

House of a Thousand Stories

This adventure is designed to run as an Interactive, in essence a LARP (Live Action Role-Playing) event, in which the players portray their characters directly for much of the time. The total event should, if possible, be run in a five-hour time slot to give the players the maximum time to accomplish their goals. Running longer than five hours is generally counter-productive, due to fatigue.

We encourage conventions which run this event to incorporate additional “flavor” elements, such as costumes, authentic props, or catered Japanese food. These will add considerably to the experience of the adventure.

Restrictions on Player Actions

During the Interactive, all players and judges should observe the following restrictions and guidelines in order to ensure that the event runs smoothly.

- **No Touching.** Touching in public is a major Rokugani taboo, and should be observed in play. Any player who willingly touches another automatically loses a point of Honor. Repeated offenses can result in the expulsion of the player from the Interactive.
- **Resolving Events.** Players should seek, whenever possible, to resolve their interactions through role-play rather than by rolling dice. If a player absolutely wishes to perform an action that requires rolling dice, s/he should seek out one of the event judges to have their action adjudicated.
- **If you say it, they hear it.** If players do not want other players to overhear their words, they should act appropriately – e.g. hide their mouths, speak in low voices, go into the next room, etc.
- **Treaty limitations.** PCs are only empowered to negotiate the specific items on their Clan objective sheets. They can propose other treaties or agreements to their superiors, but it is the discretion of the Campaign Admin whether any such agreements go forward.
- **You are your character.** All statements and actions are considered to be “in character” unless specifically stated otherwise.
- **Status does not always equal Authority.** High-Status characters only have authority over other members of their family – they cannot give orders to characters from different families in their Clan, although their position still entitles them to respect and deference.

Judges

It is recommended that there should be two judges for the Interactive, a “chief judge” and a “secondary judge.”

The **chief judge** should play the role of Ikoma Chomei, the owner of the House of a Thousand Stories. This judge is in charge of monitoring the overall Interactive, and of resolving any specific actions or plots which the players may put in motion. He is also responsible for playing out the plotline involving the House of a Thousand Stories itself, and to resolve any final confrontation between the PCs and Ikoma Chomei. Finally, at the end of the Interactive, the chief judge should compile the results of each Clan’s negotiations and agreements.

The **secondary judge** plays the role of Ikoma Chomei’s main house servant. This person may be either male (Koruma) or female (Korumi). This judge is mainly responsible for helping the chief judge keep track of events at the Interactive, resolve any unusual situations, and compile the final results. S/he is also part of the main House of a Thousand Stories plotline, although not central to it.

Getting Ready

The PCs are returning to their lands after Winter Court, but a freak late-season snowstorm catches them while passing through a rugged, forested mountain region. Thankfully, they spy the lights of a building ahead, and come upon a large two-story Inn. The signboard over the front door reads “House of a Thousand Stories.” Servants welcome the PCs inside just as the storm deepens into a full-scale blizzard.

At the beginning of the Interactive, all players should be given a copy of the Objectives Sheet for their Clan or faction. This represents the information they have received about the outcome of the Winter Court, and the remaining political questions that they are to negotiate here. (Ronin PCs are employed by the Tortoise Clan during this event, and should be given the Tortoise/Tiger Objective Sheet.) In addition, all players should be given a copy of the “Favors and How to Use Them” sheet, and the Favors should be given out to the senior (in Status) representative of each Clan.

Favor Distribution

At the start of play, Favor tokens are given out to each Clan delegation. The GMs can use colored glass beads, dice, tokens, or even cards from the L5R CCG to represent these tokens. The numbers given out for this event are as follows:

- Crab: 3
- Crane: 10
- Dragon: 4
- Lion: 6
- Mantis: 4
- Phoenix: 5
- Scorpion: 7

- Unicorn: 4
- Imperial Families: 5
- Badger Clan: 1
- Fox Clan: 1
- Hare Clan: 1
- Monkey Clan: 2
- Sparrow Clan: 1
- Tiger Clan: 2
- Tortoise Clan: 2

The Secret of the House of a Thousand Stories

Ikoma Chomei and his Inn are in fact a form of *yorei* (yearning ghost), a spiritual echo left behind by the destruction of Otosan Uchi four centuries ago. Ikoma Chomei was a dedicated storyteller who had devoted his life to running his inn and sharing his tales with his customers. The destruction of his inn left him so stricken with grief and frustration that his spirit remained here on Ningen-do, yearning endlessly to recreate the House of a Thousand Stories. Now, he has finally learned to draw on the power of Yume-do, the Realm of Dreams, to recreate his inn.

