

## Issue #17

- 1 An Editor's Musings . . .
- 2 Dreams Do Come True
- 3 Luke at Gen Con
- 4 Suicide L5R
- 5 Empire League Season V
- 6 The Gen Con Challenge Booth
- 7 All about Sleeves
- 7 Gen Con 2001 Invitation Policy
- 8 A New Player's View of Gen Con U.K.
- 9 Lion Clan Summary
- 10 Moves Like a Lion (deck)
- 11 Lion/Oni Enlightenment Deck
- 12 Test of the Emerald Champion
- 12 2001 Tournament Schedule
- 13 Top 10s
- 14 Who's Who: The New Faces in L5R
- 15 Zen's Card Focus
- 16 Voices: The Final Days of Oblivion's Gate (fiction)
- 20 News from Court
- 21 Taka's Treasures (Koku redemption)
- 30 L5R on the Web
- 31 Phoenix Clan Summary
- 32 Flaming Chicken 101
- 33 Phoenix Deck
- 34 The Dragon Clan Mountains, Part 2 of 2: A Journey of Trials (RPG scenario)
- 36 The Spirit Wars Card List
- 37 L5R in Sacramento
- 40 Crab Deck
- 41 Winning One for Ryosei (deck)
- 42 FAQs
- 44 Pebbles Roll Downhill (Diskwars review)

# Imperial Herald™





# Legend of the Five Rings

Role-playing Game

## Second Edition Player's Guide

Winter 2000





## An Editor's Musings . . .

The past year has been a busy and change-filled one for Team L5R and for all of you players who have stayed the course. If I didn't know better, I'd say that someone out there had wished for us all to "live in interesting times."

We've changed brand managers this year, completely revamped the design and story team, weathered quite a few storms generated by the L5Rinfo list, run a kick-butt series of tournaments around the world, changed the card backs, and gotten the *Herald* back onto a regular schedule.

That last item may be one of our best achievements this year, at least in terms of doing what we can to keep you, the fan club members, as happy as possible with your investment in the Imperial Assembly™ fan club. Everyone here has put in a lot of time and effort to keep the *Herald* on schedule and share the world of L5R with all of you. I'd like to take a moment to thank the folks who have been instrumental in making the *Herald* great this year.

First the crew at AEG—Dave W., for having the answers to wacky questions at odd times of the day; Ree, for writing great stories, sometimes on very short deadlines; Cris and Carl, for drawing cool clan art bits for each issue; Maureen and Mary, for making sure that things got where they needed to be on time; Ken, for giving us more to do with our *Clan Wars* figs; Z, for having started all of this in the first place; and the rest of the gang, for all of your contributions.

The crew here at Wizards—Andy, for tirelessly tracking art and stuff from archiving and for always having ideas about what else we could do; Monty and Jessica, for taking short deadlines and turning out great work; Mike, Frank,

José, Rich, and the rest of the in-house players, for the deck lists, card combos, and other things that help keep the content fresh; and Steve, Luke, Ed, and Paul for keeping L5R alive and growing.

Zen and Jeff (who we have absorbed into our collective), thanks for always coming through in the nick of time with FAQ items. The fan contributions have also gone a long way in making the last few issues better, and the thanks for that belong to those of you who have taken the time to contribute.

This issue of the *Herald*, the last in the year 2000, is full of news from the **Gen Con®** Game Fair (U.S.) and the Battle at Oblivion's Gate. You will find Ree's story, wrapping up the tournament, beginning on page 16. As usual, she's done a fabulous job. Steve and Luke both share their memories of the convention, of the *Gold Edition™* seminar in particular, and we have a report from a converted **Magic: The Gathering®** player on what a fun experience **Gen Con** U.K. was.

Our featured clans in this issue are the Lion and the Phoenix, and, as usual, we have a historical summary as well as decks for each. We also have some bonus decks in this issue—a Crab deck from Zen Faulkes, Crab Clan Scholar, and a Fox deck from Wolfgang Baur.

We have a lot of great stuff still planned for this game, and for the *Herald*, so I'm sure we'll be quite busy this next year, as well. That's a good thing, and we look forward to sharing it with all of you.

Wishing you a happy end to the year 2000 and a fantastic year 2001.

Mindy  
Ratling Clan Advocate  
and *Herald* Content Editor

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# Dreams Do Come True

by Steve Horvath

WOW!

This has been the best year of my life. Last November, Wizards of the Coast hired me. This year, I got engaged to the most wonderful woman in the world (for those who want to know, she is a Crab player). Then, they put me in charge of my all-time favorite game—the **Legend of the Five Rings™** TCG. If I am dreaming, please don't wake me up.

Like everyone else who plays the game, I would talk with my friends about how, if I had my way, or if I was in charge, I would do blah blah blah. Then one day I found myself in charge. It was a very overwhelming experience. Last year I was fighting to save the Empire in the War in the Heavens tournament, and this year I led the Banzais at the Battle at Oblivion's Gate.

The Banzais—oh man, was that something. When I got up Thursday to begin round one, I got so choked up looking out at all of the players waving the banners that I didn't think I could talk. It took a good thirty seconds before I could get the lump out of my throat to say anything.

**Gen Con** 2000, as a whole, was one of the greatest experiences of my life. Thursday saw 375 players; Friday saw 351—over 500 different players altogether. There were over 50 players from other countries, many of whom taught us we are not the only ones who know how to play this game (congratulations, Justin). L5R is dominating **Gen Con** more and more every year. The atmosphere was awesome, and everyone, including myself, got a chance to see old friends that we have played with and against over the years. That brings me to what I thought was one of the best things about this year's **Gen Con**: L5R has the best fans in the world. The passion and fanatical devotion to the game and our favorite clans is incredible. The downside is that at times it incites flame wars and insults online. Well, this year several of these people came face to face for the first time, and do you know what happened? Within minutes they had become friends, joking, hanging out, going to the Safehouse at night, and just having a great time. It just goes to show that yes, the Internet is a great form of communication, but it is easy to get the wrong impression of someone. So the next time a post really sets you off, sit back and think it through before the flames start to fly. Remember, we share a deep love for Rokugan, and that's what counts.

Ree once again delivered a fabulous story. It is a testament to how great this game is that during several dramatic

moments of the story, people cried for the heroes and the Empire they love so much.

As the tournament wound to its close, we had a first—a Shadowlands deck in the final round! As it turns out, the Phoenix, led by the Master of Fire, were just too strong that day, but having the Shadowlands come that close was very exciting. It's my hope that during the Four Winds story arc the environment will be such that every one of the eight basic Factions has its shining moment and wins something big.

Like Luke, I felt the *Gold Edition* presentation was a highlight of my career that I will never forget. Luke will talk some more about that, but I just had to mention what a huge impact the experience had on me.

As cool as the U.S. **Gen Con** was, I want to talk about U.K. **Gen Con**, as well. Though it is a smaller convention, the heart and passion of the players are second to none. Luke and I received a great reception from the players and jumped into the Midnight Madness tournament that night. I started out 2-0 with my Dragon Tattoo attack deck, and that's when they started handing me beer—did I mention that they drink in the tournament hall over there? Well, they do, and I promptly went to 2-2. Make sure the next time you see Luke to ask him how he did ⇒). The main event on Saturday had ninety-nine players. Everyone had a great time, and once again the Phoenix took the day, this time leading the forces of the Empire back to the wall. Just like at the U.S. **Gen Con**, there were some awesome decks and great players. The play environment may have been different, but the same sense of camaraderie was there.

To finish, I like to let you know that everyone who works on this team understands what a huge responsibility we have as the caretakers of the story that is Rokugan. I want to take a moment to thank everyone on the team from Luke, Jeff, Rob, James, Duane, Paul, Kim, Mindy, Dave, Andy, Mike, and Jessica to everyone else who works so hard. It's a real honor to work with such a great group of people. Finally, I want to thank all of the players who make this game so great. I will always be grateful for having the opportunity to be one of the caretakers of something I love so much.

Domo arigato,  
Steve Horvath  
Caretaker



# 58-point Ranged Attacks . . .

by Luke Peterschmidt

. . . and other **Gen Con** memories.

**Gen Con** 2000 was one of the highlights of my professional career, right up there with the Y2C party and launching the L5R novel line. As is normal for **Gen Con**, I got to meet a bunch of really great players that reminded me in a very visceral way why it is I work so hard. The Battle at Oblivion's Gate tournament was phenomenal. I'm sure Steve has already written about some of the cool stories at the tournament in his article.

For me, though, the highlight of **Gen Con** was the *Gold Edition* seminar. It was phenomenal to see hundreds and hundreds of L5R players storm into the room, fill each of the 450 chairs, and still keep coming. For a comparison, the event right before ours was the **Dragonlance**® authors summit, and they had maybe 200 people. This leads me to the obvious conclusion that L5R is bigger than **Dragonlance**.

The *Gold Edition* discussion went better than either Steve or I thought it could. To be totally honest, we were a little scared. Here we were, about to tell our most loyal fans that we're changing the card backs, resetting the story, reducing the number of playable Clans, and so on—all with no yojimbo. On top of that, I was just getting over some Vulcan death-flu that basically reduced my first few days of **Gen Con** to a couple of hours with players, pretzels with cheese dip, and narcolepsy. Then, to add to the stress, we couldn't get the slide show working because my marketing manager's Mac laptop didn't have the right extensions. So I had to send Andy Heckt running across town to find my laptop (which is a PC), which I thought just might work.

So, while Andy hauled tetsubo to get my laptop, we started the meeting with Ree's retelling of the Day of Thunder by the Ratling Kabuki theater (originally read at the Y2C party). If I had my way, I would start every meeting for the rest of my life with that—way funny stuff. But while everyone in the crowd was having a great time, I waited nervously for Andy. Visions of Paul Timm trying to "describe" what art was supposed to be on the big screen ran through my head, and the Vulcan death-flu appeared to be on its way back. I spent my time fumbling with my Power Point print-outs and wanting another nap.

Then the Kabuki theater ended. Still no working computer. Oh, well. Luckily for me, everyone in the crowd was in such a good mood that I could let the delirium of the day take hold, and I just started yappin'. Holding up my silly Power Point print-outs and saying things like, "Imagine that you all see a big image of the Olympic logo on the screen . . ." A great

feeling of awe came over me at that moment. Here I was, in front of people with whom, in one way or another, I've spent eight-plus hours a day for the last two years trying to make L5R the best product I can. I've always liked L5R players, but for a striking moment I realized that most of you *like* the work that Steve, Ed, Mindy, Andy, I, and a whole host of others have done on L5R. I felt trusted—it was euphoric!

The telling moment for me was the unveiling of the new card back. There were cheers. *Cheers*. These cheers came even before we announced that we were giving away more than ten million card sleeves to help the players through this change. From then on, the rest of my part of the presentation was really fun. I particularly enjoyed the opportunity to thank my friends at AEG for their work on L5R. Their work will *never* be forgotten and cannot be overestimated. Someday, I hope to be half as smart as Dave and a quarter as eloquent as Ree.

At some point, my computer showed up. Luckily, back at the office when no one from the IT department was looking, I had installed MacOpener on my PC, so that it could read Mac disks like the one that had the presentation on it. With the slide show in full operation, Paul Timm took over to show off some of the *Gold Edition* artwork. The art was very well received, and everyone was in high spirits. And then I glanced over at Steve Horvath . . .

Both Steve and I knew that our last hurdle would be the most difficult. And it was his job to get us over it. I got the feeling that Steve was worried that the mood was getting so high in the room that it was just going to fall harder with his final announcement.

Paul ended his presentation, and I took over for a moment to get in one more self-serving 58-point ranged-attack joke before introducing Steve. Steve went through his part of the presentation, and when he got to the fateful topic, I made a point to look at the audience.

"There will be fewer Clans in *Gold Edition*," I heard him say to more smiles and cheers. Not as many as I got for the card-back change, but the overall reaction was very favorable. I then turned to Steve, and I could see in his face the same realization that had hit me earlier.

Steve wrapped up the presentation, and we went into a Q&A session. Now, I should mention to you all what our whole philosophy for this meeting was. Our goal was "to go third edition" on our players. By that, we meant to follow the lead of another great L5R personality, Ryan Dancey, with the way he handled the launch of **Dungeons & Dragons**® third



edition—that is, to be completely up front with all of our plans, even the ones that may not be very popular. So, for the question part, Steve and I had set ourselves a policy of answering absolutely *all* questions. To be honest, we couldn't answer some, because some members of the team were so new. Obviously, any story-driven product needs to have some secrets, like plot twists and such, but since we hadn't worked out enough of the story to matter at that time, it wasn't an issue.

The questions came fast and furious. At this point, I felt like I was on cloud nine. I wandered around like Phil Donahue answering the questions that were for me and passing other questions to the folks on the stage. The one thing that I hope we got across during the questions session is that we are proud of the things that are happening with L5R. We are confident that we are moving in the right direction. Everyone on the team knows, without a doubt, that *Gold Edition* will be the best L5R release ever—period. It was our honor to share with you why we believe this.

After the meeting ended, I made good on a promise to all of the L5R **Gen Con** attendees who flew over at least one ocean to get there. Steve and I went down to the bar to buy a round for about fifty folks who needed a passport to get to Milwaukee (and answered some more questions while there).

After it all died down, Steve and I took a walk out in the clear Milwaukee air. It was about 1 A.M., and we were physically exhausted, but we couldn't imagine sleeping. Somehow, we ended up at a doughnut shop. We talked about how overwhelmed we were with the enthusiastic reception we had received. We talked about the character of our fans. We talked about how lucky we were that somebody created MacOpener. We talked about the dedication of our passport-toting fans back at the bar. But mostly we talked about how we'd better make damn sure that *Gold Edition* is everything we and our fans want it to be.

We did not talk about 58-point ranged attacks.

Luke Peterschmidt  
Servant

## Suicide L5R

by Mark Wooton  
as told to Luke Peterschmidt

This is a really fun one-booster single-elimination tournament variation of L5R played in the U.K.:

1. Each player gets a booster from a basic set. (It has to be a base set in order to get Gold-producing Holdings.)
2. Organize the players into pods of eight or sixteen.
3. Create round 1 pairings within each pod of players.
4. Each player has a generic 5/4/4 Stronghold, two Provinces, and a starting hand size of three. They play using all of their cards. Maximum hand size is still eight cards; this does sometimes make it difficult to play your cards.
5. An Honor Victory occurs at 15 points, and a Dishonor loss occurs at -5 points. In the event that neither player can win, the usual tiebreakers apply.
6. The winner gets all of the cards from his/her defeated opponent.
7. Round 2 is identical to the first, except that the players now have twice as many cards.

8. In the final round of a pod, players construct their decks from the cards they have acquired. Decks are 20/20, with 25 points for an Honor win and -10 points for a Dishonor win, four cards in the starting hand, and three Provinces at the beginning of the game. This is the last point in time at which the loser hands cards over to the winner.

9. To determine the champion of champions, the winners from both pods play a straight 30/30 match with their cards (at least four if you have thirty-two players). The Stronghold is still a generic 5/4/4, and Clan membership remains the same.

Each Personality is considered a member of both his or her given Clan and his or her player's Clan (which has no name as far as game mechanics are concerned—Clan Mark or Clan Stephanie, for example). Holdings produce Gold as though they belong to your Clan.

