

No Way Out

**A One-Round High-Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido
Month of Shiba, 1143 (Late Summer)**

by Jim Spell and Cory Mills

Module Number SoB57

Release Date: 11/19/2014

The sins of the past do not die quietly.

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS is a registered trademark of Alderac Entertainment Group. Scenario detail copyright 2014 by the author and Alderac Entertainment Group. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without permission.

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

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

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

Reminder

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

Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a high rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank 4-5.

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 4 and there are no shugenja): reduce the damage of the large tsu fish to 5k3; lower TNs by 5 for search and medicine rolls

Adventure Summary and Background

The Empire has seen a rise in tension over the last several years, with a sharp divide between those loyal to the Emerald Champion and those loyal to the Imperial Regent. This summer, the uneasy balance between these Imperial factions was shaken by the emergence of a third force: Toturi Daio, the Son of the Black Lion, has raised an army to support his claim to the throne. Though his plan to force peace between the Dragon and Phoenix was thwarted, he has continued his campaign and is a major source of concern for the Empire.

Though Kakita Toshiken and Hantei Okucheo have been at odds ever since Okucheo took his position as Imperial Regent by force, the two factions have reluctantly decided to meet in Otosan Uchi in order to determine the best course of action to deal with Daio's claim. Though reluctant to take the child Empress to the capital, Toshiken is less willing to leave her side and so Tsudao has returned to Otosan Uchi for the first time in four years. Though the Emerald Champion does not intend to remain in the center of Okucheo's power any longer than necessary, he has still decided to expand Tsudao's household for both security and political purposes.

The PCs will be asked to escort Toku Miyako, the daughter of the Monkey Champion, Toku, to Otosan Uchi so that she may serve as Toturi Tsudao's handmaiden. This will take them from the Vigilant Keep of the Monkey to the port of Samui Kaze Toshi, where they will take ship to Otosan Uchi. The vessel awaiting them, however, carries a dark secret: it is Tainted and possessed by a dark spirit that gives it the ability to steer itself.

There are several potential issues for the PCs to contend with in this adventure. Obviously, the Tainted spirit of the ship will be a major problem for the PCs, which will express itself in various ways, from minor irritations to the creation of virulent abominations. The PCs must hunt down and destroy the fast-growing and evolving *baketsu*, before they take over the ship and infect the rest of the crew, or worse, make it to shore and spread into the Empire.

While Toku is only the champion of a Minor Clan, he remains a relatively important figure in the Empire, with allies in several clans. His daughter, despite her young age, will undoubtedly gain some influence with the child Empress, and there are political figures who will seek to guide that influence (or failing that, reduce it). The Regent has sent Doji Matsume, a returned spirit courtier who was an enthusiastic supporter of Hantei XVI in his past life, to "assess Miyako's education." This will, of course, provide him with opportunity to sway her, but he will not be alone; the ship's captain is a ronin who knows Toturi Daio from his early years as a mercenary and will do his best to paint the Son of the Black Lion in a favorable light.

Finally, PCs that are haunted by the ex-*goryo* Sakura will have another complication: Matsume is the father who molested her and buried her alive. It will be up to them to handle their ghostly charge (this could potentially lead to her slipping back into her old, murderous ways).

GM Note: This is a very contentious topic to cover in the normal "PG-13" rating of the campaign, even for a "horror" mod such as this, and some players may find it distressing. Use your best judgment and present the details of this particular story with care.

It will be up to the PCs to find a way to handle these difficulties in order to both escort their charge to the capital and survive the attacks of the Tainted ship.

Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- Shadowlands Taint (any level, including less than a full Rank)
- Any PC that owns a ship
- Haunted: Sakura
- Sorinpu the Hellrazor
- Touched or Cursed by the Realm: Toshigoku
- Hero of the People
- Advantages that provide resistance to Taint

Introduction

The PCs should roll Initiative at the start of the module; this will be used later but will both serve to increase the players' tension and reduce the delay of action during the encounter on the ship later.

The PCs have been summoned to the Vigilant Keep of the Monkey by the request of both the child Empress and the champion of the Monkey. (It can be assumed that even PCs who have not met Tsudao or participated in those modules where they came to her direct attention are experienced enough that she has heard of them.)

The Vigilant Keep of the Monkey is a surprisingly well-fortified castle for a Minor Clan stronghold, with a highly complex construction as a legacy of its design by the Monkey's Scorpion allies. When you arrive, you are greeted by the castle's servants, who despite seeming somewhat harried are entirely courteous. The reason for this becomes clear after you have a chance to clean the dust of the road from your clothes and are escorted into the main hall of the Keep: the hall is crowded with samurai, guests from most of the clans. The champion of the Monkey sits wearily atop his dais at the front of the room, listening to three samurai arguing before him.

The PCs may roll **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** if they wish to attempt to recognize the three samurai; success at the below TN indicates which of the NPCs they have heard of. Previous appearances by these NPCs are listed in parentheses; PCs who have met these NPCs in the past may recognize them with a simple **Intelligence** roll at a TN of 15 (25 for Yasuhiro), but success at the Skill Roll does grant them additional information.

- **20:** Kakita Kyruko (SoB12: *Ancestral Dictate*, SoB44: *Winter Court: Shiro Chuda*); a beautiful Crane courtier and duelist, she has taken up the cause of the Black Lion and spoken on his behalf in several courts. Between her close family connection to Kakita Yoshi, the Crane Regent, and her reputation as a skilled duelist, few are willing to challenge her for her politics.
- **30:** Ikoma Takeshi (SoB41: *Divide and Conquer*, SoB44: *Winter Court: Shiro Chuda*); one of the most genial of the samurai who have joined the Owls, he has become a polite court face for the Imperial Regent in recent months.
- **35:** Kitsuki Yasuhiro (SoB21: *A Time for Vengeance*); a relatively young Dragon courtier, he is presumably here to assist the Emerald Champion's ally Toku. However, though he has served as a diplomat in the past, the majority of his experience is as a magistrate.

Upon your entrance, a herald announces you, and Toku looks up with an air of palpable relief. The samurai in front of him cease their speech as he rises to his feet and waves you forward. The center of the room clears, the crowd making room for you before the dais. The Monkey Champion inclines his head to you, his discomfort in his court finery evident.

"Welcome to the Vigilant Keep. We are honored to host so many samurai of honor and distinction, but you have been invited..." at this he pauses to survey the room with a stoic expression before continuing, "...here to assist the Empress with a small matter. At the request of Tsudao-heika, you are to escort my daughter Miyako to join the Empress' household in Otosan Uchi as a handmaiden." He clears his throat self-consciously, and glances away from the Lion courtier at the front of the crowd. "Due to the, ah, difficulties to the north, I have arranged for you to take ship in Samui Kaze Toshi to the east. As the Empress is eager to gain a companion closer to her own age, I will ask you to depart in the morning. For now, be welcome in my court. Dinner is in an hour, and you will join me at my table; we can talk more then." He claps his hands and sits back down; as the Crane, Dragon, and Lion from before press back in to take their discussion up, he sighs and rubs his face.

The PCs will be the center of activity for the court, allowing them to pick up some basic information with little difficulty (no roll is required, only making an attempt to find out what's going on):

- The Monkey Clan is beset by petitioners from all three of the major Imperial factions (the three samurai listed above, with their entourages filling the court to capacity). While Toku is no longer the Captain of the Imperial Guard, and his origins do hamper his standing with many traditional-minded samurai, his strong ties to the late Emperor (as well as his allies in the Lion and Scorpion Clans) give him a surprising amount of influence for a Minor Clan Champion.
- The Lion lands are in a state of confusion and unrest because of the sharp divide amongst the Lion daimyo; many support Toturi Daio's claim, which has led to skirmishes with forces loyal to the Imperial Regent or Emerald Champion (both of whom derive their authority from Tsudao's claim to the throne). This is undoubtedly why Toku does not wish to send his daughter north through Beiden Pass, though he is being careful not to say so directly.
- The Emerald Champion has begun talks with the Imperial Regent concerning the Army of the Black

Lion. As these talks are taking place in Otosan Uchi, and Toshiken is notoriously protective of the child Empress, Tsudao has returned to the capital for the first time in four years. Rumors indicate that the Third Imperial Legion is “on maneuvers” in the area of the capital; as the Third is assigned to the Emerald Champion, it is thought that he has taken steps to ensure he and his party will be able to leave the capital when the talks are finished.

