the Adventure

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

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

### Experience Points

Surviving the adventure:	1XP
Good roleplaying:	+1XP
Finding the Cemetery:	+1XP
Defeating the Maho-tsukai:	+1XP

**Total Possible Experience:** 4XP

### Honor

If the PCs defeated the maho-tsukai, they gain a point of Honor. If they have fewer than 6 Honor Ranks, they gain three points of Honor instead.

### Glory

Assisting the Jade Champion gains the PCs a full Rank of Glory, minus their current Glory Rank in points, to a minimum of one point. This assumes the PCs do not

speak of the matter more than sanctioned by Utagu, which carries other consequences (see above).

### Other Awards/Penalties

Any PCs who were Injured or worse in the first encounter and failed the subsequent Earth roll gain 1k1 points of Taint. PCs who were injured by "the False Toturi" gain a point of Taint for every failed Earth roll.

All PCs gain a Favor from the Jade Champion.

Successfully defeating the maho-tsukai will potentially grant the PCs Kuni Daisuke as an Ally (Influence 2/ Devotion 1); if the PCs demonstrate significant incompetence over the course of the module (not being able to locate the graveyard themselves, for instance), he may not be available, at the GM's discretion. This Ally can immediately be replaced with "Kuni Daisuke's Recommendation" at the player's preference.

The appropriate PC will receive the "Sorinpu" cert.

### Module Tracking Sheets

PCs with Haunted: Sakura or the Goryo Ancestor should note if they succeeded at the Lore: Bushido "Honor" question.

PCs who sought to influence the Thousand Years of Steel development should be noted.

### GM Reporting

What concepts were suggested and worked on for the Thousand Years of Steel kata?

Were any NPCs influenced on the various conflicts?

Were the maho-tsukai defeated?

Did Haichi succeed at dominating Shun Yu?

Did any PC receive Sorinpu from Shun Yu?

**GM must report this information BEFORE (02/23/2013) for it to have storyline effect**



# Appendix #1: NPCs

## Kuni Daisuke

Kuni Daisuke is what many think of when they imagine a Jade Magistrate: a dedicated hunter of the darkness. He was an assistant to Kuni Utagu before Utagu became the Jade Champion, and largely continues in that role. He is blocky and muscular, without being particularly tall, and his traditional Kuni facepaint goes along with the shock of thick black hair. Under the white mask, however, he is more inclined to smile than most Kuni; in some ways, he views the relentless assault of the Shadowlands against the soul of the Empire as another battleground, and refuses to cede his appreciation for life to the enemy any more than he would willingly give up any other battle without a fight. Daisuke follows Utagu's lead in supporting Hantei Okucheo because the Regent has actively demonstrated support for the Crab, in stark contrast to many Imperial authorities in their experience. However, Daisuke is focused on his task and has little taste for politics – finding the maho-tsukai is far more important than debating who claims what title as far as he is concerned. He knows who actually has to get the work done.

Air 3      Earth 4      Fire 3      Water 3      Void 3

Willpower  
5

Honor 2.5

Status 4.5

Glory 5.2

**Initiative:** 6k3

**Attack:** 6k3 (wakizashi)

**Armor TN:** 34 (ashigaru armor, +11 from Defense)

**Damage:** 6k2 (wakizashi)

Stance)

**Reduction:** 1 (ashigaru armor)

**Wounds:** 20 (+0), 28 (+0), 36 (+2), 44 (+7), 52 (+12), 60 (+17), 68 (Down, +37), 76 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Kuni Shugenja 3

**Techniques:** *Gaze Into Shadow:* Gain a bonus of +1k0 to Spell Casting Rolls when the target is any non-human creature, and any spell that inflicts damage inflicts an additional +1k1 damage when used against a target who possesses the Shadowlands Taint. Gains a Free Raise on any spell with the Jade keyword.

**Spells:** (\* indicates memorized spells) Sense, Commune, Summon; (Air: 6k3) To Seek the Truth; (Earth: 9k4) Armor of Earth (ML1), Jade Strike\* (ML1), Minor Binding (ML1), Grasp of Earth (ML2), Bonds of Ningen-do (ML3), Tomb of Jade (ML4), Wall of Earth (ML4); (Fire: 7k3) Extinguish (ML1), the Raging Forge (ML1), Disrupt the Aura (ML2); (Water: 7k3) Path to Inner Peace (ML1), Wisdom and Clarity (ML2)

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Calligraphy (Cipher) 3, Defense 5, Etiquette 2, Investigation 5, Kenjutsu 3, Lore: Shadowlands 6, Lore: Theology 2, Medicine 2, Spellcraft 5, Stealth 2

**Mastery Abilities:** +1k0 to all Spell Casting Rolls

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Strength of the Earth / Unlucky

## Appendix #2: Conflicts in the Empire

This is a list of the conflicts at work at the current time in the Empire, beyond those that always exist (the Shadowlands, the Lying Darkness, various criminal organizations, that sort of thing).

