

Winter Court: Shiro Moto

**A One-Round All-Ranks Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido
Month of Hida through Ryoshun, 1139 (Winter)**

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The Khan has invited you to partake of his hospitality during the long winter months.

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This module is written for the Legend of the Five Rings: Fourth Edition, published by Alderac Entertainment.

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing this game. The actual playing time should be about three and a half hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, gender, glory and status at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters. All bulleted information is just that, pure information. Feed it to the players through an NPC when appropriate, as sometimes reading it straight just doesn't sound right.

Players will have Module Tracking Sheets that need to be filled out at the end of the game, which is to keep track of certain circumstances and events for future GM's to create a better roleplaying experience for the player. Important information to be included in the game will be listed at the beginning of the module, and information that needs to be recorded will be listed at the end of the module. Please fill out the GM tracking sheet attached to the end of this module and return it to the Campaign Coordinator. If you need an electronic version of the form, please contact the Campaign Administrator or Campaign Coordinator (e-mail addresses are available on the website).

Rokugan has a complex and rich culture that is different in many ways from modern Western civilization. The Legend of the Five Rings book details these numerous differences, but it is suggested that GMs keep a few specifics in mind.

- Family name precedes personal name for all characters; Akodo Toturi was a member of the Akodo family with the personal name of Toturi.

- Samurai do not commonly concern themselves with money or commerce; exchanges between samurai are treated as gifts, and payments are made to peasants as though humoring the lower orders petty ways.
- An event is not truly considered to have happened without samurai witness; even criminal investigations rely entirely upon eyewitness testimony.

Some events that occur within this module affect the storyline and may need to be reported by the Campaign Administrators. This module has an effective 'active' period which is 3 months after its release, and these events (listed at the end of the module) **MUST** be reported by the GM to the campaign administration before the end of the active period for them to take effect.

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

This adventure contains suggested Glory and Honor awards (and penalties) for dealing with the challenges presented herein. However, at times the players may take extra actions which the GM judges worthy of additional reward or punishment. **Please consult the Honor table on page 91 and the Glory table on page 93** of the Legend of the Five Rings Fourth Edition core sourcebook for more specific guidelines for Honor and Glory gains and losses. Specifically, be mindful of the performing PC's current Honor, Glory, and Infamy when meting out rewards and punishments.

Reminder

This module is intended for entertainment purposes; this means that the goal is to provide an enjoyable playing experience for the players. The events of the module should be challenging, so as to ensure the players have a sense of accomplishment, but the mechanics presented here are, ultimately, guidelines. If adjustments are necessary to adapt to the specific group of players, it is suggested that care should be taken to ensure the player characters do have a reasonable chance of achieving their goals (or at least of achieving an entertaining failure). Remember that the GM has the final word at the table, and use that power with both discretion and consideration.

Adventure Summary and Background

Moto Gaheris is a ruthless and practical warrior born and bred in a harsh, unforgiving land. He rose to the leadership of the Moto Clan in the Burning Sands, and was instrumental in releasing the Kami Shinjo from the mystical imprisonment that had held her for centuries. When Gaheris led the Burning Sands Moto to Rokugan with the Kami to help the Empire during the War Against the Shadow, Shinjo discovered that her descendants had fallen to the influence of the blasphemous Kolat conspiracy, and cleansed the Unicorn with her divine wrath. Shinjo chose Gaheris to lead her Clan before she left for the Heavens, to the surprise of everyone – including Gaheris.

Though a force to be reckoned with on the battlefield, Gaheris is unused to any kind of court setting, let alone the highly sophisticated and deadly political games that Rokugan takes for granted. He has made many attempts to integrate with the Empire's culture, some more successful than others, but a growing number of his followers are growing dissatisfied with being regarded as outsiders and barbarians. And while Gaheris is still committed to the charge that Shinjo gave him, he has begun to wonder if the Unicorn and Moto will ever be truly accepted by Rokugan...

In any case, the Khan (the traditional name for the leader of the Moto, and the title that the current Unicorn Champion uses among his Clan) has spent the last several years familiarizing himself with Rokugan's culture, and most importantly with the way that war is waged in the Empire. Though the Unicorn's armies were a respected force under the command of the Shinjo family, Gaheris has begun to restructure their military organization along lines more familiar to his Moto. In essence, the tribes of the Sands typically divided their forces among those responsible for raiding, those responsible for defending their own camps, and whatever forces they could spare to support the other two at need. Gaheris has begun to organize the much larger military at his command into these three parts, utilizing resources and options that the tribes did not have ready access to in large numbers (such as remounts and shugenja). This sort of wide-spread renovation requires large-scale training, however, and the Khan has chosen to spend the winter on the edges of the Burning Sands, where the climate will allow his forces to train while the harsh Rokugani winter will protect the Clan's lands.

Despite the Khan's opinion of such matters, the rest of Rokugan expects to spend the winter months in comfort, secure from the harsh weather and engaging in polite conversation and political plotting. While it is expected of the Clan Champion to host a Winter Court, Gaheris has spent the last several years present but generally "unavailable" to his guests; this year, he will simply not be present, entrusting the care of his guests to one of his most trusted vassals. However, as the question of the Unicorn's place within the Empire has been weighing heavily on the Khan's mind, Gaheris will send his son (also named Gaheris) to determine if any of the representatives from the Clans show any sign of accepting the ways of the Clan as valid. Additionally, the Imperial Advisor Ide Tadaji has made a specific point of traveling to the Unicorn lands he has been all-but exiled from by the Khan in order to offer his observations on the current political situation of the Empire to the leader of his Clan. Either of these powerful figures will take the PCs in hand, and they will be given a chance to travel to the Khan's winter camp, to observe the Unicorn's martial preparations and the traditions of the Moto; in the process, they will serve as ambassadors to the Unicorn and assist the Unicorn Champion to decide the role his forces will take in the future of the Empire.

Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- "Oath of Fealty" to one of the following Unicorn daimyo: Moto Ukyo, Moto Zheng, or Moto Su-Tai.
- "Noticed by the Shi-Tien Yen Wang" (from SoB15: Cold Hands, Stone Heart).
- Allies or Favors from the Unicorn, specifically Moto Maduhl, Moto Hideyo, Shinjo Shirasu, or Ide Tadaji.

Introduction

The cold winds of winter blow steadily from the north, across miles of unbroken Unicorn plains, and though snow has not yet begun to fall, the air carries a sharp bite that foretells it cannot be far away. Shiro Moto rises on the horizon, its strange towers looming over the city that sprawls along the Firefly River. As you approach, a riot of color and noise spreads from the city, which seems made up of equal parts tents and permanent buildings. Though the city has no walls, before you are within a hundred yards of the first structures, a patrol of purple-clad horsemen wheel into sight, their steeds moving in precise formation.

They stop on the road in your path, and each offers a polite bow from their saddle before their leader asks for your papers. While there is no hostility in their attitude, they remain watchful and attentive to their duty; their weapons are close to hand but not drawn, and all their gear, though obviously influenced by gaijin design, is well-cared for. The commander of the unit returns your papers with a broad, welcoming grin on his swarthy face. "Guests of the Khan! Maduhl expects you at the castle, I am sure. Welcome to Shiro Moto!"

The PCs have been sent by their lords to help represent their Clans at the Unicorn Clan Champion's Winter Court in Shiro Moto. The PCs are not the only samurai sent to a Great Clan's principle Winter Court, of course – it can be assumed that more than a hundred guests will descend upon the Unicorn stronghold. The leaders of each Clan's delegation are detailed in Appendix #1 (if a PC has higher Status than the listed NPC, they will likely have been assigned as the "head" of the Clan's representatives, but the NPCs will be present to provide assistance and advice, and will remain at Shiro Moto for the winter). Of particular note is the Crane delegation: Doji Menechan, a noted courtier (that the PCs may have encountered in SoB07, "Delicate Negotiations"), who has a granddaughter of marriageable age that he is interested in using to firm up the alliance between the Crane and Unicorn; and Daidoji Tsumerai, a sensei of the Daidoji Iron Warriors and wielder of the Yari of Air (met in SoB09, "Fire and Water"). Imperial or ronin PCs are present in the retinue of Ide Tadaji, the Imperial Advisor; Minor Clan NPCs are present as their Clan's sole representative (and have no significant negotiating ability as a result). Unicorn PCs should receive a letter from their lords (Handout #1 for traditional Rokugani Unicorn, or #2 for New Moto Unicorn.)

The city surrounding the castle is, like most Unicorn settlements, not typically fully-populated year-round. However, even the nomadic Unicorn find the Rokugani winters difficult enough to move through that they spend those months in permanent encampments and strongholds. Shiro Moto is the newest such stronghold, built as it was six years ago when Moto Gaheris was given the mantle of Clan Champion. Gaheris ordered his seat of power to be built with elements of both traditional Rokugani and gaijin construction, to symbolize a union between their people. The extent to which this has been successful is debatable, however the result is a truly unique structure. Shiro Moto is variously viewed as one of the most magnificent, hideous, or foreboding palaces in the Empire, depending on the observer. It also is the closest Unicorn city to the rest of the Empire, being about sixty

miles north of Kaeru Toshi and the Unicorn's border with the Lion Clan.

Shiro Moto Toshi is large enough to house several thousand people, and has a wide variety of noteworthy locations. Though not organized into the typical districts of a normal Rokugani city, it is not difficult to locate merchants selling nearly any kind of good that can be found, with an emphasis on gaijin wares and materials. Illegal goods such as poison are somewhat scarce, due to the Unicorn's preference for law and order, but can be located with a **Lore: Underworld / Awareness** roll at a TN of 30. (The GM should use the prices listed on page 205 of the 4th Edition rulebook as a guideline, with a 10-25% increase unless the PC is willing to haggle with the merchant, causing a loss of Glory.)

Though the Moto have not fully accepted the Fortunes, there are a number of shrines in the city – mostly to honored ancestors like Moto or Shinjo, though there is a prosperous shrine to each of the Unicorn's patron Fortunes Daikoku and Ebisu. These shrines are maintained by monks native to the Unicorn lands (either retired samurai or peasants raised here), who are far more comfortable with the gaijin traditions of the Moto than most members of the Brotherhood.

Additionally, the Crab Clan maintains a dojo in this area for their Hiruma Scouts; though the retaking of the Hiruma lands has led to the relocation of their main training facilities, they spent centuries without a homeland and the only dojo for their scouts was here. The site Gaheris chose for his castle is almost a mile south of the dojo, but the sprawl of the city has nearly grown to the school's grounds. Regardless, the Unicorn consider the dojo to be Crab soil, and respect it much as another Clan might an embassy.

Part One: A Bowl of Airag

Unless they are from the same Clan or traveling as a group for another reason (at the player's discretion), it is unlikely that the PCs will all arrive at Shiro Moto at the same time; instead, they will probably reach the castle over the course of a few days. They will have some time to explore the city if they wish before the official opening of court when all the guests have arrived, however, when they first present themselves at the castle, they will all receive the same greeting.

When you present yourselves at the castle, the guards greet you politely and servants bustle about securing your steeds and belongings. Before you can follow them, a large Unicorn samurai in a fur-trimmed

purple kimono strides into the courtyard, arms thrown wide in an expression of welcoming. “Greetings, noble guests! I bid you welcome to Shiro Moto in the name of my master, Moto Gaheris Khan, Champion of the Unicorn! I am Moto Maduhl, cherbi to the Khan – what you might call hatamoto. Please, take your ease within these halls.”

