

The Falling Darkness

Part 3 of "The Soul of Yuchiban"

A One Round Living Rokugan Adventure

by Rob Hobart

An important ceremony in the lands of the Centipede Clan is interrupted by an angry Witch-Hunter. He claims to be on the trail of a powerful Maho-Tsukai, a man with dark designs for the future of the Empire...

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

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

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in adventure format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in **bold italics**. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

GM's Information

THIS ADVENTURE SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

This adventure is a Low Rank adventure. This means that only Rank 1 or 2 characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank 3 through 5 characters in mind and cannot anticipate what these characters may bring to the table.

The world of Rokugan is a cross between feudal Japan and China. It is set in an age of honorable samurai, serving their Lords (Daimyos) and Empire. Remember that family names come before personal names. Akodo Toturi is from the Akodo family and his personal name is Toturi.

A note on female designations: If a samurai has the designation of -ko, then the samurai is a female. For example, if you see Samurai-ko, then this denotes a female samurai.

A note on commerce in Rokugan: Samurai are not supposed to care about worldly possessions, especially money. A samurai pays a commoner as if the money is meaningless, a concession to the commoner's silly needs. Between samurai, the exchange of money and merchandise is an exchange of "gifts."

This adventure draws on materials originally published in the *Tomb of Iuchiban* boxed set (AEG 1998), including the NPC Kuni Vistan. GMs are encouraged to read the contents of that set for details on the history and membership of the Bloodspeaker Cult.

Introduction

The Bloodspeaker Cult has plotted for centuries to find a way of freeing their dread master Iuchiban from his imprisonment in his infamous Tomb. Now, at last, they believe themselves to be on the trail: by finding and stealing the long-lost Phoenix Clan ritual which bound him to the Tomb, they may be able to reverse it and liberate Iuchiban's foul soul. The cult's Phoenix members believe the ritual is hidden somewhere in the Isawa Library, and the Cult's greatest leader, Yajinden, is now travelling to Phoenix lands to learn the truth of the matter. But the Cult's efforts have not gone completely unnoticed: an aging but determined Kuni Witch-Hunter, Kuni Vistan, is on the trail of Yajinden.

The scenario begins in the lands of the Centipede, a tiny, matriarchal Minor Clan which lives in a single,

safe valley in the Mountains of Regret, between Otsan Uchi and the Phoenix lands. The PCs are here to bring their daimyo's replies to an offer of marriage with the Centipede heir, Moshi Wakiza. If any of the PCs are ronin, they have come here in hopes of employment – the Centipede, who have almost no bushi of their own, often hire ronin to help defend their small valley.

Kuni Vistan will soon arrive here as well – he has been tracking a man who he suspects may be Yajinden, the legendary body-shifting leader of the Bloodspeaker Cult. He is right: Yajinden is plotting to switch bodies to an Isawa shugenja (he knows the Phoenix are close to the Centipede Clan, and several Phoenix should be present at the betrothal ceremony) and then travel to Kyuden Isawa.

This scenario is intended to launch the “Soul of Iuchiban” story arc, serving as an ominous prelude to later activities of the Bloodspeaker Cult. As such, it deliberately presents a situation which the PCs cannot completely defeat – although they may be able to recover some of the stolen Isawa scrolls, they will not be able to capture Yajinden, nor will they be able to prevent him from learning the secrets of the ritual which bound Iuchiban. Such is the nature of Rokugan, where victory is not always complete or even possible.

Player Introduction

Mother Sun blazes in the sky, bathing the green fields and steep mountains of Tani Senshio – the Valley of the Centipede, home to the tiny Centipede Clan, of all Clans the only one which is personally beloved of Amaterasu. You all stand on the smooth lawn before the small but elegant unwallled palace which houses the Centipede court. You have come here to bring your lord's answers to the offer of the daimyo's daughter, Moshi Wakiza, in marriage. Although the Centipede are a tiny clan, their favor is still worth something, especially considering the skill of their shugenja and their close relationship with the Sun Goddess. You are sure your own lords have all made some sort of offer. Whether any of them will be satisfactory to the Centipede remains to be seen.

Looking around, you can see the representatives of many Clans and families here. Although not every Clan has sent a representative, this is probably more visitors than the Centipede valley normally sees in a year. The Centipede daimyo, the aged Moshi Juiko, gravely thanks all of you for coming, and assures you she will consider your lords' offers carefully. “For now, you are the guests of the Centipede Clan. In the morning, after you have rested and washed the dust of the road from your bodies, you will have my answer.”

The PCs are all given rooms in one or another of the various samurai residences which are scattered through the valley. Each samurai PC is hosted by a Centipede samurai, most of them shugenja, and is treated as an honored guest. Ronin PCs are offered quarters with the ronin guards who live in small but comfortable houses near the valley entrance. They are promised that the clan daimyo will consider their requests for employment shortly, once she has resolved the more pressing business of her daughter's marriage.

Scene One: Dinner With the Centipede

After the PCs have had the chance to settle in and wash themselves, a collective dinner is held on tables spread on the smooth lawn before the Moshi family palace. The food is simple but delicious, and heavy on the products of the sea: fish, shrimp, squid, octopus, mussels, and seaweed. Mother Sun sinks behind the Mountains of Regret to the west, and the valley is plunged into purple twilight even while the mountain peaks still blaze golden-red, a spectacular sight. Servants move about, hanging colored lanterns from posts throughout the valley, and by their elegant light the PCs have the opportunity to interact with each other, as well as with the various NPCs who have come to the valley on similar missions.

The following NPCs are definitely present in the Valley of the Centipede. The GM should feel free to improvise any additional NPCs which seem appropriate for the scene.

Isawa Otanubo

One of three Phoenix here with marriage offers, Otanubo is a cousin to Isawa Kujin, the Governor of Kyuden Isawa, and distantly related to the Master of Fire, Isawa Tsume himself. A thin, ascetic-looking man with a pinched mouth and narrow eyes, Otanubo is distant and reserved to those he does not regard as being of his own social rank – which is everyone here except those of the Imperial family and any PCs with 5 or more Glory. To those few he regards as equals or superiors, Otanubo is much more courteous and friendly, although still very much in control of himself (he seldom smiles and never laughs). He is even slightly aloof and supercilious toward Moshi Juiko, who is, after all, only of a Minor Clan. All of these qualities have attracted Yajinden to him, and the unfortunate Isawa will become the Bloodspeaker's next victim.

