

Volume one • Issue three

# Imperial Herald

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Emerald Edition

Forbidden Knowledge  
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The Return of  
The Oracle of the Void



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# Win a Complete Set Of Anvil of Despair™

The Shadow Samurai



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The Scout



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The Foxwife



© 1996 by Heather Bruton

*Heroes do not  
make themselves  
great. Greatness is  
thrust upon them.*

*- The Tao of Shinsei*

The Personal Champion



© 1996 by Bob Hobbs

One of these Followers will become a Personality available only to Assembly Members. Who will it be? That's up to you! Make your voice heard! Send in your vote via letter or postcard. One vote will be randomly drawn to win a complete set of **Anvil of Despair**. Anyone can win the set, but only Assembly members' votes will count to naming the hero. Send your vote to:

**Alderac Entertainment Group  
4045 Guasti Road #212  
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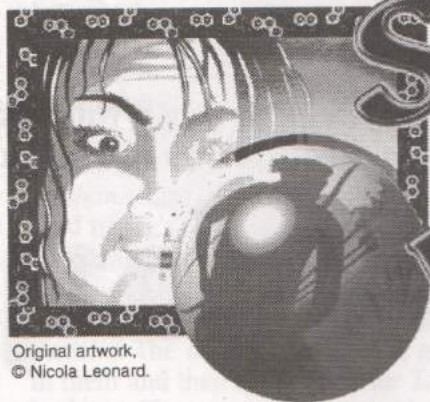
Votes must be received by October 15, 1996.

The Apprentice



© 1996 by April Lee





Original artwork,  
© Nicola Leonard.

# Secrets on the Wind

News travels as quickly as the winds of war in Rokugan, but because of the ravages of the war, communication has reduced itself to rumors and accusations. To the north and east, the armies of the Lion continued their assault of Doji Castle. Standing alone against the fiercest samurai in the Empire were the tiny army of the Crane, led by Daidoji Uji, and an army of Phoenix shugenja led by the samurai-maiden Shiba Tsukune. Time after time, Matsu Tsuko found herself put to the task as the Crane samurai used the familiarity of the terrain to their advantage while the unorthodox strategies and sorceries of the Phoenix thwarted Tsuko's tactics. It seemed as if the Lion would be forced to retreat for reinforcements when another army - a Shadowlands army - advanced from the direction of the Emperor's Palace. Scouts report that it seemed the three armies would band together to fight the threat, but at the last moment, the Lion army retreated, leaving the Crane and Phoenix to stand alone against the threat. It was only a matter of hours before the armies of the Empire were forced to retreat, buying just enough time for the inhabitants of Doji castle to abandon the ancient stronghold of the Crane. Doji Castle is now in the hands of the Shadowlands army led by the mad mockery of the Clan's Champion. Meanwhile, Doji Hoturi has massed a large force of Cranes in the south of their lands, complemented with a small contingent of Naga led by the warlord Shadaret.

Meanwhile, in the west, the "ronin army" continues to gather strength. What was once a insignificant army of Dragon samurai led by a disgraced champion is slowly becoming a force to be reckoned with. Toturi has defeated the Crab and Hida Sukune at Beiden Pass, has forced Sukune's brother, Yakamo, to retreat to the walls of Yasuki Castle and was apparently preparing an assault on the ancient fortress when news from the Imperial Palace told him of the Lion assault at Doji Castle. Upon hearing of the assault of Shadowlands armies on the Crane, the ronin Toturi turned his army from the Crab territories back to Beiden Pass. For reasons that are as yet unclear, the Unicorn contingent there refused him passage through the Pass, forcing him to turn north through the lands of his old Clansmen, the Lion.

And speaking of the Lion ...

Only recently Ikoma Kaoku has put down rumors of a riot in Matsu Castle. Spies from the other Clans have confirmed that the house is in chaos searching for a spy who has stolen The Ancestral Sword of the Lion. Word has it that Bayushi Kachiko has recovered the blade after her own bodyguard killed such a spy trying to steal the Emperor's sword. She has told Kaoku that she will keep the sword in the Emperor's Palace... just in case.

And all the Clans worry over the state of the Unicorn. For many months they have refused to speak to the rest of the Clans. Only Shinjo Yasamura has spoken at all, choosing to ride for a time with the ronin Toturi, but with his refusal to allow Toturi through Beiden Pass, the Clans have all begun to question the motives of the Unicorn.

I will be bringing you more news from the Empire, but now I must return to my letters. My spies have uncovered a great many new facts that I must collate before I can reveal them. Good luck, and keep your ears to the wind!

Special Thanks to all the folks at Heroes Con in Charlotte for the Battle at Doji Palace and to all the Assembly Members who voted in the *Kolat Master* contest. Look for the results in *Anvil of Despair*, coming this winter!

## The Imperial Herald

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This month's cover, the *Walking Horror of Fu Leng*, was painted by AEG's very own Matt Wilson. You can find this handsome fellow and more of his cohorts in *Forbidden Knowledge*, the next chapter in the Saga of Rokugan.

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Deck by David Williams  
Written by John Wick

# Walking the Way™

## Newton's Third Law (or, How To Shut Down the Fast Deck)

"For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction."

— Sir Isaac Newton's Third Law of Physics

(By the way, the reason I'm writing Dave's column this time is because he's much too busy balancing *Anvil of Despair*, *Battle at Beiden Pass* and getting ready for Gen-Con's big bad "The Sword of Hantei" tournament. But he gave me the deck and showed me how to use it, so let's give it a shot, shall we?)