In effect, the PCs have gotten trapped inside of a living dream. They will have to recognize the truth and confront Ikoma Chomei in order to break out of the dream and return to the real world. There are several clues which the PCs can notice (and which the two GMs should make sure to drop into play):

- Time. No matter how long the PCs stay at the Inn, the blizzard outside never stops, although the depth of the snow outside seems to vary oddly. Furthermore, the PCs find it difficult to tell how long they have been at the inn – at times it feels like a few hours, at other times as though many days have passed. The GMs should give different information to each PC who asks about time or weather conditions, deliberately creating contradictions that will eventually warn the PCs that something isn't right.
- Isolation. Some PCs may try to find ways of contacting the outside world, such as sending letters. All of these fail, no matter what the PCs do. Furthermore, a PC who goes out in the storm will get lost in the blizzard and then, somehow, always find their way back to the Inn again. Even PCs with advantages like Absolute Direction will succumb to this.
- Knowledge. Ikoma Chomei and his servants believe it is still the time of the Four Winds, when their inn was flourishing. All of Chomei's stories are set in or before that time, and he is quite ignorant of the subsequent history and events in Rokugan. If PCs ask him for stories about later times, or question him about current events, he will be caught flat-footed, and will try to bluff or change the subject.
- Behavior. Ikoma Chomei and his servants seem almost desperately happy to have guests at their inn, and go out of their way to welcome them, urge them to stay as long as they like, and so forth. Furthermore, if any PCs try to leave the inn, they

will become downright frantic, begging the PCs not to endanger themselves by leaving the inn. They will not ultimately use violence, however.

- Magic. Although magic works more-or-less normally in the Inn, the spirits will often seem confused, and cannot answer any questions pertaining to time or location. Also, any attempt at divination will always come up completely blank (within the Inn, there is no future).

Ultimately, the PCs should role-play a confrontation in which they convince Chomei that he is dead, at which point both he and the Inn itself fade away with a faint whimper: “I only wanted to tell stories.” The PCs find themselves back in the snow-covered pass where they began, and no time has passed. If they continue to travel, they can soon find a real village where they can stay safely.

Conclusion

At the end of the interactive, the judges should record the votes of each delegation (Great Clans, Minor Clans, and the Imperials) on each of the four major issues being negotiated here, as well as the individual issues being pursued by the Clans. The results of these votes should be forwarded promptly to the Campaign Admin at youta@fidnet.com.

In order to be counted for full effect, each Clan delegation, and the Imperial delegation (if any), must vote unanimously. If a Clan’s vote is split, the value is reduced, as follows:

Great Clan/Imperial full vote: 3 points

Great Clan/Imperial split vote: 1 point

Minor Clan full vote: 1 point

Minor Clan split vote: 0 points

The total points for and against each of the issues and proposals should be recorded and sent to the Campaign Admin.

Finally, the chief judge should compile and report any other potential agreements or treaties which the PCs may be offering to their superiors.

All PCs who participate in the Interactive earn 2 XP. Honor and Glory awards may also be made, and the discretion of the judges. The Glory penalty for “inactivity” does not apply to this adventure because no time actually passes.