Rumors

Getting further information is possible with a **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll, TN 10; a successful roll learns one rumor at random, plus one extra rumor for every 5 points by which the roll beats the TN. (Monkey PCs receive a Free Raise for this roll.) The rumors include:

- Rumors of Toturi Daio, the Black Lion, have been spreading like wildfire. Many of these involve his long absence, saying that he was away from politics because he was busy repelling a goblin army in Hiruma lands, destroying the Forest Killers gang, and single-handedly slaying the gaijin-tsukai prince of Balishnimpur. (or other notable events accomplished by the PCs; the GM should feel free to tailor this rumor to the players at the table)
- The recent warfare on the Dragon Heart Plain has raised questions regarding the behavior of the Phoenix Clan; such aggressive behavior is unlike their usual pacifism. Though their alliance with the Crab has strengthened their military position, their political standing has suffered – the broken alliance with the Scorpion in particular has many speculating that they will face great difficulties in the courts.
- The PCs and Toku Miyako will be traveling to Otosan Uchi on the *Impeccable*, a vessel captained by a ronin named Rinosuke. He is a long-standing friend of the Toku family, a grizzled old war veteran with a reputation for integrity, and said to have been a close friend of Toturi Daio from the time the Imperial claimant lived as a ronin.
- Rumors of a Dragon “navy” have begun to circulate through the Empire’s ports. Most openly mock the idea (including the Dragon), but more than one merchant has seen a ship with green and gold sails traveling the coastal waters around Otosan Uchi. Some point to increased piracy in Phoenix waters and speculate that the Dragon seek revenge for the death of Mirumoto Uso; there are those who pin the actions on opportunistic Mantis, however.
- The Burning of the Kitsune Mori has turned the meager remnants of the Fox Clan into homeless refugees. The Scorpion Clan has offered hospitality to the Fox, hosting their unexpected guests in Ryoko

Owari for the winter. While a surprising outpouring of resources were given to the Fox in early summer, the ashes of the forest have only recently cooled and it will still take a great deal of time for the Minor Clan to recover.

- The Lion and Scorpion Clans have suffered a recent string of arsons, and there is some confusion over who is responsible; allegations have been made that rogue agents from either the Dragon and Scorpion are to blame. Though the Dragon have sent aid to their Lion allies, it remains to be seen what the ultimate outcome of the devastation will be. The Lion, of course, are busy with their own internal affairs currently, but their memory for grievances is well-known.
- Imperial Regent Hantei Okucheo has vehemently denied any involvement in the arsons in the central Empire in the face of whispers of his culpability. This position has been made clear by Seppun Biransei on more than one occasion in recent weeks. This has only caused the whisperers to grow more cautious; they have not been silenced in part due to the rumors surrounding the Regent’s previous life.

Dinner will be announced within the hour (as the servants strain to provide proper hospitality for so many guests); tables are brought and several of the delegates leave in order to keep the hall from being overcrowded. The PCs are seated with Toku and his wife Inao, a beautiful woman whose exquisite poise and impeccable manners demonstrate her Scorpion origins.

Conversation during the meal is polite and formal; while he was born a peasant, he has been champion of the Monkey for nearly fifteen years and married to a Scorpion-trained courtier for a decade and he has gained an understanding of at least basic etiquette. Toku does have an agenda during the meal; any PC who wishes may roll **Investigation / Awareness** (TN 30) to realize that he wants to vet the PCs before they leave with his daughter (even if he has met them before, he wants to be certain that they will perform this task with devotion and see her safely to her destination). Success with a 40 or more allows them to sense a deep and abiding grief in Toku.

After dinner, the servants will serve sake (or sochu for PCs that want something stronger), and the gathering will take on a slightly more relaxed atmosphere. As the evening goes on, a few musicians will begin to play and the delegates will continue their political wrangling in the time-honored fashion of courtiers everywhere: making the other guys look bad while maintaining an air of proper decorum. (As they are all guests who have no wish to offend their host, there is a sharp limit to how

much insult they will give, but they will all come as close to that line as possible.)

Toku will not participate, allowing the court to proceed without his direct attention. PCs who are paying even the remotest attention will see that has dropped his happy, gregarious *On* and now sits silently, haunted by the past. *If one of the PCs makes an effort to speak with him, he will rouse himself slightly and attempt to act more as a proper host. “With so many honorable samurai here in my home, I am reminded of the many heroic men and women I have had the fortune to know over the years. Even those we have lost... especially those we have lost... have given something precious to us, in examples of how a samurai can best live. Tell me, my friends, what stories of those who have passed on do you draw inspiration from?”*

This is a relatively simple court game: the host of the court is asking for his guests to entertain each other with tales of heroism and valor, specifically from people who have died. It should not take much to realize that he is thinking about the Emperor (if none of the players realizes this on their own, a **Courtier / Intelligence** roll at TN 20 will help them put it together); however, Toku is not one of the people who knows the full details of the Emperor’s demise.

Any PC who wishes to tell a story along these lines may do so with a roll of either **Perform: Storytelling** or **Oratory / Awareness** (rolling less than 15 causes a loss of one point of Glory; rolling more than 40 gives a point of Glory). Telling a more specific story addressing Toku’s grief has its own consequences, however: simply claiming in open court (even a rural one such as this) to have been present at the Emperor’s death earns the PC a full Rank of Infamy, and costs the PC any Favors they may have with the Emerald Champion. Speaking plainly of the events regarding the Emperor’s death requires violating an express command from the Emerald Champion, and will cause the character a loss of three points of Honor for every Honor Rank they possess.

GM Reminder: At the end of Emperor’s Favor, Kakita Toshiken’s exact words were: *“Should anyone ask, the Emperor battled a returned spirit and was slain.”*

The simplest and easiest way around this issue is for the PC(s) to tell Toku to speak with the Emerald Champion. Doing so, however, ensures that Toku realizes there is more going on than has been said, and moreover, that the PCs are involved. In order to keep from rousing his suspicions, one of the PCs must succeed at a **Sincerity / Awareness** roll (TN 35); failure on this roll means that any PC who admits to having this sort of knowledge will

not receive Toku as an Ally at the end of the module, no matter their actions.

Those who wish to bring Toku some measure of peace, or to try to gain his help, may decide to tell him about the actual events of SoB14: Emperor’s Favor. This will trigger the consequences listed above; speaking in private will avoid the Infamy (and Favor loss), but still result in Honor loss.

Regardless, making this attempt with the Monkey Champion is greatly appreciated by him. (The following may need to be edited, depending on what the PCs say.)

Toku is quiet for a long, long moment, but then begins laughing. “Karma has brought us together for a reason, it seems. Very well; we will find the Emperor’s true killers and bring them to justice, one way or another.”

The rest of the evening is spent talking with Toku about the events of the Empire since then, and basically getting him caught up on current events. All PCs who admit to being present for Toturi’s death gain “Ally: Toku 2D/3I”, with the PC speaking up the most being given Toku’s lucky knife, a (rather plain) tanto given to him by Toturi during their ronin days. This should be noted on their module sheet. (This is at the GM’s discretion; if there is any question, the PCs may make a Contested Roll of **Sincerity / Honor** to determine which impresses Toku the most.)

If a PC haunted by Sakura tells the truth to Toku:

When you finally make your way to your room at the end of the night, there is a gentle tug on your sleeve. At your side, Sakura looks up to you with curious eyes. “Was that... Compassion?”

The ghost of the child (whether she remains a vengeful goryo or not) is genuinely curious about the reasons behind the PCs’ actions. While this was not an example of the tenet of Bushido called Compassion, it may have been

What the PC chooses to say here is important, and roleplaying matters – the ghost absorbs what the PC says and takes it to heart. In addition to roleplaying an answer, the PC must also roll **Lore: Bushido / Intelligence** (TN 20). If the PC succeeds, they may write on their mod tracking sheet near where they wrote down “Haunted: Sakura”, the word “Compassion” (initialed and dated by the GM). If the PC called Raises on the roll, that should be noted as well.

Part One: The Journey Begins

In the morning, Toku leads his court out into the open yard of the Vigilant Keep to bid your party farewell. Inao and their children are all present; the Monkey Champion's wife is composed though she holds their infant son in slightly trembling hands. Miyako is a sturdy young girl, only seven years old and somewhat daunted by the prospect of leaving her home for the first time. Toku gives a short speech thanking you for your service and exhorting you to care for his daughter on the journey.

Miyako breaks away and runs back to her father, giving him a big hug around the waist. The others turn away, ignoring the spectacle, while Toku bends down to look his daughter in the eye, speaking softly with a reassuring smile. "Miyako-chan... you are the bravest young woman I know, and I am, and will always be, proud of you. Do not be afraid; my friends here will take you to Tsudao-heika safely."

The young girl nods her head, meekly stepping back toward the horses.

"Go on. Just promise you'll write, neh?"

"I will write every day. Goodbye Papa."

Once she is mounted, your little cavalcade rides out. Miyako turns to look over her shoulder at her home as long as it is in sight; a golden ribbon escapes from her hair, pulled away by the relentless wind.

