

The Taste of Kamigawa Neon Dynasty: Blue

Intro

First off, if you haven't read my last article about White and the Imperial Court in Neon Dynasty then I recommend you read that first because of the fact that there are some stuff I mention there that makes things make a lot more sense here, and I don't feel like repeating myself five times for every article(You can read said article here-
<https://douglysium.tumblr.com/post/679785148245573632/the-taste-of-kamigawa-neon-dynastys-imperial>).

With that out of the way, there is something I want to cover before discussing Blue itself and how it appears in Kamigawa: Neon Dynasty, that being artifacts. Now I stress that it's important to remember that artifacts in general Magic can represent any number of things, from natural resources like ore or minerals to something artificial like tools and technology. I've seen some people wonder why Green can do things like make treasures and care about artifacts when it's the "nature" color and there are actually several answers to this but one of those answers is because while artifacts are often used to represent technology that is not the only thing they represent and they can be used as a metaphor for ancient relics or naturally occurring objects.

Goldvein Pick


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Artifact — Equipment



Equipped creature gets +1/+1.

Whenever equipped creature deals combat damage to a player, create a Treasure token. *(It's an artifact with “ , Sacrifice this artifact: Add one mana of any color.”)*

Equip 1 (1: Attach to target creature you control. Equip only as a sorcery.)

But what do artifacts represent in Kamigawa NEO? Well, as touched on in the previous article, the artifacts in NEO usually represent technology and modernity. We know that one reason the design team went with “modernity = artifacts matters and artifact creatures” while “tradition = enchantments matter and enchantment creatures” is because using artifacts to represent newer technology and other artifacts to represent old relics of the past in this set conflict did not draw enough of a distinction between the factions in the set from a mechanical perspective, which can lead to potential confusion. However, it is also important to remember that enchantments, like artifacts, can represent multiple things but they have often been used to represent concepts, natural phenomena or processes more often than artifacts. This makes sense because artifacts basically have to be physical things or objects most of the time while enchantments can represent stuff with a nonphysical aspect such as pure magic or a process.

Abundant Growth




Enchantment — Aura



Enchant land

When Abundant Growth enters the battlefield, draw a card.

Enchanted land has “: Add one mana of any color.”

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Of course there are exceptions.



Blue

Now this section is going to be a bit shorter than the others because I already touched a lot on Blue and Green's representation in the previous part. In case you need a slight refresher each color has a ratio of enchantments and artifacts for the set. Colors that lean towards tradition have more enchantments while colors that lean towards modernity have more artifacts. Green and Blue act as the two furthestmost benchmarks for this theme, with Green embracing tradition the most and Blue embracing modernity the most. The order of the colors on Kamigawa from

most traditional and enchantments to most modern and most artifacts is Green, White, Black, Red, and then Blue.

I think one thing to note is that enchantments, and enchantment creatures, also represent the presence of kami influence or kami-based magic. So by having Blue with fewer enchantments and more artifacts it signifies less reliance on the kami. Part of this can be tied to the idea that Blue believes anything is possible and thus it believes with the right amount of technology, effort, and knowledge one could obtain ways of emulating or achieving the feats kami are capable of performing even if the kami themselves, or their respective magic, are not available. To Blue even you can be like a kami with the right amount of research, technology and time, heck with the right factors you can probably even surpass kami based abilities.



It is also extremely important to remember that even the most extreme sides of this set aren't 100% one thing or the other. While Blue does indeed tend to represent modernity and artifacts the most in this set it does have at least some enchantments.

Moon-Circuit Hacker

1



Enchantment Creature — Human Ninja

Ninjutsu (Return an unblocked attacker you control to hand: Put this card onto the battlefield from your hand tapped and attacking.)

Whenever Moon-Circuit Hacker deals combat damage to a player, you may draw a card. If you do, discard a card unless Moon-Circuit Hacker entered the battlefield this turn.