Crab Clan

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Otosan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our Position: The Crab Clan opposed the new northern road, but since the Emperor has accepted the idea, we shall accept his judgment and make the best of the situation. With regard to the route of the northern road, the route makes no difference to us, but it may offer us a chance to gain favor with the Lion Clan. We should offer our support to the Lion Clan in exchange for the pledge of their future support against the Crane Clan. As far as the Scorpion proposal for a southern road, while this would have some value to us in improving our trade, it would also offer the Scorpion Clan a route for invading our lands. We should only support this option if other Clans offer us incentives to do so.

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly, so that all understand that the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: The Crab have little interest in this gaijin trade matter, so we should bargain our support wherever it seems most advantageous to us.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their

attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: The Crab Clan is largely opposed to allowing Unicorn magistrates into our territory. However, we might need to bargain our support on this issue in order to gain Unicorn support for our own goals.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our position: The Dragon have a just cause, and we are weary of the Imperial Herald's enforced peace. Although the Badger are our cousins, they have clearly committed a grave breach here, and should be punished accordingly. Besides, any war will make an important dent in Shikan's tiresome wall of "peace."

Clan Goal: The Crab Clan is concerned about the increased influence of the Scorpion and the Phoenix with our neighbors, the Hare. This winter we tried to bring pressure on the Hare to reject these alliances in favor of a closer relationship with us, but the Scorpion stymied our efforts. Now we have another opportunity. If we can convince enough of the other Clans to pressure the Hare, it should be possible to expel the Scorpion and Phoenix influence there.

We also remain concerned about the Crane Clan's ambitions toward the Yasuki family. We should try to find a way to improve our Clan's commercial position compared to the Crane, in order to ensure we have the wealth and influence to resist Crane pressure and support ourselves in the event of war.

Crane Clan

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Otosan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our position: Although the Crane will gain nothing directly from the construction of the northern road, it will clearly be to the benefit of our Dragon allies for the road to take the route north of the Drowned Merchant River. Also, this more northerly route will be more beneficial to the Phoenix, so we should emphasize that in order to drive a wedge between the Phoenix and the Lion (those Clans have been far too close recently).

With regards to the option of a southern route, we are of two minds. On the one hand, this would benefit and strengthen our great rivals, the Scorpion Clan, as well as the Crab who also sometimes trouble us. On the other hand, it would allow the Scorpion to threaten the Lion through Beiden Pass – and the Lion, in return, to threaten the Scorpion. This could be to our benefit. We should weight these competing factors, as well as considering what incentives the Clans offer us for supporting their position, before making a final decision on this matter.

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly and the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: The Mantis are wealthy and ambitious. Although it is painful to admit it, their wealth threatens our own position as the Empire's economically dominant Clan.

Ensuring the Tortoise retain a stake in the Thrane trade will be a good way to keep the Mantis from becoming too powerful. It will also place the Tortoise and their Tiger allies in our debt, which could be useful later.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: It is important for us to improve our relations with the Unicorn, who could be key allies against both the Scorpion and the Lion. Therefore we should strongly consider supporting this goal of theirs, especially if they offer us support on other matters (such as the route for the northern road) in return.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our position: The Dragon are our allies, a key ingredient in countering the strength of the Lion Clan. The situation demands that they be allowed the chance for vengeance. Perhaps more importantly, this will offer a chance to undermine Miya Shikan's endless attempts to maintain a permanent and unnatural peace in the Empire.

Clan Goal: Our Clan Champion, Doji Sarutomo, has decided to seek an alliance with the Tiger and Tortoise Clans, in order to gain access to the new trade wealth they control. Unfortunately, he was unable to secure such an alliance in Winter Court, so this may be our best opportunity to make one. To that end, he is willing to offer the marriage of his niece, Doji Yoriko, to the son of the Tortoise Clan daimyo. However, letters from the lady O-Doji Koneko have suggested that it would be wiser to offer Yoriko to the Dragon Clan, perhaps in a marriage to the son of the Mirumoto daimyo, in order to further cement our alliance with them against meddling from the Lion or Scorpion. She also wishes us to pressure the Dragon to end their alliance with our Scorpion rivals.

Our Yasuki and Daidoji families expressed concern throughout the Winter at possible ambitions from the Crab to regain control of the Yasuki name and lands. We should be on guard against any Crab commercial or political maneuvers against us.

