

Shielded by Fire

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

Part 3 of *Unwritten Future*

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The return of an unlikely ally follows a summons from the Oracle of Fire.

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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/High-rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank 4.

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 3): reduce the Marauders to Rank 2, removing their ability to make Simple Action attacks, and reduce Naathim to Rank 4 (making his damage 8k3 instead of 8k5); increase the damage done by the jade rocks to 1k3; reduce the number of Raises Jomyako starts with to twice the number of PCs at the table.

High End Party (most/all characters Rank 5): put all of the Marauders in Riding Armor (increasing their Armor TN to 37 and Reduction to 4), increase Naathim's Reflexes and Strength to 5 (giving him an Armor TN of 42 and 9k5 damage); there are two Toichi no Kansen accompanying the Jimen no Oni; Jomyako is not penalized by Kaiten's presence in the debate.

Adventure Summary and Background

It has become obvious to many in the Empire that the death of the Oracle of Void caused a tremendous backlash across the Celestial Heavens, as evidenced by the madness that has claimed the other Oracles of Light. The Oracle of Earth was consumed by the fear of failure and withdrew into a crystal prison to protect himself. The Water Dragon's representative on Ningen-do mourned for the loss of her humanity and longed for a child of her own, which resulted in her servants 'rescuing' children from sinking ships and bringing them to the Oracle's undersea home. In both cases, the efforts of several brave samurai bolstered the Oracles, and helped them begin healing their strained connections with the Heavens.

After the incident involving the Oracle of Water, the Elemental Masters of the Phoenix quietly began searching for Isawa Norikazu, the former prophet turned Oracle of Fire. As a child, he had been driven to the edge of sanity, and possibly beyond, by the visions granted to him by the Heavens, and receiving the

blessing of the Fire Dragon made him even more erratic. The Masters hoped to find Norikazu and heal him before his insanity consumed him and most likely a giant swath of the Empire, completely. They found him wandering the Burning Sands north of the Unicorn provinces, but they could not have foreseen the condition he would be in when they met him.

Isawa Norikazu is *sane*. For the first time in his life, he is not troubled with uncontrollable and indecipherable visions of the future, and he does not have the constant whispers of the Fire Dragon derailing his thoughts. He spent five years in the desert reveling in being alone in his own head, and became angry when the Masters came after him, demanding he return to the Empire and his duties. That anger turned to rage when they informed Norikazu of his brother's death, and he chased them off with an enormous show of his power. He quickly came to regret that action, and then to add more and more of his actions to that regret, ultimately blaming himself not only for his brother's death, but also for not using his superior insight and understanding of his own prophecies to prevent the people of Rokugan from falling victim to the horrific wars and disasters of the last decade.

The Oracle is also aware that the forces of the Dark Oracles are even now moving within the Empire. In fact, the Dark Oracle of Air has been visiting the hidden lair of Agasha Tamori deep in the Dragon mountains for several months, trying to convince the bitter family daimyo that becoming the Dark Oracle of Fire is his best option for taking his vengeance on Gennai and his followers for deserting Tamori during Hitomi's possession by the Lying Darkness. Norikazu has seen the evil that will come from this event, up to and including the eventual passing of the Dark Oracle's mantle to Agasha Chosei, which in turn leads to the Yobanjin invasion and the War of Dark Fire several decades in the future. Norikazu wants to make amends for his failures by preventing the Agasha daimyo from agreeing to join the forces of darkness. He is aware that direct interference by the Oracle is prohibited by the Celestial Heavens, but he is just as aware that the Heavens are still dealing with their own disaster and may not be able to stop him. If he can't nudge his mortal envoys towards Tamori's salvation or elimination, Norikazu is willing to step in himself.

Surrounding himself in a tremendous column of flame to keep interruptions away, Norikazu has spent the last year training a replacement Oracle, preparing against the certainty that the disruption in the Celestial Heavens will repair itself and the very real possibility that his insanity will return when it does. This new Chosen is an outsider to the Empire, a Moto with an unusual

understanding of the kami and their relationship with humanity. Norikazu has dispatched Moto Rakkas (Rahk-kahss) to meet with a group of samurai that he has summoned to Toshi sano Kanemochi Kaeru (City of the Rich Frog), and lead them to the Oracle's camp in the Burning Sands.

Over in Dragon lands, Agasha Tamori has been struggling with the rage he feels over losing his wife during the Battle at Oblivion's Gate and the growing influence of the Taint he acquired as a result. Following the defection of the majority of the Agasha family to the Phoenix, Tamori went into seclusion and has spent much of the last several years in meditation and study. In another time, Tamori might have sided with Hantei Okucheo and assisted in the returned emperor's attempted coup, but destiny has taken a different path. Left out of the political machinations surrounding the young Empress, Tamori has retreated into his own thoughts, and his anger has been steadily building. The fact that the traitor, Agasha Gennai, has been rewarded for betraying the Dragon with his own family name has only fueled that rage.

Acting at the request of a new Dark Champion of Jigoku, the Dark Oracle of Air has begun visiting the tainted daimyo, stoking Tamori's thirst for vengeance and encouraging him to take on the mantle of the Dark Oracle of Fire.

On the way, the PCs will meet up with an infamous and possibly familiar Phoenix shugenja named Gennai Shikkui, who has hired a small band of ronin mercenaries to protect him while he pursues his experiments with the kami. The leader of the ronin band has his own reasons for accepting the priest's koku, however, which will come to light as the journey progresses.

Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- The Shadowlands Taint
- Kharmic Tie
- PCs who have played Prison of Earth

Introduction

Getting permission to visit the City of the Rich Frog from your daimyo was simple after showing them the message from the Oracle of Fire and explaining the dream. As you journeyed, you met others who shared your dream, and had matching invitations from Moto Rakkas. It was late afternoon when you passed

through a large encampment of ronin outside the walls of the city, but you eventually made your way to the main gates. Smiling widely, the man you saw in your dream waved you past the guards (after a cursory glance at your travel papers) and into the city, just as in your dream. Without speaking, the Moto made it clear he expected you to follow him as he weaved through the crowded marketplace, and eventually you found yourselves seated here, at an inn called the Smiling Carp.

The Moto smiles broadly as you take your places around the low table, offering a precisely polite bow to each of you. (If there are any Unicorn present, he offers them a handshake instead of a bow, but understands if the PC refuses). His heavily accented words come slowly, almost hesitantly, as though weighing each word carefully. "Greetings, friends. I am Moto Rakkas, student of Isawa Norikazu-sensei, here to meet you in his place and to take you to him."

Moto Rakkas appears typical for a Unicorn, with sun-darkened skin and long mustaches. It is hard to tell if he is a warrior or a priest, however, as his garments are an odd combination of long robes and the leather and cloth breeches worn by Unicorn bushi. His robes bear the mon of the Moto family and their bushi school, but the only weapon he appears to be carrying is his wakizashi. Rakkas will gladly answer any questions the PCs may have, though he does not know exactly why the Oracle wishes to speak with them.

- Why did the Oracle of Fire summon us? *"Since the Masters of the Phoenix visited him last year, he has been sometimes sad and sometimes very angry. I know something is troubling him, and he wants your help to make it stop."*
- Why did he send you to meet us? Why didn't he come to meet us himself? *"Isawa-sensei insisted that I come to meet you as part of my training, because I need to learn more about the Empire and its people."*
- How long have you been with studying with him? What/Why is he teaching you? *"He found me in the desert just months before the arrival of the Masters, and brought me back to health. He has been teaching me about the Empire's past, telling me what is happening now, and also preparing me for what may come tomorrow."*
- Where are we going? How long will we be traveling? *"Isawa-sensei is waiting for us two days north of the Unicorn lands. I would prepare for two weeks of travel."*

- If a PC mentions his unusual style of dress, he gets flustered momentarily, then responds with a smile: *“It is easier to honor the spirits, and to fight.”*

Once the PCs have asked their questions, he stands, and moves away from the table.

“We will leave in the morning. Please, enjoy this city tonight, but be ready tomorrow. I must go and make myself ready to leave, also.” Moto Rakkas bows once again, and departs for his room.

The City of the Rich Frog, sometimes called Kaeru Toshi despite the Lion-held city of the that name, is clearly very wealthy, with just about anything a samurai could need or desire available in the markets if one knows who to ask. There are no recognizable guards or magistrates watching over the stalls, but you can't help but notice several burly samurai wandering the area talking with merchants and occasionally smoking long, metal pipes.

The PCs may also take this opportunity to talk with the locals and pick up bits of useful gossip using the usual methods, with more information available for those with certain skills or looking in specific areas. The Kaeru know the value of good information, however, and learning anything useful requires more skill than in other parts of the Empire. The roll for gathering information is **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness (TN 15)**, with a Free Raise for every item purchased from local merchants (to a maximum of four Free Raises from this effect). PCs learn one piece of information for succeeding at the original roll, and one additional rumor for every increment of **10** beyond the base TN that they succeed. Some PCs may wish to try using **Intimidation** to get information from the locals, and this is a valid tactic, but anyone who gets too aggressive will find themselves blinded by tobacco smoke, suddenly aware of a sharp pain in their knees, and being escorted from the area.

- The ronin camped outside the city are an otokodate calling themselves the Band of the Ox. PCs with at least **two ranks of Commerce** or who make a second roll of **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness TN 20** and who ask for additional information about these ronin learn that the Kaeru have hired the large otokodate of mounted samurai as additional protection from their two Great Clan neighbors, the Lion and Unicorn.
- A strike force made up of ronin horsemen launched an attack against Face of the East Castle in the Crab lands. The castle itself was unharmed, but the nearby Golden Carp Marketplace was completely

leveled, and many of the merchants were killed. Descriptions of the assault estimate the force at anywhere from 60-100 horsemen, using tactics similar to those used by the Shinjo. Players with at least **2 ranks in Lore: Underworld** are aware that much of the business taking place in the Golden Carp Marketplace was related to black market goods, and most of the merchants killed had ties to various criminal organizations.

