



Legend
of the
Five Rings™
ROLEPLAYING



DEATHLY TURNS

SUPPLEMENTAL ENCOUNTERS FOR WHEEL OF JUDGMENT

Deathly Turns

IMPORTANT—IF YOU INTEND TO BE A PLAYER IN WHEEL OF JUDGMENT, YOU SHOULD NOT READ PAST THIS POINT. DOING SO WILL SPOIL THE ADVENTURE FOR YOU!

THE FALCON TAKES FLIGHT

The encounter **A Mission from Lady Mazoku** and the adventure seeds from the **Agents of the Mazoku** appendix could also be used as jumping-off points for campaigns in which many of the PCs belong to the Falcon Clan (see *Shadowlands* page 81).

Deathly Turns is a game supplement that encompasses several optional bonus encounters meant to be played in conjunction with the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game* adventure *Wheel of Judgment*. It consists of three encounters and an appendix of adventure seeds:

- ✿ **Blood and Magic (page 3):** This encounter takes place after the player characters (PCs) have been reincarnated as *oni* and have entered Jigoku, the Realm of Evil, in Part Two of *Wheel of Judgment*. This encounter also includes options that expand upon playing *oni* characters.
- ✿ **Escape of the Hungry Dead (page 10):** This encounter can be incorporated after the PCs have left Jigoku and are returning to Meido, the Realm of Waiting, through Gaki-dō, the Realm of the Hungry Dead. This encounter also provides additional information about Gaki-dō.
- ✿ **A Mission from Lady Mazoku (page 15):** This encounter takes place shortly after the PCs have returned to Ningen-dō, the Realm of Mortals.
- ✿ **Appendix: Agents of Mazoku (page 22):** This appendix provides several adventure seeds for subsequent adventures, which can occur any time after the players have played through *Wheel of Judgment*.

The first two encounters (**Blood and Magic** and **Escape of the Hungry Dead**) are meant to be integrated directly into the *Wheel of Judgment* adventure, giving the PCs additional objectives while in Jigoku and Gaki-dō, respectively. These encounters reference Non-Player Character (NPC) profiles from *Wheel of Judgment*, so it is good to have a copy of that adventure handy. Of course, game masters (GMs) could certainly use them in other ways, as stand-alone adventures or in conjunction with their own campaigns.

Even in the absence of *Wheel of Judgment*, each encounter provides PCs with a compelling reason to adventure in these strange and dangerous Spirit Realms and accomplish a particular task. However, each also presumes that the PCs have been reincarnated as *oni*, giving them unique characteristics and capabilities that make journeying in these realms possible. GMs may need to take measures to ensure that PCs who have not been reincarnated as *oni* do not suffer unduly from the terrifying effects of these realms!

The remaining encounter and set of adventure seeds (**A Mission from Lady Mazoku** and **Agents of Mazoku**) in this supplement are similarly suited to being used apart from *Wheel of Judgment*. However, for the most part, these take place in Ningen-dō, so they are suited to more conventional mortal PCs. Thus, they could be used before (or after) adventures in the realms of the dead featured in *Wheel of Judgment* or purely as stand-alone scenarios.

It is strongly recommended that the GM thoroughly read and become familiar with each encounter they intend to use before running it with a group of PCs. Finally, note that all of the special rules incorporated into *Wheel of Judgment*—for instance, the ability of *shugenja* to use Theology as a Social skill, as described in **Shugenja in the Underworld**, on page 7 of that adventure—can be applied to the encounters featured here, at the GM's discretion.

NEW SCHOOLS

In addition to the bonus encounters, *Deathly Turns* introduces two new schools suitable for characters who join the party in the afterlife: the **Mazoku's Enforcer Tradition** (see page 24) and the **Champion of Days Gone Tradition** (see page 25).



Blood and Magic

The PCs have been reincarnated as oni, using the masks provided by the *maō* (demon lord) Burakakin, as described beginning on page 11 of *Wheel of Judgment*. The masks have absorbed their spirits, causing them to be reincarnated as oni, and they have entered the hellish realm of Jigoku. In this form, they are able to move relatively freely through this land, something that would be far more difficult and dangerous were they still mortals.

Burakakin has given the PCs the task of determining who, or what, is responsible for the missing paperwork and the general sabotage of the bureaucracy of Meido, which is causing a great deal of consternation in the court of Emma-Ō, the Fortune of Death and Judge of the Dead. **Blood and Magic** also gives the PCs a problem to solve that is independent of Burakakin's mission.

The PCs may choose to ignore the new problem—with appropriate consequences, as described below—or to pursue it. If they pursue it, they may do so in parallel with Burakakin's mission, or they may place that mission on hold while they pursue the new one. In either case, **Blood and Magic** does not otherwise interact with Burakakin's mission. Note, however, that should the PCs' true natures and purpose for being in Jigoku be revealed during this encounter, it could very much have implications for Burakakin's mission.

A SINISTER CONVERSATION

As the PCs make their way through the bleak, gloomy tunnels of Jigoku, they come upon a side passage that almost immediately opens up into a cave, which is the lair of a hulking oni called the Brute. Three other oni are gathered there, and all are engaged in a furtive discussion about something that should not be possible: a mortal has come to Jigoku, in order to make a bargain.

Read aloud or paraphrase the following:

...mortal...yes, a mortal, here...wants to make a bargain...

If the PCs remain in the main tunnel and listen, the other oni do not detect them. However, because of echoes and the noise made by the other oni, the PCs only overhear pieces of what the Brute says next. Read aloud or paraphrase the following, interspersing fiendish growls throughout:

...a tunnel...under that accursed Wall...Empire from the inside!...from the fortress...the Bleak Place... along with her...to ourselves!

Hearing all of what the oni says requires the PCs to get closer, risking detection. Getting closer without being noticed requires a **TN 2 Skulduggery check (Air 1, Fire 3)**. Failure means that the gathered oni detect them, although not before the PCs manage to overhear their conversation.

Whether or not the oni detect the PCs, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

The largest oni, a vile figure wrapped in a mantle of flayed flesh, speaks to its three smaller comrades:

"She claims to be a *mahō-tsukai*. Says she can show us a passage that leads right under that damnable wall, so we can attack their pathetic Empire from the inside! In return, she wants this scroll. Got it from the fortress. Now she's waiting to meet me, in the Bleak Place. I say we go along with her. We can always kill her later. Meantime, we keep this to ourselves!"

With a cacophony of growls, grunts, and hideous glee, the other oni all enthusiastically agree with the massive brute. Your eye is drawn to the scroll case perched on the Brute's back, an incongruous sight atop the monstrosity.

If the oni detect the PCs (or the PCs rush into the open to smite the foul plotters), read or paraphrase the following aloud as well:

Suddenly, the largest oni's four baleful eyes turn and rest upon you. "What's this? Wretches eavesdropping on us, seeking to steal our scraps? Slaughter them!"

If the oni do not detect the PCs, the PCs have the option to fight (see below), or they can proceed to the options listed under **On the Trail of Evil** (see page 5).

If the oni detect the PCs, the PCs must fight (see below). However, at the GM's discretion, PCs with sufficiently cunning plans (or clever roleplaying ideas) might be able to divert the fight to an intrigue or escape, or otherwise pursue one of the options listed under **On the Trail of Evil** (see page 5).

FIGHT!

Three Vicious Oni plus the Brute are initially visible, but they don't all fight unless the PCs seem like a worthy challenge. Based on **Table 1-1: Oni Battle Scaling** on page 4), one or more of the Trio of Vicious Oni may hang back, making cruel comments or cheering for the Brute but refraining from entering the fight (see **Determining Group Rank** on page 310 of the core rulebook).

TABLE 1-1: ONI BATTLE SCALING

PC GROUP RANK	NUMBER OF COMBATANTS
7 or lower	The Brute
8–12	The Brute and one member of the Trio of Vicious Oni
12–16	The Brute and two members of the Trio of Vicious Oni
16+	The Brute and all three members of the Trio of Vicious Oni

Note that this encounter is calibrated to be quite difficult for most groups. This is because the costs of failure are somewhat lower than they would usually be (see **Dying as Demons** on page 14 of *Wheel of Judgment*). If the PCs perish, they can pick up the trail again (see **On the Trail of Evil** on page 5).

The edges of the wide tunnel in which the battle takes place are filled with massive stalactites and stalagmites that appear upon close inspection to be made of calcified blood, each with a skull spitted on its point. These areas are Dangerous and Obscuring terrain. A river of vile, clinging ooze also cuts through the tunnel near where the oni are standing: this is Entangling terrain. See page 267 of the core rulebook for information on **Terrain Qualities**.

If the PCs win the battle, any oni who did not participate scatter into the darkness of the tunnels and are quickly lost to sight. The PCs can recover the scroll from the tattered pile of flayed skin the Brute threw off during the fight (see **The Scroll**, page 8). The scroll bears the name of a location, scrawled recently in blood, on its outside: the Bleak Place.

TRIO OF VICIOUS ONI


MINION CONFLICT RANK:  4  3

The demonic creatures called oni lord over Jigoku in the name of Fu Leng, their fallen master. However, some oni do more lording than others; the vicious oni whom the Brute has gathered are a trio of cruel and capricious horrors, but they are relatively low within the cosmological pecking order in which they reside. One is a bird-headed skeleton with ragged feathers of blood; the second a


swirling pit of darkness from which scabrous insect legs protrude, scabbling across the ground; the third a blazing corpse studded with nails of black iron. The three are constantly squabbling over slights as old as the War against Fu Leng.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
00 HONOR	 3	 2	ENDURANCE 12
03 GLORY	 2	 3	COMPOSURE 8
00 STATUS	 2		FOCUS 4
 +2,  -2	DEMEANOR - HUBRISTIC		VIGILANCE 2
ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 2	SCHOLAR 2	SOCIAL 0
ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES	

Unholy Might:

 Martial; *Physical, Spiritual*

Sickening Visage:

 Social; *Interpersonal*

FAVORED WEAPONS

Corrupted Talons and Spines: Range 0–1, Damage 5, Deadliness 5, Durable, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Vile hide (Physical 2, Supernatural 1, Unholy)

ABILITIES

BOUND FOR ETERNITY

As a Support action, one member of the Trio of Vicious Oni may revive one trio member who was defeated in the previous round. Spectral chains reach from the surviving member to the other, dragging the soul back immediately through their unholy bond and returning the fallen comrade with 6 fatigue and 4 strife, and all conditions and injury disadvantages removed. After a trio member is revived, each foe at range 0–2 of the returned oni receives 3 strife. Members of the trio who are not participating in the battle do not use this ability.


HELL IS OTHER DEMONS

After a member of the trio becomes Compromised, it always chooses to become Enraged as its unmasking. It moves toward its nearest trio comrade and performs a Strike action against that other member, if able. It does so even during a scene in which this would not normally be allowed, such as an intrigue.

SHORTCUT TO THE SCROLL

The PCs might come into possession of the scroll early, should they defeat the Brute. See page 8 for more information on the scroll.