From the moment that you arrive to the moment that you leave the offices of AEG, the phone is ringing. It never stops. On the other end of the line are folks with questions about the legitimacy of card combos, folks with questions about story elements or folks who just want to chat. The most popular thing that folks like to chat with us about starts off with: "I love *L5R*, but (insert your favorite Clan here) is broken. It's just too powerful."

We hear a lot of that. I've personally heard it said about every Clan at least twice (some more than others), and in a way, it's comforting to know that people are finding the strengths of certain decks and

exploiting those strengths to their best potential. That's the way Sun Tzu would have wanted it: Know your enemy and yourself and defeat will never knock on your door.

Recently, however, we've been hearing that a lot about one particular style of deck: the Fast Deck. It seems some folks are become experts at the "quick win." You know, bring out an Oni or cheap samurai first turn and start whacking Provinces second turn with lots of *Charges*, *Frenzys* and *Contentious Terrain*.

Well, if you know Dave Williams (*L5R*'s Lead Designer and Number Cruncher), then you also know that when Dave hears that something can't be beat, he sets his mind to crush it until it's flatter than a Denny's pancake. So, he took one look at the Fast Deck and came up with a deck to shut it down. Here's what Dave came up with.

It's called *Newton's Third Law*, and it's based on the whole idea of equal and opposite reaction. It's a Dragon deck that's designed to spank a Fast Attack deck and put it to bed early without its supper. The key to it is in its defensive strength. It involves a lot of Terrains, but more importantly, it also involves a lot of duels. Now, this isn't your standard *Iaijutsu Duel/Entrapping Terrain* combo. Oh, no. Dave's much more insidious



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than that.

The big strength of the deck relies on getting someone to attack you. Here's how it works. Shadowlands Oni comes over to stomp on your Province. You have *Togashi Mitsu* out there to block with a *Tetsubo* in his fist. The first thing you do is *Outflank* him, then you play the *Test of Might*. If *Mitsu's* fired up, he's at an 11 Force before focusing. Even Crab Clan Onis have to take a second look before jumping into *that* duel.

Also, be on the lookout for those *Suspended Terrains*. The *best* use for those is getting your opponent in them and then using *Superior Tactics* to move right back out. Then, you can go in with Daini and Mitsu for two free turns of attacks while his guys are losing *Suspended Terrain* tokens. Sure, you may lose a Province, but the other guy will be *slowed down* and that's the tactic we have to use here. And, of course, *never* underestimate the power of a well-timed *Counterattack*. If you play it right (with a *Suspended Terrain*), you could be looking at three full Attack phases without a single shred of resistance.

A couple of last thoughts. The honor producing Holdings are in there (along with the Personalities with high Personal Honor) to force your opponent to attack you. Unfortunately, this deck may have some trouble with a defensive "fast Honor" deck. And lastly, Dave's got *Toku*, because you can never have enough of the Tokunator.

Ponder this wisdom and return here when you are ready for more. See you next time!

### ***The Ninja Shapeshifter's Rubber Soul***

Or is that Achilles Heel? I can never remember.

Anyway, we get a lot of calls about the *Ninja Shapeshifter*. Some folks think he's too powerful, some folks think he's unstoppable, others really like Ron Spencer's art. But with the release of *Shadowlands*, our little black-clad friend may be finding himself in a whole new kettle of stew.

The two cards that really cook his goose are *Arrows from the Woods* and *Wounded in Battle*. Think about it for a moment. One kills a Personality through his Force, the other attacks him through his Chi. The *Shapeshifter* can only shift one or the other. Which one is it going to be this turn? If you have both of those in your hand, you can axe him right quick and right easy with just one card. Also don't forget *Test of Honor*: just 6 Gold and that Ninja is saying "Goodnight" to Gracie.

### ***"Newton's Third Law"***

#### ***Actions***

- (1) Ambush
- (2) Block Supply Lines
- (2) Counter Attack
- (3) Dispersive Terrain
- (3) Entrapping Terrain
- (3) Frenzy
- (3) Iaijutsu Duel
- (3) Outflank
- (2) Superior Tactics
- (2) Suspended Terrain
- (3) Test of Might

#### ***Items***

- (1) Ancestral Sword of Dragon Clan
- (2) Tetsubo

#### ***Spells***

- (2) Earthquake
- (2) The Fire From Within
- (1) The Fist of Osano-Wo
- (1) Touch of Death
- (1) Walking the Way

#### ***Rings***

- (1) Ring of Air
- (1) Ring of Earth
- (1) Ring of Void

#### ***Holdings***

- (3) Gold Mine
- (3) Sanctified Temple
- (3) Jade Works
- (3) Small Farm
- (3) Gambling House
- (2) Temple of the Ancestors
- (1) Master Smith

#### ***Events***

- (1) Crysanthemum Festival
- (1) Imperial Gift
- (1) Iris Festival
- (1) Plague

#### ***Personalities***

- (2) Agasha Tamori
- (1) Earth Dragon
- (3) Mirumoto Daini
- (3) Mirumoto Hitomi
- (1) Momaru
- (3) Togashi Mitsu
- (2) Togashi Yoshi
- (1) Togashi Gaijutsu
- (1) Togashi Yokune
- (1) Togashi Hoshi
- (2) Toku



# The Oracle of the Void™

D. J. Trindle

## Frequently Asked Questions

*"I hear the talking of the DJ -  
Can't understand just what does he say?"  
- Mexican Radio, Wall of Voodoo*

*This issue, D. J. promised me "The Most Mind-Boggling Timing Example Ever." Meek readers (such as myself) should read the following timing example with caution!*

There is a three-player game, with turn order Allen, Bob, Cindy. Allen has the Imperial Edition Isawa Tsuke (the Phoenix Clan Master of Fire) and a Togashi Yoshi in play. Bob has the Imperial Edition Doji Hoturi (the Crane Clan Champion), a Toku, and a shugenja with an Elemental Ward, while Cindy has a shugenja with a Counterspell.