Watch out for completely broken cards in this format—like Sanctified Temple! ;-)



# Empire League Season V:

## Soul of the Empire

by Mike Liesik

*After Toturi was liberated from Goju and Goju's faceless minions at Morikage Castle, many in the Empire hoped that things would return to normal. Their hopes were in vain. The Shadow had corrupted the Emperor, causing him to go into fits of rage, branding even his most loyal vassals as traitors. Many fled the court, fearing for their lives. Still others, concerned for the future of the Empire, swore to remain and try to help the man they had called friend during the Day of Thunder.*

*Meanwhile, the Crab, with the help of the Naga, reclaimed Hiruma Castle, which they had lost to the Shadowlands many years ago. Shortly thereafter, the Naga left, heading toward the mountains of the Dragon, leaving the Crab with no allies. A horde of Shadowlands creatures, led by Kuni Yori, surrounded the bulk of the Crab army. Hida Yakamo, determined to return with reinforcements, left the castle and headed for the Kaiu Wall, but Yori captured and slew him, leaving Yakamo's sister, Hida O-Ushi, as the head of the clan.*

*After the Siege of Sleeping Mountain, in which the Naga attempted to keep the Dragon from awakening the Shadow trapped under the Dragon's keep, they fled into the countryside. The Naga arrived at the edge of the Shadowlands in time to steal the body of the fallen Crab daimyo, Yakamo, and secrete it away in their forests. Filled with rage, Hida O-Ushi swore to destroy every member of the Naga for such blasphemy and began laying waste to the lands of the serpent people.*

Season V reenacts the end of the *Hidden Emperor*™ story arc. This season will feature six Clans with three objectives each. Led by an ancient hero, the Naga must lend their knowledge of the Shadow to the very people who view them with distrust. Weakened by their civil war, the Crane must unite their family under one leader and battle to save the man they call Emperor. With one of their strongest working against them and a Kami leading them, the Unicorn must find a way to defeat their past, or the Moto will be lost forever. Having only recently recovered the True Tao, the Brotherhood must return to their roots or risk losing themselves. After a long feud between oni overlords, the Shadowlands has joined with Goju to see the destruction of the Jade Empire. With the ascension of Hitomi and the return of Hoshi, the Dragon must unite under their new daimyo and aid the clans in the Empire's greatest time of need.

The new objectives are designed to challenge experienced players by placing restrictions on their win conditions or deck contents. A few examples include:

### Crane

Command the Ancestors

End the game with eight Ancestors in play.

### Naga

Rebirth of a Hero

Bring five Honorable Dead, Unique Personalities directly into play from your discard pile.

### Unicorn

Shinjo Returns

Destroy eight Kolat cards controlled by your opponent, outside of battle. Your deck can contain no Kolat Personalities.

### Brotherhood of Shinsei

Accepting the Tao

Achieve an Enlightenment Victory without having any of your cards cast Kihos.

### Dragon

Return of Myth

Bring at least one copy of the Air, Earth, Fire, Void, and Water Dragons into play.

### Shadowlands

War in the Shadowlands

Destroy ten of your opponent's Shadowlands Personalities outside of battle.

League members who complete all of the objectives for one or more factions are eligible for a clan mon pin at the end of the season. Players who choose not to play one of the featured factions will, as usual, still be eligible for the Empire League™ pin, which they can earn by having the most play points. Everyone who earns 10 play points earns an alternate art promo card.

If there is an epic event in Rokugan's past that you would like to see in a future Empire League season, please send an email to me at [toku@wizards.com](mailto:toku@wizards.com) with the subject line "Empire League ideas." I cannot guarantee that I will use your suggestion or that, if used, you will receive credit for it.

If your local Stronghold or Premier store does not currently run the Empire League, they can sign up by calling their Merchant Services representative or our Direct Sales department at (800) 821-8028. Don't forget that your store can order and run any season that we still have available.



# The Gen Con Challenge Booth

by Erik Brann, a.k.a. Kakita Kentei

**Gen Con 2000** was my very first **Gen Con**, and I was lucky enough to have a very special role among the L5R players. I, with help from many people, ran the first annual **Gen Con Challenge Booth**.

The booth's purpose was to provide a forum where players who had disagreements about the story, or in-character actions, could play out their grievance in a duel. It also provided a way to raise some money for charity, with all duels donating money to the Shriner's Hospitals for Crippled Children and the Burn Unit. Only three challenges were scheduled ahead of time.

The Moto challenge was a weekend-long event arranged by Brent Keith that involved the fate of the Moto family hanging in the balance. Essentially, Shadowlands players and Unicorn players faced off while keeping a running tally, with the final tally having an impact on a single game, which Ree Soesbee would attend. This challenge generated a lot of revenue, and many folks had a great time playing.

The Valley of the Two Generals challenge was a special-format duel between the Dragon and Crane, and it replays that famous battle. This year the Crane won it.

The Mujina challenge was held between Leon Phillips and Brent Keith over who was the ultimate overlord of all Mujina. Leon Phillips won in a very close game, with decks that included a play set of every Mujina card in print.

In addition to the prearranged challenges, we had spot challenges, with various players accepting challenges from all comers. These included Darrian Dalangini, the Shadowlands Warlord; Rob Ciccolini, the Scorpion Warlord; Eric Weiner, the Crane Warlord; Steve Horvath, the L5R brand manager; Chris Hill, a.k.a. MitsuMan, of [www.thepearlherald.com](http://www.thepearlherald.com) fame; Andy Cowell, the proprietor of [www.deathseeker.com](http://www.deathseeker.com), and many others.

Additionally, we had three other sources of funds. *The Books of Final Haiku*, which Jeanne Kalvar collected and Christopher Orr published, sold for \$5 each. Leon Phillips, the "Master of Mujina," donated a whole box full of various old gaming supplies and books that we used as a grab bag. For \$2, each participant could draw a number that matched up to an item, which became his or her prize. And finally, Andy Heckt and Wizards of the Coast donated the Box of Greed, which contained many rare and promo cards. For \$5, a participant could draw ten cards. This was by far the most popular part of the Challenge Booth.

All in all, we raised nearly \$2,500 to donate to the Shriner's Hospitals for Crippled Children and the Burn Unit.

I personally would like to thank the following people for their hard work over the weekend:

Folks who worked the Challenge Table: Kakita Kaori (Jeanne Kalvar), Kakita Toshiki (Shannon Kalvar), Daidoji Gisei (Nancy Sauer), Fushou no Akurei (Jarrod Schuster), Doji Kokoro (K. C. Colman), Mirumoto Chris (Chris Orr), Kakita Brent (Brent Morgan), Mack'uk (Alexander Skrabut), Shara (Charlotte Johnson), Shosho the Mujina Wrangler (Brent Keith), Leon Phillips (Master of Mujina), Tim Smart, Ralph Martin, Darrian Dalangini, Thomas Cottone, and Greg Osborn, the Dragon Warlord.

Folks who acted as Featured Players for the table: Darrian Dalangini, Chris Hill, Andy Cowell, Joe Fulgham (Hitomi Pukku, or Puck), Todo the Shadowlands Monk (Todd Rowland), and Steve Horvath.

Wizards of the Coast® staff: Mindy Sherwood-Lewis, who graciously allowed us space right in the L5R area; Andy Heckt, who brought us the Box of Greed; and the entire Darkedge Team for their support.

And lastly, I would like to thank my wife, Tracie Brann, who provided a hundred percent support in this, and, in spite of her initial misgivings, had a wonderful time. I love you.

Thank you all for your help. It was because of you that this worked out as well as it did.

I apologize if I forgot to mention anyone.

It appears that the Challenge Booth was a great success, and I hope that next year it will prove even greater. So please get your challenges together, and bring your stuff to raffle!

On a more whimsical note, as a member of Team Boshniggy, I had the Team Boshniggy Kotei Banner proudly displayed on the wall behind the Challenge Booth and the Great Boshniggy sitting on the table when Ree Soesbee asked me what they were. When I explained that Boshniggy was the mascot of the players at the Knight's Quest in Gardner, Massachusetts (the store where I play L5R), Ree picked up Boshniggy and gave him a great big kiss. It was very cool to have our mascot blessed by Ree. Thank you, Ree.



# All about Sleeves

by Mindy Sherwood-Lewis

As most of you have heard by now, and have certainly seen if you have purchased any *Spirit Wars*™ product, we have had to change the card backs for our beloved game.

Why we had to make this change is a long and involved story, but suffice it to say there are people out there with more clout than we have, and the change was unavoidable.

So, what does the card-back change mean for you? Well, that depends on a few things. If you don't play in tournaments and you have a pretty casual play group, it doesn't mean much except that your decks will look pretty motley if you mix cards from previous sets with cards from the sets going forward. That shouldn't be too much of a problem in a casual setting.

If you do play in tournaments, however, you will have two basic choices: either you play with cards that all have the same backs, or you sleeve your decks with opaque-backed card sleeves so that you can mix cards from various sets.

We understand what a hassle that can be. Some of you never use sleeves on your cards, and are, unfortunately, going to have to adjust to them if you want to play mixed decks. Some of you always use sleeves on your decks, but this will mean changing out a lot of cards, which can be time-consuming and expensive.

So, you're probably thinking, *What are you L5R folks going to do to help us with this transition?* Glad you asked!

If you have already purchased decks from *The Spirit Wars* expansion, you will have noticed that we packaged those decks with sleeves. Special sleeves, to be precise, with textured green backs and black backs that work well with L5R cards. One *Spirit Wars* deck box should contain enough sleeves to completely outfit a tournament-legal deck.

Additionally, we are offering the sleeves for Koku redemption. That's right: you can acquire them from Taka's Treasures at the low price of 100 Koku for a set of forty green- and forty black-backed sleeves. See page 21 for more details.

In addition to that (yes, there's more), if you are an Imperial Assembly member, you received a set of sleeves with this issue of the *Herald*. See, we keep telling folks that membership has its privileges, and this would be one of them!

We had ten million of these sleeves made in the hopes of seeing you gently through this transition period. The sleeves will eventually also become available for sale in game stores around the world.

# Gen Con 2001 Invitation Policy

by Mindy Sherwood-Lewis and Andy Heckt

We will issue the invitations to **Gen Con 2001** based on points earned from playing in sanctioned tournaments that take place from April 1, 2000, to March 31, 2001, for players from these Clans: Crab, Crane, Dragon, Lion, Phoenix, Ratling, Scorpion, Shadowlands, and Unicorn.

We will issue three invitations for each of the above Clans. We will base those invitations on the following:

1. Top accumulated points—Warlord
2. Best twelve finishes—Hatamoto
3. Highest number of tournaments played—Standard-Bearer\*

During the **Gen Con** tournament, these players must play the Clan given on their invitations.

There will be one invitation based on highest overall points. For the Clans that will not have Strongholds at the beginning of the *Gold Edition* environment (Ninja, Yoritomo's Alliance, Brotherhood of Shinsei, Toturi's Army, and Naga),

the player with the top accumulated points in that Clan will receive a "Legacy" invitation. That player must play a Gold-legal Clan in the **Gen Con** tournament.

Any player already holding an invitation resulting from this process will not be able to earn a second invitation from finishing first at a Kotei tournament. Should a player who has already earned an invitation through the points system win a Kotei, the invitation from that tournament will go to the second-place finisher. All other prizes related to winning the Kotei will, however, remain with the first-place finisher.

\*If there is a tie within a Clan for the highest number of tournaments played, the tiebreaker goes to the player with the lowest accumulated points. Loyalty means that you continue to play a Clan even when you get bested on a regular basis.



# Gen Con U.K.

by Alex

I have been a regular **Magic®** tournament player for nearly two years, and I came to **Gen Con** determined to play lots of **Magic**. I began talking with a couple of L5R players, however, who suggested I give the game a go. Adam behind the registration desk explained that if I wanted to enter the sealed-deck tournament the players would guide me through the game. I was utterly stunned with how friendly and helpful everybody was. I went 3-3, and at the end of the tournament I had about fifteen people come up to me and give me their decks because I was the new guy. I could not believe the generosity of these people.

## Midnight Madness

I had spent all day with the L5R group, and they had taken me under their wing, with one member lending me a Unicorn deck for the tournament so that I could take part. I waited in anticipation for the draws. I was informed I would play Justin (the guy who had just won U.S. **Gen Con**). You can imagine my shock! I explained that I had only been playing the game for twelve hours. But as we played the game, he helped me by explaining what the cards did as he played them. I went on to win that game, by this point realizing that I was hooked on this game in a big way.

The next day, with the help of Martin, Quentin, Ian, and Adam, I set to getting the cards I needed to build my own deck. By the end of the day, they had guided me to all of the trade stands where I had gathered all of the cards I would need to play in the big storyline tournament on Saturday.

## The Big Storyline Tournament

There was an unbelievable turnout. Over one hundred people had turned up, and the atmosphere was electric. I had picked my Clan (Unicorn), and I was ready.

My first game was against a Turbo Enlightenment Monk deck, and, unfortunately for me, the other player had all five Rings down by turn five. Then the unbelievable happened—I won my next five games, beating some awesome competition. I ended up among the Top 16 players, along the way defeating the World Champion, the highest-ranked Unicorn player in the U.K., the Welsh

Champion, the previous U.K. Champion, and the Scottish Champion. I just could not believe how well I had done!

The Final 16 players were matched and, much to my dismay, I drew the Monk Enlightenment deck that I had lost to in my first game. I managed to get him down to two Provinces before he got his fifth Ring down. I was knocked out, but I was announced as finishing 12th overall and the highest-ranking Unicorn player of the day. I received my Clan T-shirt and four *Time of the Void™* boosters that someone had donated. That moment was unbelievably exhilarating.

Later that evening, I found out that Justin and the organizers had agreed that I should be invited to the invitational on Sunday because of my performance over the last three days. I was absolutely stunned that they thought I was worthy of joining the top players in such a prestigious event.

## The Invitational

I drew a Crane Turbo Honor deck for my first match and got knocked out. Despite this, I had the time of my life in Manchester. I would like give a big thank-you to Adam, Quentin, Martin, Justin, Doc, Ian, and Mark for all of their help and advice and to all of the other L5R players and organizers at **Gen Con**. You guys are the best.





# Lion Clan Summary

by Edward Bolme

The Lion Clan has been, since the dawn of time, "the Right hand of the Emperor." Charged with crushing the enemies of the Emperor, they have pursued their duties with vigilance, loyalty, fearlessness, and honor.

The Akodo family has traditionally ruled over the Lion Clan. Centuries of tradition and a pursuit of excellence have made the Akodo the most feared generals in the Empire. Just as no one wants to try to pry a Crab army loose from its position, so no one wants to face an Akodo's Lion army on the battlefield. The facts are simple: in the thousand years of the Empire, no Akodo general has ever tasted defeat.

This made Akodo Toturi, the Lion Clan daimyo, of considerable interest to the Scorpion Clan as they planned their coup against Emperor Hantei the 38th. Popular and scholarly, Toturi had not only the benefits of his Lion heritage and tactical schooling, but also his childhood spent among the Brotherhood of Shinsei. This had instilled in him a fusion of clear thought and direct action so pure that even the Scorpion could not predict his moves.

Unfortunately, Scorpion spies discovered that Toturi had a weakness for a particular geisha named Hatsuko: he loved her. His love for her clouded his judgment and occasionally interfered with his official duties. Weaving a web of lies, the Scorpion used this geisha to poison Toturi on the eve of the coup, although in her confused state she did not give him enough to kill him.

The Scorpion overthrew the Emperor. As expected, the clans rallied against them, though their uncoordinated attacks could not dislodge the Scorpion from the imperial capitol of Otsan Uchi—could not, that is, until the day Toturi returned. He rallied the clans and seized the capitol, killing the Scorpion daimyo in the throne room.

In the wake of the coup, Hantei the 39th petulantly stripped Toturi of his title, name, and family. Refused the chance to commit seppuku, Toturi became a ronin. The Akodo family likewise became dishonored and disgraced, and the hot-headed family daimyo Matsu Tsuko took control of the Lion Clan.

As the Clan War progressed, it became apparent that the dark god Fu Leng was becoming incarnate in the body of young Hantei the 39th. This ugly truth became apparent to the Lion Clan when the Crab armies landed on the shores outside Otsan Uchi and moved to take the capitol. Matsu Tsuko led her army to defeat these usurpers, but as her troops took the field, the Emperor himself ordered her to stand aside and let the army fight without her. The Crab crushed her

army.

The Lion Clan, for whom honor and oaths carry the weight of generations, was torn: they had sworn to serve the Emperor and protect the Empire—but what were they to do when the Emperor had become the greatest threat the Empire had known? For Tsuko, the question was without answer. She would not abandon her oaths, so she took her own life, commending her people to the ronin Toturi.

The Lion Clan split, with one faction under Ikoma Tsanuri defending the Emperor and the other faction under Kitsu Motso defending the Empire. At the Day of Thunder, Toturi at last reunited the two factions and led them to victory.

Toturi became Emperor, and Ikoma Tsanuri, in a political move to heal the clan, became daimyo.

In the wake of Toturi's disappearance, war broke out between the Lion and the Unicorn, who, as imperial magistrates, saw themselves as the new Right Hand of the Emperor. At the same time, the Naga abandoned the Crab at the Wall, leaving them in a perilous position, and half of the Lion Clan moved south to aid the Crab in their plight.