2/1

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There are a couple of base reasons for this. The first is that it's not like Blue, nor everyone who is Blue aligned, completely disregards the past and tradition. As mentioned in the previous article, Blue likes knowledge, as knowledge, in its opinion, is the best way to become your best self and figure out how to get what you want or need.



For example, looking at the past may tell you where shortcomings lie and what needs to be improved upon, such as looking upon a rough draft. Due to that Blue does care about the past because it can offer important or helpful information but it is much less beholden to tradition or the past than Green usually is. Green cares about the natural order and accepting the world for as it is but Blue sees nature and the natural order as neither good nor bad and combined with its color philosophy it is totally willing to improve upon the natural or replace less efficient things with unnatural and more efficient/effective things. It is also important to remember that some people using kami magic can be Blue and studying or utilizing kami can offer important

information or allow one to become their best selves or develop more technologies and equipment based on kami related things.

It should be noted that Blue is also a color that believes in free will and that you can become anything you want. So by relying less on the kami one can rely more on themselves and thus have more control over becoming whatever it is they want to be.

Since I haven't mentioned it before, artifact creatures in this set are either those who have incorporated so much technology into their body that they count as both an artifact and a creature...



artificially made or created with technology built into them.

or creatures that are



THE SAIBA FUTURISTS

In “Planeswalker’s Guide To Kamigawa: Neon Dynasty,” the Saiba Futurists are described as being an extremely secretive technocratic elite who are at the forefront of technological innovation on Kamigawa. They have a strong belief in innovation and pushing the boundaries of possibility and they claim to have impartiality to how the rest of the plane views their research. It is stated that while they theoretically obey the Imperial Court’s restrictions and

laws, in practice, they often dabble on the edges of it and will sometimes just break or overstep the laws.



While a lot of their inventions have apparently helped the entirety of Kamigawa as a plane, they often hoard the best knowledge for themselves in order to maintain power and status. Rumors say that how far they've actually pushed the boundaries of technological development is further

than anyone can guess.



The Saiba Futurists are organized into divisions, with each one being headed by a chief. All divisions have researchers and experimentalists but it is noted that some of these people are secretive to the point of paranoia and will employ agents of espionage.



This secrecy leads to projects given cryptic code names and being surrounded with magical occlusion veils to help hide them and/or their information. Apparently, the only person with complete insight into the entire organization is the head of the Futurists themselves, but their identity is shrouded in mystery. A majority of Saiba Futurists members prefer not to rely on kami magic since they see it as putting themselves at the whims of the kami. While they do consult with kami on occasion, they prefer to be free to experiment and explore on their own terms while using their own ingenuity to figure things out. However, there are still some Futurists individuals who have chosen to experiment with kami magic as well as the very forces that govern reality.

With that out of the way, we can get a bit more specific about some of the ways the Saiba Futurists and Blue philosophy overlap. First is the love of technology, and while technology does not automatically mean Blue or vice versa (as even Green can be technologically advanced/inclined) I have already explained Blue's general connection to technology in both this article and the previous one. The Saiba Futurists like technology because it allows them to do things they ordinarily couldn't and it potentially allows them to become anything they desire, which also ties into the presence of artifact creatures since things like cybernetic enhancements allow them to do things that a normal purely flesh and blood body could only dream of. Blue has always had a secretive and stealth angle in the game of Magic. Which of course begs the question of why this is the case? Well, the short answer is basically knowledge. Blue values knowledge and thinks that if you want to do something the best way to approach it is to learn all you can about it, think first and then act, use your head not your heart, look before you leap, etc. This means that when Blue is trying to combat something or protect itself it will often rely on knowledge for a similar reason. If knowledge is so powerful then, in the eyes of Blue, one of the best ways to deal with enemies is to limit their knowledge, your enemies can't do much to hurt you if they don't even know you're there, your weakness, how much power you have, what your goals are and, most importantly, what you do and don't know. If knowledge is power then by preventing or taking away someone's knowledge you do the same to their power. This explains the secretive nature of the Futurists and why they hoard information since they can protect themselves and their info by being secretive. Similarly, knowledge or the gaining of it can be used offensively, which would probably explain the use and emphasis on espionage. It also allows them to do more of what they want since generally people cannot prove if they've committed a crime and thus a faction like the Imperial Court can't always punish or restrict them. Their skirting of the law could also potentially be a connection to Blue's love of knowledge since if you are knowledgeable about laws you could push the bounds of them or find loopholes. A noteworthy amount of Futurists members are described as being paranoid which isn't the first time that this aspect has been explored in Blue. In places like the Kithkin of Shadowmoor, the presence of Blue is sometimes used as a representation of specific types of paranoia.