- The Kaeru family, now the Frog Clan, has made a tidy profit off of the skirmishing between the Lion and Unicorn over the last several years. However, the locals are very clear about wishing to avoid choosing sides between their mighty neighbors, and indeed are quite looking forward to a lessening of the tensions in the coming year with word that the Lion Clan will be turning its attention to the east.
- The Unicorn Clan has provided hundreds of horses and dozens of riders to assist Imperial Chancellor Otomo Mitsuhide in establishing an Imperial Courier service through the Empire. The first routes have been surveyed, and though some Clans are concerned about the prospect of samurai travelling through their lands with little oversight, the chancellor's couriers promise to greatly increase the speed of messages throughout Rokugan.
- The Frog Clan is one of three new Minor Clans created by the decree of the Imperial Regent three years ago. They have proven fairly successful, even if their main holdings are directly between two strong martial rivals; the Kaeru family have always been prosperous merchants and their change in status has simply granted them greater access to a wider market.

Additional rumor: Lore: Underworld / Awareness TN 30, Emerald/Clan Magistrates or those with relevant Social Positions who have **2 or more ranks in Lore: Law** may roll that, instead). There are whispers coming from those close to Kakita Toshiken that the Emerald Champion has ordered an investigation into allegations that the Daidoji Trading Council has been infiltrated and possibly taken over by the Kolat. One of the ships returning from the military action against the Ivory Kingdoms apparently found evidence that someone had been selling Rokugani trade secrets to the gaijin, and worse, selling Rokugani peasants and the children of low-ranking samurai for labor.

The next morning, Moto Rakkas meets you in the stables, where servants have readied your horses. Before you set out, Rakkas clears his throat before speaking. “Some of you may have journeyed together

before, and have shared your tales with each other. I do not know these stories, but would be honored if you shared them with me.”

Along the way, Moto Rakkas will try to spend time talking to each of the PCs, specifically shugenja. One night, during the trip through Unicorn lands, he will start a conversation by asking the following question: *“Why do so many priests ask the kami to kill for them?”* If there are multiple shugenja in the party, he will focus on the most militant schools, such as Kuni or Dragon Agasha. If there are no shugenja, he will ask the most pious of the PCs at the table, based on ranks in the relevant Lore (such as Theology) and Meditation Skills.

Below are some of the points that Rakkas will likely bring up in the discussion:

- Where he is from, shugenja are rare and the distance from the Empire makes working with the kami difficult. It is the duty of bushi to protect the priests so they may focus on their studies and appeasing the kami.
- The elemental kami are innocent, much like children, and asking them to kill or damage humans opens them up to corruption.
- Samurai have been given their own means of dealing with their enemies, in the form of their ritually prepared katana (or other weapons), so that the karmic debt caused by slaying another human is carried by their own Honor, rather than weighing down the souls of the priests. By using the kami as offensive weapons, do the priests belittle the spiritual sacrifices made by their defenders?
- Katana and other weapons have kami bound into them through ritual, but the rituals of the forge used and the consecration ceremonies ensure the kami are aware and willing.
- Using the kami to help defeat forces of corruption or those who are truly evil is appropriate, as these enemies might be unkillable otherwise, but focusing them on a mundane enemy creates discord among the kami, and invites corruption.

Rakkas is eager for counter-arguments, and will listen enthusiastically to the opinions of his travel companions. He tries not to be offensive, and will back down if a PC feels the Moto is questioning their honor, dropping the subject completely if things begin to deteriorate into violence. Ultimately, Rakkas is interested in an intellectual debate on the subject, and not merely being argumentative. When the conversation draws to a close, he will thank any participating PCs for sharing their insights, and return to more mundane conversation.

Part One: The Sanest Man in the Room

*You make good time through the lands of the Unicorn, and reach the outpost of Kibukito on the northern border of the Empire with little difficulty. Two days later, your path brings you to a high pass between dunes. As the pass opens up to an expansive view of the horizon, you are struck by a tremendous sense of *deja vu*; rising into the sky from beyond the next hill is an enormous column of swirling flame. Approaching the column, you can make out a pair of ryu flying through the fire like salmon swimming upstream. As soon as they notice your group, the dragon spirits leap from the pillar and fly towards you, circling overhead three times before turning and heading back towards the Oracle’s camp. One of the spirits turns and nods his head in a signal to follow them.*

Once the party crosses the next ridge, the pillar of flame dissipates, and they can clearly make out a man dressed in the robes of an Isawa shugenja standing at the edge of a small oasis. Players who retrieved the Katana of Fire in the module “Fire and Water” instantly recognize Isawa Norikazu, the Oracle of Fire. His robes are mostly white, with images of flames rising from the hem. The two dragons have settled into the sand behind him, and watch the approaching samurai cautiously. If there are any PCs with at least one full rank of Taint, one of the ryu will lock eyes with each such character, alert for any signs of an attack against the Oracle. On the other side of the small pool a campfire sits between a pair of squat tents and a series of posts that have been arranged as a make-shift corral for the horses.

“Welcome, samurai,” the Isawa says with a polite bow as you approach. “Thank you for coming! Please, see to your horses, and then we can talk. Rakkas-san, I would speak with you a moment, now.” The Moto ties off his horse and crosses the oasis, where he and Norikazu speak quietly for several moments, both men looking towards you occasionally as you unsaddle your mounts. The conversation is brief, and Rakkas quickly returns and offers to finish taking care of the animals, “Please, allow me. Isawa-sensei is ready to speak with you.”

PCs who roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception (TN 25)** can tell that they aren’t really looking at the party, so much as something over their shoulders, presumably back along the trail they took to get here. If asked about the conversation, Rakkas says that Norikazu was making him aware of a potential problem on the path

back to the Empire, but it is nothing they should worry about for now.

A number of rugs and cushions have been arranged around the campfire where Isawa Norikazu sits, and motions for you to join him. The Oracle of Fire appears calm as he prods the fire, and not at all the crazy-eyed prophet that you may have expected based on the stories about him. “Again, thank you for coming, my friends. I apologize for making you travel all this way to speak with me, but I am not yet ready to return to the Empire. And that, I think, is the best place to start.

“As you are no doubt aware, the death of Toturi Kaede and the shattering of the Void Dragon all but severed the ties that connected the other Oracles and myself to our patrons, the Elemental Dragons. Events that were destined to happen decades in the future – Toturi’s death, the Invasion of the Ivory Kingdoms, the Dragon-Phoenix War – have occurred in rapid succession. You have, no doubt, experienced the further effects of the Empress’ death during your journeys, but I would like to explain what happened from my perspective, while I still can.

“Where being severed from the Celestial Heavens resulted in something close to madness for my fellow Oracles, it granted me clarity of thought, freedom from the visions that I have had all my life. At first, I reveled in it, and found that I preferred solitude to the constant interruptions that come with being an Oracle. So I left, and came here.

“There were some who found me, asking questions that I answered to the best of my now-limited ability, and eventually word of my whereabouts reached the Elemental Masters. They came as a group, at first pleading that I return to Kyuden Isawa, and becoming more insistent when I refused. Gennai even tried to use my brother’s death as a means to lure me back. This was the first that I had heard that Mitori had taken ill, and I... did not react well. I erupted at the Masters, and drove them away. It was then that I became aware of something else.

“I am dying. The fever that granted me the curse of prophecy has progressed to the point that my body can no longer sustain itself, despite the succor of the Fire Dragon. If I had known of Mitori’s illness, I would have gladly passed the blessing of Tengoku on to my brother, but I was not there to save him. To make up for this failure, I found an apprentice. My young Moto friend’s... unique... perspective is something that will be desperately needed in the times ahead,

especially if you succeed at the task I would like you to undertake.

“Even now, the Dark Oracles are moving against the Empire. There is a new Champion of Jigoku, and he is using the Dark Oracles to further his plans. The newest Dark Oracle of Air, Soshi Jomyako, has met several times with Agasha Tamori; I believe she is trying to convince him to accept the mantle of Dark Oracle of Fire. If he does, he will be the cause of a terrible war between the Dragon and the Phoenix, and his death will result in the next Dark Oracle of Fire sending a massive army of Yobanjin fanatics burning across the Empire. Though it should not happen for many years, the destruction wrought upon the Empire as a result of Tamori’s acceptance of the mantle of Dark Oracle of Fire will be unprecedented.

“I want you to keep this from happening. Rakkas-san knows where Tamori has gone to seek solitude, and will lead you to him. Once there, I want you to free Tamori’s mind from the doubt and the dark promises planted there by Jomyako. If you can convince him that revenge is not the answer, that becoming a pawn of Jigoku will bring disaster to the Dragon and the Empire as a whole, it will be a major setback for the Dark Oracles, and, perhaps, bring me some sense that I was able to prevent the deaths of hundreds of thousands of people.”

The players will probably have questions for Norikazu, and he will answer them as honestly as he can. If the questions are related to the mission he has asked them to undertake, they will not count as their “One Question.” Below are several probable questions, and their answers.

- What exactly are you asking us to do? *“Ensure that Agasha Tamori, through whatever means you may have at your disposal, does not fall to the influence of the Dark Oracles and Jigoku.”*
- You want us to kill him? *“It should not come to that. Your wits and your knowledge of bushido should give you leverage enough.”*
- Aren’t the Oracles forbidden to interfere with the Empire? They are to act as guides, but not get involved? *“That is why I am trying to avoid direct intervention by involving you. This may be our only chance to stop a series of major catastrophes from ravaging the Empire. If I take personal action, the consequences are beyond even an Oracle’s ability to predict.”*
- What if your actions only make the disruption in the Spirit Realms even worse? *“I do not expect that to be the case, as my plan seeks to balance*

the influence of the Dark Oracles, rather than tip things in Tengoku's favor."