THE BRUTE

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK:  12  5

A vile behemoth, the Brute is an oni of vast and ancient power. Wrapped in a shroud of flayed skin stained dark with blood and wielding a monstrous ax fitted with teeth of obsidian, this horror stands significantly taller than any mortal. Beneath the shroud, an onlooker might be unfortunate enough to catch a glimpse of red sinew and twisted bone, the curves interweaving like the roots of some malign tree. In the Brute's skull-like face, four ember eyes burn.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
00 HONOR		ENDURANCE 18	
10 GLORY		COMPOSURE 10	
00 STATUS		FOCUS 6	
 +2,  -2 DEMEANOR - AGGRESSIVE		VIGILANCE 3	

ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 1 SOCIAL 1 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Massive Stature:  Martial; <i>Physical</i> Unholy Strength:  Martial; <i>Physical, Spiritual</i>	Unquenchable Bloodthirst:  Social; <i>Interpersonal</i>

FAVORED WEAPONS

Massive Obsidian Ax: Range 1–2, Damage 8, Deadliness 7, Durable, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Blood-soaked hide robes (Physical 5, Supernatural 2, Unholy), the scroll

ABILITIES

DREAD BELLOW

Once per scene as a Scheme action, the Brute may roar, feeding on the primal terror it instills. Each other character at range 0–4 must resist with a **TN 4 Meditation check (Earth 2, Air 5)** or suffer the Afflicted condition and stumble back 1 range band from the Brute. For each character who fails, the Brute removes 2 fatigue.

HARVESTER OF HEADS

The Brute reduces the TN of Attack action checks against Compromised characters by 1 (to a minimum of 1).

GIANT OF JIGOKU

The Brute is an Otherworldly, Tainted being of silhouette 5. After any character performs a successful Attack action that deals 0 damage to the Brute (after resistance is applied), that character suffers 3 strife.

ON THE TRAIL OF EVIL

At this point, the PCs are aware that the Empire faces a terrible threat. Even so, they may decide that it's not their problem and simply carry on with their mission from Burakakin. Depending on the PCs' attachments to the Mortal Realm, this might require them to forfeit honor (for ignoring an existential threat to their homeland), receive strife (if they still have loved ones among the living), or both. Ignoring the problem should also have narrative consequences later in the campaign, whether they are ramifications in the afterlife (other oni could use the passage, and the PCs could be required to investigate escapes from Jigoku) or in the world of the living.

Assuming they choose to act on what they've learned, the PCs have several choices regarding how to proceed.

JOIN FORCES WITH (OR DECEIVE) THE ONI

The PCs could attempt to join forces with the oni. At this point, if they reveal themselves to the Brute and its cohorts, a successful **TN 5 Courtesy** or **TN 3 Command check** is necessary to prevent them from being immediately attacked. If they succeed, they must undertake an intrigue against the Brute and its demonic cohort (see page 254 of the core rulebook).

For the participants in this intrigue and some example objectives, see **Table 1–2: Blood and Magic Participants and Objectives** on page 6.

If the PCs succeed in convincing either the Brute or the Trio of Vicious Oni to let them accompany the growing band of demons, they are able to join in the vile venture (or pretend to do so).

If the Brute intimidates the PCs and the PCs have not yet achieved their social objectives, the PCs each receive 6 strife. Any PC whose nerve holds and does not become Compromised then counts as having succeeded in their objective to convince the Brute to let that PC go along. Any PC who becomes Compromised flinches. If all PCs flinch this way, the oni plotters stalk off and vanish beyond a serpentine bend in the tunnel before the PCs recover themselves. If some PCs flinch and others don't, at the GM's discretion, a PC who flinched may unmask and make a suitably impressive display of (ostensible) evil or might to convince the Brute they are worthy to accompany the group anyway.

If the Trio of Vicious Oni succeed in their objective and neither the PCs nor the Brute have succeeded in their objectives, a brawl breaks out. See **Fight!** on page 3. At the GM's discretion, any number of PCs can slip away from the impending brawl before it starts if at least one PC succeeds at a **TN 4 Skulduggery (Air) check**.

DEALING WITH DEMONS

PCs with two or more ranks in Theology will know that lecturing the trio and the Brute on their religious and spiritual failings can potentially weaken their resolve and browbeat them into cooperating with the PCs. Alternatively, the PCs could use religious reasoning to convince the oni that doing something is in their best interest.

On the flip side, the PCs can lean into their disguise as oni and impress their audience with how blasphemous and profane they are: "You should let us join you because we hate Shinsei and the Fortunes so much. That fool Fortune of Mercy Jizō tried to say something nice to me once, and I told him he was old and laughed at him..."

TABLE 1–2: BLOOD AND MAGIC PARTICIPANTS AND OBJECTIVES

SOCIAL OBJECTIVE	PARTICIPANT	MOMENTUM POINTS NEEDED	BASE TN
Appeal to the Brute	One or more PCs	6	3 (Water +2, Fire –2)
Appeal to the Trio of Vicious Oni	One or more PCs	8	2 (Earth +2, Air –2)
Intimidate the new arrivals	The Brute	Highest PC focus	Highest PC vigilance
Start a brawl	The Trio of Vicious Oni	Highest PC focus +5	Highest PC vigilance –1

FOLLOW THE BRUTE

The PCs could instead attempt to follow the Brute clandestinely to its meeting with the mahō-tsukai. This requires one PC to succeed at a **TN 3 Skulduggery check** to stay hidden or a **TN 4 Tactics check** to outmaneuver the oni. If at least one PC succeeds, the entire group can follow the Brute through a series of winding tunnels without being noticed, eventually arriving at the Bleak Place.

If the PCs fail, they must either confront the Brute and its minions or retreat. If they retreat, they lose track of the Brute and must find their way to the Bleak Place on their own (see **Find the Bleak Place** below). If they confront the Brute and its minions, they must do battle (see **Fight!** on page 3) or try to talk their way into joining the Brute’s journey (see **Join Forces with [or Deceive] the Oni** on page 5).

FIND THE BLEAK PLACE

A third option is for the PCs to strike out on their own and attempt to find the mahō-tsukai themselves, as they have overheard the location of the meeting: the Bleak Place. The PCs could do any of the following to find the Bleak Place, or they could attempt other creative solutions at the GM’s discretion:

- ☘ **TN 4 Theology (Water) check:** A canny PC might wonder what effect the presence of a mortal mahō-tsukai has on *kansen*, or corrupted elemental kami. Indeed, studying the behavior of the *kansen* for a short while reveals that they all seem to be drawn in one general direction, which could lead the PCs to their quarry.

- ☘ **TN 5 Courtesy (Fire) or TN 3 Command (Fire) check:** The PCs could ask other denizens of this hellish domain about the Bleak Place. Assuming the approached denizens cooperate, they describe the Bleak Place and how to get there, but they do so in furtive tones that suggest the prospect of going there actually frightens them.
- ☘ **TN 4 Culture (Earth) check:** The PCs could attempt to remember stories of the Bleak Place from myths or popular tales in the hope of divining its location in Jigoku.
- ☘ Should the PCs fail at all of their attempts, they are eventually able to find the Bleak Place, but not without encountering additional enemies and hazards.

THE MAHŌ-TSUKAI

While a mahō-tsukai NPC is presented here as the default antagonist for **Blood and Magic**, the GM may wish to substitute their own NPC. For instance, the PCs may have already crossed paths with such a vile character, giving them an increased stake in that NPC’s defeat. A good example would be the character Kitsu Sokori, who appears in both the *Legend of the Five Rings Game Master’s Kit* adventure **Dark Tides** and the *Mask of the Oni* adventure. If the characters did not kill her in *Mask of the Oni*, and she managed to escape—or, to make matters even more personal, if she defeated and killed them—then she would make an excellent mahō-tsukai antagonist. However, all further references will be to the default mahō-tsukai NPC, an enigmatic woman known only as Jya-Aku.



JYA-AKU

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK:  8  6

Jya-Aku, whose name means “wickedness” (and is surely an alias), is an enigma. She is a mahō-tsukai of prodigious power, and no one is certain of her true identity. She might have been a samurai of the Great Clans, a commoner, or even a foreigner, but on the matter of her past, she is silent. She might be new to the craft or an ancient sorcerer prolonging her life through unholy means. All that is known about her is that she is cunning, elusive, and profoundly dangerous.

SOCIETAL	PERSONAL
01 HONOR	ENDURANCE 16
11 GLORY	COMPOSURE 14
00 STATUS	FOCUS 8
 +2,  -2 DEMEANOR - SINISTER	VIGILANCE 4

ARTISAN 1 MARTIAL 2 SCHOLAR 4 SOCIAL 2 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Forbidden Knowledge [Mahō]:  Scholar; <i>Mental</i>	Sinister Arrogance:  Social; <i>Interpersonal</i>

FAVORED WEAPONS

Blasphemous Knife: Range 0, Damage 3, Deadline 6, Concealable, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Fel Mantle (Physical 5, Supernatural 5, Unholy) (see next column), concealing hat, set of forbidden scrolls, leather map to tunnel from the Shadowlands to Rokugan (see page 8)

ABILITIES

MAHŌ MASTER

Jya-Aku is a Tainted being, and while wearing the Fel Mantle she is also an Otherworldly being. She can perform any of the following mahō techniques from the core rulebook:

- ✦ *Grip of Anguish* (see page 224)
- ✦ *Mark of Desecration* (see page 225)
- ✦ *Sinful Whispers* (see page 225)

Additionally, if the GM possesses the *Shadowlands* sourcebook, Jya-Aku can perform any of the following techniques from that volume:

- ✦ *Shape the Flesh* (see page 120)
- ✦ *Spiritual Shackles* (see page 120)
- ✦ *Spread Corruption* (see page 120)

THE FEL MANTLE

Crafted by an unknown but clearly depraved artisan, the Fel Mantle is a powerful artifact created from the hide of a long-dead oni. It offers resistances of Physical 5 and Supernatural 5, and it has the Unholy item quality. It also grants the wearer the abilities to see in total darkness and to sense the presence of kansen and other powers in Jigoku. Moreover, its wearer becomes a Tainted, Otherworldly being.

The Fel Mantle is what has enabled Jya-Aku to enter Jigoku; should she remove it, she would be flung immediately back into Ningen-dō, the Mortal Realm. Where in Rokugan (or beyond) Jya-Aku appears is up to the GM, but in the process of being flung back, she shoots straight up into Jigoku’s rocky ceiling and is dragged painfully and humiliatingly upward toward Ningen-dō through every stratum of rock and dirt between her and the surface world. This means that, in addition to the tunnel indicated on the leather map Jya-Aku carries (see **The Map**, page 8), the PCs have a new tunnel from Jigoku to the Mortal Realm to deal with—and seal—as soon as possible. PCs with at least 2 ranks in Theology understand the implications of a mortal trespassing in Jigoku and what would happen if Jya-Aku’s means of trespassing were removed.

Using the Fel Mantle comes at a terrible price. A being wearing it hears constant disturbing whispers, perhaps some dreadful echo of the oni from which it was made. Each day the being wears it, even if only for a minute, their composure decreases by 1. Even after removing the Fel Mantle, the wearer retains the Shadowlands Taint (Void) disadvantage. If they remove the Fel Mantle and rid themselves of it permanently, their composure increases by 1 each day until it is fully restored. If they ever wear the Fel Mantle again, their composure immediately drops to 1. If their composure decreases to 0 while wearing the Fel Mantle, they are wholly consumed by Fu Leng’s will, becoming a pawn (whether witting or unwitting) to the fallen god’s schemes. Jya-Aku has been wearing the Fel Mantle for two days, which is already reflected in her composure.

THE BLEAK PLACE

The Bleak Place, a cavern holding nothing but pools of stagnant water, is one of the very few parts of Jigoku that does not change or shift unnervingly. This is because it is, spiritually, utterly dead. In a past age, perhaps, some great desecration blasted all essence of vitality from the place, leaving it barren and desolate, even for an unhalloved place like Jigoku. Jya-Aku has chosen to meet the Brute here because she knows that the denizens of Jigoku shun the Bleak Place, making it as “safe” a place as one could likely find in the hellish realm.

DIS-MANTLING JYA-AKU

Taking off the Fel Mantle requires the wearer to make a successful TN 3 Meditation (Void) check, which can only be attempted once per day as a Movement and Support action or downtime activity. Forcibly removing the Fel Mantle from Jya-Aku requires a TN 4 Martial Arts [Unarmed] check (Fire 2, Water 5).

