



Legend of the Five Rings Interactive Storyline Collectible Card and Role Playing Games

Holiday Season 2013 Special Edition

The New Imperial Herald

By Dave Laderoute

Greetings, samurai of Rokugan, and welcome to the renewed Imperial Herald. Or, rather, welcome to an interim version of the renewed Imperial Herald. You'll recognize this format as being the one used for the Herald until the effective end of its publication many months ago. We're phasing this format out, though, because we intend to relaunch the Imperial Herald in an entirely new way, as we move towards and into Ivory Edition.



The L5R Collectible Card Game (CCG) will feature prominently in the new Imperial Herald, of course, but we won't focus solely on the current tournament scene and the "standard" constructed deck format. We're also keen to present articles on other formats, such as Draft, Sealed and War of Honor, as well as Big Deck, Legacy, Highlander, even Suicide, or any other formats that might come along and prove popular.

There's much more to Legend of the Five Rings than just the CCG, however. We plan to offer articles on the Role Playing Game (RPG), dealing both with "crunch"--game mechanics and

rules--and "fluff"--background information about the setting of the Emerald Empire, its people, culture, society, politics, economics and so on. This will include both the "pen and paper" RPG, as well as web-based play, such as AEG's occasional, formal "Winter Court" RPG events or any of the various web forum-based games run by fans.

Of course, the Imperial Herald will also provide another vehicle for delivering L5R fiction to the fans and players, both general, and more Clan-specific material, such as the aforementioned Clan Letters. And we'll certainly delve into the setting in a more general way, offering up articles about aspects of Rokugan itself, and how these can be incorporated into your RPG campaigns, or just be available for your general interest.

The Imperial Herald will also offer articles on just about any other aspect of L5R you can imagine. As related game products are developed, we'll cover them in these pages. This includes games like "Ninja: Legend of the Scorpion Clan" (in fact, an article about that game appears in this issue, on page 4) and the upcoming L5R Edition of "Love Letter", as well as any other L5R game products that might come along. Perhaps we'll even revisit some older games; after all, there may still be some players of the old Clan Wars miniatures game out there!

Last, but not least, are things like Live Action Role Playing and Costume Play (cosplay). These tend to popular at larger gaming events, such as Kotei, GenCon, the European Championships and the like. Some folks put enormous effort (and expense!) into their costumes and personae, so we want to give them a forum to show off their stuff, as well as share their methods and techniques.

All of this relies, of course, on you, the fans. We don't simply want you to read and enjoy the Imperial Herald, we want you to help produce it. In these pages, we're showcasing some

articles by folks from outside AEG, sent in response to our "Call for Submissions" back in August. We received some terrific stuff, and only some of it appears in this Special Edition of the Herald. We have much more sitting "on hold" that we'll be using in future editions of the Imperial Herald. And we're not done looking; we'll be seeking more articles from you. There's some amazing writing talent out there, as the material we've received shows. I'm sure you'll find the fan-submitted articles in these pages proof of that. There will be more about the submission process coming as we move into the beginning of Ivory Edition. In the meantime, if you have ideas for articles, go ahead and starting working on them. Just keep them to no more than 1500 words!

In the meantime, enjoy this Special Holiday Season 2013 Edition of the Imperial Herald. Have a safe, happy and healthy holiday season, and we'll talk more in the new year, the year of Ivory Edition!



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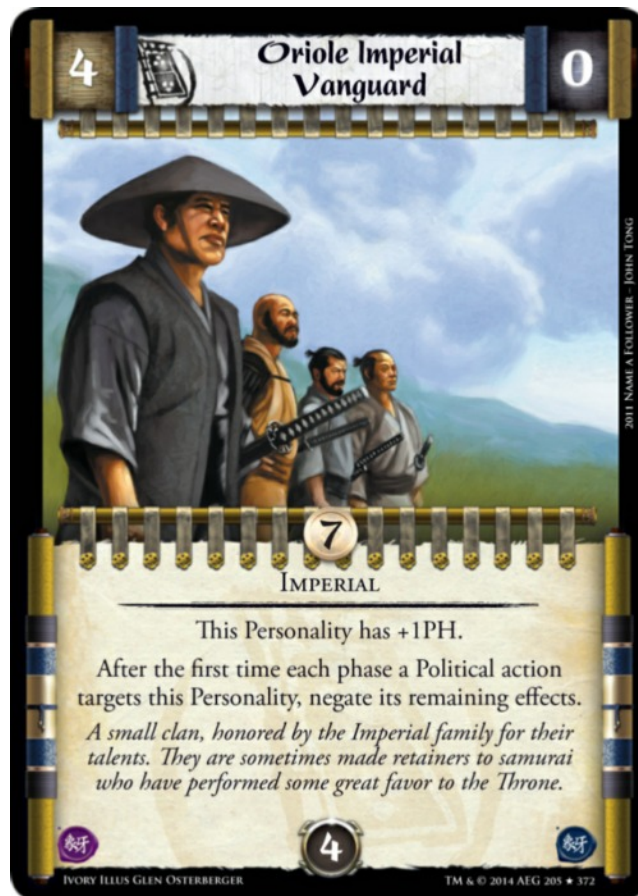


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IVORY EDITION

By Dave Laderoute

Ivory Edition isn't far off, now. Here are some more previews of cards from the upcoming Ivory Edition Base Set of the Legend of the Five Rings CCG to help tide you over until you have the actual cards in your hands.



There are many ways to die in Rokugan. Most samurai, especially those of a more military inclination, expect to die by steel or bow-shot in battle, or in desperate struggle against some foul monstrosity or gaijin fiend threatening the Celestial Order. However, samurai may come to more sinister ends, by poison, or by terrible magic that drains the very life force, the chi, from their bodies. To help your samurai avoid that awful fate in Ivory Edition, you can let them draw on the calming, steadying influence of the *Tea House*.

The *Tea House* does double-duty in your deck, acting as a 1 Gold Cost Holding that produces 1 Gold (in the game's usual shorthand, this would be a "1-for-1 Holding"), or as a means of negating Chi penalties—or both, if you can manage to straighten it after doing one or the other. A 1-for-1 can certainly help your deck's Gold scheme, especially with the way that Gold can be "pooled" in Ivory Edition—you might very well want that extra 1 Gold, in case you need to make an odd amount of Gold. Meanwhile, being able to negate Chi penalties on your Personality from cards such as the *Red Hunger's Fang* or *Bayushi Jin-e* can help ensure his survival—at least until the end of the turn. Note that it only negates such penalties from other players' cards and tokens, though, so beware those that you end up putting on your own personalities. The *Tea House* won't help your Personality then!

Next, we have a Follower, a powerful, albeit expensive one in the *Oriole Imperial Vanguard*. The Oriole are a Minor Clan of relatively recent origin, being formed in 1168 by the Emperor Toturi in recognition of their long service as the skilled smiths of the Tsi family. Although closely aligned with the Dragon Clan, the noble Oriole will give players in Ivory Edition the opportunity to recruit them as a hefty 4 Force Follower for 7 Gold. Some of the best things about this Follower, though, are its Traits. Its Personality gains 1 Personal Honor, which synergizes well with a number of effects we know are going to be in the Ivory environment. For example, this is an extra 1 Force for a Personality who attaches *Seppun's Blessed Blade*, or who is defending and has been targeted with the Spell *Soul of Earth*. It also gives a Personality a little more protection against *Akodo Dairuko Experienced* or *Kitsuki Kinaro Experienced* (of course, it also makes those two Personalities a little more dangerous if they have it attached!) The card's other Trait, negating the effects of the first Political action that targets its Personality each phase, can be also be extremely useful, offering significant protection against many powerful effects in the environment, including the send-home action of the Imperial Favor. The 4 Focus Value and the Imperial keyword are just more good things about an already strong card.