Miyako will be placed in the care of the highest Status female PC, if one is present. This is largely a matter of propriety, though there is a certain amount of responsibility inherent in this duty to present a proper example of appropriate behavior for a samurai-ko. (At the GM's discretion, any acts that cause an Honor loss will incur an additional point of Honor loss for this character.)

The journey to Samui Kaze Toshi takes three days, essentially without incident. Miyako is a well-behaved, if somewhat energetic, girl with a sunny disposition and a sharp mind. She knows very little of the ways of the court; though her mother gave her a few minor lessons, Miyako is essentially a rural samurai who has no experience of the world. (She is, after all, only seven years old.)

Samui Kaze Toshi

Samui Kaze Toshi, or Cold Wind City, is nestled into a large bay where the Spine of the World Mountains meets the sea; it is centrally located along the coast and thus is a bustling and vital trade hub. The port itself, Cold Wind Port, is a moderately-sized city, as the area is highly mountainous and the sea trade is the main source of income for the province.

The docks of the port city are extremely busy, with trade along the coast at an all-time high due to the recent alliance among all four clans with significant naval interests. (The Crane joined with the Crab and Phoenix in a more limited military fashion in the summer, but are eager to turn the opportunity to a commercial profit for the clan as well. And, of course the Mantis and Crab have a long-standing alliance.)

Other things in town include the *House of the Red Waves*, the most popular sake house in town; a quiet geisha house called *The Folded Fan*; a Temple to Suitengu, Fortune of the Sea; and a sprawling Temple of Fukurokujin. The estates for the Phoenix, Mantis, and Crab Clans are all impressively ornate, with each embassy hosting lavish feasts for their departing ships' crews.

PCs visiting the Temple of Suitengu may sacrifice something of personal value by throwing it into the bay and make a **Lore: Theology (Fortunes) / Void** roll, TN 30, to appease the capricious Fortune. Success gives the PC a Free Raise on any Sailing rolls for the rest of the module.

The *Impeccable* has been contracted by Toku himself and the captain, Rinosuke, is an old family friend; to be a part of the Honor Guard, all the PCs must travel with Miyako. However, PCs who own a ship may have the ship travel with them as escort. If they wish, they may attempt to gather a cargo of their own with a **Commerce / Awareness** Roll. The result of this roll equals the amount of koku they will earn as a profit; they may add 3 koku for every Favor spent. This profit will go to their clan; see the "Other Rewards/Penalties" section to determine their personal gains for this at the end of the module.

The Impeccable

You are greeted at the docks by a burly, weathered ronin well into his middle years. He bows, and spares a quick smile for the young girl, but he speaks to you in respect. "Konban-wa, honorable samurai. I am Rinosuke, owner and captain of the Impeccable, and it is my honor to provide transport for you and your

charge to Otosan Uchi.” He gestures proudly at the ship behind him, a trim vessel that lives up to its name. Several sailors trot down the gangplank to take your baggage.

Rinosuke is genuinely pleased to be of service to his old comrade Tokū; he is quite fond of Miyako, though she has only vague memories of him (it has been three years since he last visited the Vigilant Keep, which is a long time for a seven-year-old). The captain will lead the PCs onto the ship, where he introduces his first mate, a perpetually-scowling thug by the name of Kozake, and the ship’s second mate, a much more congenial ronin called Shichiro.

The Impeccable is an average-sized kobune, with tall sails and an above-deck cabin for the captain and guests (space is tight; genders are segregated by a screen). There are four main areas below deck: the crew quarters (sleeping area and galley kitchen), toward the aft (rear) of the ship, and three cargo holds (two small, one large), filled with barrels and boxes of supplies. There are two main ways in and out of the hold: the stairs down to the crew area, and a large hatch in the deck to access the main cargo hold, toward the front of the ship. A small hallway runs down the center of the ship, dividing the two smaller holds and connecting the crew quarters to the main cargo area. Claustrophobic PCs will not feel comfortable down there (and, obviously, Large weapons are quite difficult to use in such confined quarters, adding +10 to the TN to use them).

In addition to the PCs, Miyako, Captain Rinosuke, and the crew of twenty, there is one other passenger aboard the ship: Doji Matsume, a returned spirit serving as an advisor to Hantei Okucheo.

The ship will set sail shortly after the group comes aboard. The PCs will have three options for spending their time on the first day at sea:

Training Miyako

Miyako is a highly-energetic seven year old who has just begun her training as a samurai. She is an eager study, wishing to learn anything she can about how to best serve the Empress and impress her father. In game mechanic terms, she has begun studying in the Tokū Bushi School but she has no actual Ranks in any Skills, nor does she have the Technique. PCs may instruct her in any Skill they feel is appropriate by rolling **Skill (Emphasis)** / **Awareness** at TN 45. This will give her 2 CP (PCs who have a position as a sensei provide an additional CP) to spend on that Skill if rolls arise for her during this module. *Each PC may only attempt this roll once, and*

no skill may be higher than three, but if she receives 8 or more CP, she gains the “Prodigy” Advantage.

Training Themselves

The PCs may work with Rinosuke and the crew to gain +2 XP that can only be spend on the Sailing Skill. This does require succeeding at a simple **Intelligence** Roll (TN 20) on two separate days.

PCs that choose to try training both themselves and Miyako only gain +1XP, and some of Miyako’s CP *must* go toward Athletics (Swimming) and/or Craft: Sailing.

Political Jostling

Despite her young age, Miyako will be taking a place of trust in the child Empress’ household. Because of her young age, she will be viewed as a potential tool by many in the Empire who seek to influence Tsudao. Matsume and Rinosuke are both vying for Miyako’s favor and will attempt to subtly sway her one opinion, typically during her training or conversations at dinner; Matsume supports Okucheo, of course, and Rinosuke is an old acquaintance of Toturi Daio. Influencing her toward or away from one of these NPCs requires making a **Courtier**, **Etiquette**, or **Sincerity** / **Awareness** roll at TN 40.

Doji Matsume

Shortly after the ship sets sail, Doji Matsume will appear on deck and introduce himself to the PCs. He is a returned spirit, and as may be expected for a Crane courtier, he is well-dressed and fairly handsome. While generally pleasant and urbane, Matsume has an attitude of penitence as a result of having spent his afterlife in Toshigoku.

Matsume is loyal to the Imperial Regent, having served him in his previous life. He acts as a political advisor, and is actually one of the more moderating influences on Okucheo, along with Ide Tadaji and Otomo Mitsuhide. He will explain his presence on the vessel as “ensuring that the child Empress’ handmaiden has an appropriate education and understanding of propriety”, and will actually make an effort to assess Miyako’s grasp of etiquette and instruct her in the proper ways to behave in the Imperial court. (He will also, of course, attempt to impress upon her the importance of the Imperial Regent and the absolute imperative of joining the dynasties when Tsudao comes of age.)

PCs loyal to the Emerald Champion will likely see Matsume as an antagonist, though he is a trained courtier and will go out of his way to avoid conflict. He does represent his faction and will make polite conversation concerning the Empire's need for a strong and competent leader, but has no intention of giving insult to the PCs themselves. He will make no bones about the fact that his advice for the Regent is to find ways to unite the Empire rather than increase the factionalism (curious PCs may roll **Courtier / Awareness** at a TN of 50 to pick up on the fact that Okucheo's inclinations do not run in that direction normally; Matsume will not say so directly, of course, and many players are likely to assume it, but the roll would confirm it for the characters).

PCs wishing to encourage Doji Matsume to continue pulling Hantei Okucheo toward peace may make a plea for Compassion with a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** roll, TN 30. Those wishing to "convert" him into supporting Toshiken or Daio must roll a 75, in which case, he will take their words under consideration; this does not convince him to change his loyalty, but will give him some inclination to pursue peace between the factions.

Sorinpu

If any of the PCs have Sorinpu, after Matsume has an opportunity to introduce himself, it will make its presence known.

A low growl rises above the ocean wind, and the Crane courtier looks around in confusion. The ancient blade Sorinpu flickers into sight, hovering before Matsume's throat and he freezes. Matsume's careful façade will crumble as a look of fearful recognition curdles his face. "T-t-that blade... you can't... where... k-k-keep it away from me... stay back!"

Any PC(s) with the Sorinpu cert must roll raw **Willpower** at a TN equal to their Insight Rank times 5; if they are successful, they are able to fully awaken the blade and allows them to control it – they receive the Awakened Sorinpu cert. Failure means that the weapon carves into Matsume, giving him Permanent Wound and costing the PC two points of Honor for every Rank of Honor they have. If there are multiple PCs with Sorinpu and there is a mix of success and failure, then Matsume is not injured (but only those PCs who manage to exert their will over the blade get the cert).

Matsume will move away from the sword with increasingly hurried steps, but will stumble and fall in his backward scramble. Matsume's resolve will break and he will answer anything the PC asks, his whispers harsh.