The PCs may have encountered Maduhl in previous modules, or may roll **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** at a TN of 20: he is a high-ranking vassal and close friend of the Khan, having served as one of his personal guard during their days together in the Burning Sands. Maduhl has spent most of the years since the Moto came to the Empire traveling across Rokugan, learning about samurai culture with fascination. His accent is heavy, and though he is somewhat lacking in true social niceties (particularly by the exacting standards of high Rokugani courts), he is exuberant, friendly, and honestly respectful of the Empire’s traditions. Like his Khan, he is committed to the Moto integration into Rokugan without giving up all of the Moto’s own traditions.

Maduhl claps his hands, and a servant brings a heavy brown sack and a glazed bowl of red clay. “I have visited many courts of Rokugan since the Moto arrived, and been welcomed by a variety of customs. Please let me share one from our tents.” He lifts the sack and pours a pale, translucent liquid into the bowl. “This is airag, a drink of my people much like sake is to yours. We offer our guests the hospitality of our tent, and pledge to your safety under our roof.” With that, he offers the bowl.

Unicorn PCs (or those who succeed at a **Lore: Unicorn / Intelligence** roll with a TN of 30) will recognize *airag* as fermented mare’s milk; a fairly potent alcoholic beverage (somewhat stronger than sake, but not as powerful as shochu) with a sour flavor that takes a great deal of getting used to – particularly for Rokugani palates. Additionally, and potentially troubling to most samurai sensibilities, it is being served in a single bowl for every member of the group and it is served out of a leather bag. However, the ritual of greeting is very important to the Moto, which can be determined by an **Etiquette / Awareness** roll at a TN of 20.

PCs from the Burning Sands are used to this custom, and if a PC has extensive experience with the Moto (at the GM’s discretion, based on the character’s background), they may have been through it before as well and will know that the most polite response is to drain the bowl. All other PCs must make an **Etiquette / Stamina** roll with a TN of 20 in order to keep their face if they drink, causing them a loss of one point of Glory.

(Failure to roll even a 10 will cause them to disgrace themselves by vomiting; this earns them a loss of four points of Glory and two points of Honor.) Choosing not to drink at all will gravely insult their host; while it has no immediate effects, it will profoundly affect the attitude the Khan will have toward them.

As long as the PC takes at least a sip, Maduhl will give them a broad smile and drain the bowl himself before summoning servants to lead them to their rooms. If a PC drains the bowl, they will discover that *airag* is fairly potent – they must make an **Earth** roll at a TN of 20 to avoid taking a penalty of +5 to all TNs for the next hour (as there are likely no rolls they will need to make in that time, this serves as little more than a warning for the opening court). Drinking additional portions should require further rolls, at an escalating TN at the GM’s discretion.

The PCs will have several days to acclimate to the foreign court that they find themselves in before the official opening ceremonies. This will give them an opportunity to get to know the various NPCs present at Shiro Moto (detailed in Appendix #2).

Additionally, any PC paying at least some attention to their surroundings will see that there are fewer Unicorn bushi present in the castle than might normally be expected. The Unicorn is one of the more martially-inclined Clans, like the Lion and Crab, and generally consider it a point of pride to demonstrate their might even in more peaceful court settings. The safety of the guests is not in question, but there are no more guards in evidence than might be expected from a Crane or Phoenix court. There is also a significant lack of Moto from the Burning Sands; with the exception of Maduhl (or any possible PCs), the only Unicorn samurai in residence were born in the Empire.

Rumors

Any PC who wishes to learn what is being talked about in the court 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. (Unicorn receive a Free Raise for this roll.) The rumors include:

- Though Moto Gaheris is the leader of the entire Unicorn Clan, he has never been comfortable with the political duties often thrust on him due to that position. Over the last six years, he has officially hosted four Winter Courts, but his general habit has been to avoid personal appearances during the court.

- The presence of Ide Tadaji at Shiro Moto has caused some confusion and concern. The Khan was known to have little regard for Tadaji, and many of the courtiers worry that the season will lead to a confrontation between the powerful men.
- Fighting between Lion and Unicorn has continued sporadically along their shared border. However, no major territory changed hands this year, and the skirmishes have remained relatively minor. For the most part, the conflict between the Clans has remained on the battlefield, with little spill-over into other areas. Though the Lion and Unicorn are rivals, the Clans are being careful to keep their rivalry contained.
- Tensions between Dragon and Unicorn have increased over the last year. The Clans have always been distant, and the Dragon's strong alliance with the Lion have made many Unicorn uneasy with their eastern neighbors. So far, the relationship between the Dragon and Lion is predominantly political, so the Unicorn are not inclined to cause strife; for their part, the Dragon are willing to pursue their war with the Phoenix without military assistance from the Lion and extend the same courtesy to their allies.
- The Imperial Regent's creation of three new Minor Clans is unprecedented in the history of the Empire. The Kaeru family of the Frog Clan are wealthy merchants; the Tsi family of the Oriole are renowned craftsmen; and the Yotsu family of the Tiger have a reputation as defenders of the people. The clans are said to be looking for a direction that befits their new status as opposed to their old more simple ways, and many wonder what caused the Regent to take this unexpected step.
- The Dragon Clan has annexed the ronin village of Nanashi Mura in the south of the Dragon Heart Plain. Though the Dragon had allowed the ronin to exist for years on their own, that lenience has appeared to change. While the Ronin aren't happy they have little they can do in the face of the Dragon's desires; it's said the city is being expanded in to a proper city, and will be the capital of the new province.

The Young Prince

As is appropriate there will be an opening court that everyone in the castle attends. To not attend would be highly irregular, as the point of a winter court is to socialize and besides, this is where all the food is going to be. PCs who wish to avoid may warrant gentle reminder of their goals here, as the scene is somewhat crucial in getting to the rest of the module.

The main hall of Shiro Moto is decorated in a uniquely Unicorn, and more specifically Moto, style. Tapestries displaying scenes from the Burning Sands and famous battle line the walls, with depictions of mounted forces arranged in battle lines unusual to your eyes. No less unusual is the food that is already being served: Varieties of grilled meat sizzling from the fire are being laid out in abundance, alongside more traditional Rokugani dishes of fish and rice. Most interesting are those that try to blend the two, to varying degrees of success. Alcohol is also available in copious quantities, both the traditional Rokugani staples of sake and shochu, as well as more airag and other exotic liquors.

Guests are seated so as to encourage discussions between guests and locals, with entertainers and musicians keeping everyone entertained with a mix of cultural favorites. At the front, Moto Maduhl sits on the dais with a few men telling stories and laughing, although the dais seems to be made for a larger group.

Some time should be given for people to settle in and talk, getting a feeling for the crowd they appear to be spending the winter with. After a little time has passed for chit-chat and commenting on the unusual foods, the young prince enters.

With a stir in the back of the room, a small party of men enters wearing the leather and fur of the Moto. At their front is a sturdy man, though not very tall, with a somewhat unusual complexion: Well-tanned, but with pale skin underneath. From the reaction of the Unicorn this can only be the Champion's son: Moto Gaheris, called Gaheris Koghun (the young prince) to differentiate from his father Gaheris Khan. This is confirmed a moment later when the castle's herald announces him to the crowd formally. The Moto heir strides up to the dais and embraces Maduhl, calling him "Uncle." Gaheris Koghun joins Maduhl in the dais, and motions for his companions to filter through the crowd. "Please...enjoy the hospitality of the Moto." Gaheris Koghun gestures for everyone to resume eating.

Recognizing Gaheris Koghun is free: He is announced. A deaf character may roll heraldry, but it is assumed that they will recognize him. Any character who wishes to roll Lore: Heraldry or Lore: Unicorn at a TN of 30 can do so to recognize the source of his odd complexion. He is half-Ashalan, his mother having been of that race who married Gaheris the elder before they came to Rokugan.

After having his men settle in to eat, Gaheris will do the same. This is another opportunity for general

socializing and storytelling, making some connections between PCs or between PCs and NPCs. The next major instance occurs late in the dinner.

Brawl!

As the evening progresses, Moto Batun (one of Gaheris Koghun's riders) will provoke a confrontation with one of the local Unicorn samurai; this will escalate into a general brawl among the guests, as the rest of Gaheris' riders will join in, as will several of the guests (Crab/Mantis/Lion);

One of Gaheris' companions, an older man with a deep scowl on his scarred face, begins to raise his voice from where he sits. The person he is speaking to, a more traditionally Rokugani looking man in the Unicorn colors, tries to keep his voice down...but his tone is growing heated as well. It's hard to hear what happens, but in an almost frozen moment anyone watching can see the older man in the Moto gear ball his fist and slam it in to the other Unicorn's face. In most courts this would be followed by silence and shock...in Shiro Moto it explodes in to a rolling ball of jiu-jutsu and sweaty men in fur punching one another that soon encompasses nearly all of the room.

The 'brawl' should encompass all the PCs, who have to decide what to do. The fight proceeds more like environmental hazards than an actual fight. Roll Initiative as normal, but then ask each character for their Stance to describe what they are doing in the fight. Each Stance requires a different roll, and there are three "Rounds" of rolls and descriptions. PCs will take a number of Wounds equal to the amount they fail the roll by (with the exception of Full Attack and Center). Void may be spent normally, to enhance the roll or reduce Wounds (though other applications are not relevant – increasing their TN is impractical with so many potential opponents).

- Attack: Jiu-jutsu / Agility 30. This represents direct involvement in the fighting, but in a controlled, focused manner that allows them to spend some effort on their own defense while still doing damage.
- Full Attack: Jiu-jutsu / Strength at 35. These characters, like most of the Moto, will simply throw themselves into the fray without regard for their own safety. They will take a minimum of 10 Wounds, plus however much they fail the roll by.
- Defense: Defense / Strength 30. PCs who wish to defend themselves while retaining the ability to move, or to defend others, will be in

this Stance. If a PC Guards another character (PC or NPC), reduce the Wounds that character takes by 10.

- Full Defense: Defense / Reflexes 20. PCs who have no desire to take part in the combat should take this Stance, as it gives them the best chance to avoid the fighting.
- Center: No roll, but they will receive the standard Center Stance bonus on the next "Round". However, because they are waiting to take action, they will take 20 Wounds.

The players should be encouraged to describe their actions in a cinematic and sweeping style; this is another part of the Moto culture, where a warrior is encouraged to display his strength in relatively harmless fashion. There is no lethal intent, and even if a character takes enough Wounds to kill them, they will instead be left with one Wound remaining. PCs who draw weapons will bring the encounter to a crashing halt, as the guards who had not taken part surround them and demand them to stand down. (It should be obvious that failure to do so is a gross violation of all convention, even more than the antics of the hosts, and will result in the PC removing themselves from the module as they will spend the remainder of the winter confined to their quarters.)

If a player asks what Gaheris does, they notice him settling back in his cushion to watch the battle with a small smile. An **Investigation / Awareness** roll (at a TN of 20) will allow them to realize that, rather than being mildly amused as he appears, he is actually quite interested in the reactions of the guests. This is, in fact, something of a test that Gaheris has arranged to determine which of the present samurai are more inclined to decisive action over talk.

Aftermath

Gaheris will ask to speak with those PCs who engaged in the fight (those who spent Rounds in the Attack or Full Attack Stance in particular), and speak to them with the text below.

While the servants are cleaning up the mess following the brawl, one of Gaheris' companions approaches and asks to speak with Moto Gaheris. Sitting on the dais looking somewhat amused, he flashes you a grin that looks both boyish and fierce. "You show admirable spirit, samurai. I am Moto Gaheris, called Gaheris Koghun." He leans back, and looks around the court. "You may have noticed our court is somewhat... diminished, here. This is where we hold court for our honored cousins who may not be used to our... customs. But we keep a more private court

where we may follow to the customs of our fathers without offering insult, open only to those of our Clan who are comfortable – and to select honored guests.” He leans forward keenly. “We would be delighted if you were to join us there and truly experience the hospitality of the Unicorn, and the Moto.”