It's Allen's turn, and he uses *Isawa Tsuke's* innate ability to play a focus card and challenge Bob's *Toku*. The face-down focus card is *Focus*, with a focus value of 5, but only Allen knows this. All players, starting with Bob, may now react to Tsuke, but Bob has something up his sleeve and passes. It is now Cindy's turn to react to the duel-producing effect. Cindy has the *Counterspell* in play, which could cancel the duel, but since it isn't her Personality in the duel, she's satisfied, and passes. It is now Allen's turn to react to Tsuke's duel, and he passes. All players having passed consecutively, the duel begins.

The Master of Fire and Toku are now considered to be on their way into a duel, and reactions which trigger on "entering a duel" effects may be played now. Since Reactions always start with the opponent to the active player's left, Bob gets to produce the first reaction, and Bob reacts with a *He's Mine!* This allows him to replace Toku (who becomes bowed) with his *Doji Hoturi*, a more fitting opponent for the Master of Fire. Nobody has any reactions to Bob's *He's Mine!*

Since Cindy, Allen, and Bob all let this reaction pass, it becomes Cindy's turn to react to the start of the duel. She passes, and Allen uses his *Togashi Yoshi* to draw and

discard the top card of his Fate Deck and add the Focus Value to Tsuke's Chi. It's the Ring of Earth, with a Focus Value of 4! Bob may react first to Yoshi, and passes with a beseeching look at Cindy. Cindy gets the hint, and uses her *Counterspell* to prevent Yoshi's card from adding to the Master of Fire's Chi. Allen, Bob, and Cindy all elect not to react to Cindy's *Counterspell*, and it becomes Allen's turn to react to Yoshi's now-canceled Fate draw. He passes, as do Bob and Cindy. Yoshi's effect having resolved and been passed out, it becomes Bob's turn to react to the start of the duel. He uses Hoturi's ability to change the duel to a test of Personal Honor. (This means that even if Yoshi's ability hadn't been canceled, the card drawn wouldn't have affected the Personal Honor duel, as Yoshi's cards add to the Personality's Chi.) Nobody wishes to react to this change, and nobody has any more "entering the duel" reactions to play. It is now time for the combatants to start playing Focus cards.

Hoturi is the challenged Personality, and may play the first Focus card. He does so, and it's Tsuke's turn to focus. In this kind of duel, though, the Master of Fire may not focus, so he strikes. Both players turn over their focused cards; Isawa Tsuke had played a card with a 5 focus, and Doji Hoturi a 1 focus. It looks as if Hoturi's going to lose this one....

But wait! Bob plays a *Poisoned Weapon*, after the Focus cards are turned up but before they're added up, to reduce Tsuke's Chi by three. Bob immediately loses 4 Honor, but doesn't care. Nobody has any reactions to this, and Tsuke dies, his Chi reduced below zero. With no opponent left in the duel, Hoturi gets away unscathed; all of the focused cards are discarded, and Bob gloats over the Crane Clan Champion's treacherous victory as Hoturi becomes bowed by the "He's Mine!" Allen's Limited Action has been fully resolved, and Bob may now play an Open action as the game continues...



As many of you might know, I've retired from full-time L5R FAQ duties, due to more pressing problems (i.e. getting the actual game out). I've passed the torch to Jeff Alexander, who has revised and extended the FAQ to deal with the questions engendered by the Shadowlands expansion as well as questions arising from the core set. Most of the following Q&A exchanges are his, and they answer the most pressing questions left unanswered by the newly-revised-yet-again Emerald Edition rulebook.

-D.J.T.

**Q:** Which Personalities are **Unique**? They all seem to have particular names. Can I really have three of all of them?

**A:** **Unique** cards have the word "Unique" in their traits line. Though almost all Personality cards depict specific individuals, most are merely representative of their particular station in Rokugan and have many peers, thus allowing you to put three in your deck. It'd also be much less fun if you had to play things like "Lion Samurai #1" or "Phoenix Shugenja B."

**Q:** Can I replace a Unique version of a Personality with a Unique, **Experienced** version?

**A:** Yes.

**Q:** I just discarded a Follower card. Can I use *Animate the Dead* to attach him to a Personality?

**A:** Nope. *Animate the Dead* specifically says "...back into play," and discarded Followers never made it into play in the first place. You only get to *Animate* those cards which are authentically Dead.

**Q:** If I use *Animate the Dead* to bring back a dead Follower, do I still have to meet honor requirements?

**A:** I'm afraid so. I'd love to be able to answer "no," but I can't justify it from the card text. Someday maybe an errata to the card will be issued, but until then, dead Followers have the same high standards as living ones.

**Q:** What if I'm using a special ability to move Followers around?

**A:** The answer is the same: the new recipient must be legally able to attach the Followers normally or else he can't receive them, no matter how they're being moved.

**Q:** What's the deal with Doji Hoturi? How can he ever lose a duel? No one else has a personal honor as high as his, and focusing is useless because it adds to your Chi!

**A:** If Hoturi's controller makes a duel a duel of honor, focus cards will add their values to personal honor, not Chi, since that's what the duel is based on. Note that this only applies to Fate cards played as focus cards, not to any other duel-related, Chi-changing effects. Also note that the Double Chi ability, because of how it's defined, will work normally in a duel of honor.

