

Treacherous Sands

by Ben Frederiksen

**A Low / Mid-Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Champions of the Ivory Throne**

Month of the Rooster, 1340 (Fall)

**Module Number: CIT15
Release Date: 11/03/2017**

Travel, Investigation, Combat
Part 2 of Shifting Sands

Sometimes what we look for is not what we find.

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS is a registered trademark of Fantasy Flight Games. Scenario detail copyright 20XX by the author and Fantasy Flight Games. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without permission.

This module is written for the Legends of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Fourth Edition, originally published by Alderac Entertainment Group.

Please refer to the *Heroes of Rokugan 4: Champions of the Ivory Throne Campaign Primer* for information on how to run official campaign modules. In addition to the basic setting information and house rules for this campaign, it details the various administrative necessities of the living campaign. GM reporting is crucial to players' ability to engage with the setting and to increase their characters' influence.

Adventure Background and Summary

During the Winter Court at Shiro Ide, a group of Gaijin traders attacked and killed a unicorn samurai who had been cheating them, one Moto Aram. An imperial tax collector, Otomo Katsuo investigated the matter with the help of a motley group of samurai. The gaijin were killed and their records recovered.

Otomo Katsuo has finally deciphered the ledgers after months of work and with the aid of a scholar from the Phoenix. They have revealed a much larger pattern of smuggling than he previously expected, and some ominous references to gaijin artifacts.

Accordingly, Katsuo plans to call the PCs together to assist him in finding the smugglers and putting a stop to them. Katsuo sent his aide, Isawa Hayato, ahead to follow up on a lead regarding some esoteric gaijin manuscripts.

The PCs will need to determine the course the investigation will follow. There are a pair of cities they can investigate: Dark Edge Village and Shiro Moto. Either will provide clues as to their first destination – Outsider Keep, a city on the very boundary of Rokugan.

Suspicious gaijin traders and equally suspicious unicorn samurai populate Bugaisha. Very few are pleased to see an Otomo and his entourage present, even those not engaged in illegal behavior. With some cajoling, the PCs should be able to convince them to reveal the location of their quarry – a small encampment three days ride into the desert. Also, the Phoenix aide, Isawa Hayato, was captured while investigating this city and was held here. If the PCs act quickly enough the gaijin will be forced to abandon their captive before extracting valuable information from him. Either way, Isawa Hayato will be dead when the PCs arrive.

Reaching the encampment will not be easy. They will meet a familiar face along the journey, who will warn them to turn back. Katsuo intends to press on, regardless of the danger, and the PCs soon find themselves trapped in a massive sandstorm.

Making their way past the sandstorm, they come upon the gaijin camp. With the assistance of a friend, they should be able to subdue the gaijin. In so doing, they will gain some much-needed information about what exactly has been smuggled into Rokugan.

GM Note

This Module provides a tracking chart to monitor the progress of the PCs. It will be useful in determining the fate of Isawa Hayato as well as determining how much evidence the pcs have gathered about the mysterious Moto Ayumu and his gaijin companions.

The amount of evidence gathered is very important, and will have an impact on future modules. Likewise, tracking the Notice points the PCs accumulate as they investigate will determine the degree of preparation for the gaijin.

Isawa Hayato is a (former) PC, so some PCs will have met him previously. This should not be an issue since he does not interact directly with the party, but his torture and death may be meaningful to those that knew him.

Upkeep

The events of the modules are certainly of primary importance in the lives of the characters, but many of them will have been working on a variety of tasks in the times between modules. At the beginning of the module, several things will need to take place (though some are obviously dependent on the actual needs of the PCs at the table).

Character Notes

The GM should take a few minutes to examine the players' character sheets in order to have an idea of the nature of the PCs at the table. Note any PCs with the following Advantages / Disadvantages.

- Disbeliever. Cast Out (any). Soft Hearted.

News from the Empire

While the GM is looking over sheets, it's a good time to distribute the first player handout of most modules. The News of the Empire is an overview of the recent events of the Empire in a fashion that shares the

ongoing story with the playerbase without requiring a Skill Roll or interfering with the actual plot of the module. Any plot-relevant Rumors will belong in the appropriate section of the module to be learned during play.

Inactivity

Time passes, and though the PCs' deeds will earn them a reputation, the Empire is a large place and lasting fame is a long-term goal not easy to achieve.

Accordingly, all PCs lose 2 points of Glory.

This cannot reduce a PC's Glory Rank to less than their Insight Rank, and the Fame Advantage increases their Insight Rank by one for these purposes.

Taint Progression

If a PC possesses the Shadowlands Taint, they will need to roll at the beginning of the module to see how much it has grown over the intervening time since the last module.

The TN of this raw **Earth Roll** is 20.

Crafting

The Crafting rules are detailed in the Campaign Primer, based largely on the Crafting rules in the core book (page 258). Unless explicitly indicated otherwise, a PC may only make one Crafting Roll per module, and any Void Points or other character resources (spell slots, Luck, etc.) spent on the roll do not refresh for the duration of the module. Any successful roll is noted on the provided sheet with the description.

Preparation Techniques

Techniques like the Agasha Shugenja or Yogo Wards do not quite fall under Crafting, but still can benefit from pre-planning and the Upkeep is a good opportunity. However, unlike Crafting, this is not the only time these Techniques may be used during a module – this is just a chance for the GM to remind the players and get it out of the way.

Ronin Survival

Life is difficult for ronin in the Empire at the best of times. PC ronin are no exception to this. At the start of the module, a PC ronin must roll **Hunting (Survival) / Stamina** at a TN25. Failure on this roll gives the ronin the Permanent Wound Disadvantage for the duration of the module. Koku may be spent on this roll to gain a Free Raise for every koku spent before the roll is made, or one Free Raise for every two koku spent after the roll is made.

Experience Expenditure

Finally, the players should be given one last chance to spend any experience they wish before the module begins. Unless the module specifically allows it, experience may not be spent during the adventure.

Introduction

Two weeks ago, you received a request from a member of the Imperial Families, Otomo Katsuo. Your assistance was requested in a matter of some discretion regarding smuggling and tax collection. Your lords, eager to please the imperials, sent you at once.

After a few hours, days, or weeks of travel along well-maintained roads and easily traversed waterways, the PCs find themselves in an inn on the edge of the lands of the Lion on the outskirts of the City of Honor's Sacrifice. The sun sinks low on the horizon as the assembled samurai enter the front door.

A small but stately establishment, the Blue Petal Inn caters to traveling Imperials and other well-connected persons.

A tall thin man greets each of you at the door as you arrive, ushering you immediately into a small side sitting room with a bow. "Ah, please samurai-samas, right this way. Lord Otomo-sama is quite eager to speak with you, and wishes to do so as soon as he finishes preparing." The Innkeeper brings tea and bowls of a delicious soup, then quietly disappears, leaving the PCs alone.

After thirty minutes of waiting, Otomo Katsuo, a man of average height with a traditional top knot and hawk-like nose enters the room from the far exit. The smell of lilac is noticeable, as is a thin trail of steam. You can only surmise that door exits to a bath house of some form.

"Ah, my friends. Thank you for meeting me. I apologize for keeping you waiting. Please, make yourselves comfortable."

Katsuo sits at the head of the long low table, and the innkeeper enters once more to place tea and soup in front of him. Katsuo takes a sip of tea and nods approvingly. "I do enjoy Kensen-san's tea. It is delicious. Anyway, as I was saying, thank you for coming. It took many months and the assistance of the Phoenix clan to decipher the documents I recovered from the gaijin criminals. What I found was quite worrying; an elaborate smuggling ring involving a group of Unicorn samurai and some gaijin. With your help, we shall bring these criminals to justice. Do you have any questions before we begin?"

What are they smuggling?

Gold, expensive silks, and gaijin cultural artifacts. Very expensive goods. Moto Aram apparently cheated his gaijin contacts when buying some very expensive relics from them.

Where do we start?

The recovered ledgers name the Unicorn in charge as Moto Ayumu. However, my research has found no samurai by that name, so it is likely a pseudonym. We must find those that may have met this man and track him down.

The ledgers show trades were made in Dark Edge Village, Shiro Shinjo, and in Shiro Moto. Presumably someone in one of those cities has met this Moto Ayumu and can help us locate him and learn his actual name.

Who is involved?

We believe a group of Unicorn samurai have been trading with some Senpet gaijin calling themselves the Balanced Scales.

The Unicorn we know to be involved were the deceased Moto Aram, Moto Hachirou, and Moto Ayumu. With some aid from the Phoenix, I have already arrested and interrogated Moto Hachirou. He has provided a description of Ayumu for us, as well as some information on places Ayumu visited. Unfortunately, that is all he was willing or perhaps able to give us.

What does Moto Ayumu look like? / What do we know about Moto Ayumu?

He is a short man with a bald head and a long beard. He commonly wears long flowing robes and walks with the aid of a staff or cane. He is apparently an excellent horseman, and oversaw the finances of the smuggling ring. I believe him to be the key.

Are we Yoriki / Can we make arrests?

You are my yoriki in this matter. You may consider mercantile matters related to this smuggling. If you believe a low rank samurai or a gaijin should be detained, you may detain them. If a high-ranking samurai must be detained, then we shall have to seek an order of appearance from the local lord.

Can we wear armor?

No, not currently. Until proven otherwise, this is simply a mercantile matter. We will arrest the perpetrators if we locate them, but unless things escalate I do not see a need for armor or battlefield weapons.

Once the players are done asking questions:

We must decide where to begin. We have three leads; Shiro Shinjo, Shiro Moto, and Dark Edge Village. I have already sent the researcher the Phoenix assigned to Shiro Shinjo, so it falls to us to investigate either Dark Edge Village or Shiro Moto. I leave that choice to you. Dark Edge Village is smaller so it should be easier to find someone there who might recognize Moto Ayumu. Shiro Moto will likely be more difficult to pick up a lead, but given the much larger market there they will probably know more about what he was up to. Where should we start, samurai-sans?

The next morning the assembled depart from the inn towards their first destination.

In the meantime, the inn's accommodations are extravagant. The baths are warm, the food delicious, and both tea and sake are available in a wide variety.