The PCs are expected to accept; they are being done an honor by Gaheris, after all, and it is clear that this is where bulk of actual business will be conducted. Roleplay out the acceptance or denial, but this is not intended to be a huge scene. Should anyone choose not to accept, they may be approached by Tadaji as well (below). Should they decide to stay in the castle and not go with either, see ‘Staying at Shiro Moto’ below.

Those who accept Gaheris’ invitation will be invited to spend the evening with him and his riders (the cadre of bushi accompanying him, a combination of honor guard and drinking companions). The Moto will drink and share stories of the Burning Sands, with an emphasis on the spookier stories. Gaheris will cut things short before midnight, however, with one last tale, told well enough to make

“Once, in the time before my people came to follow the Lady Shinjo, we were bound in service to powerful, dark gods. The Shi-Tien Yen-Wang, the Lords of Death, demanded reverence from my ancestors and granted power in return. But when the Lady defeated the Ujik-hai despite their power, the brave warrior Moto, honor to his name, knew that his people had been deceived. He swore to follow the Lady, and led our people to the path of light. The Lords of Death were left behind, to howl their rage in the empty night.” He takes a long drink and leans close, his voice lowering to a menacing whisper. “Some nights, when the moon hides her face from the world and the wind sweeps across the steppes, you can hear them howling still. And that is why the Moto never sleep in the same place twice, lest the dark gods of our ancestors find us.”

PCs who avoided confrontation in the brawl (most likely by defending and saying they were staying to the sides), or those who refused Gaheris’ invitation, will be approached by Ide Tadaji. He will ask them to go with him out to the main court, both as an escort and for advice in dealing with the Moto.

After the brawl, Ide Tadaji—the Imperial Advisor—requests a moment of your time. He is seated at the far end of the court with a cup of tea in front of him, and his cane laid out surreptitiously on the floor at his side. “Samurai, I noticed your actions during the brawl. I have need of some who would travel with me,

and who choose to think before they attack.” Tadaji sighs slightly, and sips his tea. “There is another Unicorn court this year, held out in the Burning Sands and more akin to traditional Moto practices. I would ask you to accompany me to it, as my escort and to provide... advice, in dealing my cousins.”

Politically astute PCs may notice that this could also be seen as something of a challenge to Gaheris, given their reactions and the known animosity between the Khan and Tadaji. It is still the best opportunity for them to accomplish something for their lord, however, and they should be reminded of this if they seem reluctant to accept.

Before they depart, Doji Menechan will ask any Crane PCs to be certain to keep an eye out for a suitable match for his granddaughter. If no Crane PCs are present, Daidoji Tsumerai will be asked along by Gaheris – he will be friendly with his Clan’s allies, and courteous with PCs from the other Clans. (Especially Crab, in fact; despite the recent tensions between the Crane and Crab, Tsumerai is a Daidoji and has a great deal of respect for Hida’s Clan.) Tsumerai will have the same request from Menechan, though he is somewhat less capable in match-making than he is in martial pursuits.

The PCs may answer immediately to either Gaheris or Tadaji, or have some time to think/prepare. As they will be leaving in the morning the answer will need to be before everyone else leaves. Any PCs who choose to stay at Shiro Moto and not accompany either Gaheris or Tadaji will find the conditions as listed in ‘Staying at Shiro Moto’ below – as it involves writing themselves out of the module, they should be careful of that decision.

During the night, all PCs need to make a **Void Roll** at **TN 20**, including penalties from drinking and wound penalties from the brawl. The TN is increased by 5 for PCs from the Moto family, and by 10 for anyone who has already been **Noticed by the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang**. Anyone who fails the roll gets the following dream:

The wind blows across the moonlit plains, a low whisper that seems to come from everywhere. It curls around you with a touch like a lover’s caress, brushing your face. It does not carry the scent of the fresh grasslands around you, but of one of gentle decay. Moving away, it follows you, and the shadows lengthen as clouds advance on the moon. For a moment you can see forms in that wind: ten dark figures, looming over you and wreathed in shadow. All you can make out for certain is burning, brilliant eyes under gaijin helms, and a voice that seems to

come from ten throats at once as it whispers “There you are...” And then you awaken.

Characters who get this dream should add the note **Noticed by the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang** on their mod cert. They also do not recover any spent Void that night. (Though they will recover it normally through the rest of the module.)

Staying at Shiro Moto

If any player refuses to relocate, they are essentially writing themselves out of the module. This should be made clear to them before continuing. Any PC who remains at Shiro Moto will enjoy a relatively pleasant, though rough, court – Maduhl will be lavish with food and drink, and a variety of entertainments will be offered. However, as the events are heavily leavened with traditional Moto activities (including more than a few repetitions of the first night’s brawl), the courtiers present will have no real desire to speak of them again. Therefore, all PCs who remain at Shiro Moto will lose a total of 16 points of Glory (one for every week of idleness); this cannot reduce a PC to lower than one full Rank of Glory. Additionally, any such PC will only earn at most two points of experience (for survival and roleplaying), at the GM’s discretion.

Part Two: The Court of the Khan

Travelling to the Khan’s winter encampment does involve crossing the majority of the Unicorn Clan’s lands in the winter. Though it is still early in the season, this is a prospect that most samurai would be exceptionally leery of – Rokugan’s harsh winter snows typically paralyze the Empire, making the transport of large groups of troops and materiel difficult. The group travelling with Gaheris Koghun and his riders is relatively small, however, and the young Moto is experienced at moving a squad of troops across inimical terrain quickly. If the PCs do not have horses, they will be provided, and are in fact necessary to keep up – refusing to ride will be equivalent to remaining behind, as Gaheris has no intention of waiting for laggard PCs. The ride is far from comfortable, however.

The morning after the brawl, you depart. Moto Maduhl is left in charge of Shiro Moto, to run the court for those who do not wish to partake of the particular Moto traditions waiting you, or were not honored to be invited out to the real court. You set off at a brisk pace towards the desert.

The Unicorn lands are breathtaking in their scope, possessed of a kind of open and windswept grandeur that leaves little mystery as to why long, fast horse rides are so popular here. In the winter it is a bleak grandeur, with snow blanketing much of the sweeping hills and making fast rides into slogging plows. Most of your travel is not snow packed as it is early in the season, but it certainly is not how most Rokugani would prefer to spend their Winter Court; and the specter of the snows that typically paralyze the Empire are no doubt spurring on the pace Gaheris sets. In order to make it to the Burning Sands you must travel for many days across the majority of the Unicorn’s holdings, and the young Prince sets a grueling pace. Those honored non-Unicorn accompanying him may soon find unaccustomed sores, and tired ponies.

The traveling to the camp is an opportunity for roleplaying, and should be fairly free-form. There are only informal festivities in the cold nights, such as story-telling and drinking around fires, and the days start early. It is as close to a military march as many courtiers are likely to get. The Unicorn are jovial about it, however, and many of them seem to think this would be a better way to spend all of Winter Court! They banter as they ride, and a number of them are willing to engage in minor contests of sport and especially riding as they go. Opportunities should be given to get to know some of the people here, if it is desired. Ide Tadaji keeps the pace with a quiet, intense grimace of pain, but refuses to allow himself to fall behind. Gaheris does not go out of his way to make things easy for the older, crippled courtier, but demonstrates a grudgingly increasing respect for the Imperial Advisor as the journey continues. Daidoji Tsumerai, if present, has an easier time of it, though even he is unused to so much riding.

Gaheris’ “riders” travel with him. A Moto tradition for high-ranking members of the family, they are a somewhat elite squad of warriors who are as much friends as a guard of honor. If asked, they are open about the tradition; when Gaheris became a man, he was assigned a small bodyguard by his father, but as he matured and gained experience, he found others to trust and gave them positions – a high honor for any Unicorn, but particularly among the Moto.

Gaheris’ riders are:

- Moto Batun, a huge man who follows the old Ujjikhai ways and is deeply chauvinist; he and Altan are the only two remaining members given to Gaheris Koghun by his father.
- Moto Altan is the eldest of the riders, but remains relaxed in the way of a grizzled old veteran archer who has seen it all.

- Moto Jetei is young, happy-go-lucky scout who is more than happy to share a few games of dice or drinks with anyone on the trip.
- Moto Khuchar is as young as Jetei, but intense where his friend is joyous, and always on the lookout for ways to prove himself worthy. He is a skilled swordsman, though it is with the spear that he truly shines.
- The only non-Moto, by blood or family, among Gaheris' companions is Ide Takashi, who is a younger man and friendly. He serves as an ambassador to the Prince, both from the Empire, and to the younger Gaheris, to smooth over those places where there may be a conflict in traditions.

Eventually, the group will arrive at the camp of the Moto:

After days of traveling, you come to the far western passes of the Unicorn lands. Moving through the mountains, the air starts to warm up, a dry heat with the promise of cold nights. As you come through the final passes, the camp comes in to view. Several things come to mind as you see it spread out before you. First that while it is on the other side of the mountains it is not in the true desert; it will be warm, but your journey will not take you into the Burning Sands proper.

Secondly, this is not a small court. Off in the distance you can see Bugaisha, the Outsider Keep where the Unicorn send samurai who have displeased them, and the location of the old Moto dojo. Spread out in front of you on the scrub is a huge camp of tents both familiar and foreign, tens of thousands of them. Here is the true gathering of the Unicorn for winter and the games of court and strength, and it is an impressive sight. An enormous structure, a Moto chomchog, lies at the heart, while well over half of the tents and yurts are spread out as they would in the field for military action. The inevitable camp followers are clustered in their own section, merchants and servants prepared to serve the needs of the army. Banners for all the families are present, although it seems most of the local samurai are Shinjo. You follow the caravan down in to the camp, arriving at the Khan's true Winter Court.

Here is where Winter Court truly begins for the PCs. It, like most Winter Court mods, is somewhat non-linear. The PCs have a number of options for games, meetings, and conversations they can pursue before they get involved in the hunt arranged by the Khan (Part Three). The following are some suggestions for major activities, but they are not the only ones; if the PCs wish to run an event, they should feel free to (and be

rewarded per the rewards section), but they are by no means required to do so.

The Camp

There are over thirty thousand Unicorn samurai present in the camp – nearly a quarter of the Clan is here on the Khan's command, to train together and come to a better understanding of one another. There is nearly always some sort of activity in the tents, and the Unicorn are welcoming of their Khan's guests (though many of them will be surprised to see them). It is worth noting that the PCs and Ide Tadaji (and Daidoji Tsumerai if he is along) are the only non-Unicorn samurai to be found for hundreds of miles. Some of the more influential samurai present are listed in Appendix #3.

Though particularly religious characters may be disappointed (there are only a few small traveling shrines in the camp, though there is an ancestral shrine principally devoted to Moto in Bugaisha proper), there are a number of different opportunities for the PCs to explore.