You recognize this? "No... but it *feels* like the horrors of Toshigoku... the pain and rage without end or hope."

You were in Toshigoku? "Yes. My sins in life, the terrible things I did, damned my soul to that Realm. I would prefer not to speak of them... I have devoted my second life to seeking redemption. For me and my lord both."

Hantei Okucheo was in Toshigoku? "Don't sound surprised! You know some of the things he did, but you don't know the whole truth. What he did was unconscionable. What **I** did was unconscionable, and we deserved everything that happened there, but we are changed men! Can you please put that hateful thing away?!"

You really think Okucheo has changed? "If I can change, he can too. **I CAN'T GO BACK.** You do **NOT** know what it was like. I can't go back... I can't... but when we die this time, if things haven't changed, we'll get dragged back and thrown into that hole and we'll **NEVER** get out again... I can't... Please don't make me go back..."

Matsume will do his best to avoid the PC(s) with Sorinpu for the rest of the module.

Sakura

If a PC is haunted by Sakura, she will make her presence known on the first night (after the above scene with Sorinpu, if appropriate). This is not specifically if the PC who is talking to Matsume is haunted, but if *any* PC is haunted by her.

Matsume turns to look at you, but his eyes drift away, behind you. A look of confusion flickers in his eyes, then recognition, followed by absolute horror as he collapses onto the deck.

*Behind you a young girl clad in a dirty white robe stands in a sickly moonbeam, with deep purple rings around her eyes and throat, wild black hair, torn fingernails... and no feet. A look of absolute, pure **HATRED** ours from her venomous eyes.*

Her voice croaks... "Father."

Any PC who played "Cold Hands, Stone Heart" will recognize this as the *goryo*, Sakura. Matsume's cry will bring the crew, NPCs, and (probably) the other PCs running.

Each PC present must roll to resist **Fear 4** (Raw Willpower against TN 25; the PC may add their Ranks

in Honor to the total of the roll, but failure means that the PC will suffer a -4k0 penalty to all rolls while the ghost threatens them and failure by more than 15 will force them to flee in fright). The crew as a whole will fail and flee, but Rinosuke and (surprisingly) Miyako will succeed at the roll. Once it is obvious what is going on, they will immediately hustle Miyako away from the threat. Matsume automatically fails, but he is incapacitated and cannot run: he is face to face with his greatest failure and can do nothing but clutch his prayer beads and beg for forgiveness.

As stated earlier, this requires *very* careful roleplaying; to put it bluntly, Doji Matsume was a consummate villain in his past life, who, among other atrocities, repeatedly raped and then buried his daughter alive, causing her to become a spirit of vengeance. However, Matsume has been violently punished (tortured) for the last seven-hundred years and has truly repented for his crimes.

As the GM, you do not have to share this specific information with the PCs in detail, especially if there is the chance it could create issues or cause bad reactions. *Use your best judgment here.*

“Sakura-chan... I... Can you...” He breathes hard, trying to speak, his face pressed to the deck of the ship. “I would give anything to fix what has been done. I do not deserve it, but... please forgive me.”

A look of doubt and confusion crosses the goryo’s face as she looks to [the PC whom she haunts]. Interceding can be done with an **Etiquette / Awareness** roll of TN 50 (with a Free Raise for mentioning Compassion, plus one for each tenet of Bushido written on their character sheet by the “Haunted: Sakura” disadvantage and for the numbers beside it).

Failure on the roll (or not intervening) means she simply says ***“die”***, in which case Matsume draws his wakizashi and, with trembling, shaking hands, plunges the blade into his stomach, whispering ***“Forgive me...”*** He does not wait for a second, and will die a slow, agonizing death. This will trigger his Dark Fate, reviving him at 1 hp, but he is too weak to continue: a PC would have to act as his second; otherwise he will lay there, a broken failure of a man crying silent tears.

Should he die, Sakura will simply be gone when the PCs turn to look at her.

Success on the roll (or if no PC is willing to act as his second):

The face of the young girl twists in hatred, pain, and confusion. She advances blindingly fast, her hands

around Matsume’s throat in an instant, howling with rage as she throttles and shakes her tormentor. Tears stream down her face as his skin turns cold, and clammy. As she fades away, her father’s eyes roll back as he falls over onto the deck of the ship, shivering and twitching, but soon stops, cold and unresponsive; his wide eyes staring blindly into the darkness.

Sakura, a prim and proper young girl again, looks on dispassionately.

A deep gasp for air raises his chest up off the deck, forcing life back into his lungs. Doji Matsume struggles but manages to bow again.

She bows in return, looks toward [the PC whom she haunts] with a faint smile, and fades away.

The status of Doji Matsume will obviously depend on whether the results that occur above and proceed appropriately (either the corpse will have to be disposed of, he will need healing, or at the very least a cup of hot tea). Should he survive and the PC ask him what happened, he will respond meekly that he does not know exactly, that he is very tired, and must rest.

If either the Sorinpu or Sakura events occur, Rinosuke will demand answers from the PC involved. Convincing them that Miyako is safe to be around the PC requires a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** roll TN 30: failure means the PC will no longer be trusted with her safety for the remainder of the journey and is ordered to stay away from her, costing the PC a rank of Glory and a rank of Honor. (Note that another PC may make this roll for them.)

If the events with Sakura occur (and, obviously, he survives), Matsume will come out of his bunk looking very pale the next day. He had significantly terrifying dreams and could not sleep, and suspects that his deceased daughter somehow gave him the burden of her memories to carry. He will do so with penitent resolve, but will be unable to rest (and thus regain void points) ever again. Compassionate PCs who wish to instruct him in the ways of Meditation may do so, gaining a point of Honor.

Part Two: Dark Water Rises

From here, the module can take several different directions depending on the PCs’ actions. The listed events for the second and third days are unlikely to be

interrupted, but from there, the PCs may well press the issues urgently enough to change the course of events.

During the late hours of the first night out, Shichiro will replace the tiller of the ship with the Tainted tiller, inviting a powerful kansen to possess the vessel.

Over the course of the trip, small things will happen to injure the PCs and NPCs *who are not Tainted*. Characters may lose their footing or stub their toe, they may get splinters, things might fall on them, food will slide off the table, etc. The source of this is the ship itself playing pranks on them. Once each day, a random PC must roll **Sailing / Reflexes** at a TN of 30; they take a number of Wounds equal to the amount they failed by. Every day, this effect happens to one additional PC (so, one PC on the second day, two PCs on the third, etc.) PCs who are Tainted will not suffer these pranks, however, they will feel unsettled and must make a raw **Willpower** roll (TN 20) every night or the whispers of the corrupt spirit in their dreams prevent them from regaining Void Points for resting. The Taint often causes bad dreams, after all...

Day Three

About halfway between Kyuden Doj and Golden Sun Bay...

A rather clear day allows a decent view of the coastline. It appears fairly rocky, but not overly so; there are a number of small fishing villages along the coast, but it would be impossible to moor the ship at any of them (no docks). In the middle of the day, Miyako will point out a large torii arch visible atop a distant precipice: rolling **Lore: Theology / Intelligence** (TN 25) or **Lore: Geography / Intelligence** (TN 20) will show this to be Reihado Shinsei, the enigmatic Shrine of the Crow, which can only be found by the pure of heart. This is taken as a very fortuitous omen.

About an hour before dinner, PCs with “Hero of the People” will be called into the galley by the chef, Ito: one of the containers of tsu fish eggs in the hold was damaged and its contents in danger of spoiling. Upon consultation with the captain, Ito has decided to serve the delicacy instead of allowing it to go to waste, offering these PCs an advanced taste (which is quite delicious: Ito is very skilled), along with a cup Nine Izo Sake from the chef’s own stash.

Dinner with the captain, the other guests, and the crew is fairly lively, especially after the sake starts flowing. Word of the tsu fish eggs spreads as well, brightening an otherwise dreary day.

Glancing at the captain, the second mate Shichiro calls for some of the crew to break out musical instruments. “A song or two would go well with this sake, wouldn’t you say? What should we hear?” Laughing, the sailors call out names of tunes, when their banter is interrupted...

“Hurk... uuuurk...”

All eyes turn toward the captain, who is vomiting heavily under the table; the first mate moves to help, but is waved away. After a long moment of heavy breathing, Rinosuke sits up and reaches weakly for a napkin... but his lower face, chin, and kimono are stained black. His torn mouth opens, distending far wider than it should, and Miyako screams as a great glob of foul blood is coughed onto the table.

A misshapen tsu fish writhes in the black ichor; it turns toward [the PC most disgusted by this] and hisses, its fins rattling malevolently. The ship hits a wave and lurches hard to port, sending everyone sprawling; the tsu fish leaps from the table and races below deck.

