

Grateful Reward

**A One-Round Mid-Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido
Month of the Sun, 1142 (Spring)**

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Once again, you have assisted Doji Oharu with a “small matter.” Now, you only await your reward... but a samurai’s work is never done.

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

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

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

Reminder

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

Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a Mid-Rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank 3.

Although most of the challenges here are role-play oriented and thus not terribly dependent on party strength, a few changes can be made to adjust the adventure difficulty for low-end and high-end parties, as follows:

Low End Party (most/all characters Rank 2): Decrease the TN of the initial rolls for Wound Ranks by 5. The Otoshi-gumi Soldiers in the first combat have their first two Wound Ranks filled. The enemies in the second combat have their first two Wound Ranks filled, and only one Void Point remaining.

High End Party (most/all characters Rank 4): Increase the TN of the initial rolls for Wound Ranks by 5. Increase the Otoshi-gumi Soldiers' Reflexes to 3 and the Otoshi-gumi Lieutenants' Reflexes to 4.

Adventure Summary and Background

This adventure is unique in that it is designed in the vein of a 'bottle episode' from television. The PCs should not be leaving the room they start in at any time during the module. They will be directing other investigators as they look into things, and rolling those investigators' stats. Even the two combats occur within the waiting room of Doji Oharu's residence. If the PCs start to get antsy or cabin feverish, then good: they are, in fact, stuck.

But it should also be fun. The NPCs will gain bonuses from the PCs they are 'paired' to, involving the PCs in an indirect fashion. They have an unorthodox investigation with unorthodox investigators.

The mod starts at the end of a different mod the PCs have just played off-screen. They are gathered to get the Glory, Honor, and other rewards that they have earned with a long and grueling job for Doji Oharu—it just turns out that they aren't quite done yet.

While they are waiting to discuss their successful mission with Oharu, there is a monk who will give them the chance to gain a void point back with a tea ceremony. During their discussion with Oharu, this monk will die from poison delivered by Kakita Haruteka. Haruteka is a fervent supporter of Toshiken

who wants him to go to open war against the Imperial Regent; the poison is to be blamed on an Owl, a known supporter of Okucho, in the hopes it will provoke a war.

Of course, the PCs don't know any of this. While they may suspect it is a poison, it also presents symptoms similar to a disease, and so they are quarantined. They must investigate, hoping it is poison, a poison that they likely believe (and Oharu believes) is related to the smuggling bust they just completed.

After they find the poisoner, Bayushi Akanishin, he says that an Owl paid him to do it. After they have gotten enough information that they could reasonably track the Owl down, a hit squad attacks them. During this fight they will only have their wakizashi, since they put their weapons up when they came in and they have no spells. After the fight, they will notice the hit squad all bear the same tattoo as the smuggling gang, which should clue them in to the fact that there are two factions at work here.

The second period of investigation is to find the 'Owl', actually Haruteka. He has shaved his head, grown a beard, and started dressing like an Owl to try to pin the blame. The doshin catch him on the way out of town, and bring him back. This starts the second interrogation: a discussion with Haruteka of his motives and reasons. It starts as interrogation and philosophy, but ends more practical: a second hit squad comes, and now they have to decide whether to arm Haruteka or not (if they convinced him of their views), or to fight them both.

Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- Ally: Doji Oharu
- Owl Cert
- A Position in the Emerald Magistrates organization

Special Note

No more than six players can play this module; it can be played with fewer, but there are only six deputy characters for the players to control through the investigation.

Introduction

Through this section, the PCs must make several rolls to determine the difficulty they had with the previous investigation. These rolls will primarily determine how much damage the PCs begin the module with. Void may be spent on these rolls, but the character's Void Points do not refresh between rolls. Shugenja PCs may spend spell slots to give themselves or other PCs +1k0 on a roll (one spell slot per unkept die), and these slots do not refresh either. PCs may use Luck or Honor Rolls on these rolls as normal, but these (or any other limited-resource effects) will not refresh. Any unused Void Points, spell slots, or Luck will reduce the overall Wounds taken at the end, but will be expended entirely before the PCs begin the first scene – it is intentional that the character are entirely exhausted and out of resources at the beginning of this module.

Two weeks ago, you answered another request from the Emerald Magistrate Doji Oharu for assistance in one of his “simple matters”; as usual, the matter was anything but simple. Reports had come to light concerning a yakuza group trafficking through the Shadows of Beiden, the small passes through the Spine of the World Mountains between the Scorpion lands and the Lion lands. Following the death of two Emerald Magistrates and their yoriki, Oharu asked some of his more accomplished allies to look into the matter: you. A squad of trained peasant deputies were sent to assist you, and they proved quite useful.

Your investigation began at Ryoko Owari Toshi, the infamous city that produces the vast majority of the Empire's opium (both legal and illegal). Scouring through the dark underbelly of the city and the devious merchants that call it home was unpleasant, but the deputies, particularly Michi and Akira, were quite helpful in finding information on the smuggling ring: a particularly nasty gang calling themselves the “Otohi-gumi”, led by a brutal ronin bushi with the name of Kosatsu.

Each PC rolls **Investigation / Awareness** at a TN of 35; failure means that the character is down a Wound Rank at the start of the first scene. (This should be tracked, rather than applied immediately.)

From there, you followed a trail of bodies, bribes, and burned poppy fields northeast to the mountains. Tracking the yakuza through the wilderness was a difficult task, particularly given their ruthlessness with regards to leaving witnesses behind, but one of the deputies, Kohaku, proved to be a hunter of some

ability and the gang's hideout was eventually discovered.

Each PC rolls **Hunting / Stamina** (TN 35), as above.

With their headquarters finally located in small mountain keep, you prepared for an assault on the yakuza's leadership. Haru and Yoshi, the two most experienced deputies, led the others in keeping the bulk of the gang occupied while you confronted Kosatsu. The ronin proved every bit as vicious as his reputation indicated, and combined his bloodthirst with incredible skill and tenacity. He and his lieutenants only fell after an epic battle, refusing to be taken alive.

Each PC makes a roll to represent their character's primary combat ability: generally, a **Weapon Skill / Agility** roll, though the GM may allow them to substitute other Traits as appropriate for the Skill or style in question (Strength for Heavy Weapons or Jiujutsu, or Reflexes for Agility, for example). Shugenja may roll **Spellcraft / [primary Ring]**. Any character may instead roll **Defense / Agility**. The TN for this roll is 45; success means that the character will take one Wound Rank worth of damage, while failure results in two Wound Ranks. Again, this should be tracked rather than applied immediately.

You had no time to celebrate your victory before one of the deputies, Ren, burst in with a warning about the hideout: one of the yakuza had triggered a trap that would destroy the complex. Taking Kosatsu's head, you fled the collapsing castle and watched flames claim the ruins. With their leader dead and their resources destroyed, the Otohi-gumi are finished, but it was far from the “simple matter” indicated by Oharu.

Each PC must roll **Athletics / Water** at a TN of 35 to flee; Disadvantages that limit mobility, such as **Lame** or **Small**, give a penalty of -1k1 to this roll. As before, failure results in the loss of a Wound Rank.

At this point, each PC should lose one full Wound Rank, plus an additional Wound Rank for each of the above rolls they failed (or two, for the combat). For example, if a character succeeded only at the first roll, they would begin the next scene with their Injured (+15) Wound Rank filled. (Void Points or other damage-reducing effects do not apply to this loss.)

Additionally, each PC loses all of their remaining limited-use resources; any ability that may only be used a limited number of times per module or day is considered to be entirely expended. Each such effect

does allow the PC to recover one Wound (a single individual Wound, not a Wound Rank). This also includes Void Points and spell slots.

The intention of this is to put the PCs in the position that they frequently are at the end of a module: all of their resources are gone, they are wounded and exhausted, and they are ready to be finished with their task. The idea is that the characters have just accomplished an epic undertaking, albeit “off-screen”, and players who wish to run with the concept should be encouraged to do so.

Part One: Something to Believe In

Doji Oharu’s estate in Miotoshi Mura is, as might be expected, lavishly decorated and filled with all the comforts one could wish. The large village is roughly two hours’ ride north and east of Ryoko Owari, where the Crane once served as an Emerald Magistrate. The town is quite prosperous, and has a relatively sizable population of samurai who enjoy a more sedate lifestyle than that found in the city. Though he is not the gokenin, Oharu’s house is the largest in the village, and a welcome sight in the orange glow of the setting sun as you make your painful way back to report in.