Finally, we see the return of an old card, the *Gumbai-Uchiwa*. In addition to being just a fun name to say—*Gumbai-Uchiwa*—this weapon offers an impressive 2 Force bonus to its Personality for only 3 Gold. It is also One-Handed, a new keyword coming in Ivory Edition. The real strength of the *Gumbai-Uchiwa*, though, is in its utility as a reusable discard. Need a 3 Force bonus for your Tactician? Discard *Gumbai-Uchiwa*, then Equip it right back out of your discard pile with a later Battle Action. Need to discard a card for the Imperial Favor's Limited action, or for some other action that needs you to discard a card? *Gumbai-Uchiwa* will take the hit, then wait in your discard to be Equipped later on. Be wary, though—once it's Equipped, if it comes out of play for any reason, it's gone, removed from the game!

Walt Disney World Kotei

By Todd Rowland

Looking for something to do at the end of May, 2014? How about combining your love of Legend of the Five Rings with the magic of Walt Disney World? Read on to find out how!

The first ever Kotei to be held in [Walt Disney World](#) in Orlando, Florida will be May 28 through June 1, 2014! The Kotei have long been an important part of the Legend of the Five Rings tournament scene, and this will be an experience like no other.

The event will be hosted at the beautiful [Coronado Springs Resort](#) on the Walt Disney World property. Staying on property affords attendees many excellent perks, including free pickup from the airport, bus service all throughout Disney World, and more. The Coronado Springs is the home of Disney's Conference Center, where the event will take place. The Coronado features a lush pool area and several excellent dining options, and best of all we have a group rate on the rooms! In addition, all attendees and their families/friends can get discounted tickets to the parks.

The event will feature the storyline event, as well as a side event—the Legend of the Five Rings [Love Letter](#) storyline event. If attendance is high enough, we may also have a second chance storyline tournament.



Breakfast and lunch will be catered during the tournament, and the next morning, the finals move to the Japan pavilion in [Epcot](#)! You'll have another catered breakfast while you watch the final match play out (or play in it!) at the samurai fortress in Epcot. After our winner is crowned, we'll have a day to enjoy all the fun of Epcot, including Test Track, Mission: Space, the world showcase, and more. In the

evening will be a private dessert party and fireworks viewing for our attendees.

This will be one of the most memorable Kotei in L5R history. AEG is offering additional rewards for attendees, providing prizes and Ivory product equivalent to the event price. This is on top of the normal Kotei event prizes.

Not only is the event going to be a blast, we'll be at Disney World where we can enjoy the parks, and the Star Wars Weekends at Hollywood Studios. All weekend long actors from the Star Wars films will appear throughout the park, as well as many other special events all geared towards Star Wars. If you just can't get enough card playing, you can play Disney's own interactive CCG, [Sorcerers of the Magic Kingdom](#) throughout the Magic Kingdom park. Free boosters are given to anyone who visits the Magic Kingdom.

We are extremely excited to bring this first of its kind event to the L5R community. For more information on the event and to inquire with agent handling reservations, please visit [l5r.com/wdw-kotei](#). We hope to see you there in May!

BigDeck, or Having Fun With Lots of Cards

By Tony Calderon

Tony Calderon gives us a rundown on “Big Deck”, an innovative alternate format for the Legend of the Five Rings CCG. Read on to find out how to play with a deck of 200 cards, all of them unique.

Many of us have been here before--the current arc is coming to an end so, soon, it will be time to take our current decks apart and put those cards away. Those of us who play Legacy might try to convert our current decks to Legacy versions, only to find that some of the personalities that we've come to love are just too slow for the format. This was our predicament in Philadelphia as the Samurai arc was coming to a close. We wanted a way to keep playing with some of our favorites, but we didn't want the games to be too fast or end too quickly. We decided to copy another format that had begun locally for a different game. That format required players to play with one deck of 200 cards and only allowed for 1 copy of each card. To our surprise, applying these restrictions to an L5R deck was not a hindrance at all. It was, for instance, very possible to build a functioning gold scheme. Coming up with 200 cards for a deck wasn't that much of an issue either, even for those of us who had not played prior to Samurai. We decided to use the same name for our format, and so, BigDeck was born.

So what is BigDeck exactly? Really, it's just [another way to play with your old cards](#), but with two basic rules applied to deck construction which are, quite frankly, designed to slow the game down and allow for some of the more expensive personalities to become playable. The first rule is that the Dynasty and Fate decks must each contain exactly 100 cards. The second rule is that you are limited to only running 1 copy of each card in your deck. Trying to come up with 200 cards for a deck may sound pretty daunting at first, but actually most people find that the problem is trying to cut down to 200 cards. You have to remember that you have over 15 years of L5R's evolution as a CCG and over 10,000 unique cards to choose from, which is actually a big part of the fun. For those who have played for years, every province flip and every card draw is another chance to play with some old favorites. For those new to the game, it's a nice glimpse at the history of the game, and it gives some of the old timers the opportunity to be the first to explain to you that, for example, the Ability on [Bayushi Kachiko Experienced 3](#) is not, in fact, “once per turn”.

Personally, I feel that one of the biggest draws to the BigDeck format for people is that every game you play can and will be different. That is the nature of a Highlander (that is, every card



being considered Unique) format. You could play against the same deck 10 or more times in a row, and each time you will win or lose due to a combination of different cards. Your opponent may be running [Boundless Sight](#) to help search for [Bayushi Kachiko Experienced 3](#), but it is pretty much a given that they will still not get to play her in most games. Making sure that not every game plays out the same way is, in fact, one of the core ideals of the format. It is also this ideal that makes having a Ban List a necessity. It is no mistake that the majority of the cards on [the current BigDeck Ban List](#) are cards that start in play and would allow a player to search for the same cards in their deck game-after-game. While eliminating this type of consistency might be a turn off for some players, it does allow for some of the more powerful cards to remain legal in the format. After all, it is difficult to really abuse a card or combo if you're not guaranteed to see it every game.

One thing that has been an asset in making the format more accessible for players has been the [Oracle of the Void](#) maintained by AEG. Being able to have such easy access to the most recent information on every card ever printed in the game has been great. It has definitely made things simpler when it comes to deck-building and making rulings on older cards. For

those who are trying to come up with ideas for a deck, the Oracle is always a good place to start. I would also recommend taking a look at [the Strategy section of our forum](#) at for deck ideas and deck lists from others in the community.

There really is no bad place to start though. You can pick your favorite Stronghold from your favorite clan, or you can select a clan and try to build around one of their themes. Some themes may not be possible, but it doesn't mean that the idea can't lead to a deck. There are definitely not enough Lion Deathseeker Personalities to fill out a 100-card deck, but there might be enough to build a military deck that tries to honor out in battles. There is also nothing stopping someone from trying a theme in a clan that is not considered the “strongest” clan for that theme. Want to build an honor deck but don't enjoy playing Crane? Perhaps you might prefer trying out Lion or Phoenix. Not a big Scorpion fan? Perhaps you could try dishonor out of Crab or Dragon. [Kaede Sensei](#) is available to all clans, so enlightenment is always an option as well. Even better, you could be the first to build a solid deck out of [The Dark Path of Shadow](#) or [Shrine of the Spirits](#). With over 10,000 cards to play with, the possibilities are out there.

The cool thing about a format like BigDeck is that it can be as competitive or as casual as you and your group want it to be. You can run a tournament for it at your local store, or you can play games of BigDeck in between testing decks for Koteis. Over the summer of 2013, BigDeck was chosen by AEG to be part of GenCon for the first time ever, and the current Winter Court season will feature several BigDeck events. The format has definitely come a long way in a short time, and with the community's help, it will just get better.

