

PART THREE: THE BATTLE OF THE WHITE STAG

WHAT HAPPENS NOW?

The third part of *Hindsight* is fairly free-form. Gamemasters should read over the section to get a loose familiarity with the events and goals, but the specific timing will depend on the players' exact battle plans. There are three major, growing problems during the final round; the player characters may split up or work together to solve them, but splitting up may allow them to get through it more quickly.

1. **The Imperial troops in Otosan Uchi need a new strategy to win.**
2. **Seikidera's role in the battle and history must be maintained.**
3. **The Mantis must not betray the Empire, or all is lost.**

It is also useful to protect Akuro's vial of time-ichor during this process if the PCs are to get home afterward, and to protect Isawa Sanro.

How do the samurai figure out these goals? The first clue is that as part of this skewed future history, Mantis player characters will suddenly find their equipment and kimonos brought from the future upgraded to Fine quality. Simultaneously, Lion and Crane PCs will find their own reduced to peasant brown, and their daisho vanish. (These changes can be reversed when a Heroic Opportunity presents itself during the battle.)

If they haven't figured it out by now, the players should realize that straightening the course of history is entirely on their shoulders, and winning the Battle of the White Stag is the key. They should begin Part Three knowing that they are well and truly screwed. If they take Akuro's little vial now and paint a picture of the year 1120 right now, they will return to a world much changed. **See Appendix II** for a glimpse of the nightmare. A few History rolls or conversations with panicking NPCs should get them to take stock of the situation.

- 1) **The gaijin got an intelligence report from Akuro, so the present Rokugani battle plan will be useless.**

They don't need to roll History to know this is not the way it should be, but they need to roll History to remember all the details (TN 15).

Historically:

In a few hours, the gaijin will launch a long line of 120 ships, holding about 5,000 men total, from the northern Mantis isles, the only place that offered them any safe harbor once the edict was given. This fleet is bent on attacking the Bay of the Golden Sun, Otosan Uchi's harbor. Knowing that the *gaijin* cannons will tear their ships and men to pieces at long range, the Rokugani lower a shield of mist over the harbor and pull their ships back inside the bay itself. When the ships enter the area with low visibility, the Rokugani have the time to fight a pitched battle, boarding the gaijin ships and fighting hand-to-hand. Additional support from shugenja and archers in the lighthouses on the White Stag peninsula (also known as the Peninsula of Dawn and Peninsula of Sunset) choke up the ships as they are entering and prevent the gaijin from getting a foothold on the land.

As the battle lengthens, the gaijin ships need that foothold more desperately, and start expanding down

the southern coast, into the Crane lands. But among the Rokugani, only the Mantis have anything resembling a navy. A major turning point comes when dozens of merchant ships recruited by the Crane transport Crane samurai into the battle, and they keep the gaijin off the coast. While the gaijin ships pile up in the water, the Mantis fleet (about 80 ships) arrives, and through attacking the gaijin rear, breaks the line and saves the day, in the part of the fighting they call the Battle of the Raging Seas, one of Rokugan's few naval battles.

Meanwhile, a small force of gaijin on land lay siege to the city. The samurai hold them off until the Dragon and Centipede clans show up (with mysterious prescience) and cut off their supply train. Stranded without their wagons of gunpowder, they soon fall back on hand-to-hand fighting, and are no match for the Mirumoto.

With one Raise on this History roll, a PC can recall that Doji Seikidera was the key instrument in appealing to the Crane merchants. By riding down and debasing himself before them, asking for their help in warrior matters, he showed great compassion and healed a long-standing grudge between the Crane merchants and the samurai.

After Akuro's change:

The gaijin now have no illusions about sailing into the trap waiting for them in the Bay of the Golden Sun. Instead, they have dumped a large portion of their forces on land and are marching them north to the city. This means more cannons aimed at Otsan Uchi, and if they reach a convenient ridge, they can rain fire down on the palace and harbor without risking a single ship. Meanwhile, the ships will concentrate on taking the lighthouses and peninsulae, which will draw out the Rokugani fleet to face them nearly toe-to-toe. Unimpeded by the Mantis, who are now their allies, the gaijin will put more and more troops and cannon on the ground and in the lighthouses until they can envelop the south and east and rain artillery into the city at will. By the time the Dragon arrive, the gaijin will already have taken the city walls, and can shut them out, raining down death whenever they like.

2) The Crane Champion, whom all the history books say was integral to winning the Battle of the White Stag, is dead.

An Intelligence + Courtier roll (TN 15) will reveal that the Crane forces will be devastated without Seikidera. Any replacement champion will desperately need to be a hands-on general. The Crane soldiers at the palace who are of sufficient Glory to get the Crane troops to follow them are all Kakitas; their primary tactic will be to find and duel the gaijin generals, which is not a wise strategy to try on dishonorable foreigners. Telling a Kakita his battle plan is flawed is a quick way for the PCs to get into a duel, which is fabulously unproductive.

With one Raise, the PCs can guess that the likely default commander for Imperial defense will be Bayushi Atsuki.

With two Raises, they may be able to guess that Atsuki is likely to go with Doji Seikidera's old battle plan because *neither of the high-Glory daimyos, Bayushi Atsuki or Shiba Katsutoshi, have the Battle skill*. If the PCs get back to Otsan Uchi or do an Intelligence + History roll at TN 15, they can remember the names of one prominent battle commander for each Raise: Seppun Koboru, Shiba Dorataki, and Seikidera's son, Doji Bayatsu, each have passable command training (7k3) and historically were division commanders that fought well, though Dorataki died. If none of the PCs have a decent Battle skill, our heroes' best hope lies in getting these folks to make decisions rather than the daimyo. Unfortunately, *none* of these three have the requisite Glory to stand up to Atsuki or Katsutoshi.

3) The Mantis, who supposedly fought alongside the Crane in the Battle of the White Stag, are now on the side of the gaijin.

Intelligence + History, TN 15, will tell the PCs that the current Mantis daimyo is Gusai Narimoto, and his fleet admiral is Gusai Tadakiyo, a cruel but clever and convincing man. *Kanimoto, the pregenerated Mantis PC, will feel a strange shudder if Tadakiyo's name is mentioned, as if someone just put a shovel into the earth of his grave.*

With a Raise, the character can guess at the rationale for the change -- Narimoto was known to be a peaceable man, and had great respect for the Emerald Throne. General Tadakiyo, on the other hand, despised the Crane for their control over the *gozoku*, and would not have turned down an offer to loot Otosan Uchi if it looked like the gaijin would win.

