



# SHŌGUN NO KATANA

## HISTORICAL HANDBOOK

*By Post Scriptum and Federico Randazzo.*

*Consultants: Dai Kurahara and Silvia Teodora Vallergera.*

One of the things that amazed us when Federico submitted this game was its wonderful setting. For us at **Placentia Games**, this is one of the two pillars on which our games are based (of course the other pillar is the mechanics, which we always try to clean and balance to perfection).

In this brief handbook, we want to tell you something about this fascinating world full of mystery and tradition, and explain which aspects we decided to take some license with for game design reasons. To assist us, we hired as consultants Professor Dai Kurahara from Tokyo Denki University, an expert in military history and a passionate wargame player, and Dr. Silvia Teodora Vallergera, who graduated *summa cum laude* with a master's degree in the history of Japan and who currently lives in Tokyo.

We hope you'll have a good read!

### TIME PERIOD

**S**hōgun no Katana is set in Feudal Japan, i.e., the historical period between 1185 and 1868. The exact years in which the game takes place are deliberately unspecified. In order to best balance the rules of the game, we had to take some liberties and mix together things that come from different eras.

In general, however, this was a period of struggles between local lords (**Daimyō**) who aimed for domination over all of Japan in order to obtain the title of **Shōgun**.

The art of forging swords for military use has evolved a lot over the centuries, even after the victory of **Tokugawa Ieyasu** in the battle of Sekigahara and his conquest of the title of Shōgun. His victory began a period of peace, during which Japan was closed to the outside world: a system that would last until the arrival of Commodore **Matthew Perry** in 1854 (which would lead to the end of the Feudal Japan period in 1868).

Since the political situation during the **Edo period** (1603-1868), under the Tokugawa Shōgunate, was relatively stable, swords at this time were used mostly for aesthetic and collecting reasons.

## TERMINOLOGY

A board game must, first and foremost, be ergonomic: comfortable to play. It is most important that the rules are understandable and intuitive. But we also wanted the Japanese flavor to be tangible, and the game terms to express its charm. So, we decided to translate terms that have a clear relevance in the game, like **Worker**, **Monk**, **Market**, **Palace**, **Forge**, and the names of the resources. But we kept familiar Japanese words for well-known concepts, like **Shōgun** and **Daimyō** as well as others including **Washitsu** and **Komainu**, which enrich the setting without weighing down the text.

The case was different for the term **Katana**. Though it is well known in the occidental world, here we have decided to use it only for the specific sword of the Shōgun, and call the rest of them simply **Swords**. This give even more emphasis to the Shōgun no Katana, which lends its name to the game itself.

Trivia: The “n” used to write **Katana** in the title of the game is the real **kanji** used in Japanese to write the word katana.

## CHARACTERS

### DECORATORS

The existence of people specialized in sword decoration is historically accurate, but forging and decorating usually happened at the same place. Decoration was part of the manufacturing work that went into creating a sword, and was important to increase its artistry and value.

In addition to the engravings on the steel of the blade, there were different types of decorations: the **pommel** and the **guard** could be decorated in gold and buffalo leather.

The **handle** made of wood might be covered in ray or shark skin, and could be adorned with thin lacquered plates of gold and copper, leather and fabric.

The **wooden scabbard** was also a symbol of social status, so aristocrats and nobles required sumptuous decorations, for example using sharkskin and mother-of-pearl.

### DAIMYŌS

The Daimyōs were local lords who ruled the various feudal domains, and it was actually common for Master Forgers to produce swords for them. Advance payment was by no means usual, but we introduced it to the game for game design purposes.

## THE SWORDS

Swords were actually crafted from the materials featured in the game: in addition to the **Steel** used to forge the blade, there was **Stingray Leather** to cover the hilt and make the grip stronger, while **Wood** was used for the scabbard, which was then covered in **Lacquer** that made it possible to add decorations and pictograms created with gold powder and other materials. This last resource is the most precious in the game, because it added value and prestige to the weapon.