I understand, of course, that not everyone will enjoy playing every format. However, when people say they have as much fun losing as they do winning, then the format can't be that bad. If you haven't tried it yet, then I hope you will give BigDeck a shot. And if you already play, then perhaps one day we'll sit down for a game or two. Just don't try to remove my [Akodo Hachigoro](#) from the game.

Momoku, The Best Disadvantage

By William Maldonado

Players of the Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game typically try to make their characters as strong as possible. Here's a look at a Disadvantage that can make your character much weaker--and why you should consider using it.

Whether caused by a karmic imbalance or an offense to the Heavens, a character with the Momoku Disadvantage is doomed--or is he?

In the 4th Edition of the L5R RPG, the Momoku Disadvantage grants 8 Character Points that can be used at character creation. However, it restricts the use of Void points for anything except the activation of Techniques that require it. For this reason, many players refuse to take it. Void points are entirely too useful and are the *de facto* source of “against the odds” victories in the game. Gaining 8 Character Points simply isn't enough of a draw for many players. It's simply terrible, which is why it's the best Disadvantage. Why? Well, consider the flavor text for Momoku: “...harmony is a state virtually unknown to you.” What does this mean in a character's story?

At the most basic, it means that you feel at odds with the world of Rokugan; strange, otherworldly, and off. Such a character would feel as if they were drowning on land, uncomfortable in their own skin, and that strangeness would be evident to anyone around them. In the xenophobic society of Rokugan, it would be like seeing someone who claimed to be your neighbor but is on the wrong side of the so-called uncanny valley. They blink too often, breathe at odd intervals, and clothes hang from them at weird angles. As word spreads about this individual, shugenja examine them and find them to be a blank void in their senses. The *Ishiken* test them and find that they are not Tainted; they just don't exist and don't belong. They aren't Spirits, either, as they have flesh and blood and belong to none of the Spirit Realms beyond Ningen-do. Tests are done and they aren't special in any real meaningful way, they are just *wrong*.

It would be dishonorable, however, to not give these people their birthright, a dutiful role, so they are sent to unimportant schools with bland mentors, to learn just enough to serve where



they are likely to be as inoffensive to the universe as possible. People are certain that this “nothing” will die having done nothing meaningful with their lives.

This effect is also present out of character, around the gaming table. Without the ability to spend Void points for that little extra *oomph* to their actions, Momoku characters are harder to rely upon. At best, these characters may be paired up with others who, regardless of actual skill, are seen as more reliable because they can spend Void points. The advantage is only taken by those who want a challenge because, from a mechanical standpoint, it's hard for characters taking Momoku to excel unless they spend the Experience to become great at what they do. But specialization forces these characters to be less adept in other areas. There is no +1k1 to die rolls or boost to Initiative when the need is there. The character has to rely much more on herself in a land that breeds killers of gods.

This brings us to why it is the greatest disadvantage for role playing purposes. The Empire is filled with stories of heroes who came from humble or shameful origins; Toku and Kaneka

for instance. Such heroes are the subject of literature and plays that teach how, with Honor and Courage, even the lowliest man can strive to increase their station in the Celestial Hierarchy while serving the Empire. So, why couldn't someone unconnected with the universe be able to reach the same level of fame?

Tying Momoku with the Great Destiny advantage provides a deep well of role playing fodder for GM and player. Imagine a court scene where you have the shintao monks proclaiming that your character has signs pointing you to doing something great in defence of Clan or Empire. On the other end of the room, you have the practical characters whispering about you being “Nothing” and “Absent” from the elements spreading the seeds of doubt that you will get the chance to overcome. If you prefer a smaller scale goal for your character, perhaps taking Higher Purpose would be better. Imagine the duelist who meditates and trains constantly to become the premiere duelist for her clan or the personal yojimbo for her lord in spite of her spiritual handicap.

Imagine also the Momoku student of enlightenment who studies The Path of Man because more worldly accepted paths feel closed to her. This could lead the character to either falling into Disbelief or rising into a Fortune's blessing or even to be Chosen by the Oracles or to become a Paragon of Virtues. All of these stories can spring forth from taking a single disadvantage and many more can come with a little thought crafting into the role play causes and effects of Momoku.

At the beginning of their life, the shugenja and diviners of the empire would consider a character with Momoku to be doomed. But Rokugan is defined by defying the odds in order to prove one's mettle. Sometimes, like with this Disadvantage, the enemy comes from within and fighting it is no less glorious a struggle.

A Community of Resources

By Seth Anthony

As the L5R Community Organizer I field a lot of questions from folks looking for resources or background information on the L5R CCG. The community that has developed around L5R is its biggest strength and getting new players to connect to that group is key in keeping them active and playing. Some of these resources are fairly obvious – the [Imperial Assembly](#), the [Oracle of the Void](#), and the [Clan Forums](#). Others, however, are a bit less known, especially to new players.

For those who really enjoy the story and background of L5R, I send them to [Kaze no Shiro](#) and the [L5R Wiki](#). Kaze no Shiro maintains a database of L5R fiction, from the early days up until recent times. Everyone's favorite stories remain available at Kaze no Shiro and it provides a fantastic resource for those players who are returning to the game, but want to bridge the gap between the story from the time when they played and where the story is now. The L5R Wiki provides an encyclopedic history of the world of L5R, from its inhabitants to major plot points from the story. It contains information from the CCG and the RPG, enabling players to make connections between the two

products. If you use these two websites in tandem, you'll be caught up on the story in no time!

A potential barrier to entry into the L5R Community is jargon. Just like any social construct, the global community of L5R players has developed a lingo all its own. One of the best resources I've found to help players decipher some of these terms is a Google Doc entitled "[L5R Vocabulary](#)". As a player of earlier editions, it was extremely useful for me when I returned to the game in the Emperor Arc, as it defined acronyms and nicknames that I kept running into on forums and other community sites.

For those that really want to keep up to date with L5R as a game, there are several news sources. While known to many veteran players, new comers to Rokugan may not have found these resources yet, leaving them out of the loop. On the "official" front, the [L5R Facebook page](#) and the [L5R Twitter feed](#) remain two great sources for information from the L5R brand. As the game grows, we plan on sharing information through these

social media channels. Make sure you have "liked" and are "following" us to keep up with all the latest news!

On the other hand, there are also some great fan resources that shouldn't be overlooked. The [Strange Assembly Podcast](#), at is one of the best and longest running sources for commentary on L5R and their interviews with members of the L5R Staff are vital to the community as a whole. Also entering the podcast arena is the [Kolath Informant](#), which has begun a radio program, called the Oni's Eye, focusing on all things L5R.

The internet is a big place and I couldn't begin to list every site that discusses L5R, but these resources will provide a new player with several options to get information on the game and hopefully draw him into this world of Samurai and Shugenja that we all love!

Ninja - Legend of the Scorpion Clan

By Mason Mangrum

In October 2011, the hype for Emperor Edition was great, but it's possible that you might have missed a little gem of a game also released by AEG called [Ninja: Legend of the Scorpion Clan](#). This game of hidden movement focuses more on strategy, planning and reading your opponent than do most games. As the game unfolds, you'll unconsciously hold your breath as the patrol passes your hidden traitor. You'll catch yourself triangulating the ninja's position from your two carefully placed sentries. And most importantly, you'll have fun while you do it.

Ninja: Legend of the Scorpion Clan, is a 2-4 player turn-based hidden movement game that centers around the Scorpion Clan sneaking into a Lion Clan stronghold. One player or two players control the Ninja and the Traitor. They are to infiltrate a Lion stronghold, accomplish their mission and get out before they either fall to the Lion's blade or 20 turns pass. The Lion player or players must locate and kill the Ninja and Traitor, or keep the Scorpion from accomplishing their mission until time runs out. The Scorpion characters are hidden, using a mini map to track movement, and they choose a handful of cards that allows them to move over walls, into secret passages and attack the guards. The Lion can only find them by listening or moving into their space, actions accomplished by playing cards from their hand. They are able to draw cards as the Scorpion clan takes actions and makes their presence known. It's a simple game that hides an in-depth experience. Though you'll develop strategies and learn new things each time you play, here are a few basic tips and strategies that will help you if you are just beginning your journey into *Ninja*.