Dragon Clan: All Families

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Otsan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our position: Clearly, we desire that the main road be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, so that our Clan may benefit from it properly. We must secure as much support for this as possible in order to overcome the Lion. In this regard, we can offer our own support to the Scorpion for building a second, southern road and re-opening Beiden Pass. Also, this discussion may offer a chance to drive a wedge between the Lion and the Phoenix.

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly and the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: We have little interest in this matter. Our support can therefore be bargained to one side or the other in order to win their backing on different issues.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: The Unicorn seek an authority that goes beyond their borders – a most unusual demand. However, we will need their permission to travel through their lands and strike at the Badger Clan, and we may also need their support with regards to the route of the new trade road. Therefore it may be necessary to reluctantly support them in this matter. However, if we can gain our goals without doing so, that would be preferable.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our Position: We must, of course, gain the support of as many Clans as possible in order to override the influence of the Imperial Herald. The Lion, Crane, Unicorn, and Scorpion will be especially important in this regard.

Dragon Clan: Mirumoto/Tonbo (addendum)

Family Goal: We will need to strengthen our alliance with the Scorpion Clan in order to ensure that they support us in our war against the Badger Clan. Besides any other diplomatic measures we might take, we can also suggest a marriage to the Kitsuki daimyo, Kitsuki Asuroru. Be aware, however, that the Kitsuki family may be more interested in offering him to the Phoenix Clan.

Dragon Clan: Kitsuki (addendum)

Family Goal: It will be important to protect our Clan's diplomatic relations from the aggressive intentions of the Mirumoto and Tamori. In particular, we should try to work around them to improve our current bad relations with the Phoenix Clan, and to reduce our Clan's dependency on alliance with the Scorpion. To that end, we can offer to marry the Kitsuki daimyo, Kitsuki Asuroru, to a member of the Phoenix Clan, and prevent the Mirumoto and Tonbo from offering him to the Scorpion. Also, we should try to find a way to reduce the Scorpion Clan's influence on the other Minor Clans, who may be hostile to us over our unavoidable actions against the Badger.

Dragon Clan: Tamori (addendum)

Family Goal: We have noted with distress that the Phoenix Clan are increasing their influence with the Hare Clan and improving their relations with the Lion. Both of these developments need to be undermined. We should block any further alliances or agreements between any of these Clans, and try to convince the Hare to align themselves with us or another Clan instead. If it is magical wisdom they seek for their proposed new school, the power of the Tamori is not to be denied lightly.

Lion Clan

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Otosan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our position: Clearly, the route south of the Drowned Merchant River is the correct one. We must rally as much support as possible for this route in order to deny any victory to the Dragon Clan. A route north of the Drowned Merchant would greatly increase their trade and wealth, encouraging them to war and making them far more dangerous to the peace of the Empire. Also, by keeping the route under our control, we can ensure that the Phoenix remain more closely aligned with us, whereas a northern route would encourage them to improve their relations with the Dragon.

With regard to the Scorpion proposal, we are also opposed. This is clearly an attempt to re-open Beiden Pass in order to threaten our southern flank on behalf of their Dragon allies. We should oppose it firmly.

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly and the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: We would prefer that all trade with the Thrane gaijin was ended, but the Emperor's will is of course paramount. If the trade must take place, it matters little which Clan conducts it. We are wary of allowing the Mantis a chance to further increase

their wealth and power, but also reluctant to ally with the contemptible Tortoise. We may bargain our support in this matter, but either choice is a distasteful one.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: We are firmly and unalterably opposed to allowing the Unicorn such an unprecedented power. This must be stopped at all costs.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our position: Although the Badger crime is great, we are wary of allowing the Dragon to launch such a war. They would use this as a chance to hone their armies in battle while others, such as ours, still remained in barracks. We should try to rally support against this breach in Shikan's truce.