**Q:** Speaking of unkillable duelists, what about the Master of Fire?

**A:** He's not unkillable. He's only immune to death due to losing a duel started with his own Innate Ability. If he is challenged, or if he starts a duel using some other ability, he's as mortal as anyone else. He can also die from a Poisoned Weapon, which lasts beyond the duel.

**Q:** "He"? I thought the Fire Master was female!

**A:** Maybe. Maybe not. The Phoenix are very good at misinformation.

**Q:** My opponent has a Personality in play that won't normally join my Clan. Can I play *Kolat Master* on it and steal it?

**A:** No. *Kolat Master* says the Personality "rejoins your family". Someone who will not join your Clan could never have been in your family to begin with, and so cannot "rejoin" it.

**Night Medallion:** The *Night Medallion* only adds +2 to numbers expressed using digits, not to numeric words. It also adds to the actual value, not to the magnitude: "-2" would become "0", for example, not "-4". Finally, it will not change the text of abilities copied from other cards (this overrides the rule on p. 28 under "Copying Abilities").

**You can sign onto the L5R electronic mailing list** by sending email to [majordomo@home.isomedia.com](mailto:majordomo@home.isomedia.com). Use a blank "Subject:" line and include one of these two commands as the only line in the body of your mail:

subscribe l5rinfo yourid@your.host.com

to receive every letter as it's sent in, or

subscribe l5rinfo-digest yourid@your.host.com

to receive an accumulated digest approximately once per day. In either case, replace "yourid@your.host.com" with your actual email address. **SAVE THE INSTRUCTIONAL MESSAGE** you receive from the mailing list software! It will prove invaluable when you wish to unsubscribe or if you have problems.

-From the FAQ, maintained by Jeff Alexander ([jwa@zot.iipo.gtegsc.com](mailto:jwa@zot.iipo.gtegsc.com)). ☸



# TAKA'S TREASURES™



## What are Koku?

I am Yasuki Taka - the Master Merchant of the Crab Clan. Yes, there is many a Crane who wishes I would teach him the secrets I know, but I save them for my Clan to make the most of their Koku.

What are Koku? Well, I would not expect a gaijin like yourself to understand, but Koku are the coins of our Empire, much like the coins of your own, eh? Here, let me teach you one of my tricks. Be sure to keep it secret.

You can find Koku on the back of every Destiny Pack and on the inside flap of every Dynasty Deck. Decks have three Koku each and Packs have one, and if you can find *me*, you'll have even more access to the wealth you deserve.

So, how do you use the Koku once you've found it? Send it to me! Send all your Koku to me and I will exchange it for the merchandise I have here. However, make sure you follow the shipping and handling procedures listed with the merchandise. It makes my job a little easier, and we all want me to be happy while I package your prizes now don't we? Next issue, I'll have even more, so save your extras.

And remember the wise words of my teacher, Master Zinsa-san, "There are always new ways of finding Koku." Until next time, *May evil always feed on your neighbor.*

3 - 1



3 - 1. The most treasured possession of a family, the ancestral sword of the Clan is a symbol of honor and heritage. And now with your Koku, you can bring this ancient symbol of strength and pride into your own Household. Provided by the master smiths at Weapons Emporium, available here for a limited time only.

Availability subject to local laws and restrictions.



2500 plus \$10 S&H

3 - 2



3 - 2. Here it is. The shirt that everyone wants. The most sought after shirt at the '95 Gen-Con Game Fair. More than anything else, this is what L5R players have been asking for. It's currently unavailable at stores and the only way to get it is here - from me. Specify Size (L, XL, XXL).



250 plus \$3 S&H



3-3. The master smiths of Rokugan have really produced a marvel this time. *Clan watches!* That's right, you can get your favorite Clan on the face of a wrist watch! All in full color. Specify your Clan when ordering.



600 plus \$2 S&H





## The Card Shop (Based on availability. In other words, first come first serve.)

If you're missing cards to complete your collection or are just looking for a little something to give you that extra edge against your opponent, then peruse this month's selection of cards. Each order must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope, the order form, and any protective materials you want your cards to travel in. And, for a *very* limited time, we have the highly demanded Clan Stronghold Cards for just 15 Koku! Only one of each Stronghold to a customer, please.



### 15 each plus an SASE

3-4. Crab Stronghold



3-5. Crane Stronghold



3-6. Dragon Stronghold



3-7. Lion Stronghold



3-8. Phoenix Stronghold



3-9. Unicorn Stronghold



3-10. Scorpion Stronghold



3-11. Naga Stronghold



### 20 each plus an SASE

3-12. The Thunder Dragon



3-13. Emerald Edition Naga Abomination



3-14. Emerald Edition Kitsu Matso



3-15. Emerald Edition Shosuro Hametsu



## ORDER FORM – Herald #3

(cut out or photo copy)

Please write down all items ordered by number (ie. 2A,4G, etc.) and total the shipping and handling.

Item #'s \_\_\_\_\_ Shipping & Handling Total\$ \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Street \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

**Make Check Payable To:**  
**ALDERAC ENTERTAINMENT GROUP**  
**attn: Taka's Treasures**  
**4045 Guasti Rd #212**  
**Ontario, California 91761**

**Please include this form with all orders!**

Please allow two to four weeks for delivery. All items are subject to availability. If an item you have ordered is not in stock you will be contacted about a substitution or your Koku will be returned.



# What's New in Emerald Edition?

A lot of L5R players will be asking us this question, so we decided to head the sucker off at the pass. Here are the surprises you can expect to find in Emerald.

## The New Strongholds.

The first thing experienced players are going to notice is the new art on the back of the Starter boxes. Except for the Phoenix, who have a new Stronghold ability to reflect their increasing research into the Shadowlands, none of the numbers have changed – but the art sure has. Also, new flavor text adorns the side of the boxes, telling the changes that each Clan has undergone, and giving hints as to changes that may be in their future.