With two Raises, the PCs know that Narimoto rarely left his palace, and Mantis trade during his rule relied on Tadakiyo to screen any visitors to the islands, including reports from Mantis merchants and representatives to the mainland. When Narimoto's son, Gusai Ochimi, attempted to interfere with this process, Tadakiyo turned Narimoto against him with rumors of a coup. If Akuro wanted to switch the Mantis' loyalties, he would have talked to Tadakiyo.

LET'S GET TO IT

Once these facts are known, the PCs will presumably try to solve these problems.

No Time to Hold Auditions

Seikidera is dead. Real dead. But the PCs desperately need him to be alive.

Of course, that armor he's wearing conceals most features, doesn't it?

The pregenerated characters, particularly Shosuro Yakawa, have a variety of impersonation skills, including Acting and Mimic, and Asahina Jikoji has the spell Way of Deception.

(For those home groups who hit upon the idea but don't have the skills to pull it off, Bayushi Atsuki also has a retinue with at least one loyal Scorpion with stats similar to Yakawa's. The price? No need for the PCs to worry about that. The Crane will be paying *plenty*, for a very long time. Will this change history? Yes, but it's better than **Appendix II**.)

If they do choose to impersonate Seikidera themselves, please note that the Champion's sword, the ancestral blade of the Crane Clan, can only be wielded by one of Doji, Daidoji or Kakita descent. It takes an Intelligence + Lore: Crane Clan test, TN 20, for the characters to remember this. Otherwise, the sword cries out at the impostor the first time he draws the blade.

For home groups where a Doji, Daidoji or Kakita PC takes on the impersonation, it is possible for them to use and get the benefits of the blade, but knowledgeable Cranes will still spot them for fakes when it does not ring joyously at being drawn.

Provided, of course, the PC bearer doesn't have dubious parentage and an undetermined Great Destiny advantage just *lying* around...

Where To, Captain?

The first order of business for most groups will be going somewhere, possibly getting off whichever Phoenix, Mantis or Crane ship is sinking the worst. As they decide on where to go next, however, all the characters should roll Perception, TN 15, to hear someone moving around in the hold of the Phoenix ship.

If they investigate, they find Isawa Sanro, the young shugenja from Part Two who will one day grow up to found the Asahina family, stowed away in the hold.

He had been listening invisibly (future Adepts of Air, aren't they just *precious*) when the characters announced the coming gaijin armies. Excited at the thought of rescuing Seikidera, he followed the characters and stowed away in their boat.

Sanro serves two purposes in the adventure. He is someone the characters must protect during the battle, giving a chance for personal roleplaying even in the midst of life-threatening combat. His genuine bravery will get him into constant trouble throughout the battle in Part Three, wherever he gets dropped off. On the bright side, he is also a talented shugenja with most any Air spell the PCs need. He will happily assist home groups with the Way of Deception spell if they need help impersonating Seikidera, provide a stiff wind to get their ship where it needs to go, or use Tempest of Air or Osano-Wo's Breath to deflect musket balls.

Isawa Sanro

Rank 1 Isawa Shugenja

EARTH 1, Willpower 3, FIRE 3, AIR 4, WATER 2, VOID 4.

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Investigation 1, Meditation 2, Shintao 3, Theology 3, Courtier 1, Etiquette 1, Stealth 2, Spellcraft 3, Lore: Shugenja 3

Honor: 2.9 **Glory:** 1.3

Advantages: Great Destiny (found Asahina family), Benten's Blessing, Daredevil

Disadvantages: Small

TN to be Hit: 20

School Techniques: May spend up to maximum Void on spells; Free Raise for rituals.

Spells: Don't worry about specific spells for Sanro. He should be able to help the PCs with whatever they lack. He has most Air spells, Path to Inner Peace (or the ancient equivalent), and whatever else will help get them out of a tight spot. He has not learned offensive combat spells -- that's later in life.

The Merchants

For the PC impersonating or replacing Seikidera, the first order of business is gathering the merchant fleets which made up Rokugan's improvised navy. However, this is not quite as simple as just showing up in port and announcing the draft. Seikidera left for his midnight negotiations without any papers, any

official seal of the daimyo, and certainly no Imperial-signed orders authorizing him to gather troops for war.

The merchants, in the first harbor town they stop in, are hardly the servile, agreeable *heimin* the PCs might expect. It has been less than a hundred years since the Yasuki defected, and the Crane had a policy of pampering their merchants ever since to prevent them from defecting. Over time, these expenses swelled and Doji Tomeko put in sweeping cutbacks to prevent the Crane from going bankrupt. All the merchants saw was a betrayal, enforced at the points of samurai swords.

There are about 120 Crane samurai in each of three towns to the south, a force enough to make the gaijin think twice about establishing a beachhead. But an Intelligence + Battle (20) roll will inform the PCs that it's a bad idea to simply tell them to run north and fight. While they would do so if the Crane Champion ordered them, it's a long uphill trek, and they'd find themselves exhausted just as they get to the cuts in the cliffside beach. Without ponies enough to get troops there, the only real method is sailing ships.

The merchants of the towns can be easily gathered for a public pronouncement, but when the characters ask them to sail into battle, they stare blankly. One of the most prominent merchants, Kentosen, respectfully points out that their place in the Celestial Order is to provide samurai with goods in return for protection. They don't fight. That's the bushi's job.

Kentosen is an angry and conflicted young man. The loudest and most respected voice among the local sailors and traders, he was a bastard child of a Daidoji samurai and merchant-caste girl. Raised *heimin*, but given extravagant gifts by his guilty father, he now controls his father's fleet of ten *kobune*. He resents his status as a *heimin* and feels that samurai are running a racket, demanding servility from the rest of the population in return for "protection" from a war that hasn't happened in generations. Underneath his anger, however, he longs to believe. He loves and respects his father, who taught him battle arts on the sly, and if the characters can seem like worthy, noble samurai willing to make up for past injuries, he can make things happen. At least six other merchants will join in if he is convinced, providing 40 ships that can take a dozen samurai archers each. (The more ships, the better; it is possible to load each ship with up to 50-100 warriors in some cases, but this is not wise considering what a cannon's canister round can do to such a mob packed shoulder-to-shoulder.)

Kentosen

EARTH 3, FIRE 2, AIR 3, WATER 2, VOID 2.

Skills: Athletics 3, Commerce 4, Courtier 2, Craft: Shipwright 3, Craft: Fishing 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Jujitsu 2, Kenjutsu 2, Law 1, Sailing 3, Sincerity 3, Yarijutsu 1.