The PCs will have the chance to act in initiative order, using the rolls made at the start of the module. The small tsu fish acts on 38, but it gets to act first during a surprise round, running on small legs down below deck, toward the galley. Intercepting it will require the PC to act before it *on the second round*; they must have either Water 4 or can use a ranged attack (casting a spell or throwing a weapon; there are no weapons larger than wakizashi allowed at the dinner table). On their own action, each PC must succeed at a Fear 3 roll (TN 20) or suffer the normal penalties.

The highest Status PC (sitting closest to the captain) can make a raw **Perception** Roll at TN 20 to notice that the hem of their kimono is torn and stained. Investigating under the table allows them to notice, amidst the black and bloody vomit, a fresh hole chewed in the wood. Being exposed to Tainted blood requires a raw **Earth** Roll (TN 10) to avoid gaining a point of Taint.

Dealing with the Victims

Checking on Rinosuke will show that he is *almost* dead: he is “Out”, having taken 57 Wounds (Earth 3), now has 2.5 Ranks of Taint, and is unconscious. If he is healed, he is struggling with the Taint and reluctant to maintain command.

In the galley, Ito and two of the crew are dead. They suffered the same fate as the captain: their mouths are black, bloody, and shredded, and *many* small bloody footprints lead into the hold. If the PCs check, the

corpses are Tainted. If proper precautions are not taken, they will rise as undead revenants when it is most dramatic for them to do so. The small barrel of Tainted eggs is in the kitchen.

Treatment options are limited; PCs may roll **Medicine** or **Lore: Shadowlands / Intelligence** (TN 20) to realize that anyone who ate the tsu fish should induce vomiting immediately. This can be accomplished by gagging on something or taking a vomiting agent, which can be created with a medicine kit and a **Medicine** or **Craft: Poison / Intelligence** roll, TN 20. In any event, the tsu fish will come out the only way they can: through the mouth. The tsu fish are not fully developed yet though, so they only do 30 Wounds as their razor-sharp fins shred their victims. The PC must also roll raw **Earth** against a TN of 20; failure gives them points of Taint equal to the amount by which they failed. However, immediately ingesting jade of some kind before or after vomiting will give the PC a +10 bonus. Additionally, inducing vomiting will cause a PC with Honor of 9 or 10 a loss of two points of Honor.

If the PC does not purge the tsu fish eggs, in about 20 minutes, the Tsu fish will erupt on their own, causing 57 points of damage (ignoring Reduction). This also increases the TN of the **Earth** roll to resist the Taint to 35, with the same consequence for failure.

PCs who are already Tainted will take the blame first: the crew is looking for a reason for this and have no other suspects. The first mate Kozake will take charge of the ship and demand Tainted PCs be thrown overboard: convincing him and the crew otherwise could take a variety of ways (Sincerity, Intimidation, Honor Test, etc), but all have a TN of 40 (with 1-3 Free Raises for proper roleplaying, and 2 Free Raises if a Jade Yoriki or Magistrate PC vouches for them). Failure means being thrown overboard or violence, but the crew will stand down if more than half of the PCs choose to fight. However, Kozake will declare their actions to be mutiny and a Shadowlands conspiracy, leveling the very real threat of “You’ll hang for this in Ootosan Uchi!” before storming off to the cabin.

Who’s in Command?

A PC who has a Position giving them some form of naval Status can take over the ship with a **Sailing, Perform: Oratory, or Intimidation (Control) / Status** roll TN 35, otherwise the first mate, Kozake, will take over. (This is only really possible because the crew doesn’t like him because he’s Brash. Another competent seaman is capable of winning their loyalty.) If Rinosuke is conscious, he will turn over the ship to a PC who seems qualified and offer whatever counsel he can.

Piloting the ship requires a **Sailing / Agility** roll, TN 20. Once the ship’s Taint is discovered, however, this TN increases to 40. Failure means that the ship picks up speed to a dangerous level, and the PCs do not have control over where it goes (though it heads north on its own to seek other ships to prey upon).

Exploring the Ship

Exploring the hold requires the use of a lantern or torch, because otherwise it is pitch black, except for a patch of moonlight coming from the door and the main hatch, if it is opened (during the day, light streams through small gaps in the deck as well). Beyond the above mentioned penalty for Large weapons in the close confines of the hold, the ship’s evil nature makes normal light sources dim and shadows deep, creating a +10 TN penalty for all sight-based rolls (this is already factored into the Search rolls below). Additionally, the ship counts as a Tainted location for the purpose of casting spells: all Spell Casting Rolls have a +5 TN, and Fire spells have an additional +5 penalty. This penalty may be ignored by calling upon a kansen, several of which have begun to gather already, but doing so gains the caster a point of Taint automatically.

The ship is intentionally hitting rough seas and causing the boat to sway hard, making this Moderate Terrain. Some of the cargo barrels have gotten loose and/or broken, which means there are various supplies rolling on the floor. The crew’s food supply is in one of the smaller rooms in the hold.

“By the Light of the Moon” illuminates random objects that the ship itself has hidden (because it is toying with them), but it does not work against the *baketsu* because they are not objects.

The ship will toy with the PCs, giving the GM the opportunity for suspenseful drama: hitting a hard wave to knock the PC down, successful Investigation rolls may reveal a rat or a loose sake bottle in the shadows instead of a *baketsu*, for example, and the *baketsu* will use this as an opportunity to attack the PCs: dropping onto them from above and wiggling into their armor, or ambushing them and biting their feet, for example. It is up to the GM to determine the appropriate type of ambush bonus.

Identity of the Ship

While searching the ship (for *baketsu* or otherwise), there are a few things they can discover with an **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll:

- **Crew Quarters TN 45:** The lowest Honor PC (or the PC with the most Taint) who succeeds will find a high-quality no-dachi wrapped in a blanket; none of the crew will claim it. Success with an **Investigation (Interrogation)** or **Intimidation (Control)** / **Awareness** roll (TN 30) will get the crew to give up Shichiro as the owner of the blanket. Further examination shows the blade to have been crafted by the Oriole swordsmith, Tsi Sanzo. (see cert).
- **Captain's Quarters, TN 25:** The PC will find a bloody obsidian dagger and a bowl made from a human skull in a box in the captain's writing desk. This was, in fact, planted by Shichiro, and Rinosuke knows nothing about it. An **Investigation (Interrogation)** / **Awareness** roll (TN 25) will allow the PC to be sure Rinosuke is not lying, if he is in shape to be able to deny anything.
- **Main Hold, TN 35:** the PC will find a large shipping container under a tarp; it is covered with symbols that have been scratched out and defaced. The crate is empty, but examining it below deck is almost impossible as any lantern brought close enough will dim to uselessness. This was the case that held the Tainted tiller that Shichiro used to corrupt the ship; it was stolen from the Kuni and he broke its bindings. Recognizing the warding symbols requires a **Lore: Shadowlands / Intelligence** roll (TN 30), but will probably need to be done above deck. The box is about six feet long, four feet high, and two feet wide; it requires two people to carry it up to the deck, which presents a good opportunity for the *baketsu* to attack... Once the PCs can examine the crate, they can identify it as having held a ship's tiller with a **Sailing / Perception** (TN 25) or **Investigation / Perception** (TN 40) roll.

Pressing jade to the wood of the ship will cause it to blacken, instantly dissolving the jade into foul, oily powder. The ship's Taint also camouflages the *baketsu*'s Taint, if the PCs have a way to detect such things.

The kansen that inhabits the ship cannot be detected with a Sense spell, and will of course lie to the PC should they attempt to contact it with Commune, but if a shugenja attempts to speak with other spirits (fire spirits in the lanterns, or water spirits in the ocean, for example) they will be absolutely terrified. Getting them to identify the source of their fear requires three Raises for clarity, whereupon they will call the ship itself "a dark and twisted spirit, seeking to claim you as its crew."

The first PC to discover that the ship itself is Tainted must make a **Fear 4** roll (Fear 5 if they are below deck, alone, it's dark, or in some way super creepy).

At this point, the PCs should realize that they are in significant danger. The ship, knowing it has been discovered, will no longer bother hiding its nature: shadows deepen, flames emit little light or warmth, the sea gets rougher, and every time the ship creaks, it sounds more like groaning laughter.

Proximity issues

Other ships that get too close (within 50') will be rammed: the first attack is a warning; the second sinks the ship, ripping it apart.

If a PC has a ship traveling with the *Impeccable*, it will also try to sink the second vessel (only once), and the PC owner of that ship must roll on behalf of its current pilot to prevent its destruction using their own **Sailing / Intelligence**, TN 40. If the second ship manages to survive, it will get left behind by the significantly faster Shadowlands vessel.

Hunting the *Baketsu*

Searching for the small *baketsu* involves an **Investigation (Search)** / **Perception** roll against their **Stealth (Sneaking)** / **Agility** 10k3e+10: they have spread throughout the ship, are very small, incredibly quick, hide easily in the shadows (Master of Shadows power), and can climb walls/ceilings.