With the clan's power divided, the Lion Clan found themselves hard-pressed to fend off the Unicorn. Kitsu Okura, although newly appointed as the Jade Champion and defender of purity, turned in desperation to a hidden resource: an oni long-buried in Lion lands. He gave his name to Oni no Okura, who crushed the Unicorn army at White Shore Plain.

The Taint of the Shadowlands began to spread among the Lion Clan, and many questioned the justification of Oni no Okura. Even though her power had saved the clan from defeat, they wondered if they had paid for their lives with their souls.

In the end, the fractious fighting among the clans stopped as they united against the Shadow. Oni no Okura led them deep into the Shadowlands and in the end proved herself a Lion (oni or not) by valiantly defending her general and giving her life for the clan.

## Lion Top Ten

1	Thierry Laurent	2231
2	Daniel Tibbles	1803
3	Garnung Benoit	1755
4	David Veschi	938
5	Jack Chang	866
6	Jesse Butler	817
7	Bryan Flynn	687
8	Raphael Carton	651
9	Gordon Lum	621
10	Greg Bewley	621



Moves Like a Lion

**Stronghold:** Ancient Halls of the Lion

**Sensei:** Akodo

### Dynasty (40)

#### Personalities (20)

- 3 Akodo Quihao
- 3 Ikoma Gunjin
- 3 Ikoma Ryoze
- 1 Kitsu Osen
- 3 Matsu Agetoki
- 3 Matsu Morishigi
- 3 Matsu Suhada
- 1 Oni no Okura Exp. 2

#### Events (5)

- 1 Birth of the Sword
- 1 Evil Feeds Upon Itself
- 1 Imperial Gift
- 1 Inheritance
- 1 Revering the Past

#### Regions (1)

- 1 Golden Sun Plain

#### Holdings (14)

- 3 Copper Mine
- 1 Fortress of the Dragonfly
- 2 The Hiruma Dojo
- 2 Jade Works
- 3 Large Farm
- 3 Small Farm

### Fate Deck(40)

#### Sensei (1)

- Akodo Sensei

#### Actions (30)

- 3 Ancestral Protection
- 3 Charge!
- 3 Forgotten Lesson
- 3 Luring Tactics
- 3 Sneak Attack
- 3 Strength of Purity
- 3 The Sun Returns
- 3 Tactical Maneuvers
- 3 Trapping Tactics
- 3 White Shore Plain

#### Ancestors (3)

- 1 Shiryō no Tsuko
- 1 Shiryō no Gohei
- 1 Shiryō no Taisa

#### Followers (6)

- 3 Ashigaru Archers
- 3 Spearmen

#### Item (1)

- 1 Ikoma Tessen

#### Rings (1)

- 1 Ring of the Void

## Moves Like a Lion

by Wolfgang Baur

The "Moves Like a Lion" deck is a Tactician deck that doesn't gain Force bonuses directly from Tacticians. In fact, it's not really a Tactician deck, but a mobility/action denial deck in disguise. This doesn't mean it has no teeth; the deck can take second turn Provinces with a good start, such as Morishigi plus ancestor plus Charge!, or Suhada plus Follower plus Charge!. However, fast attack isn't the primary way to this deck wins. Instead, it's about thinking carefully, then playing Tactical Maneuvers and Luring Tactics to arrange the battles the way you want them.

Once you've got the troops in position, the action denial kicks in. You can avoid ever being sent home with Trapping Tactics, The Sun Returns, and Ancestral Protection. Actually, Ancestral Protection is more broadly useful, because it cancels duels, kolat actions, and all other targeted effects. The Personality killing decks that are so popular in Seattle, like Vu Fu or the classic Phoenix PK, can't touch anyone as long as you have Ancestral Protection in hand.

Forgotten Lessons is crucial in two ways; it allows you to attack with Gunjin and gain a Force bonus if you play it on yourself. It also allows you to slow down the Kaede sensei, to avoid the Hantei sensei's edict for a turn, or to buy lots of Personalities against a player using Yodin Sensei. Trapping Tactics makes your ranged attacks more effective, and can be brutal if you have a number of the Followers in play. Since the card doesn't see much use except in Naga decks, most opponents don't see it coming.

Most of the time, though, you want your sensei working for you. With Akodo sensei, White Shore Plain provides a bonus to every single personality with over 2 Chi. If the Fortress is in play, that's everyone except Suhada. If the Fortress is not in play, it's still more than half of your Personalities.

Like most Lion decks, it can sometimes run for Honor if things go wrong on the offensive. The events provide 4 points of honor, and the personalities can provide up to 53 points. That said, it is vulnerable to Dishonor decks; if you see many Dishonor decks locally, consider swapping in Lies Lies Lies to avoid an auto-loss.

Shiryō no Taisa allows you to cancel Purusha's ranged attacks and Sneak Attack actions; if possible, attach him to someone with 2 Chi, so they get the Tactician trait from Akodo sensei.

#### Open or Extended Jade

In Extended Jade, Merchant Caravans should replace the Jade Works and a Large Farm, and a second copy of The Hiruma Dojo as well, since Merchant Caravans can buy it for you. On the Fate size, you you'll probably want an Ancestral Armor or Sword as well as Test of Courage to replace Trapping Tactics. Forced March fits the general theme of the deck, but it's often too expensive.

In Open, you'd need Merchant Caravans, Return of Fu Leng, and Matsu Gohei, plus an Ancestral Armor and/or Sword and possibly Superior Strategist (if you've got them). You might also consider adding in Rising Sun, which ensures that every single one of your Personalities gets the Tactician trait from Akodo sensei (while it lasts). And a Rising Sun at the White Shore Plains is a beautiful thing to see.

# The Kitsu Tombs

by Jose Titos

I have to admit that when I first set my eyes on the Kitsu Tombs, my first thought was "Wow! 4 gold for Lion!" The fact that my Lion shugenja automatically gained the shadowlands taint bothered me, but the ability to ignore honor requirements for shadowlands personalities proved to be a strong boon.

Additionally, being able to bow one of my human shugenja to negate my Oni's coming into play effects is amazing. Think of Akuma, a massive Oni for the low price of zero gold and he won't pop your province!

As I dislike cookie cutter deck archetypes, I decided to go for a victory condition that most Lion decks ignore: Enlightenment. If the Kitsu were in league with the Shadowlands, it would be for honorable reasons. The Elemental Oni are incredibly powerful personalities. Knowing that Kukanchi and Moetechi could be brought out from the SH alone made me realize that the Kitsu tombs were a very suitable home for them. This deck is focused on speed; I have included shugenja that can be brought out for box alone. Kitsu Okura or Kitsu Huiyuan can be brought out for honor. Ryosei and Togashi Shinseken are there for backup support, the latter allowing you to slow down a cavalry deck and aiding in bringing out the Ring of Air. Shokansuru is an underrated card that produces 5 gold when bringing an Oni into play. It is also the only Shadowlands gold holding that will only make you lose honor the first time that you bring it into play. You don't have to worry about it dropping your honor faster than a fully armored Hida dumped into The Last Stand River!

This deck centers on having the right cards in your hand at the right time. The Emissary of the Ivory Kingdoms event and the Boundless Depths of Water and Banish All Shadows kihos give you the card drawing engine that you need. Bring Kukanchi into play drop your hand and play the Ring of the Void. 1 down 4 more to go! If you are fortunate enough to have the Blessing of Isawa at the right time, this will greatly facilitate your deck. Finding the Balance in conjunction with Kaede Sensei make Enlightenment seem deceptively easy. However, there are many cards that can severely disrupt this deck, Senseis being key among them. Hantei and Kuro Sensei come to mind. The former can hamstring your deck by preventing you from playing key action cards. The latter's ability to decline duels makes getting the Ring of Fire out almost impossible. One interesting thing that I noticed is that once you play oath of fealty, your non-Lion Shugenja will join your clan and simultaneously gain the Shadowlands trait! This can be a problem if an Iris Festival or your opponent's anti Shadowlands cards target your deck.

This is not a straightforward Enlightenment Deck. It has some personality control to boot. Use Drawing out the Darkness to corrupt your opponent's personalities and destroy them using either Darkness Beyond Darkness or Oni no Okura's innate ambushing ability. Oni no Akuma meet an untimely death? Use Kaede's Tears to save it from oblivion and return it to play later. If you are in a situation where Enlightenment is not feasible, pound your opponent's provinces to dust in true Lion fashion.

## Rare and Fixed Cards

This deck can easily be played with no rares. Kitsu Huiyuan is a rare from Fire and Shadow. Ikoma Ryoze is a fixed card in the Kitsu Tombs starter. The Clan Heartland and Tidal Land Bridge regions can be replaced with Mystic Grounds. The majority of the deck is common and uncommon.

## Variants

When shifting to an Extended Jade or an Open environment feel free to throw in Kitsu Toju for recovering lost honor or Oni no Ianwa for sheer military might. Iaijutsu Art and For the Empire are 2 of the best dueling cards for this deck. If you want to make it more challenging, forego Kaede Sensei and Finding the Balance and play with the Dark Moto Sensei and corrupt holdings. This will greatly speed your deck at the price of bringing you dangerously close to dishonoring yourself out of the game by turn two.

## Dynasty Deck (48)

### Events (5)

Blessings of Isawa  
Emissary of the Ivory Kingdoms  
There Is No Hope  
War Weary  
Wisdom Gained

### Holdings (13)

Copper Mine x3  
Jade Works x3  
Shokansuru x3  
Small Farm x3  
Writings of Kuni Yori

### Personalities (28)

Ikoma Ryoze Exp. 2  
Kitsu Huiyuan  
Kitsu Okura x3  
Kukanchi x3  
Moetechi x3  
Oni no Akuma  
Oni no Okura  
Oyuchi x3  
Ryosei x3  
Togashi Shinseken x3  
Toichi x3  
Yosuchi x3

### Regions (2)

Clan Heartland  
Tidal Land Bridge

## Fate Deck (46)

### Sensei (1)

Kaede Sensei

### Actions (24)

Avoid Fate x3  
Darkness beyond Darkness x3  
Deadly Ground x3  
Iaijutsu Duel x3  
Night Battle x3  
Oath of Fealty x2  
Refugees x2  
Superior Tactics x2  
Test of Might x3

### Elemental Rings (5)

Ring of Air  
Ring of Earth  
Ring of Fire  
Ring of the Void  
Ring of Water

### Kihos (16)

Banish All Shadows x3  
The Boundless Depths of Water x3  
Drawing Out the Darkness x3  
Facing Your Devils x3  
Finding the Harmony x3  
Kaede's Tears



# Test of the Emerald Champion

## A Global Storyline Tournament

On the weekend of January 12, 13 & 14 stores all over the world will be hosting the first global storyline tournament of 2001. Here is what it will be about:

The years following Toturi I's defeat of Hantei XVI and Hida Tsuneo in the Spirit Wars have been relatively peaceful and prosperous. A decade of peace and the rule of an enlightened emperor have reduced the influence of the commander of the Imperial magistrates, the Emerald Champion.

Or perhaps it is the Emerald Champion himself who has allowed his powers to wane? Toshiken, the formerly mighty samurai who stood alongside Toku at Toturi's right hand, has aged unnaturally quickly, losing the skill at arms that earned him his post, though still maintaining the respect of most of the Great Clans. For several years, Toturi's youngest son, Hantei Naseru, has attended to most of the duties that Toshiken would have attended to in his prime. The Great Clans have accepted Naseru's growing power—after all, he is Toturi's son, and at least control of the magistrates has not been given to a rival clan.

But the years of peace and unchallenged prosperity have ended. The first casualties of the new crisis are within the Imperial Court itself. Toshiken

and Hantei Naseru respond to the need for new leadership by acknowledging what many had already guessed:

Toshiken is on his deathbed. The time has come for the contest that will determine who will be the next Emerald Champion.

While Toshiken returns to his family to die, the Great Clans of Rokugan send their sons and daughters to compete in the contest at Otosan Uchi. The winner will command the imperial magistrates, help the empire survive its new wars, and shape the future relationship of his or her clan with the son of Toturi who bears the Hantei name...because Naseru is an ambitious and visionary leader who has ideas of his own for the proper uses of imperial power.

Applications for this tournament were sent out to stores in October, and should have been processed by the time this Herald reaches your hands. Visit our website at [www.wizards.com/151/testemeraldchampion/](http://www.wizards.com/151/testemeraldchampion/) to see the list of stores that have signed up to run it, and to find the one nearest you. Then join the other players in your area to affect the ongoing saga that is L5R!

## 2001 Tournament Schedule

by Mindy Sherwood-Lewis

This is the tentative schedule for the global storyline tournaments (GSTs), the prerelease tournaments (PRTs), Koteis, and regional storyline tournaments (RSTs). These dates may change, and applications for each will go out to stores roughly twelve weeks before each tournament date.

January 12-14

GST—The Test for the Emerald Champion

February 24-25

PRT—*Gold Edition*

March 30–April 1

GST—as yet unnamed

May 5-6

PRT—*Alpha* release

May and June

Kotei tournaments—dates to be determined by organizers.

July 7-8

PRT—*Bravo* release

**Origins™** Kotei tournament

August 2-5

**Gen Con** annual storyline tournament

September, October, and November

RSTs—dates to be determined by organizers

September 7-9

GST—as yet unnamed

October 13-14

PRT—*Charlie* release

# Top 10's

## Crane

1	Matt Wantman	1510
2	Tyler Running Deer	906
3	Les Purcell	827
4	Shawn Hopkins	786
5	Paul Ryan	628
6	Johnpaul Mawet	567
7	Nicolas Martin	528
8	Andreas Stavropoulos	524
9	Ryan Jensen	518
10	Michael Basden	468

## Naga

1	Barry Osser	734
2	Charles Jones	617
3	Sean Cabin	439
4	Luis Matos	437
5	Damian O'Dea	380
6	John Brovillet	356
7	Richard De Tagle	324
8	Joseph Reil	290
9	Mike Johnson	279
10	Marc Harrison	272

## Scorpion

1	Magnus Chung	1638
2	David Brown	1081
3	Frank Bustamante	792
4	Chris Paliogiorgos	719
5	Lang Johnson	611
6	Henri Huhtanen	546
7	Robert Ciccolini	473
8	Brandon Smalls	448
9	Sascha Knippig	364
10	Fabian Waltener	362

## The Shadowlands Horde

1	Darrian Dalangin	1113
2	Kris Scudgington	990
3	Richard Jones	886
4	Mike Colson	712
5	Marc Crowley	536
6	Andrew Lamb	524
7	Sigfried Trent	487
8	Isaias Arroyo	472
9	Ben Wantman	442
10	Morgan Littleton	371

## Toturis Army

1	Ronald Carlson	1908
2	Stephane Vasselin	1543
3	Paul Li	1145
4	Leon Phillips	790
5	Eddy Chau	763
6	Paul Gerardi	715
7	Da Silva Francois	642
8	Jeff Furnish	639
9	Giorgos Poursanidis	639
10	Mike Daniel	578

## Crab

1	Jeremy Holcomb	1558
2	Brian Duff	1556
3	Chris Porowski	904
4	Alexis Kampas	796
5	Matthew Budd	620
6	Ricky Denove	563
7	John Pierce	519
8	Peter Bilodeau	499
9	Terence Kelsall	484
10	Daniel Chlebowczyk	420

## Dragon

1	Gregory Osborn	1420
2	Kelly Garcia	861
3	Josh Timmers	838
4	Craig Rocco	821
5	Fotis Flevotomos	719
6	Donald Gates	632
7	Chuck Derby	581
8	Dominic Adenuga	576
9	Matt Denove	576
10	Tom Maffei	524

## Ninja

1	Peter Warren	1404
2	Tim Huey	1256
3	Guyonnet Alain	1165
4	Thomas Graham	1156
5	Travis Murray	522
6	Simon Lai	504
7	Martin Helsing	456
8	Nathan Osser	366
9	Anthony Nguyen	360
10	Vincent Sosa	343

## The Brotherhood of Shinsei

1	Jeff Hicks	2375
2	Jason Marlis	959
3	Thomas Cottone	864
4	Guenael Dantin	796
5	Mike Wantman	504
6	Ioannis Reppas	446
7	Michael Young	418
8	Jesse Albanese	396
9	Colton Slomtaugh	395
10	Ian Ryan	329
10	Simon Slater	329

## Yoritomo's Alliance

1	Alexis Sardella	2892
2	Jason Cadd	1164
3	Wolfgang Baur	953
4	Benoit Delsuc	808
5	Giraudeau Pierre	765
6	Kevin Martin	735
7	Gary Sondergaard	722
8	Andy Boyd	685
9	Paul Main	625
10	Joel Marbella	589

## Unicorn

1	Kyle Jones	1785
2	Yann Primault	1679
3	Craig Scudgington	1289
4	David Claxton	1073
5	Molly Timmers	859
6	Erik Batt	739
7	Bakie Lee	659
8	David Bekier	659
9	Gary Kirby	626
10	Nicolas Chateaubriand	620



## Who's Who: The New Faces in L5R



Jeff Alexander is a relative newcomer to the gaming industry, though not to L5R. He's been playing since before the *Imperial Edition*™ set and, within a year of starting to play, began providing a service to players by compiling official rulings from various forums. He has contributed to the *Imperial Herald* and the L5R roleplaying game. He has also had a hand in card and rules design since the *Emerald Edition*™ set and considers it a great honor to have been selected by the game's designer and fans worldwide to take over Dave Williams' position.