Clan Goal: The other Clans have been moving aggressively to build alliances against us, while our only diplomatic advance has been with the Phoenix. This places us in danger of being surrounded by enemies. Although we should certainly work to maintain our relations with the Phoenix, blocking any attempts to drive a wedge between us, it will also be important to seek new avenues for support. The Crab seem a likely option for such improvement, for their share our enmity toward the Crane and Scorpion. Perhaps by establishing stronger relations with the Crab we can open a way to peel the Unicorn away from the Crane as well.

Mantis Clan

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Otosan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our position: We support all of the roads, for every improvement in the Empire's internal trade will redound to our benefit. Furthermore, opening Beiden Pass will offer our friends in the Scorpion Clan many new options. Of course, we should still sell our support dearly, in order to gain political favors for the future. As far as whether the northern road should go north or south of the Drowned Merchant River, we really have no preference, and can choose whichever side gains us the most.

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly and the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: Quashing this petition will be greatly to our benefit. This should be our main goal here.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: We are very suspicious of the Unicorn Clan's intentions in this regard. Whatever they may claim about upholding law and protecting the Empire, the Scorpion are suspicious of their true goals, and where a Scorpion is suspicious, caution is more than warranted. We should therefore oppose the Unicorn on this.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our position: Although we have no specific viewpoint on this matter, we are wary of allowing Shikan's truce to be broken. We can bargain our support here to whichever side will help us more in quashing the Tortoise petition, but our preference would be to oppose the war if we can do without jeopardizing our goals.

Clan Goal: Wealth is the true and ultimate power in the Empire, and our new control over the Thrane trade will increase our power and influence even more. It is time we put this wealth to work at gaining more allies. We should seek to negotiate a new preferential trade treaty with one of the coastal Clans – either the Crane, Crab, or Phoenix. Whichever Clan accepts will gain great wealth, but will also become dependent on us, giving us leverage to use against them in the future. We can cement the treaty with a marriage or two.

Minor Clans: Tortoise and Tiger

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Otosan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our position: We support the road project, and the southern route would only increase our prosperity so long as we can retain some control over the Thrane trade. However, we should bargain our support on both the southern road and the route for the northern road in order to gain help in pushing through our petition against the Mantis (see below).

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly and the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: This is our absolute priority. The Mantis have blocked us all winter, this is our last chance to secure this petition and ensure our future prosperity.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: Although we are not comfortable with such an expansion of Unicorn power and authority, our petition takes higher priority, so we should be ready to bargain our support to the Unicorn in exchange for their backing to our petition.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our position: We are uneasy with the Dragon bullying a Minor Clan, but at present we have no alliance to the Badger, and we may need the Dragon Clan's support for our petition.

Minor Clans: Badger

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Otosan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our position: We have no views with regard to this road. It would not benefit or harm us. We should therefore sell our support in order to gain allies in stopping the Dragon Clan's aggression.

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly and the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: We would clearly prefer to support our fellow Minor Clans on this matter, but the need to stop the Dragon from attacking us may force us to support the Mantis instead.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: If the Dragon attack us, it will be through the Unicorn lands. Therefore we should offer our support for this Unicorn goal in exchange for their refusing the Dragon passage to attack us.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our position: We must stop this at all costs! Our Clan is a small and humble one, devoted only to protecting the mountain shrines and guarding against any attack from the Burning Sands. We are innocent of the attack on the Dragon sensei, no matter what confession may have been forced from a mere servant. We must bend all our efforts to preventing the Dragon from gaining support for their war.

To this end, we have been attempting to find a husband for Ichiro Kaori, the daughter of our Clan daimyo Ichiro Oto. Although no Clan was willing to make this match during the winter, perhaps these samurai will be more interested.

Minor Clans: Hare, Fox, Monkey, Sparrow

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Otosan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our position: A second road in the south would greatly benefit our humble Clans, so we should seek support for the Scorpion position – especially since the Scorpion have been seeking to improve their relations with all four of our Clans in recent years. As for the route of the northern road, we should support whichever route offers us the most gain.