Part One: The Investigation Begins

Investigation: Shiro Moto

The journey to Shiro Moto is quick and easy. The roads are well travelled and well patrolled by vigilant Moto bushi. Your papers are only given the most cursory of glances and the Moto bow low to your Imperial charge at each waystation. There are noticeably more Lion merchant caravans on the roads of the Unicorn than is common, hauling grain, copper, and other staples to and from the markets of the clan of Shinjo.

As you enter, you see Shiro Moto is a massive city, with high walls encircling a huge population of rokugani, peasants, and the occasional gaijin. The markets are vast, with goods of every nature being traded. Merchants hawk their goods from carts as you pass, and small children stand in front of storefronts calling out to travelers, including yourselves, describing the wares sold within.

As you reach the confluence of three massive, the citadel of the Moto family looms tall, its towers a mix of rokugani and gaijin architecture.

Otomo Katsuo bows slightly to all of you. "I shall pay a visit to the castle and make the proper introductions. It would be rude to do otherwise..." he stops for a moment and gives a wry smile, "and would give them an excuse to take offense and impede our investigation. This will likely take me all day, and perhaps most of tomorrow. I expect by then that you

will have some results for me. I have confidence in you samurai-sans.”

With a nod, Otomo Katsuo sweeps off towards the castle.

There are four main avenues of investigation open to the PCs: The markets, the black market, a survey of the inns, and the temples. If the PCs come up with a clever idea, allow them to make an appropriate roll and if they succeed have an appropriate NPC point them towards one of these four locations (likely the temples). Clever ideas should be rewarded with a free raise or similar benefit at their destination.

Splitting up will allow them to cover more ground, only check the Time box that takes the longest, but will cause them to gain much more notice from the gaijin. Add 1 to the Notice value for each location they visit and total them.

Many rumors swirl around Shiro Moto. Any PC may gather rumors with a **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll.

Rumors

- 10: The declaration of war between the Lion and the Crab is somewhat... confusing. Most expected the Lion to attack the Unicorn and now the local merchants have extra spears and no customers for them.
- 15: There have been fewer gaijin goods in the market in the past few years and fewer still gaijin. It is a bit odd.
- 20: The Silk merchants have been doing extremely prosperous business lately. Most seem to think this must be due to closer relationships with the Crane.
- 25: Ide Ekuan recently granted a boon to the Lion clan. After last winter's court, he sent a number of Unicorn steeds to the Ikoma, and pledged to allow Lion caravans to travel Unicorn roads without taxation.
- 30: A small group of gaijin was recently seen hanging around a small antique shop in the market, Fukurokujin's Bookcase.
- 35: Moto Noritoshi has recently arrived home from the Crane lands for the first time since last winter. He has apparently been faring excellently in his studies, but some whisper that he has had trouble getting along with the other students.

Shiro Moto: Markets

The Markets of Shiro Moto are massive and filled with people of every clan, ronin, peasants, and the occasional gaijin. Everything under the sun is for sale, and all at quite competitive prices!

If the PCs wish to shop for any non-jade items in the core book, they can be found here for the listed prices.

Most merchants are happy to sell goods to the PCs, but very few have any memory of an old man with a staff or a pair of gaijin travelling with him. After all, there are many old men with staves, even old Unicorn men.

The PCs can conduct a search of the markets any number of ways. A clever tactic or explanation should grant a free raise. The base roll to find information here is either Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness at TN 25, Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness at TN 20, or Commerce / Awareness at TN 15.

A success will locate an old female merchant. She will mention to the PCs that she saw an older bald Unicorn samurai, leaning heavily on a staff, travelling through the market with a small group of gaijin. One of the gaijin had to frequently stop and help him, as he was often going out of breath. This struck her as very unusual. She noted that they went into a shop together but then left separately; the shop's name was Fukurokujin's Bookcase.

Shiro Moto: Temples

As befitting a major city, Shiro Moto has many temples. The greatest of these is the temple to Daikoku. Second to the fortune of commerce is the rather foreboding temple to the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang, the Lords of Death. Besides these two major temples, minor temples to virtually every fortune imaginable can be located.

Asking around the temples for a man of Moto Ayumu's description will be largely useless. Many bald old men who travel with staffs visit the area. However, if the PCs mention the gaijin, the monks will become quite reluctant to speak. A reasonable appeal will convince them to mention that a man of that description was seen with a pair of gaijin visiting the Temple to the Lords of Death. Perhaps the abbot of that temple would know more.

Asking about Moto Ayumu, or a man fitting his description, at the temple to the Lords of Death will reveal more specific information.

The abbot, Haruto, a quiet retiring man of 60 will greet any inquiring PC. He is a former Iuchi shugenja,

though he will not admit to such, and recognizes any samurai by their clan and family.

He is slightly suspicious of the PCs; however, he is more suspicious of the strange man that came into the temple two weeks ago to pray along with a pair of gaijin. He is an old man and does not care for gaijin in his temple.

If the PCs can convince him with Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness at TN 25 or Theology / Awareness at TN 20, he will speak freely about the man. He came into the temple with a pair of gaijin, and prayed at the alter to the Lords of Death. While praying, Haruto noticed that though the man was not dressed as a priest, he wore a concealed satchel of ofuda (shugenja prayer scrolls) bearing the symbol of the Iuchi Shugenja school. As they were leaving, Haruto overheard them mentioning meeting some friends at Fukurokujin's Bookcase.

Shiro Moto: Black Market

Locating the black market within the walls of Shiro Moto is easier said than done. However, a turn down the proper alleyway and a coin in the right pocket can solve many problems.

A PC must roll Lore: Underworld / Awareness at TN 15 to locate an appropriate source, as well as spending 2 koku on bribes. If they do so, they are given a slip of paper with an address and a passphrase, along with a D1 honor loss.

At the address is a burly ronin with a large sword and long drooping mustaches standing in front of a large wooden gate. Speaking the passphrase results in a nod from the ronin as he swings the gate open just enough to permit the samurai entrance.

Within is a small set of stalls but the contents of these stalls are nearly fantastic. High quality silks, gaijin goods, and weapons fill every booth.

Goods can be bought at listed core prices times ten, but are all quite high quality (The Gaijin Gear advantage cannot be purchased here).

Asking around the market will result in any of the traders instantly recognizing Moto Ayumu and his companion, Fahud Abd Al-Karim. Moto Ayumu frequently visits this market, though less so after the death of Fahud's brother Basil last winter. The last time he was here he was setting up a large deal for some gaijin relics that was to be concluded at a local clearinghouse called Fukurokujin's Bookcase.

Shiro Moto: Inns

The quantity, and varying quality, of inns in Shiro Moto is exceeded only by the quantity and varying

quality of the goods in its market. Searching them all would take days, and that presumes the innkeepers were all forthcoming with their guest lists, which most are not.

There are a few ways to approach this problem. An Investigation / Awareness roll at TN 35 is required to locate the Inn where Moto Ayumu stayed. Hiring peasants to help, paying bribes, or specifying to look in the seedier areas of town should be worth a free raise each. Other clever ideas should earn a free raise as well. Appeals to imperial authority will largely fall on deaf ears, as the inns who will cooperate fully are not the ones where Ayumu stayed.

On a success, the Inn of the Reluctant Smith is located and the proprietor, a gruff ronin named Banu, will reluctantly confirm that a man named Moto Ayumu did in fact stay at his Inn two weeks ago. He will refuse to show the PCs the log book, but insists that he and two other men checked in, stayed for three nights, and then left. They paid in full in advance and so saw fit to ask no other questions. He did overhear them discuss meeting someone at a place named Fukurokin's Bookcase, a shop in the market that specializes in rare scrolls and gaijin texts.

If a PC can convince him to share further details (Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness at TN 20) or simply bribe him (1 koko), Banu will confirm the other two were a pair of gaijin brothers. Apparently one of the brothers was a member of some gaijin religious order; Banu noticed him praying while holding a strange holy symbol that looked like a metal scale inscribed in a circle.

Fukurokujin's Bookcase

Fukurokujin's Bookcase is a small shop in an otherwise unremarkable block of the market. The delicious smell of cooking vegetables wafts from the noodle shop flanking it to the left, and a small number of shoppers filter into and out of the clothes shop on the right. None enter or leave the bookcase.

Stepping inside Fukurokujin's Bookcase, a small bell rings somewhere far back in the shop, further back than it seemed possible given the modest exterior of the shop.

The walls are high and lined on both sides from floor to ceiling with all manner of texts; scrolls, pillow books, gaijin manuscripts, and other stranger looking documents cover the shelves. Immediately before you

sits an icon of the fortune of wisdom cast in solid bronze, smiling with palms open to greet you.

After a moment a young man wearing the colors and mon of the Iuchi with a strange glass and metal contraption on his face rushes forward from the back of the shop to greet you. He stops abruptly and bows low. “Ah, honorable samurai-samas, welcome to my shop. What can I help you find? This one is Iuchi Keiji, and would be happy to assist you.”

The smell of paper and light incense becomes very discernable as the door swings shut behind you, causing the bell to ring softly once more.

Likely questions the PCs may have:

Who are you?

I am Iuchi Keiji. I own and run this shop. I inherited it from my father and he from his father before him. It has been in my family for six generations.

What can you tell me about your store?

We sell books, scrolls, and scholarly texts from all over the empire and points beyond. Ever since the time of my forefathers we have collected rare and esoteric information and made it available for our clients. If there is something specific you are looking for and we don't have it in the store for a modest fee we can search for it on your behalf.

Prices for books and texts range from 10 koku up to hundreds of koku.

What is that thing on your face?

It is a device of gaijin manufacture. It assists with my poor eyesight. The gaijin simply call them “Glasses”. What a humble name for so strange a device.

Has an old man with a staff come through here?

A large number of old men visit my shop. I'm afraid you'll have to be more specific.

What about an old man and a gaijin?

I carry books from all over the empire, as well as the Burning Sands, Medinaat al-Salaam, the Senpet empire, and points beyond. Many gaijin have come to my shop, both to sell books and to buy them. As I said, you will have to be more specific.