## The Ancestral Armors.

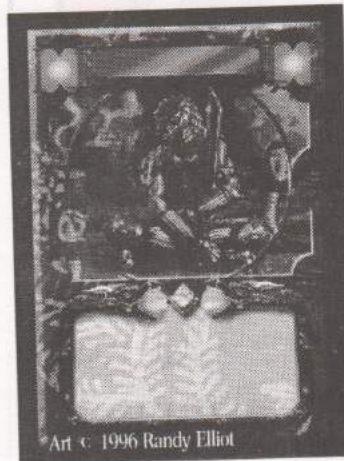
That's right, the Swords are gone and the Armors have arrived. There's one for each of the Six Clans, and each one has a different special ability.

## New Faces?

There are no really *new* faces, although one is certainly new to the set. The *Naga Abomination* has found his way into the set and he's

got a brand new Trait: he's **Unique**. And if you think that means all promo versions are now **Unique**, you'd be right.

You'll also find the *Scorpion Poison Master* and the *Lion Tactician*, both from *Shadowlands*, in Emerald. The Poison Master, who was exclusive to the Scorpion Clan Decks, is now back, and since Toturi is no longer an Akodo (which means he's no longer a Lion) we decided to include the Tactician to fill out the missing slot.



Art © 1996 Randy Elliot

## New Art.

Many cards have found new art. Ben Peck's art can be found on *Break Morale*, *Brilliant Victory*, *Scout* and *Avoid Fate* while Bryon Wackwitz gave *Entrapping Terrain*, *Kharmic Strike*, *Mercy*, *Occupied Terrain*, *Traversable Terrain* and *Unexpected Allies* and *Sake Works* his own personal touch.



Art © 1996 Brian Snoddy

## New Rulebook.

Oh, yeah. Did we mention that there's a new rulebook in *Emerald*? Those of you familiar with the changes we made in the *Shadowlands* rulebook will still find new stuff – a small amount – in the *Emerald* version. Targeting has been clarified, the definition of a battle has been polished up, duels work slightly differently and (for the last time) ranged attacks are fixed.



Art © 1996 Randy Elliot

## And one last note for all you Kisada fans ...

Hida Kisada, the Great Bear of the Crab Clan, who used to have an Honor Requirement of 10 now has an Honor Requirement of 6. Just thought you might want to know.





# Forbidden Knowledge

## Actions

□ The Arrow Knows the Way	R	Behnke
□ Brash Hero	C	Peck
□ Bribery	U	Hobbs
□ Chasing the Wind	R	Maher
□ The Coward's Way	U	Biondillo
□ Crushing Attack	U	Maher
□ Delicate Calculations	C	Wackwitz
□ Disharmony	C	Lancaster
□ Diversionary Tactics	C	Hobbs
□ Enlightenment	C	Maxwell
□ Family Loyalty	R	Vick
□ Fearful Populace	U	Sirac
□ The Final Breath	C	Hudson
□ The First Shout	C	Leonard
□ Fu Leng's Steeds	U	Maddocks
□ Hazardous Ground	C	Hobbs
□ Higher Ground	C	O'Connor
□ Kolat Saboteur	R	Mahr
□ Moving the Shadow	C	Maher
□ Nemesis	U	Peck
□ Ninja Kidnapper	U	Grabski
□ Passing on the Soul	U	Cadice
□ The People's Expense	C	Wald
□ Reserve Movement	U	Wackwitz & Daily
□ Ride Until Dawn	R	Wackwitz
□ Scorn	C	Anderson
□ The Second Shout	C	Trowbridge
□ Spoils of War	R	Wackwitz & Daily
□ Strike with No-Thought	U	Maxwell
□ The Third Shout	U	Maher
□ Those Who Stand Alone	C	Cadice
□ The Tides of Battle	R	Garcia
□ Unfettered Attack	U	Trowbridge
□ Virtues of Command	U	Gallegos
□ Your Life Is Mine	R	Trowbridge

## Events

□ A Black Scroll is Opened	U	Wackwitz & Daily
□ An Untold Cost	R	Wackwitz & Daily
□ Dealing With Shadows	U	Raabe
□ Dragon Sword is Broken	U	Wackwitz
□ Imperial Funeral	U	Sirac
□ Not this Day!	U	O'Connor
□ Pearl of Wisdom	R	Lancaster
□ The Price of War	U	Vick
□ Seize the Day	R	Hudson
□ Strength of the Earth	U	Shanteau

## Holdings

□ Artificer	C	Lee
□ Bandit Hideout	C	O'Connor
□ Battlements of Matsu Castle	R	O'Connor
□ Black Market	C	Leonard
□ Bushi Dojo	C	Biondillo
□ The Gates of Hida Castle	R	Peck
□ The Kakita Palisades	R	Anderson
□ Merchant Caravan	C	Maher

□ Ningyo	C	Vick
□ The Shinjo Parade Grounds	R	Sirac
□ The Togashi Bastion	R	Wackwitz & Daily
□ The Towers of Isawa Castle	R	Biondillo

## Items

□ Ancestral Sword of Hantei	R	Behnke
□ Armor of Earth	R	Trowbridge
□ Dripping Poison	U	Spencer
□ The Emerald Armor	R	Snoddy
□ The Eye of Shorihotsu	U	Shanteau
□ Garrote	U	Grabski
□ Gunsen of Water	R	Maher
□ The Imperial Standard	R	Shuler
□ Katana of Fire	R	Shuler
□ Mempo of the Void	R	Leonard
□ No-dachi	C	Trowbridge
□ Personal Standard	C	Lancaster
□ Yari of Air	R	Leonard