If the PCs do not first get Jya-Aku’s leather map (see **The Map**, page 8), it goes with her—straight up. While this does prevent the demons from using the map, and deprives Jya-Aku of her means of entering Jigoku, it also leaves the GM with a concerning thread to dangle over the PCs in future adventures.

Kansen are unable to enter the Bleak Place; indeed, when the PCs arrive, kansen throng about it, drawn by Jya-Aku's presence but unable to approach her. Moreover, the TN of every check made by oni—including the PCs—in the Bleak Place increases by 1.

Jya-Aku sits cross-legged in the Bleak Place, meditating, clad in the Fel Mantle and wearing a broad, conical hat that conceals her face. In her lap is her bargaining chip: a leather map depicting a tunnel that leads from the Shadowlands into Rokugan, circumventing the Carpenter Wall.

The cavern is Imbalanced (All Elements) terrain, with a number of small pools of stagnant, reflectionless water that are Entangling terrain scattered throughout. The tunnels just outside are Obscuring terrain (see **Terrain**, page 267 of the core rulebook).

THE MAP

When the Kuni family reclaimed their lands after the oni Dōkutsu no Majo's subterranean attack, they were unable to seal off all the resulting tunnels (see page 49 of the core rulebook). One still traverses lands farther north, eventually opening into the Shadowed Swamps in the Shinomen Forest, well inside the Empire. Should the powers of Jigoku learn how to traverse this route, it would open a hellish causeway akin to the Shadowlands' Festering Pit of Fu Leng deep inside Rokugan, creating a new and potentially catastrophic front in the Empire's war against the Shadowlands.

The path is fantastically convoluted, however. Without this map—drawn on what appears to be human skin—it would be virtually impossible to find the tunnel's lost and unguarded opening.

The map cannot be permanently damaged or destroyed. If it is cut apart, it regrows from the largest fragment over several hours while the smaller pieces quickly wither and decay. If it is set ablaze, the leather bubbles and screams, blistering but eventually cooling and returning to its original shape. Other methods of destruction are similarly thwarted.

THE SCROLL

When initially opened, the scroll that the Brute obtained from the archives in the Fortress of Fu Leng appears to be blank. However, when the scroll is daubed with blood (as any character with Theology 2 or higher would suspect), crimson words twist into being describing an obscure ritual, the nature of which requires detailed study. A **TN 5 Theology check (Water 3, Earth 6)** reveals that the ritual might threaten not just the Emerald Empire but also the balance of power in the realms of the dead; however, the check does not uncover the specifics of the ritual's effects. In addition to describing this ritual (which the GM is free to use as an ominous

plot seed for future adventures), the scroll functions as a source of evil knowledge from which a character can learn mahō techniques (for more on mahō techniques, see page 224 of the core rulebook).

Destroying the scroll causes each character at range 0–1 of it to suffer the Afflicted (Void) condition.

A CONFRONTATION

At this point, the PCs have either followed or accompanied the Brute to the Bleak Place or have contrived to travel there on their own. After they arrive, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

In the midst of a vast cavern sits a woman in sinister contemplation. Atop her head sits a conical hat, obscuring her face, and across her shoulders is a mantle in dreadful hues. Tucked into her obi is what appears to be a rolled-up piece of leather. Kansen—corrupted elemental spirits—throng the edges of the chamber, but they seem hesitant to enter, as if something has put fear into even these twisted spirits.

The woman tilts her head up slightly. "So, you're the demons who have heeded my call to bargain. Step forth with that scroll, and let us speak of pacts and power."

If the GM wishes, the PCs may have arrived ahead of the Brute, giving them some time to act before the oni arrives. In any case, they now have several options, including taking the map, removing the mantle, or making a deal with Jya-Aku. Alternatively, the PCs may try something else entirely. For instance, they could try to convince the Brute that Jya-Aku is lying and the map is worthless, or to incite other oni to intervene and use the ensuing chaos to their advantage.

TAKE THE MAP

The PCs could attempt to take the map to disrupt Jya-Aku's plans. This likely entails attacking her, as well as the Brute if the oni is also present. If the PCs make an attack or try to grab the map, Jya-Aku immediately attempts to leave the Bleak Place by entering one of the shadowy tunnels that feeds into the cavern. Doing so allows her to call upon the full power of the kansen swarming outside to wield mahō in the ensuing battle (provided her targets are also outside the cavern).

After Jya-Aku has received 12 or more fatigue, she attempts to remove the Fel Mantle as a Movement and Support action during her next turn (making the **TN 3 Meditation [Void] check**; see page 7). If she succeeds, she vanishes through the cavern ceiling, leaving the Fel Mantle behind and opening a rocky tunnel in her wake. If she fails, she is unable to flee.

If Jya-Aku is not Incapacitated, stealing the map during the encounter requires a character to make a **TN 4 Skulduggery check (Air 2, Earth 5)** as a Movement and Scheme action. Reduce the TN by 2 if Jya-Aku is unaware of the person attempting to steal it or is Compromised.

MAKE A DEAL

The PCs could instead strike a deal with Jya-Aku to acquire the map themselves, then attempt to get it out of the underworld before it falls into the wrong claws. Jya-Aku is unlikely to agree, but if the PCs have somehow acquired the scroll she wants from the Brute, she will trade the map for that. Of course, this has its own worrying consequences, for Jya-Aku's goals with the ritual scroll are no more wholesome than the Brute's plans for the map.

Deceiving Jya-Aku into believing some falsehood that works in the PCs' favor requires a **TN 6 Courtesy (Air) or Performance (Air) check**.

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of this encounter, one of the following occurs:



- ✱ The PCs have been successful. They have defeated Jya-Aku and any oni with her. They have also retrieved the map and the scroll—and possibly the mantle as well—in which case they can simply return to the adventure or campaign where they left off. It is up to the GM to determine whether the PCs can bring any of these items to the Mortal Realm or if, when the PCs return to Meido, Burakakin takes the items and safely stores them away.
- ✱ The PCs have failed to achieve one or more of the three objectives (defeat Jya-Aku, retrieve the map, and retrieve the scroll). This could set up future adventures: for instance, a new Shadowlands threat might emerge in the Shinomen Forest or Jya-Aku might delve into the forbidden ritual described on the scroll. Regardless, the PCs can resume the adventure or campaign where they left off.

The PCs receive 4 XP for surviving this encounter, plus 2 XP if they retrieved the map, the scroll, or both. They could also receive appropriate honor awards for major sacrifices (see **Using Social Attributes**, starting on page 300 of the core rulebook) for some combination of Courage, Duty and Loyalty, and Honor.

Jya-Aku can also become an ongoing antagonist for the PCs, if she does not die in this encounter. She remains grimly determined to acquire the ritual scroll she sought to trade for, and she uses other methods to reach Jigoku if the Fel Mantle has been taken from her. The PCs could find themselves forced to confront her again as she seeks other means to acquire the scroll or, if she acquired it during the encounter, uses its evil knowledge to commence some cataclysmic plan.

ADVANCING ONI CHARACTERS

Wheel of Judgment and the **Blood and Magic** encounter envision the PCs being oni for only a limited period of time. However, a GM may wish to have the PCs remain in Jigoku for a longer period, have them return there at some point, or even set an entire game in that nightmare realm. If so, the GM may want the PC oni characters to have some means of advancing that fits their vile nature better than simply spending XP. The GM may also wish the oni PCs to be different or more powerful than those resulting from donning the masks in *Wheel of Judgment*.

Shadowlands Powers, on page 137 of the *Shadowlands* sourcebook, offers a variety of new options for oni player characters. These can be purchased for a number of XP equal to the  or  conflict rank increase listed with the power (whichever is higher). They do not count toward any curriculum. Depending on the tone and themes of the campaign, PCs who return to residing in the Mortal Realm should either keep their Shadowlands powers or lose the powers and have the XP refunded.

Alternatively, if the PCs are going to be oni only for a limited time, such as during *Wheel of Judgment*, spending XP may not be appropriate. In this case, oni PCs could earn Shadowlands powers by accomplishing goals set by the GM. Such goals could include completing this encounter, defeating the Bladed Oni from page 18 of *Wheel of Judgment* in a duel, or entering the Fortress of Fu Leng to retrieve a long-lost record.

Escape of the Hungry Dead

In this encounter, as in **Blood and Magic**, the PCs are oni. However, they have left Jigoku and now travel through Gaki-dō, the Realm of the Hungry Dead, on their way back to Meido and the conclusion of their mission for Burakakin. Like **Blood and Magic**, this encounter is intended to be inset into *Wheel of Judgment*—specifically during **Part Three: Returning**, on page 26 of that adventure. However, **Escape of the Hungry Dead** is separate from Burakakin's mission for the PCs, providing an optional encounter in Gaki-dō. It could also be used as a stand-alone encounter, with appropriate setup by the GM.

In *Wheel of Judgment*, the Phantasmal Oni engineers an attack upon the PCs by *gaki*, or hungry ghosts. This encounter could be used in place of that or could follow it; it depends how much game time and difficulty the GM wishes to invest in the PCs' passage through the bleak realm of Gaki-dō.

A HORRIFIC GATHERING

As they traverse the dreary, noisome realm of Gaki-dō, the PCs see *gaki*, both individuals and small groups, heading in a common direction. Unless the PCs interfere, these hungry dead pay no attention to them; the *gaki* are determined to reach a particular location. If the PCs choose not to follow them or otherwise investigate, the GM could contrive a way to have the PCs do so. For instance, the stream of *gaki* could become large enough to overwhelm the PCs, carrying them along to their ultimate destination. Alternatively, the PCs could overhear a *gaki* mumbling cryptically about escaping Gaki-dō and returning to the Mortal Realm, or suggesting that Nin-gen-dō is facing some sort of imminent threat arising from the place the *gaki* is headed.

If the PCs follow the *gaki*, they eventually reach a luxurious house surrounded by gardens and a stone wall perimeter. The building stands in stark contrast to the dreary, foul landscape all around it. Throngs of *gaki* mill about outside the estate, with more arriving every moment. Several small, blue, servile *mazoku* (formerly mortal souls who have become demons bound to serve Emma-Ō) periodically appear atop the wall, dumping baskets of what appear to be fruit and vegetables over it, where the horde of *gaki* ravenously consumes them. Vicious fights break out among the *gaki* as they compete for the food.


INVESTIGATING THE NOISOME RABBLE

If the PCs want to investigate further, they must pass through the mass of *gaki* surrounding the estate. If they time this carefully, moving when the *mazoku* have just dumped more food, they are able to slip by unassailed with a **TN 1 Skulduggery (Air) check**, the low TN reflecting the fact that the *gaki* are far more interested in the food than they are in the PCs. Success means the PCs have timed things right and can enter the estate without further incident, through a gate in the perimeter wall that seems to bar only the hungry dead. A failed check means the PCs come between the *gaki* and some food or become embroiled in a fight among the hungry dead.

The PCs could instead find another way through, perhaps by attracting the *gaki* away from the estate, at least temporarily; employing stealth or subterfuge; or using some other means, such as a *shugenja*'s invocations. GMs should keep in mind that the TNs for all invocations performed in Gaki-dō increase by 1, per the **Shugenja in the Underworld** sidebar on page 7 of *Wheel of Judgment*. Alternatively, the PCs could simply bow their way through the *gaki*.