Has a Moto Ayumu come through your store?

I do not disclose my clients. If he was here, then I surely did not ask his name. I treat everyone with respect and hold their names and their requests in the greatest confidence.

An Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness roll at TN 15 will reveal that he is obviously concealing information. If pushed on the point, see below.

Have you met a Fahud Abd Al-Karim?

Have the PCs make a raw Awareness at TN 10 to notice a shiver come over the man when the name is mentioned.

I am sorry, I do not speak of men such as him. Those priests are not welcome in my store. Not anymore.

If pushed on the point, see below.

Have you received any odd requests lately, or sold anything you consider strange, perhaps three weeks ago?

Well, normally I would not speak of such things, but there was a specific request that struck me as very out of the ordinary. A customer came through looking for a text on a specific gaijin religion. We do carry a few such texts, but they are rare you see. It was a text on the rituals, ideology, and historical relics of an ancient gaijin god of trade. There was something about that book, something wrong. I do not know what.

If pushed on who the customer was, see below.

The Customer:

The shopkeeper, while dedicated to his principles, is not trained a highly trained courtier. Any concerted effort to break down his defenses will likely result in him divulging information on Moto Ayumu and his companion. This could be Courtier (Manipulation), Investigation (Interrogation), Temptation, or even Intimidation at TN 25.

Iuchi Keiji sighs and rubs his nose. “All right, all right. Yes, a man by that name came through the store, two weeks ago. He was looking for a book. A specific book. A treatise on the rituals, ideology, and historical relics of one of the ancient Senpet gods. A god of trade and merchants, if memory serves. I don't know why he wanted it, but he was extremely insistent on that specific book. He paid over one hundred koku for it.”

Keiji shrugs his shoulders, “This would not be entirely out of the ordinary; I carry many unique books and have many customers that are looking for specific texts. That is the purpose of my store after all. But that gaijin with him...” Keiji shivers. “Something about that man was wrong. The way he looked at me, it was as though he was judging me, weighing my value, that he might at any moment decide I was unworthy and strike me down. I've seen the symbol he wore before, the mark of the Generous Trader. That same symbol was on the cover of the book his friend bought. I will be happy if I never see that man again in all of my days.”

“I did not understand anything he said, but I did catch one word. Bugaisha. I have not seen either man before or since.”

With another shiver, Keiji regains control of himself and pushes his glasses up higher onto his nose, “Now then, if you are not looking to buy something, I would kindly ask you to leave. I have work to attend to, and I wish no more to do with that man.”

Shiro Moto: Wrap up

If the PCs return to Otomo Katsuo with the name Bugaisha and do not know what it means, he will gladly fill in that it is a city on the edge of Unicorn lands, also called Outsider Keep. It is most notable as a hardship post for out of favor Unicorn and a destination where gaijin meet to trade.

If the PCs have the lead on Bugaisha, and have collected 6 or more points of Evidence:

Otomo Katsuo nods sharply, “Good, good, I think we have enough to go on. If you wish to explore further avenues, I suppose we could do so, but the trail clearly leads to the city of Bugaisha. You have done well to find out as much as you have about Moto Ayumu-san and his strange companion.

It does not sound like they are far ahead of us, nor that they were in any hurry. Hopefully this means we can easily intercept them in Bugaisha.

Moto Noritoshi was in attendance at court, and was... as pleasant as he always is. I am ready to leave whenever you are, Samurai-sans.

Where shall we go?

If the PCs have the lead on Bugaisha, but have not collected 6 points of Evidence:

Otomo Katsuo nods slowly, considering the PCs words. “You have done well, and Bugaisha sounds like a promising lead. However, I think we need to learn more about Moto Ayumu-san and his companions. I do not wish to walk into Bugaisha blind.

I think we should either finish searching here, or should investigate Dark Edge village for further information about Ayumu-san. After all, it does us no good to reach Bugaisha if we have no way to identify

him. Asking such questions while he is present in Bugaisha would be a sure-fire way to alert him to our investigation and likely cause him to flee. We must know more before we pursue him.

Thankfully, from what you have told me he does not appear to be in any form of a hurry. With luck, we will be able to catch him in Bugaisha even if we take a detour to Dark Edge Village first.

If the PCs have visited both Shiro Moto and Dark Edge village without a lead:

Otomo Katsuo nods slowly, considering the PCs words. “I am afraid we have had no luck finding the trail of this man or his gaijin. Thankfully, Isawa Hayato-san fared better in his search of Shiro Shinjo. A letter arrived from him arrived this morning. He says that Moto Ayumu was conducting some strange architectural research in the Shinjo Archives, and that he planned to visit Bugaisha. Hayato has already left for Outsider Keep, and I think it would be a good idea to go there to meet with him and continue the investigation.

Otherwise:

Otomo Katsuo nods slowly, considering the PCs words. “You have done well, but we still must find a lead on Moto Ayumu’s next location.

I think we should investigate Dark Edge village for further information about Ayumu-san. We must know more before we are able to pursue him.

Thankfully, from what you have told me he does not appear to be in any form of a hurry. With luck, we will be able to catch him even if we stop at Dark Edge Village first.

Investigation: Dark Edge Village

The roads to Dark Edge Village are a far cry from the well maintained and briskly patrolled roads of the Lion lands or the other Unicorn provinces. There are few travelers and fewer still merchant caravans. Those few guards you do meet seem almost astounded that an Imperial would be visiting, but they do their best to hide their surprise. Still, the journey is easy and swift if only due to the uncluttered roads.

Dark Edge Village is a large but sparsely populated city. What it lacks in people, it makes up for in uniqueness. The third largest dueling grounds in the empire, a massive set of shrines, and a huge contest field all sit just beyond the shadow of the mountains in the distance. Never quite touching the village, the shadows creep towards the edge of the dueling grounds, then stop as the PCs enter the city. A chill wind blows down from the mountains, even this early in the fall. A few peasants stop their labors as you ride into town and bow low to you.

Otomo Katsuo bows his head momentarily, pulling his collar closer. His voice is loud and clear over the whistling wind, "This weather is...unseasonable. I am going to retire to the inn." He looks around, his suddenly worried, and drops his voice. "I think it likely we are being watched. I do not think we can afford to spend much time here. Do your best to be discreet with your inquiries. We will need to leave in the morning if we are to avoid arousing suspicion. I assumed the village would be larger based on its reputation."

With a nod, Otomo Katsuo sweeps off towards the nearest inn, the House of the Pink Rose.

Though Dark Edge Village is only sparsely populated, there are still rumors to be heard, presuming the PCs are willing to take the time to roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** to gather them.

Rumors

- 10: The declaration of war between the Lion and the Crab is somewhat... confusing. Most expected the Lion to attack the Unicorn this summer. Welcome news, though this far into the hinterlands was unlikely to see action regardless.
- 15: There have been fewer visitors the last few years. While never a popular destination, ever since Moto Sartaq and his hatamoto visited a few years back the number of Moto samurai who have visited the ancient site of the test of the Emerald Champion has dropped considerably.
- 20: The grounds have not been well maintained of late. With fewer visitors there is less reason to do so, and less coin in the coffers of the shrines with which to do so. It is most unfortunate the state of disrepair the dueling grounds are falling into.
- 25: A small group of gaijin was recently seen hanging around the Shrine to the Lords of Death,

accompanied by an old man in the colors of the Moto. Most odd.

- 30: Moto Noritoshi recently passed through the city on the way to Shiro Moto. This is quite odd, since Dark Edge village is not at all on the way to Shiro Moto. Supposedly he stopped to pray at the shrine to the Emerald Champion.
- 35: Ide Ekuan recently granted a boon to the Lion clan. After last winter's court, he sent Unicorn steeds to the Ikoma, and pledged to allow Lion caravans to travel Unicorn roads without taxation.
- 40: I hear that Izumi-san has a crush on Kaito-sama. Wouldn't they just be the cutest couple?

Dark Edge: Dueling Grounds

The dueling grounds are a wide-open series of rings, each with a small set of raised benches surrounding them. Famed as the third largest dueling grounds in the empire, the facilities at Dark Edge Village are only exceeded by those at the Kakita Academy and at Shinden Osano-Wo.

Past the dueling grounds, off in the distance, lies the unused and unmaintained competition grounds for all the other trials of the Emerald Champion; horsemanship, history, and others.

Unfortunately, these dueling grounds have not been well maintained. The grass grows thick between the rings of sand, and while the sands themselves are kept free of weeds, it is obvious they have not been properly maintained in years.

Searching the area for clues is a time consuming affair, and will take most of the afternoon. Investigation (Search) / Perception at TN 25 will reveal some useful information. One of the dueling rings, far from the center of the village, was recently raked. There are no tracks within the ring itself, and the sand has clearly been freshly moved since the last time it rained.

A set of tracks is clearly visible; one set leads to this ring from the village, and another head off into the woods just a short distance away from the city. The tracks appear at least a couple days old, but not older than a week or two. They were made by somewhere between two and four individuals.

Following them will lead the PCs to the Ritual Site.

Dark Edge: Shrine to the Emerald Champion

The shrine to the Emerald Champion sits just on the edge of the village. Calling it one shrine is a slight misnomer, as it is in fact a single large shrine, flanked by scores of smaller shrines radiating out from it. Three large statues sit just outside the complex staring eastward, in the direction of Ootosan Uchi.

Kakita, Osano-Wo, and Hantei tower over you as you approach the entrance to the first shrine, dedicated to the original Emerald Champion, Kakita.

An old unassuming monk stops sweeping momentarily as you arrive, and bows low. "Honored samurai guests, please, be welcome in the Shrine of the Emerald Champion. This one is Katsuro, how many I help you today?"

Any PC with at least 3 ranks of Iaijutsu will notice that despite his advanced age Katsuro moves with a great deal of grace and poise; he was obviously at one point a trained duelist.

If a PC with Cast Out attempts to enter, Katsuro will pause a moment, and regard that PC. "I am sorry, but I have heard word of your transgressions. It would be best if you cleansed yourself and made amends before you entered here." If the Cast-Out PC enters regardless, Katsuro will shrug slightly and do his best to ignore that PC entirely, to the point of pretending he or she simply doesn't exist. Entering the shrine over Katsuro's objections earns the offending PC Katsuro as a Sworn Enemy (5 points).