Honor: 3.8 **Glory:** 0

Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (peasant), Driven (prove self to father), Uppity (like "Brash," for peasants)

TN to be Hit: 15

Weapons: Oar (Str +2k2), Harpoon (Str +3k2)

Crane Bushi**EARTH 2, FIRE 3, AIR 3, WATER 2, VOID 2.****Skills:** Archery 1, Athletics 2, Battle 1, Courtier 1, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 3, Jujitsu 1, Kenjutsu 1, Sincerity 3, Yarijutsu 3**Honor:** 3.5 **Glory:** 1**TN to be Hit:** 15 (20 in armor)**School Techniques:** Replace Kenjutsu with Iaijutsu: add Iaijutsu skill to initiative roll.**Weapons:** Fine Tachi (Str +3k2), Yumi with Fine arrows (Str +3k2), Fine Yari (Str +5k2)**The Mantis Betrayers**

If the characters go after Gusai Tadakiyo immediately following Sekidera's death, they will run smack into his fleet, gathering in a port on the Island of Silk. Trying to get to him through his entire army of hench-goons (that's 80 ships of varying size and about 3,000 men) is a fast way to get killed. It is far easier if the PCs persuade Narimoto to rein in his general.

Narimoto is also on the Island of Silk, in the splendid castle of Kyuden Gusai. Where the PCs only saw ancient ruins in Part One, here they see the castle mound flowing with green, manicured grass, white stones cut so finely you could not fit a razor blade between the cracks, a torii arch of ivory and hawkbill tortoise shell, a little bridge of cedar and pine over a crystalline river, and inside the gates, wide spaces and chignon curtains in an Ivory Kingdoms style.

If the PCs request to see Gusai Narimoto and have some personal item of the Emperor, Crane Champion, or other status symbol, they will be disarmed and escorted in by a squad of twenty samurai. (If heckled that this seems excessive, they'll snort and say "most people get thirty.")

The daimyo's room is the topmost room in the castle, and as the shoji open, the man they see is dwarfed by the image on the rear wall. It is a spectacular mural of the Dragon of Storms, Osano-Wo's mother, sheltering her young child from the spider beneath the sea, a legend so old it is hardly ever told in modern Rokugan. The ocean and storm together are countless shades of lapis lazuli, malachite, sapphires, and the bolt of lightning the dragon holds in her hand is a streak of pure gold.

Is this important to the adventure?

Sure. It's an experience. It's something no other modern Rokugani will see in their lives.

If the PCs have somehow sent an emissary without status enough to get a meeting, they'd better lay on the Sincerity or Stealth rolls (TN 25), and if they hose it, the Mantis cops will deal with them appropriately. An alternative is to get an audience with Narimoto's much more accessible bookworm

son, Gusai Ochimi. The peasantry will amiably direct samurai to the library in the Temple of Inari, where he spends much of his time reading and writing.

Ochimi doesn't give a fig for Tadakiyo, who he thinks turned his father against him. A group of magistrates from several different Clans showing up on his doorstep telling him Tadakiyo is up to no good is just what he wants to hear. He'll take them to see his father without so much as a Sincerity test, and the only problem with this plan is he's gonna get into his father's office and blurt out accusations just as incoherently as he defended himself three years ago, or he ain't Gusai Ochimi.

Then it's time for the PCs to make a Sincerity roll.

Gusai Narimoto is on the lookout for Cranes trying to screw his merchant fleets, Phoenixes who bully him with force, and Scorpions just on principle. He's not surprised if any of those clans are complaining about Tadakiyo. An Awareness + Sincerity (TN 20) test would convince him *something* is wrong with Tadakiyo -- his messages have been erratic. But to get him to believe Tadakiyo will attack the Emperor turns on his Clear Thinker advantage (TN 30); to get him to believe his general is going nuts at the behest of some time-traveling Dragon who put mind-altering crud in his soup is a TN 40. Scorpions, Cranes and Phoenixes have to Raise once on top of this due to his distrust.

Gusai Tadakiyo: Rank 4 Mantis Bushi

EARTH 4, FIRE 4, AIR 4, WATER 4, VOID 3

Skills: Archery 3, Athletics 4, Battle 4, Commerce 4, Courtier 4, Defense 5, Etiquette 3, History 4, Iaijutsu 4, Jujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Heraldry 2, Investigation 3, Intimidation 5, Nofujutsu 5, Poison 2, Sailing 4, Sincerity 5, Wrestling 3.

Honor: 2.0 **Glory:** 8.0

Advantages: Clear Thinker

Disadvantages: None -- he likes to annoy Scorpions like that.

TN to be Hit: 20 (25, 45 in armor)

School Techniques: Fight on uneven ground without penalty; use any weapon as if with a skill of at least 1; spend Void and gain benefits of a Full Attack without changing TN to Be Hit; may make two separate Initiative rolls, one for each hand, and attack once on each; adds Water Ring x5 to TN to Be Hit while not making a full attack (expenditure of a Void Point can extend this to a Full Attack; see Rank 2). Yes, the Rank 4 Technique is a secret passed down from daimyo to daimyo. Yoritomo didn't invent it himself. That's just his friends talking.

Weapons: An entire army surrounding the PCs as they speak.

Provided the PCs can get him to send some folks down to investigate, the truth will come out; the Mantis fleet is assembling in the docks on Tadakiyo's orders. This will make Narimoto think twice.

Narimoto storms down to the docks, soldiers and PCs in tow, and calls a meeting with Tadakiyo. Tadakiyo lies smoothly -- he heard the Crane were massing troops, and he's assembling this fleet in self-defense. The PCs are obviously here to try and get the Mantis to swing first, to provide some excuse for a war, deceitful slubberdegullions that they are. What better excuse for the Great Clans to beat on the Mantis than a mixed bag of magistrates, injured or killed in battle?

Tadakiyo knows better, of course. He's met with Akuro in his various guises, and now he's thinking that if the gaijin conquer Otosan Uchi, the Mantis can pick sides a day late -- and make the Crane or the Lion pay, one way or another, for years of humiliation.

If nobody else suggests a duel to settle the matter, Narimoto or Ochimi will.

Note that once a champion for the PCs' word is chosen, a Mantis duel is not a formal iaijutsu duel. If a PC suggests standing somewhere where there's space, great, but if not, the duel starts once the Initiative roll hits the table and it ends when the bystanders get the courage to come back.

Gusai Tadakiyo: Rank 3 Mantis Bushi

EARTH 4, Willpower 5, FIRE 3, Agility 4, AIR 2, Reflexes 4, WATER 3, VOID 3

Skills: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Battle 4, Bojutsu 3, Commerce 4, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, Forgery 4, Jujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Heraldry 2, Investigation 3, Medicine 3, Nofujutsu 4, Poison 2, Sailing 4, Sincerity 4, Stealth 3.

Honor: 0.5 **Glory:** 6.2

Advantages: Heartless, Quick (also the Nemesis of the pregenerated PC, Kanimoto; when fighting him, Kanimoto cannot use Void)

Disadvantages: Vain

TN to be Hit: 20 (25 in armor)

School Techniques: Fight on uneven ground without penalty; use any weapon as if with a skill of at least 1; spend Void and gain benefits of a Full Attack without changing TN to Be Hit; may make two separate Initiative rolls, one for each hand, and attack once on each.