Miotoshi Mura is a trade hub for the smaller farming communities that dot the Scorpion Kinbou province, giving them access to the enormous market that is Ryoko Owari Toshi. Most of the farmland around Ryoko Owari is used for growing poppies, leaving them to get their food somewhat further away, and Miotoshi Mura is one of the communities that feeds the Scorpion metropolis. Additionally, there are a number of samurai residents who have made the town a haven of sorts away from the bustle of the big city, while remaining close enough to take advantage of its opportunities on occasion (making it something of a Rokugani version of a suburb, though somewhat more removed as far as travel is concerned by modern standards).

There are rumors that Oharu’s manor was provided to him for assisting the Unicorn Clan when they controlled Ryoko Owari after the Scorpion Clan Coup, but for whatever reason, the Scorpion never chose to reclaim the property even after the Emerald Magistrate was assigned elsewhere. A high wall surrounds the grounds; in addition to the house and its elegant garden, there is a stable and a small

outbuilding currently in use as barracks for Oharu’s deputies.

A pair of guards at the gate grant you entrance, recognizing you from your earlier visit and summon a servant. You are shown to rooms and a bath-house to clean yourselves up and change from your travel- and blood-stained clothing, and to secure your gear. Almost immediately, however, another servant, a lovely young woman with impeccable manners, escorts you to a waiting room outside Oharu’s office. Another of Oharu’s allies, an elderly monk by the name of Kitahachi, rises from where he was clearly waiting to deliver his own report to bow deeply at your entrance.

“Greetings, samurai! You appear to have had much more difficulty with your task than I did with mine... Oharu-sama is busy at the moment, but while we are waiting, please allow me to be of assistance.” He sends the servant to fetch tea for a tea ceremony, and opens a satchel full of medical supplies.

Kitahachi is a member of the Brotherhood of Shinsei, a priest of the Four Temples who has provided his advice to Oharu on several occasions. He is happy to provide healing, using the Medicine Skill (3k1 Wounds returned to any PC willing to allow it), and will genially invite them to partake of a tea ceremony before their meeting in order to compose their minds. While normally, the tea ceremony may only benefit up to five people including the one performing it, Kitahachi’s skill allows him to lead up to six other people through the forms, though it only grants one point of Void to those who participate. (No rolls are necessary for either the healing or the tea ceremony, only the PC’s participation.)

If asked about his business, Kitahachi will discuss his mission: Oharu asked him to look into reports of plague in the central Scorpion provinces. Kitahachi’s inquiries indicate that there is a disease spreading slowly among the lower orders, but without any samurai victims, it is unlikely to be a major concern for the nobility. It is thought that the disease came from the Lion lands to the east, and the reports indicate that those it afflicts are taken very suddenly ill, with crippling pain and fever; death is common, but not inevitable with proper care.

Through the tea ceremony and any quiet conversation the PCs choose to engage in, the sound of a pen scratching across paper can be heard through the thin walls of Oharu’s office. Whatever business he is currently engaged in, it is obviously solitary.

PCs who choose to attempt Meditation to recover more Void may do so (bearing in mind any existing Wound Penalties) at a base TN of 25 due to the situation: they run a risk of being interrupted or of being caught unaware when Oharu is finally ready to see them.

After the tea ceremony is over, and the monk has returned to the corner to sit in quiet stillness, your waiting resumes. A servant comes to take the pot, and delivers a single cup to the office. Most of an hour passes in relative silence, save for the faint scratching of Oharu's pen. While it is appropriate for a high ranking samurai to keep those lower than him waiting, even Oharu eventually recognizes this is perhaps getting to be too much. From his office, his rich baritone calls out apologetically. "Forgive me, samurai, I will be but a few moments longer."

But it is not Oharu's smooth voice that draws your attention. In the quiet of the room, it would be easy to forget a single elderly monk... but despite the legendary meditation prowess of the Brotherhood of Shinsei, this one has gone too quiet. Too still. He breathes no more, and as you watch, his head drops and his body slowly slides down the elegant wall to the spotless floor. His body is flushed, and as you watch it on the floor you start to feel shocks of pain running through your own limbs...

At this point, any of the PCs who took part in the tea ceremony are affected by a modified Venom-based poison – they are at -1k1 on all rolls due to the pain and distraction, as if their Traits had all been reduced by 1 (this does NOT reduce their Earth Ring for purposes of Wounds, however). This effect will take a day to start to wear off (mechanically, rolls for recovery are not made for 24 hours), and they will be thoroughly miserable in the meantime. However, given the nature of Kitahachi's last task, the affliction could be the result of disease as well. Once informed of the situation, Oharu will absolutely refuse to leave his office, since then he might get sick himself (the Rokugani do not have a strong grasp on pathology). Further interaction with Oharu will occur through the paper door to his office. He will refuse to allow any PCs to leave the room they are in, even those that are currently not showing symptoms, since they might spread the sickness to the town. He will acknowledge any PCs who point out they might have been poisoned, since this is valid, but since what they have does match up with the sickness the monk was investigating, he cannot risk it just yet.

Someone, however, has to discover what has happened. With both Oharu and his preferred pawns/allies under quarantine, the question is who will do so. The answer

lies in the peasant deputies who accompanied the PCs on the previous mission; they are already in Oharu's employ, and they are not 'infected'.

If the PC's suggest this, then Oharu responds with the following:

"Yes..." Oharu murmurs, from behind the closed shoji screen. "Yes, that is a wonderful idea. I will have my servants send them the information about what is going on here. You can send them directions as well, and they will be my yoriki for this. Well, doshin, at least. Doshin conducting an investigation, very unusual, but this is not exactly a normal situation is it, my friends?" You can almost hear him shaking his head. It sounds amused.

If the PCs don't come to this conclusion themselves, they can talk about it for a few minutes and run through the various options before Oharu will chime in with the following:

"Samurai, it seems to me we already have a group of investigators whose work you find satisfactory. If we have a disease then there will be nothing to do but wait for a shugenja and pray; but if it is poison, then they can find the source and hopefully find an antidote. If there is one." Oharu pauses. "Doshin do not normally undertake investigations themselves, but given the circumstances... unless you have some compelling reason we should not use them, I will send word."

PCs who choose to leave at this point are not only writing themselves out of the rest of the module, they run the risk of incurring Doji Oharu's wrath for so flagrantly violating his wishes and command. They do gain the other rewards mentioned at the end of this module for the deeds performed "off-screen", and two points of experience, but they incur several penalties: they lose Doji Oharu as an Ally, a full Rank of Glory, and gain "Sworn Enemy: Doji Oharu" and two full Ranks of Infamy.

Part Two: Lay Your Body Down

At this point, the GM should put the character sheets in the Appendix on the table, and explain that each player will choose one that they are running for the investigation. The one they choose represents the one that they did the most work with during the previous investigation, and thus formed some sort of relationship with in whatever way their PC would. The doshin have

a variety of different Skills among them, albeit obviously of less distinction than that of the PCs. The doshin characters are deliberately vague, to allow the players to determine for themselves what they are most comfortable playing; the names are specifically chosen to be gender-neutral, for example. The players should be given relatively free reign to fill in the gaps of background and personality as they see fit.

The doshin will get a bonus to all Skill Rolls equal to the Ranks in that Skill possessed by the player's PC. (This is essentially identical to the rules for Cooperative Skill Rolls, but applies for the duration of the module without the other character's presence.) Additionally, the doshin gain the benefit of any Emphasis the PC has, and are considered to be Skilled in any Skill the PC possesses, removing the penalty for Unskilled Rolls.

The Discredited Rooster is one of the more interestingly named sake houses you've been in, and working with Doji Oharu you've seen your fair share of sake houses. There was this one time, with a one-eyed Crane in Kosaten Shiro... but never mind. The interior of the bar gives no insight into what could cause discredit to a rooster, but it does have good sake on the cheap, and it is your traditional watering hole for a victory round after a case.

So it is rather surprising when, after some cheap food and drink, you see two rather large men come in: Ichi and Ni, Oharu's left and right hands and the ones who most often give you your assignments. Wordlessly, Ichi motions for you to follow them to the back room while Ni grabs a jug of sake.

Once you are settled in the back room, Ichi begins to speak; you've only heard Ni speak once, and it was a rumbling basso that seemed to shake you to your very soul.

Ichi, meanwhile, has a surprisingly sweet voice for a shambling mountain of a man. He says simply, "Job's not done. Oharu and the samurai you worked with are sick; could be plague, or could be poison. We got word. Congratulations, kiddos, you are now officially doshin for an Emerald Magistrate. Find out if he's sick or poisoned, and if it's poison find out who did it. There's extra money in it, and Oharu-sama will no doubt be very grateful."