The shrine is large, well kept, and filled with small statues representing the key events in Kakita's life; such as the trials for Lady Doji's hand, his victory over Matsu, his meeting with Yasuki, and of course taking the position of Emerald Champion to Hantei-kami. Katsuro will follow the PCs inside, and will offer to narrate a tour if any PCs are interested and willing to listen.

Katsuro can also answer some basic questions about the village and its recent visitors.

Have you seen a bald thin man with a cane, or a man named Moto Ayumu?

I am sorry, I do not recall any such man. I do not venture into the village much other than when I need supplies, perhaps one of the villagers saw this man.

Have you seen any gaijin?

No, I have not. Do you really think gaijin would be interested in visiting the Shrine to the Emerald Champion? Why, that would be quite the sight. But if there were gaijin in town, surely someone would have noticed.

Have you had any visitors lately?

Yes, a few days ago a young Moto man stopped by the shrine. He spent the night in prayer.

He wore the mon of the Kakita, and seemed most focused on his praying to the Emerald Champion. I do not think he even noticed me while he was here.

A raw awareness roll at TN 10 will reveal that Katsuro is not telling the entire truth. If pressed on the matter, he will hang his head slightly.

"It is not normally my way to speak of another's prayers, but something about this young man disturbed me. He was praying for guidance; asking Lord Kakita what he would do in this situation. I heard mention him 'the relic of the Generous Trader' and the shrine to Those Other Gods. Perhaps he was referring to the Lords of Death?"

Do you know who Kaito or Izumi are?

Ah, yes. Shiba Kaito, the sculptor has been in town for the past few months. I believe he is working on a new sculpture of some form. He has been in and out of the shrine a few times, making notes. I dare say he is working on a piece centered on Kakita.

Hiruma Izumi arrived last week, I think she is on her way to the Lion lands, but has stopped to stay in the Inn. I am not quite sure why she stopped. She visited once and seemed a nice samurai-ko.

Dark Edge: The Inn

Only one inn remains open in Dark Edge Village, the House of the Pink Rose. It is a large establishment, constructed of fine woods, with a bright and elegantly painted sign.

Stepping inside, excellent artworks adorn the walls. However, the common room is almost empty. You are greeted at once by a middle-aged man with a sharply manicured goatee who bows very low to you and speaks quite rapidly, "Ah, samurai-sans, please come in and be welcome in my inn. Take your ease, and I will have tea for you momentarily. My name is Tajima, and if there is anything else I can get you, please let me know!" With a bow, Tajima disappears into the back room, presumably to fetch food and drink.

Inside the common room two samurai sit on opposite sides of the room. One in the colors of the Crab, and the other in the colors of the Phoenix. Each appears to be engrossed in their own business; the Phoenix scribbling in a notebook, and the Crab reading a set of scrolls.

The guests at the inn are Shiba Kaito and Hiruma Izumi, who the PCs may be familiar with if they

played Winter Court: Shiro Ide. Both have ended up here by happenstance and are more than willing to make friendly small talk with the PCs, especially any PCs they are acquainted with already.

Shiba Kaito

Shiba Kaito is quite busy working on some sketches, and will not notice the PCs until they approach him. Once they do, he will look up, momentarily surprised and flustered before regaining his composure. "Oh! Hello samurai-sans! It is, umm, good to see you. I am Shiba Kaito, it is a pleasure to, umm, meet you. Would you care to, uh, join me for some tea?"

What brings you here?

I am working on a new sculpture. I confess I felt a bit lost after the events of the winter, and I came here seeking inspiration. I may, well, I may have found it. I have an idea at least. I've started working on some test models, but we'll see.

What are you sculpting?

Oh, I am sorry, I do apologize, but I can't really say anything about it yet! It's not nearly far enough along, and if I finish it, it wouldn't do to ruin the surprise. No, no, I am sorry samurai-san, but I just can't tell you. No offense intended.

What do you think of Hiruma Izumi?

Izumi-san? Oh, umm... (his face momentarily turns slight red) she seems nice. There haven't been many samurai around lately, other than that strange old man a few weeks ago, so it's been nice having someone to talk to.

Have you seen an old man / a man named Moto Ayumu?

Yes! Yes I have. He came through a few weeks back. He seemed... terse. And unfriendly. I am not quite sure what to make of the man. He had a pair of gaijin with him, it was very strange. They spent a few nights here at the inn. I noticed them doing something out past the dueling fields, but I can't say I considered it closely.

Have you seen any gaijin?

Yes, now that you mention it. An old man, uh, Moto Ayumu I think it was? Came through the city a few weeks ago, escorted by a pair of gaijin. Odd to see gaijin this deep in the empire. They spent a few nights here at the inn. I noticed them doing something out past the dueling fields, but I can't say I considered it closely.

Do you know what he was doing or what brought him to town?

I can't say I do. I have been using some of the old contest facilities as a work space, and I noticed Ayumu and his gaijin doing... something... on one of the old fields. I think the horsemanship test area? I didn't look closely. I heard the old man praying to the Kami though. I'm not a shugenja, I can't speak the language, but I know it when I hear it.

If PCs wish to explore the Horsemanship Fields, proceed to Dark Edge: Ritual Site.

Hiruma Izumi

Hiruma Izumi sits by herself at a table along the wall of the inn. She is slowly drinking a bottle of sake, and reading a set of scrolls. As the PCs approach, she will carefully set the scrolls aside, and motion towards the empty chairs. "Ah, greetings samurai-sans. It is good to see you again. I did not expect to run into so many samurai here. This village is quite small and quiet of late. What brings you to Dark Edge Village?"

Why are you in Dark Edge Village?

I was passing through on my way to my next assignment, in the lands of the Scorpion. She winces momentarily, I am afraid my injury got the best of me, and I had to stop for a few days while it heals. I imagine I will be able to travel again soon.

What do you think of Shiba Kaito?

He seems honorable and dedicated to his work. I was a bit surprised to find him here after the... events of last winter's court. He is pleasant company though, when he can be bothered to stop working for a few minutes.

Have you seen an old man / a man named Moto Ayumu?

She strokes her chin thoughtfully for a moment. That is a vague description samurai-san. But yes, I believe so. Was he travelling with a gaijin? I can't say I asked his name. I left him alone, and they kept to themselves.

They spent a few nights here at the inn. They seemed to make a bit of an impression on Shiba Kaito. For my part I did my best to ignore them.

Have you seen any gaijin?

Yes, I did. A pair of gaijin and an old man came through the city a few weeks ago. It seems strange that the Unicorn would allow gaijin to wander their lands, but I suppose that's their decision to make. They spent a few nights here at the inn, and their presence seemed to make the peasants uncomfortable.

Do you know what he was doing or what brought him to town?

I can't say I do. Perhaps Shiba Kaito might know.

What are you reading?

Oh, these are a set of old instructions on dueling stances. I was reading about dueling stances that do not rely on, well, having both feet functional.

She sighs, it is not my first choice, but it is in the best interest of my service to my clan.

Dark Edge: Shrine to the Lords of Death

On the north edge of town, where a large amphitheater once stood, stands a strange shrine. A large tile roof stands tall over a flagstone floor, but the shrine has no exterior walls. Arranged in a circle are ten large stone statues, facing outwards. The statues seem to glare at you as you approach, their gaze boring into your soul.

No monk appears to be present to tend this shrine. Instead, there is a central plinth with a plaque upon it.

“Here the Lords of Death appeared, and reminded us all of their role in the Celestial Heavens. May they find our actions Just.”

A Lore: History / Intelligence or Lore: Theology / Intelligence check at TN 20 will recall that during the time of Toturi the Second, the Lords of Death appeared in this village, at this very spot, during a tournament. If any PC makes a TN 30 or higher, they will further recall that the Lords of Death claimed the soul of the Khan's son, Moto Gaheris, in person.

Stepping onto the platform is a deeply disconcerting experience. All involved have the sudden feeling that someone or something is watching them intently... watching and waiting. Any PC with Disbeliever or Bad Fortune: Moto Curse feels this sense of wrongness much more strongly; they must make a Fear 4 check or flee the area. A PC who has both must check Fear 6.

While there are no other samurai, monks, or peasants present, exploring the temple still has the potential to generate some useful clues.

An Investigation (Search) / Perception roll at TN 30 will turn up a small box, hidden beneath the base of one of the statues. The box is locked with a simple lock. It can be broken with a Raw Strength (TN 20), or Artisan: Locksmithing / Agility (TN 20) or Sleight of Hand / Agility (TN 25). Within is a note and a string of koku.

“Your terms are acceptable. Meet at the agreed upon location. Send a messenger to the Inn of the First Sands if plans must change. Payment enclosed.”

Lore: Inns, Lore: Unicorn, or Lore: Geography at TN 15 reveals that the named inn is within the city of Bugaisha. If the PCs do not recognize this, Otomo Katsuo will do so automatically if they tell him the name of the inn, as he has stayed there before.

Speaking with the Kami will present some insight as well. An appropriately worded question reveals that a man left a box hidden in the base of one of the statues. If asked to describe the man, he was a man of Strong Air, with friends from Outside. The kami did not care for his friends, and will describe them as Wrong.

Furthermore, they are deeply unhappy that Wrong Ones were called upon nearby – they are unable to provide more details, but an appropriately worded question will reveal that Wrong Ones were called upon in the place where Beasts of Earth used to run.

Proceed to the Dark Edge: Ritual Site if the PCs can piece together that the kami are referring to the horsemanship arena.

Dark Edge: Ritual Site

A large oval course, with the remains of tiered stands rising along its edges, stands a short distance away from the village. The roofs of the short buildings of the city are just barely visible over the top of a rolling hill.

The carefully manicured horsemanship course of trimmed grass, meticulously placed obstacles, and precisely arranged targets is no more. A mass of weeds and overgrowth, the remains of obstacles, and a single target standing alone in the distance are the only remaining testaments to the once pristine horsemanship test grounds.