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly and the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: The Tiger and Tortoise have administered the gaijin trade with honor and skill, and the Mantis maneuver was clearly a mere power-play to claim control of wealth that was outside their grasp. We should do our best to see to it that the Tortoise petition is successful.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: We are uneasy with this expansion of Unicorn power, which seems to have no purpose. Unless we absolutely need Unicorn support to protect the Badger, we will not support this proposal.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our position: We are very concerned that our fellow Minor Clans seem to be under attack by Great Clans such as the Mantis and the Dragon. We should try to rally support against the Dragon war. The Imperial families will probably offer us help in this matter.

Phoenix Clan

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Ootosan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our position: Both options for the northern road would benefit us roughly equally. Therefore we must consider the question of which route would benefit us the most politically. The Lion greatly desire the route south of the Drowned Merchant River, and our relations with the Lion have been excellent lately – it would be unfortunate to damage them. On the other hand, because our relations are so good, it is not absolutely vital to do as the Lion wish... and an improvement in our relations with the Dragon could be helpful, after so many years of strife with the Tamori family.

As for the southern road, although it would be good to bring trade to our friends in the Hare Clan, we should probably defer to the Lion on this matter. Furthermore, such a road would threaten war between Lion and Scorpion, a tragedy for the Empire.

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly and the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: Matters of trade are not something we would prefer to concern ourselves with, beyond the basic need to see that our Clan is prosperous and our peasants thrive. We are more concerned with our own goals, concerning the Inquisitors (see below) and

the Crab. On this matter, therefore, we should make what arrangements are needed to gain support in those endeavors.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: Although the Unicorn are devoted to hunting and punishing criminals, they have proven less than interested in our proposals for the Inquisitors. Therefore we should support them in this matter only if they agree to support our petition for the Inquisitors.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our position: We do not approve of a Clan as powerful as the Dragon waging war on a Clan as small as the Badger, and it would be tragic if this era of peace were ended by any conflict. However, it is undeniable that the death of a sensei demands vengeance. Perhaps if the Badger made some manner of public restitution and apology?

Clan Goals: We seek to have the Order of Inquisitors officially accepted and acknowledged as agents of the Jade Champion, able to travel across the Empire in pursuit of the workers of *maho*. Too many elsewhere in the Empire no longer take the threat of the Bloodspeakers seriously – even the Crab no longer fear their return. We must win this concession from the other Clans in order to protect all from this lurking threat.

In relation to this, we also feel it important to strengthen our relationship with the Crab Clan, the other Clan which opposes Jigoku. A marriage alliance might be useful in this regard – Asako Miako, the daughter of Asako Heichi, the Master of Air and Jade Champion. Finding her a suitable husband among the senior ranks of the Crab – perhaps one of the Hiruma daimyo's brothers – would cement our friendship.

Continued improved relations with the Hare, the minor Clan which opposes *maho*, are also a good idea. Although a Minor Clan would be unworthy of such a prominent marriage, a wedding between minor samurai would certainly help in this matter.

Scorpion Clan

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Otosan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our position: The northern road will strongly benefit our Unicorn enemies, although it will also be beneficial to the Dragon, currently our allies. However, the Emperor has spoken, and it is too late to change things. Therefore we must pursue our plan for a second, southern road with all possible vigor. This will indebt several Minor Clans to us, ensuring that we have a powerful buffer against Dragon aggression, and will also force the Lion to defend Beiden Pass. Also, both roads weaken the economic power of our Crane rivals, which is always a good thing.

The Unicorn will probably oppose the southern road, since it diminishes their control of travel through the Spine of the World Mountains. We can also expect opposition from the Lion and possibly the Crane. Be prepared to overcome such objections.

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly and the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: We support the Mantis whole-heartedly on this matter. The Tortoise and their Tiger lackeys have benefited from the gaijin trade for far too long.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: The Unicorn grow arrogant, trying to impose themselves on the other Clans without regard for tradition or propriety. This measure must be opposed with all of our strength.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our position: Our Dragon allies seek only the justice which is their due, and we should support them in this effort. The Badger must be punished for the crime they committed in our city of Ryoko Owari.