The PCs can ask questions here, but there is not a lot that Ichi can tell them, and Ni will not speak lest he make their skulls explode. Ichi only knows as much as Oharu does, which is pretty much what he told them. He will answer with the information that is available at this point – that the other samurai with him fell ill after

dealing with a monk that was out investigating reports of illness in the Scorpion villages to the south, and that they had a tea ceremony. In order to find the answers, Oharu is willing to offer a great deal of koku (certainly more than the doshin can easily relate to), as well as political favors and other services only available to one of the highest-ranking Emerald Magistrates in the Empire.

If they spend too much time asking for questions, Ichi will respond with a certain amount of biting sarcasm: *"If Oharu-sama wanted to pay me to do investigations, I'd do investigations. Fortunately, that's what he has you lot for. So why don't you stop asking questions to someone who knows exactly as much as you do, and go ask questions to people who might have some information?"*

They have the whole city to go to, and they can search anywhere they'd like. The most logical place is the kitchens of Doji Oharu's estate, which is the most direct manner to get to the poisoner, but there are other options: chasing down rumors or seeking answers in the underworld. The doshin should start by focusing on the possibility of poison, which Haru or Kohaku should realize. Investigating a possible illness would require several days' travel to follow the monk's trail and should be done only after eliminating local leads.

Cautious or particularly careful players may wish to report in to Oharu regularly; this should be discouraged, as the characters do not know if they have a limited window of opportunity before the responsible party escapes. However, once the deputies uncover that a samurai is a suspect, they will likely wish to get documents to support taking him into custody; this is entirely appropriate and will facilitate the appropriate encounters greatly.

Kitchen

The most likely place for them to start is the kitchen of Oharu's manor, as it was the most likely place that any poison would be introduced.

Oharu's kitchen is small but well-equipped, and the servants who wait in the kitchen look like they know what they're doing. They also look terrified, since there are two guards on the door when you come in; the whole manor is on lockdown. You are the only people they are letting in and out, others barred by firm suggestions and large guardsmen.

The head chef looks somewhat sullen at these intrusions, although there is fear in his eyes as well. A samurai who dies under fear of poison can

frequently result in a string of kitchen-based executions.

The doshin may notice that one of the servants in particular looks nervous and may choose to focus on her. If they do not specifically examine the servants for guilt, the players should roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** at a TN of 15 to notice her looking particularly twitchy.

Her name is Masae, and she is in charge of tea, and knows that hers will probably be the first head on a pike if things go pear shaped. She will not volunteer this information, but none of the other kitchen servants will hide it. It should be no more than two questions to get to her, or one if they start with “Who prepared the tea?”

Masae has one goal: do not get killed for this. If the doshin approach her with a soft sell, then she’ll try to negotiate from a position of knowledge. If they come with a hard sell, then she’ll fold in an instant and beg them not to kill her if she cooperates.

As you approach you notice that Masae is very young, and shakes a little bit as you come over. She swallows, and her eyes look to your weapons nervously. “Yes, samu-... I mean...I...” She sputters over what to call you. “Yes, samas.” She settles on. “I am in charge of the tea...”

Masae is entirely innocent, but understandably frightened. All she really wants is to live. She purchased a new pot from a porcelain maker in town, Bayushi Akanishin, this morning and it was this pot that the tea went in to. She didn’t do anything else to it except bring it home and put tea in it for Oharu and his guests. Akanishin even offered it as a good choice, given it had a flying crane motif on it. She didn’t think that it was odd, because he is known for his porcelain wares.

Examining the pot requires an **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll at a TN of 20; success allows them to spot a small cavity on the inside of the pot. Success at a 30 will allow them to see a faint discoloration around the cavity, where a seal of some sort melted away in the heat of the tea.

Rumors

If the characters wish to ask around town to find out what sort of things are happening, and potentially any important leads, they may roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** (bearing in mind any benefit they may receive from the modified Cooperative Roll rules). **Investigation / Awareness** may be substituted, though it increases the base TN by 5. Success at a TN of 10

allows them to learn one thing from the following list, with every 5 points above that giving them an additional piece of information:

- Doji Oharu has a very mixed reputation in town; while he is a high-ranked Emerald Magistrate that few wish to cross, he is known to be a fairly dissolute samurai and very fond of his own creature comforts. His house was given to him by the Scorpion nearly twenty years ago, so he is something of a fixture in the town even if he is rarely there due to his duties.
- Oharu has been collecting vassals and bringing them home in order to see to both his comforts and security. The two budoka who are the head of his personal guard, Ichi and Ni, are examples of this, and rumors surrounding the two giants are commonplace. Everything from them being ronin to each being actually a pair of midgets in disguise can be heard.
- There are reports of illness in the central Scorpion provinces, fires scattered through the southern lands, and bandit raiders along the north and west. The Scorpion Clan is busy dealing with these various issues, which at least is allowing the peasantry to handle their own affairs with minimal interruption.
- The last few years have seen a large increase in opium production in Ryoko Owari. Locally, this has meant both good news and bad news: it does mean a lot of money coming through town but it also comes with some unpleasant people.
- Miotoshi Mura has a couple of dozen samurai residents, those who seek something more peaceful than life in the teeming metropolis of Ryoko Owari. One of the most infamous is the out-of-favor Scorpion courtier Bayushi Akanishin, who has become a wealthy merchant patron lately due to his exile from the courts.
- Though the village sees visitors, and has a handful of residents, from other Clans, Imperial samurai are a rarity in Miotoshi Mura. Nonetheless, word has it that one has been seen in the last few nights, though no one seems to know what has brought him to such a quiet backwater.

Underworld

Another possible route is to just start combing the underworld contacts the characters may have, or may exist in the city. Due to the village’s proximity to Ryoko Owari, there is a small but energetic black market in various goods, which provide an opportunity for the characters to explore.

Akira has a contact in the underworld named Kaze that they may go talk to if that is their preferred tactic. Kaze runs a small stall selling small healing charms and protective amulets as a legitimate front, and large amounts of opium as an illegitimate one. He also deals in information, and is willing to sell it for a price. He may also be approached later on in the investigation, when the PCs need more information.

Kaze is a slender man, but whipcord strong and clearly capable of handling himself. Which is odd, for a man selling protective amulets, but makes a lot of sense given his side-trade in opium. He looks wary as you come in, but then he sees a friend amongst you and a knife-edge smile comes to his lips. "Ah welcome, my friends... I hope it was a good wind that brought you in today? What sort of protection or healing may I interest you in today?"

Kaze knows who the most likely poisoner in town is, and is more than willing to sell that information; his goals can be summed up as money, women, money, and money, and not necessarily in that order. He will negotiate for the maximum amount of funds, goods, and favors that the doshin can offer either on their own or on behalf of Doji Oharu. Which is a not insignificant amount, as Oharu is well known to be attached to breathing. A **Lore: Underworld** or **Commerce / Awareness** roll at a TN of 15 will allow the characters to realize that Kaze is looking for a payday if it is not obvious enough. **Commerce / Awareness** at a TN of 20 will be enough to make a good deal; otherwise, it just becomes a question of how much the doshin are comfortable with agreeing to pay.

The hard sell (threats of violence, retribution, torture) will work as well, but only if he truly believes they are committed to it. A successful **Intimidation / Willpower** at a TN of 20 will be sufficient when combined with roleplaying to convince him they are willing to follow through with their threats.

Regardless of how they approach it, Kaze will give them the name Bayushi Akanishin, a known porcelain craftsman in town, as the most likely person in town to have access to rare poisons. If paid, Kaze will be happy if to see them again later; if they threatened violence, if they come to him later he will be angry and sullen.

Bayushi Akanishin

One way or another they will find the name Akanishin, and be directed to his shop. A samurai merchant patron who has lost favor with his Clan (Black Sheep), Akanishin is fairly prosperous from a material perspective, but is dissatisfied with his current lot in life. He employs several artisans to provide him with

his wares, though a few special samples are created by him personally – such as the pot acquired by Masae.

Shards of Honor is an upscale boutique porcelain shop specializing in a particularly delicate and easily broken form of ceramics – hence the name, and the amount of repeat customers he receives. It is an average-sized shop, decorated in dark wood and crimson as befits a shop run by a Scorpion.

Akanishin himself is dressed in a red kimono with a carp motif, perhaps alluding to some Yasuki heritage, and a porcelain quarter mask only covering one eye to give him a roguish appearance. He gives a little bow as the doshin enter. "Ah... greetings, my friends. Welcome to Shards of Honor. Is there something I can help you with? I am afraid I do not have much... common wood or clay dishes for sale."