In stark contrast to this neglect, a circle has been cleared in the grass in the very center of the track. An unmistakable sign of recent activity. Somehow was here recently, but for what purpose?

The horsemanship course is a ruin. However, there is a large circle, 25 feet across, in its center where the grass has been cut and obstructions removed. No effort was taken to conceal this sudden act of grounds keeping. The purpose of this circle though may prove slightly more elusive.

A small kanji is visible drawn into the dirt. Some effort was clearly taken to obscure it, but it is still recognizable as the symbol for 'Trade' or 'Exchange'. Other kanji were also drawn along the edges of the circle, but they have been rendered illegible.

Attempting to call upon the Kami to decipher the purpose of this circle will be largely fruitless. The kami present just arrived here a few days ago. The previous kami were 'Sent Away' by a 'Man of Strong Air', the tell-tale sign of the local kami being banished.

Searching the area with Investigation (Search) / Perception at TN 25 will turn up a useful clue. But more importantly, it will attract attention. A dropped piece of paper can be found, with directions to an inn in the city of Bugaisha written by one 'Alim Abd Al-Karim'.

Once the PCs have finished their exploration of the site, they will be approached by a small group of ronin:

Stepping out from behind the stands, a voice calls out "Ah, greetings honorable samurai-samas. I apologize, but perhaps this is fortuitous. My friends and I were on our way to the village, and we seem to have gotten somewhat lost. We meant to hire a guide, but you see we were slightly short on funds. Surely, noble samurai such as yourselves would take pity on humble wave men and assist us.

This is obviously a shakedown, and there should be no doubt that the men are bandits. There are ronin equal to the number of combat-capable PCs.

If the PCs wish, they can simply pay off the ronin for a sum of 10 koku. Alternatively, they may be scared off with a TN 30 Intimidation / Willpower.

If they are paid or frightened off, the ronin leader will nod, "Ah, thank you for your generosity samurai-sans. Here, perhaps this note will mean more to you than it does to us."

He hands over a browned, slightly stained piece of paper. "Report anything out of the ordinary to Fahud, at the Inn of the First Sands."

Otherwise, the ronin will attack and attempt to steal whatever money the PCs have – they know the area is unpatrolled and so is a good place to ambush travelers. They were told to watch for anyone snooping about and waylay them.

They will not kill downed PCs, simply take their money and any possessions which seem valuable and easy to sell (no weapons or armor)

If taken prisoner, they know only that an old man paid them to watch the area for the next month and to rob anyone that began nosing about.

The ronin will flee if half or more are reduced to the Down wound rank or below, doing their best to take their fallen with them.

Ronin Bandits

Desperate men are willing to sell their honor for ready coin.

School/Rank: Generic Ronin Bushi 1 / Insight rank 2
Initiative: 5k3

Armor TN: 20 (23 in armor) **Reduction:** 1

Wounds: 10 (+0), 14 (+3), 18 (+5), 22 (+10), 26 (+15), 30 (+20), x2 (Down, +40), x2 (Out)

Attack: 8k3 (Katana, Complex)

Damage: 6k2 (Katana)

Air 2 Earth 2 Fire 2 Water 2 Void 2

Reflexes 3 Agility 3

Honor: 1.5 Status: 0.0

Primary Skills: Kenjutsu 5

Special Mechanics: May roll Earth during Reactions at TN (5 + 5x Wound Rangs) to ignore wound penalties.

In case the PCs somehow missed it earlier, one of the ronin will drop a small note instructing them to report any suspicious activity to "Fahud, at the Inn of the First Sands."

Dark Edge: Wrap up

If the PCs return to Otomo Katsuo with the name Bugaisha and do not know what it means, he will gladly fill in that it is a city on the edge of Unicorn lands, also called Outsider Keep. It is most notable as a hardship post for out of favor Unicorn and a destination where gaijin meet to trade.

If the PCs have the lead on Bugaisha, and have collected 6 or more points of Evidence:

Otomo Katsuo nods sharply, "Good, good, I think we have enough to go on. If you wish to explore further avenues, I suppose we could do so, but the trail clearly leads to the city of Bugaisha. You have done well to find out as much as you have about Moto Ayumu-san and his strange companions."

"It does not sound like they are far ahead of us, nor that they were in any hurry. Hopefully this means we can easily intercept them in Bugaisha. "

"I am ready to leave whenever you are, Samurai-sans. Where shall we go?"

If the PCs have the lead on Bugaisha, but have not collected 6 points of Evidence:

Otomo Katsuo nods slowly, considering the PCs words. “You have done well, and Bugaisha sounds like a promising lead. However, I think we need to learn more about Moto Ayumu-san and his companions. I do not wish to walk into Bugaisha blind.

I think we should either finish searching here, or should investigate Shiro Moto for further information about Ayumu-san. After all, it does us no good to reach Bugaisha if we have no way to identify him. Asking such questions while he is present in Bugaisha would be a sure-fire way to alert him to our investigation and likely cause him to flee. We must know more before we pursue him.

Thankfully, from what you have told me he does not appear to be in any form of a hurry. With luck, we will be able to catch him in Bugaisha even if we take a detour to Shiro Moto first.

If the PCs have visited both Shiro Moto and Dark Edge village without a lead:

Otomo Katsuo nods slowly, considering the PCs words. “I am afraid we have had no luck finding the trail of this man or his gaijin. Thankfully, Isawa Hayato-san fared better in his search of Shiro Shinjo. A letter arrived from him arrived this morning. He says that Moto Ayumu was conducting some strange architectural researches in the Shinjo Archives, and that he planned to visit Bugaisha.

Hayato has already left for Outsider Keep, and I think it would be a good idea to go there to meet with him and continue the investigation.

Advance the Notice and Time tracks to their maximum. The gaijin will be ready and will have completed extracting information from Isawa Hayato.

Otherwise:

Otomo Katsuo nods slowly, considering the PCs words. “You have done well, but we still must find a lead on Moto Ayumu’s next location.

I think we should investigate Shiro Moto for further information about Ayumu-san. We must know more before we are able to pursue him.

Thankfully, from what you have told me he does not appear to be in any form of a hurry. With luck, we will be able to catch him even if we stop at Shiro Moto first.

Part Two: A Step Outside

Travel to Bugaisha is easy and only takes a handful of days, but the further west the samurai walk the warmer and drier the air becomes. The Unicorn patrols are more frequent, but they seem much more interested in inspecting caravans and gaijin than in the business of an Imperial and his escorts.

Bugaisha, otherwise known as Outsider Keep, stands on the far western edge of the Empire. It looks out on the empty wastelands which quickly give way to the Burning Sands on the Empire’s border. It is the last bastion of civilization.

The city is bustling with merchants, many of them gaijin, doing brisk trade as unhappy Unicorn samurai look on. The guards seem distracted at best, and little better than the merchants at worst. None seem specifically concerned with the actual task of guarding the city or the market. Whether through neglect, incompetence, or simple laziness, the city seems to be almost unregulated and a dirtier than one would hope from a Unicorn holding, even given the city’s proximity to the gaijin lands.

Otomo Katsuo leads you into the market proper, with a quiet warning, “We must find an inn to stay at without drawing attention to ourselves.”

He winds through the market, past an eclectic mix of Unicorn, Scorpion, and gaijin merchants, all loudly doing business and bartering. As you pass, you notice that guards are almost non-existent.

Total the Notice values of all locations the PCs have visited.

If the total is 11 or greater:

With no warning, a knife comes flying towards Otomo Katsuo from the shadows of an alleyway. Katsuo drops with a grunt as the knife embeds itself in his chest. He lands on one knee, breathing deeply, but breathing. “Cowards and criminals...” he wheezes. “Stop them!”

A dark shape in the alleyway takes off at a sprint.

Otherwise:

As you round a corner, you come upon a merchant and a gaijin arguing.

The gaijin's voice is incensed and heavily accented, "You will give me what I seek, Scorpion-san. My lord requires that book and will pay 5 koku for it as agreed, not a zen'i more."

The Scorpion replies smoothly, "Ah, but this text is quite rare and has historical value. Surely your master can spare a gift of coin commensurate with its value."

The gaijin lifts a finger to respond threateningly, "Ayumu will not tolerate such revisions, Scorpion. Give me the book..." then he realizes he is being observed. A moment later a look of recognition crosses his face, "You..."

With a single effortless motion, he pulls a knife from his belt, jabs it into the arm of the very surprised Scorpion merchant, grabs the book, and flees at a sprint.

Chasing the Gaijin:

Either way, presumably the PCs will wish to chase the gaijin assassin.

He runs through the market, overturning carts as he goes, weaving between stalls. To stay with him, the PCs must roll Athletics (Running) / Strength at TN 15. Any PC that fails begins to fall behind and will have their subsequent TNs increased by 5.

The assassin turns into a set of side streets, leaping over a set of low walls and pushing past confused merchants and pedestrians. To keep chasing, the PCs must roll Athletics (Jumping) / Agility at TN 20.

Finally, the assassin darts through a crowded street, sliding past a series of large wagons. To maintain the chase, the PC must roll Athletics (Running) / Reflexes at TN 20 to avoid getting run down by wagons.

The assassin runs down a short set of steps and into the basement of an Inn, the Inn of the First Sands, and slams the door behind himself.

If the PCs are unable to follow the assassin, they can find the Inn a few other ways. First, they may have received its name or directions to it in Dark Edge Village. Finding it is automatic.

Otherwise, they can ask around with either Lore: Underworld / Awareness at TN 20 or Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness at TN 30.

Lastly, they can simply attempt to track his path with an Investigation (Search) / Perception roll at TN 30.

Alternatively, if the PCs can come up with another clever idea, it should be similarly difficult but ultimately possible.

If all avenues of investigation fail, a tall thin samurai wearing a long cloak in the colors of the Moto will brush past the PCs and quietly drop a slip of paper into the hands of the highest honor PC which says, "The basement of the Inn of the First Sands." The man quickly turns a corner and disappears.

The Inn

The door to the Inn's basement is closed but not locked. The samurai can easily force it open. If they wish to listen at the door, they can hear two people talking quietly within in Senpet, but their words are too low to make out any details.