Weapons: Kama (Str+2k2), Tachi (Str+2k2), gaijin long sword (Str+2k3), steel-rimmed boot (Str +0k2), and if you're feeling particularly nasty, pistol (4k4 at short range, 3k3 at medium or more, Fear effect TN 10.)

Troubleshooting

In theory, no one else can interfere with the duel, but due to the mouthing-off nature that comes very close to a duel, it's always possible the PCs gang up on Tadakiyo. Ochimi will put a restraining hand on

whoever attempts to interfere; you may be able to discourage another by altering them with history-effecting changes; but if they start a dog-pile on Tadakiyo in the hopes of saving the day, the Mantis soldiers will have no qualms about spearing the lot of them.

Start with about a dozen of these guys on each side of the dock, and add in another dozen if the PCs start trying to get away or try something funny on Narimoto.

Mantis Bushi (Rank 1)

EARTH 2, FIRE 3, AIR 2, Reflexes 3, WATER 2, Strength 3, VOID 2.

Skills: Archery 3, Athletics 2, Battle 2, Commerce 2, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 2, Jujitsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Sailing 2, Yarijutsu 3.

Honor: 1.0 **Glory:** 1

TN to be Hit: 15 (20)

School Techniques: Fight on uneven ground without penalty; use any weapon as if with a skill of at least 1.

Weapons: Tachi (Str+2k2), Yumi (Str+2k2), occasional nunchaku (Str+2k2), yari (Str +4k2).

If Tadakiyo is fairly cut up, he'll beg for mercy and then shoot, stab, hit or throw the PC who pauses to give him any quarter. This, too, is generally accepted among the Mantis. However, whatever the result, the duel with Tadakiyo will put enough doubt in Narimoto's mind that his personal attention will be brought to the brewing battle on the land, and while he may show up late to the battle, it's better than not showing up at all and letting the world slide into **Appendix 2**. Thus, even if the PCs freak out, kill Tadakiyo and a half-dozen bushi and strike out on the lam, they will have gotten the Mantis into the battle. ("I got good news and I got bad news for the Emperor. The good news is, the Mantis fleet is on the way.")

GO, BID THE CANNONS SHOOT

As the Battle of the White Stag begins, how and when you go to the Battle Table depends on PC placement since encountering the gaijin land forces in Part Two. The gaijin general is considered to have 8k3 for the Tides of Battle roll.

The Rokugani, on the other hand, need some kind of unity of command before they can even *make* their roll. If the PCs do nothing, Bayushi Atsuki or Shiba Katsutoshi will be in charge, using Seikidera's old plan, and will be rolling 3k3 without the benefit of the Battle skill, adding the unskilled penalty of 10 to the Target Number -- in this case of a contested roll, it means these bozos would have to exceed the gaijin's result by 10 in order for them to get a "winning" result. To win the battle on their own, they would need this three times in a row.

To make matters worse, the gaijin general will spend Void whenever possible on the Tides of Battle roll; note that when the cannons go off, the Rokugani commanders must also make a Fear test or lose the ability to spend Void.

If, however, the PCs can get the Emperor to act like an Emperor and take charge, or persuade the commander of the Emerald Legions that this plan was ordered by some rear-echelon idiots who won't be watching anyway, the battle decisions will end up getting made by someone who knows what they're doing; a handy Lion or Seppun commander will have a Perception + Battle rating of about 7k4.

Can We Use the Pretty Map From *Otosan Uchi* as is?

You could, but historically, it's likely to have been a smaller city. The city as described in the year 1120 has an inner wall around the Forbidden City, a second wall (the Miwaku Kabe) around the Ekohikei, or inner districts, and a third, crumbling wall around the Toshisoto, or outer districts. In the year 400, it's likely that only the first two walls exist, and there will only be a few outlying buildings and docks near the harbor, not the bustling town on the map.

The waterfall depicted on the full-color map is the upper limit of the gaijin's sailing ability. Once a few ships have docked near its base, they will shoot at the Miwaku Kabe and try to storm the gate closest to the river. The Rokugani commanders will, of course, pile in the population and close the gates if they know an army is coming.

When the Spells Come Out

Rokugan possesses a unique advantage over the gaijin that experienced FRPGers are certain to exploit; the shugenja. Be prepared for the PCs to request Isawa upon Isawa to defend the city, since the capital city of the Empire will certainly have its share. The Phoenix have motive to help and specialize in working together in rituals, contributing Free Raises and dropping Void Points left and right. Even assuming there are as few as five to ten Rank 1 shugenja in the city makes for a fearsome weapon to give the gaijin army grief.

Tempest of Air or The Breath of Osano-Wo can repulse cannon or musket fire from key positions. Fist and Fury of Osano-Wo can summon a storm that can blow the gaijin off course, let alone the effect of hitting ships and cannon with lightning that sets fires and has even longer range than a cannon. Fist of Earth or Earthquake, depending on interpretation, Raises, and strength, can create a tsunami that can capsize countless ships, to say nothing of a five-shugenja conga line throwing Master of the Rolling River with 15 Void Points hucked in. Even seemingly minor-league spells such as Inflammation, Summon, or Transform can put a spark in a gaijin powder magazine at nearly any distance, blowing an entire ship sky-high.

There are a couple ways to keep the fighting lively:

1) Cinematic Destruction of Hordes of Extras

I'm sorry, did we say there's 5,000 gaijin and 120 ships? Nope. Get out a pencil. Now there's 10,000 gaijin and 250 ships. The Phoenix will run out of gas after a few dozen, then get together to throw up a huge Benevolent Protection of Shinsei over the Imperial Palace. It won't stop cannon fire, but at least no gaijin is going to drag the Emperor's body through the streets.

2) "They Couldn't Hit an Elephant at this Dist--"

The gaijin got to see what Phoenix magic could do during the purges, and they aren't keen on learning a second lesson. The Rokugani have no idea how long cannon range is, nor do they know what spotters for indirect fire are. Tempest of Air needs to be directed for it to repulse a cannon shell, so one canister

round from a hidden cannon snuck into the city is all you need to wipe out a group of shugenja. Keep in mind the Fear effects from cannon on land or sea (whichever they aren't paying attention to) can shut down Void.

3) Countless Important People Need Path to Inner Peace

There go all your Water spells, buddy.

4) Sir Ian McKellen's In Everything These Days

Hidden among the gaijin troops are a handful of gaijin wizards know how to use what the Unicorn call *meishodo*, or "name magic." While not as talented as the Phoenix, nor capable of Raises, their Grounding Energy and Counterspells can be done at the drop of a hat.