Mirrorweave

2  




Instant



Each other creature becomes a copy of target nonlegendary creature until end of turn.

“Those who are different are untrustworthy, unpredictable. Put your safety in the hands of your own kind.”

—Bowen, Barrenton guardcaptain

 Jim Pavelec

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This adds up because Blue is all about utilizing knowledge and trying to think first and plan ahead. If this aspect of Blue gets too out of control it can encourage behavior that is paranoid as one may constantly try to stay one step ahead while worrying about the future. I mean think of Blue's most famous mechanics, the almighty counterspell.

Counterspell



Instant




Counter target spell.

One of the main things that the counterspell is supposed to symbolize from a mechanical perspective is Blue's foresight or trying to think ahead. By using your brain and thinking about the future you might be able to properly predict the next action your opponent is going to take and counter a dangerous, powerful, or fatal spell for two or three mana. But what if the fact that you aren't 100% sure about what they are going to do begins to gnaw at you. I mean there are an endless amount of cards they could play and what if you counter the wrong one or that one spell you didn't counter creates an infinite combo you weren't aware of(I mean you don't remember what all the cards in their deck are). This is basically the type of thought that Blue can sometimes encourage or at the very least the type of thought that is sometimes represented with Blue in Magic. But like with all things it's important to remember that paranoia or anxiety doesn't automatically mean Blue nor do all Blue factions and characters embody these traits.


Norin the Wary



Legendary Creature — Human Warrior 

When a player plays a spell or a creature attacks, remove Norin the Wary from the game. Return it to play under its owner's control at end of turn.

"I have a bad feeling about this."

 Heather Hudson

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2/1

It should also be noted that some of the Futurist's technology has genuinely helped the plane and they do share some knowledge which is something that ties into how Blue not only wants to improve upon itself but also the world around it in a lot of cases. Their leader being unknown ties into their previously mentioned themes of secrecy(since you can't arrest, blackmail, or assassinate their leader if you don't even know who they are).

Their consulting of kami ties into my previously mentioned points about gaining knowledge from or with kami and how the kami can be helpful for bettering oneself. It also potentially gives them a chance to analyze and experiment with kami powers and their experimentation with the very forces that govern reality ties into their love of knowledge, as does their preference to use their own intellect to solve things as opposed to just always using kami magic. Their preference for intellect and technology over constantly using kami magic also gives them more chances to push and improve upon themselves. The fact that they don't want to be at the whim of the kami ties into Blue's themes of free will since Blue believes anything is possible with the right amount of knowledge, technology, and time. So basically they don't like being at the whims of the kami because they feel it takes away some of their free will and agency.



Their tinkering with the laws that govern reality itself also ties into Blue's philosophy of how anything is possible given enough time and information.

When it comes to the name of the Saiba Futurists my mind immediately jumps to サイバー, which is literally just the word cyber written out in katakana. However, it is a fitting name since cyber is defined as “relating to or characteristic of the culture of computers, information technology, and virtual reality.” Something that perfectly applies to the Saiba Futurists' emphasis on technology and information. The name Futurists also thematically ties into the themes of tradition and modernity, with the name Futurists making them extremely easy to identify as the

faction that sits on the furthest end of the modernity side of the conflict while highlighting their emphasis on the future and progress over the past and traditional ways.