For game purposes, each sword is represented by a tile that simulates the plans for that sword's creation. Sadly, no trace remains of these plans, but it's plausible to think that they were used, since each age had a different forging style.

### SHŌGUN

This was the highest military title, equivalent to that of General. Initially, the Emperor himself granted this title to his most valiant commanders, delegating to them the management of life outside the capital. The title of Shōgun became hereditary over the years. The Emperor retained formal power, but in reality he devoted himself only to court life. Military and political power was for all practical purposes in the hands of the Shōgun and his family. As valiant military commanders, Shōguns had great admiration for finely crafted swords.

### FAMILY MEMBERS

The Shōgun used to host representatives of the most important Families at the palace, as a way to help keep them under control in both a positive way—by strengthening political relationships—and in a more menacing one: Should a family undertake an action that was unpleasant for the Shōgun, this could have an effect on family members residing at the palace.

It is also historically accurate that many of these family members were women, and that the Shōgun tried to maintain a political balance between the different families by avoiding any show of excessive favor to one or another.

## WORKERS

In our game, Workers take care of a lot of different tasks: they go to the market and the Emperor's Palace, pay visits to Daimyōs to receive the mandate to forge swords, and, obviously, craft the swords.

In reality, assistants to Forge Masters were only specialized in forging, while all other tasks were performed by other individuals

## MONKS

The use of Monks for forging swords is our own invention, inspired by the fact that it was normal for a *Shinto rite of blessing* to be performed at the end of the forging process. In the game, we imagined that the Forge Masters call upon the monks to supervise and bless the work in exchange for an offering to the Temple. However, in reality it was customary for craftsmen to pay taxes to support the temple and monks.

## PLACES

### ACADEMY

This place did not actually exist. We invented it for game design purposes.

### WASHITSU

This name indicates a traditional room in which there is a space reserved for exhibitions of artwork, called *tokonoma*. It is here, therefore, that swords would be displayed in the dwellings of a Daimyō or the Shōgun.

### FORGE

Obviously, the mechanism by which the swords move through the Forge is fictional and completely functional to the rules of the game. In reality, inside the *kajiba* (the Japanese term for “forge”), the master forger held the piece of metal and handled it skillfully while his assistants hammered at it with a cadenced rhythm.

### MARKET

Obviously this place is real and, all in all, it wasn't all that different from a modern *ichiba*. Probably, however, the resources we used in the game were not to be found there, but instead had to be purchased from special traders and craftsmen.



### KOMAINU

In the game, this area has a special function we designed. But in reality, it was an integral part of the Temple, forming the entrance to the sacred structure.

### TEMPLE

Temples (both Buddhist and Shinto) were very popular at the time, and monks played a more important role in society than they do today.

Monks could carry weapons, because the temples were one of the three main pillars of the country, alongside the Imperial House and the Great Warrior Houses. Also for this reason, temples received taxes for their own use.

If they were not located inside a city (such as the temples on *Mount Hiei* in the Kyoto area), the temples would often form their own towns. In fact, conglomerates would form outside such a temple, in which common people lived (carpenters, unskilled workers, etc.). These people would work in the temple (for example by carrying out renovations).

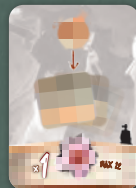
Buddhism and Shinto did not have ceremonies as we might recognize them in the West, although obviously funerals, weddings, blessings for people, pregnancies, births, and so on were celebrated then as now. These celebrations, however, took place on order and for a fee, as in the case of the blessings of the swords we talked about in the section dedicated to the monks.

# HONOR CARDS



You score points for all of the Honor cards you have collected, as follows.

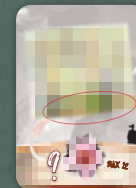
The maximum score given by each card is 12.



Score 1 point for each Decorated Resource on all of your Swords except your **SHŌGUN NO KATANA**.



Score 3 points for each different Strength level of Swords you have.



Score as many points as the total number of Coins indicated by your 4 Decorators at the Academy..



Score 4 points for each Sashimono of the indicated type you have.