Clan Goal: The Champion of the Crane, Doji Sarutomo, grievously insulted our Clan during the Winter Court, and he and his Clan must pay. We must find ways to block and obstruct the Crane Clan in every goal they pursue here. Furthermore, we should try to break up their alliance with the Dragon Clan, and persuade the Dragon to ally themselves exclusively to us. To that end, we should seek a marriage alliance between one of the top Dragon daimyos (perhaps the Kitsuki daimyo?) and Bayushi Erihime, the niece of our Clan Champion.

Unicorn Clan

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Otosan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our position: The trade road will naturally benefit our Clan in many ways, speeding the pace of commerce throughout the Empire and bringing fresh wealth into our Clan's coffers. In this regard, the Scorpion proposal for a second, southern road is most intriguing. Officially, we will oppose this road, since it would benefit the Scorpion and the Lion, both enemies to us. But in actuality it is the judgment of the Khan that the southern road will benefit us as well. Therefore we should support it covertly while maintaining the public claim that we oppose it.

As for the choice of routes for the northern road, we have no preference, and should simply look to which choice gains us the greater political benefits.

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly and the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: It would be unwise to let the Mantis Clan grow too powerful. The wealth of the Thrane can be controlled when it is in the hands of the lowly Tortoise. In the hands of the Mantis, it would give them too much power and influence. We should support the Tortoise petition.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: Although this will be perceived by others as our primary goal, it is mainly a gambit to distract their attention. If we can succeed, this will be excellent, but failure will be tolerable so long as we force our enemies to expend resources blocking us.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our position: The Dragon will need our approval to pass through our lands and war on the Badger. In public, we should show great reluctance to accept such a violent campaign on their part. Privately, however, we can support the Dragon to the utmost. The unnatural truce enforced by Miya Shikan must end, so that honorable warfare can return to Rokugan once more.

Clan Goal: Our purpose in this winter and every winter is to strengthen ourselves while spreading division and confusion among our enemies. In this regard, we should seek covertly to encourage the Crab and Crane toward conflict over the Yasuki lands, as well as encouraging further rivalry between Lion and Dragon, as well as between Crane and Dragon. We have allowed the Crane to believe they have an alliance with us, and we should further encourage this by arranging a marriage of a prominent Crane, possibly their new Daidoji daimyo, to the Great Khan's younger sister, Moto Saayia. This will encourage the Crane to be even more aggressive toward the Lion and the Scorpion.

Imperial Families

You have received reports from your Clan's negotiations at the Winter Court. Although many things were decided, a number of secondary issues remain unresolved. This stop may offer you the opportunity to settle them in your favor.

The Great Road: The Emperor has agreed that a new road should be built across the northern Empire, linking the port of Otosan Uchi with the Unicorn Clan, in order to improve trade and prosperity. Although the Clans have of course accepted the dictate of the Son of Heaven, they remain in disagreement on where the road should be built. The Lion Clan has proposed that the road should travel south of the Drowned Merchant river, where they can easily protect and guard it, and link to the Dragon and Phoenix territories via the Bridge of Lion's Might. However, the Dragon have pointed out that such a road would hardly be "new," merely an improvement of existing routes, and would fail to fulfill the Emperor's stated goal of improving trade in the northern Empire. They have suggested the road should instead be built north of the Drowned Merchant River, linking the Dragon, Unicorn, and Phoenix lands directly.

The Scorpion Clan, while expressing no opinion as to which route the northern road should take, have pointed out that this new road will bring no benefit to the southern Empire, especially the isolated lands of the Crab, Sparrow, Fox, and Hare. They have proposed that a second road should be built, linking the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Crab territories, along with several minor Clans. This would require re-opening the long-closed Beiden Pass, a step which some Clans are unlikely to support.