Outside L5R, Jeff has a long history of playing games, from rummy with his mother and grandmother at an early age to **D&D®** in high school to **Champions**, **Warhammer 40,000**, and **Bard's Tale** in college. In the past year or two he's been trying to get back to basic games like chess and Go whenever he can to fill in the gaps.

Jeff joined Wizards of the Coast after an all-too-brief stint with the Alderac Entertainment Group (AEG), where he took up the unenviable task of revising the *Gold Edition* rulebook. Prior to AEG, Jeff was a software engineer for General Dynamics. A native of Pennsylvania, Jeff considers himself a Left-Coaster after almost eight years of living in Southern California. He currently resides in Tukwila, Washington, a small town right next to the much more famous Renton. He has no wife and one cat.



James Wyatt wrote dozens of articles for *Dragon Magazine* before joining Wizards of the Coast's **D&D** Worlds team in January 2000. He is the author of the **D&D** adventure *The Speaker in Dreams* and co-authored (with Rob Heinsoo) *Monster Compendium: Monsters of Faerûn*. He brings a taste for the macabre and a strong background in world generation to his **Legend of the Five Rings** work. He adopted the mantle of Oni no Hanasu (the story oni) in the summer of 2000, and is the advocate for the Shadowlands on the L5R story team. He is prone to evil grins while working and inspiring his coworkers to wear jade and carry clear plastic knives for self-defense. At home, he is a mild-mannered writer, delighting in the company of his wife Amy and 3-year-old son Carter.



Rob Heinsoo has worked in the game industry since 1994. He edited the **Shadowfist** trading card game and co-designed its two expansions for Daedalus Entertainment. While at Daedalus, he maintained continuity between **Shadowfist** and the **Feng Shui** roleplaying game, wrote the *Shadowfist Players' Guide*, and served as the Daedalus net rep. Rob then worked a year at Chaosium as the **Glorantha** line developer. Back in the Northwest, he spent two years testing and providing additional design for the **King of Dragon Pass** computer game by A-Sharp. Since early in 2000, he's worked in the World of the Cubicles as a game designer for third edition **D&D**, writing pieces for the new monster manual and **Forgotten Realms®** campaign setting. Rob is overjoyed to return to the world of trading card games and is amused at the lucky Fate deck draw that landed him a job working on L5R, a world he has always loved but never expected to work on.

Duane Maxwell started playing the **Legend of the Five Rings** TCG when some guy from Five Rings Publishing handed him a free *Imperial* deck at **Gen Con** a few years ago. When he went back home, he and several others started playing. He has been hooked ever since.

Registered as a member of Toturi's Army, he enjoys playing decks from every Faction. (How better to understand your enemies than to walk in their shoes . . . er . . . sandals?) Duane is a big fan of multiplayer story deck games, which is where he feels the magic of L5R is best captured. He doesn't win many games, but what the heck? Duane has never used a 58-point ranged attack at all, let alone used one to defeat an opponent.

# Zen's Card Focus: Devastation of Beiden Pass

by Zen Faulkes

Beiden Pass: the spine of the world. The crossroads of the Emerald Empire. The most crucial strategic point in the Empire.

Gone.

Devastation of Beiden Pass probably won't see a lot of play, if the track records of Spells are anything to go by. Few Rituals have ever achieved popularity. Devastation of Beiden Pass costs 7 Gold and is Unique. It begs the question, "So what does that do?" whenever you attach it. Even so, it's worth giving a second look, because it has several vastly different effects.

You have a choice when you cast this Ritual: either lower the Province's Strength by the Chi of three Shugenja or raise it an equal amount.

When attacking, reducing Province Strength is rarely a wise tactic. Province Strength matters only when you get past the defending army. In general, raising the Force of your own army is best, followed by somehow penalizing or removing the opposing army. Reducing Province Strength is a distant third in effectiveness.

Plus, casting a Battle Ritual is tricky to pull off. You need three Shugenja in the battle to cast the Spell, and your opponent can see where the Spell and Shugenja are assigned. If you send three and one gets sent home, you're stuck. And it isn't easy to move all three Shugenja to an undefended Province.

Raising your Province Strength seems a more powerful use of this Spell, because the benefits of raised Province Strength tend to last a little longer. It is possible to create some very impressive Province Strengths with Devastation of Beiden Pass. A trio of 5C Shugenja can create a 15-Strength boost. With cards like Fortress of the Dragonfly or Oracle of Thunder, it's not all that difficult to get those kind of Chi values.

Casting Devastation of Beiden Pass when defending is less risky, too. When the Attacker goes for one Province,

stick your Shugenja at another battle and cast the Ritual away from the attackers.

Of course, having high Province Strength alone may not win you the game. It won't do you much good to raise a Province's Strength to 20, for instance, if your opponent has a 30F army—or casts Be the Mountain. High Province Strength can make it easier to save your army, however (with Trenches or Flaming Ground, for example), and the Province.

Casting this Ritual has another effect, which imitates the effect of the original Beiden Pass Region. When the

walls come tumblin' down, everyone in that battle is stuck there and can't move in or out. I can see a lot of attackers being more interested in making armies "stick" than fiddling with Province Strength. You can then use your cheapest, most expendable Shugenja to cast the Spell. Line up a cheap Shugenja with two of the ever-popular Cultists, and you've got your own little Winter Warfare on a scroll. On defense, this Spell might combine nicely with Come One at a Time (see IH #14).

Devastation of Beiden Pass destroys the casting Shugenja but not the Spell—not directly. While Isawa Suma can't

cast the Spell again, it does open the door for a few other neat combos. If the Personality is saved, so is the Spell. Give your Shugenja a Decoy. Or you might cast a Mirror Image on the Shugenja carrying Devastation of Beiden Pass. And you can always fall back on a Scribe if you can't save your Shugenja.

Devastation of Beiden Pass is one of those cards more concerned about plot line than game effects. Still, you've got to admit that there's a certain coolness in playing a card that represents bringing an entire mountain range down on an enemy army.





# Voices: The Final Days of Oblivion's Gate

by Ree Soesbee

*"Goju! I scream, and my voice is never-ending. I come for you!"*

*—Isawa Hochiu, Master of Fire*

The Five Masters stood outside the gate to Volturnum, their powerful magic holding back the Shadow's hordes. A legion of oni and beasts of the Taint slaughtered the armies outside the city; if the armies within were released, there would be no hope for the samurai of the Empire.

Isawa Hochiu stood beside the others, his fingers outstretched as wave after wave of fire streamed through the air. His faithful yojimbo had long since fallen, her black hair stained red against the pale sand of Volturnum's inner city. Hochiu watched as the Crane swept past, ignoring the dangers within the inner city to defend the Elemental Masters against the Shadowlands threat—ogres and trolls with terrible claws and crashing iron clubs. The Crane commander, his right arm bound and useless, ordered another charge under a wave of searing heat. With his command in their hearts, the Daidoji tore into the beasts with fierce yari and shimmering swords.

Nearby, Taeruko staggered and fell to her knees, the torrent of stone cascading and dying as she landed heavily on the ground. Beside her, Shiba Ningen reached to take her hand, his large brown eyes worried.

"I can stand," she panted, her hair shifting around her face with the caress of the wind.

"You are the Master of Earth," Ningen said. "You can do anything." The belief in his voice lit a fire within her eyes, and Taeruko shuddered to her feet. Leaning on Ningen's small shoulder, she screamed, and the rocks rose again at her command. On the battlefield below, the Hida called for victory, piercing the armies of the Shadowlands. The battle went poorly, despite the sacrifices of the Empire. Though the Dragon ise zumi had forged a path into the city gates and through the outer walls of Volturnum, the inner city—that which would have housed its nobility and the strength of its people—remained closed to the imperial armies. The fighting tore through the ruins and across the wide plain that had once been an outer city. Samurai dodged through ruined buildings that were now no more than foundations, and leapt from pillars that stood alone in what may once have been city streets.

The Five Masters stood before the inner gates to Volturnum, holding back the Shadow armies that remained inside. The minions of the Goju made little effort to flee the city, content in the strength of their position, while Ninube and the beasts of the Shadowlands fought to eradicate the armies of the Empire. If the soldiers of Rokugan could only seize hold of the outer city and the plains, perhaps they could launch an assault against the Goju still within the inner gates. Until then, it was the duty of the Elemental Masters to keep the inner city at bay and hold the great steel gate to Goju's domain closed.

The visions had plagued Hochiu since he set foot on this cursed plain. The lost souls of samurai flashed before him, telling the tales of how they died on the way to the Eternal City. Hochiu could not make them leave, and he could not ignore their words. Something about what they said triggered a rage within him, a fury that only flame quenched.

*I am Hiruma, of the line of the Crab scouts, and I know the Shadowlands better than anyone.*

Hochiu covered his eyes as the spirit rose before him. "Return to Jigoku," he told it, but it hovered in the air above the ground with hands outstretched. Agasha Gennai stepped in front of the failing Master of Fire, stirring the winds into a tempest and hurling back the arrows of undead archers.

"Watch your back, boy!" Gennai said scathingly. "There is too much for me to do to take care of someone who should be my peer!"

He was right. Too young, too untrained . . . perhaps there was too much of his father left in him, Hochiu thought. Their meeting at Morikage had been brief, but he still remembered Isawa Tsuke's words. *You can never avoid your destiny . . . only cheat it for a time.* Hoichu labored to continue, pouring lightning and flames upon the city of Volturum and defending himself with a white heat that burned arrows and melted the metal sword blades of those who dared approach him.

*This is what my father would have done at Ootosan Uchi,* Hoichu thought to himself as he fought, *if he had lived long enough to find the path.*

The hillside shifted, and another legion of Shadow thrust themselves toward the gate, urgently seeking the way through toward the armies on the plain. The city stood on a tall hillside, its forgotten buildings crumbled and fallen. Below, on the wide terrain of the Shadowlands, a festering marsh bordered against a dry, dust-filled plain. The body of the Empire's armies fought there, with only a few brave legions forcing their way into the city, fighting the Goju minions with all of their strength until their faceless bodies fell before Oblivion's Gate.

"Where is Goju Adorai?" Taeruko called, desperate to find the Master of the Shadow. "He must be within the city somewhere. But why have we not felt his wrath? What labor keeps him from the battle?" None of the samurai who passed the Elemental Masters could answer—they had not seen the Lord of Darkness. He was somewhere within the city, most likely, tearing at the stone that bound Jigoku to the world. Once the gate had turned to Shadow, the lands of the dead would follow, and Rokugan's ancestors would be destroyed.

*I walked through the armies as they rose on this bloody dawn. I saw their eyes.*

The visions flashed before Hochiu's staring eyes, and he struggled to contain them. There was too much to do—a distraction could mean not only his own death, but also the deaths of the thousand samurai below in the plains. They had to contain the Shadow within the city, or the armies of the Empire would be lost.

Another legion, this time of brave Lion, passed through the gate that the Elemental Masters guarded. Their commander saluted the Master of Fire and gave his lieutenant the order to charge. Hochiu watched them move through the city streets, fighting against shadows that detached from buildings and moved of their own accord. He saw the Ikoma troops begin to fight among themselves as Goju shinobi magic infiltrated and corrupted their numbers.

"We have to help them," Hochiu said falteringly, unsure of how.

"It can't be done, cousin," Isawa Tomo murmured. His golden aura spread out from his pale skin, illuminating the hilltop. "If a larger group enters, the oni and their horde will defeat the armies on the plain. Fewer, and they have no hope of reaching the gate at all."

"Where is the gate? I will go, and we shall see if magic can help destroy the Goju's power."

"Deep within the city, there is a building whose walls curve upward like a giant seashell, cupping the empty sky within blackened fingers. In that coliseum, the arch rests. It is as large as a hundred humans, taller than any tree, and wider than ten horses side by side. It glows with a light unlike any other—but it is covered by the Darkness of the Shadow so that its light is hidden from us. You cannot possibly reach it. Even if you could fly, their servants would leap from the buildings to find you, and a single touch of their claws would strip you of your soul." Tomo's voice was sad, his face etched with grief. "I wish that I could let you go, but I cannot. I will not let you throw away your life on useless efforts. When the armies finish with the hordes on the plain, we will all enter the city at once."

"Even if they could . . . !" Hochiu shouted, tears filling his eyes as he pointed a cascade of fire down toward the enemies of the Empire. Oni singed and burned, screaming in anguish as their bodies exploded into white-hot flames. ". . . By then, it will be too late. We have to send someone—a troop of our finest yojimbo, or the Avalanche Guard—someone! Even now, the first Goju destroys the gate, slaughtering the spirits of Jigoku. How much longer can they stand?"

*I have never seen so many dead . . .*



Another ghost, another vision, and Hochiu closed his eyes to the spirit's tale. "Tomo-san!" He shouted. "You have seen the gate. What must be done?"

"We can do nothing," another voice said. Isawa Hochiu at first mistook it for another vision. He opened his eyes to the darkness of the Shadowlands, and he saw light within the city of Shadow, spilling out from deep within its walls. He heard the screams of the Goju as a golden light seared them, turning their flowing skin to ash. The man beside Hochiu smiled, gesturing at the rising brilliance. "Nothing . . . for now." He was not a tall man, but he was elegant, his emerald green eyes shining strangely beneath a tattered jingasa. Pale, white hair flowed down around his shoulders, and, for a moment, Hochiu mistook the stranger for a Crane. But the man wore no mon. His features were strange as he smiled, his teeth slightly pointed and his eyes brilliant with an inner light. "Watch, Master of Fire, and you will see the beginning of all that will come to pass."

"What is that glow?" Taeruko shouted toward Gennai. The Shugenja of Air looked down on the city of Shadows from his high vantage, carried aloft by wind. Around him, ten Scorpion bushi hovered, his protection against the oni and dark kansen of the air. Their blades flashed, whirling through the wind, and the Master of Air replied, "An army comes from the center of the city. But it is an army like none other I have seen . . ."

The Bayushi warrior shouted, "My lord Agasha, the army is moving toward us. Shall I signal Saigorei-sama and ask for the armies below to advance?"

"No." Gennai suddenly smiled, looking more closely at the golden spirit leading the charge. "I do not think the general of the allied armies needs to fight this foe—but he will wish to be here when the gates to Voltturnum are ours at last.

"Taeruko-san, raise a path from the city down to those on the field. Keep it clear of oni. Hochiu-san, suppress the Shadows within the gate. They fear your fire and the light it brings, and your will can drive them back long enough for these spirits to make it out of the city." Gennai raised his hands, and his voice filled the air, riding on wind with the echoes of thunder. As the others hurried to aid him, the Master of Air sent a gale sweeping through the Shadow city, clearing the streets. The Shadow within Voltturnum's walls let out a cry of anger, unable to swarm upon the golden army and destroy them before they could escape.

The massive gates of Voltturnum groaned, weight pressing against them as the Goju struggled to fight against the combined will of the Five Masters. Ningen stood his ground, his eyes clear and peaceful, and the metal gates simply did not move.

"Now, Ningen-san!" Gennai shouted from on high. "Open them!"

When he did, an army of golden spirits rode gleaming horses through the gates to the city of Shadow, their iron-shod hooves stirring up the stone and ground. A thousand samurai, bloodied from combat and shouting ancient battle cries of the Empire, raced past, and Hochiu stared at their stalwart faces.