When informed of their mission he will be amused and dismissive. He is also something of a drama queen; he knows he did it, but he has been told he will be protected and plans on enjoying the interaction.

"Ah... does Oharu-sama plan to start promoting ronin and peasants to Emerald Magistrates now?" Akanishin shakes his head. "Very well. I am a Scorpion, and I am used to being the first one everyone suspects." He sighs dramatically. "What is it now, have I been seen in the night in black? Have I been skulking about where I am not supposed to? What horrendous crimes have I perpetrated only because I am a Scorpion?"

If directly accused, he will react with scorn and wounded honor.

"It takes a great deal of gumption to come in to a shop and accuse a samurai – a SAMURAI – of such things. To his face!" Akanishin whips out his fan and flutters it in front of the face in question. "If you were samurai I would insist on a duel. Can I duel you if you are pretending you are samurai? Do you have any testimony of these lies, or just the lies themselves?"

The trick is, as stated above, Akanishin did it and he knows it. But he also knows that there are no samurai who can say so. And he has been told that if he is brought in it will be stopped, and he won't face torture. But he is also the kind of guy who would prefer to get paid twice for one job if possible, regardless of who he betrays. Enough money, favors, or influence will make him quite happy, but he pretty much knows the only way to ensure he gets the amount he wants is to talk to

Oharu personally. Besides, he knows it isn't contagious.

If they try to take him in without trying to bribe him, he will rely on all his authority as samurai to be taken directly to Doji Oharu and speak to the actual magistrate. If he is offered bribes for his knowledge he will come along willingly, to do a 'favor' to the renowned Emerald Magistrate.

“Ah of course, while I am nothing more than a simple purveyor of porcelain, I would be happy to assist Doji Oharu-sama in this matter. He is well-known for his... generosity.” Akanishin flashes a winning smile; not a smile to win friends, but a smile that says he believes he has won. He packs a few things in to a satchel, and moves to the door. “Shall we?”

If forced to go along, he will instead be much more outraged, continuing to play his anger.

“If you will take me then fine, I will speak to Doji Oharu-sama about the rudeness his investigators show to upstanding samurai, and how this stain to my honor might be properly repaid.” Akanishin sniffs, snapping his fan dramatically, as he moves to exit his shop huffily.

Part Three: Nothing but a Good Time

One way or another, the doshin should bring Akanishin to Doji Oharu's mansion. The poisoner is brought in to the house, but the doshin are not. The guards don't care if the suspected poisoner is actually infected, but they do kind of like the doshin. The players return to their regular PCs, albeit likely in some discomfort:

It has been a little while since you sent the doshin out, and that time has been... unpleasant. You are beset by pains and a fever, and while they are not getting any worse, they also do not feel particularly good. It has been a struggle for you to keep from crying out.

The sounds of feet come from the room on the other side of the screen; not Oharu's, but the entrance hall that is closed off to you. A shadow appears on the screen, and the low voice of a guard announces. “Oharu-sama, your investigators have brought a man to meet you. Bayushi Akanishin.”

There is no response, until after a few long moments Oharu asks “Did someone say something?” from behind his own screen. After repeating it more loudly

so that Oharu can hear, Oharu nods. “Good, then let us get down to business.”

Through this interaction, the PCs are in the middle room and must serve as intermediaries between Oharu and the Scorpion. They may use whatever resources they have and are willing to promise in negotiations, though of course Oharu has his own to offer (Oharu will, naturally, greatly appreciate assistance from the PCs, but does not demand it).

The PCs will also be informed of any deals that the investigators have made with Akanishin. If there was a deal or promise he will be quite compliant, waiting for the questions to begin before answering them completely. If there was no deal, he will demand complete clemency and compensation to tell anything. This should be done fairly subtly (he will claim to need time to “search his records” for the artisan that made the pot, for example), though he will eventually break down and be blunt if the PCs appear too impaired or dense to realize what he's looking for. Monetarily, he would like at least 20 koku, but will of course be more than happy to accept more. The PCs can argue about it for a little bit, but in the end Oharu will give in and promise to reward him – as there is no samurai testimony against him, it will be extremely difficult to make any charges stick.

“Yes, I supplied the poison that you drank, Oharu-sama. I was paid to deliver a lethal poison in to the pot, and paid handsomely as well. Diluted as it was through more targets than intended, it will not kill you, although without the antidote you will be in near paralyzing pain for a number of days.”

If asked about an antidote, he will smugly inform them that he can provide one for the right price, but it will take a few hours to put together the formula. (He does have a dose of the antidote with him, but not enough for more than one person.)

The PCs will logically want to know who paid him, which he will also reveal.

“I was paid by an Owl, sama. An agent of Hantei Okuqueo, and a relatively high ranking one at that. His name is Seppun Tadamaru, and he wants you dead.” Akanishin says smugly. He starts to say something else when you hear a door sliding open.

“Why are we being interrupted?” Oharu asks loudly, but not before Akanishin lets out a cry.

“These are not your men, Oha-“ His voice, once so confident, cuts off in the middle of his cry with the wet

gurgle of a throat being slit. Blood splatters on the shoji as dark shadows approach it. As they open there is another crash, and two men leap in through previously closed windows. Tough looking men. Tough looking men with swords, a murderous intent in their eye, and a confident smile on their lips. The sound of fighting breaks out at the front gates, and an alarm goes up among the guards.

Oharu's screen slides open, his eyes wide. "Oh my."

During this fight, the PCs do not have their weapons or access to them; a PC who wants to get his weapon is fleeing from the fight. They have their wakizashi. They don't have any spell slots (even Void slots). They have whatever Void Points they gained back from the tea ceremony, and if they didn't participate then they don't have any (though at that point, they are not suffering the penalties of the poison). They have whatever Wounds they had been assigned.

There are three Otoshi-gumi Soldiers (four if the table is High), all of whom have taken some damage; their +0 Wound Rank is full. (If the table is Low, fill the next Wound Rank as well, putting them at the +3 Rank.) They will fight to the death, having been promised great rewards for bringing Oharu's head to their new leader.

Oharu will not advance into the room, though after collecting his katana, he will cut down any of the enemy that approach him. As usual, he will prefer to leave the bulk of the fighting to the PCs; though unwounded and with all of his Void Points, he also is suffering from the effects of the poison.

After the PCs defeat the enemy, guards will report that several more assaulted the front gate to cause a distraction.

Though Oharu's voice is pained, it is steady as he surveys the corpses. "What in the name of Jigoku is going on here? Did this Tadamaru send people..." He takes a moment as a spasm of pain hits him, so that he does not show it any more than a tightening of his features, "because he heard Akanishin was going to talk?"

Perceptive PCs (those who succeed at an **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll at a TN of 25) or any PC who is specifically investigating the body will notice that the corpses all have a specific tattoo on their inside of their wrists: three triangles interlocking triangles, the symbol of the Otoshi-gumi triad, the smuggling ring they just spent a great deal of time and injury fighting.

"The Otoshi-gumi?" Oharu asks, clearly surprised. "I thought we had fairly well put them out of business. Some of them must have escaped rather than attacking you and told someone here. But how are the yakuza involved with this Owl?" He winces again.

The bad news is that the PCs now have whatever Wounds they have in addition to the previous ones, and they are still wracked by spasms of pain. The good news is, Oharu grants them permission to gather their own weapons (and even their armor, if they ask). However, between the threat of more assassins and the debilitation of the poison, Oharu is loath to send the PCs out to gather more information – he would much rather have assistance close to hand if more yakuza attack.

Once more the PCs need information that they cannot go out in to the world and find themselves. It should occur to them before too long that they need their peasant friends to go back in to the city again and try to find this Seppun Tadamaru. If it does not occur to them, then after a little while Oharu will recommend it.

Part Four: Only Time Will Tell

There is no briefing for the doshin this time around. They arrive back on the scene to see bodies being taken out after the PCs have found the tattoos. They are informed of everything the PCs know: the Otoshi-gumi is involved... somehow. Seppun Tadamaru is involved... somehow. Most importantly, the PCs need to talk to that Owl.

Searching Shards of Honor

The doshin may wish to begin their search for answers at Akanishin's business (he lived in rooms above the shop). A successful **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll at a TN of 20 to search Akanishin's rooms will uncover a letter from "Seppun Tadamaru" in the Scorpion's writing desk. It is, obviously, not terribly explicit about the task Tadamaru asked of Akanishin, but knowing what happened makes it easier to read between the lines. Unfortunately, it also does not specify where they were to meet for final payment, mentioning tea house but not giving a name. However, having found this letter will grant the doshin a Free Raise on any rolls to locate Tadamaru, as it gives them a solid starting-point.