Mechanics

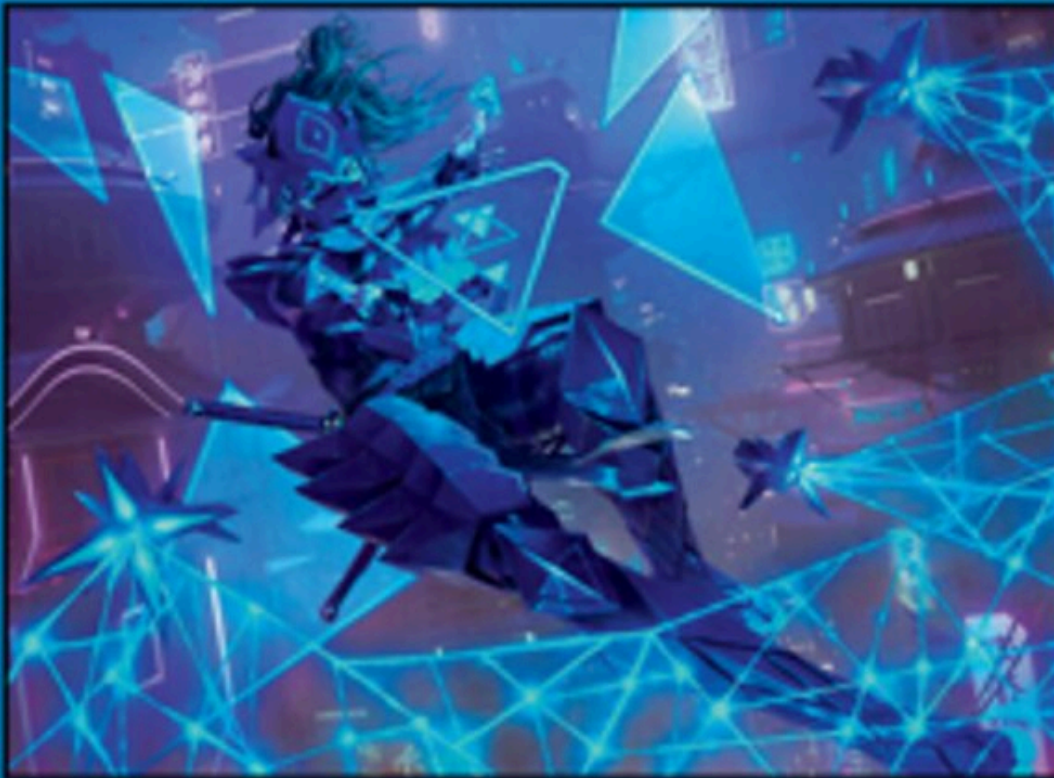
Mechanically the Saiba Futurists care about artifacts the most out of all the factions and enchantments the least, and since that aspect of Blue and the Futurists has been covered several times already I won't cover that again.



They also have a bit of a pilot and vehicles theme which is probably for the same reason White has that theme(i.e. the connection pilots have to flying as by definition pilots are people who operate an aircraft or ship, even if the pilots in magic can operate any vehicle for the sake of gameplay, and Blue gets a lot of flying creatures mechanically) and because of their connection to technology.

Moonsnare Specialist

3



Creature — Human Ninja



Ninjutsu 2 (2, Return an unblocked attacker you control to hand: Put this card onto the battlefield from your hand tapped and attacking.)

When Moonsnare Specialist enters the battlefield, return up to one target creature to its owner's hand.

2/2

In this set Blue and the Saiba Futurists also get a decent number of ninjas and, along with Black, it has some good ninja tribal synergies and rewards. This is because the whole point of ninjas is that they specialized in espionage, intel, and assassinations. In this case, their connection to espionage and intel is why there are so many Blue ninjas as opposed to the assassination thing. Ninjutsu as a mechanic is one that for a cost allows you to “Return an unblocked attacker you control to hand: Put this card onto the battlefield from your hand tapped and attacking.”