Before them, pausing his charger to see that the last one made it through the city's wall, was the Emperor of all of Rokugan—Toturi the First. His skin bathed in a golden aura, he wore ancient armor and bore an unknown blade, lifting his battle standard with confidence. "To me!" he shouted, and the armies behind him roared in eagerness. "There is your enemy! There are your children, your children's sons, and the heart of the Empire. As you have sworn to me, so you have sworn to aid them."

His body was pure, his heart true, and Hochiu could see no trace of the shattered Emperor who had ruled Rokugan for the last three years. As he commanded them in great, ringing tones, the samurai who followed him cheered. The armies charged past the city gate, launching themselves from the hopeless battle in the city down toward the great plain where Shadow and Shadowlands alike fought to destroy the armies of the Empire. Perhaps, with these strange reinforcements, the tide of the battle would change.

When the first rank of spirit samurai met the enemy, a great shout went up from the allied armies of the Empire.

"My lord!" Hochiu cried, his eyes wide. "Can someone not continue the battle in Voltturnum? What of the inner city?"

Toturi's eyes were grave, his face lined with concern. "Of those who came with me out of Oblivion's Gate," he said from atop his prancing spirit-steed, "more than half died fighting Adorai within the city's

heart. The others became tainted the moment they set foot within the city. This place is filled with Fu Leng's diseased power—the Taint is as strong here as the Shadow, and we cannot fight both. The Empire cannot continue its battle with such losses. It was only because of your bravery, and that of the Elemental Masters," Toturi nodded to the others, "that we escaped the inner city to fight this day." As Ningen forced the steel gate to close behind the last of the spirit army, Toturi turned his great steed and followed the others into war.

*I know the demon hordes are not finished with us.*

*There is more to come, over the horizon, and we must plunge onward.*

"There must be a way," Hochiu thought to himself, continuing to battle while the armies of the Empire fought around him. "A way for someone to reach the gate—a way to defeat them. This battle is for nothing if we cannot find the key!"

"You are the key, Hochiu-san," a voice spoke softly, and Hochiu was amazed to hear it over the roar of his own flames. He turned to see the strange, white-haired samurai watching him.

"Who are you?" the Master of Fire asked.

"I have no name, Hochiu. None that you would understand."

Shouts rose from the battle below as the Naga fighters released another volley of deadly arrows. The wind coiled about the flying shafts, guiding them toward the Shadow creatures on the inner walls with unerring accuracy. Crystal flashed in scattered sunlight, piercing black bone and faceless flesh. The pale samurai smiled, and the wind ceased.

"What are you . . . ?" Hochiu asked, but this time his question showed that he understood the creature that bowed politely before him.

"I am here to help you as my companions aid your armies. The inner city is well defended, and no one can reach the gate in time. Even now, Goju completes his ritual, and the stone of Oblivion's Gate turns black and dead. Soon, all of Jigoku will be the same."

"Toturi's armies could not survive the blasphemies within the inner city—how can we?" Hochiu's voice held little hope, but his face held an eagerness to try.

The man smiled. "No human can do it, Hochiu, you are correct. But I can."

Hochiu shook his head, restoring the fire from his hands with a quick word and a gesture. "I cannot go. There is too much to do here. Without me . . ." Hochiu looked at the other Elemental Masters, hope dying on his features. "They need me."

"Yes, Hochiu, they do. But the Empire needs you more." The man's eyes were haunted by hidden fears, but he smiled a strangely sharpened grin. "Who else can go? Taeruko?"

The Master of Earth's voice floated through the air as if she were there to answer. "I cannot leave. Without me, the gate will fall and the Shadow will trap our armies below. The Earth's strength is needed here. Her stone protects us."

"Tomo?"

"I have been beyond the gate . . ." Tomo answered, and Hochiu saw the man's face within the flames of his own sorcery. "And I am needed here. There are too many samurai who need me, fallen to the Taint and their own wounds. If I go, they will all die, and there will be no one left to fight for."

The pale samurai gestured, and the face within the flames changed again. "Or Gennai?"

Gennai did not answer, but Hochiu saw him commanding the Phoenix samurai from above, giving them insight to their opponents' movements, lifting them above the ground with his magic to protect them from the claws and Taint of their enemies. Without Gennai, the Phoenix would fall—and Shiba Tsukune's battle cry echoed in the vision. She needed him for his wisdom and his strength. Gennai could not go, not while she lived.

And Hochiu would not trade her life for his own.

"I will follow you," Hochiu said resolutely. "But I will need a yojimbo. If I am to die, then I will die as a Phoenix, fighting beside my family."

*(continued on page 26)*



# News from Court

by Andy Heckt

Members of the Assembly,

The court of Toturi the First again holds sway in Rokugan. The Shadow was defeated, but before us now lies a foe we fear to face—our ancestors. Many of the spirits of our forefathers and -mothers have refused to return to Jigoku, and among them, the Tyrant, Hantei XVI, holds dominion, with the feared Crab general Hida Tsuneo at his side. The Spirit Wars rage!

## The Favor

The landscape lay scorched. The dead lay twisted among the horde that had defended this place. What they had defended lay empty and desolate—closed to mortals. At this scene was heard a whisper. Closer, the whisper became a murmur. It came from a body resting next to the gate. As the body was rolled aside, the murmuring became a clear calling and the hand reached down and picked up the sword . . . .

As I have been unable to locate my wily companion, Taka, this issue's favor will be used for a vote on which clan should recover the Bloodsword Revenge from the field surrounding Oblivion's Gate. The clan (or Shadowlands) with the most votes will have one of its Personalities recover the sword. Whichever of the seven major clans (or Shadowlands) has the least number of votes will be connected to the sword's focus. And you don't want to be the focus of this sword! To cast your vote, you'll need to use your cover letter.

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As the Four Winds story-arc has its focus on certain clans (others only see individuals), only clan letters for the Crab, Crane, Dragon, Lion, Phoenix, Scorpion, Unicorn, and Shadowlands are planned for production. Ratlings will get a letter when their clan is released, or

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(continued from page 19)

"Do not fear, shugenja." The creature smiled, his emerald eyes crinkling with a strange joy. "You will not be alone."

*Determination. We cannot falter; we cannot fail.*

"Away, spirits!" Hochiu screamed, burning the ground with fury. The ghost vanished, surprised by the Master of Fire's violence, but his words still echoed in Isawa Hochiu's mind.

"Let me help you," a voice called through the fire's blaze, and Hochiu felt strong hands lifting him from the ground. He had not even realized that he had fallen to his knees, so strong had his anger been. Looking up into the face of the samurai, he saw a distant beauty, all the more magnificent because of the blood and violence of their surroundings. "I am . . . Shiba Saiko," she said, faltering under his gaze. "A yojimbo to the shugenja known as Agasha Fukishi. But now my master is dead, and I fight to die."

"Then you fight with me," Hochiu said.

The pale samurai smiled. "Then we are prepared?"

Unseen, Shiba Ningen had approached the hillock. Now he slipped his hand into the hand of the pale stranger. "Are you taking away my cousin?" he asked innocently.

With swift sorrow, the man knelt before the small child, looking into the eyes of the Acolyte of Void. "You know that we must go."

Ningen nodded. "You are brave." He looked at the three companions, his eyes lingering on the Shiba yojimbo. "All of you."

Hochiu said, "You will tell the others that we have gone. Tell them that if we do not return, it was my greatest honor to fight beside them. Especially . . . Taeruko." Hochiu flushed lightly. "Give her . . . everything," he finished lamely, unable to say the words.

Ningen smiled. "Do not worry, Master of Fire. You will tell her yourself." The young Void shugenja smiled once more at the pale samurai. "May I say goodbye to you?"

"Of course," said the man. Placing his arms around the boy, he drew Ningen into a hug. Ignoring protocol, the man and the boy whispered together for a few minutes, but whatever they said was lost in the wind that surrounded them. When he was done, the man stood and the boy bowed low. Then, without another word, Ningen continued toward the city's inner gates, readying his will to force them open once more.

"What did he tell you?" the yojimbo said, awed at such a display of affection.

The white-haired samurai looked after the boy with a downcast smile. "Only what I needed to hear: that I will not be forgotten." He started, rubbing his hands together in a sudden gesture of unease. "Come. The gates will only open for a moment, so that the Goju cannot escape to threaten the armies in the outer city."

Ningen placed his chubby hands on the gate's metal surface, whispering to it as his fingers traced the ancient scrollwork.

*All I ask is that you are brave enough to follow.*

Stepping back from the gate, Ningen continued to chant, and a black inky substance flowed over the steel doors. It was not the blackness of Shadow, but rather a void filled with stars. As the tremendous gates swung open of their own accord, the ink spread between them, a barrier of void against a city of blackness and foul shadows.

"Go now," the child whispered, and Hochiu began to step forward. The pale man in white caught his arm.

"Not that way," the samurai said, his features shifting. "Like this." His body began to elongate, the arms turning to wisps of smoke and the legs extending from his body into great haunches. Hochiu and Shiko stepped backwards, awed by the transformation as the white-haired samurai closed his eyes in exultation.

The body stretched impossibly, its color shifting, scales gathering on the man's skin.

When he was done, the man had vanished like a summer's sudden rain, and in his place rested a Dragon. The eyes, great, glowing emeralds of power and unfathomable wisdom, stared out from glittering scaled skin, and his claws extended in a gesture of peace.

"You will not walk, Master of Fire. You will ride, and your yojimbo with you. Only this way can you withstand the Taint of the city."

"I cannot ask you to do this . . ."

"You have no choice. I will accept the burden of the Taint so that you may live to save the Empire. It is the way of things. It is our only option."

"Is it honorable to sacrifice an immortal Dragon so that mortals can live?" Hochiu breathed.

"Come with me, samurai," the Dragon roared, "if you wish to change the world."

After that, there was no argument.

*I look out at the oni's armies, and I see our death in their eyes.*

Voltturnum's inner city sped beneath them, only a few feet away, as the Dragon's sinewy body twisted and turned through the coiled streets. Beneath arched parapets and high stone walls the great kami flew, its serpentine body shining light down upon buildings and stones that had seen nothing but shadow for a thousand years.

Yet as they passed, the Dragon's eternal light began to fade, drifting into nothingness as the Taint took its toll. "You must stop!" Hochiu yelled. "We can still return to the outer gates!" But the Dragon paid no heed. This was not a city that allowed second chances—it was not a place where failure was rewarded with anything but death. Though the Dragon felt its immortal soul recoil from the touch of the Taint, still it sped forward, bearing hope beneath the breath of silent winds.

At last, the great coliseum stood before them, arched and black with age and darkness. Its pillars, once gleaming and bright, now stood twisted and corrupted by the shinobi of the ninja. Their tall trunks shifted as though alive, moving with errant grace beneath a sky so dark that the light of the sun could not pierce it. Within the building, screams of anguish fought with cries of derision and foul laughter.

Landing before the ruined archway that led toward the light, the Dragon's form shifted abruptly, collapsing in upon itself until only the shell of the man remained. His white hair, once beautiful and long, had become gray and tattered, falling in thick clumps from green-tinged skin. He fought for breath in rasping pulls, his frame twisting with Taint, the bones of his legs breaking under the weight of his landing. Only the emerald eyes were unchanged.

"Hochiu," the Dragon of Air murmured. "Hurry. There is . . . little time. He knows that you are here . . . he will be waiting for you, Hochiu . . ."

Stumbling back, the Master of Fire nodded. "Thank you. For everything."

"Remember . . ." the Dragon whispered once more, and then his body began to change, falling to ash and blowing in the wind that swept through Voltturnum's most secret heart. A dragon, no longer of air, but of ash and shadow, slithered away down corridors of darkness, hiding from the light that had cursed it for its valor. Within seconds, the road was clear.

"We must hurry," Seiko's voice said, close by. Yet with hers, Hochiu could hear the presence of thousands of others, their fingers pressing against his skin as if to drag him into the building's dark corridors.

*I hear them. I remember.*

*The ogres fled. They had no choice but to be driven into the flames.*

*Do they curse me, still?*

Hochiu reached for his yojimbo's arm, drawing his sword from its saya as she prepared her spear. "If Goju sees me, he will slaughter me without mercy. We won't be able to get close enough to use this." He held aloft a katana made of crystal, blessing the Scorpion who gave him the blade.



"Then he will have to see you where you are not."

The corridors were long and dark, with flashes of light spilling from the arena before them. Hochiu followed Seiko's dark figure through the darkness, trusting the bushi to guide him safely. Gradually, the darkness eased, and the shadows that had hung from the walls and pressed close against Hochiu's flesh fell back. "Stay here," Seiko whispered, and her voice sounded husky. The shadows covered her face as her fingers touched him lightly across the lips. "You will know when to strike."

The room that once held the gate was wide open, dead grass piercing broken stone. A broken bottle of sake rested against the gate's lower arch, and dark hoofprints covered the dirt of the massive audience chamber. Broken walls surrounded the room, with easily enough space to hold a thousand humans. Hochiu swallowed heavily, looked down at the gate, and saw shadows fluttering wildly through the chamber.

Something lived there—something of darkness and deception.

*I saw her today. They were far from my position, but I swear she felt my eyes follow her.*

Hochiu stepped out onto the ledge that led to Volturum's gate, watching as the shadows that guarded the massive structure twisted toward him. "Goju!" he shouted, and his voice echoed through the massive audience chamber. "Face me!"

The shadows were approaching cautiously, their wide eyes dark within darkness. Hochiu laughed when he saw them move toward him. "I am the Master of Fire," he said arrogantly. "Do you believe that your claws can harm me, when I have already traveled so far?" For an instant, he raised his hand as if to pelt them with steaming lava and tongues of flame, but then stopped. "No," he said. "I will save my anger for Goju—whose black sorcery is worth my time—and not for you beasts who pretend to serve him. You are dogs, nothing more, and you do not even deserve my amusement."

"Well said, shugenja," said one of the shadows of the Gate as it detached itself, forming into a tall, thin male whose red eyes glowed beneath a thin jingasa. His hands faded into shadow, surrounded and caressed by his minions. He gave a soft whisper, and three of them leapt toward Hochiu.

The shugenja spun, cutting through them with the crystal blade of his yari, severing the darkness with light and watching as they recoiled in pain. Hochiu danced aside as whirling blades spun from the sorcerer's hands, their black edges dripping with Taint and poison.

He lunged. His staff caught one of the shadow-walkers in the leg, twisted, severing the limb, and hurled the beast into its fellows. Two vanished into darkness, while the third screamed in agony, its leg purified by the rich touch of the stone and fading into ash.

He dashed toward the infernal sorcerer, his spear held before him, but Goju faded into the darkness, reappearing at the end of the thin ledge. "Not yet, Master of Fire," Adorai said mockingly, releasing another torrent of black acid from his fingertips. It splashed upon the ground, nearly shattering the thin stone, and Hochiu leapt through the air to find footing on the coliseum floor before the thin parapet fell into a pit of shadow.

Meanwhile, Jigoku continued to seethe and burn, its plains destroyed by the black magic of the Goju. Hochiu saw the armies, led by Yoritomo and the Thunders, gather for one final assault against the ninja of the Shadow.

"You can do nothing to save them," Adorai said, using the Master of Fire's distraction to his advantage. He plunged one hand into the master's back, tearing at Hochiu's ribcage and digging his fingers into the shugenja's heart. "Watch them die, Phoenix, and then go to join them. Your death will be all the more sweet once I have stolen your hope."

"I . . . will always . . . have . . . hope," the shugenja gasped, dangling on the end of Goju's fist. He twisted, plunging his spear into the ninja's shoulder and forcing Goju to drop him before the sorcerer could retrieve the heart from within his ribs. Blood poured from the Phoenix's body, but he did not look up at the Goju who stood before him.

"Now . . ." the wounded one whispered, reaching out her hand to someone in the shadows.

Before Goju could spin around to see who the Master of Fire summoned forth, the spirits of Jigoku clustered around his face, spending their spirits of golden glowing essence, dragging the sorcerer back with flashes of fire and light. All of the spirits, all of the voices that had clustered around the Master of Air revealed themselves in a single white light to the infernal sorcerer. Thousands of samurai who had died at the hands of the Shadow freed themselves of their dishonor by giving their souls in the final fight.