## Personalities

□ Akiyoshi (Ua)	C	Wilson
□ Akodo Godaigo (Ua)	R	Alexander
□ Asako Oyo (Ph)	U	Wackwitz
□ Bayushi Baku (Sc)	U	Raabe
□ Bayushi Shoji (Sc)	R	Spencer
□ Bog Hag (Ua)	C	Maddocks
□ Dairya (Ua)	R	Snoddy
□ Dark Daughter of Fu Leng (Ua)	R	Everingham
□ Doji Kuwanan (Cr)	C	Raabe
□ Fusaki (Ua)	C	Gallegos
□ Ide Daikoku (Un)	R	Wald
□ Ikoma Tsanuri (Li)	U	Wilson
□ Ikoma Ujiaki (Li)	R	Kimble
□ Isawa Natsune (Ph)	C	Anderson
□ Isawa Uona (Ph)	R	Everingham
□ Kaiu Kenru (Cb)	C	Anderson
□ Kaiu Suman (Cb)	U	Wackwitz
□ Kakita Foruku (Cr)	U	Shanteau
□ Kakita Toshimoko (Cr)	R	Hoover
□ Kemmei (Ua)	C	Hudson
□ Kolat Whisperer (Ua)	R	Shuler
□ Kuni Yori (Ua)	R	Maddocks
□ Matsu Toshiro (Li)	C	Snoddy
□ Mirumoto Daini (Dr)	R	Gallegos
□ Oni no Akeru (Ua)	U	Spencer
□ Oni no Jimen (Ua)	U	Wackwitz
□ Oni no Kaze (Ua)	U	Sirac
□ Oni no Mizu (Ua)	U	Hoover
□ Oni no Seiryoku (Ua)	U	Tedin
□ Oni no Taki-Bi (Ua)	U	Peck
□ Qarash (Ng)	U	Peck
□ Ramash (Ng)	C	Tedin
□ Seikua (Ua)	C	Gallegos
□ Shahadet (Ng)	R	Wilson
□ Shinjo Mosaku (Un)	U	Kimble
□ Shinjo Sadato (Un)	C	Behnke
□ Togashi Mikoto (Dr)	C	Gallegos

□ Togashi Rinjin (Dr)	U	Peck
□ Tsuruchi (Ua)	C	Spencer
□ Yogo Asami (Sc)	C	Tedin
□ Yogo Junzo (Ua)	R	Wackwitz & Daily

## Regions

□ Beiden Pass	U	Frank
□ Crossroads	C	Lancaster
□ The Doji Plains	U	Vick
□ Farmlands	C	Bruton
□ Flatlands	C	O'Connor
□ The Isawa Woodlands	U	Bruton
□ The Kaiu Walls	U	Biondillo
□ Kuni Wastelands	R	Grabski
□ Mountain Pass	C	Trowbridge
□ Plains of Otsan Uchi	R	Wald
□ The Ruined Keep of Fu Leng	R	Kimble
□ Swamplands	C	Lancaster

## Spells

□ A Terrible Oath†	R	Behnke
□ Black Wind From The Soul†	R	Wackwitz & Daily
□ Calling the Elements	C	Behnke
□ Courage of the Seven Thunders	U	Hudson
□ The Elements' Fury	U	Cadice
□ The Fires That Cleanse	U	Hudson
□ The Iron Citadel†	R	Biondillo
□ Jadestrike	C	Biondillo
□ The Path to Inner Peace	C	Mahr
□ Purity of the Seven Thunders	R	Hobbs
□ Return of the Fallen Lord†	R	Spencer
□ Reversal of Fortunes	U	Lancaster
□ Sharing the Strength of Many	C	Hobbs
□ Strike at the Roots	C	Bruton
□ Walking Honor of Fu Leng†	R	Wilson
□ The Wasting Disease†	R	Spencer
□ Wheel of Fate	U	Hudson
□ Whispering Winds	C	Lancaster
□ Wind-Borne Slumbers	U	Biondillo

## Followers

□ Goblin Berserkers	C	Raabe
□ Kotaro	R	Hudson
□ Lesser Oni	C	Trowbridge
□ Mantis Budoka	U	Grabski
□ Mantis Samurai	U	Peck
□ Ogre Warriors	R	Peck
□ Pikemen	C	Biondillo
□ Shield Wall	U	Garcia

### Key:

C = Common  
U = Uncommon  
R = Rare  
Cb = Crab  
Cn = Crane  
Dr = Dragon

Li = Lion  
Ph = Phoenix  
Sc = Scorpion  
Ua = Unaligned  
Un = Unicorn  
† = Black Scroll



# The Way of the Willow

by Ree Soesbee

*We first met Ree at Heroes Con just a few weeks ago. She asked me about writing for the Herald and I gave her the usual run-down. With most writers, I get a response in a few months after they've spent considerable time working on their pieces, editing and re-editing until its just right for submission. Two weeks later Ree sent me this huge three part story about a Crane, a Lion and the Naga, and it read just like a children's faerie tale. This is part one; expect to see future installments in future Heralds. And while the tale Shizue tells the Lady of the Lions is quite charming, it may or may not be the truth. After all, we are listening to a Crane's tale aren't we?*

The darkness of the clouds rumbled in the skies above the flame-colored banners of the Matsu home. To the west, the fading, sickly brightness of the setting sun shone low over the horizon, and a brisk wind blew the ominous storm toward the battlefields of the Osari Plains.