Gaijin Wizards (Rank 2 Shugenja equivalent)

EARTH 3, FIRE 3, AIR 3, WATER 3, VOID 3.

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Bojutsu 2, Courtier 1, Defense 2, Guns 2, Hand-to-Hand 2, Shugenja Lore 3, Sailing 2, Stealth 2.

Honor: 0 Glory: 0

Advantages: Magic Resistance 2 (+10 TN to be affected)

Disadvantages: Gaijin Name

TN to be Hit: 15

School Techniques: One Free Raise for a favored element, which varies with the individual; uses *meishodo* (see *Way of the Unicorn*), preventing them from using Raises but allowing them to cast any spell in 1 round.

Weapons: Fancy-looking walking stick (Str + 2k2), Musket or pistol (4k4, 3k3 at short range, 1 Raise per distance category, Fear effect TN 10, 4 rounds to reload).

Spells:

Counterspell (TN 10, adds 10 to TN of opposing spells)

The Fires From Within (TN 15, 5k3 damage, line of sight)

Tempest of Air (TN 15, creates a gust of wind, contested roll of caster's Air vs. target's Earth, if successful, knocks target off feet and moves them 10' back, stops projectiles, dur. 6 rounds)

Bo of Water (TN 15, creates a bo of water with 5k3 damage, duration

10 rounds)

Grounding Energy (TN 15, duration Earth x5 rounds, allows for the caster to make a contested roll against enemy spellcasting at a designated location; contested roll is the caster's Earth Ring versus the opponent's casting Element.)

The Battle On Land

If the gaijin can make it to Ootosan Uchi, they will secure a position outside of the south wall (the left of the map), well outside of arrow range, with three columns of musketeers armed with bayonets and swords. The cannoneers (of which there are about 75) will bombard the wall in an attempt to draw the defenders into emerging from the inner city.

This gives the gaijin a serious advantage. The samurai can hide behind stone battlements at first, but once the cannoneers get the range, they will simply lob their shots directly onto the wall or in gatehouse windows, killing dozens of samurai who thought they were safe.

If the Rokugani try to take them out with a charge, they've stepped into the trap. The musketeers will wait until the majority of troops are outside the wall, at which time the columns will open up with musket volleys to stop any charge and fix bayonets in extremes; when the charge is broken on one column, the other two columns will swing towards the center of the fighting, creating an envelopment (or, if the Rokugani were foolish enough to attack the middle column, this manuver creates a double envelopment). Ideally, during this time, the cannons will lob canister rounds onto the ramparts, at the gate, and into the city beyond to ensure no archers or shugenja get involved. The gunners will *not* fire into troops without a new order from their commander -- they have to conserve ammo for later bombardment, and they were told charging troops are the musketeers' job.

The south wall of Ootosan Uchi, therefore, is considered at least **Engaged** at all times. Going out onto the field is **Heavily Engaged**.

If the Rokugani begin to lose:

Using covered wagons reinforced with wood as shields from arrow fire, the gaijin will advance up to the walls with muskets to hit the enemy and saws to destroy the bar on the gate. (This allows them to capture the gate and replace the bar for their own use rather than destroying it with cannon.) Fortifying themselves on the gate wall will be a major priority; from there they can hit the palace with canister rounds to kill anything standing there, and their troops will advance to set fire to as many buildings as they can to cause confusion.

If the Rokugani begin to win:

How the player characters accomplish this is up to them, but a typical way to do so is to rain shugenja magic on the cannons (note the constant thunder of guns may erase the use of Void, the Phoenix's ace in the hole), saturating the gunpowder with either fire or water. The gaijin have prepared for this and have brought tarpaulin to try and keep the cannons dry, but rain is one thing and Master of the Rolling River another.

If the battle goes back and forth: The battle is won or lost once either side wins three times in a row in the Tides of Battle. After six rounds, you may judge that night has fallen, creating a lull in the fighting.

If this occurs, the PCs can try a commando raid under cover of darkness, a time in which muskets and cannons are remarkably inaccurate.

Duel results with the gaijin do not actually reflect a formal Rokugani battlefield duel, but a moment in which the samurai must face an opponent alone to be resolved at the skirmish level of detail. It should be noted that it takes one "attack" to draw a pistol and one to fire it, and while the gaijin have range on their side, they do not have an equivalent for the Iaijutsu skill. Dueling gaijin wizards use the regular Dueling Shugenja rules in *Way of the Phoenix*.

Heroic Opportunities in the land battle include:

- * The PC is in an attack on the gaijin column; charging into massed musket fire and surviving is worth at least **2 Glory Points**.
- * The PC shears a cannon in half with a supernaturally-aided kenjutsu swipe, or captures a cannon and turns it on the enemy ranks. **3 Glory Points**.
- * Kicking out the locks on the war-cart wheels and sending it rolling back down into the ranks of the gaijin is worth **2 Glory Points**.
- * Dousing fires and killing the gaijin responsible for the blazes is worth **2 Glory Points**.
- * The shugenja and troops are getting battered when a PC shields or rescues Isawa Sanro, someone with a Kharmic Tie to the PCs, or another prominent historical figure that abruptly changes history. As the PC shimmers and change between Clans like a chameleon, he intimidates the enemy and inspires allies for **4 Glory Points**.
- * When the outer gates crash down, the battle is at its bloodiest, but one to three warriors can stop the column if they can just hold the inner gate. Repulsing the gaijin bayonet charge at the gates of Otsan Uchi is worth **5 Glory Points**.
- * A PC who charges the enemy line and buys time by getting them to waste their ammo all on him will get at least **3 Glory Points** if he lives; note that any bushi who absorbs a cannonball to the chest with a spectacular use of Mountain Does Not Move or pure dumb luck will inspire the whole Rokugani army, gain a **Glory Rank**, and let the Rokugani who witnessed it ignore subsequent Fear effects for the duration of the battle.

Gaijin Infantry

EARTH 3, FIRE 2, Agility 3, AIR 2, WATER 3, VOID 2

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Commerce 2, Defense 2, Gambling 2, Guns 3, Hand-to-Hand 2, Sailing 2, Stealth 2.

Honor: 0 **Glory:** 0

Advantages: Large

Disadvantages: Gaijin Name

TN to be Hit: 10 (15 in armor)

Weapons: Musket or pistol (4k4, 3k3 at short range, 1 Raise per distance category, Fear effect TN 10, 4 rounds to reload), musket bayonet (Str +3k2), gaijin cutlass (Str+2k3), cannon (7k7 with 2 Raises to hit an individual or base TN 10 to deliver 4k4 in 10' radius for canister, Fear effect TN 15, 5 rounds to reload, -1 per extra crew member, max 3).