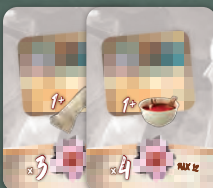
Score 3 points for each Decorated Resource on your **SHŌGUN NO KATANA**.



Score 3 points for each card placed under your Forge as a permanent benefit.



Score 3 points for each unused card you still have.



Score the indicated points for each Sword you have which has at least 1 Resource of the indicated type.



Score the indicated points for each Sword you have which has at least the indicated Strength level.



Score 2 points for each Worker and Monk you have on the main gameboard at the end of the last round (including Monks still at the Temple).



Score 1 point for every 4 Coins you own (in addition to the normal 1 point for every 5 Coins). For this purpose, consider each unused Resource you have as the number of Coins shown at the Market.



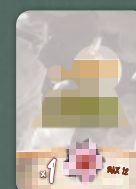
Score the indicated points for each Sword you have which has at least the indicated quantity of Decorated Resources.



Score as many points as the total sum of the Strength levels of all your Swords.



Score 8 points.



Score 1 point for each pink flower reached by your Score marker before scoring this card (each complete lap is worth 7 Points).

## IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF THE DAIMYŌ CARDS



**When you can activate it:**  
When you perform a Market action.

**Effect:** Immediately obtain the Resource(s) shown on the card, even if you don't buy any Resources.



**When you can activate it:**  
When you perform a Palace action.

**Effect:** Place the Family Member token in a Room where you do not have a Family Member and obtain that Room's effect also. It cannot be placed in the Passive Room.

PLEASE NOTE: The token can be placed before or after you rearrange your Family Members, but in any case it can't be in a Room where you already have one.



**When you can activate it:**  
When you perform an Academy action.

**Effect:** Advance one of your Decorators one step. It can be the same one you already advanced this action or another one.



**When you can activate it:**  
At any moment, even during an opponent's turn.

**Effect:** Transform up to 3 Resources of a type shown for an equal number of the other type shown.

## IMMEDIATE EFFECTS OF THE MARKET CARDS



**When you can activate it:**  
At any moment, even during an opponent's turn.

**Effect:** Rearrange your Family Members at the Shogun's Palace. The Permanent Benefit of this card costs 1 Coin instead of 3.

PLEASE NOTE: You can have at most one Family Member per Room.



**When you can activate it:**  
At any moment, even during an opponent's turn.

**Effect:** When you deliver a Sword, double the points written on the Sword tile (so,

not including those given by Decorations or by the current round).

PLEASE NOTE: The **SHŌGUN NO KATANA** has no points written on it, so you cannot use this effect on it.



**When you can activate it:**  
At any moment, even during an opponent's turn.

**Effect:** When you deliver a Sword, double the benefits received by a row or a column of your choice.

PLEASE NOTE: Even if you deliver more than one Sword in the same Moment, you can apply the doubled benefits only to a single Sword tile.



**When you can activate it:**  
At any moment, even during an opponent's turn.

**Effect:** You may decorate a Resource that you have already placed on a Sword in your Forge and receive Coins according to the position of the corresponding Decorator in the Academy.

PLEASE NOTE: You cannot decorate a Resource if there is already a Decorated Resource of the same kind on that Sword.



**When you can activate it:**  
At any moment, even during an opponent's turn.

**Effect:** You may play a second permanent benefit at the end of a row or column that already has one (you must pay for it normally; it may even be the benefit on this card).

PLEASE NOTE: You cannot place the benefit on a row or column that already has 2.



**When you can activate it:**  
When you perform an Academy action.

**Effect:** Double the Coins you earn with this action.



**When you can activate it:**  
On your turn, when you decide to use a Monk.

**Effect:** Pay 3 Coins less than those shown in the Temple.

IMPORTANT: Cards which double an effect always double only the base effect. If you play more of them at the same time, you don't get an exponential effect.



EXAMPLE 22: **Ringo** uses 2 Market cards n. 3 on this Sword. He scores 15 points in total, not 20.