Beyond death, beyond dishonor, they struck at the Goju, driving him back from the impostor at his feet. He screamed, reaching taloned hands to clutch at the errant spirits of Jigoku, clawing and cursing them. One final voice whispered in Hochiu's ear as he stepped out from his hiding place at the edge of the coliseum floor, whispering its blessing before it gave its eternal soul at the Goju's hands.

*I am a healer, not a bushi. I do all I can to heal their wounds. But I cannot save them.*

"But I can," said Isawa Hochiu, echoing the spirit voice's sentiment as the crystal katana whistled toward Goju Adorai's neck. The sorcerer spun, facing the blade just before it seared through his neck. A final, agonizing scream tore the stones from their resting place. "Why?" he asked the Shosuro actress, looking down at her bruised face.

"Because when this began, we were nothing—your clan destroyed, mine exiled. Where we were both weak, now we are strong—together, as it was meant to be. We have redeemed ourselves, you and I, both Phoenix and Scorpion," Shiko said, blood trickling from the corner of her mouth. Kneeling beside her, Hochiu removed her cloak and looked down at the terrible wound. "My father's father, when the Empire began, was Phoenix. I am his daughter, and my heart is true. Where he could not serve you, Isawa, I could. But now you must kill me . . . before the Shadow steals my soul."

"You have done more than redeem yourself, Scorpion," he said quietly, watching as the gate's golden light faded into nothingness. "You have given yourself—and your clan—new life. May you find your next rebirth in peace." Her death was quiet, unmarked by ceremony or hymns, and, when it was finished, Hochiu placed his cloak over her face, arranging the folds of silk so that it became a mask of his own making.

She would enter the underworld as a Scorpion should.

The darkness faded around Volturnum's great walls, and the sun burst through the clouds, shattering stone and shadow with their power. Rays of sunlight danced upon the earth around the ancient city, renewing the Empire's hope and driving back the beasts of the Shadowlands. "Forever will this city be sacred to us," the Sun spoke, his voice echoing through the Celestial Heavens. "Let it never more be seen in darkness. Not by day . . ."

"And never by night," replied the soft voice of Lady Moon.

*I am the Moon, and I am the Sun. I am all that the Empire has ever been or will be. I give you this gift because you are brave enough to remember. You are Akodo—born of duty, honor, and bravery. That will become your soul, now that you are free. And those who once were shall be Akodo once more, to teach their kin the ways of the Empire and give your honored house rebirth in a new age, a new Rokugan.*

*There will always be more stories—for those valiant enough to live them.*



# L5R on the Web

by Tige Rustad

A large percentage of **Legend of the Five Rings** players are connected to the Internet, and others have access through school, work, or public access. More and more, the Internet is becoming the best means to provide fast information to players, stores, and potential players. Many fans have created their own sites with materials ranging from news to storylines, from jokes to FAQs. There are so many sites that no single article can do justice to them all, so I hope that Wizards of the Coast will continue to find space for occasional updates. For now, I'd like to hit some highlights that I've found and that my group uses.

By far the best way to communicate with the design team, be on top of the latest rulings, and interact with other L5R people is the L5RINFO email list-server. (Other list-servers include L5RRPG, L5RTrades, and L5RGame.) You can find instructions for signing up at [www.wizards.com/L5R/imperialcourt/maillinglist.asp](http://www.wizards.com/L5R/imperialcourt/maillinglist.asp). It's pretty free-form, but there are some etiquette rules to follow. You can ask questions directly of the design team, find out plans for L5R, discuss deck strategies and card combos, ask rules questions, discuss storyline implications, and so much more.

A number of news sites have come up, as well: [www.thepearlherald.com](http://www.thepearlherald.com), [www.boyung.com/L5R/](http://www.boyung.com/L5R/), and [http://welcome.to/the\\_stronghold](http://welcome.to/the_stronghold) are three sites to check out. They are updated at least weekly and differ in their content, though they all contain deck ideas, strategy tips, links to other sites, and discussion boards and polls.

The top site for me and many other players is [www.deathseeker.com](http://www.deathseeker.com). It has undergone many changes over the years but still draws many visitors. It has a free-form posting site, weekly polls, a searchable archive of L5RINFO server messages from the design team and others, and auto-posts of important information that the design team sends to the L5RINFO server.

If you're looking to buy singles, [www.jcecards.com](http://www.jcecards.com) and <http://iab.interkan.net/cgi-bin/index.cgi> are my sites of choice. JCE Cards is an excellent source, and John is great with service. The IAB is the Imperial Auction Block, and, like eBay and the rest, it is "buyer beware"; though I've had no problems, I've heard of

some.

For the absolute best source for story information, my choice has to be the Miya Archives at [www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Cavern/7378/Rokugan/index.html](http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Cavern/7378/Rokugan/index.html). (I just wish the URL were shorter!) Here you'll find all of the rulebook stories, clan letters, a family roster, and stories from Ree that first appeared who knows where.

Lastly, for rules and FAQ info, Zen Faulkes has [www.planet.net.au/~zfaulkes/o-ushi.html](http://www.planet.net.au/~zfaulkes/o-ushi.html), which he updates more often than Jeff Alexander's site ([www.zdi.net/jwa/l5r/index.html](http://www.zdi.net/jwa/l5r/index.html)) since Jeff took over design. Both have indexed guides to rulings, though, which is invaluable to people who play in tournaments.

I know there are other sites, especially for specific clans or in foreign languages. Maybe we'll do an article on those another time.



# Phoenix Clan Summary

by Edward Bolme

The Phoenix Clan have long been known as the premier practitioners of magic, as well as the foremost advocates of peace in the Empire.

In the wake of the Scorpion Clan Coup, the vengeful shugenja Yogo Junzo began his betrayal of the Empire. For a thousand years, the Scorpion Clan had safeguarded the dreaded Twelve Black Scrolls. Now, in revenge for the destruction of the Scorpion Clan, Yogo Junzo began to open his scrolls and unleash their dark magics upon Rokugan. Junzo himself was immediately twisted into an undead creature by the powers of the first scroll he opened, and with his corruption he began to serve the dark god Fu Leng.

The Elemental Masters of the Phoenix felt the spiritual tremors wash across Rokugan. As it coincided with the mysterious wasting disease that plagued the land, the Phoenix could feel spiritual corruption clawing at the Empire's soul. They knew evil was on the rise.

The Council, the ruling body of the clan made up of the five Elemental Masters, tried to fight this evil effect but found they lacked the knowledge to do so. After careful consideration, they decided that knowledge is power and that, to have the power to defeat Yogo Junzo and his dark magics, the Phoenix themselves needed to open and study those few Black Scrolls they had in their possession. This was not a task considered lightly; the Masters knew that they were gambling with their very souls, but they were willing to risk everything to save the Empire from Fu Leng's grasp.

The secrets they discovered gave them more power, yet with this power they also grew ever more hungry and began to seek out more scrolls to open. Thus, the Phoenix Masters, despite all of their precautions, allowed the corruption of the Black Scrolls into themselves. And, once corrupted, their noble goals were easily twisted by Fu Leng and replaced with darker aims.

At the Day of Thunder, the Elemental Masters gathered for the last time. One, the Master of Fire, stood with the forces of Fu Leng against the rest of the Council, his unnatural fires scouring the Phoenix forces before he was slain. Isawa Tadaka, the Phoenix Clan Thunder, died attacking Fu Leng. Of the Elemental Council, only Isawa Kaede, the Mistress of the Void, survived the day.

Between the tides of war and the corruption of the Council, the Phoenix Clan, their lands, and their people were all but obliterated. With but a handful of samurai left, the clan began the slow process of rebuilding. Samurai and shugenja alike worked to purify the lands and preserve what little was left.

Kaede herself went to Otosan Uchi to marry Emperor Toturi the First.

When Emperor Toturi vanished on the anniversary of his coronation, the Empire was thrown into chaos. With no Emperor to restrain them, the Mantis Clan looked to expand their power. They were, after all, charged with adjudicating disputes in uncontrolled lands, and if the Phoenix could not defend themselves, then they had to consider Phoenix lands uncontrolled.

At the same time, the Naga besieged the Dragon Clan at Sleeping Mountain, alarmed at the experiments by Hitomi, the Dragon daimyo, on the servant of the Shadow, the faceless threat from the dawn of time. The Naga were not the only ones concerned; the Agasha family as a whole left the Dragon Clan and moved to Phoenix lands, embracing Shiba Tsukune as their new daimyo.

Toturi was eventually found—he had been hidden at Morikage Castle and guarded by faceless ninja. After he had returned to Otosan Uchi, it became clear that he was under the influence of the Shadow itself. When the Kami Shinjo returned from the Burning Sands and assaulted Otosan Uchi to destroy “the usurper Toturi,” Kaede stood by her husband. As Shinjo's forces entered the palace, Kaede spirited Toturi away to the safety of Phoenix lands.

There, Toturi realized that the Shadow's grip on his soul could only be severed by death. The Shadow knew this as well and moved the seal the gate to the afterlife, forever separating Rokugan from its past. As the Phoenix samurai led the way to Oblivion's Gate, Toturi committed seppuku and entered the spirit world. There, he rallied the samurai of ages past and helped defeat the Shadow.

## Phoenix Top Ten

1	Art Reid	1909
2	Shawn Williams	1515
3	Eusebio Goncalves	1316
4	Thomas Huco	1165
5	Jean Pierre Miet	798
6	Alshin Coleman	776
7	Jared Devlin-sherer	758
8	James Kennedy	725
9	Gordon Lum	697
10	Mike Wantman	690



# Flaming Chicken 101

by Frank "Yasuki Taka" Chafe

If you ever wanted to know how the Phoenix serve up the finest culinary chicken meals here is a brief lesson. It's quick, fast and very spicy, but fills the stomach and lets you truly enjoy the aroma of this culinary masterpiece. (Cards are in **BOLD**)

Recipe (basic ingredients):

Start with a Sacred Temple of the Phoenix Culinary Stronghold cookbook. This will give you all of the directions you will need.

Add one **Dark Moto Sensei** to guide your hand for adding the spice, and that will be good. Especially since they know how to serve it up in a hurry.

From there the ingredients are kind of dicey.

For the Base of the deck (what you gaijin call it the Dynasty side of things), start with the following:

Add 3 **Moto Tsume** to help you prepare the bones for a nice after battle snack.

Add 3 **Doji Adoka** to deal with a polluted ingredients. He's good at purifying them.

Add 3 **Kitsu Gongson** for that extra bit of lion energy, a good spicy ingredient.

Add 3 **Jama Suru** and 1 **Exp Jama Suru** to deal with all of the blood and fluids.

Add 3 **Oni no Gorusei**—this helps with the flavor half of the deck (I'll explain later).

Add 3 **Uragirimono**—Cause all good Rokugani meals have to have some noodles.

Add 3 **Kukanchi**—Because I wouldn't want you to be afraid if you didn't have enough of the ingredients. It helps fill the void.

Add 1 **Exp Soshi Bantaru**—because the last ingredient I wouldn't want you to be afraid to add.

And lastly, ask yourself, "Do you like **Oni no Akuma**?" If you do add 1 of him and 1 of his Exp version as well. For that added kick.

Preparation of the Ingredients (The rest of the Dynasty Deck)

Now listen closely, as this is a closely guarded secret. Are you listening? Ah . . . good. Under a **Moon and Sun**,

**Kachiko Promises** that **The 38th Hantei Falls** during a **Winter Warfare** would be a bad thing. So it is your **Duty to the Empire** to take those **Desperate Measures** and begin **Enlistment** of whatever assistants you might need. This dish will allow you to receive the **Benefices of the Emperor** if you stop **The Return of Fu Leng**, and bring about the **Doom of the Dark Lord**. Remember when you are preparing **The Great Feast** to make sure everything is done right or you will not be given your **Imperial Ambassadorship**. But if you do, then there will be cause for a **New Year's Celebration**. These are my **Final Words** to you. Use them well and you will find that you have had much **Wisdom Gained**.

Now for the flavor! (what you Gaijin call the Fate Deck)

You must ask yourself a few questions when adding the flavor!

1. Are you a Phoenix? If not I would consider taking an **Oath of Fealty**. I mean we have won every major tournament of the year we must be pretty good. Add 3.

2. Do you get the impression that sometimes you are **Touching the Void**? Then you are obviously an admirer of Isawa Kaede. Excellent, you have great taste in our master chefs. (her specialty is cheese, I hear). Add 3 of these as well as 1 **Ring of Void**.

3. Do you get excited under **Evil Portents**? If you don't you will after having this meal. Add 3.

4. Do you like leaving your enemies asking themselves, "How did you do that?" You do? Great. Add 3 **Forgotten Lessons**.

And now the flavor . . . **Lesser Oni!!!** Add to fill out the rest of the pot (26). Stir well and it serves 4-5 provinces in short order. Good luck!

## The Phoenix Toolshed\*

by Leon "The Master of Mujina" Phillips

\*too big to be a toolbox

The Ruins of Isawa Castle are rarely used. After all, if you wanted cheap spells and shugenja you'd use the original stronghold. Up until recently, the Eternal Halls of the Shiba was the stronghold almighty. The Ruins was (and generally still is) considered the weak phase of the Phoenix. However, as several kihos come out with every set, the Ruins box just gets stronger every time.

The following deck just shouldn't have worked when I originally put it together for the fun of it. Phoenix players call it an abomination. In 40/40 environments, 50/300 decks aren't supposed to do well. I'm constantly tweaking it, but one thing remains steady...every time a new kiho comes out, I put three into the deck.

There are so many useful kihos or combos in the deck it's scary. I've won with Hate's Heart/Doom of the Dark Lord, honor, Master of Five, Enlightenment, and Military. In one tournament alone, I won by three different conditions (and came one turn away from a fourth victory condition).

Against decks that do one thing really well, it performs solidly. Against decks that do little things en masse, it has problems. Considering that tournament scenes are flowing with one trick ponies, this deck performs well in tournaments. In the five tournaments it's competed in, twice it's only finished around the .500 mark, but the other three times it has taken second place (in one 8 person and two 16 person tournaments).

A quick recognition of your opponent's deck theme is vital, and so is keeping your stronghold unbowed as much as possible after the first turn or two. Use the Grove of the Five Masters for non-surprise kihos (after all, your opponent sees that one), and use the stronghold to pull out that life saver/clinchier.

The key to doing well (and more importantly, in a timely fashion) is to read through each kiho at least once. Just get an idea of what you can do. You don't need to know the names of the kihos (that's the benefit of the stronghold...you just need to bow and search).

Have fun with it... modify it... tweak it... and realize the ultimate utility of the Phoenix Toolshed!

Specific uses for cards:

Isawa Taeruko (great for getting Empty Crevasse or Bridged Pass), Isawa Hochiu (the only fire actions, unfortunately), Hanoshi (Can't think of a good victory? Play Agasha Tunnels and go stomp, stomp), Bhakarash (thinking of switching to all three Bhakarash, but mobility is good), Naka Kuro exp (Almost as good as Kaede, but the honor requirement hurts), Isawa Kaede exp (She is awesome once she comes out), Mystic Ground (Imperial Surveyor makes these work twice each!), Palace of the Emerald Champion (You can gain the honor and then switch it for a Mystic Ground if honor is your chosen path for the game).

## The Ruins of Isawa Castle

### Dynasty:

#### Holdings

2x Bridged Pass  
2x Empty Crevasse  
3x Merchant Caravan  
3x Silver Mine  
3x Jade Works  
2x Sanctified Temples  
2x Imperial Surveyor  
1x Grove of the Five Masters

#### Personalities

3x Asako Hosigeru  
3x Isawa Taeruko  
2x Isawa Hochiu  
3x Hanoshi  
2x Ghedai  
1x Bhakarash  
1x Isawa Norikazu  
1x Isawa Norikazu exp 2  
1x Naka Kuro exp  
1x Isawa Kaede exp

#### Regions

3x Mystic Ground  
3x Agasha Tunnels  
1x Palace of the Emerald

#### Events

Regions of Rokugan  
Naga Storm Mirumoto Mountain  
Doom of the Dark Lord  
Kachiko Calls to Thunder  
Emperor's Peace  
Blessings of Isawa  
Death of the KiRin  
The Master of Five  
Sacrifices for our Future  
Kolot Duplicate  
Imperial Gift

#### Fate deck

3x "every" kiho in the game (except for the unique one from Heroes of Rokugan)

all Five Rings  
Ancestral Sword of the Phoenix  
12th Black Scroll  
Mempo of the Void  
3x Walking the Way  
2x Sharing the Strength of the Many  
3x Flooded Pass  
3x Entrapping Terrain  
3x Come One At A Time  
3x Where Shinsei Stood  
3x Take the Initiative  
Kaede Sensei  
Hantei Sensei  
Yoshi Sensei  
Hiruma Sensei



# The Dragon Clan Mountains: A Journey of Trials

## Part 2 of 2

by Cris Dornaus and Phil Lewis

In issue #16 we introduced you to three out of five trials that characters traveling in the Dragon lands might find. Here we present the last two trials.