The Battle In the Harbor and the Sea

The battles here range from **Reserves** (the streets of Otosan Uchi and the Crane lands to the south) through **Engaged** in the harbor to **Heavily Engaged** out on the water or in the lighthouses, which are key objectives for bombarding the city. **Duel** results usually mean that the PC is bereft of help when the gaijin are climbing up the rigging for him.

If the Rokugani begin to lose:

Even the Rokugani's fastest boats are too slow when they're rowing into gaijin guns. The artillery will have countless opportunities to hit each crew at normal sailing speed, and the gaijin will sweep onto the shores. Putting cannon on the lighthouses is bad enough; putting some behind a building or two in the lower town means they can send spotters to crouch on nearby rooftops and figure out within a few rounds to fire canister rounds at the gate without ever being exposed to shugenja counterattack.

If those gates open and samurai come pouring out, this bunch *will* fire canister into the masses in order to stop a charge. From there, it's just a matter of time before they get to the tunnels underneath the city.

The Emperor's palace itself does have an enchantment laid on it to confuse and misdirect those not of the Hantei blood. However, the gaijin don't need to know where they're going. If they start coming up in the streets, they can hit the Imperial Palace with a cannon. It's traumatic enough seeing bleeding Cranes dying in the story gardens -- take a *guess* what happens to history if a canister round hits the Emperor's bedroom.

If the Rokugani begin to win:

The Mantis and the Crane are the great saving graces here. Additional troops mean no sooner have the gaijin made progress on their beach assault than they have to watch out for Rokugani arrows raining down on their backs, and the Mantis have no trouble shooting off an unstable platform. Better yet, their first-Rank technique means they can handle any weapon with a Skill of 1 -- including a captured gunship.

If the battle goes back and forth:

Nightfall is on the Rokugani's side here as well. The gaijin want to be in the bay, anchors weighed, and looting the docks when the sun goes down -- not floating around outside the peninsula, in the dark, looking for a place to land among the rocky sea cliffs. Thus, a stalemate is a win for the Rokugani. The gaijin will fall back and give up the harbor, landing further south down the Crane coast to reinforce their brethren, or, if they are losing there, going north to try and create a second front on the land.

Heroic Opportunities:

* The PC's boat gets sunk by cannon fire, and the crew wounded. They have only a few rounds to heroically lash together a raft, and pile on the wounded bodies. **Saving the remnants of the crew is worth 2 Glory Points.**

* A Rokugani crew is butchered by gunfire and their ship is left adrift. With no one at the helm, a PC can re-capture it and send it crashing into a gaijin ship. **Taking out a ship is worth 3 Glory Points.**

* The PC's sails are shredded and their ship is a sitting duck. As the canister rounds land, it's clear the only way they can get to an enemy ship is to swim, then board, then take it over...without any armor. **Capturing a ship this way is worth 4 Glory Points.**

* There is a narrow path up the cliff-side to the Crane beaches, and the gaijin desperately need it. Holding the line by cutting down gaijin among the rocks and hurling them off the cliff is worth **3 Glory Points.**

* Finding the gaijin squads who have sailed into the harbor in the chaos and disembarked into the tunnels beneath the city is worth **2 Glory Points.** Note that firing muskets in underground tunnels is a very good way to go deaf.

* Diving into the water after a drowning commander or kinsman is always a good way to get **2 Glory Points** upon the successful rescue. Keep in mind that the bodies and blood in the water will attract sharks, whose feeding frenzies will make for a frothing sea. Use the following stats if you want to drop back into Skirmish level.

Sharks

EARTH 3, FIRE 3, AIR 4, WATER 4

Rolls When Attacking: 4k3

Rolls For Damage: 3k2

TN to Be Hit: 15 (5 on a ship deck or in a net)

Wounds: 10: -1; 15: -2; 20: Dead

Notes: These are mostly blue sharks, which are not very big, but appear in large schools, following gaijin ships and eating the garbage they throw overboard. Once enough bodies hit the water, they will go into a feeding frenzy. The TN to hit a human swimming in the water is half what it is on land.

* Running alongside the ships sailing up Ootosan Uchi's main river and fighting them from the shores and from the bridges is worth **2 Glory Points**, or **3** if a spectacular leap from the bridge into a ship's rigging and hurling a gaijin out of the crow's nest is involved.

* When the fighting is thickest by the lighthouse peninsulae, the derelict ships will add up, clogging the entrance to the harbor. It is here the gaijin will have to attack the Rokugani in hand-to-hand if they are ever to take control of the ships and open the strait again. **Fighting the gaijin hordes to a standstill right at the mouth of the harbor is considered Heavily Engaged; let the Battle Table award the Glory as appropriate.**

* A PC sees the gaijin land and attack the lighthouse, with the intention of bringing cannon up to the top. They defend the stairs from the swarms of gaijin trying to climb their way up. Note that a spectacular Siege, Engineering, or Explosives roll (TN 25+) and a wagon full of captured gunpowder will let a crafty PC collapse the lighthouse, sending massive tons of stone down on any ship at the base of the peninsula. **Preventing the gaijin from getting the lighthouse and/or sending it tumbling down on gaijin ships is worth a Glory Rank.**

Gaijin Sailors

EARTH 2, FIRE 3, AIR 2, WATER 3, VOID 2

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Commerce 2, Craft: Shipwright 3, Defense 3, Gambling 2, Guns 3, Hand-to-Hand 2, Sailing 4, Stealth 2.

Honor: 0 Glory: 0

Advantages: Large

Disadvantages: Gaijin Name

TN to be Hit: 15

Weapons: Musket or pistol (4k4, 3k3 at short range, 1 Raise per distance category, Fear effect TN 10, 4 rounds to reload), gaijin cutlass (Str+1k3), cannon (7k7 with 2 Raises to hit an individual or base TN 10 to deliver 4k4 in 10' radius for canister, Fear effect TN 15, 5 rounds to reload, -1 per extra crew member, max 3).

That Guy Looks Familiar!

Kakita Kumpei, traitor to Rokugan, is hiding out somewhere in the reserves, either on land or sea. He's likely to stay out of the fighting until the PCs can pull off a good manuver and catch him -- say, when the Crane or the Mantis hit the gaijin fleet from behind, or the PCs raid the gaijin army in the middle of the night.

Kumpei can't run very fast. He can't fight too well, either. His ace in the hole is the fact that a Kakita Artisan, to travel through his paintings, can only paint a scene of a locale with which he is familiar. And he's the only Artisan in the year 400 who knows what the year 1120 looks like.

Did the PCs want to go home?

AND THE FALLOUT

If the PCs lose...well...

...history changes. Rokugan's screwed.