As the Scorpion Clan player, your goal is to infiltrate the Lion Clan compound, complete your objectives, and get out alive. You'll accomplish this by using stealth, trickery, and various tools at your disposal. You control two characters—the Ninja and the Traitor. They play similarly, but each has different strengths. The Ninja focuses more on stealthy movement and quiet assassination. The Traitor is more about manipulation of the Lion Clan's guards. You will be using both independently, and as a team, in order to complete your objectives before time runs out.

As the Lion Clan player, your goal is to prevent the Scorpion Clan intruders from completing their mission, either by killing them or holding them off until dawn. It sounds simple, but this is by no means an easy task. The intruders will intoxicate one sentry, kill another and in the end, all you will hear is a cat. Positioning is key, and you'll need good intuition as well.

For both sides, making good notes on your personal map is key. Make notes about everything that can help you. This goes beyond just where you've been or what areas you've searched. Make a note of when you played a "Listen" card, heard something and how far away it was. Make a note for every guard that comes out of his barracks. Make note of every ending position where you didn't find a secret passage. Not only will good notes allow you to resolve possible conflicts about who was where and who should have heard what, but it also allows you to be able to replay certain situations and figure



out better solutions after the fact. Encourage your opponent to take good notes as well.

Playing as the Scorpion intruders, you'll get to choose a handful of cards that will help you either deal with guards and obstacles, or avoid being spotted. The Ninja and Traitor will have options available to them like Rope, Shuriken, Potent Sake and so on. These cards will define your style of play. While it might seem beneficial to have a wide variety of options available to you, it might actually be more helpful to center your strategy around one, particular strength. For instance, picking all Shuriken and Kenjutsu as your Ninja and Potent Sake and Kenjutsu as your Traitor allows you a very formidable "Smash-and-Grab" approach. On the other hand, picking Shadow Walk, Rope and Secret Passage with your Ninja, and Rope, "Cats", and Secret Passage for your Traitor allows you to play a very manoeuvrable, stealthy game.

Playing as the guards, your cards are what allow you to do your job. It's best to pick a solid variety of Search, Listen, Kenjutsu and Awaken cards, although finding the secret passage can also benefit you as well. The key is to not use your cards until they're needed. Remember, you have the ability make a free Sentry Listen action if you didn't play any cards during your turn, so learn to use this until the intruders have tipped their hand. A lucky guess with a free Listen can earn you the cards you'll need later in the game.

Also, keep in mind the state of the game. Much like the CCG, knowing what cards a person has played and how many cards he has in his hand will allow you to make better decisions regarding what actions to take. For instance, if you notice that the Lion Clan player has taken a lot of actions with his patrols and has four cards left in his hand, it's a safe assumption that he's very unlikely to be able to take more actions with his patrols.

Very much like an actual ninja, misdirection is a major advantage for the Scorpion player, the Traitor, having "It Was

A Cat" gives you the ability to potentially confuse your opponent. Though it's best to use it to cover your own movement from a nearby patrol, playing it as a response to a Listen can make your opponent waste cards desperately looking for your Ninja who might be on the other side of the map. Similarly, both the Ninja and the Traitor can use Rope in apparently useless areas to make the other player believe they have gone over a wall. Another advanced tactic is having your Traitor in open view of a isolated, drunk Guard. This can make your opponent scramble to pull sentries and patrols to pursue him. You are free to climb over a wall or duck into a secret passage and avoid any conflict safely.

As the Scorpion player, you can play the game conservatively, minimizing the enemy's chances of finding or hearing you. However, you are often pressed for time, and as you search for the Objectives, your opponent will start to get a good idea of where you are. At this point, you'll need to act quickly before your opponent has a chance to corner you. Therefore, do your best to cover as much ground as possible early in the game. Even if you die, as long as it's before Turn 11 you still have a chance to win, possibly with a whole new objective whose location you know, preventing the opponent from sitting on a unsearched zone. In fact, though the advantage it gives your opponents is great, death is sometimes a good way to 'reset' a bad situation.

As the Lion Clan player you have a few tricks of your own. At the start of your turn, you can play two Awakens from the same building and move the guards on a patrol track, creating a patrol in an area that might have seemed like a gap in your defences. You can do this for the first two turns, when it's more likely that your opponent will be trying to dodge around your patrols, making it more difficult to deal with sheer number of Guards on the table.

As the Lion player you also hold an advantage over your opponent in knowing where all the Traps, Hidden Sentries and Objectives are. Though three Objectives must be placed in both Castles, Traps and Hidden Sentries may be placed in any area in any Castle. Therefore, you can have all of them in a high traffic area and hope your opponent is unlucky enough to stumble onto multiple ones and not have an answer for them. Also, later in the game, if the intruders have not completed their Objectives, you can place Patrol on a few unsearched spots in order to prevent them from completing it, or to lead them unto the Hidden Sentry they've yet to find.

This barely scratches the surface of the level of complex strategy you can find in this deceptively simple game. Each time you play, it's entirely possible to learn something new, and quite often what will work for you one game might work against you in another. It's definitely something you need to try for yourself, if you haven't!

Family Matters

By Shawn Carman

Sometimes, the most difficult relationships are those bound by blood. Shawn Carman shows us how true this is in a tale of the Kakita family of the Crane Crane.

During most of the year, Tsuma was a quiet little village with very little in the way of attractions to outsiders. Its only truly remarkable feature was the large dojo of the Kakita Bushi School found there, one of the largest in all the Crane lands. During the spring season, this meant that it was home to the Topaz Championship, the most illustrious and ostentatious gempukku ceremony in all of Rokugan. During the weeks that surrounded the championship, hundreds or even thousands of people from all across the Empire flocked to Tsuma. Businesses opened and made their earnings for the year in a matter of days. It was utterly chaotic, and then, when it was over, the entire town seemed to vanish. Shops closed, not to open their doors again for nearly a year. In an instant, the thriving hub of commerce and ceremony was reduced to a silent, strangely empty monument to the success of the Crane Clan.

Kakita Mitohime had always preferred it during the empty months. The young samurai-ko had trained at the Tsuma dojo only a few years ago, but it seemed much longer. At the time, she had not understood that her presence there was so controversial; little more than a child when she began her training, she was blissfully unaware of her mother's disgrace and how that stain had clung to her as well. She had learned quickly; the barbs of her fellow students were an excellent source of instruction. The punishments of her sensei when she responded to those barbs with violence were even more educational. She had wondered why she was ever admitted to Tsuma, but it was until at least a year afterwards that she discovered her mother still had some friends who wished to see Kakita Korihome's daughter elevated from her shameful circumstance of birth. If they had hoped attending the dojo at Tsuma might accomplish that, surely they had been grossly disappointed.

Mitohime had not returned to the dojo in nearly a year, not since she had completed the mastery tasks for her most recent technique. The sensei were largely indifferent to her when she arrived, although they did often bring younger students in to watch her perform. It was a safe thing to do, she imagined. Either she would do well and they could tell the students to emulate the nameless kinsman they had seen, or she would fail and they would identify her to them and caution them against the burden of dishonor. It was a constant effort on Mitohime's part to never betray how much she hated them.

The serving girl appeared and, with a smile, wordlessly refilled her cup of steaming hot tea. Mitohime nodded absently in her direction and the girl withdrew, revealing a flash of red as she turned, a simple cloth tucked into her obi to use as necessary to handle hot items being serve. Mitohime's eyes were drawn to it at once, and it reminded her suddenly of something from her childhood, something she had forgotten long ago...