Our position: The Imperial families do not oppose or support any of the options regarding the new trade roads – we seek only to ensure that these roads become instruments of peace, not of war. In that regard, the Scorpion proposal for a second, southern road requires careful consideration, since the re-opening of Beiden Pass – while certainly sure to bring fresh prosperity to the southern Empire – would also increase the options and possibilities for war. It may be best to oppose this road for now. As for the route of the northern road, if the Dragon insist on their aggression against the Badger, we should punish them by putting our support behind the Lion Clan's proposed route.

The Tortoise and the Mantis: The Mantis Clan has gained the Emperor's approval for their proposal to break the Tortoise monopoly on the Thrane trade. The Tortoise have submitted a petition asking that the Emperor publicly declare that the Mantis do not have a monopoly and the Tortoise will retain the right to trade with the Thrane.

Our position: Preventing the Mantis from gaining a full monopoly on the Thrane trade would accord well with the Emperor's love for the Tortoise, as well as ensuring that the Mantis do not grow too powerful and forget the importance of peace.

Unicorn Magistrates: The Unicorn Clan has recently gained some momentum for their proposal that their magistrates be given Empire-wide authority. However, their

attempts to nail down this gain in Winter Court have been stymied by their rivals. It is likely that they will continue to push for this goal.

Our position: We are suspicious of the intentions of Moto Temujin, and therefore find it best to oppose this effort.

The Badger War: The Dragon Clan's Mirumoto and Kitsuki families have demanded the right to make war on the Badger Clan in retaliation for the murder of Kitsuki Tanako at the Bon Festival by a Badger servant. However, the Imperial Herald Miya Shikan blocked their efforts at Winter Court. If they can gain enough support here, they may be able to override Shikan's objections. Of course, they will also need the agreement of the Unicorn Clan, since they will have to march through Unicorn territory in order to attack the Badger.

Our Position: Miya Shikan is deeply appalled that the Dragon would presume to break the peace which has blessed the Empire for so many years. It is possible that they might accumulate enough support to persuade the Emperor to sanction their war – we must struggle against this with all the strength we can bring to bear. The enmity of the Imperial families is not to be taken lightly, especially with the Emperor's eldest daughter beginning the process of choosing her husband.

Favors and How to Use Them

During this interactive, each Clan delegation receives one or more Favor tokens, which represent bringing political influence to bear to persuade a samurai from another faction to support you. If you wish to offer a Favor to a character, a majority of the characters from your own delegation must agree to do so.

When a favor is offered to a character, he cannot refuse it without committing a breach of etiquette. A character who refuses the offer of a Favor loses 5 points of Glory.

If a character accepts a Favor, they are placed under an Obligation to the Clan which gave them the Favor. This Obligation requires them to vote in the manner which that Clan desires on one issue at the Interactive. (The Clan offering the Favor must identify the specific vote choice when offering the Favor.) The chief value of this is to split an enemy Clan's vote on an issue important to your Clan – a split delegation carries much less weight than a unified one.

If a character fails to fulfill their Obligation at the end of the Interactive, they have dishonored themselves by failing to keep their word as a samurai. They lose the Favor, and also lose five points (half a Rank) of Honor – a full Rank if their Honor is 4.0 or higher – and gain Bad Reputation: Untrustworthy, with an associated gain of Infamy.

If a character does fulfill their Obligation, they may write down a Favor from the appropriate Clan on their character sheet.

Trading Favors

Once a character has a Favor, they do not have to keep it. They can choose to trade or gift it to another character. Such personal trades/gifts do NOT create Obligations, nor do they lift the Obligation on the original character.

Special Rules for Favors

The one time that a character can refuse a Favor without losing Glory is when he has already accepted a different Favor on the same specific issue.

Favors cannot be offered to members of your own Clan.

Scorpion Blackmail

If you have a Dark Secret, you cannot refuse a Favor offered by the Scorpion Clan. If you have already accepted a Favor on that issue, the Scorpion Favor overrides it, forcing you to break your word on the previous Obligation.

If you fail to fulfill the Obligation created by a Scorpion Favor, your Dark Secret is revealed and you gain five ranks of Infamy.