If the PCs end up fighting the *gaki*, they soon find themselves bogged down in desperate combat against a multitude of the hungry dead. It is up to the GM to determine whether they are able to eventually fight their way through, if the *mazoku* come to their assistance, or if they even survive at all. Note that if the *mazoku* help, it's not for the benefit of the PCs; rather, Hiniku, the *mazoku* who owns the estate, doesn't want her plans for the *gaki* to be disrupted by the intrusive PCs.

A HUNGRY SWARM

Individually, *gaki* are rather pitiful creatures who pose little threat to the PCs. This is reflected in their minimal combat and intrigue conflict ranks of 1 each. A ravening horde of *gaki* such as the one in this encounter, however, does pose a major threat, and the GM shouldn't hesitate to impress that on the PCs. Per **Gauging an Encounter** on page 310 of the core rulebook, the GM should create a group of *gaki* (see page 26 in *Wheel of Judgment*) with a total  conflict rank equal to half the PCs' group rank to attack the party. However, the GM should also make it clear that there may be ways to get through the throng of *gaki* without needing to fight them.

If the PCs die, the GM has the option of “respawning” them per the instructions on page 14 of *Wheel of Judgment*; they reappear at the threshold between Jigoku and Gaki-dō near Hiniku’s estate, rather than in Jigoku. The list of saboteurs from *Wheel of Judgment* remains where they dropped it when they died; it is of no interest to the hungry dead, as they cannot eat it. If the PCs also retrieved the map, scroll, Fel Mantle, or some combination of these items in **Blood and Magic**, these objects are also outside the estate, along with other plot-relevant items they may have acquired.

GETTING INSIDE

Once they are through the crowd of gaki, the PCs find entering the estate relatively straightforward: they can simply walk through the gate in the perimeter wall, which prevents only the hungry dead from entering. However, if the GM wants to make entry and avoiding running afoul of the crowd of gaki both more tense and more difficult, the PCs could first have to deal with the Gatekeeper.

The Gatekeeper is a blue mazoku, who can be represented by the **Mazoku Bureaucrat** profile on page 8 of *Wheel of Judgment*. Convincing the Gatekeeper to allow the PCs to enter requires a successful **TN 3 Courtesy (Water 2, Air 4)** or **TN 4 Command (Air 3) check**. It is also possible to bribe the Gatekeeper, who is particularly enamored of anything he can’t obtain in Gaki-dō—which is actually most things. Any bribe the GM deems reasonable reduces any check to convince the Gatekeeper to allow entry to 1. Conversely, if the PCs take too long to gain entry, or if they attack the Gatekeeper, they find themselves once more fighting the gaki, as described above.

A VILE PLAN

Inside the estate, the PCs find respite from the relentlessly bleak realm outside. The estate is sumptuous and luxurious. However, it is also noticeably disheveled and dilapidated, as though it’s not being properly cleaned or maintained. The garden inside is abundant with fruit and vegetables. The plants are supernaturally enhanced, blossoming and growing new fruit almost as soon as the existing food has been picked by the small, servile mazoku. These mazoku are deferential to the PCs, but they excuse themselves after only brief snippets of conversation; they are too busy harvesting the fruit and dumping it over the wall to linger and talk.

Eventually, one of the mazoku brings the PCs to Hiniku, an imperious blue mazoku with a harried and fed-up demeanor, who broods amid piles of unfinished paperwork. She demands to know why the PCs have intruded

on her estate. If the PCs ask why she is feeding the gaki, she tells them it’s her job as the deputy commissioner for this district of Gaki-dō. However, she seems evasive, as though concealing something. A successful **TN 3 Sentiment check (Fire 2, Earth 4)** reveals that she is, indeed, failing to reveal the full truth.

In truth, Hiniku is working for the Phantasmal Oni (see page 28 of *Wheel of Judgment*). By engineering a mass escape of gaki to Ningen-dō, she can do her part to further undermine Emma-Ō and disrupt order in Meido. Hiniku believes the PCs are oni (who are usually self-serving, opportunistic beings), and she presumes that any oni who would seek her out in Gaki-dō are also working for the Phantasmal Oni. She offers the PCs a reward for refraining from interfering in her plans, but she offers a more valuable reward if the PCs agree to help her open the way for the gaki to escape.

The first reward is a set of travel papers that allows the PCs to travel throughout Gaki-dō freely, without interference from the mazoku who run the realm. The second is a more extensive set of travel papers that allows the PCs to travel all of the Spirit Realms—with the exception of Jigoku, Yomi (the Realm of Sacred Ancestors), and Tengoku (the Celestial Heavens)—without interference from those realms’ respective authorities. Such papers facilitate future adventures spanning these strange realms, which, in addition to Gaki-dō and Meido, include Chikushō-dō, the Realm of Animals; Sakkaku, the Realm of Mischief; Yume-dō, the Realm of Dreams; and Tōshigoku, the Realm of Slaughter. See pages 20–30 and 134–139 in the *Celestial Realms* sourcebook for more details about these Spirit Realms.

MAKING A CHOICE

At this point, the PCs have several options:

ACCEPT HINIKU’S OFFER

The PCs can accept Hiniku’s offer of travel papers for Gaki-dō in exchange for just walking away. If they do so, she also ensures that they can pass unassailed through the gaki crowded outside her estate. This effectively ends the encounter and returns the players to the *Wheel of Judgment* adventure as they are about to return to Meido. However, the gaki may then make a major incursion into the Empire, which could set up a future story for the group. To choose this path, the PCs must forfeit honor (a major breach of Duty and Loyalty; see **Using Social Attributes**, starting on page 300 of the core rulebook) for accepting such a brazen bribe. It also likely aggravates Emma-Ō (if it is discovered), something the PCs might have to face when they return to Meido.

HELP HINIKU ENGINEER THE ESCAPE

The PCs can instead help Hiniku facilitate the gaki's escape. Not far from the estate is a long-disused passage leading from Gaki-dō to Ningen-dō. It is guarded by a fierce red mazoku warrior named Hogo-sha, which means "guardian" or "protector." Hiniku dares not challenge or even confront Hogo-sha herself—she's not supposed to be implicated in the escape, after all—so this is up to the PCs. While they are unable to simply persuade Hogo-sha to put aside his duty, they can attempt to bluff him, distract him, incapacitate him, or even outright banish him by killing him in combat.

Hogo-sha can be represented by the **Mazoku Guard** profile on page 4 of *Wheel of Judgment*, with his endurance increased to 20, his Martial skill group increased to 4, and his mazoku robes replaced with mazoku armor (Physical 3, Supernatural 3). If the PCs succeed, Hiniku rewards them even more richly, with travel papers for the additional Spirit Realms mentioned earlier in **A Vile Plan**. As in **Accept Hiniku's Offer**, the gaki may then make a major incursion into the Empire, which could set up a future adventure for the group. Taking this path requires the PCs to forfeit honor (a massive breach of Duty and Loyalty for rebelling against a superior). It also raises Emma-Ō's ire, as well as that of his agents in the Mortal Realm. It does, however, allow the PCs to slink back into Ningen-dō to attend to any of their unfinished business (or run amok) for a time before they are discovered.

THWART HINIKU'S PLANS

The PCs have several ways to prevent Hiniku from carrying out her plan: they can try to dissuade her, subdue or kill her, inform on her, or execute a plan of the players' own devising. Should Hiniku's profile be needed, she can be represented by the **Mazoku Guard** profile on page 4 of *Wheel of Judgment*, with the Dour demeanor (Earth +1, Water +1, Air -1).

Dissuade Hiniku

Via an intrigue conflict scene, the PCs can attempt to dissuade Hiniku or her staff who are in the room (collectively represented by the **Mazoku Bureaucrat** profile on page 8 of *Wheel of Judgment*) from sending the gaki into Ningen-dō. For the participants in this intrigue and some example social objectives, see **Table 1-3: Dissuade Hiniku Participants and Objectives** below.

If the PCs are able to persuade Hiniku (or her staff of bureaucrats) to discard the idea, she does so and she is generally helpful to the PCs in future endeavors, if somewhat sour about their past interactions with her. If the PCs say they will report her to her lord, the Hungry Governor (see page 13), and they fail to do so within a few weeks, however, Hiniku sets her plan in motion once again.

TABLE 1-3: DISSUADE HINIKU PARTICIPANTS AND OBJECTIVES

SOCIAL OBJECTIVE	PARTICIPANT	MOMENTUM POINTS NEEDED	BASE TN
Appeal to Hiniku's sense of duty	One or more PCs	16	3 (Air 2, Earth 4, Water 4)
Convince Hiniku that they will report her to her lord, the Hungry Governor (see page 13)	One or more PCs	8	4 (Air 3, Earth 5, Water 5)
Convince Hiniku's staff of bureaucrats to refuse to go along with her plan	One or more PCs	9	3 (Earth 4, Fire 4, Void 1)
Convince the PCs she has given up on her plan (when in actuality she just intends to wait until they leave)	Hiniku	Highest PC focus -2	Highest PC vigilance
Convince the PCs her plan is really for the greater good	Hiniku	Highest PC focus +3	Highest PC vigilance -1
Get the PCs to offer to solve the root problem	One Mazoku Bureaucrat (representing Hiniku's staff)	Highest PC focus +5	Highest PC vigilance

Subdue or Kill Hiniku

The PCs can attempt to threaten or kill Hiniku, but she is a formidable opponent in her own estate. Should the PCs threaten violence, she initially orders her guards to escort them out. If the PCs resist, a fight breaks out in her mansion, the piles of paperwork providing Obscuring (and potentially Entangling) terrain. Hiniku can also summon her own mazoku underlings (represented by the **Mazoku Bureaucrat** profile on page 8 of *Wheel of Judgment*) and the hungry dead (represented by the **Gaki** profile on page 26 of *Wheel of Judgment*) to help her.

The GM should add Mazoku Bureaucrats and Gaki such that the encounter rank (see **Determining Encounter Rank** on page 310 of the core rulebook) is equal to the PCs' group rank times 1.5, or higher if the party is especially martial in focus. This should be a difficult encounter, as being killed does not mean the end (though the PCs will need to figure out another way to thwart Hiniku's plan, as formal appointments with Hiniku are off the table should they attack her).

If the fight goes well for the PCs, Hiniku is unwilling to die to carry out her plan. If she suffers the Incapacitated condition, she surrenders and apologizes for her misdeeds. See below if the PCs also wish to inform on Hiniku. It is up to the GM to decide whether the Phantasmal Oni will seek vengeance against the PCs earlier than previously anticipated.

Inform On Hiniku

The PCs can inform on Hiniku to her lord, the Hungry Governor, by traveling to the governor's estate (whether the PCs arrive at the mansion without further incident is up to the GM). This effectively ends the encounter. As far as the governor is concerned, the PCs were simply doing their duty, but she offers a karmic reward in the form of a testimonial to Emma-Ō, which may help their case for restoration to mortal life. This would likely also be considered a major sacrifice for Duty and Loyalty (see **Using Social Attributes**, starting on page 300 of the core rulebook). Informing on Hiniku prevents the gaki incursion into Ningen-dō.



THE HUNGRY GOVERNOR

The GM may wish to simply narrate the PCs' encounter with the Hungry Governor. However, if the GM wants the players to roleplay their characters' encounter with the Hungry Governor, she can be represented by the **Mazoku Bureaucrat** profile on page 8 of *Wheel of Judgment*, with the Socialite template from page 311 of the core rulebook. The Hungry Governor holds court in a palatial estate, and she has more than enough Mazoku Guards and Bureaucrats (on pages 4 and 8 of the *Wheel of Judgment*, respectively) to ensure the PCs do not cause trouble.