Akanishin's lab can be found in his office at Shards of Honor; unfortunately, nothing is labeled in a fashion that the doshin can understand. However, there are

several strings of koku hidden in various places; the doshin will find an amount of koku equal to the highest Search roll. What they choose to do with the sudden (and potentially suspicious) wealth will be up to them – they each know Oharu well enough to know that he would prefer it to be turned over to him, though they will likely receive a bonus for finding it.

Asking Around Town

Apart from Akanishin's residence, the players may seek their answers in a variety of places. The town has numerous places for samurai to seek company, including geisha houses, dojo, public gardens, and of course the tea houses. Tracking down the Imperial will require questioning people across the village.

This is a more open-ended investigation than the previous one, since it lacks a definite starting and ending point. The doshin have the run of the town, and while "Tadamaru" hasn't been running around willy-nilly he has left some footprints that the PCs can manage to find. Creative approaches should be rewarded with some information.

Overall, since he has been trying to keep from being found too easily, the players will need to get a couple of pieces of information to track "Tadamaru" down.

Gaining useful information out of this requires Skill Rolls based on the locale chosen to ask such questions. Many options are available, and again, the GM should use their judgment on any "out of the box" plan the players come up with. **The base TN on these rolls is 20**; each attempt represents at least a half-hour of investigation. Success means that the doshin can get a rough description of the Imperial, as well as learn the name of three of the tea houses that Tadamaru has been seen at; since there are five major tea houses in the town, it should only take a few successful rolls to determine that the Unexpected Pleasure is the common element. Failure does not yield any significant information, however, if the doshin take more than six hours (12 attempts) to locate Tadamaru, he will have left town and they will be unable to find him. There is nothing that says the doshin must work together at each location, however, so if they split up they will gain more opportunity for gathering information.

Courtier / Awareness can be used as a default at any of these locations without penalty (this is essentially a modified Gossip check), but the locations below may also be approached with the listed Skills.

Underworld

A **Lore: Underworld / Awareness** roll will allow the doshin to speak with several less-than-reputable dealers

in "various wares" to gain the names of the Uneasy Peace, White Mountain Blends, and the Unexpected Pleasure as places where Seppun Tadamaru has been seen.

Market

Success with **Commerce / Awareness** lets the doshin talk to honest merchants in the marketplace, giving them the names of Steep Challenges, the Unexpected Pleasure, and White Mountain Blends.

Dojo

Demonstrating their might with a **Jiujutsu / Strength** roll at the local dojo will earn the doshin enough respect that the bushi and budoka there will reveal that an Imperial bushi has been seen around the Unexpected Pleasure, the Uneasy Peace, and Steep Challenges.

Gardens

If the doshin are brave enough to speak with the town's various samurai, an **Etiquette / Awareness** roll will allow them to demonstrate proper respect and courtesy to their betters, granting them the knowledge that a Seppun samurai has in fact been seen at the Unexpected Pleasure, Dreams of Steam, and White Mountain Blends.

Shrines

Approaching the monks that tend the town's shrines will let the doshin demonstrate their piety with a **Lore: Theology / Intelligence** roll, garnering enough goodwill that the monks will mention having heard of a member of the pious Seppun family at Steep Challenges, the Unexpected Pleasure, and Dreams of Steam.

The Unexpected Pleasure

Eventually the doshin will have found out that "Seppun Tadamaru" is at the Unexpected Pleasure, and is likely not staying for long. They don't know too much of why he is here, but they know where to go.

The Unexpected Pleasure is a well-constructed inn on the Ryoko Owari side of town. It is decorated in a slightly garish style, with each nook and cranny having some 'surprise' in them to live up to the theme. Certainly unexpected, whether they are a pleasure is a different matter.

As you enter you see a small crowd at this hour, some taking meals and some simply drinking. A Crane, a Crab, and four Scorpion make up the differing tables. It seems like that is everyone until your eyes turn the corner, and you see a man sitting in a recessed alcove. He is wearing green, and meets the description of Tadamaru from those who have seen him – tall and

lean, with a shaven head and a full beard. He is, however, not wearing an Imperial mon. As you approach he looks up, his eyes wide in surprise. Brows raised, he greets you in a distinctively gravelly and raspy voice. "Ah... hello?"

At this point "Tadamaru" is in something of a situation. He has no desire whatsoever to actually go with them, but if he just attacks doshin under the authority of the second in command of the Emerald Magistrates it will blow his cover even more spectacularly. His first instinct will be to stall for time. He will imply that there are greener pastures if they let him go; essentially he will try to bribe them like they were samurai, obliquely and without ever directly saying it. Mostly he is looking for an opportunity, although he would be willing to follow through with it (although that might end up with them being killed later).

Eventually he will agree to be taken in, figuring that a better opportunity might present itself along the way.

"Very well... doshin." Tadamaru says, settling on a fairly neutral term. "I will accompany you back to see Oharu-sama." He says, standing carefully as he moves toward the front to claim his katana. He is calm and collected, but it is possibly to see tension around his eyes, the sign of nerves fraying at the edges.

Part Five: Back to the Rocking Horse

Unless the doshin want to murder him in the street (which is highly inadvisable), they will take him back in to the increasingly bloodstained house of Oharu. Here, the perspective shifts back to the PCs.

After the fight, Oharu returned to his room behind the shoji screen to rest, as the sharp lances of pain continue to rack your bodies. The poisoner died before giving you the antidote, and the healer Oharu keeps on staff is still working on it. Still, knowing it is a poison and not a sickness has meant you have at least been made comfortable, with some broth and tea while the guards scour the city along with the doshin.

Several hours have passed in quiet, or not so quiet, contemplation of the myriad of reasons why poison is terrible when the doshin return, bringing with them a man in Imperial green but lacking the Seppun mon. He looks between the group of you and gives a polite nod, looking perhaps a little nervous. With his shaved head and frankly impressive beard for a Rokugani, he

looks nothing like the normal image of a cultured Seppun. He hands his katana and wakizashi to one of you, as a sign that he does not intend to fight (and showing his status as someone to be questioned, belying his calm).

"Tadamaru" will choose the PC with the highest Honor to hold his weapons during the interrogation.

"Greetings, samurai. Oharu-sama." He greets the assembled group with his raspy, growling voice. "What is the meaning of this... unique... invitation?"

At this point if any PC is an Owl, they may make a **Lore: Heraldry** or **Courtier / Intelligence** roll at a TN of 30. If they succeed, they are the first to realize what is going on here:

The beard and the shaved head throw you off for a moment, but as you watch the man—and as you hear him begin to speak—you realize something: this is not Seppun Tadamaru. He has a similar build as Tadamaru, and maybe if Tadamaru had shaved his head and trimmed his beard, but... something is off.

This is confirmed a moment later when Oharu responds. Or, if none of the PCs are Owls, or succeed at the roll:

Oharu's voice comes out from behind the shoji: "Wait... who did those doshin bring us? That voice sounds exactly like my friend Kakita Haruteka. An Emerald Magistrate."

"Tadamaru" blanches, scowling. "Damn you, Oharu." He looks down and sighs. "Yes, it's me."

"But... why?" Oharu says, finally sliding the shoji screen open to look at his friend. Either the shock has dulled the pain, or Oharu has found another medicinal way of doing so, for he is steady as he looks his fellow Crane in the eyes. "We've worked together for a decade. No one supports the Emerald Champion more than you do!"

"It is because I support the Emerald Champion, Oharu." Haruteka says sadly, shaking his head. "This cold war between him and that monster Okuchoe is strangling the Empire, dividing clans and families, and mocking everything that Toturi-sama fought for. And yet Toshiken won't act!" He almost yells, his voice cracking with anger. "He won't do anything but sit and wait and let that horrific fossil profane the capital! I've been advising him, and you, for a year that he needs to strike decisively. But both

you and he seem to have forgotten how to perform one perfect strike.”

Oharu winces at the sting of that comment, the Kakita mon on his shoulder a testament to his years of training in that very art. “And what was this supposed to accomplish? Killing Toshiken’s second in command?”

“While in the guise of an Owl. You were supposed to die, and the investigation would lead back to Seppun Tadamaru. It would force an active confrontation.”

“It would force a war!” Oharu says, anger filling his voice.

