

SHINSEI'S SCROLL

A Newsletter for

KEN SANO DOJI (SWORDS OF THE CRANE)

A Legend of the Five Rings RPG Campaign

ISSUE #1 - 6/11/08

GM PAGODA

This is the first issue of what I hope to be a long string of these newsletters for our L5R campaign. I've done these in the past and they've always given an added element as far as keeping everyone engaged in what we're playing. I read through some of the newsletters that Tony did for his D&D campaign back in 2002. They were very good and reading them now took me right back to what we were playing back then.

So it's back to Rokugan! We'll see how far it goes, hopefully for a while. After playing even a short session like tonights, I remember why the game is one of our favorites.

OUR LAST CHAPTER... A SYNOPSIS OF THE LATEST SESSION

Blood Gold - Session 1

Players

Tony as Kakita Takahiro - A Bushi, duelist, and student of Iaijutsu. Takahiro keeps a secret that could potentially spell his doom.

Drew as Daidoji Ichigo - A Harrier with questionable tactics and a penchant for the dice. Unfortunately, Ichigo is a terrible gambler and is more than occasionally proven unlucky.

Dan as Hida Barukai - A Crab warrior and unlikely emissary to the Crane. As a diplomatic gesture, Barukai's daimyo has seen fit to send him to the Daidoji in

support of the Crab-Crane alliance. He is to treat the Daidoji lord as his own, and learn what he can from the Iron Crane.

NPC's

Daidoji Daisuke

Doji Sumio

The Matron, serving girls, and the Geisha

A fearsome Ogre

The story opens on warm, late-spring afternoon at Kosaten Shiro. Takahiro and Ichigo have returned to the castle after practicing their riding skills. In the stable, an ashigaru trots up and tells the two young bushi that Daisuke-sama wishes to speak to them immediately. They quickly tie up their horses and follow the yari-wielding soldier.

They pass through the fields surrounding the castle, following the road that winds its way through the flooded rice paddies. After about a mile, they spot their lord and his retinue inspecting the barley fields. As they approach, the ashigaru steps forward and bows to the ground before Daisuke-sama, reporting that Takahiro and Ichigo have arrived.

Daisuke looks at his two young retainers with a barely detectable grin crossing his face. He explains that with the Crab alliance comes the duty to foster one of their clan at the castle. They are to travel to Shiro Daidoji where they will meet this Crab and escort him back home to Kosaten Shiro. Several of the other horsemen grin as Daisuke-sama relays his orders. Apparently they know that a Crab in Crane lands may not behave exactly as is deemed appropriate and that the young samurai may have an interesting assignment to dispatch.

Daisuke-sama pulls a folded letter from his kimono and hands it down to Takahiro. He tells him to stop at the estate of Daidoji Konyo on the way back home and deliver the letter. He loses his grin, and explains that he is inviting Konyo to his court to discuss his land dispute with his neighbor Daidoji Seibei.

After being dismissed, Takahiro and Ichigo are approached by Doji Sumio, Daisuke sama's castellan. He provides them with all of the details, their travelling papers and funds for the trip. They run back to the castle, ready their horses and head south for Shiro Daidoji.

Several weeks before Hida Barukai leaves the Crab lands heading north and feeling the burden of duty heavy upon his shoulders. He has a begrudging respect for the Daidoji family of the Crane, but little for the others of the clan. Nevertheless, his daimyo has commanded him to live with their allies in Kosaten Shiro and he understands what it means to put duty before desire.

He sails up the coast for several weeks before making landfall in Crane territory. He is then escorted by several different groups to Shiro Daidoji, home of the Iron Crane. He is given comfortable accommodations in a cottage just outside the castle walls. There he waits for his journey to his new home in Kosaten Shiro.

After about a week of travel, Takahiro and Ichigo arrive at Shiro Daidoji. They are shown to Barukai's dwelling, where the old matron of the house greets them. She explains that the Crab has left to walk about the town, but should be returning soon. She offers them food and a bath. They gladly accept, eager to wash the dirt of the road away. They are taken to the bathhouse where they are stripped, scrubbed, rinsed, then shown into the tub of steaming water.