- Who is this 'Champion of Jigoku' that you claim is leading the Dark Oracles? *"His name is still hidden from me, but I know he is gathering power beyond the Carpenter Wall. He will eventually make a move against Rokugan, and we must do whatever we can to slow him down or stop him."*
- Why choose Rakkas as your successor? Why not me/another shugenja? *"Moto Rakkas is a warrior with the soul of a priest. He will bring an outsider's perspective to a very insulated and, until recently, isolated Rokugan. This perspective could be invaluable whe.. if the Empire chooses to further reach beyond its borders."*

Answers to possible "One Question" questions:

- Where is [Person, Item]? *"I can tell you were they were/it was before my Sister's death, but I cannot guarantee that it is still there."* The player should contact Admin via the HoR3 Forums at Heroes-of-Rokugan.net. This is probably the most common type of question, and the most effective answer.
- Who is responsible for Kaede's death? *"If Toturi had not deflected the assassin's blade, the Oracle of Void would be alive. If Kakita Kaiten had carried his own sword, instead of the Dragon's Claw Katana, the Void Dragon would not have shattered. If Kakita Toshiken had not been distracted by conspiracies, the assassin could not have acted. If one person had made a different choice, you would not be asking this question."*
- No, really, who is ultimately responsible? Who sent the assassin? *"Like the other Returned Spirits, they are currently hidden from my vision."*

Other questions should be submitted to Admin.

Once the PCs have run out of questions, Norikazu will ask them to commit to his cause.

"I have explained my plan, friends. Will you assist me?"

Some PCs may think that perhaps Norikazu is overstepping his duty as an Oracle, and they are probably correct. He will respond to arguments against his request by calling on the PC's own compassion and sense of duty.

"I understand your trepidation. Honestly, I do. I ask you then to think of me as nothing more than a daimyo, asking you to perform this duty on my behalf."

Take the information I have given you, and use it at your discretion. Understand, however, that failing to act on it could result in the unnecessary deaths of thousands of people."

Regardless of the PCs' response to the Oracle of Fire's request, he will spend the rest of the evening answering any other questions the PCs may have to the best of his ability, and then offer them the use of the second tent for the night. The twin ryu serve as adequate protection, making a watch is unnecessary, but Norikazu will not prevent the PCs from setting up their own.

Part Two: Long Time, No See

You awaken the next morning and find a simple breakfast has been prepared and Rakkas has already readied your horses for the journey. Norikazu offers you his blessing for your journey, and the twin dragons cavort overhead as you return to where they met you yesterday.

When the walls of Kibukito appear as dots on the horizon the following afternoon, they are accompanied by a much nearer spectacle: a group of eight ronin surrounding a solitary figure wearing the robes of a Phoenix shugenja. As you watch, the wave-men draw in around the man, who appears oblivious to their presence as he kneels to inspect something on the ground. Before you can alert him, however, the ronin turn, almost as one, and look directly at... a second group of a dozen or so ronin that have appeared on a low ridge to the east of your current position. The new force pauses only a moment before raising their scimitars and screaming, urging their horses down the slope towards the still oblivious shugenja.

PCs who have played 'Prison of Earth' may have some suspicions about the identity of the shugenja, but should make a **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** (TN 15) or raw **Intelligence** (TN 20) to remember this man as the highly focused yet easily distracted engineer, Agashanow-Gennai Shikkui.

The players may roll initiative if they wish to get involved. They have a few options here, but very little time to make a choice. The 'Ronin Marauders' will reach the 'Ronin Defenders' in two rounds. There are ten Marauders and their leader Moto Naathim, and seven Ronin Guardians (Bikou's stats are in Appendix #1).

The PCs can simply ignore the fight and continue on their way, leaving Gennai Shikkui to his fate. Moto Rakkas will suggest that the shugenja may need their help, but will not press the issue if the PCs present a case for why they should ignore the situation.

The PCs can intercede, putting themselves between the two groups, but will have to do so before the Marauders take their second action. The Ronin Marauders are actually Moto, and part of a disaffected faction the PCs may have encountered during WC: Shiro Moto. If the PCs intervene, the Marauders will halt their charge until they can determine the nature of the threat posed by these newcomers.

The leader of the Moto identifies himself as Moto Naathim, and explains that the other group of ronin are obviously spies sent by the Phoenix, and must be eliminated. **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** vs the Moto's **Sincerity / Awareness** (6k3) reveals that he is lying, or at the very least using the spying charge as an excuse for an attack that was going to happen with or without just cause. If asked why they are dressed as ronin, rather than wearing the normal Unicorn colors, Moto Naathim will explain that they are returning from a patrol, and it is safer to dress like the locals. Again, he is lying. A PC who responds with a well role-played attempt at diplomacy can attempt to defuse the situation. They need to roll **Sincerity / Awareness TN 20**, and depending on how the PC chooses to make the argument, they may use either the Honesty or Deception emphasis of Sincerity. Convincing the Marauders to move on requires a **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** (TN 30). Success on the Sincerity roll grants a Free Raise (failure raises the TN by 5), and failing the Courtier roll causes the Marauders to attack. Confronting Naathim on his dishonesty will cause him to take offense and order the attack unless handled very carefully – the GM may use their discretion, but it can be assumed that any attempt to bully or intimidate a group of proud Moto will result in anger and violence.

The PCs can join either side of the coming battle, without stopping to find out who either group of ronin is or why they are there. If the PCs join the Marauders against the Guards, the fight should be over rather quickly, though Bikou will slip away during the fight. PCs may roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** (TN 30) to see him shimmer a moment, then melt into the sand. Gennai Shikkui will use his magics defensively, though he will still have Moto Rakkas defending him regardless of which side the PCs join in the battle.

During combat, Moto Rakkas will attempt to defend as many shugenja as possible, though he will focus on Gennai Shikkui. He pulls a pair of wide-bladed daggers from a sheath on his back, wielding them much like war-fans. Rakkas moves around the person/people he is guarding in a series of whirling spins, attempting to distract his opponents and deflect their attacks. PCs can roll **Battle / Intelligence TN 20** during the fight to get a feel for the different styles being used. The Marauders are clearly trained as a unit, while the Guards appear to be self-trained or taught by different sensei. Crane PCs or those who have at least **2 Ranks in Lore: Crane** (or Ranks in the Kakita Bushi School) can tell that the leader of the Guards is exceptionally skilled with his katana, and probably attended the Kakita School.

The Moto will fight aggressively until they start losing members, choosing at that point to hand out as many Wound penalties as possible and then riding away in a classic “hit and run” tactic. Unless prevented from retreating, they will take their dead (and horses) with them; leaving them no such opportunity will result in them striking out as viciously as possible. The Guardians are, obviously, rather more defensive in their tactics, but are both outnumbered and outclassed. For simplicity's sake, it may be easiest to limit the number of enemies faced by the PCs to the number of characters in the party.

Moto Naathim

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

Initiative: 9k4+6 **Attack:** 10k5 (scimitar, Simple)

Armor TN: 37 (riding armor) **Damage:** 8k5 (scimitar)

Reduction: 4

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

School/Rank: Moto Bushi 5

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: May make attacks as a 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.

Moto Cannot Yield: While mounted or while assuming the Full Attack Stance, keep an additional number of damage dice equal to half Strength, rounded down. Gain this bonus only while wielding a two-handed weapon or a weapon with the Samurai keyword.

Skills: Animal Handling 4, Athletics 5, Battle 6, Defense 4, Horsemanship (Gaijin Riding Horse) 7, Hunting 5, Intimidation 4, Investigation 2, Jujutsu 4, Kenjutsu (Scimitar) 6, Kyujutsu 5, Perform: Oratory 2, Sincerity 3, Stealth 2

Mastery Abilities: no movement penalties from Terrain, +6 to Initiative, may retain a Full Defense Roll in successive Rounds, may use Full Attack Stance while mounted, mounting or dismounting is a Free Action, +1k0 to Stealth Rolls while in wilderness, +1k0 damage with unarmed and swords, may ready a sword as a Free Action, may string a bow as a Simple Action, increase maximum range with bows by 50%

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

Marauders

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

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

Armor TN: 30 **Damage:** 8k3 (scimitar)

Reduction: 3

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

School/Rank: Moto Bushi 3

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: May make attacks as a Simple Action when using a melee weapon.

Skills: Animal Handling 3, Athletics 5, Battle 5, Defense 2, Horsemanship (Gaijin Riding Horse) 6, Hunting 5, Intimidation 4, Investigation 2, Jujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Scimitar) 6, Kyujutsu 2, Spears 3, Stealth 2

Mastery Abilities: no movement penalties from Terrain, +5 to Initiative, may use Full Attack Stance while mounted, mounting or dismounting is a Free Action, +1k0 to Stealth Rolls while in wilderness, +1k0 to unarmed damage, +1k0 damage with swords, may ready a sword as a Free Action, may ignore 3 points of opponent's Reduction during first Round of skirmish when using Spears

Advantages/Disadvantages: Large / Gaijin Name

Ronin Guardians

Air 2 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 3
Reflexes 4 Agility 4
Honor 3.1 Status 0 Glory 1.0

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

Armor TN: 30 (light armor) **Damage:** 7k2 (katana)

Reduction: 3

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

School/Rank: none/Insight Rank 3

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Defense 4, Heavy Weapons 3, Hunting 4, Intimidation 3, Investigation 2, Jujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Underworld 2, Stealth 2

Mastery Abilities: Athletics 3 (no movement penalty from Moderate Terrain and reduce penalty from Difficult by 1); Defense 4 (may retain a Full Defense Roll in successive Rounds); Heavy Weapons 3 (reduce opponent's Reduction by 2 with Heavy Weapons); Jujutsu 3 (+1k0 to unarmed damage); Kenjutsu 5 (+1k0 damage with swords, may ready a sword as a Free Action); Kyujutsu 3 (may string a bow as a Simple Action)

Should the PCs convince the Marauders to stand down/move on (or following combat, if he did not flee), the leader of the other group of ronin will approach. Introducing himself as Bikou, he explains that his small band of ronin have been hired by the Gennai family to protect Shikkui. He's a likable fellow, and any PC who has the **Kharmic Tie** advantage (with anyone) instantly feels a connection to him. Suspicious PCs may roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** vs Bikou's **Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness** (10k5, with the Emphasis), but everything he has said is the truth. Bikou will ask the PCs if they are headed back to Kibukito.