Isawa Noriko

The courtier daughter of a mid-ranking Isawa daimyo, Noriko is here to offer the hand of her twin brother Narita in marriage. (Her older brother Muto is the heir to their father's position.) A woman of plain features, she has cultivated charming manners and an elegant, memorable voice to compensate. She will seek conversation with everyone at the dinner, cultivating alliances and winning friends, and clearly makes a good impression with her Centipede hosts. She herself has not yet been betrothed, and may consider eligible bachelors (PCs and NPCs) from that perspective.

Asako Tamanara

A deceptively calm and centered man, almost monk-like on first appearance, Tamanara actually guards a terrible temper which may erupt if he is offended or frustrated. He dislikes Cranes, who he sees as frivolous and materialistic, and Crab, whose violent crudity repels him. Tamanara is actually a Henshin and is acting on the behalf of the secret Henshin school, which sees promise in the Centipede bloodline. As the evening progresses he becomes increasingly angry at Asahina Yakamo, finally challenging him to a shugenja duel (in proper Rokugani style, the duel is delayed until it can be approved by the daimyo of both participants).

Asahina Yakamo

This man (named, ironically, the same as the Crab Clan heir) is the prototypical arrogant, irritating Crane courtier. A slim, almost delicate man, he wears his white-dyed hair tied back in a loose ponytail and dresses only in the finest, most carefully chosen silks. He looks down on anyone who is not a Crane, especially ill-mannered Crab brutes and barbaric Unicorns. Yakamo's presence is a measure of how little the Crane think of the Centipede Clan, whose matriarchal ways are disgusting to the traditional Crane. Yakamo may confide this to other Crane who seem sympathetic with his attitudes.

Agasha Hajite

Friendly and courteous, Hajite seems to reverse the usual "enigmatic Dragon" cliché. However, it may be noted that he wears a katana, signifying his willingness to fight duels in his own defense. He dresses simply and wears his hair long and loose, held back from his face with a simple headband. Hajite has no bones to pick with anyone here, and will freely acknowledge that he does not expect his lord's candidate to win the hand of the Centipede heir: "We would be honored by an alliance with the Sun-blessed Centipede, but our poor mountain lands can offer far less than other Clans, I am sure."

Soshi Himiko

Elegant and stylish, with a delicate mask and an alluring smile, this woman is the quintessential Scorpion seductress – an image she cultivates carefully, since she is actually completely faithful to her husband, Soshi Amano, a mid-ranking Scorpion daimyo. Himiko is technically here to offer her husband's younger brother's hand in marriage, but her real mission (assigned by her family daimyo, Soshi Hametsu) is to prevent the Centipede from allying with the Crane or Unicorn.

Yogo Gyumei

A quiet, menacing Scorpion shugenja whose face is almost completely covered with an elaborate wooden mask, showing only his eyes and his sardonically smiling mouth. This soft-spoken man is actually the current host for the soul of the Bloodspeaker Yajinden – an enjoyable irony for him, since the real Gyumei was a member of the Black Watch, the Scorpion organization of Maho-hunters. He will try to avoid conversation with any Ise Zume PCs, or any who show expertise in the ways of Maho or the Shadowlands (e.g. Crab, Inquisitors, Moto, and so forth). If he suspects anyone may be on to him, or using some magic or device which can detect Taint, he will quietly depart for his quarters – which he will do anyway once Kuni Vistan is on the scene.

Ide Kitanae

This prim and proper courtier woman is actually here on behalf of the Otaku family. The Otaku, Rokugan's only other truly matriarchal family, see much virtue in an alliance with the Centipede, and the family daimyo, Otaku Kamoko, is prepared to offer a marriage to one of her own kinsmen. Kitanae will speak eloquently and fervently on behalf of the Otaku and the Unicorn Clan, observing that "while our ways may be strange, we have proven that our word is as good and our honor as strong as any Clan in Rokugan."

Chuya

The only Minor Clan representative (except for any PCs), Chuya is here to represent the Mantis Clan – the ambitious Mantis Champion, Yoritomo, would be glad of an alliance with such powerful shugenja. Chuya, a tall, imposing man with thickly-muscled arms and a slab-sided face, is polite to Great Clan PCs, but shows them no special deference – it is clear he regards himself as their equal, an attitude which some of them (such as Asahina Yakamo and Asako Tamanara) find infuriating.

Otomo Kedogame

An almost impossibly dignified and remote man of early middle years, his hair in an immaculate topknot

and his every move is a study in etiquette. Kedogame is here to offer the hand of an Otomo maiden, one of the Imperial line, as a sign of the Emperor's favor to the Clan most beloved of Mother Sun. He treats the maneuverings of the Clan representatives with distant contempt, acknowledging their greetings with polite thanks, and speaks extendedly only with Moshi Juiko and any Imperial family PCs. He is visibly disgusted by the arrival of Kuni Vistan, and departs for bed soon thereafter.

Vistan Arrives

Toward the end of the dinner, the PCs notice some of the Centipede's ronin guards troop down into the valley and report to Moshi Juiko. Any PC rolling Simple Perception at TN 10 can overhear what they are saying: It seems a Kuni witch-hunter is here, claiming to be on the trail of a maho-tsukai and requesting to search the valley. Juiko thinks for a while, then reluctantly permits him entrance to the valley. She declares, however, that she will not allow her guests to be disturbed. "Let him search tomorrow, when our business is concluded," she says.

Kuni Vistan soon arrives, a tired, travel-stained old man with a white beard and balding head, dressed in the simple garments of a witch-hunter and bearing a jade-tipped bo staff. He bows to the daimyo and requests her permission to test those present for the Shadowlands Taint. Juiko refuses, barely containing her anger at such an uncouth demand, and brusquely orders that Vistan be given quarters in the palace barracks with the ronin. After a pause (and some whispered words from her daughter), she relents slightly and permits him to share the dinner with the rest of her guests.

Vistan will, of course, be seated with the PCs (the Fortunes have dictated that they happen to have an open place at their table). The servants are visibly uncomfortable at serving him, and for his part he is angry at the Centipede daimyo's apparent obtuseness. "If he is here, I may have only one chance to catch him," he growls.