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of the encounter, one of the following occurs:

- ⊗ The PCs are successful, having prevented Hiniku from carrying out her plan. The gaki do not make an incursion into Ningen-dō. The PCs now resume their adventure or campaign where they left off.
- ⊗ The PCs are not successful, having failed to prevent Hiniku from carrying out her plot, either because they couldn't or because they chose not to. This could set up future adventures as an incursion of gaki plagues the Mortal Realm. For instance, Emma-Ō may demand that the PCs deal with the incursion, perhaps granting them a temporary return to mortal life to do so. In any case, the PCs resume their adventure or campaign where they left off.

The PCs receive 2 XP for surviving this encounter, plus 2 XP if they prevented Hiniku from carrying through with her plan to release gaki into Ningen-dō. They could also receive appropriate honor awards for major sacrifices for some combination of Duty and Loyalty, Honor, and Righteousness.

ADDITIONAL ADVENTURES IN THE REALM OF THE HUNGRY DEAD

Wheel of Judgment assumes that the PCs pass through Gaki-dō relatively quickly, interacting little with the realm as they do. **Escape of the Hungry Dead** offers an opportunity for the PCs to spend additional time in this dreary realm. Some players and GMs, however, may want their characters to spend even more time in Gaki-dō, engaged in completely different adventures, or to return there at some time in the future.

The *Celestial Realms* sourcebook offers considerable detail about the realm beginning on page 27; GMs should find this useful for portraying Gaki-dō and capturing its particular flavor. In summary, Gaki-dō is a vast, perhaps limitless realm that is a bleak and tedious reflection of Ningen-dō, the Mortal Realm. It is an enormous sprawling slum, its buildings nothing but slumping ruins lining identical, muddy streets under a leaden sky. Despite this, throngs of gaki, the hungry dead, pack the overcrowded realm, wandering aimlessly with nothing to do but desperately seek something, anything, to eat, or they simply stand and stare in empty misery. GMs should emphasize the dismal nature of the place as the PCs explore it; PCs should soon begin to realize that no matter how far they venture, nothing really changes. Occasionally, they may see a mazoku hurrying about on business of their own, but otherwise, they encounter nothing but the hungry dead.

Such a uniformly wretched place offers only limited roleplaying opportunities in itself, so the following are some abbreviated adventure seeds intended to inspire GMs' creativity in designing adventures in Gaki-dō.

A LOST INNOCENT

The PCs learn from a mazoku—or from some other suitable agent if they begin their adventure outside of the underworld—that an innocent person has inadvertently crossed into the realm and must be rescued. The PCs may be able to follow clues, including physical ones such as shoe prints (which are very different from the bare footprints of the gaki), or odd behaviors among the gaki, to track down this person and guide them back to where they belong. Alternatively, far from being an innocent person, this could be someone with a more sinister agenda. For example, a shugenja might seek a particular soul, one who has been justifiably

reincarnated as a gaki, in order to change their karmic destiny or retrieve a piece of information from them for a less-than-honorable purpose.

INVASION!

A powerful oni has launched a campaign to seize territory from Gaki-dō in order to increase that oni's power and influence in Jigoku. The PCs may have had dealings with the oni before—for example, it could be Atsumari no Oni from the *Mask of the Oni* adventure. Their insights and experience make them valuable allies for the mazoku desperately trying to turn back the incursion, which is making the already terrible overcrowding in Gaki-dō even worse.

A NEW WORLD

In a remote part of Gaki-dō, someone has discovered a tunnel that appears to lead to a previously unknown Spirit Realm. The mazoku are unable to enter it, however, and have discerned that only mortal souls are able to do so. Not only have some gaki wandered into this new realm, and need to be retrieved, but the realm itself represents an unknown threat and must be investigated. Because the PCs are known to the Hungry Governor, she has requested that they investigate on her behalf and will reward them suitably for doing so. But what is the nature of this new realm, and what dangers does it pose to the PCs?

A HIDDEN AGENDA

Something strange has begun to affect the gaki: some of them are beginning to behave in an organized, cooperative manner, as though they are being led, or controlled, by some other party or power. Not only is this a problem for the mazoku struggling to keep the realm running efficiently—or as efficiently as they possibly can, anyway—but it may also be a problem for the gaki themselves, threatening their karmic judgment and rehabilitation and thus delaying their reincarnation into new lives. The mazoku are already overwhelmed with work, so they ask the PCs to help them determine what is affecting the gaki, as well as who or what is behind it and what their motives are.

A Mission from Lady Mazoku

Unlike the previous encounters, which take place in Jigoku and Gaki-dō, **A Mission from Lady Mazoku** takes place after the conclusion of *Wheel of Judgment* once the PCs have returned to Ningen-dō. This could be immediately after the adventure ends or at some point in the future: whatever works best for the campaign. This encounter provides a default NPC shade the PCs have to deal with, but the GM can substitute their own NPC, such as one whom the PCs have previously defeated. As always, the GM is free to adapt the NPC and encounter as needed.

Alternatively, this encounter could be incorporated into a different campaign, such as one with one or more Falcon Clan characters. It also provides a way to introduce a touch of the supernatural into a campaign that usually focuses on earthly matters. As such, there are several ways this story can begin, depending on the tone the GM wants to set and whether the PCs have completed *Wheel of Judgment*.

If the PCs completed *Wheel of Judgment* or are otherwise familiar with the supernatural in Rokugan, the encounter can begin with **A Visit from Lady Mazoku** (see right) and proceed as written.

If the PCs are less involved with the supernatural (or if this is the jumping-off point for a new afterlife-themed campaign), the encounter can begin at **The First Victim** (see page 16) with Lonely Shore City Magistrate Daidoji Himanari asking the PCs to investigate a murder that others have deemed a simple vendetta. However, something is bothering Himanari about the details: specifically, the similarity to another recent murder. In this case, the encounter with Lady Mazoku could come later, after she realizes the PCs would make ideal agents to solve this problem for her. As another option, their meeting with her could occur after their first face-to-face encounter with Hagane in Footnote Village (see **The Common Thread** on page 17), when the PCs realize they are dealing with problems beyond the mortal scope.

A VISIT FROM LADY MAZOKU

At some point after their return to the Mortal Realm, the PCs are confronted by Lady Mazoku. She grimly informs them that a dangerous shade has escaped from the afterlife—and that given the PCs' experiences in the underworld, they are uniquely suited to assisting her. She charges them with finding this shade and returning it to the afterlife. The PCs may object, claiming it wasn't their fault, but Lady Mazoku is unmoved. She personally finds the PCs' return to the Mortal Realm objectionable, but she cannot do anything about that; what she can do is insist that the escape of this dangerous shade *could* be their fault, due to their various actions in the afterlife and the ensuing chaos, and that they are thus responsible for dealing with it. Further, she offers the PCs an incentive. If they complete her task, she will offer them a small portion of her power (the **Spirit Hunter** title on page 21).

If the PCs agree, Lady Mazoku enigmatically tells them to begin their search in Lonely Shore City, "where a whisper has been cut by steel." She does not provide any specific information about the escaped spirit, save that it was a duelist of some renown in life—petty details of mortal lives like names and desires are beneath her interest.

If the PCs refuse, each one of them receives the Haunting adversity; Lady Mazoku appears to them at inopportune times, disrupting their plans, disturbing their sleep, and generally getting in their way. The PCs may also find themselves dogged and pressured by Lady Mazoku's loyal agents from the Falcon Clan. This persists until the PCs agree, in good faith, to pursue and deal with the shade (at which point the Haunting disadvantage is removed). Of course, the PCs may also seek some other way of ridding themselves of Lady Mazoku's influence. However, this will be difficult, as she is powerful; moreover, they may then have an enemy waiting for them in the afterlife!

PAPERS, PLEASE

This encounter sees the PCs traveling extensively in northern Rokugan, particularly through the lands of the Crane, Lion, and Phoenix Clans. Such cross-border journeys require appropriate travel papers issued by magistrates (or avoiding checkpoints by traveling through wild lands). If the PCs are themselves Emerald Magistrates, or are associated with them, then this is not a problem. Otherwise, the acquisition of such papers (or the journey using less-traveled routes) could become its own adventure.




LADY MAZOKU

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK:  8  10

Lady Mazoku is the secret patron of the Falcon Clan. Over the centuries, she has taught the clan's Phantom Hunters to deal with supernatural threats that would otherwise overwhelm them. She rarely reveals herself directly, but when she does, she appears as an elegant woman wearing robes of a style not seen for many centuries.

She frequently travels to the Mortal Realm as part of her duty to hunt down and return escaped spirits to Gaki-dō. If her association with human agents were discovered, however, Emma-Ō would be forced to punish her for the crime of involving mere mortals in the affairs of the dead.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
70 HONOR	 4  5  4  3  5	ENDURANCE 14	 20  9  5
70 GLORY		COMPOSURE	
65 STATUS		FOCUS	
 +2,  -2 DEMEANOR - ASSERTIVE		ARTISAN 3 MARTIAL 4 SCHOLAR 6 SOCIAL 5 TRADE 0	

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Gaki-dō Knowledge:  Social; <i>Interpersonal</i>	Desperate for Aid:  Social; <i>Interpersonal</i>

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Unearthly Limbs: Range 0–2, Damage 7, Deadliness 4, Sacred, Snaring

Gear (equipped): Ancient Falcon Katana (Range 1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged, Sacred), ghostly form (Physical 10, Supernatural 10), numerous scrolls pertaining to Gaki-dō law and individual gaki

ABILITIES

MAGISTRATE OF GAKI-DŌ

Lady Mazoku is an Otherworldly being, though she appears as a normal human. She doubles her vigilance when detecting Otherworldly or Tainted beings, mahō use, or kansen activity. When Lady Mazoku unmask, everyone who can see her suffers 6 strife as her form shifts into inhuman shapes before settling as she composes herself.

VETERAN GAKI HUNTER

Once per scene, should a PC sufficiently impress Lady Mazoku with devotion to the cause of capturing and containing malign spirits, she may impart to the PC some of her wisdom concerning this subject. The PC lowers the TN of their checks targeting such spirits by 1 for the remainder of the session.

THE SHADE

The escaped shade is a rōnin warrior, a skilled duelist who goes by the name Hagane, which simply means “steel”—probably an assumed name. See page 20 for Hagane's profile.

THE FIRST VICTIM

The PCs first encounter Hagane's trail in the lands of the Crane Clan, in Lonely Shore City. Kakita Sadao, the old instructor of the city's Whispering Blade Dōjō, was recently found dead, apparently cut down by some unknown opponent during what appears to have been an unsanctioned duel.

By the time the PCs arrive, the body has already been cremated, and the Crane Clan magistrates in Lonely Shore City have completed their investigation, citing a lack of leads to pursue. A successful **TN 3 Courtesy check (Water 2, Fire 4)** convinces the town's chief magistrate, Daidoji Himanari, to share what little they do know with the PCs. Himanari reveals that Sadao's katana was deliberately broken, suggesting a personal grudge of some sort against the instructor.

Himanari also informs the PCs of a similar murder they heard about from their contacts in the Imperial Capital. The other victim was an aged duelist named Doji Yūdai, in a dōjō in the Eastern Petal Village, near Otosan Uchi. Yūdai also apparently died in an unsanctioned duel, and his katana was likewise broken. The magistrates in Eastern Petal Village have been similarly unable to find any other leads. The two murders, although probably related, remain unsolved. Himanari's jurisdiction is limited to Lonely Shore City, preventing them from investigating outside of Crane Clan lands.

A TRAIL OF BLOOD

Given what the PCs know, they may suspect that Hagane is seeking out and killing older warriors across the Empire. Their next logical step might be to search out leads on similar crimes, either by consulting with Emerald Magistrates with jurisdiction in other places in Rokugan, or by pursuing rumors spread by merchants, rōnin, and others who travel the Empire. The PCs should make various appropriate checks to search for information, such as Courtesy or Command checks to request (or demand) information, Skulduggery checks to pay the right bribes for information, Culture checks to be aware of certain details in their social environment, or Government checks to search official records for useful facts. The GM should encourage the PCs to be creative in their investigations at this stage.