The gaijin bust up the palace, kill the *gozoku*, and make the Hantei swear allegiance to them. The Lion obey the Hantei's orders for about a week. Then they get in position and storm the city through sheer

force of numbers. They'll win, but at a price described in **Appendix 2**.

It's not a good price.

If, on the other hand, the PCs help the Rokugani fight at least to a stalemate, time is on their side once more. The sea battle will end first as the gaijin fleets flee, searching for a safe harbor. If they can't go south because of Crane troops, they will go north into what they think is unoccupied territory.

Unfortunately for them, they never found out the Dragon and Centipede clans were sending reinforcements south to Otsan Uchi, just in case something happened. A legion of fresh troops and sun-worshipping shugenja who specialize in Air and Fire magic are just the thing to clean up the dregs the following morning. (Yes, we did the "Dragon's mysterious prescience conveniently saves the Empire" thing in *Fortunes Lost*. But the Dragon do it four times throughout Rokugan's history to save the Empire, and this was one of those times. Plus, if they don't capture a little black powder from this incident, how are the Agasha going to invent fireworks?)

The gaijin, as a rule, expect no mercy when surrendering, nor do the Dragon give any to non-samurai who attacked the Emperor. The gaijin will try to escape by sailing across the seas, wounded, starving, and without ammunition, never to return.

GLORY, HONOR, AND...UH, I WAS NEVER HERE

If the PCs chipped in to save the Empire and helped the Emperor stand up to the *gozoku* for once in his life, he'll want to reward them lavishly. Unfortunately, if he does so, their names will be remembered in the Ikoma histories at the Battle of the White Stag for centuries.

So now the PCs have a choice.

They can try to go home, or they can live a pampered existence in the year 400.

This can be a pretty sweet existence. The PC can hang out at the Emperor's side with his name glorified and the chance to take credit for all the innovations he can remember from the future. He can get placed in the Emperor's army, be granted his own minor Clan and a Glory Rank around a 7 or more, he could get trained by the Seppun, he could advise the Emperor on future threats to preserve the Empire, and recruit a legion of underlings to cover up his mistakes. There will, of course, be jealous enemies, such as the Scorpion and the Phoenix, and a vague, nagging feeling...almost like a memory...that the PC's eyes were once a different color.

That feeling will grow.

Bring Me My Ruby Geta

If Kumpei lives, he will grudgingly submit to doing a painting under the watchful eyes of the PCs. He wants to get home, too, and genuinely believes that what he and Akuro have done was for the good of the Empire. Who among the samurai would not interfere in order to stop Rokugan from suffering the worst of all possible fates?

To paint the scene, Kumpei needs to make an Intelligence + School Rank Test, TN 30, and use the remaining vial of kami-ichor. Once opened, this one-way portal will last for about five minutes -- as long as the ichor is wet. Akuro, who is most likely dead, was the only one who knew how to isolate the

ichor, so this is truly their one and only chance to get home.

If Kumpei is dead but the heroes have the vial, they are, most likely, still stranded in the past. PCs may attempt to employ another Kakita Artisan. To do so, they must thoroughly describe their homeland and home time to such an extent that the artisan feels as if they had been there themselves. (A Kakita Artisan Story-Teller PC would be ideal for such a situation.) This is a fun way to make players roleplay how much they want to see their families and daimyo again, and a good way to make them sweat; one inaccuracy can send them who-knows-where. The Artisan will have to make an Intelligence + School Rank Test, TN 30.

It is during this process that the player characters may get an inevitable sinking feeling -- that the artisan will have to be told what they are painting, and springing the big secret on them will change the future. Ordering the artist's seppuku will change the future as well. As a matter of fact, staying here and living out a life in the past would be changing the future terribly, too.

But the *heroes* committing seppuku...to have the lot of them die, erased from the histories and the memory of all that were here except perhaps the Son of Heaven and the mysterious Togashi...that would solve a lot, wouldn't it?

The World Upon Return

If the PCs have fudged it beyond a reasonable doubt or you're feeling like a tragic ending is the way to go, feel free to warp the future history of the Empire. The changes can be sweeping: it's entirely possible the Asahina family may not exist, for example -- or PCs may come home only to find out that everything is as it should be except one small, poetic detail. This would be the time to hit the PCs' buttons. Was it all worth it if they come home only to find their betrothed coming to greet them wearing the outfit of a different Clan?

But hopefully, your players will have done a good job. If they return home for a happy ending, having prevented the death of any major historical figures; won the Battle of the White Stag, put a stop to Kumpei and Akuro and somehow managed to leave no lasting footprint on history, then they are due for their rewards.

Once they emerge into the modern day of Otosan Uchi, they can find their way back to their lord (Kitsuki Yasu, in this case) and report that they found the murderer of the Togashi monks. If they present their case, he will congratulate them on solving the mystery. As for their strange and unbelievable tale, like a good Kitsuki, he will remain skeptical, and will not recognize their heroic actions at the Battle of the White Stag. If they persist, he will suggest employment as a jester.

In sum, they will receive 3 Glory Points for nailing a crafty murderer.

That's right. In the ideal situation, if the players have busted ass across time in order to nail this maddened jerk, been scrupulously careful not to alter the time-stream in any way despite the fact that only they would know, and then once they have been shredded by cannon fire, they told the Emperor himself, "No, no, this isn't the way things were supposed to work. I will humbly and gracefully refuse all acknowledgement and all mention of my presence in the Ikoma histories. I need to return home to my family and friends and my menial task catching bandits for my own flawed and arbitrary lord, and serve ingloriously just as I have done for the past few years of my life. You are offering me the Empire with the sanction of the Son of Heaven and therefore the Celestial Order and I am refusing it, because *it would be wrong.*"

It has been our experience that playtesters don't do this.

If a player is happy with this result, ask to see his character sheet. Get out an eraser. Give him back his character without any time-related changes.

At the bottom, under "Honor," put down "5."

No one else needs to know.

APPENDIX 1: GUNPOWDER

The gaijin invading Otosan Uchi have three kinds of gunpowder weapons: flint-lock pistols, muskets, and cannon. For purposes of this adventure, all three use the Low skill "Guns" to hit, which is combined with Agility when taking a shot.

As with Horse Archery (see *Way of the Unicorn*) it is possible to take an action solely to aim the gun and gain a Free Raise to hit. The gunner must hold still (TN to Be Hit 5) for one action per Raise they want, must be able to track the target, and may gain a maximum of Free Raises equal to their Perception.