Rumors

Any PC who wishes to learn what is being talked about in the camp 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. (Unicorn receive a Free Raise for this roll.) The rumors include:

- Moto Gaheris has been courting a Moto girl by the name of Sarantuya on and off for the last year. There is some speculation that he may finally get around to proving his valor so that he can propose marriage. Many of the traditional Rokugani are hesitant about the subject, as they understand that the match brings little of benefit to the Clan, but few wish to directly oppose the wishes of the young prince.
- A few of the Unicorn scouts have reported sighting a bizarre phenomenon in the desert to the north: a moving pillar of flame that slowly drifts across the dunes. Pursuit has yielded no answers – the fire disappears before they can come close enough to make anything out, but investigation of the area has found strange, glassy footprints, as though a man of flame walked across the sands.
- The Unicorn, more tolerant of gaijin than most of the Empire, have invited a number of merchants from across the Sands south in order to ply their trade within Rokugan's borders. All of the legal necessities have been met, and though most of the

Empire would likely disapprove of such flagrant trade with foreign agents, it is technically within the letter of the law.

- One of the gaijin merchants is actually an Ashalan sandsmith – one of the rare, inhuman masters of crystal. Though he has unique wares for offer, he is not a very successful merchant as he refuses to make a large number of sales, and only his exclusive nature has prevented him from facing consequences for his treatment of samurai.
- Though many of the New Moto are outright contemptuous of the Rokugani who spend their time reading rather than training, word has begun to spread that the Khan is looking for a copy of Akodo's "Leadership." Some see this as a sign of respect for a worthy foe, and some are taking it as a joke (the uses the pages might be put to are crudely described, but best not repeated in polite company).
- If he is present, Daidoji Tsumerai will earn a reputation in the camp as a curious samurai with a little less social grace than even the Unicorn are used to. While his martial prowess earns him a great deal of respect, many of the Unicorn wonder why he seems so interested in how many of the high-ranking Unicorn samurai are married.
- When Ide Tadaji arrived in camp, he immediately reported in to the Khan. Raised voices were heard outside the chomchog, but the Imperial Advisor was allowed to remain in the camp, though he is obviously not partaking in the military maneuvers. Strangely, the Khan has periodically sent for Tadaji, presumably to confer with the courtier, though relations between the men still seem tense.

Divisions in the Camp

The PCs are, as stated, the only non-Unicorns in the camp; but that fact does not mean the rest of the camp is completely united. As they will see during the wrestling contest, there are divisions in the Unicorn Clan that can be quite striking when revealed. Shinjo's coming changed many things in the Clan and not all of those wounds have healed cleanly. There are a number of divisions in the Clan – and thus the camp – that can become apparent as the PCs explore, and the hosts forget there are outsiders present. Those PCs who are actively observing the Unicorns should see some of the following signs, though correctly interpreting the conflicts requires a **Courtier / Awariness** roll at a TN of 20, with an additional conflict revealed for every 4 points they succeed by.

These divisions should come up at various points. They can be flavor, or they can be more active. Discussions, heated words at competitions, and socially acceptable

'pranks' are the ways that it generally comes out. (Plus an occasional rolling brawl for the Moto.) It is never taken to the level of duels, and the Khan is most displeased when it becomes noticeable, but it is something the PCs can definitely observe.

Rokugani vs. Moto Newcomers

The biggest factional division is between those who are ethnically, and fully socially, Rokugani. While the other clans may see all Unicorn as outsiders, the Clan has been back in the Empire for over three centuries. While they may have odd customs, they are completely Rokugani and share most of their basic ideas and ideals with the Empire.

The other side is those Moto who returned with Shinjo, and now run the Clan. They have many more strange customs, and while the Moto may quarrel with one another they have far more in common with each other than with the more Rokugani Unicorn. Many of them also see Shinjo's placing of them in control of the Unicorn as an acceptance that the rest of the Clan needs to follow more of their ways. While there are a number of samurai on both sides reaching out and moving for integration and acceptance (and the PCs may be part of this sect), but there are also hardliners on both sides. And it shows.

Nothing overt happens, but during competitions when a 'traditional' Moto wins he gets more cheers from some, and when a more mainline Rokugani wins a different faction is more enthusiastic.

Integrationist vs. Raider

This is subtly different than Rokugani vs. Moto, in that while it largely lines up with that cause, some of the lines get more blurred. Essentially this is the broader version of the old Unicorn vs. the new, in that it is the ideological debate raging in the Clan as to how much of either side should be adopted by the Clan.

There are those among the other families who agree with the Moto that the Kami's choice does imply they should take up more traditional Moto ways. There are Moto who feel like they should learn to meld the two cultures since while they were chosen, Shinjo was still Rokugani and they should honor her original vision as well.

Shinjo vs. Moto

This is a more subtle one, given the immense power the Khan has (and how scared people are of the large man in furs). But the Moto rule the roost now, and some of them are a little too happy to show it. There are some Moto who were here before the rest came out of the

desert (the family did exist before Gaheris, after all) and some of them are enjoying their newfound status too much. And since that status comes at the expense of the Shinjo family themselves, there are many in that family who resent it.

And the Shinjo are not without some cause for resentment. The majority of the samurai 'stationed' at the nearby keep are Shinjo. And they are the only whole family that has ever been stripped of the Championship of their Clan. To have been stripped by their own Kami and family founder, and for what even they have to admit is a good reason, stings. And some of them are prone to focusing on resentment. After all, not *all* of them were Kolat, now were they?

The Bazaar

While not a permanent camp, there are nonetheless an impressive number of artisans and merchants present to sell their wares to the samurai gathered here. "Shops" of all shapes and sizes with all sorts of goods for sale.

While not a city or even a permanent encampment, there is nonetheless an impressive bazaar, a market sprawling out for several blocks. All sorts of shops can be found, selling everything from the tame to the exotic. Though quite a few gaijin are doing brisk trade, the most exotic seems to be a very oddly shaped tent with beautiful glass sculptures on display. Some, a very few, glint with the telltale rainbow light of true crystal.

The tent is owned by an Ashalan sand-sculptor using the name "Kouseki." A PC may purchase a crystal item if they wish, but there are restrictions: Kouseki determines what item, will only sell one to any customer, and they are phenomenally expensive (2 koku for an arrowhead, 5 for a spearhead and 10 for a dagger). He does not bargain, so reducing his prices with the Commerce Skill is not possible. Even items of minor utility out of true crystal are beyond most samurai's purchase. The sort of item most likely to be thought useful by PCs (such as larger weapons) are not available, but PCs may spend Favors to gain him as an Ally as he is interested in engaging in more trade in the Empire, and needs support to make that happen. This will all them to write future fictions for other items. He will accept trades of interesting items – the crystal from the Oracle of Earth (from SoB13, "Prison of Earth") will elicit fascination from him, for example, and will be confused by the amulet from Agasha Shikkui (from the same module), as it does not react to his abilities as normal or blessed crystal does. Kouseki is a craftsman, not a merchant, by nature: he views his creations as

very definite extensions of his soul and parts with them only to those he feels will value them.

Beyond that, there is a fairly substantial market for other things, ranging from small gaijin trinkets to the finest horses the Unicorn are willing to sell to outsiders (i.e. typical "Unicorn Riding Horses"). If the PCs wish to purchase things for their lords, spouses, or selves they have ample opportunity to do so (although if they have ample funds is another matter). PCs who wish to purchase the "Gaijin Gear" Advantage may do so, though it will require contacting the Campaign Admin for the appropriate mechanics for any piece they wish to use. (Pieces bought as curiosities or souvenirs that will not be used as equipment do not require the Advantage, but should still be expensive; the exact pricing is at the GM's discretion.)

The Nadaam

One of the major highlights of the Unicorn festivities is a large festival made up of three parts. The first component is a traditional Moto wrestling competition, with horse racing and archery to follow. Traditional Moto wrestling is different from sumai – the first contestant to touch the ground with something other than their hands or feet loses, and they wear a traditional outfit. The field is normally covered (if barely) by groups of short vests, loincloths, and sweaty men. That last part proves to be a point of contention, as a matter of fact.

The Nadaam is a point of great pride and excitement for the Moto, and days are spent in preparation. It is the highlight of the court, and winners will spend until the next year glorying in their victories. It is divided in to three parts: first is traditional Moto wrestling, followed by a horse race conducted by young boys and girls, and finally team archery.

Near the ring where the wrestling will be held, a small murmur of voices can be heard. They are coming from two Unicorn samurai, one a woman dressed in the armor of the shiotome, the battle maidens; the other a huge and leathered man in the furs of an old-school Moto. The Moto you recognize as Moto Batun, one of the young prince's riders.

As you draw closer, you can see the set lines in the battle maiden's jaw, and the fire in her eyes.

An **Investigation / Awareness** roll at TN 10 is enough to reveal that the battle maiden (Utaku Hioko) is clamping down on a powerful fury to keep from making a scene and violating protocol. Batun, for his

part, has less concerns about polite behavior and is very derisive.

They are arguing about Hioko's desire to compete in the wrestling tournament. Batun, a Moto traditionalist and not a small misogynist, does not agree. Batun might even be needling her to try to get her to explode, and it is working. Hioko, a decorated veteran herself, is nonetheless doing everything in her power to keep from raging at one of Gaheris Koghun's riders.

The PCs may intervene in the dispute, arguing for either side. There is a point to Batun's side, although he is doing his best to bury it in being a jerk; it is traditional for women not to compete. PCs should not be outright shouted down if they want to argue on Batun's side, although they may be in the minority. It is, however, traditional for both Rokugani and Moto to challenge another to a contest of arms in such a disagreement, with the typical method of resolution in the Empire being the iaijutsu duel. The PCs may suggest to Hioko that she offer a challenge (doing so requires no roll, she is simply angry enough that she has forgotten most propriety), or a female PC may issue a challenge herself. A male PC can challenge, but as their victory would merely demonstrate that the woman had to get a man to fight her battle for her, it would not have the effect they desire.

If a female PC or Hioko challenges Batun he accepts (despite any Status difference), in the form of a wrestling match. A PC who wishes to insist on iaijutsu must convince the Khan. If the PCs go to the Khan he is reluctant to allow it to be iaijutsu as the argument is over wrestling, but can be convinced; this does not require a roll, because he does see the larger point.

PCs who wish to may provide Hioko with some training or assistance prior to the duel. If they have Ranks in Iaijutsu, they can help her focus herself enough that she will prove victorious, but if she enters with the same unsettled frame of mind, she will lose despite her greater Skill. (She has Iaijutsu and Void both at 3, where Batun has a very rudimentary understanding of the form but has a higher Void.) Unfortunately, there is little that can be done to assist her with wrestling – Batun's physical power is just greater than hers. Various spells or other abilities can be used, though they will cause an Honor loss for the character. All such attempts are at the GM's discretion.

Regardless of the form of the duel, the results determine women's participation in the wrestling. If the woman wins, then Batun is forced to concede defeat and women will participate in that part of the competition. (Even in iaijutsu, he will not attack unless the opponent

continues the fight). The rules for Moto wrestling are below; the winning herald and wrestler each get +0.1 Glory. If Batun wins, then women will not be allowed to compete.

Moto Batun

Air 2	Earth 4	Fire 3	Water 4	Void 4
Reflexes 4		Agility 4	Strength 5	
Honor 3.8		Status 5.3	Glory 6.2	

Initiative: 8k4+5 **Attack:** 10k4 (scimitar, Simple)

Armor TN: 25 **Damage:** 8k3 (scimitar)

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

School/Rank: Moto Bushi 4

Techniques: *The Way of the Unicorn:* May wield two-handed weapons with one hand (except for bows). +1k0 to damage rolls while mounted, using a scimitar, or while using a two-handed melee weapon (these bonuses do not stack). Scimitars have the Samurai keyword.

Shinsei's Smile: Gain a bonus to attack rolls equal to half of target's Wound Rank TN penalties, rounded down.

Desert Wind Strike: Simple Action when using a melee weapon.