Eventually, Gennai Shikkui will take a break from studying a series of what look to be upturned glass bowls and wander over. If Shikkui has previously met any of the PCs, he will greet them enthusiastically and invite them to see at his latest project.

"Oh, hello! Come look at this! I found a way to draw water kami out of the air! Well, possibly out of the ground. Or I turned air kami into water kami. I can't tell, really. I asked, but they won't tell me. Anyway, I had the fire kami fuse sand into these bowls, left them out on the dunes overnight, and now I have water. I know, I know... Heating water produces steam, and dew forms when the air cools down, but there's not a good way to capture the water, especially out here in

the desert. Until now...” He will continue rambling in this fashion until the PC either asks him to stop, or walks off.

“Gennai-sama,” Bikou says as he approaches the babbling shugenja, “I believe it is time to get back to the Empire. Your papers expire soon.”

“Expire? Oh. Yes, right. I think I have what I need. I need to redesign the capture bowls, add a collecting lip, maybe a pour spout...” His abstracted muttering peters out, and he looks around with a bright smile. “It appears that we are headed the same way, samas. May we join you?”

Once they get back to Kibukito, reluctant PCs will have one final opportunity to change their minds about Norikazu’s request. If they do not want to follow Moto Rakkas into the Dragon Mountains to speak with Agasha Tamori, they may head back to their homes from here. They will gain one XP for playing, and a second if they dealt with the “Marauders” who were threatening Shikkui and his bodyguards. Rakkas will proceed with the plan, asking Bikou and his men to escort him in place of the PCs, and dragging Shikkui along with them. This will result in the **Really Bad Ending**.

Part Three: Even the Longest Fuse, Eventually...

If the PCs bypassed Shikkui and his guardians, the remainder of the mod will play out quite differently, and adjustments will need to be made. The biggest change will come once the party reaches the entrance to Tamori’s hidden library, but the GM should be careful to make any other changes that seem appropriate based on which NPCs are still accompanying the Oracle of Fire’s delegation. Some instances of story conflict have been pointed out already, but there may be more based on choices made by the players. For instance, if Shikkui and/or Bikou did not join the PCs following the encounter with the Moto Marauders, it might be necessary to skip ahead to the **Arrival at Shiro Tonbo**. However, if the PCs left Shikkui to his fate at the hands of the Marauders (or actively assisted the Moto), Bikou will be following the group at a distance. This is best represented by allowing the PCs to roll Investigation between the scenes, giving them a sense of being watched, until Bikou reveals himself at the entrance to Tamori’s cave.

After returning to Unicorn lands, it quickly becomes apparent that you and Shikkui’s entourage are heading in roughly the same direction. It is also apparent that the Unicorn expect you to ensure that the Phoenix exits their lands as quickly as possible, causing Bikou to comment that it seems fated for you to travel together for a while longer. The leader of the small band of ronin is friendly, and you get the sense that he hasn’t been a wave-man for long. Aside from the occasional stop to find out where the easily distracted shugenja has wandered off to, the journey is largely uneventful, until the night of the new moon.

If asked about his past, Bikou will reluctantly admit that he left the service of his lord following the revelation that his daimyo had been involved in some illicit activity during the conflict between the Crab and Crane.

Just as the sun begins to set, Moto Rakkas begins clearing a spot for the night’s camp fire, only this one is much larger than on previous nights spent in the wild. The fire pit is also larger than normal, clearly intended to contain the large bonfire Rakkas begins to build. If asked, the enigmatic Moto explains that tonight is the New Moon, and the larger fire is necessary to his family’s ritual to fend off evil spirits while Lady Moon hides her face from the Empire. If any of the PCs play an instrument, he asks them to play something traditional, encouraging them to play faster and faster as he whirls around the fire pit, slicing his fans through the air as he moves. Once the Moto has completed his offering to the flame, he explains to any curious PCs that centuries ago, before the Unicorn returned to the Empire, his family became servants of evil spirits called the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang, or the Lords of Death. Now that his family has returned to the Empire, the Lords are angry, and searching for them. Their presence is strongest when moon turns dark, but the elemental spirits of Rokugan, especially Fire, keep the Lords at bay.

If the PCs have Shikkui and his ronin with them, the following interaction occurs:

Gennai Shikkui erupts in laughter as Rakkas tells his tale. “Seriously? You were thanking the fire for protecting you from a tale designed to frighten unruly children? You built the fire. Your whirling dance drew air to it, and helped it grow larger. If anything, the fire should be thanking you!”

Rakkas responds coolly, obviously struggling to keep his anger in check. “You may be correct, Shikkui-san, but they offer their thanks through their protection, so perhaps we are even. It never hurts to offer gratitude when given a gift, whether the gift is needed or not.”

“A gift? The kami are merely doing what we ask them to; they don’t understand why we ask.”

“You are wrong, Gennai-san. You would be wise to reflect more on the respect the spirits are due.”

The conversation will quickly devolve into an argument, with Rakkas promoting the ritual worship of the kami, while Shikkui continues to suggest the kami don’t understand any of the pageantry most shugenja put into their spellcasting, making it a waste of effort. If the PCs don’t step in, Rakkas will finally get fed up and punch the Phoenix in the jaw, knocking Shikkui out cold.

Arrival at Shiro Tonbo

You arrive at Shiro Tonbo slightly more than two weeks after leaving Kibukito. The Imperial Legionnaires at the gates welcome you to the castle, and review your papers before one of them turns and heads inside. “We were told to expect you, samurai, but Tonbo Kiriko-sama, the castle hatamoto, asked to be informed of your arrival before we allow you to enter. Please, wait here,” the Seppun guard says, motioning to an area to one side of the gate, where a number of people are already waiting. Among those whose entry to the castle has been delayed is a monk wearing crisp black and white robes. He introduces himself as Mune, a disciple of the 10th Kami.

“While we are waiting, samas, perhaps you can help me with my current meditations. I am pondering a spiritual issue that may be particularly relevant, given the events currently taking place within the Empire. Most of the returned Ancestors have already been judged by Emma-O, and sent to their proper rewards in the Spirit Realms. Do their actions during this second chance at life on Ningen-do affect this judgment, when they return to Emma-O?”

This is meant to spark a theological discussion, but some players may bring up the very practical point that the Kitsu can simply ask a recently-deceased Return Spirit what happened. Mune will respond that he has, in fact, spoken to several Kitsu on the matter, and the Ancestors that they communed with lived their second lives much the way they lived their first, so there was nothing different to change Emma-O’s judgment. *“I wonder, though. What if a peaceful man sent to Tengoku for living an honorable life spent his second lifetime warmongering? Or a rage-fuelled warrior who returned from Toshigoku only to dedicate himself to a life of quiet contemplation?”*

While the PCs wait, Gennai Shikkui (if he is present) will be unusually quiet. If anyone asks, he will admit that this is the closest he has been to Dragon lands since his family left to follow Gennai. **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness (TN 25)** reveals that Shikkui is not being entirely truthful, but all he will say if pressed further is that he is “not welcome in Dragon provinces anymore.”

As the discussion winds down, the Imperial Legionnaire returns with Tonbo Kiriko who greets the PCs with a bow and looks over their travel papers. **IMPORTANT:** If Bikou is not with the party, the guards are only expecting the PCs and Moto Rakkas. If Shikkui is not present, the Tonbo simply welcomes the PCs and Moto Rakkas into Shiro Tonbo.

Tonbo Kiriko, the hatamoto of Kyuden Tonbo, greets you with a friendly smile. “Ah. You are the group that the Togashi asked us to watch for, though we were told to expect (a number equal to two more than the number of PCs) of you. The rest of you will need to wait here or move on.” Though her face is too well composed to give much of a sense of her feelings, there is still a certain amount of curiosity evident in her regard of the group.

“We are the only ones wishing to enter the Dragon Lands, Tonbo-sama,” Moto Rakkas says, indicating your group. “The ronin are escorting the Phoenix back to his people.”

Even as the Unicorn is speaking, the hatamoto shakes her head. “I’m sorry, Moto-san, but we have our orders. If the Togashi approve a certain number of people, we have to send that many people. I’ve found it less confusing to not question them on these things.”

If he is present, the PCs may suspect that Shikkui is the intended extra person, but he will simply shake his head if asked, revealing or repeating that he is not welcome in Dragon lands.

Bikou steps forward, and bows deeply to the hatamoto, then turns to you. “I will accompany you, samas, if you agree. I feel that there is something calling to me from beyond this gate, and my men can see that Gennai-sama reaches the Phoenix lands safely.”

Part Three: Please, Allow Me to Introduce Myself...

A few days later, you find yourselves working along a barely traversable pass that has taken you deep into the Dragon Mountains. Occasionally, the ground beneath you shakes, releasing a shower of pebbles and small stones upon your heads as a reminder that these mountains were not always so tranquil. The path is narrow, but it eventually widens out, leaving you looking up at a wall of lichen-encrusted stone.

"I... I don't understand." Rakkas turns to you with a puzzled expression, "This is the spot Norikazu-sensei showed me. There should be a cave opening right here in this wall."

Players may roll **Investigation (Notice)/ Perception** (TN 25) to notice the outline of an opening. Rakkas will eventually see this outline, if a player does not. Exceeding TN 35 reveals a barely noticeable trail of small, reptilian foot prints moving up the cliff face. None of the tracks is larger than an inch across, but appear to be made of small pieces of pure jade. The tracks weave through and around each other, like the knots on a strand of prayer beads. (This a ward created by the Jade Dragon to try to limit the Shadowlands campaign against Tamori; the Jade Dragon is nowhere near as powerful as the Elemental Dragons, but is attempting to do what good it can.)