**Emerald Champion/Imperial Regent:** Though it is the most recent to come to light, the divide between the Emerald Champion (Kakita Toshiken) and the Imperial Regent (Hantei Okucheo) is in a lot of ways the most prominent of these conflicts. The Regent controls Otosan Uchi and the vast majority of the Imperial Bureaucracy; the Emerald Champion has custody of the Empress and the loyalty of the Emerald Magistrates. Neither side has a significant advantage, and while they are vying politically, the Imperial General's declaration of neutrality and intent to maintain the peace has kept the fighting metaphorical. At this point, it is important to stress that every samurai in the Empire remains loyal to the Empress; they may serve her through the Regent, but there are no claims yet that the throne belongs to anyone other than Tsudao.

**Crab/Crane:** There are elements of the Crane (principally those that returned through Oblivion's Gate) that view the continued existence of the Yasuki as a blight upon the honor of the Clan, and many others agree that insufficient reparations were made for the Crab's aggression during the Clan War. The Crab have no particular reason to want war, but have never really cared for the Crane, and have no reason to back down from a fight. There have been overtures of peace, and talks are undergoing, but due to the other problems each Clan is experiencing, nothing formal has been declared yet.

**Dragon/Phoenix:** The defection of the vast majority of the Agasha family to the Phoenix Clan during the War Against the Shadow has been felt keenly by the Dragon, and the slight to their honor has finally begun to be avenged. Full-scale war has been avoided, though the fighting between these Clans last year was the hardest in the Empire. The Dragon advance stalled in the face of the Phoenix Clan's significant defenses, and they chose to spend this year consolidating their gains. However, it is only a matter of time before the Dragon move forward once more against their actual targets: those that many consider traitors, the Phoenix Agasha. Unless another resolution can be found, war between the Clans may be inevitable.

**Lion/Unicorn:** The fighting between the Lion and Unicorn is easily the least fraught with high emotions or political complications. The Khan (the Unicorn Champion's personal styling) is a newcomer to the Empire, and wishes to prove his prowess and the worth of his Clan. The Lion are generally thought of as the best military in the Empire, and who better to test themselves against? As far as the Lion are concerned, this is an opportunity to demonstrate that their reputation is not exaggerated. With the exception of the strange circumstances around the Lion's retaking of Toshi no Meiyo Gisei, the fighting between the Clans has been as civil as could reasonably be expected from samurai.

**Mantis/Scorpion:** The Mantis Champion, Yoritomo Aramasu, is viewed by the Scorpion as a traitor. To a large degree, the antipathy between the Clans comes down to that fact. Aramasu was the chosen successor of Yoritomo, however, and the Mantis have not turned against him despite the fact that he has not been seen in the Empire for quite some time. There is bad blood between the Scorpion and the Tsuruchi family as well, but for the most part, the Scorpion remain focused on punishing a man they see as having betrayed them.

**Internal Crab:** A number of Crab decry the methods Hantei Okucheo used to ascend to the position he now holds – specifically using the Crab daimyo and their forces as military threats in court. Crab Champion Hida O-Ushi has accepted his position and authority, however, which has led to the discontent among the Clan to quietly begin to marshal their forces under the Champion's husband, Hida Yasamura. A full-scale Crab Civil War may result from this, but neither side will be able to claim universal support as long as the Hantei continues to provide the Crab with increased material aid for the war against the Shadowlands.

**Internal Crane:** With the Crane Clan Champion still a young child, the duties of leading the Clan have been split between the Kakita daimyo (Yoshi, who is responsible for political affairs) and the Daidoji daimyo (Uji, who has been leading the Clan's armies in the field). A vocal group of (mostly returned spirit) samurai have pushed for claiming restitution from the Crab for past wrongs, and though the Clan is divided on the issue, Uji has led Crane

forces against the Crab. At this point, the pacifistic Asahina and the politically-minded Kakita generally believe that war with the Crab is not in the Clan's best interests, while the Daidoji and the majority of the Doji are eager to avenge generations of insults to the Clan's honor.

**Internal Lion:** Kitsu Motso, the first Kitsu to serve as Lion Clan Champion, has experienced numerous difficulties within his own Clan since rising to his position. Though open war has not resulted yet, a large percentage of the Lion returned spirits seem to have significant issues accepting his leadership, leading many to choose to become ronin instead. At this point, the Clan has not suffered as a whole from these losses, but they are indicative of problems with the Champion's leadership.

**Internal Scorpion:** A philosophical debate is growing in the ranks of the Scorpion, between those who view the Clan's traditional role as the overt "villains" of the Empire as counterproductive to the Clan's best interests and those who feel that the methods established by Bayushi himself at the Dawn of the Empire ought to be continued. As the primary proponent of the former view is the Clan Champion, most of the discussion has been extremely contained – there has been some political struggles between the factions, but betraying the Clan is unthinkable to Scorpion, so open fighting has been avoided.