* * * * *

Her mother reached down angrily and pulled away the red cloth that little Mitohime had wrapped around her head. "Mama!" the little girl screeched. "Mama, I want it!"

"Where did you get this?" Korihome demanded. "You should not have it!"

"Found it!" Mitohime wailed. "Play!"

"This is not for playing," her mother scolded. "This is... this is..." her voice trailed off, and her lip quivered ever so slightly. "I should not have kept this," she said softly, as if to herself. "It was a mistake."

"What is it, Mama?" the child asked, noticing the change in her mother.

"Something I wanted to remember," Korihome said. "But I was keeping it for the wrong reasons. It must be destroyed."

"No! Pretty!"

Korihome knelt down and looked into her daughter's eyes. "Look at this closely, little flower," she said softly. "This is a Scorpion's mask. You must never trust a Scorpion, not for any reason. They take things from you and hurt you, and they are our enemies."

Mitohime frowned. "Did a scrop'un hurt you, Mama?"

Korihome brushed a lock of hair from her daughter's face. "Yes, darling. Yes, one did."

* * * * *

Mitohime had not thought of the incident with the mask in perhaps ten years, and it was a sharp, biting memory to leap unbidden into the forefront of her mind. She blinked it away, her eyes stinging, and she returned her attention to the matter before her. She was using what pitiful few coins she had remaining on the least expensive tea the house had to offer, and still it was leaving her with nothing. She had expended what meager funds she had to her name with her other efforts in the



city, first in securing a room in this particular, ridiculously expensive inn, and the rest in hiring... well, that was for later. The tea was piping hot and incredibly flavorful. She understood, at least, how they could charge so much. She could not imagine what the more expensive blends must taste like.

There was another guest across the large room, one attended by many servants and the owner of the tea house. The man was strikingly handsome and was dressed in attire that, Mitohime was sure, cost more than she had ever seen in her lifetime. His bearing suggested not only wealth but station, although he did not see overbearing by his actions. He smiled graciously even to the lowest serving girl, causing her to blush uncontrollably. Normally such display would disgust her, but even Mitohime could not deny how utterly genuine the man seemed. She knew him, of course. She was, in fact, sworn to serve him above all others save for the Crane Clan Champion and the Empress herself. He was Kakita Ikaru, daimyo of the Kakita family, lord of all he surveyed in this city and this province.

His gaze crossed her on occasion as she sat and sipped her tea. Her saw her, of course. He saw everything. Mitohime did not think that he knew her name, but it was possible. If someone had asked her if she believed the Crane Champion would know her name, she would never have said so, but only a few years prior that had proven to be the case. Might the Kakita lord know her as well? Possibly, but it seemed more likely that his affairs in court would occupy his attention. Her eyes glanced down to the wakizashi that he bore on his hip. She could see that the stories were true: it was bound to its saya with iron links like those of a chain. The stories held that some prophecy or curse of some sort indicated the Kakita would fall to ruin if their lord ever drew his blade. Mitohime was not certain that she believed in such things, but she hard heard the man had training by the Togashi, and she doubted he was defenseless. Still, she respected him for his dedication; the thought of drawing his blade would apparently not even cross his mind, so great was his dedication to his family's well-being.

Mitohime placed the last of her coins on the table and took up her things. She bowed once in the daimyo's general direction. He seemed to nod back, but it could have merely been the light of the lantern blowing in the wind as the door opened. It was time for her to retire to her chambers before she became any more philosophical than she already was.

* * * * *

The Obsidian Moon was a mere crescent high in the night sky, but Mitohime had not yet slept. It was the fifth night she had waited in the darkness, listening intently for any sound that seemed ill at odds with her surroundings. This was the last chance she would have. After tonight, there would be no more coins to pay the woman she had hired. There would be no coins to purchase a room at this ridiculously overpriced but admittedly very comfortable inn. There would not even be coins to pay for the tea she had come to appreciate so much. There would be nothing. And if the thing she had been waiting for did not happen tonight, she would have nothing to show for all her effort. Then she would have no choice but to simply return to her mother's house and wait. It was a death sentence, but there would be no other choice.

There was a gentle rustling sound, like cloth against cloth, but it was out of place. No one who was sleeping would ever hear it, but Mitohime was not sleeping, and she was keenly aware of what might be taking place in the corridor just a few inches away from where she waited, exhausted. She waited, every muscle tensed, at once hoping and fearing that the moment she had been waiting for had arrived at last. There was the tiniest creak from just outside her door, just from the point where she had carefully modified the floor to ensure that it would make just such a sound, and then she struck.

Mitohime threw the sliding door open and lunged in one fluid movement, striking out with the pommel of her blade with all her force. It struck home and someone was sent sprawling across the hallway. To his credit, he did not lose his footing, nor did he lose his grip on his weapon, and he recovered almost instantly. "You!" he hissed.

"Me," she said quietly. She was surprised at how weary her own voice sounded.

"Stand aside!" he demanded. "I will not forfeit my uncle's vengeance!"

"No," she replied.

His blade glinted in the dim light of the hooded lantern. "I have no wish to spill my family's blood," he said. "Do not force me to test my resolve."

She nodded and lowered her blade slightly. "I do not have the same compunction," she whispered, and she struck.

The man fell dead on the floor.

There was shouting from elsewhere in the inn, but Mitohime's head swam, and she collapsed.

* * * * *

Dawn was several hours away yet, but it seemed that the entire staff was already awake and catering to the needs of the Kakita daimyo and his entourage. Mitohime sat at one of the tables, feeling altogether numb. One of the serving girls had draped a blanket over her shoulders, but she did not remember that. Another of them, or perhaps the same one, had given her a cup of hot tea. It was probably even better than the one she had enjoyed earlier in the evening, but she could not tell right now. Even her tongue was numb.

Someone sat down across from her. After a moment, she looked up at the person blankly before she finally realized that it was Kakita Ikaru. Dully, she realized that even his simple night clothing was fantastic. "My lord," she said. Her mouth felt as if she had not drunk anything in weeks.

"One of my people told me your name," Ikaru said thoughtfully. "I have heard it before, but not recently. Tell me about yourself."

Mitohime thought for a moment, but could think of nothing significant to say. "I am Kakita Korihome's daughter," she said finally.

"Ah," Ikaru replied. "That tells me much." He gestured toward the upper floor. "My hatamoto is concerned that the assassin intended to kill me. He assures me that, somehow, I owe you my life. Would you agree?"

She thought about it for some time. "No," she finally said. "He was not here for you."

Ikaru shrugged. "I did not think so. It seemed wrong, somehow. But you do know why he was here, don't you?"

"I do," she said with a nod.

"This is not the most rewarding conversation I have had," Ikaru said, allowing just a hint of exasperation to his tone. "Would you care to explain?" It was phrased as a question, but it clearly was not.

"That man is... was... my cousin. The nephew of my father. He discovered a truth that I only found out a relatively short time ago, which is that my mother killed my father to prevent him from taking me to the Scorpion to be raised. He considered it an unacceptable shame on his family's honor. His intention was to kill my mother and I... I could not allow that."

"Of course," Ikaru said. "Why would he think your mother was here?"

She shrugged. "I have spent everything I have spreading the rumor that Korihome is here, and hired an actress to impersonate her. It was not a reasonable ruse, but a man seething with a lifetime of rage and intending to fulfill his family's debt of honor is not a reasonable man."

Ikaru nodded. "And now?"

Mitohime shrugged again. "I have nothing left. I will return to dwell with my mother at her estate. I have few other options available."

The Kakita daimyo reclined for a moment. "I find that I require an additional yojimbo to ensure that nothing of this nature happens again. I assume you are available?"

Mitohime blinked. "Yes, my lord."

"Very good," Ikaru rose. "I will see to the arrangements. Be ready by dawn?"