The PCs may also think to go around the front of the inn, whether to take the gaijin by surprise or simply to cut off their escape. There is an entrance to the basement from the Inn's kitchen, and neither the inn's cook nor its owner will trouble or impede samurai in accessing it.

There are three gaijin assassins, unless most of the PCs are rank three, in which case there are four assassins.

As you open the door, the dim room before you resolves into a most unpleasant scene. Tied to a chair is the body of a samurai in priest's robes of bright orange bearing the mon of the Phoenix. A scroll satchel sits on a table nearby, tipped over.

Within the room stand two (or three) gaijin, one holding a knife, evidently having just cut the Phoenix samurai's throat. The implements of torture are clearly visible scattered about the room.

The gaijin draw weapons and advance upon you.

Gaijin Assassins

School/Rank: Temple Guard 2

Initiative: 7k3

Armor TN: 20

Reduction: 0

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+0), 27 (+2), 33 (+7), 39 (+12), 45 (+17), 61 (Down, +37), 57 (Out)

Attack: 9k4 (Scimitar, Complex)

Damage: 6k3 (Scimitar)

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 2
Agility 4

Honor: 3.5 Status: 0 Glory: 1

Skills: Swords (Scimitar) 5, Knives 5, Commerce 3, Etiquette 2, Lore: Law 1, Stealth 5, Horsemanship 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Languages (Rokugani, Yodotai) / Social Disadvantage (Gaijin)

Techniques:

Trained for War – Reduce wound penalties by 3. 2k1 when voiding on school skills.

Strike with Fury – 1k0 to Initiative. 1k0 to Attack while in **Full Attack**.

Presuming the PCs win the fight:

Otomo Katsuo appears at the door behind you, takes in the scene, and swiftly makes his way to the body of the Phoenix samurai. He kneels and takes a moment to inspect it carefully.

After a minute, Otomo Katsuo rises from inspecting the body. “This was the assistant leant to me by the Phoenix clan, Isawa Hayato. I shall have to inform the Master of Water of his apprentice’s death.”

His voice gains a sudden note of steel and his gaze goes hard as he turns back to you. “This is beyond simple matters of trade; they have murdered samurai. We will find them, and we will bring them to justice. Search the room, we need any clue we can where their accomplices have gone. They can’t have gotten far.”

Total the Time values of all locations the PCs have visited. Add one if the samurai were unable to catch the Assassin themselves, and an additional one if they had to be given the name of the inn by the mysterious Moto.

If the result is 11 or greater, the gaijin will have had sufficient opportunity to finish torturing Isawa Hayato for information. If it is 10 or less, he held out long enough that the gaijin did not learn anything from him before being forced to kill him.

Searching Isawa Hayato:

Lore: Anatomy / Perception at TN 15, Craft:Torture / Perception at TN 10, or Medicine / Intelligence at TN 20 will reveal that Isawa Hayato has been tortured over a period of a few days. He is however only freshly dead, likely killed shortly before the PCs entered the room.

Depending on the Time value, he either obviously withstood the torture, or obviously did not. What he may have been forced to reveal however is a mystery.

An Investigation (Search) / Perception at TN 25 will reveal that he has a small note concealed in his sleeve. It reads “Ayumu escaped with Fahud towards the Burning Sands. Heading West by North West three days. Get word to Katsuo. -Hayato”

Searching the gaijin:

The gaijin carry a plethora of knives, and each has a small purse with a few koku in it. At first pass, they have nothing else remarkable on them.

However, Investigation (Search) / Perception at TN 30 will reveal a pocket sewn into the inside of their garments. Within each is a prayer book in Senpet, full of rites to the Generous Trader, an obscure gaijin god. Also, tucked into the first page of the book, is a set of instructions.

“Once you have finished learning what the Priest knows, meet me at the camp. West for two days, then Northwest for one. Do not be late.”

Searching the room:

The room is a mess. It is full of crude torture implements, as well as a pair of makeshift beds, and the scattered belongings of the gaijin. Judging by the half-eaten food and empty containers, the gaijin have been here a little less than a week

An Investigation (Search) / Perception roll at TN 25 will turn up a stained map, which had been turned upside down and was being used as a placemat. It marks a location in the Burning Sands perhaps 3 days travel from Bugaisha.

If a PC is able to make a TN 30 on the Investigation (Search) / Perception roll, the PC also finds a small book. The book is in Senpet, making it impossible to read unless someone has the advantage. If someone does, they will discover that the book is a small work on various gaijin relics and short descriptions thereof. A small scrawl in a footer indicates that it was at least at one point owned by a Scorpion, though the name does not appear to be of any real importance. If found, Otomo Katsuo will confiscate after it has been perused.

Presuming the PCs find at least one of the clues as to Ayumu’s location, Katsuo will nod gravely and insist on departing as soon as possible in the morning. “This is enough. Their trail should be fresh, and we have good directions. We must not let them get away.”

Part Three: Into the Deep

Otomo Katsuo requisitions horses for all the PCs who do not have one of their own.

The first step beyond the gates of Bugaisha is easy. The second step likewise simple. By the end of the first hour of travel, the familiar walls of Bugaisha are gone, disappeared over a sand dune. Nothing is left of Rokugan, now only the foreign endless desert stretches on ahead of you.

The trail so far at least is clear. While the desert may be endless, it is not trackless. Many others have come this way, and the occasional gaijin caravan passes you on the trail.

The brutal heat is sweltering, though not in the same way as the heat of the Ivory Kingdoms. This heat is dry, merciless, and seemingly without respite. Even as Lord Sun begins to dip behind the hills, the air burns. Then suddenly, the heat begins to drop, and the air swiftly turns chill as Lady Moon rises above the horizon. The wind begins to pick up, cutting at you.

Otomo Katsuo motions to stop. "While Lady Moon blesses us with her light, I think it may be wise to stop and set up camp. There is no sense in taking chances. We will resume our travels in the morning."

As you begin to set up your tents, you can't shake the feeling that somewhere, something or someone is watching you.

The night is exceedingly cold and provides little respite after the sweltering day. All the PCs should roll Raw Stamina at TN 15. Blankets or other warm clothes provide a free raise. Failure results in the PC catching a cold, causing a -5 TN penalty to all rolls until the end of the Sandstorm.

Encourage the PCs to set watches and describe their duties in camp, but nothing will bother them until morning.

Otomo Katsuo rises with the first rays of the sun and begins to wrap a dark cloth around his head.

"In this weather, perhaps it is best to take some precautions. I would encourage you to do likewise."

Any PC that mimics Otomo Katsuo and dons garments to protect themselves from the sun will receive a free raise on their next Stamina roll against the environment.

After waiting a moment for anyone that wishes to change their dress, Katsuo mounts his horse. "It is time to be off. I spent some time last night going over the maps, and I believe we must be close now. We must leave the safety of the trail, but we are nigh upon them. These criminals will not evade us much longer. Come, let us pick up their path and bring the Emperor's Justice upon them."

Ayumu and the gaijin have not gone to any great length to conceal their trail, allowing the remoteness

of the desert to obscure it for them. However, tracking in the desert is still not easy.

A Hunting (Tracking) / Perception roll at TN 20 or Investigation / Perception at TN 25 will pick up the gaijin's trail. If no PC succeeds, Otomo Katsuo will do so, but will take longer to find the trail.

By mid-day, the sun will be high and hot in the sky, and even the precautions the PCs may have taken will be sorely taxed to avoid heat exhaustion. All PCs should roll Raw Stamina at TN 15. However, if Otomo Katsuo had to find the gaijin's trail, it is at TN 20 due to the increased time and effort. Any PCs that fail suffer a -5 TN penalty to all rolls until the end of the Sandstorm (cumulative with any penalty they may have suffered from the cold night).

Once located, the trail is not hard to follow. The gaijin do not seem to have made any effort to obscure it. It stretches Northwest, away from the caravan trails, though towards what it is almost impossible to say.

As the sun begins to sink in the sky, a thunderous noise begins to echo across the southern dunes. For a few long minutes, the noise begins to grow, and Otomo Katsuo drops off his horse and draws his blade.

Suddenly, a group of ten horseman crest the dune just south west of you. For a long moment they are nothing more than dark silhouettes with the blaze of Lord Sun at their backs. As your eyes adjust, you can make out the purple of the Unicorn.

A deep voice calls out "Sheathe your blade, samurai-san." The riders draw up to you slowly. A large man, looking completely comfortable both in the desert heat and in the saddle of his massive horse draws near. "I am Moto Ogedei." He pauses for a moment, taking stock and appraising each of you in turn, "Ah, you are the Otomo then. I was wondering if I'd see you here. I advise you to turn back. The desert is no place for the inexperienced."

Resolve is plainly apparent on Otomo Katsuo's face. Ogedei pauses for a moment, and shakes his head. A note of remorse is evident in his voice as he continues, "I presume you are still pursuing the business from this winter. As I said before, this is a Unicorn matter. We will handle it. For your own good and that of those who accompany you, return to Rokugan Katsuo-san."

Katsuo glares up at Ogedei, speaking through clenched teeth. "As I told you before, Ogedei-*san*, we are investigating Imperial Crimes. These fine samurai will surely see the matter through. I appreciate your warning, but we will see our duty done. The

desert is no threat to us, and apprehending these criminals is of the highest importance. They have killed a samurai and they will answer for it.”

Moto Ogedei sighs, and spurs his horse on. He and his companions swiftly disappear over the next sand dune as the thunder of their hooves recedes.

With a gesture, Katsuo turns back towards the assembled samurai. “Perhaps it is time to set up camp. The criminals cannot be far now, the trail is still very fresh. We will take them in the morning. Be on your guard, if we are close to them, then they are close to us.”

The night is less cold, and the bright light of Lady Moon makes keeping watch an easy task.

Part Four: Sandstorm

As the sun rises on your third day in the desert, once again Katsuo rises early. “Come, we must take the criminal and his gaijin accomplices. They cannot be more than a day’s ride in front of us. The sooner we move, the sooner they face justice.”