Being unblockable or unable to be blocked is something that Blue does a lot so it makes sense that the tribe with the mechanic that allows you to get a surprise hit on an opponent and rewards you for playing, often small and unassuming, unblockable creatures along with other forms of evasion (such as flying) would have heavy ties to Blue. Being unblockable also ties into Blue's attraction to stealth and Ninjutsu and also leaves your opponent guessing at all times as to whether or not you have a card with Ninjutsu in your hand. Which ties into Blue's themes of trickery, secrecy, and subterfuge.



Blue and the Saiba Futurists in this set also care about modified creatures, modified creatures are those with equipment, auras and counters on them(as those count as modifications). Some of this is for the same technology-based reasons as before but it also has to do with how Blue is usually less afraid to use things like technology and tools to allow it to achieve what it couldn't do before. In essence, using a modification often involves the use of artificial things to change and improve something, which is something that both Blue and the Saiba Futurists often embrace.

Land

In my last Kamigawa NEO article, I covered the respective land card for the Imperial Court and this article will be no different. Otawara, Soaring City is a card that depicts Otawara(duh).



Otwara itself is described as “Formerly the exclusive domain of the Moonfolk, the floating city of Otawara has opened its doors to intrepid researchers of all kinds. Nevertheless, it remains a place of beauty and mystery. Mist and clouds swirl between buildings. Pathways and entrances are hidden and deliberately confusing, meant to dissuade outsiders. The only place non-moonfolk are still forbidden is Oboro, the Ancient Palace, which is considered sacred ground to the Moonfolk.”

As with last time, I think there are some interesting details. First off, it was originally only accessible by moonfolk but now all kinds of researchers can go there. I would at least argue



that this shows some of the modern and technological aspects of the Futurists. The most obvious thing to point out would be the fact that the main factor preventing most non-moonfolk people from being able to access it is that they cannot naturally fly but Moonfolk can.

Oboro, Palace in the Clouds



Legendary Land



: Add  to your mana pool.

1: Return Oboro, Palace in the Clouds to its owner's hand.

Here the soratami wove their endless plots—graceful, artful, and deceitful, while the unwitting world moved below.

 **Rob Alexander**

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However, thanks to technology things like flight are made more readily available to even those who aren't born with it, allowing potentially anyone to at least reach the city. Thus, doing away with some of the old traditions like that.



Also, the fact that it's a flying city specifically that also has mist and clouds swirling between buildings has a clear call to Blue's connection with the classical elements of air and water. The reason Blue is often represented by these things in Magic is because elements like fire and earth represent more bodily aspects, emotions and instincts while things like air and water often represent things like the spirit and mind(at least it does "western" culture. These

symbolisms can vary from culture to culture and place to place but Magic tends to default to the Greek style classical elements). The place is also described as one of beauty and mystery with pathways and entrances being hidden and deliberately confusing, meant to dissuade outsiders. This ties into the more cunning and mind game aspects of Blue's philosophy but also the Saiba Futurists' more secretive, shady, and even paranoid aspects. It should also be noted that mists and clouds swirling between buildings could potentially obscure vision which once again points to their more secretive aspects. These all help show us that this city and the Saiba Futurists themselves might be more than they seem. The weirdest thing to me though is the fact that non-Moonfolk are still forbidden to enter Oboro, the Ancient Palace, which is still considered sacred ground.

Guardians of Oboro

2



Creature — Moonfolk Samurai



Defender

Modified creatures you control can attack as though they didn't have defender. (*Equipment, Auras you control, and counters are modifications.*)

"The palace is closed to outsiders."

3/4

This could once again point to the idea that there is something mysterious or secretive happening within the city and inside its main resident faction or simply that even the modern embracing Saiba Futurists haven't rejected literally all forms of tradition and there are still traditions they like, or at the very least there are citizens in the city that haven't completely rejected all traditions.



The Otwara card's channel ability is one that for 4 mana(3 of any color and 1 Blue) allows you to discard it in order to "Return target artifact, creature, enchantment, or planeswalker

to its owner's hand." The ability also costs 1 less generic mana for each legendary creature you control.

I think its ability to return things to a player's hand is a great nod to how the flying city purposefully constructed to befuddle and confuse people, and getting lost in Magic is often represented by getting returned to one's hand or library.