The ground shakes as you inspect the wall, dislodging a boulder the size of a large dog. It careens down the cliff face in an almost unnatural fashion, bouncing from one wall to another before eventually slamming to the ground inches from where you stand. As the dust settles, you see the boulder crumble, transforming into a squat pile of blood-drenched dirt and stone. "My master wants to know why you are all standing around, staring at him," it states matter-of-factly, with a voice like chalk scraping across slate. As it speaks, you feel a malevolent presence from within the mountain, and the tremors in the earth grow stronger.

At this, the PCs need to make a **Fear 3** check. Players who roll **Lore: Shadowlands** (TN 20) know this creature to be a Lesser Elemental Terror of Earth, though the brutish creatures typically travel in pairs. Making a 30 recalls that Lesser Earth Terrors occasionally appear paired with a Greater Earth Terror instead.

As you watch, blood-red ichor seeps from the mountain wall, and the stench of rotting meat fills the air. Four deep crimson rubies appear towards the top of the blocked opening, above a maw filled with shattered obsidian. "AIR LADY SAYS LET NO ONE IN," the fiend bellows as it unfolds from the cave mouth. "AIR LADY SAYS CRUSH ANYONE WHO COMES TOO CLOSE."

PCs should make a **Fear 4** check as the Greater Earth Terror confronts them.

If Bikou is with the party:

Before you can draw your weapons, Bikou the ronin steps forward, surrounded by a halo of shimmering air. "I believe I may have a way around this beast, if you'd rather not risk a fight." While he speaks, the shimmering is replaced by thousands of inky tendrils that withdraw into the folds and sleeves of the man's clothing. Battle-worn armor and thread-bare cloth are replaced with fine blue silk and armor that appears to have been crafted from dark gray granite. You find yourself staring not at a well-spoken ronin, but at a Crane warrior with long, flowing hair and a trickster's smirk. "But it's up to you, my friends."

If "Bikou" was not with the party:

A smooth voice speaks out, "May I be of service, samurai?" The shadows of the pass deepen for a moment, and a man in dark gray armor, its plates appearing to have been carved from solid granite, steps out of the darkness. Handsome and elegant, with the mon of the Kakita on a blue sash and the typical white-dyed hair of the Crane, his face is lightened by a sardonic smile. "I believe I can get you past this guardian without a fight, should you wish it."

A player who makes a **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** (TN 20) roll recognizes this man as being none other than Kakita Kaiten, the former daimyo of the Kakita family. It is widely known that Kaiten reclaimed his honor via seppuku following the death of Toturi Kaede. Characters who participated in the mod New Beginnings or who have a Karmic Tie to Kaiten recognize him automatically, though he carries an aura of menace. **Unicorn** players or PCs with at least **2 ranks of Lore: History or Lore: Unicorn** also recognize Kaiten is wearing the **Armor of Earth**, which was last known to have been stolen from the Unicorn by agents of the Lying Darkness.

If the players accept Kaiten's offer of intercession (otherwise proceed to **Fighting the Elemental Terrors**):

The Crane nods imperiously to the hulking monstrosity. "Please, let the Dark Oracle know that Kakita Kaiten is here, along with his guests."

The huge Jimen no Oni takes on a confused look that would seem to mirror your own, and then simply vanishes, while the smaller Earth kansen moves away from the opening. "The Mistress is intrigued, spirit," the creature states in a grating monotone. "You may enter."

Fighting the Elemental Terrors

These are potentially very dangerous foes; the Jimen no Oni is Invulnerable and both can take a large number of Wounds. Additionally, the Jimen no Oni is bringing rocks down on the PCs. During the Reactions Stage of each Round, all of the PCs must make **Athletics** or **Defense / Reflexes** rolls at a TN of 30; failure means that they take damage equal to the amount they fail the roll by.

However, this does mean that after the first Round, there will be jade-studded rocks on the ground. Though not sufficient to present major difficulty to the enemy, they can still be used as improvised weapons (using Jujutsu for melee attacks or Athletics to throw them) as 0k2 damage weapons that will count as jade, ignoring the enemies' Invulnerability.

Jimen no Oni, Greater Elemental Terror

A giant humanoid form made of blood-clotted dirt and rock; in place of eyes it has rubies that shine with unholy fire, and its cry sounds like the rumble of a great boulder crashing down a hill.

Air 2 Earth 8 Fire 2 Water 3
Reflexes 4 Agility 4 Strength 6
Initiative: 6k4 **Attack:** 8k4 (fist, Simple)
Armor TN: 30 **Damage:** 7k3
Reduction: 8 (halved against crystal or obsidian)
Wounds: 30 (+5), 60 (+10), 90 (+15), 120 (Dead)
Taint Rank: 6.0
Skills: Defense 4, Hunting 4, Intimidation 4
Special Abilities:

- *Earth Movement:* can move through solid earth and stone at normal movement speed.
- *Fear* 4
- *Huge*
- *Invulnerability*
- *Magic Resistance:* three Ranks vs Earth Spells (+9 to TN)
- *Trembling Earth:* anyone within 50' is at -1k0 on all Skill and Spell Casting Rolls

Toichi no Kansen, Lesser Elemental Terror of Earth

Appears as little more than a pile of dirt and stone with stony appendages.

Air 1 Earth 5 Fire 2 Water 2
Reflexes 3 Agility 3 Strength 4
Initiative: 5k2 **Attack:** 6k3 (Simple)
Armor TN: 25 **Damage:** 4k2
Reduction: 4 (none against crystal or obsidian)
Wounds: 20 (+5), 40 (+10), 60 (+15), 80 (Dead)
Taint Rank: 5.0
Skills: Defense 2, Hunting 2, Intimidation 2

Special Abilities:

- *Bury:* after initiating a grapple, may drag its victim underground at half movement speed; they must dig themselves out or suffocate
- *Fear* 3
- *Earth Movement:* can move through solid earth and stone at normal speed
- *Huge*
- *Magic Resistance:* one Rank against Earth spells (+3 to TN)

Once the elemental fiends have been defeated, a willowy female voice beckons from inside the cavern. "All right, shadow-spawn, you have my attention..."

Regardless of how the PCs chose to bypass the Terrors:

Moto Rakkas turns to look at each of you, and asks, "Do you know this man, my friends? I do not like being lied to."

"I apologize for the need to disguise myself, Moto-san," Kakita Kaiten responds, bowing low as he directs you into the cave (a courtesy you cannot tell if it contains respect or mockery). "Please lead the way, samurai. I promise that all will be explained inside."

The cavern winds its way several hundred yards into the mountain, and the mysterious Crane uses this time to tell his tale. "Following the attack on Kaede-sama, I was one of several samurai given the duty of finding Toturi-heika within the strange new spirit realm and returning with him to the Empire. We found the Emperor, but he had given himself over to the Living Shadow once more. The others – Toku, Rekai-san, the two Seppun guards – they defied our Emperor's call for renewing their fealty, and perished at their own hands, while I remained true to my Lord, and joined him as his Champion. He commanded me to find a way out of that twisted realm, and I eventually made my way to Ningen-do, only to find out that I already existed in this world. The version of me that committed seppuku to atone for his – my? our? – role

in the Empress' death was one possible Kaiten, while I have... been chosen to follow a different path."

If the PCs want more information about Kaiten's path, or why he is here, he will simply shrug, saying only, "You will find out soon enough." If they persist, or balk at his presence due to his being a potential threat, he will respond in a firm tone that borders on anger, and almost growling, "You wouldn't be here if not for me, and I promise that I mean you no harm at this time.. All you need to do is trust me for a little bit longer."

A warm glow flickers on the cavern wall ahead of you, and spreads as you round a corner to find yourself in the entrance to a large chamber. Scroll racks line the walls to each side of you, while a fire flickers in the large irori hearth in the center of the room. A slight, stooped figure turns and glares at you from the low table where he sits, the fine robes and a tracery of a tattoo across his face marking him as Agasha Tamori. A beautiful woman stands by a door opposite your entry-point, clad in the robes of a shugenja and a mask covering her eyes that appears to have been torn from the hide of... something monstrous.

"Who...? How DARE YOU enter my private retreat uninvited!!" Tamori bellows as he jumps to his feet. "I command you to leave IMMEDIATELY!!" The shugenja's face reddens as he moves towards you, and you can see bits of flame leaping from the hearth to his outstretched palms.

"Now, now, Tamori-sama," the woman coos as she steps between you and the enraged daimyo. "They are our guests, despite showing up unannounced and without invitation." Turning her attention to you, she offers a polite nod before beginning introductions. "As you are no doubt aware, this is Agasha Tamori, daimyo of the Agasha Family. I am Jigoku's Oracle of Air, once known as Soshi Jomyako. Please forgive our lack of hospitality, but we were not expecting additional guests. I shall have more tea prepared." Several tea cups float across the room towards you and the teapot returns to its place by the hearth, and she looks expectantly at your group. "And you are...?"

If the PCs are inclined to attack first and ask questions later (they are talking with a Dark Oracle, after all), they should be allowed to roll **Etiquette (Courtesy) / Awareness** (TN 15) to realize this is a bad idea: Agasha Tamori, while Tainted, remains technically the daimyo of a Great Clan family and they are in something that could be considered his home. Attacking his guests would be a major insult – and, indeed, it is one that is

responded to with great violence: if the PCs persist, move to the **Really Bad Conclusion**.

Assuming they are willing to show proper samurai courtesy, each of the PCs should roll **Etiquette (Courtesy) / Awareness** at a TN of 20 to make a good impression with a polite introduction. Success grants them a Free Raise on one of the following Social rolls in this scene; they may call Raises to gain additional Free Raises to use later. (As this confrontation is resolved with the Raises the PCs choose to call, this will be of significant use later.)

After your introductions, the Oracle focuses her attention on the shadowy Crane, "And now... Kakita Kaiten, why are you here? I believe you are supposed to be dead."

"Indeed I would be, Lady Oracle, were I this world's Kaiten. No, I have been sent here as the representative of an interested third party to offer Agasha-sama another option."

"I see," the Oracle responds. "And who might you be here to represent?"