### Test Four: Worldly Things

A great mountain spirit Dragon appears to the party. It is awe-inspiring as it emerges from a swirling cloud of multicolored smoke and breathes great goutts of flame. It demands to know why the samurai are trespassing upon its sacred mountains. If they tell the truth, no matter what that may be, it will allow them to pass but will demand that each character make a material sacrifice before they move on. Each character must offer it some physical thing that he or she has and that he or she truly values. If they offer something expendable or just not valuable relative to what the character actually has available, the Dragon will take the item and demand more. If a person has nothing of monetary value, then the Dragon will accept an item that would cause the person hardship to be without. For each item deemed worthy, the Dragon swallows it, purrs contentedly, and offers a few words of praise the giver. If a character refuses to give an item or argues that the one he or she gave should be good enough, the Dragon swallows the person whole, engulfing him or her in a single swift bite. Now, as far as the rest of the party is concerned, their companion is dead. Actually, he or she has been transported unharmed to the base of the mountain, where the real road ended (and where they started on the path into the Dragon Clan lands). Once all of the remaining characters have made their sacrifices, the Dragon fades away and they may continue on their journey. They soon discover that all of their items have

been returned, in better condition than they started. Normal katanas become fine quality, as do normal kimonos or other normal items. Gems become more valuable and coins double.

If they lie to, or attempt to deceive, the Dragon in any way, however, they will all instantly be transported back to the road as earlier mentioned. The spirit Dragon is a mystical being whom mortals cannot harm.

### Test Five: Never Give Up

A cliff bars the party's path, and the only choices are up and back. As it seems only about thirty feet tall and shows many small foot- and handholds, it does not appear to present too great a challenge. As a character begins to climb, he or she realizes that the wall seems to get taller and the ground seems to fall away rapidly. Soon, a howling wind begins to buffet the character, blowing sand and grit into his or her eyes. The character must keep climbing without turning back for any reason except to help another to climb.

The climb takes thirty minutes of continuous effort before the top finally seems to get closer. The climb will end in another fifteen minutes. If a climber stops for more than two minutes, or if a climber starts descending, then the thirty minutes start over. None of the climbers notice any rope thrown from the top, and as soon as a person is on the wall, any rope they may have been hanging onto disappears. After ten minutes of climbing, a character must start making stamina rolls starting with a TN of 5 that increases by 5 every ten minutes thereafter. Those with the Mountaineer skill and those particularly adept at climbing walls may add the appropriate skill.



### Ratling

1	Caleb Brown	127
2	Gregory Osborn	84
3	Jeremy Graham	83
4	Dale Theuset	59
5	Adam Weissmuller	49
6	Brandon Petitpren	39
7	Charles Baldwin	38
8	Ricardo Morales	36
9	John Pierce	35
10	Shaun Scott	33

# Second Edition Game Master's Guide

Winter 2000



Legend of the Five Rings

Role-playing Game





# The Spirit Wars Card List

## Actions

Ancestral Dictate	U
Ancestral Protection	R
Arriving at the Imperial Gates	U
Battle at White Shore Plain	U
Battle of Drowned Honor	C
Battle of Quiet Winds	C
Battle of Shallow Waters	C
Crab Tattoo	R
Dark Secrets	C
Fall on Your Knees	R
Fallen Ground	U
Guard the House	C
Hesitation	U
Infantry Charge	C
Interruption	U
Last Gift	C
Lay the Blame	C
Luring Tactics	U
Mara's Farewell	C
Moto Technique	R
Nightmare	U
Personal Sacrifice	C
Return for Training	U
Scaring the Masses	U
Scholarship	C
Sign of Weakness	U
Snow Crane Tattoo	R
Temptation	C
Three-Stone River	U
Through the Flames	C
Torii Tattoo	C
Weapons Cache	C
Where Tsunuri Fell	R
Witch Hunt	U
Witch Hunter's Accusation	U

## Events

Birth of the Anvil	R
Birth of the Sword	R
Birth of the Wolf	R
Earthquake at Otosan Uchi	R
Emperor's Favor	R
Fall of the Alliance	R
Imperial Census	R
Kamoko's Constellation	R
Revealing the Bastard	R
Revering the Past	R
Right to Rule	R
Sumai Match	R

## Followers

Asako Riders	R
Clay Soldiers	C
Empress's Guard	R
Fallen Legion	U
Inkyo	C
Old Debts	C
Oni Spawn	C

## Ratling Scroungers

Shiryo no Ch'I	R
Shiryo no Hotei	R
Shiryo no Nyoko	R
Shiryo no Rohata	R
Shiryo no Shoji	R
Shiryo no Taisa	R
Shiryo no Ujik-hai	R
Signal Corps	U
Spirit Hounds	C
Tsuko's Heart	U
Undead Legion	U
Warriors of the Great Climb	U
Yokai no Mizushai	R

## Holdings

Dragon Dancers	C
East Wall of Otosan Uchi	R
Emperor's Under-Hand	R
Intelligence Agent	U
North Wall of Otosan Uchi	R
Oni no Yamaso	C
Poorly Placed Garden	C
Shrine of the Evening Star	R
Simple Huts	C
South Wall of Otosan Uchi	R
Spirit Bells	U
Torii Arch	C
Wall of Bones	C
West Wall of Otosan Uchi	R

## Items

Back Banner	C
Bitter	R
Bronze Lantern	R
Honorable	R
Iron Mempo	C
Nage-yari	C
New Kimono	C
Shuriken	C
Sodegarami	C
Treaty	U

## Kihos

Ancient Knowledge	U
Beginning and End	R
Hitomi's Glare	R
Let the Spirit Move You	C
Mortal Flesh	U
Moving the Wind	U
War Paints	R
Yakamo's Smile	R

## Personalities

Akodo Ginawa (Exp. 4 Ginawa)	R
Akodo Ijasu	U
Akodo Quehao	R
Asako Misao	U
Bayushi Baku Exp.	R
Bayushi Paneki	C
Bayushi Yojiro Exp. 2	R
Chou-Sin	C
Daidoji Hachi	C
Doji Kurohito	U
Doji Meihu	U
Doji Reju (Exp. 2 Hitomi Reju)	R
Giuniko	C
Hantei XVI	F
Hida Hio	C
Hida Kuon	C
Hida Kuroda	C
Hida Sukune Exp. 2	R
Hida Tsuneo	R
Ide Gokun	U
Ikoma Tsai	C
Isawa Metigaru	C
Isawa Nakamuro	C
Kakita Kaiken Exp.	R
Kitsu Dejiko	C
Kitsune	C
Kohuri	C
Kuni Utage Exp.	R
Lalesha	C
Lsinyuan	C
Mirumoto Ukira	C
Mirumoto Uso Exp.	R
Miya Dosonu	U
Miya Yemi	U
Mizuichi	C
Mokoto	U
Morito (Exp. 2 Shinjo Morito)	R
Moshi Shanegon	U
Moto Hideyo	C
Moto Vordu	C
Noekam	U
Oni no Fushiki	C
Otomo Dsichi	R
Otomo Hoketuhime	C
Roshungi Exp.	R
Saigorei Exp.	R
Shasyahkar Exp.	R
Shaunasea	U
Shiba Aikune	C
Shiba Ningen Exp.	R
Shinjo Shono Exp.	R
Shosuro Chian Exp.	R
Soshi Angai	U
Suzume Roshi	C
Taikon	U
Tamori Chosai	C
Tamori Shaitung	U
Te'tik'kir	C
Togashi Mio	C
Tsi Yoji	U
Tsuruchi Okame	C
Uidori	U

## Usagi Gohei

Utaku Yu-Pan	U
Wutho	U
Yeiseo	C
Yoee'trr	U
Yoritomo Aramasu	
(Exp. 3 Bayushi Aramasu)	R
Yoritomo Kitao	C
Yoritomo Yukue Exp.	R

## Regions

Amaterasu's Furnace	U
Cliffs of Golden Tears	U
Cursed Ground	U
Fields of Darkness	C
Fields of the Sun	R
Great Crater	R
Knowing Lands and Giving Trees	U
Obsidian Statues	R
Quiet Tombs	C

## Sensei

Akodo Sensei	U
Kaiu Sensei	R
Lady of the Forest Sensei	U
Miya Sensei	R
Suzume Sensei	U
Tsuko Sensei	F
Uona Sensei	F
Wasp Sensei	U

## Spells

Call the Spirit	R
Devastation of Beiden Pass	C+R
Master Smith Ascends	C
Ruin and Devastation	U
Soul Sword	C
Star-Filled Steel	U
Turn of Fate	U

## Strongholds

Noble Halls of the Akodo	F
Shrine of the Spirits	F
Towers of the Asako	F

# L5R in Sacramento

Greetings, honored members of the Imperial Assembly from Valley of the Two Rivers, near the mountains once rich with gold and inland from the city by the bay with the Golden Gate Bridge. I am Ikoma Rigi, a poor storyteller, who gathers tales and records histories.

I'm here today to tell you of the Legend of the Five Rings and how it has grown over the years and spread throughout this land. My tale begins with a wandering samurai of the Dragon Clan.

Any discussion of L5R in Sacramento has to begin with the name Steve Horvath, who began playing the game when it first came out. It seems like a long time ago, since he is now in charge of the game. According to Steve, he was reluctant to pick up the game at first because he, like many other gamers at the time, were already forking over money for other trading card games that had flooded the market.

It took one demonstration of L5R to change his mind. Sound familiar? Like many of us, Rokugan pulled him in with its wonderful story and challenging mechanics.

Steve began pushing the game heavily at the stores where he worked. Many of the top players in the region today will tell you that it was Steve who first introduced them to the game.

With the help of some local Imperial Ambassadors like Dave Salsman, Fred Fernandez, and Sean Silva (to name a few), the game really took off. Shortly after the release of the *Shadowlands*™ expansion, Dave Williams showed up for a demo at a Roseville store. He made quite an impression on some players with his Phoenix Enlightenment deck (this was in the days before Sensei or Kiho cards).

It wasn't long before tournaments started popping up at game stores in the area. The Imperial Assembly members began racking up points. At one time, the Sacramento area was home to the Warlords of five different Clans.

Eventually, the game did start to cool off. Steve Horvath left to take a job with Wizards of the Coast, and the game went into a lull and lost some good players. But some of the locals stepped in to take up the slack and get the game moving again.

Michael Cantinari picked up the duties of running prerelease and storyline tournaments at Steve's old store, Comics & Comix in Citrus Heights. Ash Thomson has also

sanctioned tournaments every month at Adventures in Comics and Games in Fair Oaks. Other groups have continued to play in Roseville at A-1 Comics and at Bat Comics in Marysville.

Earlier this year came proof that the game was still very much alive in Sacramento. The Kotei Tournament in Rocklin drew 117 players, making it the largest such tournament in the U.S. [not counting *Origins Ed.*] and second in the world. Steve Horvath, who came down to host the event, said he was impressed. He noted that through seven rounds of Swiss play, not a single player dropped out of the tournament. More than two dozen of us hung around that day to watch Baki's Unicorn deck as it made a startling comeback against Mike Cantinari's Fox Military deck.

The L5R scene remains strong and varied in the area. Players can find pick-up games at area stores four nights a week, with at least one sanctioned tournament a month. Mondays find players at Great Escape Games in Sacramento. Tuesdays and Thursdays there are games and Empire League play in Roseville at A-1 Comics. And Wednesdays mean L5R in Davis at The End Zone. There are also regular tournaments to the north in Marysville and, of course, in San Francisco and around the bay area.

Although there are many strengths to the area, there are also some weaknesses. This game needs its players to band together and form more of a community. Right now the community seems to consist mainly of stranded pockets of players.

Work has recently begun on a regional website: the player base can communicate, schedule tournaments, and coordinate events. There are already many fine regional pages on the Internet, and we hope to join them soon.

The second thing that this region lacks is a leader. We need an advocate for the game—someone who will love and promote it like Steve Horvath did and continues to do. I hope that, after this article sees print, someone in our community will step forward and lead this mighty army to further greatness.

And so you see, members of the Imperial Assembly, this army awaits one who will raise a fist to the sky and sound a cry that will rally these warriors and lead them to glory!

Perhaps it is you?



# Card Combos

by Jose Titos

## Mirumoto Taki exp + Weapons Cache

Assign Taki to a battle and play weapons cache on him. Attach 2 Bloodswords or Onos on him and watch your opponent cringe as they realize they have another huge unit to deal with!

## Guard the House + Battle at White Shore Plain

If your opponent destroys one of your provinces, play this terrain and use the reaction on Guard the House to add +4 PS to the remaining ones. If you are playing with The Mountain Keep of the Dragon SH, your provinces will be at +6. Watch your opponent sweat as they run out of force pump up cards.

## Blessings of Isawa + Isawa Metigaru

O.K. so Blessings of Isawa is pretty much sweet on anything, but being able to cast a kiho every turn as an innate ability and having it permanently increase your force by +1 is huge. Throw in a Spirit Guide, Takao's Jingasa, or play Where Shinsei Stood during a battle and there is no downside! Isawa Metigaru will be a kiho casting machine while increasing in Force every single turn.

## Noble Halls of the Akodo + Luring Tactics

Give one of your personalities (samurai, shugenja, spirit) the tactician trait and then use Luring Tactics to bring them to another province. The constant maneuvering will leave your opponent guessing.

## New Year's Celebration + Quiet Tombs/Revealing the Bastard

This falls more under the annoying column as it has the potential to screw you as well as your opponent.

Bring the Quiet Tombs Region into play. When a New Year's Celebration is revealed, watch in horror as everyone discards their fate hand. This is added fun in a

multiplayer game. Revealing the Bastard can be even more harsh as it removes all discard piles from play. No more Kaede Sensei or path of wisdom based endless reiteration. Watch out however if Evil Feeds Upon Itself shows up a second time!!

## Street to Street + Sodegarami

Towers of the Yogo this is not, but could fit in nicely. Attach the Sodegarami to Toku (hehe), play Street to Street during a battle and make your opponent squirm as his Crab Clan Oni with Sword bows before the Mighty Toku!

## Mushin + Blackened Skies + Signal Corps

This fits nicely in a Naga or TA deck. Play Mushin, followed by Blackened Skies, decimate entire armies and then use the Signal Corps' ability. After shredding your opponent's army to smithereens, pump up your tacticians' force and wreak even more pain.

## School of Wizardry + Turn of Fate

Use a School to bring into play a high gold cost Shugenja like Naka Kuro to play. Next turn attach Turn of Fate to him. Bow him and destroy this spell to bring the other shugenja into play. The spell is nice because it allows you to ignore other coming to play effects, like a blood speaker's honor loss. On the same turn bow the School of Wizardry and bring Naka Kuro back in play for honor.



# L5R Trivia Quiz

by Andrew Getting

Every so often it's fun to test fan's understanding of the world of L5R. To that end, we present here a trivia quiz, designed to find out how deep your knowledge of Rokugan really is. The questions have been distilled from both the TCG and the RPG. Answers to the quiz can be found below.