Totally Lost

4 




Instant



Put target nonland permanent on top of its owner's library.

Fblthp had always hated crowds.

 David Palumbo



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Bounce abilities are also something that Blue just gets a lot of in order to represent its reliance on the mind and cunning as opposed to brute force, via things like damage or destruction, to take care of a threat. As well as how Blue prefers to usually not destroy things so it can research or study them later.

The fact that Otawara's channel ability gets cheaper the more legendary creatures you control is something that I can only assume is a reference to the original Kamigawa sets having lots of legendary creatures and its ability to tap for Blue mana is of course because Moonfolk and the Saiba Futurists are heavily tied to Blue mana and the Blue alignment.

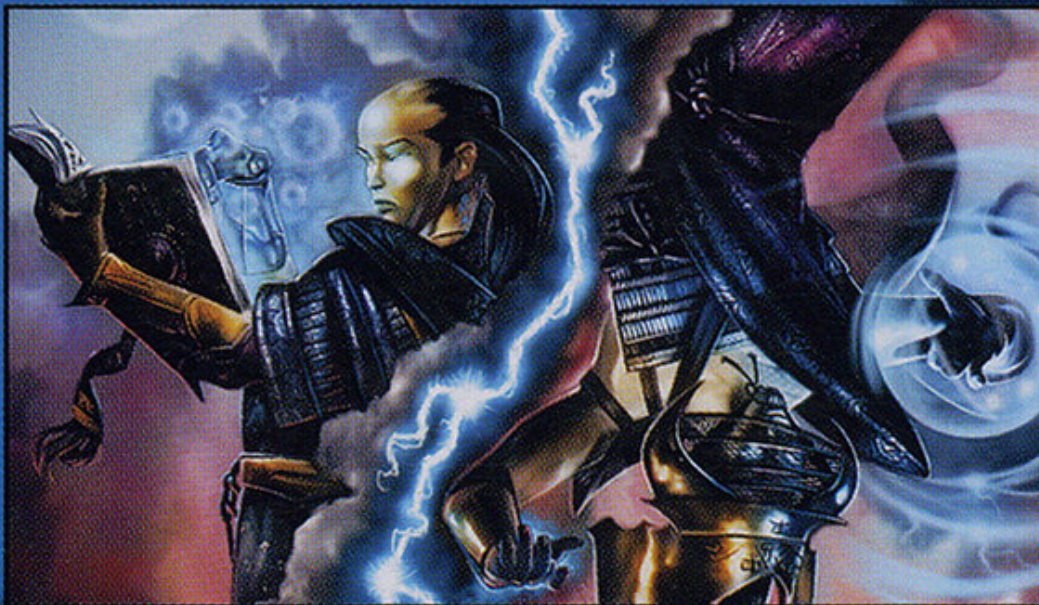
Jushi Apprentice

1 




2 , : Draw a card. If you have nine or more cards in hand, flip Jushi Apprentice.

Creature — Human Wizard


1/2



2/3 Legendary Creature — Human Wizard

3 , , : Target player draws X cards, where X is the number of cards in your hand.

Tomoya the Revealer

 Glen Angus

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Closing

Well, that's all for now. If for some reason you still haven't read the previous article you can read it

here(<https://doughlysium.tumblr.com/post/679785148245573632/the-taste-of-kamigawa-neon-dyn-astys-imperial>) and if you want to read about Innistrad I have the an article I wrote about one of its tribes

here(<https://doughlysium.tumblr.com/post/664656723908362240/the-taste-of-innistrads-vampire>).

Also, what is your favorite Saiba Futurist card or character? Next time I will be talking about Black and the reckoners so see you then.

Happily Ever After

2 



Enchantment



When Happily Ever After enters the battlefield, each player gains 5 life and draws a card.

At the beginning of your upkeep, if there are five colors among permanents you control, there are six or more card types among permanents you control and/or cards in your graveyard, and your life total is greater than or equal to your starting life total, you win the game.