"The former Elemental Dragon of Air, who now serves as the avatar for the Living Shadow, and the Nothing."

"Ah." The fury returns to Tamori's face as Jomyako calmly moves towards the chamber's exit. "In that case, I am afraid I shall have to disappoint you and your master. This discussion is for actual envoys of the Celestial Balance, not those who would see it reduced to oblivion. I am sure you can find your way out." She gestures gracefully to the door.

The mountain shudders as Tamori's anger continues to grow. "I want you gone," he growls. "Now!"

Kaiten inclines his head. "I am ordered to stay until you've heard my offer, Tamori-sama. May I suggest that we settle this like honorable samurai? If your champion defeats me in a duel, I will leave, but you agree to hear me out when I win. I'll even promise not to use any of the gifts my lord has bestowed upon me."

"My 'champion?'" The Dark Oracle ponders a moment. "Interesting." She turns towards you, assessing each of you as an Utaku might judge a newborn foal. "It seems I find myself in need of someone to defend my.. 'honor' isn't quite right. Position? Will one of you step forward to represent me against this shadow-spawn's challenge?"

Both Tamori and Jomyako are shugenja, and neither carries a katana, allowing them to call upon a champion if they choose. By the somewhat bemused smirk on the Shadow Kaiten's face, it is clear that he doesn't expect one of the PCs to step up to 'defend' the Dark Oracle. If no PCs step forward to act as her champion in iaijutsu, she will suggest that a shugenja may act as Kaiten's champion in a taryu-ji'ai duel, making the same promise not to call upon her powers as a Dark Oracle.

Shadow Kaiten's Dueling Stats:

10k6 (Assessment, with Emphasis and 9s explode),
10k9+13 (Focus, if he does not win Assessment by 10+ or 10k10+21 if he does, with the Emphasis)
10k9+8 (Strike, and gets a Free Raise for every increment of 3 instead of every increment of 5; he will keep low on the damage roll)

Soshi Jomyako's Taryu-ji'ai Stats:

This should be resolved in the same fashion as an Iaijutsu Duel, with Spellcraft substituted for the Iaijutsu Skill and the Ring of the participant's choice in place of both Void (during Focus) and Reflexes (during the Strike). Their damage roll is **School Rank / Ring**.

10k9 (Assessment)
10k10+8 (Focus, 10k10+14 if she wins the Assessment by 10+)
10k10+8 Strike (10k8 damage; she also will keep low, but show little concern about injuring someone who chooses to go against her)

If Kaiten wins or no one steps up as champion at all, Jomyako will relent, and allow the Shadow Kaiten to stay. If Kaiten is defeated, he will graciously accept his defeat with a deep bow, as he steps backwards into the shadows and vanishes (requiring the following exchange to be adjusted accordingly.)

“Very well, shadow-spawn, you may deliver your message,” the Dark Oracle relents. Kaiten pulls a folded piece of paper from his sleeve and reads,

“To the wise, powerful, and unjustly betrayed Agasha Tamori, The former Elemental Dragon of Air, also called the Shadow Dragon, sends its regards, and wants to extend an offer to act as your sponsor in your effort to take revenge on the Dragon Clan, and the Empire. All the Shadow Dragon asks in return is for you, Agasha Tamori, to become its Oracle.”

“The Oracle of.. Shadow? That is absurd!” the Dark Oracle laughs. “Tamori-san, pay no heed to this madman...”

“Silence, woman!” Tamori interrupts, causing the hearth to flare along with his temper. “You allowed

these people to stay, so I will give them the same consideration I have given you.” Turning his attention towards you, he continues, “This supposed Kakita Kaiten bears tidings from a creature I thought defeated almost a decade past, and I will hear more from him shortly. Do you also come with word from one of my enemies? Explain your presence.”

If any of the PCs are from the new Gennai family, he will end his question with a soul-piercing stare into that character's eyes. The PCs are now able state their reason for being here, though this is not the time for lengthy arguments; the chance for persuading him comes soon enough.

“You say you are here on behalf of Norikazu, the Oracle of Fire? Whispers of his near-incineration of the Elemental Masters reached me several months back, and out of respect for that act alone I will give you my attention.”

Moto Rakkas steps forward, and bows deeply to the Dragon family daimyo. “Forgive us, Agasha Tamori-sama, for breaking in on your meeting, and thank you letting us speak to you. My sensei, Isawa Norikazu has sent us to ask you to turn away from the power that the Dark Oracle offers, remaining loyal to the Empire and to your own place within it. We know that you have sacrificed much in defense of the people of Rokugan, and feel that you have only been repaid with treachery, but you should not allow regret to take hold of you and drive you to seek revenge. That will only lead to further death and destruction,” Rakkas concludes with another deep bow. Looking to you, “I’m sorry for my rough words, Agasha-sama. My friends will deliver Norikazu-sensei’s message better, I think.”

PCs may roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness TN 25** to notice some subtleties in the Unicorn's words and the way Tamori reacted to them. Rakkas actively avoided going into detail about the “further death and destruction” and emphasized the Agasha's loyalty and the importance of resisting the lure of regret. Tamori barely concealed a negative reaction when Rakkas mentioned “treachery,” however. Give each interested player a chance to offer their take on why the Oracle of Fire sent them. Tainted characters must roll **Willpower TN 5+(5 X Taint Rank)** to participate in the discussion without penalty, as Jomyako uses her connection to the Taint to keep them from making their points effectively. Ask each participating player to roll **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness TN 20**. Failure means that Tamori dismisses their arguments as nothing more than empty words, while success allows that player to roll **Courtier**

(Manipulation) / Awareness TN 25, along with any called Raises. Below is a list of things that will affect the result, adding bonuses or penalties the player's roll.

Modifiers:

- PC is from the Phoenix Clan: -5
- PC is from the Gennai Family: another -5
- Tainted PC fails Willpower roll: -5 x Taint Rank (min 5)
- PC is from the Dragon Agasha family: 1 Free Raise
- PC openly admits being Tainted: 2 Free Raises

Once the players have finished making their arguments, Tamori will give the other two parties a chance to speak their cases. Kaiten will speak first if he is here, followed by Soshi Jomyako. The PCs will have a chance to rebut the arguments/offers presented by both of them, and strengthen their own position.

Kakita Kaiten once again steps forward and bows to Tamori. "I have been in your world for only a short while, but in that time, I have come to recognize it as being almost identical to the one I left. In fact, it is almost identical to any number of Rokugans that exist inside the so-called Realm of Thwarted Destiny. In return for your service as the first Oracle of the Shadow Dragon, it will grant you this, or any of those other worlds, to be your personal playground, until the time they must return to the Nothing. Think of it! You will have the power to hunt down all of Gennai's treacherous lot, punishing them as you see fit, before striking the man himself down as everyone in the Empire forgets he ever existed. And then you can move on to a new reality and do it again!! These others, Dark Oracle and Light, what do they offer? One side offers little beyond the hope that you won't become their enemy, while the other offers you power at the cost of your sanity and your soul! Take my offer, and you will be at the Shadow Dragon's side as the Celestial Heavens are unmade in the image of the Nothing that preceded them!"

"Ah, yes. The 'unlimited' power of the Lying Darkness," Jomyako interjects. "Where is this all-powerful Shadow Dragon, Kaiten? Why hasn't it made you its Oracle?"

"I freely admit that I was tempted by the offer, Jomyako-sama, but my ambitions lay elsewhere. I am happy to serve as messenger while the Shadow gathers strength," Kaiten responds.

PCs who roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness (TN 25)** during this exchange notice Kaiten wince slightly as he accidentally admitted that the

Shadow was not at its full power. Rolling a 35 or higher reveals that Tamori noticed this, as well.

"Your words are truly an inspiration, samurai," The Dark Oracle of Air begins, stepping between you and Agasha Tamori, "but I'm afraid Norikazu-san has no business interfering in our negotiations. However, Tamori-sama has decided to pay attention to your honeyed words, and now I must respond in kind."

Soshi Jomyako was trained as a shugenja, but her affinity for the element of Air, as well as being a Dark Oracle, grants her some skill at negotiating beyond what she acquired as a mortal. She starts the discussion with three Raises for each PC, though she loses 2 of them if the Shadow Kaiten is present. Listed below are several talking points that she is likely to bring up, based on the arguments used by the PCs.

A PC who pays very close attention to her words and rolls **Spellcraft / Intelligence TN 25** will notice an unnatural timbre to her voice, and a faint breeze that causes her hair and kimono to take on the perfect dramatic flair as she speaks - signs that the Dark Oracle has called upon her Air magic to enhance her arguments in a similar fashion to the spell *Benten's Touch*. If the PC points this out, Tamori will angrily chastise the Oracle for relying on theater tricks instead of the strength of her argument, resulting in a loss of three Raises as she is forced to apologize and do without that bit of manipulation.

On Loyalty: *"They speak of loyalty, Tamori-sama, yet the Empire stood idly by while your own family abandoned you. Gennai, the one who led them in rebellion, was too much of a coward to properly protest your choice to follow Hitomi and was rewarded for his treachery with his own family name. Even Lord Hoshi has recognized him as a member of the Elemental Masters during the current negotiations between the Dragon and Phoenix clans, while you were not even invited to the table. Such is the loyalty the Empire has shown you..."*

On Revenge: *"What they call 'Revenge' I see as Justice, my lord, something that should be the goal of every samurai. Demanding that Imperial Law and over eleven centuries tradition be upheld is seen as a weakness, and warn that you have fallen to the sin of Regret. Refusing to kneel to political expediency is the definition of Strength, I say..."*

On Sacrifice: *"You lost your wife. You lost the purity of your soul fighting at Oblivion's Gate. Now they are asking you to give up your very destiny, Tamori-sama. Our duties as Dark Oracles are just as much a part of*

the Celestial Order as Isawa Norikazu's or those of the other Oracles of Light. We inspire Fear in the hearts of samurai, so that they may overcome it. We offer to fulfill the Desire within every human soul, so that they may learn to resist temptation. We force the Empire to mourn, so that Regret holds no power over them. We are burdened with terrible purpose, and this divine duty is what these samurai are asking you to give up."