**Peasant Uprisings:** The unrest among the lower orders came to a head earlier this summer, resulting in a sound defeat for the largest uprising at Otsan Uchi. Unfortunately, there are still numerous discontented peasants in the Empire, and they are keeping the Imperial Legions occupied with putting them down. The leadership behind these uprisings seem connected, though those responsible have so far avoided capture – to date, only local leaders with no information on the broader conflict have been caught for questioning.

## Appendix #3: NPCs at the Court of Autumn's New Moon

Crab – Kaiu Taka, daimyo of Kuda Province (Status 6.0, Glory 3.2, Kaiu Engineer 2, Audience TN 30): Young for his post, Taka is an extremely traditional daimyo with a personal fondness for woodcarving. He will likely be found with knife and block in hand, carving a netsuke of some sort (PCs who impress him may receive one as a gift). At this point, Taka is neutral, giving his loyalty to Kaiu Utsu (the family daimyo), and giving no further consideration to the political issues at play. Convincing him to support either side of the issues at play for the Crab is a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** roll with a TN of 25.

Crane – Asahina Yama, daimyo of Ashin Province (Status 6.0, Glory 4.1, Doji Magistrate 3, Audience TN 25): A firm, decisive leader, Yama is quite interested in using this court as an opportunity to gain the information he needs to make a decision on where to lend his support. Persuading him to any side of the issues relevant to the Crane requires a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 30; any attempt at falsehood or prevarication will increase the TN by at least 5 at the GM's discretion (consider him to have Clear Thinker).

Kakita Takezo and Kakita Kyruko are also present, but largely occupied at the dojo and information on Takezo can be found in that section. Kyruko lives in Otosan Uchi (just happening to be one of the most accomplished members of the School who is a resident of the city), and is present largely only to assist the Master of her School. Dealing with her politically is likely to be frustrating, as she is far more interested in flirtation or fighting.

Dragon: Mirumoto Uso is present with one of his assistant sensei, Mirumoto Kissaki, but information on Uso will be found in the dojo section. Kissaki is a player character in the campaign and convincing him of anything will require speaking with him in some fashion.

Lion – Ikoma Shigemori, daimyo of Ikota Province (Status 6.0, Glory 3.8, Ikoma Bard 4, Audience TN 30): A proud older man, Shigemori is determined to find out which actions to take that will serve his province best – the recent disruptions among the Lion leadership has left him focused on his own responsibilities. Swaying him requires a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 20, though he is only likely to care about those issues that directly impact his province.

Mantis – Yoritomo Sadaharu, daimyo of Maigosera Province (Status 6.0, Glory 2.4, Yoritomo Courtier 3, Audience TN 20): Sadaharu comes across in person as a dull, boring courtier (to the point that his vassals affectionately refer to him as “Tofu” for his blandness), but he still has a position of note that must be respected. His demeanor hides a keen intellect, and he is as interested in finding out what he can about the positions of the rest of the Empire as he is in developing one of his own. Actually presenting a case sufficient to convince him to lend his support in one direction or another requires a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 40.

Phoenix – Asako Dayu, daiymo of Ki-Rin Province (Status 6.0, Glory 5.1, Isawa Shugenja 4/Asako Inquisitor 2, Audience TN 20): An older man with a fondness for go, Dayu is the daimyo of the province most threatened by the Dragon advance. His fief repulsed the invaders at great cost, but the Dragon's claiming the Dragon Heart Plain just on the other side of the mountains gives him great concern. He is most interested in allies that will help protect his lands – convincing him that speaking out in support of any particular issue should take this tactic, and will require a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 30. Dragon PCs have a +5TN penalty on this roll, as would positions that give that Clan support.

Scorpion – Bayushi Ichiro, daimyo of Hizoku Province (Status 6.0, Glory 6.1, Bayushi Bushi 4, Audience TN 25): Far more straightforward than is common in his Clan, Ichiro will prove more responsive to bushi than other characters (giving them a Free Raise on both the Audience Roll and persuasion rolls). Still neutral in the Imperial conflict, he strongly believes that the Champion is incorrect about the role of the Scorpion in the Empire (but will obviously not discuss the matter with non-Scorpion). Any attempt to persuade him should be done carefully – he will have no hesitation about issuing a challenge to those who insult him, and is a duelist of note (Air 4, Fire 4, Void 4; Iaijutsu (Focus) 7, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6). Dueling him with honor will give a positive impression, however, and would grant a Free Raise on a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** roll, TN 25, to persuade him to support the

Regent or the Emerald Champion (three Free Raises if the PC beats him). Changing his mind on the role of the Clan is much more difficult (TN 45), though it has the same bonuses as the other roll.

Unicorn – Ide Yaeko, daimyo of Eijitsu Province (Status 6.0, Glory 4.2, Ide Emissary 5, Audience TN 30): An older woman with elegant silver jewelry, Yaeko is known primarily as a peacemaker. She has strong ties to the Phoenix Clan (Phoenix PCs gain a Free Raise on the Audience roll or to persuade her), but is most interested in finding a way to return peace to the Empire – convincing her to a course of action that will involve fighting requires two Raises. Persuading her to support the Regent or the Emerald Champion involves a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 30.