"Of course, my lord."

Oh My Odds!

By Ariel Alvarez

Having a basic understanding of concepts like Opportunity Cost and how to determine the probability of drawing particular cards can be of enormous help when building your deck for Legend of the Five Rings.

Despite what you may think, this article is not about math, but about deck-building. Probability is a major deck-building concept that many people overlook, but it's important to have at least a basic understanding of it. After all, you are drawing cards randomly from a deck; that's all about probability! So, whether an experienced player or a new one, if you don't know how odds affect your game of Legend of the Five Rings, or would like to learn more, then read on!

Let's start with the Fate deck. In the Fate deck, we have three basic types of cards--Strategies, Rings, and attachments, which include Followers, Items and Spells. We can further divide these into Unique cards and Non-Unique cards. Unique cards tend to be powerful, but from a probability point of view, they have issues—after all, it's harder to get that Unique card into your hand when you need it.

Attachments are permanent effects that typically offer you extra Force (and sometimes Chi, Personal Honor, Gold Cost and the like), Actions and protection for your Personalities from many of your opponent's actions. On the other hand, they usually offer no surprise effect against your opponent, since he can see what they can do once they enter in play, and they also usually cost Gold. Strategies are generally one-shot effects that normally don't cost Gold, but often involve other costs, such as Bowing a card. So, here we face a choice—do I include a certain Strategy instead of a certain Attachment, or the other way around? This presents what is called an Opportunity Cost. This results when you have to choose between several options that are mutually exclusive; in this case, cards that you want to include in your deck, but you don't have room for all of them if you want to keep your Fate deck close to 40 cards in size.

And, generally, you want exactly that—40 cards in your Fate Deck. This is because the fewer cards your deck contains, the greater is the chance to draw any particular card. In L5R, you usually want to have the maximum limit of three copies of each non-Unique card, again to maximize your chances of seeing at least one of a particular card when you draw. That said, some players employ a “tool box” approach, which uses sets of two or even only one of a Non-Unique card in the Fate deck. This gives them more options, because their deck contains a wider range of cards, so the deck can better adapt to playing against a wider range of opposing decks. The trade-off, of course, is a reduced chance of seeing any particular card, unless you employ one or more of the methods described below to draw more cards and/or draw cards more quickly. Unless you are an experienced player, however, I suggest you avoid the "tool box" approach until you have a better feel for the game and your deck. My advice for a new players is to start with sets of three copies of each Non-Unique card you've chosen to use in your Fate deck.

Now, we come to meat of the matter—digging into the deck for those precious cards we desperately need. In Emperor Edition, we start the game drawing six cards from our Fate deck, so we will see six cards of 40 (abbreviated to 6/40) in our opening Fate hand. This gives us about a 15% chance to get one of the cards we need in the case of Unique cards or sets of one card, about a 26% chance for one of set of two cards, and about a 34% chance for one of a set of three cards. Microsoft Excel contains a handy function, called [HYPGEOMDIST](#), which allows you to quickly calculate these odds. For example, let's say I'm worried about a blitz deck attacking me, so I'd like to

know my odds of drawing a particular "Absent Battle" Strategy I've included in my deck. It's Non-Unique, and I've included a full set of three in my 40-card Fate deck. Assuming I'm drawing six cards in my opening hand, I can plug these numbers into the Excel function as `=HYPGEOMDIST(1,6,3,40)` giving a result of 0.34, which means a 34% chance of getting that vital defensive card in my opening hand. Now, let's say I'm really worried about blitz, and want to know how likely I am to get two copies of this card in my hand. HYPGEOMDIST tells me I now only have a 5% of that. If blitz worries me that much, then I could include a second, suitable, Non-Unique "Absent Battle" Strategy, which changes the third parameter of HYPGEOMDIST to 6. Now my odds of drawing two copies of either of these defensive Strategies into my opening hand has increased to 18%. That's a lot better than 5%!

We're obviously now at the point of making choices. Do I include more cards in my deck of a type I want to see quickly, as above? Do I use up some of my precious Gold to cycle a Kharmic card? Do I find other ways to draw cards more quickly, such as trying to make use of the Imperial Favor's Limited action, or attempting to get the Ring of Void into play? These are some of the choices you'll face when building your deck, and during the game. Just keep in mind that every time you draw a card—no matter how your draw it—you reduce the total number of cards left in your deck, thereby increasing the probability you'll to draw a particular card the next time you draw. This is often called "deck thinning" and is something experienced players look for every opportunity to do. To thin your deck like this, you have a number of options in L5R—Card Draw, Card Cycle, Fate Manipulation, Fate Recovery and Fate Search.

Card Draw and Card Cycle are self-explanatory. With Card Draw, you get one card to add to your hand. This is what happens in the End Phase of your turn, every turn. With Card Cycle, you add one card to your hand, and then immediately discard a card (or vice-versa). Again, the Limited action of the Imperial Favor is an example of this. The odds associated with drawing a particular card when you're Cycling are the same as when you're Drawing.

Fate Manipulation is a little more complicated. This allows you to increase your chances of getting a particular card by allowing you to rearrange your Fate deck. For example, the Ivory Edition Phoenix Clan Stronghold *The Eternal Temple of the Phoenix* allows you to look at the top 3 cards of your Fate deck as a Limited action, draw one of them into your hand if it's a Spell or Kiho Strategy, replace the rest in their original order, then discard a card if you went first (meaning it's Card Cycle if you went first, and Card Draw if you went second). By drawing that one card, you can ensure that you will see the other two more quickly. Another form of Fate Manipulation allows you to look at some cards from the top of your Fate deck and send some of them to the bottom of your deck. *Rokkaku, Master of Scrolls* is an example of this. You're unlikely to see cards sent to the

bottom of your Fate deck again during the game, which means you've "virtually" thinned your deck by the number of cards sent to the bottom. Of course, this also means you are reducing the chances of getting those cards drawn again, unless you are able to use an effect that allows you to draw from the bottom of your deck, or shuffles it. Including such effects in your deck are, of course, another choice, with their own Opportunity Costs.

Fate Recovery, also known as Fate Recursion, depends on having a particular card in your Discard pile, so that it can be retrieved and put back into play. This is a conditional effect that only works if you have already played the desired card and put it into your Discard pile. The recovered cards are “virtual” copies of the cards already played. An example of this is the weapon *Gumbai-Uchiwa* (previewed elsewhere in this copy of the Imperial Herald). This may seem like having 4, or even more copies of a certain card in your deck, but this isn't quite true, because until you actually get the card you want to Recover into your Discard Pile, the associated Fate Recovery effect is effectively "blank" (*Gumbai-Uchiwa* recovers itself, avoiding this problem, as do cards with the new Discipline keyword). The good thing about many Fate Recovery cards is that they tend to work for several cards, not for just one. For example, *Claiming the Ruins* allows you to put any non-Unique Item in your Discard Pile into your Hand.

Finally, we have the Fate Search option, which allows you to simply hunt through your Fate deck (and sometimes your Discard Pile, too) for a card you want. Cards like *Asahina Kitaru Experienced* and *Dark Audience* are examples of this. Searching for cards is like breaking the rules, because the only odds you care about are those that allow you to get that Fate Search card that, in turn, allows you to dive into your Fate deck. Searching for cards generally works against Fate Manipulation, because it usually requires your deck to be shuffled afterward. However, it does help improve the odds for drawing particular cards after the second variant of Fate Manipulation—putting cards on the bottom of your deck—since it shuffles those cards sent to the bottom of the deck back into a random distribution.

So, mindful of all the above, what do I do? Do I use one of these methods to draw more cards, and/or draw them more quickly, from my Fate deck? Many of them will require me to spend Gold, use Actions, Bow cards or some combination thereof; moreover, including these effects will themselves use up precious card slots in my Fate and Dynasty decks—all Opportunity Costs.