If the PCs speak with Vistan, he can impart the following information:

- Vistan gained his strange name from his mother, who was a Unicorn. He has been a Witch-Hunter his entire adult life.
- Vistan is obsessed with the Bloodspeaker Cult and its imprisoned leader, Iuchiban, and has learned more about them than almost anyone else alive. He fears that the Empire has forgotten the threat from Iuchiban, and that this complacency may spell disaster. "I have made the destruction of the

Bloodspeakers my life's work," he sighs, "but I fear it is a work never to be completed."

- Vistan's current target is a Maho-Tsukai with the ability to switch bodies, devouring the soul of each body he claims and leaving dead husks behind. He has been hunting this Maho-Tsukai for many years, and has seldom been as close as he is now.
- The Maho-Tsukai's last victim was an unfortunate Crane nobleman, Kakita Tsumai, whose dead body now lies in Mura Kita Chushin, the northern hub village of the capital, Otosan Uchi. Vistan believes the Maho-Tsukai switched to a body in a caravan of nobles heading north toward Centipede lands, since he also believes (from accumulated evidence, of which he will not speak) that this villain wants something in Phoenix lands (which lie north of the Centipede).
- Vistan will not admit that the Maho-Tsukai is the legendary Yajinden unless the PCs are Witch-Hunters themselves or give him very good reason to trust him (e.g. letting him test them for Taint). In that case he will confide the identity of his enemy and warn that Yajinden has great and terrible plans afoot.

The Murder

That night Yajinden, alarmed by Vistan's arrival, decides to act precipitately. Still wearing the guise of Yogo Gyumei, he uses the spell Know the Shadows and sneaks into Isawa Otanubo's room, where he devours the unfortunate Phoenix's soul. Taking Otanubo's body and hurriedly concealing the lifeless husk of Gyumei, he waits until nearly dawn, then gets Otanubo's horse from the stables and, claiming "urgent business in Phoenix lands," departs the valley of the Centipede.

It is possible that some of the PCs, alarmed by Vistan's remarks, may be out and about that night, looking for signs of Maho. They do not find them. Yajinden has been surviving in this manner for hundreds of years, and is a master of passing undetected. Only Vistan, with his peculiar expertise in Yajinden's methods, has a chance of catching him...and tonight, Vistan is confined to the ronin barracks.

The next morning, the guests gather to hear Moshi Juiko's decision.

As Mother Sun emerges from the waters of the sea, the shugenja of the Centipede gather on the sea-cliffs and welcome her with prayers and chants. Afterward, the Centipede Clan and its guests gather in front of the palace to hear the Daimyo's decision on her daughter's marriage. There is a palpable anxiety in the crowd as it waits for her answer. Even if the Centipede are only a small minor clan, this event may have great political repercussions.

If the PCs ask, the representatives of Yoritomo's Mantis Clan and the Phoenix Asako family seem especially anxious. Vistan, while not a part of this event, is present nonetheless, and moves through the crowd, clutching his jade staff and looking piercingly into everyone's eyes. His actions are so disruptive to the harmony of the event that one of the Centipede's ronin guards finally draws him aside. He goes, mumbling angrily.

If any PC asks, two guests are missing: they can be identified with an Intelligence+Heraldry roll (TN 15) as Isawa Otanubo and Yogo Gyumei. As Vistan scans the crowd from his remove, he notices the absence as well, and his attitude becomes much more anxious, almost frantic.

Moshi Juiko makes her announcement. "Although we have been deeply honored by the generous and noble offers which each of you has made, regretfully, only one may be accepted. I have decided that one shall be the Agasha family of the honorable Dragon Clan." There are soft murmurs in the crowd as the news sinks in, and brief flashes of visible disappointment on a few faces – notably Chuya of the Mantis. "I offer my sincere regrets to those whose offers I was forced to reject, and pray that my decision will not make you think less of our humble little Clan in the future... What is the matter?" The interruption is occasioned by Vistan, who is now rushing about demanding that the guards immediately search for the two missing courtiers.

Juiko is furious that her important ceremony has been disrupted by this uncouth Witch-Hunter, and it is apparent that she is seriously considering having her troops cut the old man down where he stands. This should be the cue for one or more of the PCs to speak for calm and forbearance. If not, one of the guards will actually draw his sword and be about to strike when a servant, hurrying from one of the houses in the valley, rushes into the throng wailing, "Murder!"

Confusion reigns for a few moments before the servant can be calmed and questioned. It seems the body of Yogo Gyumei has been discovered half-sunken in a rice paddy. Vistan, no longer restrained, hurries toward the paddy himself, followed by several Centipede samurai and ronin.

Once order is restored, Moshi Juiko will quickly summon *eta* to remove the body from the water. Juiko's magistrate, a young woman named Moshi Tsui, arrives to examine the body; Vistan insists on joining in, as does Soshi Himiko (with an expression of refined distaste). PCs may join the investigation as well. The *eta* will turn the corpse this way and that, search it, and so forth at the direction of the samurai (who cannot taint themselves with the touch of dead flesh).

Anyone rolling Perception+Investigation at TN 15 can see there are no signs of violence on the body. Tsui soon concludes that Gyumei must have fallen in the paddy and drowned. "Perhaps he had drunk too much sake, and went for a walk to clear his head," she observes. "In any case, it is clear there is no murder here." Moshi Juiko and Soshi Himiko agree, and Juiko makes plans to send the body back to Scorpion lands, along with an apology for allowing him to perish on her lands.

Vistan, however, disagrees. Listening to Tsui's theory with a snort, he strides away and begins looking for the other missing samurai, Isawa Otanubo. Soon enough, the other man's disappearance is explained as well, as servants come forward from the palace stables explaining that Otanubo left in the early hours of the morning. "He asked that we convey his apologies, but urgent business in Isawa lands forced him to depart immediately." There is a general relaxation as this explanation ends any questions, and the ceremony resumes.