They will begin hunting down and attacking the crew and infecting them with eggs. Each infected crewman can spawn 1k1 small *baketsu* (min. 3). This means there are *at least* 9 to start, and more with each abduction/infestation. They will target sleeping crew members (especially if they sleep below deck), laying eggs in their mouth, which will erupt after about two hours, killing them in their sleep and causing the corpses to rise as revenants.

Tainted PCs

Tainted PCs can hear the ship whispering to them, especially in their dreams: the voices are distant and hard to decipher, but the message is clear: *succumb*. After the ship's Taint is discovered, they will need to roll raw **Willpower** at a TN of 15, or suffer +5 TN penalties to all rolls due to hallucinations.

The *baketsu* will not initially attack Tainted PCs (those with a full Rank or more of the Taint), and those wishing to coax or bait them out of hiding may do so with a

Sincerity / Willpower roll TN 30, but doing so **automatically** earns them a half-rank of Taint and the Minor Shadowlands Power “Child of Darkness” (see p280 for more details).

Shichiro

The second mate is a Shadowlands infiltrator responsible for this situation. He had been waiting for a good opportunity to unleash this curse on the ship and take over, and the presence of the Monkey Champion’s daughter was too good an opportunity to pass up. He will try to subtly steer the PCs away from letting Kozake take over, fueling the first mate’s aggression toward the samurai if necessary. If the PCs get suspicious of him, whether due to finding his sword or by canvassing the crew, he will simply try to bald-face lie his way out of the situation. If that fails, he will not allow himself to be taken prisoner, slitting his own throat or fighting to the death. (Potential description: **Black blood spews from his throat, and his voice carries an eerie hum as he screams, “My master’s will be done!”**)

Breaking the Tiller

If the PCs realize the source of the ship’s Tainted spirit, they may attempt to break the tiller and remove it. The spirit, of course, will fight back; this should be resolved using standard skirmish rules, as the vessel will send *baketsu* to defend the tiller – one small *baketsu* for every PC, plus one medium in the first round and one large in the second. Additional small or medium creatures should emerge from below decks every round until the tiller is dealt with, at the GM’s discretion, to keep the PCs busy. The ship is pitching and rolling as well; this is treated as Medium Terrain even above deck, and the PCs must substitute **Sailing / Reflexes** for their Initiative Roll (normal bonuses apply). Additionally, every Round during the Reactions stage, the PCs must roll **Sailing** or **Athletics / Reflexes** at a TN of 25 or be knocked Prone by the ship’s heaving; failing to roll a 10 results in them taking 10 Wounds as well. If Shichiro has not been dealt with, he will enter the fray at this point.

In order to exorcise the spirit of the ship, the PCs must do one of the following:

- Succeed at a **Craft: Shipbuilding / Intelligence** (TN 25) or **Sailing / Intelligence** (TN 35) roll as a Complex Action to figure out how to take the tiller apart, then spend two Complex Actions doing so.
- Simply bash the tiller apart by spending Complex Actions to do damage to it (based on weapon or spells); it has 100 Wounds, a Reduction of 10 against Heavy Weapons, 0 against Fire or Jade spells, and 25 against anything else.

- Shugenja may attempt to Banish the spirit; this requires being within 10’ of the tiller, casting *Sense Earth* with four Raises (an additional Raise required for the kansens) and then *Commune Earth* with five Raises. Multiple shugenja may assist; each additional shugenja that casts the same spell with one Raise gives a Free Raise to the main caster. The penalty for Spell Casting Rolls still applies. (*Bonds of Ningen-do* will not affect a kansens, but if a PC does know or Importunes for *Purge the Taint*, that spell will work; however, it has a total TN penalty of +20 due to the power of the spirit.)

At some point during combat, the deck will collapse under Toku Miyako and she will fall into a hold surrounded by *baketsu* of all sizes. Someone will have to jump down and rescue her; it is 10’ up to the deck: too high to jump back up, without assistance or some form of magical boost. If Rinosuke is active, he will jump down to rescue Miyako, throwing her up onto the deck before getting swarmed by the tainted monsters. Unless there is significant PC intervention, this will kill him. If Rinosuke is not active, Matsume will do this as long as he is still alive and was not maimed by Sorinpu. If neither are, and if no PC moves to save her within a Round, she will be badly injured. If they wait more than two Rounds, she will die. Treating her injuries with jade may help her avoid the Taint; this will require a **Medicine / Intelligence** roll at TN 35.

If the tiller is broken, the spirit will cease being able to control the ship and *baketsu*; this will leave the creatures infesting the lower decks, but they will lose their cohesion and in fact will fall to fighting with the revenants. Gaining control of the ship will require repairs (using **Craft: Shipbuilding / Intelligence** at a cumulative TN of 60; each roll takes a day’s work but lowers the TN by the amount rolled). This still leaves the issue of where the ship can go...

Where do we go/what do we do?

PCs will likely begin to question where they can take the ship so they can escape safely. However, a **Lore: Geography** or **Sailing / Intelligence** roll will inform them of the following points (if Rinosuke is alive and aware, he can provide the information as well):

- **TN 20:** Reihado Shinsei is close to where they are now. Putting the ship ashore here would put the temple in grave danger.
- **TN 25:** Docking in Otsan Uchi is extremely dangerous. If the creatures were able to escape and infest the capital, it would be a disaster. Safe docking might be managed, but would require a great deal of diplomacy to avoid being slain out of hand.

- **TN 30:** Suitengu's Garden, the "Graveyard of the Sea", is about two days north of Ootosan Uchi, near the port of Dragon's Guard City. With careful planning, perhaps the ship could be trapped there...

Day Four

The *baketsu* will now be small and medium sized. Sharks will begin trailing the ship.

As the *Impeccable* gets closer to Ootosan Uchi, other ships can be seen on the horizon.

At least one crewman (Jou) will have disappeared in the night, and two (four for high tables) will die via infestation, then rise as revenants, attacking the other crewmen and attempting to drag them below deck (whenever it is most entertaining to do so). Jou's mostly-eaten body can be found below deck.

Tainted PCs with jade petal tea will find it fouled by the small *baketsu*. There will be signs of the *baketsu* feeding on whatever they can get: the food in the hold, crewmembers they can ambush, rats, each other, etc., as well as scratches and gouges in the wood of the ship.

Day Five: Golden Sun Bay

The *baketsu* will now be small, medium, and large sized. Things can be heard moving below deck during the day, and will infect each other if crewmen cannot be obtained.

The ruined *Nichibotsu Fusheru*, the Sunset Tower, will be in sight by noon on the third day, and the sea lanes will be full of ships. Once it is in sight Kozake will leap overboard, attempting to swim to shore, but the ship will wrest control from the pilot and run him over: his body will get stuck to the rapidly accumulating barnacles on the hull, where he will scream for a few long moments before drowning, and then rise as a revenant (though still stuck to the hull).

The other ships will coming dangerously close to the *Impeccable*, which will gleefully tear them apart, if the PCs cannot warn them away with a **Battle** or **Sailing / Intelligence** roll TN 25 (see "Who's in Command").

If more than two other ships are sunk an alarm will sound, and Yoritomo Gusai will send two interceptor ships after the *Impeccable*, but the cursed vessel is far too fast for them to catch. If a PC cannot pilot the *Impeccable* away however, these ships can get in range for their tsuruchi archers (10k5e, 8k2 dmg) and fire shugenja (9k4e, Fury of Osano Wo: 4k4) to target the ship and anyone on deck. If a PC cannot wrest control

of the ship, it will ram any ships attacking it and get a few sailors stuck to its barnacled hull, until it gets bored and wanders off.

By this point, the *baketsu* will begin actively abducting, infecting, and eating crew members, starting with anyone going below deck or getting near the door (especially if the door from the crew quarters to the rest of the hold is not blocked tightly).

If the Spirit has been dealt with

The PCs may wish to put in at Ootosan Uchi if the spirit of the vessel has been banished or the tiller broken; the Jade Champion is frequently in the capital, and there are other Imperial authorities they may wish to call upon for assistance (or turn the vessel over to). Doing so is very risky, however, and will cause at least some Infamy for the PCs – it is an action that can endanger the capital (and by extension both the Empress and the Regent), after all.

Putting in to dock at Ootosan Uchi will allow the *baketsu* to leap ashore and scatter through the city. The ship should be treated largely as a quarantine vessel (which the PCs may realize with a **Lore: Law** or **Lore: Shadowlands / Intelligence** roll at TN 25) and drop anchor in the bay, well away from any other ships. The harbor patrols under Gusai's command should be signaled, and the PCs may then attempt to explain the situation.