“We are already at war, Oharu. It’s just that neither you or Toshiken want to see it for what it is.” Haruteka responds, his voice low and bitter. But he is wavering, perhaps at the sight of his old friend and the realization of what he has done.

At this point the PCs have a chance to intervene. This is a philosophical discussion between Oharu, who favors the camp Toshiken is taking of waiting for Okucheo to make the first mistake, and a faction of magistrates who want to up the stakes and make the first move. The PCs can weigh in on what they believe, for whatever reason they want to, and influence the discussion. In order to convince either side, they will need to roll **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** at a TN of 25, or **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** at a TN of 35. Should PCs be arguing on both side of the issue, the roll that exceeds the TN by the most will be the most convincing.

But there are two twists here. The first is that whether or not Haruteka repents will decide what happens to him. If he comes to seriously regret what he did, then he will later be allowed to commit seppuku. This will help quiet this, and allow the Emerald Champion to save face. If he stays committed to his course, then he will have to be executed and word of this will escape and cause Toshiken to lose face. Either way, the PCs should be given the chance to roleplay out their arguments and attempt to convince Haruteka.

When questioned about the Otoshi-gumi, Haruteka will look confused and say he has no idea what that is. The PCs may roll if they wish, but he is telling the complete truth: he has no idea what the Otoshi-gumi are, and is not connected to them in any way.

If they convince Haruteka that he is pursuing the wrong path, then he will respond as follows:

Haruteka bows his head, and at this distance you can see that there is in fact stubble growing from his shaved pate, invisible from a distance for it is fine and white. “I... I cannot stand to see this Empire pulled apart again, Oharu. After everything we lost during the War Against the Lying Darkness? After what happened in the court when Toturi-sama was corrupted, what I lost? I can’t see it happen again.” But his head shakes slowly. “But I was wrong to sacrifice my honor to make it happen. All I can do is beg that I be given the chance to redeem my family’s honor.”

If the PCs fail to sway him, or convince him to continue his course, even unto grisly execution, read the following:

Haruteka shakes his head again, anger rising in his voice. “I cannot stand to see this Empire pulled apart again, Oharu!” He almost quakes with anger as he looks at his friend. “Have you forgotten everything we lost to the Lying Darkness? What happened when we had a corrupted Emperor killing people in court?” Here he stands from where he had been kneeling, to look at Oharu in the eyes. His voice drops low, almost to a growl. “What I lost when it happened? Toshiken either needs to attack, or he needs to be replaced with someone who might actually be in possession of a spine. Have me killed, but as I lie screaming I won’t be accused of the same weakness.”

The second twist comes after they have convinced Haruteka, one way or another.

The Second Attack

After the PCs have had their roleplay opportunity and convinced Tadamaru either way, they are attacked again.

As Haruteka finishes speaking, the room falls silent, his eyes falling upon Oharu as they wait for his pronouncement. He opens his mouth to speak, a fleeting glimpse of sorrow passing over his face.

He is interrupted by the sound of shouts from the front gates, and the clash of arms.

Optional Encounter: Return to the Doshin

This encounter should only be used if there is sufficient time left in the slot (for example, if the players were able to get through the investigations particularly quickly). It does give the doshin characters an opportunity to directly impact the final combat, but it could take more time than available.

Suspect in custody and turned over to the samurai, you have been waiting outside the fine manor house while they discuss the matter. Knowing Oharu, hefty fines will be leveled, property might be seized, and the fate of the Imperial will likely hinge on what sort of political connections he can scrounge together; but, you have earned your bonuses with today's work.

(Through this portion, if Ren is present, they should be getting an uncomfortable feeling from their Inner Gift.)

After a bit of time spent relaxing and sharing a companionable cup of sake with the guards (who are somewhat worse for wear after a fight earlier today), activity at the gate catches your attention. About a dozen men troop up to the gate, led by a dark figure in armor. Without a word, the newcomers attack the guards and begin to file onto the grounds. The armored samurai issues tense orders at the gate, and follows behind a vanguard of furious masked swordsmen. With an earth-shaking bellow, Ni charges the invaders from the main house, followed closely by Ichi. The two enormous budoka quickly become the focus of the enemy's attention, though the leader and a few of his men slip around the fray to head toward the main house.

There are a number of Otoshi-gumi and Scorpion samurai acting in support of Bayushi Koriaki's quest for vengeance. Unless the doshin simply elect to remain out of the fight, they should be able to limit the number of bushi fighting at Koriaki's side in his final confrontation with the samurai PCs and Oharu.

The leader of the enemy group is obvious: he is the only one in armor, and additionally, is being Guarded by two of the masked bushi (his Scorpion nikutai). This should increase his Armor TN to higher than the doshin can manage (somewhere in the vicinity of 64, as long as he remains in the Defense Stance and has a higher initiative), but it does make the bushi doing the Guarding easier to hit (15 base). In addition, Koriaki is escorted by a number of Otoshi-gumi Soldiers equal to the players at the table, and half that many Otoshi-gumi Lieutenants. These are the bushi that the doshin should seek to interfere with – if they focus too much attention on Koriaki, he will likely emerge unscathed and there will be more enemies available when they reach the samurai.

Koriaki is focused on getting to Oharu and taking his vengeance. He would much rather use his actions to move through the crowd rather than making attacks; if, however, he has no other option, he will cut his way through the doshin. Between his goals, his superior equipment, and high degree of skill, it is more effective

for the doshin to attempt to remove his support than to attack him directly, which they can recognize with a **Battle / Perception** roll at a TN of 15.

The most effective way to do this is to attack the bushi escorting Koriaki. The Otoshi-gumi have taken damage already, from the PCs' efforts against the gang, with their first Wound Rank already full, though the Scorpion are undamaged. (This should not be adjusted based on the table strength, as the PCs' stats have a minimal effect on this combat.) If the doshin do enough damage to any of the NPCs (other than Koriaki) to place them at the Injured (+15) Wound Rank, they will retreat (in the case of the Otoshi-gumi) or simply be unable to keep up with Koriaki (the Scorpion are utterly loyal, but when injured enough, they will simply fall behind).

As Koriaki is unwavering in his resolve, there is a limited amount of time available for this combat before he reaches the main house. After four rounds, the Scorpion officer will step into the building, and most of his remaining men will block the doorway. Ultimately, this is at the discretion of the GM: the doshin should have had a chance to have an impact on the threat that the wounded and depleted PCs will be facing, but should be unable to press into the main hall themselves (at least at first).

At this point, the action should shift back to the main PCs and Oharu.

A group of formidable looking men with thick arms, thicker necks, and sharp weapons file in to the room accompanied by a tall man in a Scorpion mask and black armor with red cording.

Oharu just looks stunned, as does Haruteka. "What in the name of Jigoku is going on here?" He asks, shocked and angry.

The tall man looks at Oharu, and visible on his black mask is a bright red symbol, paint still wet: three interlocking triangles over his forehead. "My name is Bayushi Koriaki. You killed my brother, Sutsu. My men failed to kill you last time, but they sent word that they had found you, and I will not fail."

"Wait... so you are with the Otoshi-gumi? Those men from earlier were yours, not Haruteka's?" Oharu asks.

"Yes, they were mine; but I was not a part of the Otoshi-gumi. I disapproved of my brother's blatant activities; they are what cost him his place in the Clan. But I will not suffer some Crane fop to have him

killed. And who is Haruteka?” Koriaki shrugs, and draws his blade. “I suppose I’ll have to look it up later.”

The second twist in Haruteka’s fate comes here: Will the PC’s arm him? They were just arguing with him, and in fact may have failed to convince him to renounce his ways or even convinced him to go down screaming and defiant. But they are outnumbered, and pragmatism may be required to win the day.

The base number of opponents, in addition to Koriaki, is listed above. It can be assumed that the least damaged enemies will accompany Koriaki; at least as many bushi as doshin left standing will remain outside to keep the doshin and Oharu’s other guards occupied. (If easier, it can be assumed that Koriaki has his three least-wounded men in the hall with him for the confrontation.)

Again, however, the enemy is also somewhat wounded going into the fight: everyone but Koriaki has already filled their first Wound Rank (for Low-end tables, make this two Wound Ranks and leave them with only one Void). This accounts for the guards, rather than the doshin, and should be used as the minimum for the encounter. If the optional scene was not run, assume that Koriaki is accompanied only by the two Nikutai and one Lieutenant. If the doshin chose not to interfere in the fight for some reason, then the PCs will be severely outnumbered, but the above rules on Wounds still apply.