The Charge of Madness: Once per skirmish, if you successfully bring a target down to the Out Wound Level, may immediately make an additional attack as a Free Action. This attack may not target the same target as the attack that activated this Technique. May not make Raises on this attack.

Skills: Animal Handling 3, Athletics 5, Battle 5, Defense 4, Horsemanship (Gaijin Riding Horse) 7, Hunting 5, Iaijutsu 1, Intimidation 4, Investigation 2, Jiu-jutsu 4, Kenjutsu (Scimitar) 6, Kyujutsu 2, Spears 5

Mastery Abilities: Athletics 5 (no movement penalties from Terrain), Battle 5 (add Skill Ranks to Initiative Score), Defense 3 (may retain a Full Defense Roll in successive Rounds), Horsemanship 7 (may use Full Attack Stance while mounted, mounting or dismounting is a Free Action), Hunting 5 (+1k0 to Stealth Rolls while in wilderness), Jiu-jutsu 3 (+1k0 to unarmed damage), Kenjutsu 5 (+1k0 damage with swords, may ready a sword as a Free Action), Spears 5 (may ignore 3 points of opponent's Reduction during first Round of skirmish when using Spears, +5' max range ranged attacks with Spears)

Advantages/Disadvantages: Large, Quick Healer / Gaijin Name, Insensitive

Wrestling

The goal of Moto wrestling is similar to sumai; a participant loses if they touch the ground with anything but their feet or their hand. Additionally, each wrestler has a *zasuul*, a champion. Their job is to stand in the ring and shout out words of bravery and

encouragement, boasting about their wrestler's deeds. The *zasuul* rolls **Perform: Oratory / Awareness** as a contested roll against the other herald. (The Courtier Skill may be substituted, though at a penalty of -10 to the roll.) The winner of this gets to add +5 to their champion's roll. The match is resolved with **Jiujutsu / Strength**; the loser must immediately roll **Athletics / Reflexes** at a TN equal to that rolled by their opponent to avoid being knocked down. This then continues until one of the wrestlers is on the ground – matches can take a surprisingly long time, particularly between those skilled in the form.

For the tournament, the GM may wish to organize a bracket and have each participating PC go through it, to increasing levels of opponents. The exact stats of their opponents is left to the GM's discretion, though none of the Moto are likely to have Jiujutsu higher than 6 or 7. Alternately, in the interest of time, the GM can simply set the PCs against each other or "generic" Unicorn wrestlers who roll 6k3 for each roll. If any PC rolls higher than 35 on their Jiujutsu rolls, they will be the victor, gaining a Rank of Glory and the title of *arslan* ("lion") until next winter. He (or she) even gets to keep the decorative vest and shorts.

Horse Race

The horse race is unique in that the PCs are not going to be competing in this one themselves, unless they happen to be a particularly slender youth between the ages of 6 and 12. The racing is done by children, who are universally known to be lighter loads for the horses. The *betting*, however, is done by samurai. Fortunes are won or lost every year based on the races, which are based far more on the abilities of the steeds rather than that of their riders.

The races are unlike most others in Rokugan. As you assemble, with your koku ready in your purses, you see no track or circuit. Instead there is a literal line in the sand, with hundreds of horses lined up and ready to race. The Moto race cross country, miles off in to the desert before returning, to test the mettle of their horses. Slender youths wait on the horses, or standing next to them, waiting for their time to shine. People mill about, placing their bets quietly or calling them out proudly.

The PCs have an opportunity to look at the horses and the riders, and use their knowledge to find out which ones to bet on. This involves an **Animal Handling / Perception** roll (though Horsemanship may be substituted, the 10s will not explode, as an Unskilled Roll). The base TN is 10 to find out which horses are in the top half, with raises to find out (in increasing increments): the top ten, the top five, and the top 3.

PCs with more knowledge of gambling than horses can use **Games: any / Intelligence** at a TN of 20 to figure out who are the betting favorites. And finally PCs can use **Investigation / Awareness** in order to find who the crowd seems to be supporting.

For simplicity, PCs who place bets will earn one koku for every Raise made on the Animal Handling roll. They then double this amount by success on the Games roll. (If the GM wishes, they can give mercantile PCs a chance to maximize their winnings.)

Regardless, the races are simply an opportunity for the PCs to earn some money if they wish and enjoy a different kind of sporting event than they may be used to.

Archery

The archery event of the Nadaam is a team event. Teams of three compete to hit the target as many times as possible in a certain number of arrows. Simply put, the team with those most hits wins.

The archery contest is spread out on a broad, dusty plain. Targets, in various shapes and sizes, are placed across the plain at different distances. The archers draw and fire in the unusual Unicorn style, and every time a target is hit one of the judges lets out a cry of 'Uuhai', or 'hooray' in the old Moto tongue.

Each team of three has five arrows, which they are to fire at the targets. Each target may be hit only once, and the TN increases as they go out further and get smaller. The TNs are 15, 20, 25, 30, and 35; the roll is **Kyuujutsu / Archery**. The bows provided by the Moto are short, traditional weapons unlike either yumi or dai-kyu, but PCs may bring their own equipment if they wish (particularly if they have an Emphasis). Each successful roll is worth one point, and the points of the team are pooled (for a maximum of 15).

Teams range from the outstanding to the tragically bad. A perfect score will win, although only by three points (2nd place is 12, unless two teams of PCs score between 13 and 15).

Festival/Drinking Contest

After all of the contests are done, the festival continues. Spread out across all the competition fields, fires burn and illuminate the dusk. The sounds of partying ranging from the raucous to the more subdued can be heard no matter where one travels, and drinks flow freely. Sake, shochu, and even the more exotic Moto drinks can be found in great quantity. Games can be found in great quantity as well, ranging from sedate go to knife throwing, and

even a strange gaijin game played with sheep's ankle bones that sends a shiver across your skin.

Near one of the fires, the Khan's and the Gaheris Koghun himself are surrounded by staggering amounts of alcohol they are preparing to drink. Strange gaijin songs already dance on their lips, ready for an evening of joy.

Any PCs who traveled with Gaheris Koghun, or any PCs who won a contest, will be waved over by one of the riders. The young prince is not opposed to them joining, but he doesn't want to make it a command. Any who join the party will be greeted fondly, either for their companionship on the ride out or for their prowess.

One of the riders leans in, handing a bottle of shochu to one of you. "It is a shame that for people that make such good wine cannot hold it!" He offers, with a grin on his face and a sparkle in his eye, hoping one of you will take the bait.

The bait is, of course, for a drinking contest. Any PCs who want to may compete. Each round requires an **Earth** roll at increasing TNs, starting at 10 and raising by 5 every round until no one remains. A PC may bow out at any time, but to fail a roll means they have shamed themselves by throwing up or passing out, and they lose 0.1 glory if they have under Glory 7, or 0.2 if greater. The winner, if a PC, gains 0.1 glory.

Winter War Maneuvers

One of the main reasons why the Unicorn are here is to practice war maneuvers, given the turbulent nature of the Empire. By going out to the edge of the Burning Sands, they can have a dry and open area to spend the off season training.

Early one morning you are scheduled to visit something special, invited by Gaheris Koghun himself. You ride out a short way to the plains, and as you crest a low hill the low rumble and clank resolves itself into something spectacular: armies, plural, wheeling and maneuvering on horseback and on foot in massive practice training. Men and women in Unicorn colors and beneath the banners of the families ride and run full out and in full armor. Their weapons may be wooden, but their speed and dedication are as high as if this were a real battle.

"This is why we come to the desert in winter." The young Prince says, as he looks out over the armies working. The air is cold, but it is not bitter, and the

soldiers sweat heavily. Healers are out as well, most of the injuries seeming to be related to training injuries or exertion (and sweat freezing). "We can train, while the Empire slumbers. What do you think of our maneuvers?"

Anyone observing the war maneuvers can roll **Battle (Mass Combat) / Perception** in order to gain insight in to the flow of the battles. TN 15 reveals that they are using unorthodox tactics not normally employed in Rokugani armies. TN 20 will show that they have divided their people up in to unusual formations, and this is probably what they are experimenting with. TN 25 will reveal that they have apparently broken their Clan forces into three armies, and are experimenting to try to find the best types of unit to put in each organization.

PCs may only participate in the maneuvers in limited ways unless they are Unicorns themselves. They may help the healers if they know how (and the Unicorn will be grateful), but only Clan members may actually fight since only Clan members will fight with the armies on the field.

Primarily Gaheris Koghun has brought the PCs here to hear what they have to say. What comments they make about the new styles, how they think the other Clans will react to it, and anything else they have to bring up. He will listen respectfully, and question them on matters of interest to him (displaying he is quite knowledgeable of tactics and strategy).

After a discussion on the strategy and tactics of Unicorn troops Gaheris Koghun will have a 'softball' conversation about Unicorn acceptance and integration in the Empire. It is a prelude to the questions that Gaheris Khan will ask at the end of the mod (See Part Three). The young prince is curious, and knows his father is thinking of these issues as well.

On the ride away from where the Unicorn armies are practicing, the young prince is quiet as if in deep thought. Finally he looks up, and asks "Tell me, my friends... what place do you see for the Unicorn in the Empire?"

Again, this is just a low pressure entry in to what is going to be the serious discussion at the end of the module. He wants to get the PCs thinking about it so that at the end when they speak with his father, who is much more intimidating, it doesn't catch them completely off guard. In addition he is asking a subtly different question of where they see the Unicorn should be versus his father who will ask how the Empire accepts the Moto culture.

The Sandstorm Race

One unique opportunity for adventure comes midway through the winter. The Moto are abuzz that just a few days ride west, into the desert proper, there is going to be a huge sandstorm, and this provides an opportunity they love to take: a sandstorm race. This is an important opportunity to provide if there have not been enough other good looks at the positive sides of the traditional Moto culture.

The Moto have several names for it, but as it is explained to you there is one word that seems to describe it best: crazy. Adventurous certainly, possibly even heroic, but definitely crazy. A multiple-day horse race into the heart of a sandstorm, and then back out. But it perfectly encapsulates all there is to admire about the Moto. They truly embrace the finite nature of life, and take grand opportunities to live while they can.

Lines of riders get prepared to ride out in to this insanity, and if you wish to join them they will not turn any away. Sandstorm races are rare, and life is to be lived.

Any PC who wishes to join the race may do so. It will take place over four days, not including travel time to and from the camp. Each day will have two rolls, and text to read about the events of that day. Raises will put a racer ahead, and failure will injure them and put them behind.

PCs who do not wish to participate can offer bets on who will win.

Day One:

The sandstorm begins almost out of sight. The line of racers is not huge but neither is it small: perhaps one hundred riders gathered to race. All will gain renown for participating, even if they do not win. But as the flag is dropped, such thoughts leave your mind; why race, if not to win?

The first stretch is for pure speed, getting up as much of a lead as possible before you hit the sandstorm. Once you do make it to that whirling, roiling mass entering it is like being physically attacked. The sand stings at you, and you see why some of the riders gave you cloth to wrap around your head Ujik-hai style. It takes your steadiest nerves and hand to stay on your horse at all.

Roll 1: Horsemanship / Agility, TN 15

Roll 2: Horsemanship / Stamina, TN 20

Day Two:

The second day is more of a slog. There are breaks when you can get some speed, but now you understand why the Moto describe endurance and staying on course as being more important than speed. Glimpses of the sky and your own internal sense of direction are all that keep you on course, if they even can manage. But at the end of the day, whether early or late, you come to a small outcropping of rocks with a thin stream for it – a minor Oasis in the sands. Shelter, a drink, and place to rest for the night free from the stinging sand; this small oasis is the half-way mark, and it seems like a palace.