Katsuo swings into the saddle of his horse, obviously waiting for the PCs to do likewise, with no time for breakfast or other morning preparation. The day’s pace begins hard with Katsuo in the lead, the horses kicking up sand as they go.

By midday, it swiftly becomes evident that the sand in the air is not simply from the horses. The dust begins to blot out the sun and the wind wails, throwing sand everywhere. Katsuo looks back towards the PCs, evidentially unsure of how to proceed. “What think you? Do we ride through this minor annoyance, or should we take shelter somehow and wait it out?”

There are a number of ways the PCs could handle the sudden sandstorm, they can attempt to ride through it, stop and set up camp and otherwise shelter in place, they can search nearby for some form of shelter, or they can reverse course and attempt to ride out of the storm.

This storm is not natural, and so can’t be influenced by the Yoritomo Shugenja technique.

Keep riding towards the gaijin encampment:

The winds buffet your faces and steeds, making it difficult or impossible to see. The first hint of danger is an arrow whizzing past Otomo Katsuo, followed closely by a second which strikes him in the shoulder

knocking him from his horse. Gaijin in dark robes are suddenly visible in the storm, blades drawn.

A rain of arrows falls around the PCs. All PCs should roll Defense / Reflexes at TN 20. Failure results in being hit by an arrow and taking 4k2 wounds.

Proceed to Part Five. The PCs are surprised by the gaijin.

Make camp where they are:

The winds buffet your faces and steeds, making it difficult or impossible to see. In the chaos of the storm, a task as simple as removing your tent from your pack becomes fraught with peril as the winds greedily snatch anything that isn’t nailed down.

Otomo Katsuo attempts to retrieve some cloth from his horse, but it rips and flies out of his hands leaving his palms stained red.

You grip your supplies tightly, and do your best to huddle down in the sand. Food and water go flying, promising a hungry and thirsty trip back to Rokugan.

The storm begins to tear apart the PCs’ supplies, sending food, water, and shelter flying.

All PCs should make a Defense / Reflexes roll, at TN 20. Failure results in being hit by flying debris and supplies, inflicting 2k2 wounds.

If the PCs explicitly took the time to lash things down or otherwise secure their belongings, they gain a free raise on this roll.

After a few hours, the storm begins to subside. Your food, water, tents, and other supplies are scattered all over the sand dunes, but they are mostly intact.

With a look of resignation, Otomo Katsuo picks up a bottle of water that landed nearby, puts it into his pack, then remounts his horse and declares loudly “There is no time to waste. We must press on, before the criminals escape us.”

Proceed to Part Five. The PCs will not be surprised by the gaijin.

Search nearby for shelter:

The winds buffet your faces and steeds, making it difficult or impossible to see. In the chaos of the storm, a task as simple as riding in a straight line becomes remarkably difficult. Fanning out slightly, you search

for something, anything, that could serve as a wind break to protect you from the worst of the storm.

Sheltering beneath the trees is remarkably effective, though it does not take the sting out of the flying sand.

All PCs should roll Hunting (Trailblazing) / Perception at TN 20.

If any PC succeeds, they have found cover and suffer no further penalty from the storm:

Luckily, you spot a small group of trees and large stones. Taking shelter behind them, they block the worst of the wind and flying sand.

After a few hours, the storm begins to subside. Some of your smaller supplies, water, food, and the like, are scattered across the dunes, but the majority of your things are intact and you are safe.

With a look of resignation, Otomo Katsuo picks up a bottle of water that landed nearby, puts it into his pack, then remounts his horse and declares loudly “There is no time to waste. We must press on, before the criminals escape us.”

Proceed to Part Five. The PCs will not be surprised by the gaijin.

If no PC succeeds:

The winds buffet your faces and steeds, making it difficult or impossible to see. You search about for something, anything, that could protect you from the storm. You wander deeper into the desert, looking for relief.

The first hint of danger is an arrow whizzing past Otomo Katsuo, followed closely by a second which strikes him in the shoulder knocking him from his horse. Gaijin in dark robes are suddenly visible in the storm, blades drawn.

A rain of arrows falls around the PCs. All PCs should roll Defense / Reflexes at TN 25. Failure results in being hit by an arrow and taking 4k2 wounds

Proceed to Part Five. The PCs will be surprised by the gaijin.

Attempt to ride out of the storm:

The winds buffet your faces and steeds, making it difficult or impossible to see. You turn back, and the

feeling of sand hitting your back is much preferable to it hitting your face. The sting is much lessened and the winds far more bearable.

Riding for half an hour in the opposite direction takes you easily out of the storm. You wait in relative safety as it passes you by. The storm is violent but not very large and swiftly blows past.

Otomo Katsuo spends the time looking anxious, riding his horse back and forth in small circles. As soon as the storm abates, he pulls his horse back towards the trail and spurs it on.

“We have already lost a great deal of time! There is not a moment more to lose. We must bring these criminals to justice. They can’t be allowed to get away with what they’ve done.”

Proceed to Part Five. The PCs will not be surprised by the gaijin, though the gaijin will have had time to prepare and so have +10 to their Initiative.

Part Five: Gaijin attack

If the PCs are surprised by the gaijin:

As if from nowhere, a handful of gaijin in dark black cloaks bearing wickedly curved swords spring forwards. They shout battle cries in their cursed language as you draw steel to meet them.

The sandstorm clears suddenly, revealing the gaijin camp sprawling in front of you. The gaijin attacking you are but a small portion of a much larger encampment. This is not some small group of criminals or traders, but is perhaps a hundred or so gaijin. What you face are simply the guards that were standing watch in the storm.

Easily recognizable in their center is a short thin bald man with a cane, wearing the purple of the Unicorn and the unmistakable satchel of a shugenja. Moto Ayumu looks up at you, and sneers.

Suddenly, with a sound like thunder, a formation of horsemen in the colors of the Unicorn ride over the dunes. Easily recognizable at their head is Moto Ogedei. With only a second’s delay, they spur their mounts on and charge into the gaijin encampment with scimitars shining in the afternoon light.

Over the sudden commotion, Moto Ayumu swears loudly. Before the horsemen can reach him, he draws a long dagger from his belt, “Not today.”

Ayumu grabs an unconscious man who had been laying nearby by the hair, lifts his head up, and draws the dagger across his throat, "An exchange made..." then speaks something in the language of the kami. With a shimmer, Moto Ayumu disappears, but the gaijin press their attack regardless.

The gaijin guards rush towards the assembled samurai. They are led by a man wearing a variety of holy symbols of some gaijin god, all variations on a single motif; a balanced set of scales inscribed in a golden circle. You recognize the man as one of the gaijin described to you from your investigation, Fahud Abd Al-Karim.

There are a number of Gaijin Fanatics equal to the number of combat capable PCs - 1, plus Fahud Abd Al-Karim. All are fanatically loyal to Fahud and to Moto Ayumu, and will fight to the death. They accept no quarter and give none.

Due to their advantage of surprise, the gaijin have weapons drawn and receive a +20 Initiative bonus on the first turn of combat.

If the PCs are not surprised by the gaijin:

As the sandstorm clears, it reveals the gaijin camp sprawling in front of you.

Standing less than 50 feet from you are a group of gaijin sentries. It seems that neither you nor they saw the other approaching due to the sand storm's obscurement.

They shout an alarm to the camp below, and begin to move towards you. As they do, it becomes clear that the gaijin attacking you are but a small portion of a much larger encampment. This is not some small group of criminals or traders, but is perhaps a hundred or so gaijin. What you face are simply the guards that were standing watch in the storm.

Easily recognizable in their center is a short thin bald man with a cane, wearing the purple of the Unicorn and the unmistakable satchel of a shugenja. Moto Ayumu looks up at you, and sneers.

Suddenly, with a sound like thunder, a formation of horsemen in the colors of the Unicorn ride over the dunes. Easily recognizable at their head is Moto Ogedei. With only a second's delay, they spur their mounts on and charge into the gaijin encampment with scimitars shining in the afternoon light.

Over the sudden commotion, Moto Ayumu swears loudly. Before the horsemen can reach him, he draws a long dagger from his belt, "Not today."

Ayumu grabs an unconscious man who had been laying nearby by the hair, lifts his head up, and draws the dagger across his throat, "An exchange made..." then speaks something in the language of the kami. With a shimmer, Moto Ayumu disappears, but the gaijin press their attack regardless.

The gaijin guards rush towards the assembled samurai. They are led by a man wearing a variety of holy symbols of some gaijin god, all variations on a single motif; a balanced set of scales inscribed in a golden circle. You recognize the man as one of the gaijin described to you from your investigation, Fahud Abd Al-Karim.

There are Gaijin Fanatics equal to the number of combat capable PCs - 1, plus Fahud Abd Al-Karim. All are fanatically loyal to Fahud and to Moto Ayumu. They will fight to the death; they accept no quarter and give none.

However, the gaijin were caught unprepared and must spend a simple action on their first turn drawing their weapons.

If more than half of the PCs are rank 3, make the following adjustments:

Increase Fahud Abd Al-Karim's earth to 4 (Wound ranks: 20 (+0), 28 (+0), 36 (+0), 44 (+4), 52 (+9), 60 (+14), 68 (Down, +34), 76 (Out))

The Gaijin Fanatics become Temple Guard 3, gaining an additional die on initiative and simple action attacks with scimitars.

Fahud Abd Al-Karim

Assistant to a sinister plot

School/Rank: Temple Guard 3

Initiative: 7k3

Armor TN: 20 (23 in armor) **Reduction:** 1

Wounds:

15 (+0), 21 (+0), 27 (+0), 33 (+4), 39 (+9), 45 (+14), 51 (Down, +34), 57 (Out)

Attack: 9k4 (Scimitar, Simple)

Damage: 6k3 (Scimitar)

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 2
Agility 4

Honor: 3.5 Status: 0 Glory: 1

Skills: Swords (Scimitar) 5, Commerce 3, Etiquette 2, Lore: Law 3, Lore: Theology 5, Stealth 5, Horsemanship 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Languages (Rokugani, Yodotai), Strength of Earth / Social Disadvantage (Gaijin)

Techniques:

Trained for War – Reduce wound penalties by 3. 2k1 when voiding on school skills.

