

YEAR 1206

SPRING 1206

THE PATH OF HEAVEN

The Phoenix, frustrated beyond the point of tolerance, come to the conclusion that all of their research indicates that there is no way in modern or pre-Imperial Rokugani magics to compel the cooperation of a creature of Tengoku. However, in the secret halls of the Isawa, a researcher named Isawa Oda stumbles upon an old text that contains a theory about the practices of the Yobanjin Shamans, never confirmed, postulating that the Wyrms ridden by their foremost warlords are in fact Ryu called and bound by the amulets created by their Shamans.

The Isawa travels to Yobanjin Mura, where he attempts to convince the residents to give him such an amulet, naturally without success. Oda presses further, finally spending a great fortune simply for the location of a Yobanjin village on the other side of the mountains. Gearing up for a long journey, he vanishes into the mountains beyond the eyes of his superiors. Several months later, he emerges, and in the dying Spring travels to Kyuden Isawa. There, he simply orders the servants to request a meeting with the Council, and retires to his chambers.

Come the appointed time for the meeting, Isawa Oda is not present, much to the ire of the Council. The servants sent to find him discover his body in his rooms, where he has committed seppuku. Placed in front of his corpse is a neat bundle containing an odd amulet of a style very distinct from those recovered in warfare with the Yobanjin, his research notes on its effects and how to reproduce it, and, in lieu of a death Haiku, a simple scrap of paper bearing the note "What I have done, I have done for the Phoenix."

What Isawa Oda discovered in the territories beyond the northern edge of the Empire is unknown, but the results of his trial are immediately apparent. The Oni and Lost forces surrounding Phoenix lands suddenly come under assault by Ryu and other creatures of the Celestial Realm, all of which seem to be of a dulled radiance. Their eyes, report the troops on the front line, contain the desperate madness of a beaten dog lashing out against all in the hope of eventual freedom.