If a PC brings up details of the future: *"Norikazu-san has told them of your future, it seems, so allow me to put you on equal ground. In the future that Norikazu fears, you agree to my offer, and become the Dark Oracle of Fire. Your own brother grows jealous, and schemes to take your place as head of your family, going so far as convincing your poor daughter that you must be killed so that *he* can become the Dark Oracle. It is not you becoming the Dark Oracle that Norikazu is afraid of, Tamori-sama... it is what happens when you STOP being the Dark Oracle."*

Once she has finished speaking, each of the PCs has a chance to refute her claims once more, stating their objections and rolling **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness TN 25, calling Raises**. Total up the total number of Raises earned by the PCs and compare the results to the options below.

Jomyako has three Raises for each PC at the table. She loses two Raises if Kaiten is still present, and she loses three more if the group pointed out her magical manipulations to Tamori.

If the PCs have **2 or more Raises more than Jomyako:** Proceed to the Good Conclusion.
If the PCs have **1 Raise more, 1 or 2 Raises less, or tie:** Neutral Conclusion
If the PCs have **3-5 Raises less than Jomyako:** Proceed to the Bad Conclusion
If the PCs have **more than 5 Raises less than Jomyako:** Proceed to the Really Bad Conclusion.

If a PC from the Gennai family makes a sincere attempt to apologize or re-swear their fealty to the Agasha, Tamori will react negatively, costing the PCs two of their earned Raises, but if that player shows the strength of his convictions and offers to perform seppuku then and there, the party will earn 4 additional Raises, instead. If a Gennai PC actually goes through with seppuku before Tamori in an attempt to keep him from turning to darkness, the PCs get the Good Conclusion no matter how many Raises they earn (and the PC is entirely eligible for the Truest Test cert at a minimum).

If Kaiten was with the party, have the PCs roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception TN 30** while

making their counter-arguments. Successful PCs see him taking a step backwards into the shadows at the edge of the fire-light and disappearing, winking at anyone who sees his departure and offering them a slight bow.

Conclusion

Good Conclusion

The fire in the hearth surges towards the ceiling and the mountain trembles angrily below your feet as Agasha Tamori leaps from where he was seated and moves towards the startled Dark Oracle. "I have heard enough! Take your promises of power, your tales of samurai made stronger by your depredations, and all the rest of your lies and leave this place, immediately!"

"Or what?" Jomyako laughs. "You'll kill me? If you so much as point a finger at me with violent intent, I will crush you like the worm you are."

"Let's test that theory, shall we?" Tamori responds as his hands fill with flame. "Moto-san, please thank Norikazu-sama for helping me what was truly happening here." The tremors within the mountain turn to full quakes, causing scroll racks to topple to the ground. "And thank you, as well, samurai. Now get out of here! Protect Norikazu's chosen while I deal with this... thing," the Agasha daimyo orders as pieces of the ceiling begin falling around you.

Neutral Conclusion

Tamori looks at each of you with a considering glare, and you can almost feel waves of irritation flowing off of the shugenja. "You have each made some very valid arguments, but I would like more time to consider your words before I make any decisions. Moto-san, thank Norikazu for sharing his wisdom with me by sending you and your friends. Oracle-sama, thank you for giving me a chance to make this decision on my own terms. I can assure you that when I have made my choice, you will be the first to know."

"Now, however, it is time for you all to leave. Your presence, Jomyako-sama, as well as that of your tainted guardians, has upset the spirits of this once-mighty volcano, and I fear it is about to erupt for the first time in over a thousand years."

Bad Conclusion

"I have heard ENOUGH!" Agasha Tamori bellows as you finish speaking. "You go tell Norikazu that he can treat the Elemental Masters however he wishes, but

Agasha Tamori deserves better than having a collection of mewling whelps sent to deliver his self-righteous prattle!” The mountain quakes around you as Tamori’s rage reaches into the very heart of this long-dormant volcano. “And you, Soshi-san... You tell your new Champion that if he wishes to have me take part in his plan, he should ask me in person, rather than sending one of his lap dogs to do deliver his messages! I will give you a count of ten to leave this place before I bring it down on your heads!”

Provided the PCs don’t stop to try and fight the Oracle or try (and fail) to talk Tamori out of his choice, they will be able to make it out of the cave unharmed. After any of the three conclusions described above, read the following, modifying it slightly in the case of any Dragon Clan players (they are immediately put to work helping to relocate the peasants):

*You continue to feel the ground shift below you as you ride away from the mountain that once served as Agasha Tamori’s secret hide-away, and it is all you can do to keep your mount from panicking as the majestic peak behind you explodes in molten fury. A blanket of ash has just begun to settle on the area surrounding Kyuden Tonbo when you arrive two days later. The castle is in engulfed in chaos, as refugees from nearby villages seek shelter within its recently expanded walls. You are quickly ushered through the throng of frightened peasants and released on the road leading away from the lands of the Dragonfly and their Great Clan protectors, though not before learning that Agasha Tamori has (**Good ending:** been killed fighting the Dark Oracle of Air, **Neutral:** disappeared, and is believed to have fled deeper into the Dragon mountains, or **Bad:** been seen fleeing the Dragon lands, and is believed to be heading south). Eventually you say goodbye to Moto Rakkas, as he heads back to his sensei and you each begin the journey home. About a week after leaving Kyuden Tonbo, you once again wake up in the early morning hours drenched in sweat and remembering a very vivid dream.*

You see a light on the horizon that glows ever brighter as it approaches. The Great Fire Dragon circles you once, before splashing into the earth like a dolphin at sea. The last few feet of its mighty tail vanishes into the ground, revealing the smiling form of Moto Rakkas, dressed in the same unusual outfit you remember, though now they are primarily white, with purple and red flames rising from the hem and climbing the sleeves. “It is good to see you again, my friend, though I wish it were under better circumstances. I have come to inform you of Isawa Norikazu’s death, and the passing of the mantle of

Oracle of Fire to me. Norikazu also asked me to express his gratitude to you for your service, and an apology for not being able to deliver it himself. Know that without your help, Agasha Tamori would have succumbed to the temptations of the Dark Oracle, and using his considerable knowledge to help Jigoku’s newest Champion with whatever he is planning. Any pause for reconsideration that you have given Tamori is time spent knowing he is not aiding the enemies of Rokugan. Thank you again for your service, my friends, and remember - the Fire will always protect you.”

As you rub the last trace of sleep from your eyes, you notice a small box resting at the foot of your bed that wasn’t in your room the night before. Inside is a scroll sealed with a slightly modified version of the mon of the Oracle of Fire.

Refer to the Other Awards section for more information about these scrolls.

Though it is not immediately obvious to the PCs, the conclusions will determine the fate of Tamori: in the Good Conclusion, he dies killing Jomyako; in the Neutral Conclusion, he will refuse her advances – for now; in the Bad Conclusion, he will banish everyone but will take up the Mantle of the Dark Oracle of Fire before the end of the year.

The Really Bad Conclusion

If the PCs arrived at this conclusion because they refused to take part in the mission after speaking with Norikazu, skip ahead to the Really Bad Dream.

“That is ENOUGH!” The roar of frustration seems to come from the hearth itself, until you see the wrathful visage of Isawa Norikazu stepping out of the fire pit. “I gave you a simple task, to stop Agasha Tamori from becoming the Dark Oracle of Fire, and you have failed! You have doomed the Empire to a devastating future of relentless war followed by plague and famine unlike anything you have ever seen!”

The mountain trembles as fury within the Oracle of Fire builds as he turns his attention towards Tamori. “I see now that I shall have to deal with this myself!” Isawa Norikazu grunts as he punches one fist towards the ceiling, causing a fountain of fire and molten rock to burst from the floor where the Agasha had been standing less than a second before.

“You’ve gone MAD!” Tamori shouts as he dodges another lava geyser. “Jomyako! Do something!”

“Actually, I believe my work here is done, Agashasan,” The Dark Oracle laughs, smiling wickedly as a gust of wind surrounds her and she vanishes.

Scroll racks topple and lava begins to cover the only escape from the cavern. “Leave while you can, samurai! I’ll hold him off!” comes a voice from behind you, but the rumbling of the mountain makes it hard to tell which of the powerful fire shugenja said it.

You continue to feel the ground shift below you as you ride away from the mountain that once served as Agasha Tamori’s secret hide-away, and it is all you can do to keep your mount from panicking as the majestic peak behind you explodes in molten fury. A blanket of ash has just begun to settle on the area surrounding Kyuden Tonbo when you arrive two days later. The castle is in engulfed in chaos, as refugees from nearby villages seek shelter within its recently expanded walls. You are quickly ushered through the throng of frightened peasants and released on the road leading away from the lands of the Dragonfly and their Great Clan protectors, though not before learning that Agasha Tamori was slain by the Oracle of Fire. Eventually you say goodbye to Moto Rakkas, as he heads back to the desert to wait for Norikazu. About a week after leaving Kyuden Tonbo, you once again wake up in the early morning hours drenched in sweat and remembering a very vivid dream:

The Really Bad Dream

You see a light on the horizon that glows ever brighter as it approaches. The Great Fire Dragon circles you once, before splashing into the earth like a dolphin at sea. The last few feet of its mighty tail vanishes into the ground, revealing the smiling form of Moto Rakkas, dressed in the same unusual outfit you remember, though now they are primarily black, with purple and red flames rising from the hem and climbing the sleeves. “It is good to see you again, my friend, though I wish it were under better circumstances. Isawa Norikazu’s madness appears to have overtaken him when we failed to convince Agasha Tamori to turn down the role of Dark Oracle. During the battle, he struck down Tamori, and was stripped of his powers as the Oracle of Fire as a result. I am ashamed to say that in the moment between losing the protection of the Fire Dragon and his own death, Isawa Norikazu accepted Jigoku’s call, and has taken on the Mantle of Dark Oracle of Fire. I have been blessed with the powers and responsibilities of being the Fire Dragon’s representative on Ningendo. I promise you that I will help the Dragon deal with the aftermath of Norikazu’s Folly in whatever

way I am permitted. Until I see you again my friends, be safe.