The Fortunes may sometimes smile on mortals, but the Fortunes also favor the prepared mind—and L5R player. Now you know how to draw cards from you Fate Deck, how to calculate the odds to draw any particular one, how every card you draw affects your odds and how to manipulate them all. Knowledge is power. Use it responsibly, or fall into darkness.



The Gamer Spotlight

The Gamer Spotlight is a new feature on the AEG website, intending to showcase game groups and the people who run and participate in them. All of these groups are dedicated to having fun with AEG's various games; we also know that some do more, gathering to help their members in difficult times, contribute to their communities and raise money for good causes.

If you'd like to feature your gaming group, please email the article to jgoodenough@alderac.com with the subject as "Gamer Spotlight." Be sure to include something unique about yourself and the group that you want the world to know. Also include a picture or two that you'd like to be used in the Gamer Spotlight. In the meantime, visit the site and check out the groups already featured there!

Tim Anderson, battling cancer, has received over \$4600 from generous members of the L5R community to date.



An L5R Retrospective - Alternate Win conditions

By Mason Mangrum

Most players plan to win games of L5R through Military, Honor, Dishonor, or even Enlightenment victories. The game, however, has seen a number of alternate ways to win. Mason Mangrum takes us on a tour through some of these unusual paths to victory.

Near the end of Celestial Edition, I had spent nearly a month designing and putting together a deck that would dominate my local tournament scene. It would be a deck to which no one had an answer, one that my opponent wouldn't be able to see coming until it was too late. I waited with anticipation as each card I needed arrived in the mail, before the capstone of the deck finally arrived—the card *Yoritomo Ascends*.

It was a strange deck, depending on a number of recently-released cards to create small samurai personalities during the game. It also required a number of promotional and otherwise unconventional cards. But the look on my friend's face when *Yoritomo Ascends* came up in my last province, and I removed twenty of my highest-Force samurai from the game, was priceless. An almost sure defeat had given away to a victory my opponent hadn't expected. I was my twenty strongest!

Even when I took the deck to a Kotei, knowing full well that I'd be facing more effective decks, it was still an enjoyable experience. Even if the match was going totally against me, I knew that I was playing outside the normal boundaries of the game. When *Yoritomo Ascends* came up in my province, it was met with a mixture of surprise, confusion, occasionally fear and inevitably amusement by my opponent. Even though I walked out that night with a 1-5 win-loss record, I actually received more compliments and praise than the winner did!

Alternate Win Conditions are a rather strange beast in Legend of the Five Rings. L5R already has more win "standard" win conditions than your typical collectible card game—Military, Honor, Dishonor, and Enlightenment. Adding other ways to achieve victory would seem to be both complicated and redundant. Attempting to achieve these unusual victory conditions—which are normally based on Events—will definitely challenge your deck building skills. But when built correctly, decks that exploit these Alternate Win Conditions allow you to play decks that are unique, often using Personalities and combinations of cards that normally wouldn't see play. Moreover, even if they aren't terribly competitive, they are always hugely satisfying when they work out.

Yoritomo Ascends wasn't the only card ever printed with an Alternate Win Condition in L5R. Earlier in Celestial Edition was *Claiming the Throne*. This Event specified that if your turn ended and during that turn you: destroyed a Province in battle resolution; put two Rings into play by their own text; gained seven or more Honor during that turn; discarded the Imperial Favor; and paid 10 gold, you won the game. That might seem incredibly difficult, and for the most part it was, as only a handful of decks could pull it off at all.

More recently, we've seen *An Empire of Madness*, a card that states that if a player has 20 or more Madness Tokens on

his Personalities at any time, he immediately loses the game. At the time of writing this, a new Alternate Win Condition has just been revealed for Ivory Edition, the Event *Political Standoff*. By starting his turn with 50 Influence Tokens—tokens gained by gaining Honor, or causing his opponent to lose Honor—a player can win the game. *Political Standoff* may be intended more as a way to break the stalemate that often results between an opposing Honor deck and Dishonor deck than, strictly speaking, an Alternate Win Condition like the other discussed here, but it is still an alternative way to win the game.

Alternate Win Conditions go farther back in the game's history, however. In the Imperial Edition Arc, there was *The Darkest Magics*, which stated that if you have either seven of the Black Scrolls (a particular category of Spell) attached to your personalities, or have used an action from all twelve of the Black Scrolls then in existence, you won the game. This is not only great for flavor, but some of the Black Scrolls were pretty powerful cards in their own right. This allowed you to not depend entirely on one win condition, but gave you several options for winning. For example, one of the Black Scrolls, *The Wasting Disease*, allowed you to hand out -2C tokens to your opponent's personalities, making it a potentially powerful, reusable kill action, while *The Black Wind from the Soul* allowed you to destroy one of your opponent's Provinces. This gave you an opportunity for, say, a Military victory as well as the Alternate Win Condition from *The Darkest Magics*. *The Darkest Magics* still represents a powerful Alternate Win Condition in the Legacy format of L5R.

Another card from the Imperial Edition Arc offering an Alternate Win Condition was *The 38th Hantei Falls*. This event allowed you to win if you had all four of the Fortification cards titled the *Walls of Ootosan-Uchi* in play. Unlike the various Alternate Wins described above, though, which create an ongoing victory condition that applies for the rest of the game, *The 38th Hantei Falls* requires that the various *Walls of Ootosan-Uchi* cards be in play when the Event resolves. This required a lot of luck and strategies to postpone or recycle the Event to even have a hope of pulling it off. However, the card-base has expanded greatly since then, adding the experienced *Walls of Ootosan-Uchi* gives you more opportunities to reveal the Fortifications. *The 38th Hantei Falls* would definitely be interesting for use in the Legacy Format.

The Master of Five offers another Alternate Win Condition that actually gives you two new paths to victory. The first is controlling five Oracles with different Elemental keywords when this card comes into play. This can be difficult, much like *The 38th Hantei Falls*. However, the other option is to play Actions from cards that have all five Elemental keywords in one turn before the game ends. That is a much easier Alternate Win Condition to achieve—too easy, perhaps, when *The Master of*

Five is combined with personalities like *Naka Tokei Experienced 2*, *Naka Mahatsu Experienced* and *Asahina Sekawa Experienced 3*, which have all five Elemental Keywords. A single action from one of these was all that was needed for victory, a good indicator as to why *The Master of Five* isn't legal in Legacy Format.

One of my personal favorite Alternate Win Conditions will always be the one offered by *Bushido*. A Diamond Edition Promotional card, it offered an apparently simply Alternate Win. Any time you played a Strategy with the Bushido Virtue Keyword entitled *Compassion*, *Courage*, *Courtesy*, *Duty*, *Honor*, *Honesty*, or *Sincerity*, you drew a card; this alone made it worth playing in a deck that used Bushido Virtues. However, if you happened to play all seven Bushido Virtues in a single turn, you won the game. This was more difficult than it seemed, however. *Duty* required an opponent to kill one of your personalities before you could use the reaction, and *Courtesy* and *Sincerity* could help your opponent more than it could help you. Much like a real Samurai, the path of Bushido often required personal sacrifice. Was it difficult? Yes. Risky? Very. Satisfying? Unbelievably so.

Strange Assembly was interesting in that it didn't provide you with an alternate way to win, but made a standard win condition better. Normally, starting your turn with the Honor required to win gave you an Honor victory. This promotional Diamond Edition Event stated, however, that if you were able to win an Honor victory, and your honor was 8 or more over the amount required to win such a victory, you won immediately. *Strange Assembly* meant that even if your opponent was had more than enough force to take your final Provinces, gaining that addition eight Honor meant that there was little he could do to stop your win.