However they wish to tell the story, the PCs should be very careful with what they say. A calm and coherent explanation is necessary, along with a **Courtier** or **Etiquette (Bureaucracy) / Awareness** roll. *If none of the PCs can succeed at a TN of 20*, they will not be allowed to leave the ship before it is purified, meaning that they will be trapped on the vessel when it sinks. Their survival requires an **Athletics (Swimming) / Stamina** roll, TN 30; even if they succeed and make it to shore, their names will have been taken, they will be reported as dead, and unless they basically choose to live as ronin, they will be summarily executed. (Players in this situation should contact the Campaign Admin.)

If at least one of the PCs can beat a TN of 20, however, they will be taken into custody by the Jade Magistrates and tested for the Taint. PCs known to be Tainted already will be viewed with great suspicion, but as long as the other PCs vouch for them, they will be allowed to depart. All of the PCs will gain a Rank of Infamy for bringing the ship to Ootosan Uchi; this is reduced to two points if a PC managed to roll more than 50 when they provided the explanation.

Move on to the Conclusion.

Day Six: Dragon's Guard City

The general appearance of the ship is now obviously tainted; the wood and sails of the ship are oily and rotting, the surface crumbling at a touch. There is about a foot of water in the hold, which smells rancid. Resistance to Taint is now at a +5TN penalty.

There are many ships around Dragon's Guard City, which will again require a PC to remain in control of the ship, lest it start attacking Phoenix merchant vessels: whenever the ship attacks an enemy vessel, the *Impeccable* will not destroy it, but will come close enough to allow a few *baketsu* to sneak on board.

Four large *baketsu* will sneak out of holes in the side of the ship and use chain weapons to attempt to grapple PCs and NPCs via ambush, dragging them either overboard or below deck to infect.

Day Seven: Suitengu's Garden

Rinosuke is conscious at this point, but it is obvious he is having great difficulty battling the Taint; his skin has gone ashen and his fingernails have long black claws. In a moment of clarity he will request seppuku, leaving the ship under command of the highest-status PC with naval experience. If there is no PC with naval experience, he will request one of them act as his second after he gets the passengers to their destination.

By the late evening...

There is no outer boundary or mark for the region known as Suitengu's Garden, but the rough seas and deep waves expose the sharp, unforgiving rocks lurking just below the surface. The Impeccable pitches and rolls with the ocean, its wooden frame creaking and laughing as you weave your way toward a barely visible shore.

Moving toward the shore happens in three phases: the outer gardens, the middle gardens, and the inner gardens; and each phase requires a **Sailing (Navigation) / Perception** roll to proceed. Other PCs may make an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll at the given TN to give the pilot a Free Raise, and each phase takes about two hours.

Outer Garden: the rocks are far apart and set low in the water, making them easily avoidable: TN 35.

Middle Garden: the rocks are closer together, some peeking out of the water, and the rising and falling sea exposes the wreckage of ships: TN 45.

Inner Garden: the rocky shallows are a maw of unforgiving teeth, and threading through toward the shore is fraught with peril. At this point the *Impeccable* will realize the PCs intent and begin fighting back, requiring the PC to make **Sailing / Intelligence** roll (TN 55).

- Failing by 10 or less means the ship moves out, away from shore.
- Failing any of these rolls by 10-20 means the ship hits a rock moving away from shore, punching a hole into the hull (and throwing everyone to the deck for 1k1 damage); though this would sink a normal ship, the *Impeccable* creaks with laughter. This will create a +5 penalty on all future Sailing rolls, however.
- Failing by more than 20 means the ship moves out from shore but also gets stuck on a rock (throwing everyone to the deck for 2k2 damage, possibly overboard). If Suitengu was successfully appeased at his temple in Cold Wind City, he will send a great wave to lift the ship off of the rock (only once per successful prayer, though), but the damage creates a +10TN penalty to future navigation rolls. If the PCs get stuck here, *they will have to improvise.*

Once the PCs move past the Inner Garden, a rocky river inlet will be visible; a perfect place to beach the ship and escape safely. Navigating to it and beaching the ship requires simply overcoming the ship's 10k5 twice, because by now it knows what is going on; it will spit out all of the remaining *baketsu* and revenants, attempting to kill the PCs and crew, and take the ship out to sea. The ship will attack as well; using its turn to pitch and roll (making the deck Difficult Terrain), grapple them by breaking under their feet, trying to catch them with a rope, etc.

PCs wishing to re-roll their initiative from the beginning of the mod may do so *once* by entering center stance for their first turn of combat and forgoing the 1k1 bonus on the subsequent turn.

The amount of remaining *baketsu* will depend on the actions of the PCs throughout the mod: hunting them below decks each day means fewer enemies at the end fight. This means *a minimum of 3* small, medium, and/or large *baketsu* per PC, full attacking on initiative increments of 5, plus 1-5 revenants. Use your best judgment.

At some point during combat, the deck will collapse under Toku Miyako and she will fall into a hold surrounded by *baketsu* of all sizes. Someone will have to jump down and rescue her; it is 10' up to the deck: too high to jump back up, save a flight spell or a hawk tattoo. If Rinosuke is active, he will jump down to rescue Miyako, throwing her up onto the deck before getting swarmed by the tainted monsters. Unless there is significant PC intervention, this will kill him. If Rinosuke is not active, Matsume will do this as long as he is still alive and was not maimed by Sorinpu. If neither are, and if no PC moves to save her within a Round, she will be badly injured. If they wait more than two Rounds, she will die. Treating her injuries with jade may help her avoid the Taint; this will require a **Medicine / Intelligence** roll at TN 35.

The Impeccable surges upward, riding high on a great ocean crest, and slams down hard onto the unforgiving rocks and ice of the river's mouth. The deck warps, hisses, and shatters into a maelstrom of jagged, rotten teeth.

The PCs will need to make a **Defense / Reflexes** roll TN 30 to prevent falling and landing on one of the many broken and protruding shafts of wood for 3k3 damage: those who take more than 20 wounds must roll **Raw Earth** at TN 25 or gain +2 Taint as a piece of the rotten wood breaks off under their skin.

Leaping from the ship onto the shore requires an **Athletics / Agility** roll TN 25, or the PC takes 3k3 damage. Any PC not in combat, assisting others, etc while leaving may roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll TN 60: success spots a glimmer of gold and emerald green under in the water, and closer inspection shows the symbol for the Hantei family. Reaching it requires diving into the fast, icy water and an **Athletics (Swimming) / Water** roll TN 40: it is a green and gold chop, slightly chipped on the side, bearing the kanji for the office of the Hantei Empress, which was lost when the Empress Hantei Hochiahime was kidnapped in 1111. Shugenja who commune with it can hear the kami within it singing a song too pure to ever describe. Failing the roll means the current pushes them up to the sharp barnacled hull of the *Impeccable*, allowing the ship to snag the PC underwater; avoiding it is an **Athletics (Swimming) / Reflexes** roll TN 40, failure means they take 5k5 damage and must roll **Earth** to resist gaining +3 Taint at TN 25.

Conclusion

Light from the recently-constructed Temple of the Ancestors beckons you away from the wreck of the

cursed ship. As you struggle through the swirling mist, you see lanterns making their way to you: the monks of the temple have come searching for survivors.

Four men, their faces covered by white wrappings, hurry toward you. The one in the lead shouts over the angry wind, "What happened? Are you all right?"

The PCs will have the opportunity to rest in the temple and heal while the monks, led by the abbot Fung, will burn the *Impeccable* (assuming the PCs haven't) and begin the wards necessary to keep it from escaping. The last caravan of construction workers will be leaving for the capital in the morning, led by a portly merchant patron named Shiba Gobai; the PCs are certainly welcome to ride along if they wish.

Once the PCs reach Otosan Uchi, they will be escorted to the Emerald Champion's residence by two Imperial Legions.

You are shown to a waiting room, where servants show you every courtesy until the Emerald Champion returns that evening. Eventually, you hear the return of the household and guards come to bring you to where the Empress of Rokugan awaits the tale of your trip...

Tainted PCs are allowed to bow before the Empress with their comrades, but they must do so at the back of the group while under heavy guard (there are no spirits from Toshigoku in this room if any of the PCs carry Sorinpu).

Recalling the tale of the journey is done with a **Perform: Oratory / Awareness** roll, TN 65 (encouraging Miyako to enthusiastically tell the tale instead requires TN 20). Success means the PC gain +3 points of Personal Status (not to exceed 4.5); while failure to make a 30 means the PC slips by mentioning the Taint too directly in the *Empress' court* and loses a rank of Personal Status.

Success: Miyako survives, untainted

The young Empress smiles happily, looking first at her friend and then to all of you. She rises from her throne and bows, her small but resolute voice filling the chamber. "Thank you, brave samurai, for delivering Miyako to safety. Your courage is an inspiration to us all."