Vistan, meanwhile, is filled with alarm. He knows full well what has happened, and having confirmed in his own mind that his prey is Yajinden, he is in need of allies. If any of the PCs were even slightly sympathetic to him, he will approach them now, begging that they accompany him to Phoenix lands. "The Maho-Tsukai has taken Otanubo's body, I am sure of it," he explains. "As I thought, he seeks to reach the Isawa libraries. I must pursue immediately, or it will be too late. These fools will never realize what has happened... will you help me?"

If any of the PCs are ronin, he offers to hire them for 2 koku each. If they are Clan, he drops hints that "the enemy I pursue may be beyond my personal strength to deal with. A threat to the entire Empire...if you can give me your assistance, I will be eternally grateful."

If the PCs refuse, the scenario is over (although they are free to role-play the conclusion of the courtship ceremony with the Centipede). If they agree, Vistan immediately fetches his pony from the stables. If any of the PCs lack steeds, he will hire ponies for them as well. Proceed to "The Journey."

Scene Two: The Journey

From the Valley of the Centipede, the PCs and Vistan ride north through the remainder of Treacherous Pass and on into southern Phoenix lands. The weather is good, the people are friendly and peaceful, and they make good time. Vistan will insist on riding well into the night and rising with the dawn each day, resting only the minimal time needed to keep the ponies from

exhausting themselves. The PCs thus have little opportunity to appreciate the hospitality of Phoenix inns. If they seek for reports of Isawa Otanubo (Vistan will certainly think of it if they don't) they find one or two inns which remember his stay. Despite their efforts, they are gaining little if anything on him – he is travelling fast and light.

A week into the trip, the PCs' route (on the Road of the Golden Coast, Doro sano Kin Kaigen) passes just south of the famed Isawa Mori, the Isawa Woodlands, which are said to be haunted by all manner of spirits and ghosts. The forest hunches on the northern horizon like a vast dark-green tide, looking ready to flow down and engulf the rest of the land. Perhaps the PCs recall the legend of Mori Kage Toshi, the Phoenix castle which fell into haunted ruin after it was cursed.

Mujina Tricks

As the PCs pass Isawa Mori they find themselves drawing the unwanted attention of a pack of mujina, malignant trickster spirits. Yajinden, correctly fearing that Vistan may still be on his tail, has bound a small pack of the mischievous, malicious little creatures to harass any elderly men who travel past them on the road.

The Mujina will approach the party invisibly and then pop into sight, carrying out minor tricks – snatching off hats, untying obi belts, and so forth. If the PCs attack them, the Mujina scamper back to the forest, lithely dodging their attacks and taunting them unmercifully. If the PCs attempt to ignore them, the Mujina follow them all through the day and into the night. PCs who camp in the open are relentlessly teased all night, while if they stop at an inn, the Mujina wreck the place, tossing objects around and causing all manner of fear and vandalism, until the frantic innkeeper begs the PCs to depart and leave his other guests in peace.

There are two ways to get rid of the Mujina. One is magic: the spells Elemental Ward or Evil Ward will drive the Mujina away (with much noisy whining about how the PCs are “No fun! No fun!”). The other is to convince the Mujina to go away, by making an effective verbal appeal and then rolling Awareness+Sincerity at TN 25. Effective verbal appeals must be adjudicated by the GM, but it is suggested that appealing to the Mujina's vanity and sense of self-importance will work best. (“Oh great and mighty Mujina-sama, we have been honored by your visit, and beg that you show us your generous and merciful spirits by refraining from further demonstrations of your tremendous power.”)

After the Mujina encounter, the PCs travel on unmolested, passing the complex fortress of the Shiba

family the next day and, three days after that, finally reaching Kyuden Isawa itself.

Scene Three: Arrival at Kyuden Isawa

The fortified city of the Phoenix Clan's greatest family rises from the middle of a flat plain covered in fields of grain and rice. Within the city walls can be seen the awesome tower of the Isawa Palace, where the Elemental Council meets to determine the path of their Clan. Peaceful, well-fed peasants labor in the fields, and a few Shiba bushi stand guard at the city gates, checking the travel papers of those who enter and leave.

Do the PCs have travel papers? If any of them are Imperial Family or Emerald Magistrates, such considerations do not apply, but other non-Phoenix PCs (and especially ronin) will meet with a cool reception from the Shiba guards. Vistan does not have papers for Phoenix lands either, and his angry demands that the Shiba let him in “at the peril of the entire Empire” do little to impress them.

This is a role-playing encounter. The PCs must offer a courteous and convincing reason for the Shiba to admit them, and especially to admit Vistan, to the city. (Even if some of the PCs are Emerald Magistrates and able to issue travel papers, the Shiba will be reluctant to allow an uncouth Witch-Hunter into the city.) After making their presentation, the PCs must roll Awareness+Sincerity at TN 20 to gain admission (good role-players gain a bonus, +5 to +15 at the discretion of the GM). If they fail, they can cool their heels outside the city and try again when the guards change shift that evening.

If the PCs think to ask whether Isawa Otanubo has come here, the guards must be persuaded (again, with role-play and an Awareness+Sincerity roll) to answer a question about such an important member of the Isawa family. If convinced, they consult with a superior officer and then confirm that, indeed, Otanubo-sama arrived in the city a day and a half ago.

Once the PCs have been granted access to the city, they can stay at one of the several inns within the walls. The huge castle of the Isawa looms over everything, but there is nothing alarming about it; the city is a peaceful place, the residents hard-working and healthy, prospering under the guidance of the enlightened Phoenix Clan. As with any city, there is a full variety of services available – inns for sleep, tea houses and geisha houses for relaxation, merchants and craftsmen to supply any material needs the PCs might have, and so forth. Ronin will be able to track down a gambling

house or two, although these are rarer here than they would be in other, less enlightened, locales.

Seeking an Audience

Once the PCs are in the city, Kuni Vistan explains that his Maho-Tsukai prey will be trying to enter the Isawa libraries. “Whether he is still in Otanubo’s body, or in another, that will be his goal. I must be permitted access to the libraries to test those within for the Taint.” It is well known, of course, that the Phoenix are extremely protective of their library, seldom allowing anyone from outside their Clan to visit it, let alone a Witch-Hunter.