Matsu Tsuko, Lady of the Lions, stared into the black winds that blew about her keep, and cursed at what they implied, both for her and for the Empire that she served. A tall woman, with fire-bright brown eyes and a thick plait of black hair beneath her maned helm, Tsuko could only be called pretty through an act of generosity. Her mouth was too firm, her jawline too harsh, and her eyes held none of the softness that men desire in their wives each evening. Her thoughts were far more suited to the fury of battle, and her hands were callused and sword-worn. She was proud of her warrior's life, and often lead her troops to victory, but now only felt captive to the future she could not control.

The storm's black clouds descended over the plain as Matsu Tsuko's thoughts settled on the battles that would soon be fought by her armies. The wind seemed to her to stink of the acrid clash of swords, and the plains glowed a bloody red from the faint light of the sun. The armies of the ronin Toturi, once the honored Champion of her clan but now honorless and outcast, were massing near those plains, and gathered among their number were strange snake men. She allowed her thoughts to linger unhappily on the Naga, who had once been spoken of only in legend and story, knowing that they would be a crucial, unexpected factor in her future plans of victory.

Tsuko clenched her fists on the dull stone of the rampart. The Naga had no business stepping out of those myths, not now, not when the Empire's fate was in her hands! The people of the Empire knew only rumors of the Naga, rumors telling of a warlike people, ancient and secretive. To think that these beast-men would attempt to invade the Empire, and even worse, to know that a man who had once been her clan's honored Champion would lead them, made Tsuko's eyes narrow in anger and betrayal.

Suddenly, a sharp, tuneless voice broke her dark thoughts. "Lady Matsusan?" She looked over her shoulder at the tower door, and saw Ujiaki as he shoved a thin bluerobed figure to the floor a few paces away. "This . . . Crane woman," he said scornfully, "was found by our scouts, near the ronin army. The men who captured her think she is a spy, carrying messages from Doji Palace to Toturi's honorless horde." He sneered down at the bundle of tattered blue rags, his thumb making angry circles about the hilt of his katana. Tsuko set her helmet on the barbican wall, and turned to look at the creature. Pale, colorless hair, typical of the weak Doji clan, streamed out over the collar of a blue kimono. Tsuko eyed her scornfully, but the woman kept her face turned to the floor.

As Tsuko prodded the stranger with one heavily booted foot, she said mockingly, "Rise, Crane, and tell me your clan's messages to the Ronin and his army." The woman looked up, and her gentle gray eyes met Tsuko's blazing dark ones. "Rise!" Tsuko commanded, grasping the woman's arm and dragging her to her feet. As the woman's limp form awkwardly straightened under Tsuko's gauntleted hand, Tsuko noticed the woman's right leg was twisted strangely. "You're a cripple," Tsuko said insultingly, and stepped away from the Doji.

The woman flinched, then stood alone and carefully executed a graceful bow. "My father said that I was born with my foot twisted in the mouth of Fu Leng. It is not my place to question such things."

Tsuko studied the woman for a moment, her narrowed dark eyes reflecting the hatred and contempt she felt for all members of the accursed Doji clan. "What is your name, girl?" she spat.

"My name is Doji Shizue, Lady Matsu," the pale haired stranger said softly, "and your brother was correct. I was carrying letters to Kakita Yoshisan from the army of the ronin Toturi."

Surprised by the girl's forthrightness, Tsuko said, "What did the letters say? Tell me now, and my samurai will allow you an honorable death."

The Crane girl smiled sardonically and bowed again, "You are too kind, Lady Matsu."

Behind Shizue, Ujiaki scowled at the subtle insult and reached for his katana, only to be stopped by his Champion's sudden sharp glance.

Matsu Tsuko studied the girl for a moment, then said derisively, "I have heard of you, cripple girl. They say you're a teller of stories. You spend your time inventing amusements in the gardens of your clan, to entertain their delicate minds. Acrobats, dancing, stories, such gentle diversions so the



honorable Doji won't be disturbed by the harsh reality of war." Her voice was venomous in its loathing. "Now look at you, with all your petty whimpering. Look at your clan. It has fallen, your champion has been dishonored, and your mission is a failure. Your only obligation now is to give your death meaning. Tell me what was in those letters!"

Shizue stood silently against the onslaught of Tsuko's words, and Tsuko continued, eyes blazing. "You tell your clan stories of honor, history and wars ... would you be the only one of your clan left alive, dishonored, to tell the story of its destruction?"

Shizue looked paler then, and said, "Lady Tsuko, I will tell you what you ask, but it is not what you would wish it to be. I carried no battle-plans, no strategies of war to the army of Toturi. I was not looking for these things, which you consider so important. I sought instead only a story, given to me by one of the serpent-men in Toturi's army." Tsuko looked skeptical, but Shizue proceeded, sitting delicately on the barbican wall, folding her crippled foot beneath the remnants of her silken kimono.

"It has been said that history is only the recording of time between wars. The Naga have come to the Empire prepared for war, and yet we know nothing of their history. I went to the armies of Toturi to find the history, the stories, of the Naga. I sought to know the reasons the Naga have returned, and why they have entered the wars of our Empire."

"They are honorless," Tsuko interrupted, growling, "Bushu ... ronin ... they care nothing for the Empire, or the preservation of the Emerald Throne."

Shizue cleared her throat politely and said, "They have a legend about the origin of their kind, that they say comes from long before the Seven Clans walked the ground of Rokugan."

Ujiaki snorted from his corner, but both women ignored him. "The Naga I spoke to told this story of his people ..." Shizue's eyes half-closed as she spoke and her voice cut through the dusky twilight.