Koriaki and his Scorpion subordinates will fight to the death (the Scorpion immediately falling on their swords if he falls), while the Otoshi-gumi are not as committed to the cause. Koriaki is mostly focused on Oharu, though not to the exclusion of the PCs – his preference would be to kill Oharu slowly, which may well be something that can be used against him.

At the GM’s discretion, if a PC falls, the player should be allowed to contribute with their doshin. (The doshin breaks through the men guarding the door to assist.)

Conclusion

Assuming the PCs win, there are a couple of variables. If Haruteka was convinced to renounce his ways and was given a weapon, then he will seek to die in the fighting; he earned an honorable death, and Oharu will see to it that he is recognized for such. If Haruteka was not convinced to repent and was given a weapon, he will turn it in after the end; he is not going to make it easy on Oharu. He will be executed several days later

publically, and Toshiken’s reputation will be harmed based on his magistrate’s actions.

If Haruteka was convinced to repent and not armed, he will still attack; he’ll try to disarm one of the enemy and use their weapon against the assassins. It is still an honorable death, and will still be recognized as such. If he was committed to being killed by execution he will sit in the back, breaking one man’s neck when he gets too close but otherwise staying safe. He will be executed a few days later as above.

Oharu looks at the room in shock, in confusion, and more than anything in weariness. A number of shocking deaths, the pain of poison and the even worse pain of the betrayal of a friend. Oharu looks visibly older than he did just this morning. “This has been a very unusual day, my friends. I am sorry that I dragged you into it, but I am glad you were here. Truly, I am grateful for what you have done; you have my thanks.” He bows deeply, as the healers finally come in with the antidote, bandages, and healing spells.

Maybe now you can, finally, get some rest.

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

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

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

Experience Points

Surviving the adventure:	1XP
Good roleplaying:	+1XP
Finding “Tadamaru”:	+1XP
Doji Oharu survives:	+1XP
Destroyed the Otoshi-gumi once and for all (by killing Bayushi Koriaki)	+1XP

Total Possible Experience: 5XP

Honor

The PCs gain two points of Honor for helping to destroy the Otoshi-gumi at the beginning of the module.

PCs who succeed at the roll to convince Haruteka one way or the other gain a point of Honor, even if another PC's efforts swayed him in the other direction.

Glory

Any PC who succeeded at least once in the rolls at the beginning of the module gains five points of Glory for hunting down and destroying the Otoshi-gumi before the module begins. PCs who failed all four rolls gain two points.

For helping Oharu survive the assassination attempt and the poisoning, as well as doing so themselves, each PC gains an amount of Glory equal to their (10 – their current Glory Ranks).

Other Awards/Penalties

Each PC gains a Crane Favor.

Assuming he survives, each PC gains a point of Devotion on Doji Oharu as an Ally, to a maximum of 4 points of Devotion. If his Influence is not already 3, it should be raised to that level as well.

If a PC dies in the course of defending Oharu, the player should receive a "Truest Test" cert; contact the Campaign Admin for details.

Module Tracking Sheets

The doshin that the player controlled should be noted on the mod reporting sheet.

GM Reporting

Was Haruteka convinced to change his mind?

Did Doji Oharu survive?

Did any of the PCs die?

GM must report this information BEFORE (2/28/2014) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

Doji Oharu

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 2 Void 5
 Awareness 6 Willpower 4 Perception 4

Honor 3.2 (6.2) Status 6.5 Glory

Initiative: 10k4+10 **Attack:** 9k4 (katana, Complex)

Armor TN: 25 (32 **Defense Stance)** **Damage:** 6k2 (katana)

School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 1/Doji Courtier 5

Techniques: *The Way of the Crane:* Add twice Iaijutsu Skill Rank to all Initiative rolls. +1k1+1 to attack and Focus rolls while assuming the Center Stance, and for the round after

The Soul of Honor: by conversing with another person for a few minutes, can make a Contested Roll of Courtier (Manipulation)/Awareness against the target's Etiquette (Courtesy)/Awareness to learn whether they are in need of any favors or assistance.

Speaking In Silence: Cadence: can roll Courtier / Intelligence at TN 15 to communicate simple ideas with any other Crane who is trained in the Doji Courtier School or who has at least 5 Ranks in the Courtier Skill. More complex ideas can be conveyed with Raises.

The Perfect Gift: Any time in court or in an urban area, can roll Courtier / Awareness at TN 20 to come up with a suitable gift or a helpful political favor for someone else. By calling Raises on this roll, can acquire a rarer or more potent gift or favor. If such a gift or favor is accepted, may immediately take that person as an Ally with 1-point Devotion, without XP cost

Voice of Honor: In any debate or argument, may make a Contested Roll of Courtier (Manipulation)/Awareness against the target's Etiquette (Courtesy)/Awareness to forced them to concede that their position conflicts with Honor, and if they persists in this position they will commit a breach of etiquette. (It is the GM's discretion, based on the circumstances, as to whether it is a minor or major breach.)

The Gift of the Lady: By conversing with someone for a few minutes, may make a Contested Roll of Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness against the target's Etiquette (Courtesy) / Willpower to shift the target's emotions in a favorable direction.. If the target is an Ally, gain a bonus of +5k0 to the total of this roll.

Skills: Artisan: Origami 3, Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Gossip, Manipulation) 6, Defense 4, Etiquette (Courtesy) 6, Games: Go 2, Horsemanship 1, Iaijutsu (Focus) 5, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 1, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: Law 2, Medicine 2, Perform: Oratory 4, Sincerity (Deceit) 7, Tea Ceremony 3, Temptation (Bribery) 5

Mastery Abilities: +1k0 to Contested Rolls using Courtier or Etiquette. +6 Insight. +5 to total of all Contested Rolls using Sincerity or Temptation. Ready sword as a Free Action. +1k0 to damage rolls with swords. Free Raise to Focus Rolls.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Many), Benten's Blessing, Crafty, Perceived Honor (3), Social Position (Emerald Magistrate), Strength of the Earth, Voice, Wealthy / Compulsion: Opium (I), Lame

"Seppun Tadamaru"/Kakita Haruteka

Haruteka was once a good man, but has seen so much misery over the last two decades that he has become bitter and cynical. He does not trust the Imperial Regent, and has decided that anything is worth preventing another monster on the throne.

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 4
 Awareness 5

Honor 4.2 Status 4.5 Glory 3.3

Initiative: **Attack:**
Armor TN: **Damage:**

Reduction:

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 4

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

Speed of Lightning: +2k0 to attack rolls against those with lower Initiative.

First and Last Strike: May Strike first in a duel if wins the Iaijutsu/Void roll by a difference of 3 or higher. Gains a Free Raise on Strike for each additional margin of 3 instead of 5.

One Strike, Two Cuts: May make attacks as a Simple Action instead of a Complex Action while using weapons with the Samurai keyword.

Skills: Acting 1, Athletics 2, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 4, Defense 2, Etiquette 4, Iaijutsu (Focus) 5, Investigation (Interrogation) 4, Jiujutsu 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 3, Sincerity 4, Spears 3, Tea Ceremony 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (Emerald Magistrate) / Failure of Duty

Appendix #2: Antagonists

Otoshi-gumi Soldier

Air 2 Earth 2 Fire 2 Water 2 Void 1
Stamina 3 Agility 3 Strength 3
Honor 1.3 Status 0 Infamy 2.5

Initiative: 3k2 **Attack:** 6k3 (ninja-to, Complex)

Armor TN: 15 **Damage:** 6k2 (ninja-to)

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

School/Rank: none/Insight Rank 1

Skills: Athletics 3, Defense 2, Hunting 1, Intimidation 3, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (ninja-to) 3, Knives 2, Lore: Underworld 3, Stealth 2

Mastery Abilities: reduce movement penalties from Terrain by 1, +1k0 unarmed and sword damage

Outfit: ninja-to, tanto, dark clothing

Otoshi-gumi Lieutenant

Air 2 Earth 2 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 2
Reflexes 3 Strength 4
Honor 1.1 Status 0 Infamy 3.5

Initiative: 5k3 **Attack:** 8k3 (katana, Complex)

Armor TN: 20 **Damage:** 8k2 (katana)

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

School/Rank: none/Insight Rank 2

Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 3, Hunting 3, Intimidation 4, Jiujutsu 4, Kenjutsu (Ninja-to) 5, Knives 4, Lore: Underworld 4, Stealth 2

Mastery Abilities: reduce movement penalties from Terrain by 1, +1k0 unarmed and sword damage, may ready a sword as a Free Action

Outfit: katana, tanto, dark clothing

Scorpion Nikutai

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 2 Void 2
Honor 2.9 Status 2.0 Glory 2.0

Initiative: 6k4 **Attack:** 7k3 (katana, Complex)

Armor TN: 20 **Damage:** 6k2 (katana)

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 2

Techniques: *The Way of the Scorpion:* +1k1 to Initiative Rolls. +5 to Armor TN against any opponent with lower Initiative.