Each successful check reveals one the following:

- ✦ A Lion duelist named Akodo Nobu was killed in his home in the Lion city of Authorized City (Ninkatoshi), his servants having heard nothing.
- ✦ A Scorpion warrior, Bayushi Shigekazu, who had retired to purchase and run a geisha house named *The Promised Road* in the Lion Clan town of Exile's Salute (Rugashi Toshi), was decapitated by a single sword strike in the garden of his establishment.
- ✦ A member of the Tsume vassal family of the Crane Clan, Tsume Kibo, was slain by a katana blow despite being bedridden due to a chronic wasting illness in her home near Kyotei Castle.
- ✦ A Dragon duelist who had retired as a monk and taken the name Joben was found dead in a shrine near Dragonfly Palace (Kyūden Tonbo), having been cut down while he prayed. He bequeathed his katana to his son, Mirumoto Hajime, who had recently taken up residence nearby to be near his father. However, like Sadao's and Yūdai's swords, Joben's katana was broken. Having seen and heard nothing, Hajime has no idea who perpetrated this heinous act.

In each case, the victim was relatively old (in their late fifties to early seventies), had a reputation as an accomplished warrior and duelist, was killed by a single cut from a katana, and had their own sword deliberately broken.

GMs may simply narrate the above information to their players, or they may wish to turn each murder investigation into something more detailed, requiring the PCs to visit some or all of the murder sites and find clues leading from each one to the next. In any case, the murdered Dragon, the monk Joben, should be discovered last. The PCs now know that the mysterious Hagane is clearly pursuing a very personal vendetta against aged duelists from different clans. The question is, why? What links these disparate samurai?

THE COMMON THREAD

Joben's son, Mirumoto Hajime, reveals that his father and, indeed, all of the victims were members of a class that attended the Whispering Blade Dōjō in Lonely Shore City nearly forty years ago. According to his father's journals, of the class of eleven samurai, three members died previously, from various causes. This means that with the six recent murders, nine of the class are now dead; two, therefore, may still be alive.

If they move quickly, the PCs may reach the next member of the class, an Ikoma woman named Emihiko, before she is killed. Ikoma Emihiko lives in Footnote Village (Kyakuchu Mura), a Lion village near the Spine of the World Mountains. When the PCs arrive at Emihiko's home, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

As you round the bend, you hear the clash of steel. Quickening your pace, you turn the corner to find an older woman with a katana in hand and several red gashes bleeding through the arms of her brown robes. Her grey hair is disheveled, and she is bleeding heavily. The signs of battle are all around her, and she is intently focused, but you can see no opponent.

If any of the PCs are especially spiritually sensitive (such as shugenja or sages, members of the Falcon Clan, or PCs with the Sixth Sense advantage), read or paraphrase the following aloud for those characters:

You feel a sudden pressure in your forehead, and your eyes fix upon her foe: a swirling mass of shadows in the shape of a person, a sword hanging from its hand. You sense that the apparition is bound by a will to kill. An aura of menace spreads across your field of vision, and you shudder involuntarily.

Emihiko cries out for the PCs to stay back. In that instant, the specter flashes forward and cuts her through the chest, causing her to drop to the ground. A chilling laugh like a rasp of steel cuts through the air. The shade vanishes.

If a PC provides a suitable narrative reason to halt the shade's escape (such as a clever use of an invocation or a suitably dramatic challenge no duelist could refuse), they can engage Hagane in a duel or skirmish as appropriate. Hagane's profile can be found on page 20. If a PC manages to defeat Hagane (keeping in mind that, as a ghost, Hagane has physical resistance 10), the shade vanishes in accordance with the **Twists of Fate** sidebar on page 316 of the core rulebook, melting into shadows on the ground before vanishing. The victorious PC should sense with certainty that this is not over. If all of Hagane's foes gain the Incapacitated or Compromised condition, the shade also vanishes (without performing a finishing blow, in a duel), leaving only the word "Unworthy..." ringing like rusty steel in the ears of the PCs.

Emihiko is dying, but a PC can attempt to save her by making a **TN 5 Medicine (Air) check**. If they succeed, she can be stabilized; if they fail, she dies whispering the following to the PCs: "Akifusa...he knows..." A search of her house reveals a pile of letters from her various classmates over the years. The PCs can eliminate all of the letter writers as potential new victims except for one: Shiba Akifusa, who lives in Nikesake, in Phoenix lands.

If Emihiko survives, she passes along some information but remains tight-lipped on other matters. Once she is stable, she confirms that she was another member of Sadao's and Yūdai's class at Whispering Blade Dōjō. When the PCs tell her how they and the others were murdered, she explains that Shiba Akifusa is the final member of that class of students. If the PCs ask her why she thinks the shade is killing her former classmates, she claims ignorance. A successful **TN 3 Sentiment check (Fire 2)** reveals that she's lying; she knows something she isn't revealing. However, the PCs are unable to convince her to divulge it, although they get the sense that, whatever it is, it is something shameful.

If the PCs are concerned about leaving Emihiko lest the shade return, she explains that she is quite sure Akifusa will be the next target, and that the shade will return for her only once that matter is resolved. The specter has already defeated her in a duel, after all, so anything more would simply be an execution—hardly worth the time of an arrogant duelist while unconquered foes remain. She explains further that she will go to stay with her niece, Kitsu Shiori, at First Blossom Shrine a day's journey away, to purify herself and pray for atonement. Any questions about why she feels so confident the shade will visit Akifusa instead of returning to kill her immediately—or why she wants to atone—are met with a distant gaze and silence.

THE END OF THE TRAIL

When the PCs arrive at Akifusa's home in Nikesake (a journey of two weeks), they find him still very much alive. Unlike Ikoma Emihiko, however, he readily reveals to the PCs the shameful secret he and his classmates were carrying: that they had perpetrated, and then covered up, a disgraceful misdeed. In fact, he seems almost relieved to finally reveal a burden he has been carrying all these years.

When he and the victims were just young students at the Whispering Blade Dōjō, Akifusa tells the PCs, they conspired to discredit a twelfth classmate, Mirumoto Ikutsuki, who was very much their superior with a sword and supremely arrogant about it. They arranged to have their prideful classmate caught out in an embarrassing situation involving the spouse of one of their teachers, intending only to teach him some humility. Instead, matters quickly spiraled out of control. He was not only cast out of the dōjō; he was cast out of his clan as well, as a rōnin—a deeply shameful fate.

Akifusa does not know what happened to him afterward but says it seems clear that his vengeful shade has returned to the Empire to wreak revenge upon his classmates. Akifusa claims he was not involved in carrying out the plot against Ikutsuki, save by helping cover it up. A **TN 3 Sentiment check (Air 1)** reveals that he believes this to be true, at least. Having otherwise lived a good, honorable, and productive life for his clan and the Empire, Shiba Akifusa is deeply ashamed of what happened, and he asks the PCs to help him atone for what he did in his youth.

A PERILOUS CHOICE

The PCs know that Akifusa is the shade's last quarry (or one of the last two, if Ikoma Emihiko is still alive), and that it will be coming to kill him next. This leaves them with several choices: do nothing, confront Hagane, talk it out, protect Shiba Akifusa, put Hagane to rest, or enact some other plan.

Do NOTHING

Doing nothing and allowing the shade to kill Akifusa (and, afterward, Emihiko) would resolve the shade's unrest and cause it to return to the afterlife. The PCs would arguably be justified in allowing this, as the shade was clearly wronged. Allowing two people to be killed to settle this otherworldly grudge would require forfeiting honor (a major breach of Compassion; see **Using Social Attributes**, starting on page 300 of the core rulebook), but it would resolve the matter to Lady Mazoku's satisfaction.

CONFRONT HAGANE IN BATTLE

The PCs could instead confront Hagane when he arrives to kill Akifusa, stalking out of the copse of trees near Akifusa's house at dusk. Hagane is extremely difficult to defeat in battle, as he is supremely skilled with a sword and also has the advantage of being a ghost. Through Akifusa's description of Hagane and Hagane's previous encounter with Ikoma Emihiko, the GM should make it clear that fighting Hagane would be exceptionally dangerous.

If the players attack Hagane in a skirmish, certain invocations and other supernatural abilities may make it possible to trap or banish the shade. However, barring such interventions, he returns each evening at dusk to hound Akifusa. The PCs can repeat this battle as many times as they desire, but unless the GM deems a new method sufficiently creative or relevant, simply defeating Hagane with brute force does not satisfy his desires.

If a single character challenges Hagane to a duel (rather than the group simply descending upon him in a pack as soon as he sets ghostly foot near Akifusa), Hagane always accepts, offering the following terms: a duel to the death, using katana and *wakizashi*. If Hagane is victorious, the PCs must stand aside and let him complete his quest. If the PC is victorious, Hagane will consider Akifusa (and Emihiko, if she lives) to have proven their innocence by steel. Even as a spirit of vengeance, Hagane is first and foremost a duelist, and he respects the laws surrounding these formalized battles.

If the PCs present Akifusa with the plan to exonerate him through a duel, Akifusa offers to help by providing a weapon for his champion to wield. Akifusa possesses Mizutsumi, a katana that is a *nemuranai* with the Heart of the Water Dragon invocation sealed within it (see pages 208 and 307 of the core rulebook). The wielder can perform the invocation once per game session using the Sentiment skill instead of Theology. Mizutsumi also causes a gentle rain or snow to fall for a few hours the first time it is drawn each season (it has not been drawn in some years). More importantly, as the *nemuranai* possesses the Sacred item quality, Mizutsumi ignores Hagane's considerable physical resistance.

TALK IT OUT

However, the PCs do not have to fight Hagane. They could try another approach, such as convincing Hagane to put aside his quest for vengeance—particularly if Akifusa offers a public apology. They may even be able to satisfy Hagane by ensuring his memory is restored to honor. Talking it out requires the PCs to engage in an intrigue conflict scene with Hagane and Akifusa; see **Table 1-4: Convincing Hagane to Turn Aside—Participants and Objectives** below

If the PCs succeed in getting Hagane to set aside the grudge (or if they succeed in both getting Akifusa to apologize publicly and in getting Hagane to accept the apology), the matter is resolved.

If Hagane convinces Akifusa that he must die to set things right, Akifusa duels the ghost and perishes. Then, the specter departs to slay Emihiko (and tries to cut down any PC who attempts to impede him).

If Akifusa convinces Hagane to spare Emihiko (if she still lives) and the PCs, the pair duels and Akifusa perishes. Then, the shade departs the Mortal Realm without harming Emihiko or the PCs, and the matter is resolved.