After a short while, Barukai returns. He decides to bathe as well. The matron shows him in to the bathhouse. When he enters, the two Crane in the tub are quite taken aback by Barukai's massive size. He is easily the largest person they have ever seen. Ichigo's expression is confused, while Takahiro looks at Barukai with his customary amused smile. Ichigo whispers something to Takahiro to which Barukai replies, "Should I leave you two alone?"

The Crane are too stunned by the huge Crab to be insulted. When they gather their composure, all exchange bows and give their names to one another. Barukai bows a little less deeply to Takahiro than he does Ichigo. The slight does not go unnoticed.

They speak formally in the bath, not finding much to say. A girl brings sake to them which serves to help the awkward situation a bit. They finish the bath, have a meal and rest until sundown.

Ichigo inquires of the Matron if she could arrange an evening's entertainment at a Geisha house. She takes care of all the arrangements. One of the serving girls leads the way, and the samurai are soon at their destination. Takahiro excuses himself saying that he will meet them at the cottage later as he has errands to do.

Ichigo and Barukai are treated like royalty by the Geisha. They sing, dance, and serve sake for them. They laugh at all of their jokes and lavish them with attention. After a while, they take them to one of the city's gambling houses, where a little money is lost, but the revelry is rich.

The night drew to its end as the Crab and the Crane, now much better acquainted, return to their beds. They rapidly fall to sleep.

Takahiro finds a craftsman and commissions a comb from him. He plans to give this as a gift to Konyo-sama when he meets him. Once the details are set, he returns to the cottage.

The next morning dawns brightly. The three samurai meet for breakfast. Barukai is none the worse for wear, but Ichigo did not fare as well. He seems a bit out of sorts and complains of a headache. Regardless, they must leave this morning, so the food is consumed and the horses are packed for the journey. They ride out knowing that they should reach Konyo-sama's lands early the next morning. Takahiro and Ichigo are a bit perplexed by Barukai's choice to wear his armor on such a warm morning.

The morning passes into the afternoon. Clouds begin to gather and the threat of a storm looms to the west. As they continue their journey, the samurai hear screaming from up ahead. Around the corner of the road runs an old man, his eyes wide with fright, his arms gesturing madly. He is screaming, "An ogre! There's an ogre in the village! Help! Help us!"

They spur their horses on and ride around the bend. Before them is a flooded rice paddy with a large trail of destruction through it. On its other side is the village, where a barn stands next to the field. Standing before it, mud to its ankles is an ogre. He is a huge beast, almost the height of two men together. He has pale-yellow, mottled skin, stringy black hair, and a mouth full of tusks and sharp teeth. Under one monstrous foot is a dead cow. The ogre grabs one of its legs, rips it off, and begins to eat.

The samurai gallop in, Takahiro and Ichigo drawing swords, while Barukai looses arrows from his great daikyu. The ogre turns at the sound, grasping his tree-like club and bellowing at the horsemen. He charges to meet them.

Just as Takahiro and Ichigo arrive, Barukai's bow drives an arrow into the ogre's shoulder. It howls in pain. The battle is joined, katanas and tetsubo versus the ogre's club. As the ogre begins to wear down, Ichigo delivers a viscous slash to its ribs. The ogre spins and brings its club down on the Daidoji. He is able to turn at the last split second and takes the blow on his shoulder instead of his head. Still, the club gravely wounds him. He returns the strike and the great ogre falls dead into the muddy water.

Phrases of the Game

None

Spoils

5 experience points

Imperial Lore

Noodles are eaten by nearly everyone in the Empire, but their characteristics tend to vary by the class of person who is eating them. Those high in station tend towards having fine, thin noodles, while those lower down have wider, thicker noodles.

The Tao of Shinsei

"The higher you stand above modesty, the easier it becomes to lose your footing."

The Next Session

Wednesday June 18th, 2008, 5:00pm to 9:00pm