If the PCs search for Isawa Otanubo, they will need to spend half a day asking questions around the city, at which point they call roll Awareness+Courtier (at TN 15) to learn that Otanubo, as a cousin to the governor and a relative of Isawa Tsuke, has quarters within the palace where he stays when visiting Kyuden Isawa. The PCs can request an audience with Otanubo if they wish, and a servant will promise to convey their request, but nothing ever comes of it. (A Scorpion foolish enough to try to sneak into the palace of the Isawa will meet with the brutal death he deserves.)

To gain access to the Isawa library, the PCs must ultimately gain an audience with the Isawa Elemental Council (a Phoenix PC will know this automatically; other PCs may roll Intelligence+Etiquette at TN 15 to realize this, if the players don’t think of it for themselves). The PCs can request a direct audience with the Council, or they can first seek a meeting with the city Governor, Isawa Kujin, or the city Chief Magistrate, Shiba Riko.

If the PCs petition the governor or chief magistrate, those worthies will meet with them a day later (Vistan growing more impatient by the hour).

Governor Kujin is a middle-aged man with a serious, intent face; he listens carefully to their pleas and then promises to forward their request to the Elemental Council. If the PCs are rude, insulting, or unimpressive in their behavior and demeanors, he does not actually forward their request. Since Vistan will always be somewhat rude and brusque, it is up to the PCs to make sure they give a good impression.

Chief Magistrate Shiba Riko is a quiet, soft-spoken woman whose dark eyes miss nothing. She will respond similarly to the governor, but will be more favorably impressed by PCs who are themselves magistrates, and has a poor opinion of the Lion and Unicorn Clans. Like the governor, she will forward the requests of PCs who impress her positively.

If the PCs petition the Elemental Council (either directly or through the Governor or Chief Magistrate), they are allowed to cool their heels for a day before being told that the Council will meet with them in three

days (two days if the Governor or Magistrate petitioned on their behalf). By this time Vistan will be almost desperate with worry. If any PC is so dishonorable as to suggest breaking into the library, however, Vistan is horrified. “The protections on this place are tremendous. Even this powerful Maho-Tsukai can only get in by cloaking himself in the form and elements of an Isawa. For us it would be an exercise in fatal futility. No, we must convince these foolish Phoenix to trust us...before it’s too late.”

A PC suggesting such a course of action loses 2 points of Honor (1 point for Crab, none for Scorpion), and 1 point of Glory if anyone besides Vistan heard them make the suggestion.

Scene Four: An Audience with Isawa Tomo

At long last, the time has come for your audience with the Isawa Council. You are led into the main floor of Kyuden Isawa and escorted to a small audience room with perfectly polished floors and elegant shoji-screen paintings on its walls. Servants bring trays with tea and then withdraw, bowing, leaving you alone in the chamber. The only sound is your own breathing.

Vistan and the PCs are allowed to wait for a time, under magical observation. Their behavior and words (if any) during this wait will affect the success of their audience; PCs who behave with dignity and good manners will gain a favorable modifier (+5 to +15, depending on the GM’s adjudication) while those who fidget, chatter, or grumble will gain negative mods (-5 per PC who does so). Vistan will automatically get a -5 for his openly anxious behavior, so the rest of the PCs will have to make up for that.

Finally, a door slides open and a calm, refined-looking Isawa enters. The perfectly bald man seats himself on the low dais at one end of the room. He seems ageless, and could be twenty or forty – it is impossible to say. A courtier maiden, also of the Isawa, follows him in and seats herself at his right and a step behind him. “Greetings, noble samurai,” she says in a clear silvery voice. “I am Isawa Youki, servant to the Elemental Council. It is my honor to introduce to you Isawa Tomo-sama, the Elemental Master of Water, who has graciously assented to hear your plea. Please give us your names and stations.”

Tomo already knows who the PCs are, of course, but this offers him another opportunity to size up the PCs. Once they have made their introductions, he bows

slightly in acknowledgement and cups his chin in a finger and thumb. "Explain to me again why you wish access to our library," he says pleasantly. "It is one of our most precious possessions, and not a place we would lightly permit to strangers."

Let the PCs make their case. At the end of it, one PC (the one who did the lion's share of the talking) should roll Awareness+Sincerity. Other PCs who spoke are considered to be helping the roll, and add their own Skill level (or one die if they are unskilled) to the roll. The TN is 25. Remember to apply any modifiers for their behavior prior to the audience. Also, add an automatic +5 if any of the PCs are Imperial family or Phoenix Clan (+10 if they are Isawa).

If the PCs fail the roll, Isawa Tomo sighs and shakes his head. "I am sorry, noble samurai, but I cannot allow you to enter our sacred library." In this case the adventure is essentially over, although ingenious PCs may be able to come up with some desperate or eloquent appeal which can sway Tomo's judgement (the GM should use best judgement here). If all appeals fail, Vistan bellows that "you fool Isawa may have doomed the Empire" and storms out. Afterward, he sadly thanks the PCs for their help. "I have never been a man of great skill in matters of etiquette. Without your help I would probably have never have made it into the city."

If the PCs succeed in their audience, Tomo slowly nods. "Although I find it difficult to believe that such a threat could invade our palace, you have been most eloquent in your appeals. Very well; tomorrow, you will be permitted to enter the palace and test each person in the Library for the Shadowlands Taint." He holds up a hand to forestall any thanks from the PCs. "You understand, this must be done with calm and delicacy. We cannot breach the harmony of the library or cause undue offense to those who use it. Many daimyo of the Isawa family visit the place regularly." If the PCs are rude enough to ask about the Elemental Council itself (Vistan probably will if they don't), Tomo frowns just a little. "The Council and our apprentices will of course be exempt from any such tests. I can assure you, Kuni-san, there are no Maho-Tsukai among our students." This decision will be non-negotiable.

Scene Five: A Visit to the Isawa Palace

The next morning, Vistan and the PCs are led into the Isawa Palace, escorted (and guarded) by four formidable-looking Shiba bushi.

You are taken to a small interior audience room, lit by several tall candles whose flames reflect in the perfectly polished wooden floor. Waiting for you here is a middle-aged man with thinning hair and a placid countenance. He bows politely. "Greetings, honored samurai. I am Isawa Kimasu, eldest of the three caretakers of the great Isawa Library."

After the PCs introduce themselves, Kimasu gets down to brass tacks. "I assure you, noble Kuni, there are no Tainted ones in our library. To prove it, I shall be the first to submit to your test." Vistan circles around him, holding his staff, whose jade tip glows with a soft green light.