TABLE 1-4: CONVINCING HAGANE TO TURN ASIDE—PARTICIPANTS AND OBJECTIVES


SOCIAL OBJECTIVE	PARTICIPANT	MOMENTUM POINTS NEEDED	BASE TN
Appeal to Hagane to abandon the grudge for the sake of his own spiritual growth	One or more PCs	14	3 (Air 1, Earth 5)
Convince Hagane to accept Akifusa's public apology	One or more PCs	8	4 (Air 2, Earth 6)
Convince Akifusa to make a public apology	One or more PCs	4	3 (Void 2)
Convince Hagane to spare Emihiko and the PCs in exchange for only Akifusa's life	Akifusa	12	Highest PC vigilance
Convince Akifusa to fight a final duel with Hagane (and certainly die) to make things right	Hagane	Highest PC focus +3	3

GET CREATIVE

As another option, the PCs, being PCs, might find some outlandish solution to the problem at hand. The GM should feel free to encourage creativity, keeping in mind the themes of the story the group set out to tell at the beginning and encouraging ideas that promote those themes. A few of the countless options could include:

- ❁ Undertaking an intrigue with the city governor of Nikesake, Shiba Katsuda, to get the Phoenix Clan to intervene on Akifusa's behalf
- ❁ Orchestrating an elaborate ruse to convince Hagane that Akifusa and Emihiko are dead
- ❁ Undertaking a quest to acquire spiritual weapons capable of more permanently banishing the shade (while protecting Akifusa each evening when Hagane attacks)


HAGANE

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK:  8  5


Hagane, whose name means “steel,” is the alias of a shade who has escaped the afterlife. In life, he was Mirumoto Ikutsuki, but he has forgotten that name. He now wreaks bloody vengeance on those who, many years ago, wrongly caused him to be exiled from the Dragon Clan. At that time, he was already a skilled duelist, and his proficiency with a blade only improved during his life as a masterless samurai. Now, he wields his namesake sword, Hagane, to deadly effect, sharing his name with his life-taking sword.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
40 HONOR		ENDURANCE 16	
20 GLORY		COMPOSURE 12	
00 STATUS		FOCUS 8	
 +2,  -2 DEMEANOR - OBSESSED		VIGILANCE 4	
ARTISAN 1 MARTIAL 1 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 1 TRADE 3			
ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES	

Fearsome Duelist:

 Martial; *Mental*

Consumed

by Vengeance:
 Social; *Mental*

FAVORED WEAPONS

Hagane (katana): Range 1, Damage 5, Deadline 6/9, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Noroi (wakizashi): Range 0-1, Damage 4, Deadline 6/9, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Incorporeal robes, straw hat

ABILITIES


AVENGER FROM THE AFTERLIFE

Hagane is an Otherworldly being with physical resistance 10 and supernatural resistance 3. He is incorporeal and can perform unnerving ghostly phenomena such as walking on walls or ceilings, floating, and causing objects to move slightly on their own. While dueling, he makes himself fully visible to his opponent, but otherwise he appears as a mass of swirling shadows, coalesced around a katana and wakizashi. In a skirmish, increase the TN of Attack action checks targeting him by 1.

GHOSTLY SWORDS

After Hagane perished in a nameless battle and his body was left to the crows, his blades rose by the will of their dead wielder, the *daishō* becoming a cursed artifact. The *daishō* is treated as a *nemuranai* with the Biting Steel invocation (see page 202 of the core rulebook) sealed within it, which a character wielding both the katana and wakizashi can perform using the Meditation skill instead of Theology. While Hagane still pursues his revenge, the *daishō* possesses the Unholy item quality, and it whispers dread words of vengeance to any beings who hold it. However, should Hagane's business be resolved and his spirit set to rest, the *nemuranai* loses the Unholy quality and gains the Sacred quality instead, and its quirk changes to issuing a whisper of warning whenever anyone at range 0-3 of its user forfeits 3 or more honor (though it does not specify why).

TWIN STREAMS STYLE

While Hagane performs an Attack action check with a sword in each hand, he may spend  as follows:

- ❁❁: If your target suffers a critical strike as a result of this check, increase its severity by the deadline of your other readied weapon.

UNEARTHLY DRAW

As he is a spirit and one with his swords, Hagane can draw and swing his blades without fear of cutting himself, allowing him to perform draw techniques that would be impossible for a mortal, passing his blades unnervingly through his own body. As a Movement action, Hagane may ready up to two weapons. In a duel, if his opponent has not drawn a weapon yet, they must resist with a **TN 3 Meditation check (Void 1)** or receive strife equal to 3 plus their shortfall.

KILL HIM, AND HE WILL ONLY RETURN

Hagane, who is both a skilled warrior and a shade, is meant to be a fearsome opponent, but not one who can be vanquished permanently by martial means alone. Defeating Hagane in battle can drive the shade off, and appropriate use of invocations or other supernatural powers might be able to imprison or banish Hagane, but actually setting the spirit to rest permanently requires pursuing one of the narrative goals described above.

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of the encounter, Hagane returns to the afterlife, either because he succeeds in killing all of his former classmates, or because his shade has otherwise been put to rest. Until this happens, Lady Mazoku continues to insist that the PCs remain in pursuit of Hagane.

The PCs receive 2 XP for surviving this encounter, plus 2 XP if they prevented Hagane from killing Ikoma Emihiko or Shiba Akifusa (4 XP if they saved both). The PCs could also receive appropriate honor awards for major sacrifices (see **Using Social Attributes**, starting on page 300 of the core rulebook) for some combination of Courage, Compassion, and Duty and Loyalty. They do not receive any glory awards, as secrecy is important in their work for Lady Mazoku.

If the PCs both save Akifusa and set Hagane to rest, Akifusa gives them his nemuranai, Mizutsumi, in thanks for helping him absolve himself. If the PCs set Hagane to rest, they can also take Hagane and Noroi, his daishō (katana and wakizashi). If Hagane's name has been cleared publicly, returning the daishō to the Mirumoto family is a massive sacrifice in the name of Compassion.

Moreover, once Hagane has been put to rest and has returned to the afterlife, Lady Mazoku offers the PCs the Spirit Hunter title (see this page).

SPIRIT HUNTER (TITLE)

Lady Mazoku occasionally elevates mortals to assist her in work in the Mortal Realm, detecting and banishing spirits who seek to do harm. While some mortals dedicate their lives to serving her, for most, it is part-time work at best. A character who has completed this title is one of her trusted agents. The character has privileges in certain realms of the dead (Meido, Gaki-dō, or Tōshigoku) and abilities when dealing with their denizens, but lives most of their life in their normal station.

Assigned By: Lady Mazoku

Status Award: +5

XP to Completion: 12

Celestial Influence (Title Ability): Reduce the TN of your Attack and Scheme action checks targeting Otherworldly beings by 1 (to a minimum of 1).

SPIRIT HUNTER

	ADVANCE	TYPE
TITLE	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Social Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Government	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	◆ Rank 1 Rituals	🔥 Tech. Grp.



Appendix: Agents of the Mazoku

Independent of both the *Wheel of Judgment* adventure and the preceding encounters in this supplement, the following are some abbreviated adventure seeds to provide GMs with inspiration for stories centering on the afterlife and its associated Spirit Realms. If a GM wishes to let Lady Mazoku play an ongoing role in their campaign, she can be the one to assign these tasks to the PCs; otherwise, another celestial agent can intervene. The GM should determine whether Lady Mazoku or the celestial agent simply seek to persuade the PCs to pursue the tasks or instead compel them to do so; in the latter case, the XP or other rewards should be somewhat more generous, to offset the sting of the spirits' coercion.

The following adventure seeds could serve as excellent follow-ups to **A Mission from Lady Mazoku** or in any campaign with a supernatural focus. They could also provide players an opportunity to create new characters from the Falcon Clan (see page 81 and following in the *Shadowlands* sourcebook) or from schools focused on the afterlife, such as the Mazoku's Enforcer School (see page 24).

THE UNWITTING DEAD

The PCs are asked to find Hiruma Takatoyo, a samurai who died in a tragic construction accident on the Wall. However, thanks to another bureaucratic foul-up in Meido, his paperwork was misfiled, and his soul remains within his body in Ningen-dō. Despite his cracked spine, Takatoyo is living out what seems to be the rest of his mortal life. Unfortunately, his presence in Ningen-dō is having increasingly serious karmic effects, as his actions are causing things to happen that shouldn't. The PCs must locate Takatoyo as soon as possible and convince him to accept his death and enter the afterlife.

When the PCs travel to the lands of the Crab Clan to seek Takatoyo, they learn that he is part of a patrol dispatched into the Shadowlands. The combination of the Taint and the karmic disruption surrounding Takatoyo could prove especially dire in unforeseeable ways. The PCs must brave the horrors of the Shadowlands and track down Takatoyo's patrol; while he cannot actually die (despite whatever injuries he sustains), his comrades can, and their deaths only complicate the already tangled bureaucratic mess!

A SPREAD OF SLAUGHTER

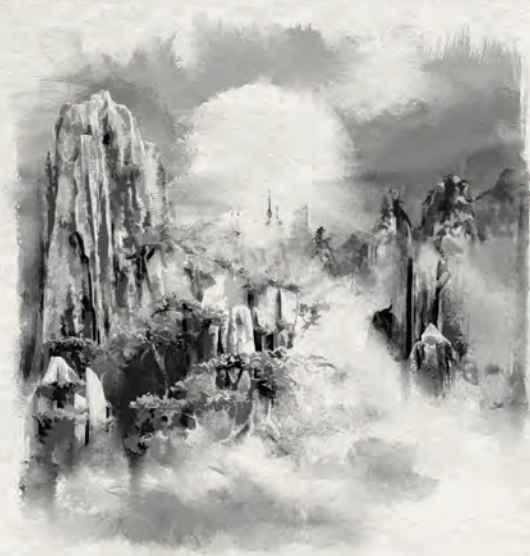
Dangerous spirits from Tōshigoku, the Realm of Slaughter, have begun to appear in Ningen-dō near the Spine of the World Mountains. These violent beings, whose very existence embodies strife and bloodshed, represent a profound threat to anyone unlucky enough to cross their path. Clearly, a way between the two realms has somehow been opened, and the PCs are tasked with finding and closing it.

A good starting place for their investigation is in the provinces of the Yogo family, near their ancestral home of Shiro Yogo, the Castle of Learning. It is there that the incursion appears to have originated. The PCs soon encounter evidence of the spirits' rampage in the form of slaughtered villagers, travelers, and even samurai. They may also end up encountering the slaughter-spirits themselves, who can be represented by the Bushi Skeleton profile on page 318 of the core rulebook, with endurance increased to 10 and "Tainted being" removed. See the **Gauging an Encounter** section on page 310 of the core rulebook for assistance in scaling the encounter appropriately for the party.

The PCs eventually discover that a recent landslide in the Spine of the World Mountains has caused a long-forgotten tunnel to Tōshigoku to open. The PCs can handle this in several ways. They can restore a physical blockage to the tunnel, but this is likely only a temporary solution in the restless mountains. They could attempt to seal the tunnel using spiritual means; the Yogo are noted masters of spiritual wards, but this may require delicate negotiation with representatives of the Yogo, who may have hidden motives of their own. After all, surely the Yogo are aware of the issue, but they appear to have done nothing to address it. Finally, the PCs could enter the tunnel to see if they can find an even more permanent way of sealing it off—or to see if it branches, leading to other strange and dangerous realms!

A STOLEN MASK

One of the masks that allow beings to be reborn as oni and enter Jigoku has been stolen from the realms of the dead. The GM can use one of the masks described starting on page 12 of the *Wheel of Judgment* adventure or make up one that suits their own purposes. Mazoku have determined that the stolen mask has been brought to Ningen-dō. Not only could this extremely powerful and dangerous artifact do great harm in the Mortal Realm, but it could also allow a mortal with nefarious intent to enter Jigoku and instigate trouble there. Moreover, the incident is extremely embarrassing for the authorities of Meido—particularly the maō Burakakin, to whose custody the masks had been entrusted.



Lady Mazoku has agreed to help Burakakin by arranging for the mask's recovery before news of its loss reaches the court of Emma-Ō. She tasks the PCs with finding the mask, retrieving it, and handing it over to her so she can return it to where it belongs in Meido. If Jya-Aku, the mahō-tsukai from **Blood and Magic** (see page 3), has survived, she is a good candidate to serve as the culprit. She could have stolen the mask as part of her ongoing nefarious efforts to exploit Jigoku for her own purposes. The GM may even wish to have her become an ongoing nemesis. Alternatively, the GM could invent a new villain as the thief or could use a recurring villain from their own campaign.