Roll 1: Horsemanship / Stamina, TN 20.

Roll 2: Hunting (Trailblazing) / Perception, TN 20.

Day Three:

Day Three is the worst day of all of them. You left your little camp in the morning and turned back in to the storm towards where you began. The wind buffets you in huge gusts that seem to slide sand everywhere, through every exposed crack in your clothing. And worst, halfway through the day the ground starts to give way in some sort of sinkhole. You grit your teeth and grab the reins tighter, driving your horse to safety!

Roll 1: Horsemanship / Stamina, TN 25

Roll 2: Horsemanship / Agility, TN 25. 1 Wound for every point under the TN.

Day Four:

The storm has lessened greatly after yesterday's terror. The only shelter to be found was next to small hills that offered some service as a windbreak, but left you half buried when you awoke. Now you are coming to the edge of the storm, to clear ground that gives you a chance: Now is the time for speed, when you can make up lost ground! Hiyah!

Only one roll today:

Roll: Horsemanship / Agility, TN 15

Finale:

The highest ranked NPC will come back with the equivalent of five Raises, a Battle Maiden who made good time. PCs who end up with more than this have a chance of winning the prize, an ornamental silver dagger in the Moto style. All who competed have definitely earned the respect of the assembled riders, and they are feted long in to the night (after a bath) with stories of past races and cups of *airag*, sake, and *shochu*.

Other Opportunities

It's important to remember that Winter Court in Rokugan lasts four months, the full season of winter. There are a wide variety of things going on, and likely some form of competition every day if not twice in a day. No module could ever list out everything, and this one isn't going to try. Suffice to say that if a PC wants to do something that is even a little likely, they have a chance. Knife throwing, juggling, storytelling, fighting, even flower arranging. Only something truly unreasonable, like hunting oni, or a torture competition, should be denied. Below are listed a few options should something be needed to expand the time"

The Blow-Up

While the Unicorn are good at looking beyond these divisions when their Clan needs them, during the more idle winter not even the war maneuvers can keep some tempers from flaring.

The sounds of voices raised in anger filters through the low hum of the tent city as you walk by one of the impromptu taverns. The crowd starts to pull back, and two samurai stumble out of the tent with fury writ in the lines on their faces.

A Shinjo, his hair pulled in to a traditional top-knot and a neatly pressed kimono hanging over a lean warrior's frame, glares at a huge Moto man. It is your old friend Batun, who seems to have the preternatural ability to be in the middle of cultural incidents.

"Take back your words, Batun-san..." The other man says, his voice cold and his hand moving to rest on the purple silk wrappings of his katana. "Or answer with your honor."

"You Rokugani cannot even take a joke!" Batun says with a laugh, snorting and clearly – and unashamedly – drunk. "A real man would settle it with his fists, not with his Ee-Aye-Doh." He says, over pronouncing the words in a mocking fashion, his Ujik-hai accent more

pronounced in his drunkenness. "Let us solve this like men." He proclaims, holding up his fists.

The PCs have several opportunities here. They can, first of all, do nothing; ignoring the outburst is more polite and will save face if the Shinjo simply decides to ignore it. They can also intervene; Batun knows them (although he may not like them) and that they are guests of his Prince, and the Shinjo can put two and two together about outsiders likely having powerful patronage here. Once they have intervened the PCs can argue to defuse the duel, or to settle it either through a traditional duel or a brawl.

There is no one set way for them to do this. Batun favors honesty, the Shinjo (Shinjo Toramasu) favors sincerity. **Courtier / Awareness** (TN 25) is more likely to work on Toramasu while a straight telling of facts on Batun. Batun can also be convinced to work out some of his ire in a practice bout, or the Shinjo lured away to something more appropriate. This is far from an impossible situation to resolve, and even Batun (once he sees the PCs) will realize this is not the kind of show he wants to put on for his Lord; they want to be given a way out of what anger and booze has flared up. The GM is encouraged to use their best judgment.

PC Hosted Games

The PCs should feel free to host games as they normally would at Winter Court, although the GM should only prompt a *very* stalling table to do so. If a PC volunteers some sort of competition they will find a number of talented Unicorn to compete. A PC who is the winner gets a prize as is appropriate. A PC who hosts a competition gets +0.1 Glory, but they may only get this bonus **once** no matter how competitions they host.

Physical Tournaments

The Moto will host a number of other physical tournaments over the Winter, including a straight up weapons tournament. Any PC may compete.

The practice area that has been cleared for martial games and physical tournaments is similar to the wrestling ring in that it is flat and sparse, and cold but not bitterly so this close to the desert. Men in traditional garments and in furs practice with shinai and boken, as well as wooden representations of naginata, nodachi, and even the Moto scimitars. They are eager for a chance to show off their physical prowess in anything ranging from a friendly bout, to a tournament. After all, it is not just for courtiers that reputations can be made and plum assignments found at Winter Court.

Games

The Unicorn are quite fond of games of all types, and there will be competitions for many of them. Go, Shogi, Fortunes and Winds... even their obscure game using the ankle bones of sheep. Of course, a traditional Samurai who touches the bones will lose Honor.

Whole pavilions have been set aside for games, to keep the minds of warriors sharp (and their humors up) through the Winter. Many, however, prefer to play outside the walls of the tents. Braziers have been set up, simmering with an inviting red heat, to keep tables from the chill even in to the night as men and women consider games. There are many opportunities to find individual tests of skill as well as arrange impromptu competitions. No different than any Winter Court, exceptional displays of any kind of skill here are invariably to the benefit of the one showing them.

Social/Discussion Activities

While there are a number of Moto here, there are also Unicorn from every family including the Iuchi and the Ide, so there are plenty of opportunities for more courtly and artisan-based games as well. Sadane, poetry, and gossip all have their places even in the more martial Winter Court the PCs find themselves in.

The settings for the more courtly opportunities this Winter are perhaps the most removed from what a traditional samurai is used to. Far from the gilded palaces, here wits are matched in various settings. A discussion of poetry might happen sprawled around a fire in a yurt, while gossip might be bet found on horseback while on a ride across the plains. And it is even said that there is a midnight game of Sadane that can be found roaming through the camp at night picking random pieces of art on display, fueled by a particularly witty Iuchi and a small ocean of alcohol. Opportunities abound to join these outpourings of courtly knowledge, or create your own.

Burning Sands Tour

One option that the PCs can take if they wish to is a trip out into the Burning Sands. Their hosts will arrange a guide and they will ride out, spend a night camping just inside that famous desert, and return home the next day. The Unicorn will be a little impressed and a little amused by anyone who wishes to do this; they have the spirit of exploration, and are not used to encountering it that much in those from other clans.

The Burning Sands itself is as impressive as claimed. Miles and miles of desert, stretching out as far as the eye can see. The landscape goes from plains to the dunes of legend, and even in the dead of winter the

temperature climbs until the heat seeps in through your thick winter clothes.

You gather to camp in traditional Moto tents as night streaks across the desert sky. It is perhaps one of the more impressive nights you have seen in your days, the night deep and the stars brilliant in the sky. It grows bitterly cold, drawing you closer to the fires and in to your blankets. In the morning, heralded by the shriek of a falcon searching for its prey, you pack up and return to the borders of the Empire.

Part Three: Finding the Way

Toward the end of the winter, the Khan decides to provide an entertainment of his own – a test both for his own men and for the guests he has been plagued with.

Several weeks have passed by since you came to this most unusual court, filled with both the traditional winter offerings and so many exotic things it may be hard to keep them all straight. But the Khan has announced a break in the games so that everyone can play one of HIS devising, and no one would dare try to keep their Go game going during his announcement. Once the majority of the camp is assembled, he addresses you.

Though not tall, Moto Gaheris is an intimidating sight – his face is hard and weathered, and he wears weapons and fur as naturally as any courtier clads themselves in silk. He is burly and bow-legged, but the burning intensity of his gaze prevents any but the most foolhardy from thinking him a comic figure.

“We are a people of explorers.” The Khan begins with little preamble. “The plains are ours; the hills are ours. The wind itself as it whips across them, is ours.” Well, no one said he was not proud of their accomplishments. “In this spirit, my game is an exploration. I have hidden a prize; the first clue could be anywhere between here and the edge of the Burning Sands. Find the prize with your team, and you win.” He sits back down on his camp stool, and looks out at the crowd. It seems he was expecting this would be all the explanation needed. “Tadaji, assign them teams. And then go! Your time wastes.”

The first complication is that the teams are not self-chosen. Tadaji shows no sign of surprise that he has been chosen to divide them in to teams, regardless of whether or not he feels it. He will divide the PCs into

teams based on his whims. For diplomacy, for opportunity, or perhaps because he finds it terribly amusing to put some people together. The PCs will find themselves put into teams based on the whims of the GM; even the number of characters per team is at Tadaji's discretion. The teams should be balanced so they have a chance, by putting in NPCs as needed, but they should not be the cliques of normal party members at the table.

For simplicity, particularly if time is an issue, Tadaji may simply assign all of the PCs to one team – given that they all accompanied him from Shiro Moto, it is reasonable that he may just naturally associate them together and go from there.

The second complication is that the Khan has actually given a clue in his speech to the first location. The plains, the hills, and the wind itself is his way of saying where it is. PCs may roll **Investigation / Awareness** to see if they pick up on his including of that phrase as being important, at a TN 30. Many of the Moto will not catch this, as their Khan is generally much more subtle than most of his tribe (no matter how much or little that is saying), but a few will catch the clue and bustle out with a definite direction in mind.

Tadaji will give them another clue, as he assigns them teams. He will also explain that this is for true explorers; they must find the first clue, but that it will lead them to another.

“I hear the prize is sets of brass rings, the kind given by the Khan to his wife Kara during their courtship. Interesting for it to be such a traditional gift, don't you think?”

PCs may roll **Investigation / Awareness** at a TN of 20 to catch the slight emphasis on the word “traditional” in Tadaji's question. Rolling **Lore: History / Intelligence** (or other niche Skills like Lore: Unicorn, Lore: Bushi, or others at the GM's discretion) at a TN of 25 to remember that the Moto family's main dojo was located at Bugaisha before Gaheris arrived from the Burning Sands to lead the Clan.

The first clue is located at the Moto dojo, on the archery range secured to one of the buttes (archery targets). It is within a few hours ride.

There are several options that the PCs and their teams can take to try to find the way. Tracking will not be easy, given the wind and the fact that the terrain is not particularly suited for it. **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** at a TN of 30 is necessary to find the trail

left by the Khan and his riders when they returned from hiding the prize.

A more social party might try to track the movements of the Khan's riders and Gaheris himself over the last few days. His servants and closest confidantes know of the game and so are a little difficult to get anything from. A few of his men went out the day before the announcement to place it. Finding this information requires a **Courtier / Awareness** roll at a TN of 30 to find a person who has the information and to get it out of them.

There are numerous other options for finding out where it is, more numerous than we can list here. As a general rule it should not be easy to find, but creativity should be rewarded. If it seems like an approach a team wants to take is a plausible one, an appropriate roll for them should be found and use the TNs listed above as a general guideline.

Regardless of how they arrived at the dojo, the first team to do so will find the next clue.

The old dojo of the Moto family is most of an hour's hard ride away from the camp. The ride takes you through a long stretch of uninterrupted plains, before you start to climb through a series of low hills. The view is stunning, and as you come up over the last hill you find yourself looking at the Dojo. It sits in a plain whipped by the wind, forcing the archers to learn how to fire accurately even in terrible conditions. As the Khan said, the plains, the hills, and even the wind belongs to the Moto, for they all come together here.