Finally he nods. "You are free of the Taint, as I expected. There is only one man here who bears the mark of Fu Leng, honored Isawa. The problem is that I do not know whose body he inhabits. How many are here at the library? And is Isawa Otanubo among them?"

Isawa Kimasu frowns. "I do recall Otanubo-sama visited the library a few days ago, but I have not seen him since. I can send for him if you insist upon it." Vistan nods fiercely. "For now there are, I believe, hmmm..." Kimasu thinks for a moment, running through a mental checklist. "There are twenty-eight people in the palace who are allowed unrestricted access to the library, including myself and the other two caretakers. And the Isawa Council, of course, but we aren't about to test *them* for taint." He smiles, but the smile falters at Vistan's open scowl. "Well. I shall have the rest of them brought here promptly. We shall start with my two colleagues."

The Testing Begins

One by one, different Phoenix NPCs are brought into the room to be tested by Kuni Vistan. Many of them are visibly insulted by the whole affair and scowl openly at the uncouth Witch-Hunter who is testing them. Only the fact that the Elemental Council has approved this prevents them from storming out in fury. Others, more reasonable, submit with a calm smile.

Events proceed in the following sequence:

1. The second Caretaker, Isawa Ukara, is tested. He is a pudgy, fussy man in his mid-thirties who is nervous and anxious about the whole affair, and sighs with relief when Vistan finishes and declares him pure.
2. The third Caretaker, Isawa Sumiko, is tested. An elegant woman in her early forties, she nods imperiously and departs the moment Vistan declares her Taint-free.
3. The first library guest, Isawa Agotsu, is tested. A vague, distractible man, he doesn't even seem to realize what is happening. Vistan sighs with irritation as he declares him pure.

4. At this point, a half-hour into the testing, a Shiba guard arrives with news about Vistan's request to see Isawa Otanubo. "Otanubo-san's wife reports she has not seen him in three days."

Vistan replies sharply, "He is dead. Search for the body." And then, nodding to Isawa Kimasu, "Continue the tests."
5. The second guest, Isawa Imoko, is tested. She is a slim, delicate young woman of almost ethereal delicacy, and names herself as an apprentice to the Master of Air, Isawa Uona. She chats with any shugenja PCs while she is tested, asking what is happening (her interest seems to be genuine, with no ulterior motives). Vistan declares her Taint-free and warns her not to speak of what is happening.
6. The third guest, Isawa Samasu, is tested. An arrogant, imperious man (like the missing Otanubo, he is a minor Daimyo), he demands to know why he should submit to this indignity and submits only when Isawa Kimasu delicately reminds him that the Elemental Council has approved this. Vistan looks almost disappointed as he declares Samasu un-Tainted.
7. The fourth guest, Isawa Ietsugu, is tested. An older man, past the normal age of retirement, he complains querulously about his studies being interrupted by this "nonsense." He is found Taint-free, and snorts, "of course, I could have told you that," as he returns to his studies.
8. The fifth guest is the first non-Phoenix the PCs have seen here: a visiting Crane, Asahina Takige, who is related to the Asahina daimyo and attends here as a favor between Rokugan's two greatest shugenja family. A gentle, peaceable man of great enlightenment, he submits to Vistan's testing with a quiet smile, and makes small-talk with any Crane or Imperial Family PCs who are present. He is Taint-free.
9. The sixth guest, Isawa Yoshio, is a young man barely out of his gempukku, a prodigy whose sensei has given him permission to study at the Library. He is somewhat confused as to what is happening, and wonders if this is some test set by his sensei. He will try to sound the PCs out (especially if some of them are shugenja and/or Phoenix Clan) to see if they are acquainted with his sensei, Isawa Sanuro. He is Taint-free, and seems even more confused when Vistan tells him he can leave. "That's it?"
10. As Vistan finishes testing Yoshio, there is a commotion outside, and several people rush in at once. It seems an Isawa shugenja (one of those not yet tested for Taint) has been found dead in the stacks. Vistan snaps to attention. "We have him on the run," he snarls. "Search the library and bring everyone else here at once." The guards are

reluctant, however, to do such a thing. If Vistan and the PCs are persistent, and eloquent, the guards confer among themselves and then depart. A few minutes later Asako Tokameki arrives.

The Inquisitor

A thin, sharp-featured man with deep-set eyes strides into the room. He looks around sharply and marches directly to Kuni Vistan. "I am Asako Tokameki, Acolyte of Earth and Inquisitor," he snaps. "The guards tell me you believe a Maho-Tsukai has infiltrated our palace. Before we proceed further, I must know what is happening in the fullest details." It seems the Phoenix have finally decided to take you seriously.

At this point Vistan, desperate to stop Yajinden (and encouraged by the appearance of an Inquisitor) will finally confess openly that he believes the Maho-Tsukai in question to be Asahina Yajinden, the legendary assistant to Iuchiban, the man who forged the four dreaded Bloodswords. Asako Tokameki listens in silence, then nods sharply and agrees to an immediate search of the library. If the PCs ask to help, he agrees immediately. "Everyone must be gathered and tested at once," he snarls.

A Sighting

The PCs, Vistan, and several Shiba guards move through the close-packed shelves of the library. Around them are thousands of scrolls containing the most accumulated magical and esoteric knowledge to be found anywhere in Rokugan. Not even the Imperial libraries at Otosan Uchi can rival this remarkable accumulation of wisdom...but there is no time, now, to appreciate it.

Have all the PCs roll Perception+Investigation at TN 20. The PC making the highest roll that beats TN 20 spots a figure in Phoenix orange leaving the library, clutching an armful of scrolls. (If none of the PCs make the roll, Asako Tokameki will make it.) A guard moves to stop the person, then bows and steps back. The person departs (if the PCs shout for them to stop, the guard looks confused, then calls half-heartedly after the departing shugenja).

The PCs may roll Perception+Heraldry at TN 20 to recognize the departing person as Isawa Sumiko, the third caretaker of the library.