For the purposes of this adventure seed, Jya-Aku is the leader of a cult based in a remote village near the Shinomen Forest. She has enticed the village head, Joh, with promises of power. Joh has ordered the other villagers, who are mostly woodcutters, to do Jya-Aku's bidding, making them her unwitting accomplices. If she was unable to acquire the scroll in **Blood and Magic** and the scroll is still in Jigoku, she seeks to retrieve it by opening the tunnel from the Mortal Realm to Jigoku depicted on the leather map from that encounter. If she already has the scroll, her aim is to perform the ritual it describes. This ritual will have dire consequences for the Empire, threatening to swallow the entire Shinomen Forest in the creation of a new hellish domain, if it goes unchecked. Jya-Aku hopes to use the mask to transform herself into this new domain's ruler: a demon lord to rival even the power of Fu Leng! If her plan works, its consequences will be devastating to Rokugan.

A MISPLACED SHADE

In yet another bureaucratic foul-up, a recently deceased soul was matched with the wrong paperwork in Meido and has been sent to the incorrect realm. The mazoku simply don't have the time or resources to find this unfortunate individual, but the mistake must be corrected; it is embarrassing, and the karmic implications are profound. The shade in question is a Lion samurai, Akodo Yasuke, who by all accounts lived a good and honorable life and could be considered a candidate for ascension to Yomi, the Realm of Sacred Ancestors. The fact that he has been cast into some other realm by accident is a terrible miscarriage of karmic justice.

Lady Mazoku tasks the PCs with helping her rectify the situation. She gives each of them a jade badge to wear, inscribed with her seal. The badges allow the PCs to pass between and through all of the Spirit Realms except Jigoku; thankfully, the mazoku have learned that Yasuke was not sent to that realm. This adventure seed and the jade badges give the GM the scope for an adventure or campaign that spans a variety of realms. In the underworld, the PCs could search Meido, Gakidō, and Tōshigoku. They could also visit Chikushō-dō, the Realm of Animals; Sakkaku, the Realm of Mischief; and Yume-dō, the Realm of Dreams. Of course, the GM may wish to develop their own Spirit Realms for the PCs to explore.

The most obvious clue for the PCs to follow, in any realm, is news of a shade behaving in a way at odds with the nature of that realm. Yasuke is very honorable and forthright, qualities that would normally be "overwritten" by the character of the Spirit Realm in question. Because he does not belong there, though, he retains his essential character, which will probably make him stand out among the hungry dead or spirits of slaughter.

Where the PCs ultimately find Yasuke is up to the GM. Once they find him, they must bring him to the authorities in Meido so the terrible error can be rectified. Of course, the powers of the realm in which they find him might have other ideas, seeing an opportunity for leverage over Meido; the PCs might, therefore, have to spring the unfortunate Akodo in what amounts to a celestial prison break!

**NEW CONTENT
INTRODUCED IN
CELESTIAL REALMS**

Most of the techniques, advantages and disadvantages, and items listed in the school profiles described in the following pages are covered in the core rulebook in Chapter 4. Those shown in bold, such as **Rite of the Wheel**, are new techniques not found in the core rulebook. These are covered in the *Celestial Realms* sourcebook.

USING THESE SCHOOLS

These two schools are suitable for new characters created in the afterlife.

The Mazoku's Enforcer Tradition is also suitable for members of the Falcon minor clan found in the *Shadowlands* book, or other characters with a bond to the Realms of Punishment, at the GM's discretion.

New Schools

The following are new schools that PCs can select as part of character creation.

Mazoku's Enforcer Tradition [Bushy, Sage]

Occasionally, overworked mazoku will "recruit" humans (living or dead) to serve as their swords, training them to adjudicate spiritual disputes and uphold the justice of Emma-Ō across all realms. Such was the case with the foundation of the Falcon Clan, and many of its warriors are trained in this tradition, but mazoku sometimes choose individuals of rare talent as well. While those trained in these arts are not shugenja, they are capable of seeing and interacting with spirits, allowing them to pursue wayward ghosts and bring peace to their souls no matter where they may appear. Some are even allowed to wear Emma-Ō's blessed robes of judgment to mark them as favored agents.

Rings: +1 Earth, +1 Void

Starting Skills (choose five): +1 Command, +1 Fitness, +1 Martial Art [Melee], +1 Martial Arts [Unarmed], +1 Meditation, +1 Tactics, +1 Theology

Honor: 45

Techniques Available: Kata (🗡️), Rituals (🕯️), Shūji (🌀)

Starting Advantage: Sixth Sense

Starting Disadvantage (choose one): Haunting or Omen of Bad Luck

Starting Techniques:

- 🌀 **Kata:** Open-Hand Style
- 🕯️ **Rituals:** Commune with Spirits

Mazoku's Authority (School Ability): When you perform an Attack or Scheme action check targeting an Otherworldly being, if you succeed, add a number of bonus successes equal to your school rank.

Starting Outfit: Traveling clothes, **robes of judgment** or sanctified robes, daishō (katana and wakizashi), **shakujo** (ceremonial staff) or yumi (bow) and quiver of arrows, scroll satchel, journal, traveling pack.



ADVANCE

TYPE

	ADVANCE	TYPE
RANK 1	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Command	Skill
	Sentiment	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1 Rituals	🕯️ Tech. Grp.
	🌀 Iaijutsu Cut: Crossing Blade	🗡️ Technique
	Weight of Duty	🌀 Technique
RANK 2	Social Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Meditation	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1–2 Earth Shūji	🌀 Tech. Grp.
	🌀 Touchstone of Courage	🌀 Technique
	Rite of the Wheel	🕯️ Technique
RANK 3	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Performance	Skill
	Sentiment	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1–3 Kata	🗡️ Tech. Grp.
	🌀 Soul Sunder	🗡️ Technique
	Rallying Cry	🌀 Technique
RANK 4	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Courtesy	Skill
	Martial Arts [Ranged]	Skill
	Tactics	Skill
	Rank 1–4 Rituals	🕯️ Tech. Grp.
	🌀 Striking as Void	🗡️ Technique
	Prayer of Protection	🕯️ Technique
RANK 5	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Courtesy	Skills
	Sentiment	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1–5 Kata	🗡️ Tech. Grp.
	Rouse the Soul	🌀 Technique
	The Immovable Hand of Peace	🌀 Technique
RANK 6	Hunter of the Supernatural (Mastery Ability): When making a check targeting an Otherworldly being, you may seize one of its advantages (see page 101 of the core rulebook) by receiving 2 fatigue instead of spending 1 Void point. If you do, your target receives strife equal to your ranks in Command.	

Champion of Days Gone Tradition [Bushi]

Samurai of past ages lived and fought in different ways, for arms and armor have evolved much over the centuries, fluctuating with new developments and societal trends alike. In the days of Hantei Genji, for example, the bow was the favored weapon, and held much of the prestige that the daishō does in contemporary Rokugan. During that time, several bloody battles for the throne, including the famous Battle of Regret's Shadow, plunged countless souls into the afterlife. While most souls have long since moved on, some of them are still there even today. Of course, Rokugan has not only changed in terms of its preferences in weaponry—manners, art, fashion, and cultural expectations have also changed with the times. A soul who has been parted from the realm of the living since an ancient war might find many things about their new modern companions to be quite unexpected!

Rings: +1 Air, +1 Void

Starting Skills (choose five): +1 Courtesy, +1 Composition, +1 Fitness, +1 Martial Art [Ranged], +1 Martial Arts [Melee], +1 Meditation, +1 Sentiment

Honor: 50

Techniques Available: Kata (✂), Rituals (✎), Shūji (☞)

Starting Techniques:

- ✎ **Kata:** Hawk's Precision
- ✎ **Shūji:** Courtier's Resolve

Effortless Aim (School Ability): When making a check using a bow, add a number of kept ■ set to an ✎ result equal to your school rank.

Starting Outfit: Resplendent traveling clothes, chokutō, knife, Ceremonial yumi (bow) with quiver of arrows, 5 armor-piercing arrows, 5 fleshcutter arrows, 2 humming bulb arrows, traveling pack.

ADVANCE

TYPE

	ADVANCE	TYPE
RANK 1	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Courtesy	Skill
	Culture	Skill
	Government	Skill
	Rank 1 Air Shūji	☞ Tech. Grp.
	✎ Pelting Hail Style	✂ Technique
	Striking as Air	✂ Technique
RANK 2	Social Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Fitness	Skill
	Martial Arts [Ranged]	Skill
	Sentiment	Skill
	Rank 1–2 Water Shūji	☞ Tech. Grp.
	✎ All Arts are One	✂ Technique
	Tactical Assessment	☞ Technique
RANK 3	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Aesthetics	Skill
	Command	Skill
	Martial Arts [Ranged]	Skill
	Rank 1–3 Fire Shūji	☞ Tech. Grp.
	✎ A Samurai's Fate	☞ Technique
	✎ Breath of Wind Style	✂ Technique
RANK 4	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Culture	Skill
	Design	Skill
	Government	Skill
	Rank 1–4 Earth Shūji	☞ Tech. Grp.
	✎ Pin the Fan	✂ Technique
	Disappearing World Style	✂ Technique
RANK 5	Social Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Martial Arts [Ranged]	Skills
	Sentiment	Skill
	Tactics	Skill
	Rank 1–5 Void Shūji	☞ Tech. Grp.
	Soul Sunder	✂ Technique
	Striking as Void	✂ Technique
RANK 6	An Arrow Loosed (Mastery Ability): Once per game session, before making a check with a bow, you may declare your confidence in a shot and stake up to 6 glory upon hitting your mark. Reduce the TN of the check by that amount. If you succeed, you recover your staked glory. If succeeding in the shot would cause you to receive a glory award (such as if you were competing with another skilled archer, or felled a dangerous beast on the hunt), you receive that amount of glory plus 3 instead. If you fail, you lose your staked glory.	

PLAYING HISTORICAL CHARACTERS

All cultures change over time, and so characters from Rokugan's past would have different cultural norms from their contemporary counterparts. With that said, having spent some centuries in the afterlife, a character might also be surprisingly "modern" in their sensibilities—after all, they have been dead far longer than they were alive, and have likely interacted with beings from all eras of history.

As another narrative wrinkle, such a character might be well-known to the other PCs for their purported deeds in life, whether or not these are actually true. Or, potentially more embarrassingly for both parties, they might be completely unknown to the PCs despite their heroics in life.

Credits

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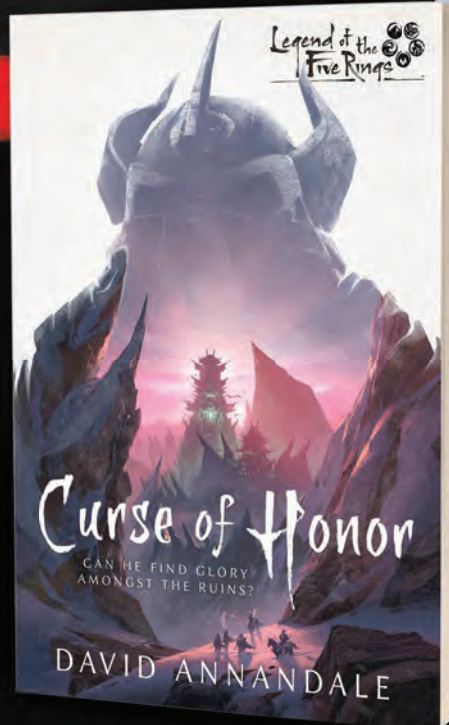


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