In the field of targets you find a bag attached to one of the buttes with arrows fletched in the clan colors. You pull it out to read the clue.

“Life grows even in the harshest climes. Within a few hours ride, just inside the Burning Sands, is an Oasis. Find your way to it, and you will find my prize.” It is signed with the chop of the Khan. He must not be much for riddles.

The Raiders:

While the teams are out near the dojo, the PCs may roll **Investigation / Perception**, TN 20. Those who succeed notice tracks in the loose ground of the plains, indicating that a number of horsemen rode through the area not too long ago. The tracks lead off towards the desert border nearby.

Inquisitive PCs who follow the tracks will come upon the following sight.

Soldiers, several hundred of them, practice here at the border to the great desert. They ride about in lightning fast strikes while on what are clearly well trained steeds. You cannot make out their banners from this distance, although you can tell this is another practice battle rather than an actual melee; the dirt their mock battle kicks up obscures identification.

Here the PCs have another choice. They can ride up to try to identify who the combatants are, or they can leave. Riding up requires them to draw close enough that they can be seen. They can also just straight up ride to the men at any time.

As you draw closer, you can begin to see through the dust and haze of the mock melee. Banners of an unusual style snap in the breeze, bright against the sky. Though they may be in the traditional shapes, you can recognize the banners of the Moto; the old Moto, the traditional Moto that came from the desert and swept through their clan.

Drawing closer to identify them allows the PCs to make a **Battle / Perception** roll, TN 20 to realize the following:

They are using the tactics of the desert here as well. There are loose formations, rather than ordered lines. Their cavalry charges, while no doubt effective, are more based on raiding than fighting. That, perhaps, is what these are: raiders. Hold-outs for the old ways of warfare practiced by the Ujik-hai in the desert, where raids on caravans and clans were the rule rather than the more formal warfare or even skirmishing of Rokugan. The desert sands seem a living thing as they race about on top of it.

PCs who get closer than this, linger too long, or come down in to the valley will be approached by Moto. The Moto will not attack (they are not stupid or suicidal enough to attack their Khan's guests), but they will be told in no uncertain terms that this is not the place for them.

A man rides up to you, all in furs and leather. He has a long and thin moustache drooping down to points, and his skin looks like it was made from the same leather that adorns his powerful chest. He moves with his horse like it was a part of him, like his own legs were just for decoration and the horse his true way of moving. He speaks simply, his accent thick, his words direct.

“Go. Return to the camp. This is not a part of your games.”

The Moto, who does not identify himself, will not speak any more, but wait as implacable as stone for the PCs to leave. He will not fight them, but he and his men will keep them from doing anything resembling participation. Should the PCs be stupid enough to attack a Raider leader in full view of hundreds of his buddies, they will be viciously slaughtered and the gene pool enriched. Give them every chance to not do this, but if they insist then they are dead and do not get the 'Good Death' karma bonus.

On to the Oasis:

Assuming players don't want to quit after finding the clue, they need to find the Oasis. Here they have a couple of options. The first of which is simply tracking it, if they have the know-how.

Three checks of **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** at TNs of 20, 25, and 30 are required to make their way to the Oasis. Anyone who stops and asks for directions at the Dojo (as there are still people there, if only to keep it from completely collapsing) will reduce these TNs by 5. PCs who took part in the Sandstorm Race, above, gain a number of Free Raises on this roll equal to their Intelligence – the oasis is the same as the one they found on the second day.

If they have any natives with them (Unicorn PCs assigned to Bugaisha, or filled in teams with NPCs) they may reduce those TNs by 5 as well. Teams without Hunting can also use an appropriate Lore skill that would be relevant to finding an Oasis to do so, at the GM's discretion for if the Skill fits and what the TN should be. However they get there, below is what they see:

Hours of riding take you in to the Rokugan side of the desert, the day growing hot despite the month and seeping in to your winter clothes. Tan, streaked with brown and red, is all around you as the desert seems to go on unrelieved. Only seems to go on unrelieved, because as you follow your way, the Oasis comes upon you around a corner like a surprise. Rich and verdant, it has been enough winter and then desert that this comes as something of a shock. A lovely pond ripples in the desert wind invitingly inside of it, and it casts shadows as the sun begins to set.

If two teams find out where it is and both succeed at the checks to get there at roughly the same time, resolve it as a race. A party that is mounted wins automatically over one that is on foot. If both parties are mounted,

have them make three **Horsemanship / Agility** rolls. Each roll they may choose whether to take the safe path or the dangerous path; the safe path TNs are 15, 20, and 25. The Dangerous are 25, 30, and 35. Taking the dangerous path puts them ahead, but if they fail they will take damage and fall behind. To get from behind the dangerous path must be taken.

For the first team within it, the prize awaits them by the pond. On a small pile of rocks that have been set up as a table, a filled cloth pouch awaits their hands. But now they have a choice to make: sleep in the oasis, or ride back in the dark? Either one has perils.

For those who choose to sleep in the Oasis, the perils come in the form of animal life. Two characters will have to deal with snakes in their bedrolls. Choose two PCs. Have them make **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** rolls during the night, TN 15. If they succeed, they can make an Agility roll at TN 20 to get out of their bed as the snake occupies it and hisses. If they fail, then they will get bitten for 2k1 damage, and lose a temporary point of Agility until they are magically healed or given an antidote (both of which can be easily found back in camp). Their ride back in the morning is uneventful, and roll-less.

Those who try to make their way back in the night face a more obvious issue, getting their horses back through the rough terrain without killing them. This is accomplished through three **Horsemanship / Perception** rolls, TNs of 15, 20, and 25 as the night grows deeper. Failure causes their horses to get injured, although not so terribly each time. Each 'injury' gives the rider a -1k0 to the next check, until the horse can be healed. If all three checks result in injuries, the riders will face some social stigma for the rest of winter for pushing their horses more than they as riders can handle.

The Explorer's Rewards

When the prize is found and brought back, they will be given their prize by the Khan in front of the other teams.

The Khan holds the small bag that was retrieved from the oasis in his blunt and weathered hands, considering it thoughtfully for a moment. "I gave rings such as these to my wife when we were courting. She was a fierce spirit, a true light of the desert. I give you rings in her honor, and in honor of what the Moto and Unicorn have had to sacrifice to become great in Rokugan." He hands you a small brass ring, engraved with Ujik-hai symbols, as your prize.

The Khan will reward the winners, and anyone who did something particularly impressive during the treasure hunt. If someone rolled above a 50 on a Horsemanship check, or expertly found the Oasis despite not having the Hunting skill, those are the kinds of feats that will impress Gaheris the elder enough to earn a ring.

The Hunting Party

Things continue on as normal for Winter Court after the scavenger hunt, but winter is quickly drawing to a close. If there are any further games, contests, or political opportunities the PCs wish to find/compete in/run, this is going to be their last chance to do so. When it is clear they have exhausted what they wish to do this winter, then on one of the final days before they will return to the Empire with the camp, they receive a letter telling them they will be accompanying the Khan out on a hunting party the next day. It will depart at dawn. Perhaps the Khan just doesn't like them sleeping in?

If there is one thing the edge of the desert does well, it is dawn. The light of Lord Yakamo bursts out over the low hills and spreads to fill the great expanse of sky. Spring will be here soon, and it is going to be a relatively warm day with a few picturesque clouds to dot the sky. You find your horses are saddled and the bags filled for a day out with the Khan, hunting to the edge of the desert. The burly champion of the Unicorn waits in his furs, a hunting falcon waiting patiently on his arm and a strangely curved and oddly small (to Rokugani eyes) bow hanging from his saddle. Both Gaheris Khan and Gaheris Koghun are here, as well as a number of their riders, ready for one last hunt.

Neither Gaheris says much as you set off towards the desert, giving you almost a full Rokugani hour to take in the stark beauty of the land, and perhaps wake up fully. But finally the Khan turns to you in his saddle, and speaks.

"I have brought you to our lands so that you might answer something for me, samurai," he says, his voice steady and even. "How do you find our culture? How do you find the ways of those who have come in from the desert like the wind, and now rule one of your Clans? Does your Empire accept us? Can it ever?" He looks at you, his eyes piercing as if daring you to mince words. "Should it?"

Gaheris is looking to determine how the PCs accept the Moto culture. He is using them as a sort of sample group to determine how the rest of the Empire will act.

They have spent a winter taking in the culture of the Moto. Bluff, blunt, but strong. He wants to know if after this exposure, they can find some acceptance of it. If yes, then it means the cause of integration can work; if not, then it seems to show that integration will not. Needless to say, there is a lot riding on this interaction; it is the climax of their time at Winter Court this year.

Gaheris prizes honesty. He is a shrewd man, and he will respond more favorably to those who speak straight to him. Those who try to equivocate will get one chance from him, earning the following response:

Gaheris looks at you, and gives a short shake of his head. "I did not ask for pretty words, samurai, or for a court dance. Give me straight words, and I will not be offended. But if you will not answer me straight, then that itself will be an answer."

If the PCs continue to try to equivocate, then one of the riders will ride forward and state the Raider philosophy quite bluntly.

One of the riders, clearly a desert Moto, comes up at the words coming from your party. "You see, my Khan, how they disrespect you with their half-truths and pretty words. We are strong; why would we weaken ourselves with their ways, their rules? Let them learn the lessons of the Sands: let them fear the thunder of our hooves, and know the strength of our steel while we claim their water and gold." Gaheris Khan does not contradict him, instead looking to you to see if you will speak plainly and refute him.

If the PCs respond forthrightly and honestly, however, they will find the Khan more than willing to actually debate them on the issues. He tends towards the practical concerns, rather than the philosophical: Can the Empire accept the Moto, and if so how much should the Moto bend to gain this acceptance? If the PCs are arguing that the Empire does accept them:

Gaheris snorts. "My cousins returned three centuries ago and are still ridiculed for our clothes, our customs, and our manners. Even those who are in every other way Rokugani but keep our most ancient customs are seen as outsiders. This is acceptance?" He asks. "Why should we believe it will be any different? And why would it benefit us, when the Empire seems to demand we sacrifice everything, and they nothing?"

But since he is actually interested in determining out the truth, he is also more than willing to play devil's advocate if necessary to get PCs opinions fully fleshed

out. If they are arguing that the Empire can never accept them:

"The Empire accepts strength, samurai. Three centuries ago my cousins came back and were attacked. Now my... good servant Tadaji serves as Imperial Advisor, and no one would argue we are not a full Clan. The Scorpion were exiled twice, and accepted back. Are we so hideous the Empire will never have a place for us as brothers?"

In the end the conversation largely depends on the PCs. Gaheris Khan is not trying to convince them of anything, he is giving them the opportunity to convince him. After the roleplaying is done, let the PCs appoint a champion to roll, someone who must have actually picked a position and argued it. Or two people to roll, if the PCs are divided. Every other person who actually took a position and argued it may roll **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** at TN 20, or **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** at TN 40, to add +5 to the champion who agrees with them. The champion(s) then roll either **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** at TN 45 or **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** at TN 60, remembering to include the bonuses from their team.

There are a few other factors that can provide the PCs with bonuses: Participation in any of the Moto's events, such as the wrestling or archery contests, or the Sandstorm Race, will grant a Free Raise (for each event, not for each participant). Any PC who won one of the traditional Moto event provides an additional Free Raise to the roll. Finally, if any Crane players remember that Doji Menechan has a granddaughter he was hoping to offer to the Unicorn to increase the strength of their alliance, they may automatically convince the Khan that they believe the Unicorn have a place in the Empire by making the offer for the unwed Gaheris Koghun. Gaheris Khan values action more than words, and that action would indicate the PCs do think of the Unicorn as samurai, by asking them to make the same sort of sacrifice for duty that all are expected to make. (Bringing Daidoji Tsumerai into the discussion to make the offer is not possible, but if he is in camp, and the PCs think of it, he would be more than happy to do so when consulted later.)