The End

Epilogue

Any tainted PC who made the Willpower roll needed to take part in the negotiations with Tamori have this additional scene if their table also reached the Good Conclusion:

The new Oracle of Fire vanishes, but something else catches your eye. Two brilliant green eyes peer at you from the shadows between two boulders for a split second before vanishing. You hear a skittering sound, like pebbles falling on glass, from behind you just as you feel a faint tug at the hem of your kimono. Whatever it is moves with lightning speed as it climbs up your back and settles on your shoulder. A small, whispering voice in your ear says, “Keep fighting. As you grow stronger, so will I, and we can fight the darkness together.” The weight on your shoulder is gone, and you feel as though the burden on your soul has lessened, as well.

PCs who received this dream have earned the thanks of the juvenile Jade Dragon, and the touch of Jigoku within them has lessened as a result. A PC with less than one full Rank of the Shadowlands Taint loses 1 point to a minimum of 1 point (this will not get rid of the Taint completely), while a character with more than one full Rank has their Taint reduced by 5 points to a minimum of one full Rank. (For example: 4 points of Taint becomes 3 points, while 3.4 Ranks of Taint is reduced to 2.9 Ranks and 1.4 Ranks is reduced to 1.0.)

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
Defeating (or talking down) the Marauders or Elemental Terror:	+1XP
Achieving the “Good” or “Neutral” Conclusion:	+1XP
Total Possible Experience:	4XP

Honor

Succeeding at the Good Conclusion is worth:
Honor 8+: 0
Honor 5-7: 2 points
Honor 2-4: 4 points
Honor 0-1: 6 points

These gains are halved for the Neutral Conclusion.

Gaining the Really Bad Conclusion costs an amount of Honor equal to the character’s current Honor Rank.

Glory

Each PC gains 2 points of Glory for receiving a dream from an Oracle and being recognized for it by their daimyo.

Other Awards/Penalties

As long as the PCs did not earn the Really Bad Conclusion, they receive a minor blessing from the Oracle of Fire. This is a small box with a miniature prayer-scroll containing a defensive Fire spell and instructions on how to call upon its blessing. When the seal on the scroll is broken (taking a Free Action as long as the scroll is in their possession), the spell will take effect, but once used, it is gone.

Good Conclusion: Shining Light (though this version works whether the PC is wearing armor or not)
Neutral Conclusion: Relentless Heat (again, this does not require the target to be wearing armor)
Bad Conclusion: Never Alone (with a casting Fire of 5)

Additionally, Tainted PCs who resisted the Taint in the scene with Jomyako have the chance to gain a small bit of recognition from the Jade Dragon as noted in the Epilogue.

Module Tracking Sheets

If the PC was involved in the discussion about using the spirits as weapons with Rakkas, note their principle argument.
If the PC played an instrument for Rakkas’ dance, note that on the sheet.
Note which reward the PC received from Rakkas at the end (if any).

GM Reporting

Did the PCs save Shikkui?
Did Moto Naathim survive?
Did the PCs fight the Elemental Terrors?
Did the Shadow Kaiten make his offer to Tamori?
Which ending did the PCs receive?

GM must report this information BEFORE 6/29/2014 for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

Moto Rakkas

A burly, weathered young man in the colors of the Unicorn, Rakkas is a strange combination of priest and warrior. Though not a shugenja, he is deeply spiritual and believes in the essential sanctity of the elemental kami. His dedication to defeating the forces of Jigoku has been honed and focused into a deep desire to defend the mortal Realm, and he has blossomed under Norikazu's tutelage.

Air 2 Earth 3 Fire 5 Water 3 Void 5
Reflexes 4 Honor 6.8 Status 2.0 Strength 4 Glory 1.6

Initiative: 7k3 **Attack:** 10k6 (leaf-bladed daggers, Simple)

Armor TN: 25 (35 in Defense Stance) **Damage:** 5k1 (leaf-bladed daggers)

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

School/Rank: Moto Vindicator 4/ Disciple of Fire Path
Techniques: *Purity of the Breath:* at start of each round, may add (School Rank + Willpower) to either Armor TN or reduce Wound Penalties; bonus is doubled if fighting Shadowlands creatures

Dance of Fire: when performing a Guard action, his targets gain Reduction equal to his Fire

Justice of Our Ancestors: Simple Action melee attacks

Avenging Our Own: +2k0 attack and damage against any enemy that has attacked this skirmish, and against any creature with Shadowlands Taint

Skills: Athletics 5, Defense 5, Horsemanship 4, Hunting (Survival) 4, Investigation (Notice) 3, Jujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Knives (Leaf-Bladed Daggers) 7, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Shadowlands 4, Lore: Theology 5, Medicine 3, Perform: Dance 5, Spellcraft 5

Mastery Abilities: ignores terrain penalties to movement, may retain a Full Defense roll in successive Rounds, +3 Armor TN in Defense or Full Defense Stance, +1k0 unarmed or sword damage, no off-hand penalties when using a knife in his off-hand, Free Raise to Extra Attack maneuver with knives,

Advantages/Disadvantages: Chosen by the Oracle (Fire), Clear Thinker, Higher Purpose (Defeat Shadowlands) / Gaijin Name, Idealistic

"Bikou"/Shadow Kaiten

Bikou is a friendly, outgoing ronin recently parted from his Clan. When he takes his true appearance, the changes are subtle (hair longer, face less weather-beaten), but he remains a handsome, engaging samurai – albeit one whose smile hints that he knows a joke that he's not sharing, and it might be on you... As Bikou, his clothes are nondescript, but as Kaiten, he wears

impeccable kimono in Crane colors and the Armor of Earth.

Air 5 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 2 Void 5
Agility 5 Strength 4
Honor 2.0 Status 0 Glory 2.0 (7.0)

Initiative: 10k5+14 **Attack:** 10k5 (katana, Simple)

Armor TN: 30 (40) **Damage:** 8k2

Armor of Earth)

Reduction: 5

Wounds: 57 (Dead)

Shadow Rank: 5

School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 3/Kenshinzen 2

Techniques: *The Way of the Crane:* +14 to Initiative. +1k1+3 to attack and Focus rolls while in Center Stance and during the Combat Round following.

Speed of Lightning: +2k0 to attack enemies with lower Initiative.

First and Last Strike: May Strike first in a duel if he 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.

Drawing the Void: +10 to Armor TN while in Center Stance

Kakita's Strength: 9s explode on Assessment

Shadow Powers: *Fear* 3 (when revealed as a Shadowspawn).

Swift 1.

Cohesion of Shadow: No Wound penalties.

Partial Invulnerability: Takes half damage (rounded down) from non-crystal weapons and from non-Void spells and other magical effects not specifically intended to target the Nothing and its minions. Crystal weapons and Void spells affect him normally.

Mental Resistance: Immune to all Fear effects and to all spells that create illusions or influence the mind or thoughts.

Shadow Powers: can see in darkness, blend into shadows and become insubstantial, may teleport up to 500' through shadows, and can change shape at will

Shadowbolt: 3k3 ranged attack once per day, it automatically hits any target in line of sight; target must succeed at a Void Roll of 15 or become touched by the Shadow (Kaiten absolutely will not do this to a PC unless he is about to die; the player will need to contact the Campaign Admin for the ramifications for their character).

Skills: Artisan: Origami 2, Athletics 5, Battle 2, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 5, Games: Go 2, Horsemanship 2, Iaijutsu (Assessment, Focus) 7, Jujutsu 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 7, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Bushido 5, Meditation 5, Sincerity (Deceit) 5, Spears 4, Tea Ceremony 2

Mastery Abilities: no movement penalties from Terrain; +6 Insight; may retain a Full Defense Roll in successive Rounds; +1k0 to Contested Rolls using Etiquette; Free Raise to Focus Rolls in Iaijutsu Duel, +2k2 to Focus Rolls if wins Assessment Rolls by 10; +1k0 to unarmed damage; +1k0 damage with swords, may ready a sword as a Free Action, 9s and 10s explode on damage with swords; restores 2 Void Points with Meditation Roll, reduce TN for Meditation (Fasting) by 5; +5 bonus to Contested Rolls using Sincerity; may

ignore 3 points of opponent's Reduction during first Round of skirmish when using Spears

Advantage: Quick

Armor of Earth: The Shadow-taken Armor of Earth is a suit of Heavy Armor that provides no penalties to movement or any rolls as long as its wearer has any Shadow Ranks. Its wearer may spend a Void Point to activate its main power: for 10 Rounds, the wearer may not be moved by others and opponents keep one less die of damage when they strike them.

Player Handout #1: The Dream and Summons

The breeze is hot against your face as you walk and causes the dust kicked up by your steps to swirl away from you in tiny, jubilant spirals. Just beyond the next dune, a tremendous pillar of flame reaches towards the heavens. Suddenly, the fiery column twists and shudders before bending into the serpentine majesty of the Celestial Dragon of Fire. You feel the heat of its gaze wash over you, and your view of the desert sands is replaced with that of a walled city. Brown, Gold, and Green banners bearing the mon of the Frog Clan flap in the wind, welcoming you to Toshi sano Kanemochi Kaeru - the City of the Rich Frog. Standing just inside the gates is a man dressed in the purple and white of the Unicorn, beckoning you to follow him.

You remember waking from that dream, drenched in sweat, to the sound of a servant knocking on the door to your bed chamber. The servant bowed apologetically before handing you a scroll bearing a simple wax seal stamped with the kanji for fire. Upon opening it, you couldn't help but notice both the crudeness of the brush strokes and the simplicity of the message contained inside:

*Isawa Norikazu-sama wants to talk to you.
Meet me at the Frog city.
I will take you to him.*

- Moto Rakkas