"Once, say the Naga, there were no men on the ground of this world. The Sun goddess and her companion, the Moon, circled the heavens together in a dance of pleasure, creating all the life of the land and sea, and brightening the sky with their twin presence. All was peace and harmony, and the beasts roamed the land in chaos and without wisdom.

"The Naga say that the Goddess, who loved all things of beauty, asked the God to give her a necklace made of the finest stars from the night sky. Fearing that if he left her side she would attract a new lover, he refused to venture alone into the night. She asked him many times, and always he denied her. But the Goddess so wanted the necklace that she contrived a plan to trick the God into getting it for her.

"One day, the Goddess took a stone from the ground, and hid it in her obi. She invited the God into her great palace in the clouds and made a feast in his honor. During the splendid repast, she gave the God great quantities of wine and bread to lull him into sleep and drunkenness. As he lay unaware, she fed to him the stone she had plucked from the earth, and it settled into his thick belly.

"The next morning, the two Great Ones began to cross the sky as they had many times before. But the stone in the belly of the God weighed him down and made him slow. He cried out to the Goddess, 'Help me, for I am falling behind you!' But the Goddess only laughed, and sailed across the sky away from him. Soon, the night came, and he was alone with the stars.

From far away he heard the voice of the Goddess, promising to return to him if he would grant her wish. So he took from the sky many bright stars, and he strung them together into a chain of jewels. Then he called to the Goddess to return to him. When she saw that he had granted her wish, she did come, and he said, "I still cannot follow you out of the night, for I am weighted as if my shoulders bore a load of lead and stone!"

"The Goddess, caring only for her jewels, told him that she could cure him of the strange weight. As he offered the jewels to her, she pulled out his own wakizashi, slit him across the gullet, and the stone fell free. In his pain, the God let go the necklace of jewels and they scattered across the sky, forming the great Sky Road which hangs above Rokugan. The God never recovered from his wicked wound, and to this day he chases her across the sky, he slowly and at night and she swift as the day, beaming her bright joy upon the lands."

"Yes, but what has this child's tale to do with the Naga people who are about to invade Rokugan?" Ujiaki interrupted, muttering sourly from his post behind them, "This talk wastes time, Lady Matsu, and the Ronin still marches to the plains of Osari!" He scowled blackly, and Shizue quickly continued.

"The stone which was in the body of the God, you see, had been under the mud of the earth, and inside that piece of obsidian lay a small greensnake, sleeping in the hardened rock. Within the body of the God, the greensnake grew. The power of the God changed the snake, and it began to think beyond the chaos of animals. When the stone was freed from the God's belly, it fell upon the earth and shattered into a thousand pieces; each piece became a Naga, each part of the other, each broken from the same block. The snake trapped inside the stone became their first Champion, and he named himself 'Qamar.' It is said that he taught his people to build cities and libraries, and that he taught them the way of the shugenja. And because they came from one stone, they remained one people. Unified. And that is the way they come to us now."

Matsu Tsuko had turned to look out over the ramparts while this story was being told, staring distantly at the storm that burdened the night sky above the keep. She closed her eyes wearily, and turned away from the cloud-blackened sky.

"Your story is curious, Doji," said Tsuko. "And because you've amused me, I'll let you live this night. But war won't wait for children's tales, and I will not have patience with you for very long. Ujiaki will take you to a room where you will be well-guarded, and tomorrow you will tell no stories. You will tell me only of the letters you carried for the Ronin." She waved a hand at Ujiaki, and he summoned one of the house guard, who grabbed Shizue and dragged her roughly through the door toward the sleeping quarters.

"You can't let her live, Lady. She is ... she's ... a Doji." He spoke the word with such fervor that she turned her dark stare on him.

"Don't let your hatred blind your honor," she said quietly. "If this girl can tell us more about these serpent-people, I am willing to listen. The Way of the Warrior teaches us that in order to defeat an enemy, you must first understand him." Tsuko turned toward the black night sky, bereft of stars due to the thick, thunderous clouds, and said, "Go now."

Ujiaki bowed curtly, and spun on his heel, leaving the Lady of the Lions alone with the storm.



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## Turn Sequence

### 1. Straighten Phase

Any cards that have become bowed are straightened.

### 2. Events Phase

All face-down cards in your Provinces are turned over and all Events are resolved once all cards have been turned face-up.

### 3. Action Phase (do any or all of the following in any order)

- a. Perform any Limited Actions
- b. Perform any Open Actions
- c. Attach Followers, Spells and Items
- d. Lobby for Imperial Favor

### 4. Attack Phase

- a. Declare Attack against one Player
- b. Attacker (and allies) assigns all attacking Infantry
- c. Defender (and allies) assigns all defending Infantry
- d. Attacker (and allies) assigns all attacking Cavalry
- e. Defender (and allies) assigns all defending Cavalry
- f. For each Battle:
  - i. Defender performs one Open/Battle Action
  - ii. Attacker performs one Open/Battle Action
  - iii. Repeat until both Players pass consecutively
  - i-iii. If there are multiple Attackers and Defenders, Defender performs first Action and play passes to the left.
  - iv. Resolve the Battle and go to the next one

### 5. Dynasty Phase

Pay for and bring into play any face-up Dynasty cards in your Provinces. You may discard as many Dynasty cards from your Provinces as you like. Refill any empty Province.

### 6. End Phase

Draw a Fate Card, and bow to your opponent.

### The Imperial Favor

LIMITED: Draw a Fate Card and add it to your hand

OPEN: Restore any one Dishonored Personality to Honorable status.

BATTLE: Return any Unit committed to a battle to the Fief of its controlling player; bow this Unit. You may do this in a battle in which you have no Units.

REACTION: Prevent any one loss of Family Honor.



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