If they succeed, they have convinced the Khan. If two different people are rolling, then whomever succeeds by the most has convinced the Khan.

As the day goes on and the conversations continue, they are occasionally broken up to perform their task here: Hunting. But at the end of the day, with Gaheris Khan's falcon well fed, the Khan looks thoughtful. "Perhaps you are right, samurai. You

have given me something to think on, and for that I thank you. May you enjoy our hospitality for the rest of the time you are here; and may the winds bring you to our tents once again, whether it be as a brother or a worthy foe.” And with that, in silence, you return to your camp.

Conclusion

The hunting party is truly the end of Winter Court. A few days later the camp is broken down (at surprising speed), and all the thousands of Unicorn (and a few outsiders) begin to make their way back in to the Empire proper.

As you set out to return to your homes on the last day of winter, the Sun is low above the ground and the moon is still visible in the sky. Light begins to fill the sky, and lines of horses stretch out far in to the distance. The moon almost seems to watch you as you set off in those lines, the thoughts of the last months heavy in your minds. Great changes have been wrought in this court, to the Unicorn and perhaps to their very place in the Empire. It will only be in the coming years when you can look back and pinpoint what was forged in this oddly warm winter, and what was nothing more than an airy spirit dancing on the desert breeze.

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
Attending the true Winter Court:	+1XP

Took part in at least one event at the Court: +1XP

Total Possible Experience: 4XP

Honor

There are no automatic Honor gains or losses for this module, but any character who is too freely enjoying the Unicorn hospitality (carousing, getting drunk, brawling, etc) will lose Honor for their lack of decorum.

Glory

Winning a competition: +0.1 (up to two times)

Hosting a competition: +0.1 (once)

Winning the Scavenger Hunt: +0.2

Riding a horse back with three injuries during the scavenger hunt: -0.2

Refusing to take a position in the Hunting Party: -0.1

Other Awards/Penalties

Any PC that takes a position in the discussion during the Hunting Party gains either Gaheris Koghun or Ide Tadaji as an Ally, depending on which brought them. Ide Tadaji has Devotion 1 and Influence 4, while Moto Gaheris Koghun is Devotion 2 and Influence 3.

Module Tracking Sheets

Was the PC noticed by the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang?

Note any significant events the PC took part in during Winter Court.

Was the PC given a ring by Gaheris at the end of the Scavenger Hunt?

GM Reporting

Did any PCs remain at Shiro Moto?

Did the Moto allow women to wrestle in the Nadaam?

Did the PCs earn any rings from Gaheris?

Did the PCs convince Gaheris Khan that the Moto can be accepted by the Empire?

Did the PCs offer Doji Kyomi (Menechan's granddaughter) to Gaheris Koghun for marriage?

GM must report this information BEFORE (6/29/2013) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs at Shiro Moto

Though most of these characters will not be present for the majority of the module, they are listed here with some rough guidelines as to how they should be portrayed.

Moto Maduhl: The cherbi (valued servant, equivalent to hatamoto) of the Khan, he is a burly warrior who is fascinated by Rokugani culture. A friendly man who loves a drink, a song, and a fine meal, he will make the PCs as welcome as he may, though in Shiro Moto he is unapologetic about the traditions of his Moto ancestors.

Honor: 3.8 **Status:** 7.0 **Glory:** 5.9 **School/Rank:** Moto Bushi 5

Shinjo Shirasu: An Emerald Magistrate, Shirasu is a serious, plain-featured samurai devoted to his duty and the Empire. He is one of the few Unicorn to hold high rank in the Imperial bureaucracies, and is quietly proud of his achievements and the glory they allow him to earn for the Clan.

Honor: 6.3 **Status:** 5.0 **Glory:** 5.8 **School/Rank:** Shinjo Bushi 4

Ide Tadaji: One of the most experienced courtiers in the Empire, the Imperial Advisor is nonetheless not one of Gaheris' favorite people. He is stocky and fairly handsome, though he walks with a severe limp as a result of a club foot.

Honor: 6.1 **Status:** 9.0 **Glory:** 6.2 **School/Rank:** Ide Emissary 5

Hida Rohiteki: One of the most outgoing Crab, let alone Kuni-trained shugenja, in the Empire, she is O-Ushi's spiritual advisor and cousin. Though she is quiet about her feelings, she is somewhat hoping to see Hida Yasamura, her cousin's husband.

Honor: 2.8 **Status:** 6.0 **Glory:** 4.9 **School/Rank:** Kuni Shugenja 4

Daidoji Tsumerai: Wielder of the Yari of Air and spear sensei at the Daidoji School, Tsumerai is a fit, handsome bushi with a reputation as a warrior of some skill. (PCs may have met and traveled with him during SoB08, "Fire and Water.")

Honor: 6.8 **Status:** 2.5 **Glory:** 4.3 **School/Rank:** Daidoji Iron Warrior 4

Doji Menechan: An older and influential Crane courtier, Menechan is present to shore up the alliance between the Crane and the Unicorn. To that end, he hopes to offer his granddaughter's hand in marriage to a high-ranking Unicorn samurai. She is a lovely young Doji Courtier by the name of Kyomi.

Honor: 7.1 **Status:** 5.5 **Glory:** 4.2 **School/Rank:** Doji Courtier 5

Togashi Suteru: A calm and even-tempered Tattooed Man, Suteru was no doubt chosen due to his placid nature and even disposition. A former monk, it is unlikely that he will be drawn into any sort of disagreement with the Unicorn.

Honor: 4.2 **Status:** 2.0 **Glory:** 2.1 **School/Rank:** Togashi Tattooed Man 3

Ikoma Midori: A fiery storyteller with a good reputation in the courts, she is here to demonstrate that the Lion Clan has respect for, but no fear of, the Unicorn Clan.

Honor: 6.4 **Status:** 4.3 **Glory:** 4.8 **School/Rank:** Ikoma Bard 3

Yoritomo Takafumi: The Mantis and Unicorn have little in common, so Takafumi is only present to give his Clan some semblance of a voice here. Otherwise, he firmly considers himself to be an outsider among outsiders.

Honor: 3.2 **Status:** 3.7 **Glory:** 2.8 **School/Rank:** Yoritomo Courtier 3

Asako Yasotaro: The Phoenix have had issues with Yobanjin raids intermittently over the last few years, and though the Phoenix have no real reason to bother the Unicorn, the scholar Yasotaro is interested in what the Unicorn may know of the "other" northern barbarians.

Honor: 6.3 **Status:** 3.1 **Glory:** 2.8 **School/Rank:** Asako Loremaster 3

Bayushi Sugimi: A pretty, elegant courtier, she is mostly resigned to presence at this court. She has encountered Maduhl before, and suspects he has some sort of interest in her (which is quite true).

Honor: 3.2 **Status:** 3.2 **Glory:** 3.4 **School/Rank:** Bayushi Courtier 4

Appendix #2: NPCs at the Khan's Court

Moto Gaheris Khan: The leader of the Unicorn has a reputation as a ruthless, savage warrior, one which he utterly deserves. However, he also views himself as one with a divine mandate, though he is uncertain how best to handle the Clan's future, and is very concerned about not wasting the blessing granted him by the Kami Shinjo.

Honor: 4.6 **Status:** 8.0 **Glory:** 9.2 **School/Rank:** Moto Bushi 5

Moto Gaheris Koghun: In a number of ways, Gaheris Koghun is a slighter, taller version of his father. He is nowhere near as experienced in the ways of war as the Khan, but in some ways is more clever, and he is reputed to be nowhere near as vicious.

Honor: 5.7 **Status:** 7.0 **Glory:** 5.6 **School/Rank:** Moto Bushi 3

Moto Hideyo: The commander of the Moto White Guard, Hideyo was until recently the military governor of Toshi no Meiyō Gisei, an honor he held after leading the Unicorn troops that claimed the city. He is somewhat bitter over the city's loss, but is making an effort to use his feelings as motivation to focus his return to the field rather than be consumed by it.

Honor: 5.7 **Status:** 6.5 **Glory:** 6.9 **School/Rank:** Moto Vindicator 4

Moto Su-Tai: The daimyo of the Enkaku province, Moto Su-Tai is exactly what many Rokugani imagine when they think of a Moto. He lives in a chomchog, eats red meat with relish, and rarely bathes. He enjoys the reaction that he provokes in many Rokugani, and knows that the Khan trusts him because of his skill as a warrior. Moto Su-Tai is never far from his great scimitar, and he remembers growing up in his homeland with pride. Activities around the campfire or in his chomchog court include more lounging and smoking pipes than debating politics or poetry.

Honor: 2.7 **Status:** 6.0 **Glory:** 5.9 **School/Rank:** Moto Bushi 5

Moto Ukyo: The daimyo of the Zenzan province; Moto Ukyo was part of the recent influx of New Moto, and was married to Moto Naomi as an attempt to bridge the gap with the Old Moto; he changed his name from 'Burigli' to a more Rokugani one. Moto Ukyo spends most of his time riding with his men on the grasslands and checking on the mining villages.

Honor: 3.3 **Status:** 6.0 **Glory:** 5.3 **School/Rank:** Moto Bushi 4

Moto Zheng: The daimyo of the Ikoku province, Moto Zheng is a thin man, who walks like he was born in the saddle. One of the New Moto, the Khan has trusted him to run his province correctly. He does have a decent talent for administration, but still relies heavily on his karo and other advisors to manage the many happenings in his province. Moto Zheng's favorite times seem to be the inspections, when he rides out to different parts of the province and examines the progress in person.

Honor: 3.9 **Status:** 6.0 **Glory:** 5.2 **School/Rank:** Moto Bushi 4

Ide Gokun: The daimyo of the Ide family, Gokun is a returned spirit from the Dawn of the Empire. He will attempt to serve the Khan as a liaison with the guests and Tadaji, though he remains far more comfortable on the battlefield than in the court and is far happier to be engaged in the war maneuvers.

Honor: 5.9 **Status:** 7.0 **Glory:** 5.8 **School/Rank:** Shinjo Bushi 5

Handout #1: Unicorn PCs

Children of the Wind,

The Empire has long had a proverb, “While you rest, your enemy practices.” Our Champion has decided that the winter months are far too long to rest. We are commanded to join him in the west, near the fortress of Bugaisha, to train and ready as a Clan for the combat that we will surely face in the coming summer. The Lion Clan is a strong enemy, but we shall show them the might of the Unicorn.

You have been sent to Shiro Moto for the opening of Winter Court. The Khan will not be there, nor will his generals, but it is important that the Khan learn of events in the capitol. Ide Tadaji, the Imperial Advisor, will be traveling to Shiro Moto to offer his advice. He will need to be escorted to Bugaisha, so that the doings of the Empire can be brought before our Clan’s leadership.

May the Lady guide your path.

Handout #2: Burning Sands Moto

Brothers and Sisters of the Sands,

The Khan has spent the last six years studying the ways of war in the Empire, and he has chosen this winter to share his insights with the Clan. We gather in the far west, almost beyond the borders of Rokugan, to spend these months training while the weaker Clans rest.

You will begin the season in Shiro Moto, to see if there are any guests worthy of bearing witness to the might of the Unicorn. Gaheris Koghun, son of the Khan, will seek your counsel, and then you may join us to learn his father's will as we prepare ourselves for the coming seasons of war.

The Khan calls, and we answer!