Scene Six: The Chase

Once alerted, Vistan and Tokameki set out at once in pursuit of Yajinden, Vistan shouting for the PCs to

accompany him. The GM should run this as a frantic pursuit through the narrow passages, steep staircases, and small, elegant gardens of the Isawa Palace, Yajinden changing bodies repeatedly as the pursuers try to close in. The GM is encouraged to improvise whatever scenes and actions add to the drama of the event. The players should feel as though they are always on the brink of capturing Yajinden, only to have him slip away again and again.

Yajinden will flee to the stables, taking a horse, and then out into the city, changing bodies until he is in the form of some suitable noble (probably an Isawa) who can leave without being questioned by the guards at the gate.

The city guards look up in alarm as the PCs, Vistan, and Tokameki storm up. Questioned, they confusedly confess that yes, someone just left on horseback. They point at a distant plume of dust, cutting cross-country toward the dark line of the Isawa woodlands on the horizon.

Pursuit to Isawa Mori

Asako Tokameki immediately orders a pursuit, sending for horses and Shiba guards. If the PCs want, they can race back to their inn and fetch their mounts and equipment (there will be time to put on light armor, but not heavy armor, which takes over an hour to don). Vistan fetches only his mount, shaking with fury and anticipation. He keeps muttering, “We must catch him. We must, we must.”

The PCs’ total allies for this pursuit will be Vistan, Tokameki, and four Shiba bushi.

As the PCs ride toward the Isawa Mori, the bright sunshine and gentle breeze seems to mock their desperation. Vistan in particular is grim and frantic, clutching his jade-tipped staff tightly. In the distance, the PCs can just make out (with Perception+Hunting rolls at TN 25) the plume of dust from the frantically riding Yajinden. The Bloodspeaker himself cannot be spotted, only a suggestion of movement that vanishes into the treeline.

It is late afternoon by the time the PCs reach the woods, their horses lathered and wheezing. Rolling Perception+Hunting at TN 20 will spot the trail of the Bloodspeaker (if none of the PCs can make the roll, Vistan will make it) leading deeper into the forest. Vistan cautions the others to be courageous and ruthless. “Yajinden can switch bodies at will. Only if he can be slain before he changes to another body will he perish forever. If one of your comrades seems to act strangely, do not hesitate; strike them down at once.”

The Battle

Yajinden is not alone. He has alerted the Bloodspeaker cells in Phoenix lands to be ready to aid him, and six of their number are waiting in the forest now. They have already summoned Oni to help their master, and now they wait for the PCs in ambush.

A sudden stench of burning and spilt blood fills your nostrils. An instant later, a terrifying roar splits the peace of the woodlands, and the ground erupts beneath the feet of the four Shiba bushi. An enormous toothy maw rises out of the ground and crushes one of the bushi with a single grinding snap of teeth longer than a man’s hand – the bushi shrieks and then gurgles in death. “Oni!” Vistan roars, the jade tip of his staff glowing with an unearthly green light.

The first Shiba bushi will be instantly devoured. Everyone must roll Fear at Rank 3 (TN 15).

Since there are a large number of NPCs in this battle, the action has been “scripted” (as follows) to help the GM run things smoothly:

Oni no Kuchini will devour the Shiba bushi at the rate of one per round until all are dead or a PC attacks it, at which point it starts in on the PCs. Note that Oni no Kuchini is Invulnerable, meaning it is only affected by jade, crystal, obsidian, and magic. If the PCs have no jade and no spellcasters, they will need to keep Vistan and (especially) Tokameki alive in order to destroy this Oni.

Oni no Usui will join the combat on Round Two, leaping out of the trees with a gibbering shriek and landing in the midst of the PCs, flailing about with its long, wavy claws. This Oni is not invulnerable, making it a threat the PCs should be able to deal with themselves.

The cultists will split their actions. Four of them will immediately charge forward and attempt to kill Kuni Vistan with melee attacks. The other two, who know Maho spells, will hang back and try to cast their spells (No Pure Breaths and Fury of Iuchiban) on the first two rounds of combat, targeting enemy spellcasters by preference (they know better than to target Vistan, who as a Witch-Hinter is immune to Maho). They will then join the melee or flee, as seems appropriate.

The Shiba bushi will spend the first round trying to fight Oni no Kuchini, then, realizing their weapons are useless, fall back and form a protective circle around Asako Tokameki. (The Oni will pursue and devour them until distracted by Vistan or the PCs.)

Kuni Vistan will first attempt to smite down the two Bloodspeakers who attack him, at the same time shouting, “Where is your master? Where is Yajinden?” His staff is a deadly weapon against anyone with the Taint (all the enemies here, of course). Once Oni no

Sukini appears, Vistan will engage it until it is destroyed (or he is killed), then join the fight against the two Oni. If he is badly wounded, he tries to dodge out of the combat and treat himself with the Medicine skill.

Asako Tokameki will cast Jade Strike on the first round of combat (targeting Oni no Kuchini and one of the spellcasting cultists), then begin casting Tomb of Jade on the second round. The spell will go off on round three (assuming Tokameki is still alive), and targets Oni no Kuchini. If it fails, Tokameki will again cast Jade Strike, followed by Fury of Osano-Wo. (If any PC is in danger of being killed, Tokameki will instead cast Path to Inner Peace.)

Aftermath

In the wake of the battle at Isawa Mori, Kuni Vistan casts about in search of further tracks or evidence of Yajinden. He finds the site of the Bloodspeakers' ritual, including a smoldering fire, spatters of blood, and a scattering of scrolls from among those stolen from the library. Of Yajinden himself, however, there is no sign. Vistan and Tokameki, examining the evidence, conclude that the Bloodspeakers summoned three Oni, allowing Yajinden to escape with one while the cultists and the other two delayed the PCs. The two investigators count the recovered scrolls and frown grimly. "These are some, but not all of them."

Vistan will want to read the remaining scrolls, although any Phoenix present will object. Vistan argues that learning the truth of what the Bloodspeakers are after is more important than preserving Phoenix secrets. It is up to the PCs whether to support Vistan or the Phoenix; if a majority of the PCs support Vistan, (or if an Emerald Magistrate or Imperial Family PC supports him) the Phoenix will reluctantly back down, although it is clear this weighs on them bitterly (any Phoenix PCs lost 1 box of Honor).

