

Yasuki Taka, Crab Clan Merchant

FIRE 2 Intelligence 4	AIR 3 Awareness 6
EARTH 2	WATER 2 Perception 5
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Yasuki Merchant 5

Honor/Glory: 1.2/2.7

Skills: Acting 5, Bard 5, Bojutsu 2, Commerce 9, Courtier 7, Etiquette 4, Gambling 6, Heraldry 5, Sincerity 8, Stealth 4

Advantages/Disadvantages: Absolute Direction, Blackmail (you don't want to know how many), Clear Thinker, Luck (rank 1), Read Lips, Voice/Dark Secrets (Kolats, enemy of the Kolats), Small

Appearance: Taka is the epitome of the “greasy merchant,” a skinny man who is always perpetually smiling, rubbing his hands together, and counting his many koku. He dresses simply, more like a peasant than a samurai.

Personality/Background: Taka is the daimyo of the Yasuki family, and made his fortune on the high-quality sake which he brews in his home village. He travels all over the Empire, usually bringing along a merchant's cart loaded with expensive trinkets. He is always alert for an opportunity to make more koku. Taka is somewhat nervous and cowardly, but can screw up his courage to act when he has to. He prefers to work through others whenever there is danger involved.

Beneath his harmless exterior, Taka has many depths. He is a high-ranking member of the Kolats, and at the same time one of the Kolats' greatest enemies. He secretly runs anti-Kolats operations through his huge network of contacts and allies, while at the same time serving the Kolats loyally, never letting them guess that he is their enemy. At this Winter Court, Taka has other concerns (see “Goals” and “Recruiting for the Mini-Mission” below) but he is also on the lookout for those who can be recruited into the Kolats organization.

Goals: Taka's primary goal here is to sell lots of items and make lots of money. Your other handout explains what items you have to sell and for how much.

Your second goal is to recruit 4-5 PCs to find out what has happened to the latest shipment of Jade Petal Tea to the Kaiu Wall. You have a financial interest in the Sun's Blessing Monastery, which produces much of the special Tea for consumption by the Damned. However, the latest shipment has failed to arrive. You need someone to find out what has happened – the Crab have no troops to spare, between battles on the Wall and Hida Kisada's ambitions elsewhere.

Your third goal is (as always) to recruit new agents for the Kolats. You can do this by offering to carry out difficult and dishonorable favors for samurai who seem to be prey to their own emotions and weaknesses. You can recruit two new Kolats agents in this way, if the opportunity

arises. (You have two “Owned by the Kolat” certs which you can hand out to those who accept your dishonorable offers.)

Your fourth and final goal is to identify a few clever and resourceful samurai who might be useful against the Kolat someday. Should you find such individuals, inform them at the end of the Interactive that they have gained the advantage “Ally: Yasuki Taka.”

Recruiting for the Mini-Mission: If Taka thinks that a samurai seems a likely choice for dealing with his problem of missing Jade Petal Tea, he will speak as follows (more or less):

“Ah, noble samurai, I wonder if you might be able to help me with a most unfortunate problem. It concerns the tea made from Jade Petals. Perhaps you have heard of it, yes? There is a nearby monastery which produces it for consumption by those who have been unfortunate enough to feel the touch of He Who Is Not to be Named. Regrettably, the latest shipment is several days late. I could use the services of a few brave and resourceful samurai to look into this matter. It would be most tragic if the latest shipment.”

As an incentive to help, Taka will promise each recruit one of the “special items” listed on his sheet of sale items.

If the PC agrees to the mission, Taka says he will contact them when the time is right. The adventure will require a minimum of four PCs, a maximum of five. Keep the Chief Judge (Kuni Yori) informed of how many recruits you have.

Taka's Treasures

As the proprietor of Taka's Treasures, you can offer the following items for sale:

Good-luck Tokens (2 koku, total of 8): "blessed by the priests of Daikoku in the city of Ryoko Owari, guaranteed to bring the favor of the Fortunes to your path"

Fine-quality Fans (3 koku, total of 4): "protect your words in court and keep a cool breeze about yourself with these magnificent fans, crafted by the finest Crane artisans. Sure to attract favorable eyes!"

Pouch of Jade Powder (3 koku, total of 7): "the same powder the Crab Clan uses to destroy the fearsome evils of the Shadowlands."

Crystal Broaches (4 koku, total of 4): "the perfect ornament for a lovely wife/concubine. See how the light sparkles when it shines through!"

Excellent Puzzle Box (4 koku, total of 2): "Scorpions themselves won't fear to place their secrets inside." You do not have the solutions to opening these puzzle-boxes – at least not that you'll admit!

Jade-tipped Arrows (4 koku each or 9 koku for 3, total of 15): "built by our famed Kaiu weapon-smiths. Why risk closing with a deadly foe when these blessed arrows will slay it at 300 yards?"

Crystal-tipped Arrows (5 koku each or 11 koku for 3, total of 12): "found in the Shinomen Forest, these ancient, beautiful arrowheads have been remounted on fine quality crab arrow-shafts."

Fine Kimono (8 koku, total of 3): "you'll be the wonder of the courts in this magnificent garment, woven from the finest quality silk."

Special Items

You also have some special items which you can use as inducements/rewards for those who undertake your mini-mission. These are as follows:

- Three jade-edged tantos (daggers).
- A crystal dagger from the Burning Sands.
- A suit of Heavy Demon Armor.