The PCs may take Ally: Toku 1D/3I. Two weeks later, they will all get a glowing letter of thanks and praise from that Miyako. They may make a raw **Perception** roll TN 20: some of the details in the letter are incorrect; the mention of bright sunshine during their very cloudy trip means that this is actually a letter from the Empress

herself, and she is referring their escape from Otosan Uchi (the events from Claiming the Throne).

Partial Success: Miyako survives, but is tainted

The bright and sunny expression drains from the Empress' face as she begins to understand the situation. She looks anxiously at the Emerald Champion, but he shakes his head slowly. Tears well in her eyes, and her voice breaks with disappointment. "I... I, uh, thank you for your service, samurai."

The PCs gain "Sworn Enemy: Toku" (worth 7 points).

Failure: Miyako dies.

The last rays of daylight drop from the sky, casting the Empress' throne in shadow as she looks on you with cold, distant eyes.

The Emerald Champion speaks, his voice rote and flat. "Even amidst tragedy and great loss, against unknowable foes, the courage of the samurai stands strong. The Empire is grateful for your service, samurai-sans."

The PCs must also write a letter to her father...

Two weeks later, they will all receive word that the Monkey Champion's wife has been found dead... She, and the rope she hung herself with, will haunt the PC most responsible ("Haunted: Toku Inao"), while all surviving PCs gain "Nemesis: Toku."

Failure: The *Impeccable* is not destroyed

If the ship survives somehow (or is beached/destroyed/abandoned anywhere but Suitengu's Garden or Otosan Uchi), reports of a black vessel crewed by the damned will soon circulate through the Empire...

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

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

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

Experience Points

Surviving the adventure:	1XP
Good roleplaying:	+1XP
Toku Miyako survives untainted:	+1XP
The <i>Impeccable</i> is destroyed:	+1XP

Total Possible Experience: **4XP**

Honor

PCs with less than three Ranks of Honor gain 3 points of Honor; PCs with three or four Ranks of Honor gain 1 point.

Glory

No Glory gain or loss.

Other Awards/Penalties

If Miyako survives untainted, all PCs gain 1 point of Personal Status, not to exceed 4.5; Toku PCs gain an additional two points, for a total of 3.

Successfully escorting Miyako to Otosan Uchi untainted gains the PCs Ally: Toku (1 Devotion, 3 Influence). He has +1 Influence if they told a story during the court at the Vigilant Keep; this is already included in the potential Devotion for telling him about Toturi's fate.

If a PC is Tainted and the ship is brought into Golden Sun Bay, they will be tested. Any PC with a Rank or more of the Taint gains a Rank of Infamy (whether they had it before or not; heavy suspicion will fall on them for simply being involved in the matter).

Results of trade: PC gains +1 Personal Status for every 20 koku they bring into the clan, to a maximum of 4.5. Alternately, they may gain a Free Raise for all Merchant Cert rolls they make in the future (noted on their mod sheet).

Presenting the Empress' Seal to Toturi Tsudao grants the PC(s)

Presenting the Empress' Seal to the Imperial Regent grants the PC(s)

GM Reporting

Did any named NPC die or was tainted?

Did Miyako gain Prodigy?

Was the Empress' Seal found?

Was the *Impeccable* trapped in Suitengu's Garden?

**GM must report this information BEFORE (2/23/2015)
for it to have storyline effect**

Appendix #1: NPCs

Doji Matsume

A moderately handsome Crane returned spirit with an air of resignation.

Air 4	Earth 2	Fire 3	Water 2	Void 3
Awareness 5			Perception 4	
Honor 4.1		Status 5.0	Glory 3.4	

School/Rank: Doji Courtier 4

Techniques: *The Soul of Honor:* So long as Honor Rank at 6.0 or better, gains a Free Raise on all Courtier, Sincerity, and Etiquette rolls. Also, by conversing with another person for a few minutes, can make a Contested Roll of Courtier (Manipulation)/Awareness against the target's Etiquette (Courtesy)/Awareness to learn whether they are in need of any favors or assistance.

Speaking In Silence: Cadence: can roll Courtier/Intelligence at TN 15 to communicate simple ideas and instructions

with any other Crane who is trained in the Doji Courtier School or who has at least 5 Ranks in the Courtier skill. More complex ideas can be conveyed with Raises.

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

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

Skills: Artisan: Origami 3, Calligraphy 4, Courtier (Manipulation) 5, Etiquette (Courtesy) 6, Perform: Storytelling 4, Sincerity (Deceit) 5, Tea Ceremony 4

Advantages/Disadvantages: Touched by the Realm: Toshigoku, Wealthy / Dark Fate, Lost Love

Shichiro

One of several Shadowlands infiltrators scattered through the Empire, Shichiro is mostly a consummate opportunist.

Air 3	Earth 4	Fire 3	Water 4	Void 2
Reflexes 4		Agility 4		
Honor 0.6		Status 0	Glory 0	

Initiative: 9k4+10*

Attack: 9k4e+5 (no-dachi, Simple) or 10k4+5 (kama, Simple)

Armor TN: 25

Damage: 8k3 (no-dachi) or 4k2 (kama)

Wounds: 76 (Dead)

Taint Rank: 5.0

School/Rank: Maho-Bujin 2/Insight 5

Techniques: *Carve the Crimson Road:* max Raises limited by Taint Rank or Void, whichever is higher; gain unkept dice on damage equal to Taint Rank; may make Extra Attack Maneuver with 2 Raises

Corruption Rewards: increase Initiative Score by Taint Rank during Reactions every Round; Simple Action attacks

Skills: Athletics (Swimming) 4, Battle 1, Defense 4, Hunting 3, Investigation 4, Jiu-jitsu 6, Kenjutsu (No-dachi) 5, Knives 6, Lore: Shadowlands 4, Sailing 5, Sincerity (Deceit) 4

Baketsu (Small)

A black tsu fish with sharp teeth and sharper fins, about the size of a rat.

Air 1	Earth 1	Fire 1	Water 1
Reflexes 3		Agility 3	

Initiative: 4k3

Attack: 6k3 (bite, Complex)

Armor TN: 30

Damage: 2k1 (bite)

Reduction: 0

Taint: 3.0

Wounds: 10 (Dead)

Skills: Stealth (Sneaking, Ambush) 3, Hunting 1, Jujitsu 3, Athletics (Climbing, Swimming) 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Extra Small (+10 Stealth rolls and TN), Master of Shadows (+3k0 Stealth rolls), Swift 3; Spreading Taint (those damaged by them must make an **Earth Roll** TN 10 to avoid gaining one point of the Shadowlands Taint)

Baketsu (Medium)

A large black tsu fish with exaggerated limbs, about the size of a large dog.

Air 2	Earth 2	Fire 2	Water 2
Reflexes 4		Agility 4	Strength 3

Initiative: 6k4

Attack: 9k4e (bite, Complex)

Armor TN: 25

Damage: 5k3

Reduction: 5 (Jade)

Taint: 4.0

Wounds: 15 (+5); 30 (Dead)

Skills: Stealth (Sneaking, Ambush) 5, Hunting 3, Jujitsu (Bite) 5, Battle 1, Athletics (Climbing, Swimming) 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Master of Shadows (+4k0 Stealth rolls), Blackened Claws, Silent, Swift 4

Baketsu (Large)

A great black and gray tsu fish, with pronounced arms and legs, walking upright; about the size of a small man.

Air 2	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 3
Reflexes 5		Agility 5	Strength 4

Initiative: 8k5

Attack: 10k6e (bite, claws)

Armor TN: 30

Damage: 6k4

Reduction: 10 (Jade)

Taint: 5.0

Wounds: 20 (+5); 40 (+10); 60 (Dead)

Skills: Stealth (Sneaking, Ambush) 7, Hunting 3, Jujitsu (Bite, Claws) 7, Battle 3, Athletics (Climbing, Swimming) 5

Advantages/Disadvantages: Master of Shadows (+5k0 Stealth rolls), Blackened Claws (+1k2 unarmed

damage), Crab Hands, Silent, Swift 2, Leaping Strike (Water +2 while in Full Attack)

Undead Revenant

Air 0	Earth 3	Fire 1	Water 2
Reflexes 3		Agility 3	Strength 3

Initiative: 3k3

Attack: 7k3 (fist) or 6k3 (kama)

Armor TN: 20

Damage: 3k1 (fist) or 3k2 (kama)

Reduction: 5

Wounds: 72 (Dead)

Taint Rank: 3

Special Abilities:

- *Beheading:* A revenant normally can only be destroyed by literally hacking it to pieces (reducing it to Dead). However, it can also be destroyed instantly by severing its head. This requires taking three Raises for the Called Shot with an appropriate bladed weapon and dealing at least 18 Wounds.
- *Fear 3*
- *Undead*