The documents prove to be dealing with the ritual which bound Iuchiban to his tomb three hundred years ago. Vistan's face turns gray. "It is as I feared," he murmurs. "They may have found a way to free their dread lord." It is a grim and silent group which returns to Kyuden Isawa.

Afterwards, Kuni Vistan quietly thanks the PCs for their help. "Although we did not completely succeed, at least we learned with certainty what the Bloodspeakers plan and that will aid my investigations in future. Without your help I would not have accomplished even that much. You have my gratitude. Perhaps one day in future we can help each other again."

The Phoenix Clan is clearly even less happy with what has transpired. Although Isawa Tomo offers private thanks for the PCs' help, and declares that the Isawa libraries will be guarded even more carefully in

future, there is no public acknowledgement of what has happened.

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

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

Experience Points

Playing through the adventure:	2 XP
Good role-playing:	1 XP
PCs get Vistan into the Phoenix libraries:	1 XP
Surviving the final battle:	1 XP
Total Possible Experience:	5 XP

Honor

Any Crab, Witch-Hunter, Inquisitor, or other Maho-hunting PCs gain +1 Honor for helping Kuni Vistan in his quest.

Glory

Any PCs who belong to the Agasha family receive +1 Glory as a result of gaining the alliance with the Centipede.

Other Awards/Penalties

If the PCs helped Kuni Vistan gain access to the Phoenix libraries, and he survived the adventure, they gain **Major Ally: Kuni Vistan**.

NPCs and Monsters

Kuni Vistan, Obsessed Witch-

Hunter

EARTH 1 Willpower 4
FIRE 3
AIR 3
WATER 1 Perception 4
VOID 3

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Kuni Witch-Hunter 4.

Rank One: Two attacks per round against Tainted foes.

Rank Two: Sense Taint by rolling Awareness+Shadowlands Lore.

Rank Three: When rolling to hit against Tainted foes, keep additional dice equal to their Taint Rank (3 for the Oni).

Rank Four: Immune to maho spells.

Honor/Glory: 2/4

Skills: Athletics 4, Bojutsu 4, Defense 3, Herbalism 2, History 3, Hunting 3, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Medicine 3, Stealth 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Clear Thinker, Higher Purpose (to destroy Bloodspeaker Cult, especially Yajinden)/Brash, Gaijin Name

Equipment: *Kimono, Jade-Tipped Bo Staff (This staff is enchanted with the spirit of a helpful kami, and will cause 3k3 wounds, rather than the normal 2k2, to opponents with the Shadowlands Taint. If Vistan is killed, the kami is released, and the staff becomes a normal – albeit jade-tipped – weapon.)*

Asako Tokameki, Acolyte of

Earth and Phoenix Inquisitor

EARTH 4
FIRE 3
AIR 2 Reflexes 3
WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 3

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Isawa Shugenja 2

Honor/Glory: 3.2/2.3

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Investigation 2, Lore (Maho-Tsukai) 2, Meditation 2, Shintao 1, Spellcraft 1, Tantojutsu 2, Theology 1

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, (Earth) Force of Will, Hands of Jurojin, Jade Strike, Strike at the Roots, Tomb of Jade, (Fire) Amaterasu's Blessing, Fires of Purity, Fury of Osano-Wo, (Water) Path to Inner Peace, (Air) By the Light of Lord Moon.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Innate Abilities (Jade Strike, Path to Inner Peace), Clear Thinker/Bad Reputation (abrupt)

Equipment: *Kimono, scroll satchel, tanto (1k2)*

Typical Shiba Bushi

EARTH 2
FIRE 3 Intelligence 4
AIR 2 Reflexes 3
WATER 2
VOID 3

TN to be Hit: 20 (Light Armor)

School/Rank: Shiba Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 2.5/1.0

Skills: Archery 2, Defense 2, Iaijutsu 1, Kenjutsu 2, Meditation 1, Naginata 2, Shintao 1, Tea Ceremony 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: None

Equipment: *Daisho set, light armor, bow with 20 arrows, naginata*

Phoenix Bloodspeaker Cultists (6)

EARTH 2
FIRE 2
AIR 1 Reflexes 2
WATER 1 Strength 2
VOID 1

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Athletics 1, Defense 1, Hunting 2, Knife 1, Lore (Maho) 2, Stealth 2

Spells: Cultist #1 knows No Pure Breaths (costs 5 wounds, 2 actions to cast, TN equal to target's Earth x 5, DR equal to caster's Shadowlands rank plus target is at +10 to all TN until magically healed, Raises for casting time and number of targets). Cultist #2 knows Fury of Iuchiban (identical to Fury of Osano-Wo, but costs 4 wounds, DR 2 plus target must roll Simple Earth at TN 10 or gain a point of Taint).

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (peasants), Dark Secret (Bloodspeakers)

Equipment: *Peasant clothing, knives (1k1)*

Oni no Kuchini (Oni of Eating)

This Oni resembles a giant upright mouth on stubby legs. Huge, glistening gray teeth fill its enormous maw, and bulbous eyes glare from the joints of its mouth. It cares for nothing except devouring prey, which it does with single-minded ferocity.

EARTH 5

FIRE 3

AIR 2

WATER 4

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 6k3

Damage: 6k4

Armor: 5

Wounds: 30: -1; 45: -3; 70: Dead

Special Abilities: Fear (rank 3). Invulnerable (only hurt by jade, crystal, obsidian, and magic). Any foe hit by 20 or more above the required TN is swallowed whole, taking 2k2 wounds per round until killed (swallowed foes may fight back with small weapons, at a penalty of +15 to their TN to hit).

Oni no Usui (Skinny Oni)

This Oni is a spindly, bipedal creature whose limbs are long and multi-jointed, the joints swollen and knobby. Its hands end in long multi-jointed fingers tipped with even longer, razor-sharp claws. Its glowing blue eyes are sunken deep in the sockets of its skeletal face, and a shrunken, withered tongue lolls from its toothless mouth.

EARTH 4

FIRE 3

AIR 4

WATER 2

TN to be Hit: 20

Attacks: Two claw attacks, 5k3 each, ignore armor

Damage: 4k2 per claw

Armor: 4

Wounds: 30: -1; 50: -2; 80: Dead

Special Abilities: Fear (rank 3). The Oni no Usui can divide its two claw attacks among two different opponents. Its claws ignore armor.