Sidearms

Both pistols and muskets deliver 4k4 damage at point-blank range and 3k3 at Short range (6 feet). Raises may, as usual, increase this damage. They are reasonably inaccurate at longer ranges -- for every range increment, the marksman must make 1 additional Raise in order to hit, thus providing the following difficulty:

Weapon PB	Short	Medium (+5TN)	Long (+10)	Extreme (+15)	
Pistol	0-2	2-10	11-20	21-30	31-40 yards
Musket	0-2	2-10	11-25	25-40	41-50 yards

However, the psychological value of a gunshot has a different effect than that of comparable medieval weaponry. When a pistol or musket goes off, the bang creates a Fear effect with a TN of 10 to those who are not on the marksman's side or were unprepared for the noise, preventing those that fail the Willpower test from being able to spend Void during the combat. It takes 4 rounds and the use of both hands to reload a musket or pistol -- on the fifth round, the musketeer will be able to fire again. For this reason, many gaijin sailors carry two or more pistols tucked in their belt, and the land forces often alternate fire to keep the pressure on the enemy.

Firearms of this period are notoriously unstable; if a firearm user ever rolls below 5 on an attack roll or the loaded weapon comes into contact with a significant flame, it will misfire and explode, doing a DR of 2 to the one holding it.

Cannon

The gaijin have brought only two kinds of loads for their cannon -- ball ammunition for destroying fortifications and ships, and canister rounds, for anti-personnel attacks.

Ammunition	Short	Medium (+5TN)	Long (+10)	Extreme (+15)
Canister 0-200	200-400	400-600	800-1000 yards	
Cannonball	0-200	200-500	500-1000	1000-1600 yards

Canister rounds consist of shot, shavings, nails and so forth tucked into a canister that explodes on impact, delivering a DR of 4 in a 10' radius. Armor reduces this damage by its change in TN to Be Hit. The TN for a cannoneer to hit an intended area with a canister round is a base of 10 at Short range; this will be modified by visibility conditions. Raises may be made as above for range or for extra roll dice on damage.

Cannon balls have a DR of 7 and ignore the armor a human target is wearing. However, while a cannonball will bounce through ranks of men, maiming as it goes, or destroy structures with ease, it is not easy to deliberately hit an individual with a cannonball, and thus the cannoneer must Raise twice to hit an individual.

Like firearms, cannons have a Fear effect of TN 15 to those not on the cannoneer's side or to whomever was unprepared for the noise. Those that fail the roll cannot spend Void for the duration of the combat. Also like firearms, if the cannoneer rolls under a 5 in the attack roll or the cannon is introduced to a significant flame, the cannon will misfire or explode, doing a DR of 3 to its crew.

A cannon requires a crew of one, but requires 5 rounds to reload. This time can be reduced by 1 round per extra crew member, up to a maximum crew of 3 and a reload time of 3 rounds.

APPENDIX 2: THE WORLD THAT SHOULD NOT BE

Togashi Akuro thinks the technology curve could help Rokugan defeat Fu Leng. Unfortunately, while he may be a whiz at Go, he hasn't played *Civilization*.

If the PCs sit back and watch just after Seikidera's death, the gaijin kick butt and hold the Hantei hostage. The Lion, of course, cannot stand for this, and will eventually attack and destroy the gaijin through some good generaling and a lot of honorable sacrifices.

Regrettably, these honorable sacrifices mean certain people will never be born.

If the PCs stay, they will see this battle, and a second wave of gaijin determined to try and conquer the Emerald Empire. Refusing to adopt the gun, the Phoenix shugenja work hand in hand with the Akodo, becoming the Empire's artillery at the terrible cost of stripping bare nearly every spirit north of the Spine of the World. This causes Togashi Yokuni great distress, and the Dragon refuse to fight: they already know who will win. This causes the Emperor declares they are no longer a Clan.

That's about all they will see in their natural lives.

A generation after that, the Crane, nearly as chewed up as the Lion, take their revenge upon the Mantis, and when the years of bad harvests come, they have little choice but to toss aside their vaunted honor, and try to conquer Scorpion land for something to eat. This is unfortunate for the Crane because the Scorpion use cannon and in the space of twenty years, factories. This means the Scorpion become a great military power, right up until the last Akodo falls in the mid-500s. Unfortunately for all concerned, the rift between Lion and Scorpion is too great. One fateful night in the year 510, Soshi Takasho is

looking for help involving the origins of some cursed swords, and there is no one there to help him, because Akodo Minobe was never born.

Soshi Takasho and Akodo Minobe were the two samurai who stopped Iuchiban from becoming Emperor.

The Crab try to stop him for the first century; then, when they commit too far, the Shadowlands, under the command of the Oni known as the Maw, attack and break through, taking Hiruma Castle and the other lands all the way up to the Shinomen Forest.

The Naga awaken and try to stop them, but when they see Iuchiban fighting the Shadowlands, even they decide that it is best that the two evils exhaust each other for a time before the killing blow can be struck.

That killing blow never comes.

The factories and the muskets give way to smokeless powder and the machine gun. Iuchiban's armies number in the millions of animated corpses. Countless zombies die with pierced porcelain masks; armored wagons with internal combustion engines roll down the streets of Ootosan Uchi, sheltering shugenja and firing artillery shells loaded with jade powder. But it is to no avail. Iuchiban starts to forge souls into his machines of war, providing himself with eternal guardians neither alive nor dead.

Around the year 800, the Unicorn return, but not through the Shadowlands. Enough ripples went through the Ivory Kingdoms to change the news given to their advance scouts, and they came riding in from the north, which is fortunate, since everything south of the Spine of the World, including the Shinomen Forest, is Shadowlands. Kuni Osaku's sacrifice to create the Wall occurred at the Spine of the World Mountains, stretching from where Iuchi Castle is on the present map down to Kyuden Ikoma, and then it branches through the Lion castles up to the Castle of the Swift Sword and then the Dragon.

When the Unicorn elders present the fan of Lady Doji to what's left of the Crane, their horses are a far cry from the tanks and cars cruising down the asphalt roads. They are accepted as poor cousins until they prove their adaptability in the next few generations by figuring out the principles of flight. By 1120, something akin to the Dragon, Crab, Scorpion and Unicorn are the dominant powers in the Western Empire, a tiny hold-out of fertile fields where the Dragon and Unicorn might have been in a different life.

To the east are the puppets of Iuchiban, who controls Ootosan Uchi, Fu Leng's goal. Iuchiban also controls Beiden Pass, which is the only reason the Dark Brother's army hasn't won yet. The minions of evil only have their numbers held in check by constant wars upon one another and a good deal of internal chaos. But for the average Rokugani, life is toil in the fields, toil in the factories, and a grim glance to the Three Clans' Wall, knowing that in the long run, there is no hope.

Unless there was something new.

Something small. Maybe a handful of people, who suddenly show up, apparently unnoticed for all these years. Maybe their memories are of a different time, a different place.

Maybe.

Still got that map of Ootosan Uchi?

[Part I](#) | [Part II](#)