Death of Onnotangu was an Alternate Win Condition that exemplified the games focus on storytelling. By attaching *Lord Moon's Blood*, *Lord Moon's Bones* and *The Obsidian Hand* to any version of *Mirumoto Hitomi* you won the game. Players who knew of Mirumoto Hitomi's descent into madness, followed by her challenging, defeating and replacing Onnotangu, Lord Moon, understood why the *Death of Onnotangu* was such a powerful event in Rokugan's history. Players who didn't know the story behind the card would often want to learn more about Hitomi and her story, and why this particular combination of cards would allow you to win.

Though not strictly an Alternate Win Condition, *Doom of the Dark Lord* deserves a special mention. This Event caused every player to draw an additional card during their End phase. However, if you were ever required to draw a card but had none in your Fate deck, you lost your rightmost province. This could easily end your game as a military loss. This made decks with good card draw riskier to play and cards that forced your



Ivory Edition Retailer Promotion

For fans of the Legend of the Five Rings CCG there is little that is more exciting than a new base set being published. Ivory Edition, the latest such set in the history of the game, is sure to bring exciting new ways to play the game, even after close to twenty years of expansions. AEG want's to make sure that every person interested in playing L5R can pick up the game at their "Friendly Local Game Store." With this in mind, we've decided to offer an amazing deal to give stores incentive to carry Legend of the Five Rings, beginning with Ivory Edition.

There are thousands of stores in the United States that could carry the L5R CCG. Naturally, we want to reach as many of those stores as we can. If you know of a store that should be carrying the L5R CCG, send them this link, <http://www.alderac.com/store-locator/>, have them complete the form, and we'll have someone contact them. The long story short is that your store can stock every Ivory Edition product, right out of the gate, for less than \$400. Oh, and did we mention that unsold product is 100% returnable? Yes, it's that good of a deal! Ivory Edition is going to mean big things for L5R, and we look forward to having you and your friends be part of the excitement!

Aftermath - A Draft Analysis

By Bryan Reese

Bryan Reese, Lead Designer for the CCG, offers his thoughts and some things to consider when drafting the latest expansion for Legend of the Five Rings, Aftermath.

Having drafted Aftermath several times now under Ivory Edition rules, both with a Gates of Chaos mix and without, I have found the following to be true (in no particular order).

- There are not many Holdings in Aftermath, so pick them up whenever you can. This includes Personalities who produce Gold, such as [Yoritomo Yashinko](#), even if out of clan. A solid economy is key to victory. This is doubly true if going for an Honor victory, as you will need 4 Gold to fuel your Stronghold ability. I would say my first pick over any other card in Aftermath is [Yoritomo Yashinko](#), with [Nexus of Lies](#) being a close second (and it will be rare you have to make that choice). The reason I argue for Yashinko is that, if going first, a Turn 1 Yashinko (assuming out of clan), leaves you with 5 Gold, which is a good number for buying Personalities. However, if you are going an Honor route, even Crane or Mantis Honor, I would pick Nexus first, as it gives you the 4 Gold you need for your Stronghold ability.



that costs Gold. Aftermath has a lot of good cards that cost Gold. It is very easy, and certainly I fell into this trap, to pick them up and add them to your deck gleefully. However, unless you got an incredibly lucky gold scheme, you likely will be left with too many cards in your hand that cost Gold, and not enough ways to make that Gold.

- [Dying Remonstrance](#) is a very good pick. Honor is a strong choice in Aftermath and causing them a 2-3 point loss from [Dying Remonstrance](#) could very well buy you a turn. And it is a 4 Focus Value card, making it very powerful for your Stronghold's ability.

- Shugenja have some really strong options, especially when mixing Gates of Chaos and Aftermath. [The Wind's Champion](#) is a very powerful Spell, often times able to get a 5 Force samurai out of the deal. There are some incredibly powerful Rare cards if you get lucky, such as [Sailor's Warning](#), [Searing Siege](#), [Blistering Rain](#), [Yojimbo of Earth](#), and even [Hitomi's Devotion](#). If you are doing a Gates of Chaos mix, it adds in [Steal the Candle's Flame](#) as a Common, which is incredibly potent. It also adds [Focus on the Flame](#) and [Kiyoshi's Wrath](#), two more strong Rare cards. The hidden strength of shugenja and Spells, though, is that often times, depending on the size



of your drafting pod, you can expect these powerful cards to wheel, making it all the way around back to you. In one pack, for example, I was able to pick up a powerful Common, and [The Wind's Champion](#) wheeled back around to me. This is a benefit that you get as a someone playing Spells in Draft that most other strategies don't get.

- Be careful of those Personalities that cause an Honor loss, especially if combining Gates of Chaos and Aftermath. [Nexus of Lies](#) will turn all of those Fallen, Fudo, and Yodotai cards, among others, into 5 and 6 point losses. You should be able to handle a couple of these losses, but not many.

- There are a LOT of good Strategies in this set. This may seem like a no-brainer type of statement, but it is not the same as Gates of Chaos, where there were a few, key Strategies worthy of attention. Aftermath has a plethora of Battle actions, so if your opponent has six cards in his hand, you can expect that, after his Stronghold use, at least 4-5 of those will be relevant to winning the battle. I wouldn't expect more than 1, maybe 2 "dead" cards in his hand. Keep this in mind as you decide whether to attack or defend.

- Because of this last fact, people seem to generally be playing fewer Attachments than normal. Often times in Draft you use attachments to fill in your deck after you run out of good Battle actions. But with the Stronghold ability, a good number of Battle actions, and fewer Holdings in the set, people seem to

be playing fewer attachments. As such, don't overload your deck with attachment meta. In sets past, there was no such thing as too much attachment meta. But in Aftermath, it is a real danger.

- [Unholy Strike](#) is good, but needs help. With a lot of 3-4 Force cards around, I often found that [Unholy Strike](#) had no legal target. Make sure you get some good Force penalties to set it up, or other Ranged/Melee Attacks, in order to make your [Unholy Strikes](#) more potent. [Strategic Withdrawal](#) is a good, if underestimated combination to go with [Unholy Strike](#). In most battles, your opponent will use their Stronghold or some other card to neutralize one of your Personalities. Send that Personality home with [Strategic Withdrawal](#) and hand out a 3 Force penalty, setting up your [Unholy Strike](#) to kill. Or, even just retreat with it and save a Province. [Strategic Withdrawal](#) is a very versatile card.



- Pay attention to your Focus Values. Playing with some weaker or more situational 4 Focus Value cards is perfectly fine. Cards like [Dying Remonstrance](#), [Respect](#), [Absolution](#), and [Reverse Fate](#) are all good cards to have. I wouldn't suggest having more than four cards in your deck that are blank 4 Focus Values, but try to keep your other Focus Values up as well. It is easy to play with all the good cards you can get your mitts on, and then find yourself with an ineffectual Stronghold.

- Pay attention to the Single-Bugged, Emperor Edition cards in the set, such as [Chagatai's Wrath](#). This has come up a number of times, especially when drafting Gates of Chaos with Ivory rules. Remember, Single-Bugged cards are not Ivory Edition legal!

Certainly, there is a lot more to drafting with Aftermath for the Ivory Edition environment, but these are some of the things you should be keeping your eye on. Whether you are paying at your "Friendly Local Game Store" (FLGS) or trying to win the Topaz Championships, keep the above in mind to improve your chances of taking home the gold.



In the provinces of the Lion Clan, the peace of the plains is shattered by the appearance of an oni, a monstrosity from the Realm of Evil. Once the beast is defeated, at the cost of many samurai's lives, the Lion's ire turns to the Crab Clan. Are the Crab not the guardians who protect the Empire from such nightmares? Surely such a terrible thing would never have occurred if the Lion had stood guard over the Carpenter Wall. Ill will turns to bold words, and bold words soon turn to bloodshed. With the two greatest armies of the Empire at one another's throats, who will emerge victorious?

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