Strike with Fury – 1k0 to Initiative. 1k0 to Attack while in **Full Attack**.

Implacable Foe – Simple attacks with Scimitars.

Gaijin Fanatics

Fanatic gaijin followers of a false god.

School/Rank: Temple Guard 2

Initiative: 6k3

Armor TN: 20 (23 in armor) **Reduction:** 1

Wounds: 10 (+0), 14 (+1), 18 (+3), 22 (+8), 26 (+13), 30 (+18), 34 (Down, +38), 38 (Out)

Attack: 6k3 (Scimitar, Complex)

Damage: 5k3 (Scimitar)

Air 3 Earth 2 Fire 3 Water 2 Void 1

Honor: 4.5 Status: 0 Glory: 0

Skills: Swords 3, Commerce 2, Etiquette 2, Lore: Law 2, Lore: Theology 3, Stealth 3, Horsemanship 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Languages (Rokugani, Yodotai) / Social Disadvantage (Gaijin)

Techniques:

Trained for War – Reduce wound penalties by 2. 2k1 when voiding on school skills.

Strike with Fury – 1k0 to Initiative. 1k0 to Attack while in **Full Attack**.

If the PCs have won:

As the gaijin guards and their leader fall to the sand, most of the remaining guards have likewise fallen to the blades of the Unicorn horsemen. The few remaining gaijin flee, panicked, into the sands. The Unicorn do not bother to give chase.

Ogedei and his horsemen trot up to the assembled samurai, and he dismounts. “It was very brave of you to attack this many gaijin by yourselves. We were happy to render assistance.”

He pauses for a moment, “If you are conducting an imperial investigation, you should conduct it. Hopefully they left some clues behind. Once you are finished, my men and I will escort you back to Bugaisha so that you can report what you have learned to your lords.”

He begins to turn away, then stops for a moment, “The desert is a dangerous place. I am glad you survived samurai-sans.”

A search of the camp turns up a large cache of enciphered communications. Most are in Senpet, but a few are in Rokugani.

The names Fahud Abd Al-Karim, Basil Abd Al-Karim, Alim Abd Al-Karim, Moto Ayumu, and Moto Hachirou appear frequently, but the substance of all the letters is obscured by the cipher.

Otomo Katsuo will be unhappy that Ayumu slipped through his fingers, but will be exceedingly pleased that the letters were recovered. If asked about the letters, he will respond “We should discuss this further in private” and make an obvious motion towards the waiting Unicorn horsemen.

If the PCs are about to lose the fight (all PCs unconscious, dead, or down):

Moto Ogedei and his horsemen wheel suddenly towards the beleaguered samurai. Putting himself and his horse between the remaining samurai and the gaijin, the Unicorn scoop the unconscious investigators onto their horses, turn and ride into the desert.

“It was foolish to come this far blindly” He pauses a moment and then chuckles, “Though very brave to attack so many gaijin. We will escort you back to Bugaisha so you can report what you have learned to your lords.”

If Otomo Katsuo was hit by an arrow before the fight started or was hit by the knife in Bugaisha, he will have perished. Otherwise, he survives with moderate wounds.

Conclusion

PCs may have questions for Moto Ogedei as they travel back. He is unwilling to say much, as he strongly believes this is an internal Unicorn matter.

He will however admit that he and his horseman have been tracking these gaijin for some days. He knows that the gaijin are servants of some esoteric god of the Senpet, and that Moto Ayumu was looking for a relic of this god. A relic that apparently, he has found. While Ogedei will not directly admit as much, this clearly troubles him.

If the PCs think to ask about who Moto Ayumu’s actual identity, Ogedei goes silent, and then quietly responds “I am sorry, I know nothing of such things.” A PC with any ranks in investigation, sincerity, or

courtier can plainly tell that this is a lie, but Moto Ogedei refuses to expand further, regardless of how the PCs ask.

If the Gaijin were stopped and their communications seized:

Otomo Katsuo leads the group back into Bugaisha in silence, and does not speak again until they are safely back in the private room of the Inn.

He sits for a long moment, drinking a cup of tea before beginning. "Samurai-sans, I am very worried about the meaning of these events. Unicorn samurai working with gaijin in this fashion is... untoward. Something deeper is going on.

Thankfully, we have their letters and hopefully something will come of that. You are of course free to share the tales of your deeds, but I would ask that you omit mention of the letters or any suspicions you may have about the identity of Moto Ayumu when discussing the matter."

With a glance around the table, Katsuo sits back, "You have done well samurai-sans. Return to your lords, with my gratitude for your assistance." Katsuo gives a gesture which has one unmistakable meaning, that it is time to leave.

If the PCs were forced to flee:

Moto Ogedei and his riders escort the PCs back to Bugashia. Once they arrive at the gates to the city, Ogedei writes them a set of travel papers and nods severely. His voice is deep and serious. "Without your magistrate, you have no further leave to be within the lands of the Unicorn. I shall send a report to the appropriate parties. These papers will see you home. I wish you the best of luck in the future, may your actions be found Just."

Ogedei wheels his horse and he disappears back into the sands along with his riders.

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module: 1 XP
Good Roleplaying: 1 XP
Gaijin defeated: 1 XP
Katsuo Survives: 1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 4 XP

Favors

If Katsuo survives and the Enciphered Letters are recovered, the PCs earn one Favor.

Honor

Any PCs that charge the gaijin without waiting for reinforcements gain H8 honor for attacking an obviously superior foe.

If Otomo Katsuo died, all PCs suffer a D1 honor loss for failing their charge.

Glory

If the PCs do not mention Ogedei's assistance, they gain G6 glory for defeating an obviously superior force. If anyone does mention his help, all PCs instead gain G3 glory.

If Otomo Katsuo died, all PCs lose 5 points of glory for failing their charge.

Allies and Enemies

If Katsuo survives and the gaijin are defeated, the PCs gain Otomo Katsuo as an Ally. He is Influence 2, Devotion 2.

Any PCs that were unconscious when Moto Ogedei arrived gain Obligation – Moto Ogedei for saving their lives.

Other Awards/Penalties

None

GM Reporting

- 1) Did the PCs meet Katsuro?
- 2) Was Isawa Hayato tortured for information?
- 3) How many points of evidence were collected?

The GM must report this information by (date three months after release) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

Otomo Katsuo

School/Rank: Otomo Courtier / 3

Initiative: 6k3

Armor TN: 20 (25 in defense) **Reduction:** 0

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

Attack: 5k3 (Wakizashi, Complex)

Damage: 5k2 (Wakizashi)

Air 3 Earth 2 Fire 3 Water 2 Void 2
Will 3 Int 4 Per 3

Honor: Status: Glory:

Primary Skills: Hunting 2, Intimidation (Control) 4, Kenjutsu 2, Defense 2, Investigation 4

Advantages/Disadvantages: Overconfident

Katsurou

A simple monk

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 5, Temples of the Thousand Fortunes 2 / Insight Rank 9

Initiative: 10k7

Armor TN: 30 **Reduction:** 4

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

Air 5 Earth 4 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 6
Perception 5

Honor: 8.0 Status: 2.0 Glory: 0.5

Primary Skills: Kenjutsu (Katana) 7, Defense 3, Kyujutsu 3, Iaijutsu (Focus, Assessment) 8, Battle (Mass Combat) 6, Sincerity (Honesty) 5, Lore: History 5

Etiquette 6, Courtier 4, Investigation (Notice) 7, Lore: Law 7, Lore: Theology (Fortunes) 5, Jiu-jitsu 5, Meditation 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Many), Bland, Clear Thinker, Leadership, Tactician / Haunted, Obligation, Idealistic

Special Mechanics: +1k1 on all High and Bugei skill roll, and +1k0 on all School skill rolls.

Akodo Bushi school techniques rank 1-5.

Kiho has appropriate.

GM Appendix #2: Tracking Sheet

	Visited?	Time	Notice	Found?	Evidence
Shiro Moto		2	3	-	-
Shiro Moto: Markets		3	2		1
Shiro Moto: Black Market		1	1		2
Shiro Moto: Inns		4	2		2
Shiro Moto: Temples		2	3		3
Dark Edge Village		3	1	-	-
Dark Edge: Dueling Grounds		2	1		2
Dark Edge: Temples		3	1		1
Dark Edge: Shrine to the Lords of Death		1	3		3
Dark Edge: Inns		2	2		1
Total:	-			-	

Player Handout #1: News From the Empire

Honored Samurai!

This has proven to be a rather eventful Summer, no? The second major battle against the Ivindi, what is now being called the Fall of the False Maharajah, has come and gone, with the Samurai of Rokugan prevailing and a Kakita showing the purity of her blade in taking his head. Though regretfully this has led to the death of Ikoma Sho, the Lion have already offered up their replacement: Akodo Hachi, a pupil of Akodo Shakato has been selected to lead the Eleventh Imperial Legion to further glory in the city of Balishnimpur.

We are also honored to announce that the bride of Toturi X will come from the Dragon Clan. The Dragon, enigmatic as they often choose to be, have not announced who will be blessed to take the Emperor's hand, but surely it will be an event worthy of the name. It seems, as part of the Dragon's newfound alliance with the Scorpion and Unicorn, a Scorpion Nakodo will be selected to assist with the arrangements. While this is something of an oddity, as such a matter is typically handled by the Imperial Nakodo, it sounds as if Toturi-sama approves of this unusual way of doing things.

Alas, not all news is good news. You have, of course, by now heard of the declaration of War made by the Lion against the Crab. It seems that not all within the Lion are in agreement with the decision made by Akodo Shakato-sama. Word coming from Shiro Sano Ken Hayai is that Matsu Mochiko, the Daimyo of the Matsu herself, committed Kanshi to speak out against the conflict. What's more interesting is that her daughter and heir, Matsu Yutsuko, refused to bow and declare her fealty to the Lion Champion. Akodo Shakato has publicly stated that she simply needs time to grieve, and that he will accept her fealty when she is prepared to offer it, but one must wonder if this is a sign of disunity within the Emperor's Right Hand.

-Otomo Yusuke