Pincers and Tail: May make the Feint Maneuver for one Raise instead of two.

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 3, Courtier (Manipulation) 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 2, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu (Katana) 4, Sincerity 2

Mastery Abilities: +1k0 damage with swords

Bayushi Koriaki

Koriaki is a chui in the Scorpion armies with more than a little bitterness against the Crane for their part in the Clan's exile to the Burning Sands. His younger brother turned to opium, crime, and banditry after the Scorpion returned, and was eventually made a ronin for his deeds. Koriaki now seeks nothing more than vengeance.

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 5 Water 3 Void 4
Strength 4
Honor 3.8 Status 4.0 Glory 5.2

Initiative: 10k5+5 **Attack:** 10k5 (katana, Simple)

Armor TN: 30 (light armor) **Damage:** 8k2 (katana)

Reduction: 3

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 5

Techniques: *The Way of the Scorpion:* +1k1 to Initiative Rolls. +5 to Armor TN against any opponent with lower Initiative.

Pincers and Tail: May make the Feint Maneuver for one Raise instead of two.

Strike at the Tail: When assuming a Stance at the start of Turn, may choose a target within 30'. If successfully hit them during that Turn, the target is Fatigued as if he had gone without rest for 24 hours. During the Reactions Stage, an affected opponent may attempt an Earth Ring roll against a TN of 25 to negate the effects of this Technique. If he fails, the effects of this Technique end during the next Reactions Stage (the second Reactions Stage after he was struck).

Strike From Above, Strike From Below: May make melee attacks as a Simple Action.

The Pincers Hold, the Tail Strikes: Once per encounter, may spend a Void Point as a Complex Action to attack opponent with a melee weapon. If the attack is successful, the target is Stunned. During the Reactions Stage, an affected opponent may attempt an Earth Ring roll against a TN equal to the amount of damage dealt to end the Stun effect. If he fails or does not attempt this roll, the Stun effect ends

during the next Reactions Stage (the second Reactions Stage after he was struck).

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 5, Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Manipulation) 2, Defense 5, Etiquette 2, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu (Focus) 5, Intimidation 3, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Sincerity 3

Mastery Abilities: ignores movement penalties from Terrain; +5 Initiative; may retain a previous Full

Defense roll in subsequent Rounds, +3 Armor TN when in Defense or Full Defense Stance; Free Raise on Focus Rolls; +1k0 damage with swords, may ready a sword as a Free Action

Advantages/Disadvantages: Heart of Vengeance (Crane), Social Position (chui) / Brash, Unlucky I

Haru, Dedicated Deputy

You are Haru, a young and idealistic peasant who has always dreamed of serving a magistrate. You are glad of the opportunity provided by Doji Oharu-sama, and were one of the first to answer his call when he announced he was hiring extra deputies two years ago. You excelled at the training provided, and have eagerly helped with several cases, although none were as important as the most recent.

Air 2 Earth 2 Fire 2 Water 3 Void 2

Honor 3.6 Status 0.3 Glory 0.7

Initiative: 3k2 **Attack:** 5k2 (unarmed,
Complex) or 4k2 (jitte,
Complex)

Armor TN: 15 **Damage:** 4k1 (unarmed
or jitte)

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

School/Rank: none/Insight Rank 1

Skills: Athletics (Running) 2, Calligraphy 1, Craft: Farming 1, Defense 2, Etiquette 1, Hunting 2, Intimidation 2, Investigation 3, Jiu-jutsu (Grapple) 3, Knives (Jitte) 2, Lore: Law 1, Sincerity 1

Mastery Abilities: May roll Search twice without raising the TN; +1k0 unarmed damage

Advantages/Disadvantages: Clear Thinker / Compulsion (write reports) 3, Idealistic

Outfit: Jitte, ashigaru armor, badge.

Akira, the Reformed Criminal

These days, you go by the name “Akira” – it’s a lot safer than using the name you were born with. Fortunately, Doji Oharu chose to let you live when you proved you were willing to be useful and helped him solve a case. Unfortunately, that does mean that your days of freedom as a thief and con artist are essentially over, though Oharu does pay well and the locals are grateful for your help. Not that they know what kind of help you give, usually, but it’s better than winding up on a gallows somewhere.

Air 2 Earth 2 Fire 2 Water 2 Void 2

Awareness 3 Agility 3

Honor 1.9 Status 0.3 Glory 0.1

Initiative: 3k2 **Attack:** 6k3 (knives,
Complex)

Armor TN: 15 **Damage:** 3k1 (knives)

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

School/Rank: none/Insight Rank 1

Skills: Athletics 2, Defense 1, Etiquette 1, Investigation 1, Jiujutsu 1, Knives 3, Lore: Underworld 3, Sincerity (Deceit) 2, Sleight of Hand 2, Stealth (Sneaking) 3

Mastery Ability: no off-hand penalties when using a knife

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crafty / Unlucky

Outfit: Jitte, aiguchi, ashigaru armor, badge.

Michi, the Merchant

You are Michi, the youngest child of one of the wealthiest merchants in town. Though you were raised, like your siblings, to be able to help out the family business, you chose instead to make your own way by taking service with the magistrate Doji Oharu. While your skills are somewhat unorthodox, the magistrate has still found them very useful more than once.

Air 2 Earth 2 Fire 2 Water 2 Void 2
Awareness 3 Intelligence 3
Honor 2.9 Status 0.3 Glory 0.2

Initiative: 3k2 **Attack:** 5k2 (sasumata, Complex)

Armor TN: 15 **Damage:** 2k2 (sasumata) or Grapple (sasumata)

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

School/Rank: none/Insight Rank 1

Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 1, Commerce 3, Defense 1, Etiquette 2, Investigation 2, Jiujutsu 2, Knives 1, Lore: Underworld 2, Polearms (Sasumata) 3, Sincerity 2

Mastery Ability: +5 Initiative for the first Round of a skirmish while wielding a polearm

Advantages/Disadvantages: Daikoku's Blessing / Contrary

Outfit: Sasumata, jitte, ashigaru armor, badge.

Yoshi, the Veteran

You are Yoshi, one of the village's ashigaru. You have marched off to war several times over the last decade, and are one of the few that was able to return. After the last time you returned, you refused to speak of where you had gone, and some in the village are suspicious of your service. However, the local Emerald Magistrate was looking for peasants with certain skills to serve as deputies, and lacking anything better, you took service with him. It's easier work than the fields, and far less bloody than the army, so you are content – just try not to think about the Legion.

Air 2 Earth 3 Fire 2 Water 2 Void 2

Honor 3.8 Status 0.3 Glory 0.5

Initiative: 3k2 **Attack:** 5k2 (yari,
Complex)

Armor TN: 15 **Damage:** 4k2

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+0), 27 (+2), 33 (+7), 39 (+12), 45 (+17), 51 (Down, +37), 57 (Dead)

School/Rank: none/Insight Rank 1

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 3, Craft: Farming 2, Defense 2, Engineering 2, Hunting 1, Intimidation 3, Investigation 1, Jiujutsu 2, Spears (Yari) 3

Mastery Ability: decrease opponent's Reduction by 2 for the first Round of combat when using a spear

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth / Dark Secret (Legion of the Crow)

Outfit: Yari, jitte, ashigaru armor, deputy badge.

Ren, the Seer

You are Ren, and sometimes you wish you weren't. You have visions sometimes, quick flashes of the future, but never early enough to do anything about it. You were the apprentice to the village healer for years, but a few months ago, one of your visions led you to quit and take up service with Doji Oharu as a deputy. Your skills have been useful to the magistrate a few times, though you have kept your visions secret so far.

Air 2 Earth 2 Fire 2 Water 2 Void 3

Intelligence 3

Honor 2.3

Status 0.3

Glory 0.2

Initiative: 3k2

Attack: 4k2 (bo staff,
Complex)

Armor TN: 15

Damage: 2k2 (staff)

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

School/Rank: none/Insight Rank 1

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Craft: Farming 1, Defense 1, Etiquette 1, Investigation 1, Jiu-jutsu 1, Lore: Theology 2, Medicine (Wound Treatment) 3, Meditation 1, Staves 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Inner Gift (Lesser Prophecy)

Outfit: Bo staff, jitte, ashigaru armor, badge.