1. What card marked the first appearance of the Dragonfly Clan?
2. What was Fu Leng's totem animal?
3. Who won the first storyline tournament?
4. Yogo Junzo was one of the early choices for the villain during the Clan Wars story arc. Who was the other?
5. In the end of the Clan Wars story arc, the Phoenix fell, and the Crab redeemed themselves. Which clans were originally slated to rise and fall?
6. What was the first book to suggest that Iuchiban was of the Hantei bloodline?
7. Of the original ten Dooms, which have not yet resolved, if any?
8. What is Matsu Hiroru's gi made of?
9. Who bears the Sword of the Sun?
10. Who performed the only known Kharmic Strike in the storyline?
11. Though Shinjo did not return until the Honor Bound expansion, her return was heralded much earlier. What was the first card that foretold her return?
12. While many L5R characters journeyed to the Burning Sands, one left L5R for another game entirely. Which game, and who is it?
13. Which character, who rose to prominence early in the Hidden Emperor story arc, is based on an Akira Kurosawa hero?
14. Who was Onnotangu's favored child?
15. Which clan produced the Demon Bride of Fu Leng?
16. Name three personalities who are vampires.
17. How long did it take Hida Kisada to die?
18. Which two clans are tied for the greatest number of different personalities with the Kolat trait printed on them?
19. Who killed Ginawa's lord?
20. Which clan or clans have no personalities with a personal honor above two?
21. What L5R character's name is mentioned in an Indiana Jones movie?
22. Which of his siblings did Hantei find untrustworthy?
23. Which clan's sword is of the poorest make, when compared to its brethren?
24. Who did Yogo Junzo betray?
25. Which clan has generated the greatest number of minor clans?
26. Which clan suffered the greatest losses at the Day of Thunder?
27. Who controls the territory where the Hantei Sword may be found?
28. Which clan's armor has been printed twice, each time with a different name and ability?
29. What personality's name appears most often in card titles?
30. What personality can, in tandem with certain Ancestors, Items and Actions, wield up to seven weapons?
31. Who was the youngest of the Kami?
32. Which L5R bushi school most closely resembles the style of the great samurai, Miyamoto Musashi?
33. Which clan first discovered the Naga?
34. What awoke the Great Kumo?
35. Which clan did Tetsuya hail from?

Answer key: 1. Imperial Gift, 2. An Ox, 3. The Scorpion clan, 4. The Necromancer, 5. Crab and Lion, 6. The Way of the Scorpion, 7. Doom of the Naga, 8. Crystal, 9. Minamoto Taki, 10. Tetsuya, 11. Rise of the Phoenix, 12. Doornow, 13. Ginawa, 14. Togashi, 15. The Crane, 16. Shuten doji, Shinko Kamiko, Penagolan, 17. Three years, 18. Monk and Mantle, 19. Ginawa, 20. Nezumi and Scorpion, 21. Balash, 22. Togashi, 23. The Lion sword, 24. Bayushi Shoji, 25. The Crab, 26. Lion, 27. The Shadowlands, 28. The Crab, 29. Osano-wo, 30. Yoritomo, exp. 2, 31. Ryoshun, 32. Minamoto, 33. The Crab, 34. The body of Hantei/Fu Leng, 35. The Crab



## FATE DECK (41 cards)

### Actions

- 3 Dead Eyes
- 3 Deadly Ground
- 2 In Search of the Future
- 3 Night Battle
- 3 Rallying Cry
- 3 Superior Tactics
- 2 Swamp Marsh
- 3 Test of Might

### Elemental Rings

- 1 Ring of the Void

### Followers

- 2 Scout

### Items

- 2 Armor of Sun Tao
- 1 Atarasi's Armor
- 3 Die Tsuchi
- 3 Ono

### Kihos

- 3 Flee the Darkness

### Spells

- 3 Star-Filled Steel
- 1 Master Smith Ascends

## DYNASTY DECK (41 cards)

### Events

- 1 Imperial Gift

### Holdings

- 1 Armory
- 3 Blacksmith
- 3 Hiruma Dojo
- 3 Iron Mine
- 3 Jade Works
- 1 Kaiu Forge
- 3 Small Farm
- 2 Watchtower

**Personalities** (Those marked with \* are not in *Gold Edition* but will be identical to Personalities with new names.)

- 3 Hida Amoro\*
- 3 Hida Kuon
- 3 Hida Kuroda
- 3 Hida Rohiteki
- 1 Hida Rohiteki Exp.
- 3 Hida Unari\*
- 2 Kuni Utagu

### Regions

- 3 Farmlands

## Face My Steel!

by Zen Faulkes

Think of a crab. Not a clan member, the critter. What comes to mind? Probably you think of a hard shell and a big pair of claws. The equivalent for a samurai? Armor and weapons.

This deck tries to take advantage of what should be a Crab specialty. Crabs have been forging armor and weapons since Imperial Edition, as represented by Blacksmiths. But those items haven't really been given much attention in the last couple of years. Fortunately, the art of smithing has been coming back a little in the last couple of sets, like Spirit Wars.

Plus, with the release of Spirit Wars, we now pretty much know what the Gold Edition card pool will be like. So I thought it would be fun to look forward a little and sketch out a "Four Winds simulation" deck.

The Crab armory contains some very cost-effective weapons: Die Tsuchi and Ono. Those high-force weapons make Test of Might a natural. Plus, Crab get to buy The Kaiu Forge cheaply, which lets you make weapon tokens for all your personalities.

Spirit Wars added the biggest boost that weapons decks have seen in a long time. Star-Filled Steel and Master Smith Ascends are both spells that give bonuses to everyone packing a weapon. With the Kaiu Forge, you can pretty much guarantee that all of your personalities will end up armed. There are more copies of Star-Filled Steel because although it can only be cast in battle, the bonus is twice as big as Master Smith Ascends.

As a lot of this deck's force comes from weapon bonuses, Swamp Marsh is there to counteract decks that get a lot of their force from followers. Meanwhile, In Search of the Future helps you deal with decks that rely on other kinds of force boosters.

The Armor of Sun-Tao is the only armor in Gold. Fortunately, it's a pretty good armor: making terrains unbreakable is powerful. And if you get a Scout out, you can put in the terrain before the defender can twitch. Atarasi's Armor (Heroes of Rokugan set) is there for flavor, since it's the only other Gold-legal armor.

Most of this deck's personalities are fairly standard Crab choices. Hida Rohiteki and Kuni Utagu are there for the important spells and kiho. Apart from the shugenja, most are 4F bruisers who can carry Die Tsuchi with ease.

There's not many subtleties in this deck. But then again, we're talking about a Clan whose repair manual says, "If it doesn't work, hit it. If it breaks, it needed replacing anyway."

Meanwhile, I can only hope that the Four Winds storyline brings a lot more steel and iron for the Crab to use.

## Winning One for Ryosei

by Wolfgang Baur

I'm going to pick on Fred Fernandez more than a little here, but he's a really dedicated player. He just has a really big mouth, is all.

Each day of the Battle at Oblivion's Gate, qualifiers began with challenge matches. Fred stood up with his Mantis banner and gave a loud, bragging challenge to the Fox. In fact, he was the perfect example of the swaggering samurai. I managed to brush it all off ("Yoritomo rules the Mantis and the Alliance! I am a Mantis, not a Fox! The Mantis are the true strength of Yoritomo! You will all kneel before me!"), until the very end. The phrase "And if the Fox lose, Ryosei will be Yoritomo's geisha!" crossed the line.

I took up the challenge.

The pairings were posted, and I was plenty nervous about my first shot at influencing the storyline directly. Fred sat down a little late but in good spirits, and we talked a little smack before the match. I had no idea what an anti-Fox metagame nightmare I was walking into.

We revealed Sensei: I saw Kaede, as expected. I think he was expecting At'tok'tok, but I revealed Taka instead. I got the same reaction I heard all weekend: "Taka? What's he do again?" Heh, he gives me everything I need, thank you very much.

I took my first turn: a Silk Works with Taka Sensei, a Small Farm, and a Kitsune Tsuke. Not bad at all.

Fred's first turn almost made me concede: Doom of the Alliance, and me without an Avoid Fate in my opening hand! As if that weren't bad enough, he played a Breach of Etiquette (knocking me down to 1 Honor). In other words, he would have Favor control because I had no way to gain Honor from Personalities. But I thought to myself, "Fall down seven times; stand up eight." No one quits in a storyline challenge. Cursing his metagaming, I kept playing.

I promptly pulled Shudo next turn, attached a Berserker with Tsuke's +1F bonus, and took a Province. Fred forgot to Favor me home! The Province I destroyed contained the Experienced Masasue, eliminating a major METH engine component. Things looked better for me.

But it wasn't over yet; Fred's metagame against Fox was strong and thorough. His Torn from the Past bowed both his Yoritomo Oban and my Diro. Then my Kolat Duplicate took out Oban (with Wasp Archers), and I took another Province, this one containing Corruption of the Harmonies. Despite his Favor control, the game was slipping away, with me bringing out more people and him desperately cycling the Favor to look for a Rallying Cry.

I ended it all with Sneak Attack and Deadly Ground, and we shook hands. It had been a grueling game, and the lead had swung back and forth several times.

But the Fox won the Mantis challenge; we will never bend our knee to Yoritomo and the Alliance. Or, put another way, I guess Yoritomo will just have to be Ryosei's little geisha for a while. I'm betting the big guy learns how to serve sake and play the samisen in no time.

### Deck Strategy

Taka Sensei allows you to play Silk Works off the box, a Kolat Assassin or Master with just one House of Contracts, and Gohei's Daisho off the box. The downside (less money for Personalities) doesn't really hurt the Fox. Only Keda, Hosigeru, and Wakiza can't be bought off the box using Taka-sama. The deck has an excellent mid-game but can be overwhelmed by decks that play Take the Initiative and regularly take one or more Provinces on the second turn.

### Taka's Fox Trix

#### Kyuden Kitsune

##### Fate (40)

1 Taka Sensei

1 Ambush  
3 Avoid Fate  
1 Counterattack  
1 Deadly Ground  
3 Deeds, Not Words  
1 Fist of the Earth  
1 Kolat Assassin  
2 Kolat Master  
3 Rallying Cry  
2 Sneak Attack  
2 Superior Tactics  
2 Test of Courage  
2 Toturi Is Drugged  
2 Uncertainty  
1 The Wind's Truth

1 Gohei's Daisho  
1 Lessons from Kuro

1 Wasting Disease  
1 Whispers of Twilight

2 Bandit Gang  
3 Berserkers  
2 Fortified Infantry

1 Ring of the Void

##### Dynasty (40)

3 Asako Hosigeru  
1 Keda  
3 Kitsune Diro  
1 Kitsune Diro Exp.  
3 Kitsune Shudo  
3 Kitsune Tsuke  
2 Moshi Wakiza  
3 Ryosei  
1 Ryosei Exp.

1 Battle at Isawa Palace  
1 Doom of the Dark Lord  
1 Inheritance  
1 Iris Festival  
1 Kolat Duplicate  
1 The Return of Fu Leng  
1 Winter Warfare

1 Golden Sun Plain

3 House of Contracts  
3 Merchant Caravan  
3 Silk Works  
3 Small Farms



# FAQs

by Jeff Alexander

**Q: How much does Fantastic Gardens cost for a Kosaten Shiro player?**

A: 6 Gold. The text about Fantastic Gardens costing a Crane player 5 Gold is a change, because it results in a cost that's different from the printed value of 7. Because it's a change, the Stronghold's text prevents it.

**Q: Can I pay for a Farmlands token with a Bushi Dojo? It's a Follower, and Bushi Dojo produces Gold "when paying for a Follower."**

A: No. You're not paying the Gold cost of a Follower; you're paying the Gold cost of Farmlands' Limited action. The token Follower's own cost is 0 by the Unwritten Number rule.

**Q: What if I'm attaching the token to a Personality who reduces his or her Followers' Gold costs?**

A: Same answer: The cost of using Farmlands' action is separate from the token's Gold cost and doesn't go down. (There are one or two Personalities, like the Experienced Hida Tsuru, who give a discount to "attaching" Followers instead of to the Followers themselves.) It actually is cheaper to use something like Farmlands on them. They're the exception, though.)

**Q: Does O-Ushi Sensei make my focuses add to Force if I use it in a duel?**

A: Yes. Furthermore, O-Ushi Sensei works against any other player's targeted card that checks or changes the Chi of your Personalities. For instance, you could choose to have another player's Force of Will exchange Force and Personal Honor.

**Q: Is "sending a unit home bowed" one effect or two?**

A: For the sake of simplicity, and despite rulings made to the contrary to avoid disrupting major events like Gen Con with last-second changes, the *Soul of the Empire*™ rulebook entry stands: sending a unit home bowed is two separate effects. Negating or prohibiting one will not negate or prohibit the other. (As a corollary, there is no more artificial distinction

between effects that "send" a unit home and effects that "move" a unit to your home.)

**Q: So if I use The Dark Path of Shadow's ability during Winter Warfare, the entire attacking army bows but stays in the battle?**

A: Yes.

**Q: What happens if I gain control of another player's Personality while that Personality is in a battle? Does the Personality leave his or her army and join mine? What if I don't have an army and wasn't even invited as an ally?**

A: As a new general ruling, if you gain control of another player's card, that card goes to your home by default. This can cause Personalities to leave battles illegally. If a Personality changes controllers while in a duel, the duel ends without resolution.

**Q: Akodo Quehao is a Sensei. Can I start the game with him in play? Can he be targeted with things like Amnesia?**

A: No and no. "Reserved game terms . . . do not count as traits; they only apply if their definitions are met" (*The Spirit Wars* rulebook, p. 31). General card classes, like "Follower," "Holding," and "Sensei," are reserved game terms. Anything that refers to Sensei is talking about that class, not cards with the Sensei trait.

**Q: Can I bring one of the Experienced Walls of Osotan Uchi into play by laying it over the original version if the original is attached to a different Province?**

A: Yes.

**Q: Who chooses what effect Spy Network has?**

A: The player it's used against.

**Q: Can I play an Action card that destroys Gaheris? He'll leave the battle . . .**

A: No. It must remove him as a stated effect of the card.

**Q: Someone told me I have to play Reactions face up even if they're "played as a Focus cards." Is this true?**

A: Yes. This is in the rulebook now. You'll want to check the errata section at the end of this article, though.

**Q: Why does the *Soul of the Empire Undead* token card have the Nonhuman trait? You've said Undead cards aren't automatically Nonhuman.**

A: They're not. The token card is mistaken. (No, I'm not going to issue errata on a token. That way lies madness.)

### Focus on . . . Regions

The only time Regions can normally enter play is at the end of their player's Events Phase, after the player has revealed Dynasty cards and resolved any Events. Regions that get revealed after then stay face up in their Provinces until the next legal time arrives to play or discard them. Regions with play costs are no different in these regards—you cannot pay the cost whenever you want to bring the Region out at an arbitrary time.

You must bring a Region into play if doing so is legal and doesn't require paying any costs. If you reveal multiple Regions, you may play them in any order you wish.

If you get to the end of your End Phase and you have any face-up Regions in your Provinces (for whatever reason), you are free to discard or keep each one, just as with any other face-up Dynasty cards. A Region kept in a Province works just like a newly revealed one when you get to your next Events Phase.

## ERRATA

### ***The Spirit Wars***

Kitsune should be a Creature.

Sanzo's Gold Cost and Honor requirement were accidentally reversed. He still has a Gold Cost of 3 and an Honor requirement of 5.

Inkyo should have "+2" Chi, not just "2." Also, his Honor requirement should be 1 and he should have no Personal Honor.

Clay Soldiers should be Nonhuman.

Yoritomo Kitao should be a Naval card.

Shuriken is truly not a Weapon.

### ***Soul of the Empire***

Kingdom of Ghosts is Political.

The Experienced 2 Daidoji Rekai does not need to bow to perform her ranged attack.

You may use the ability of the Experienced Earth Dragon only once per battle.

Kaede's Tears was accidentally given an ordinary Action card border. It's truly a Kiho.

Moto Chargers are truly not Cavalry.

Bloodstained Forest is truly not Maho.

The Experienced 2 Bayushi Aramoro should be Experienced 3.

The Experienced Ninja Shadow-Walker should be Experienced 2.

### ***Fire & Shadow***

Ide Buodin: His Force penalty lasts until *after* the Resolution segment, not just "until."

Capturing the Soul should be a Ritual.

### **Other Sets**

Another Time's effect is now a trait, not a Reaction. You may still focus it face down. [MRP]

Strike of Flowing Water's first effect is now a trait, not a Reaction. You may still focus it face down. [errata]

Eternal Halls of the Shiba no longer grant the **Phoenix Clan** trait to all of your Shugenja at the start of the game. [MRP]

The promotional Yoritomo should not have the **Experienced** trait. [errata]



# Pebbles Roll Downhill

by Ken Carpenter

*"Today, class, we continue our studies of the Clan War."*

*A sigh went up from the students, and one of them, a willful young boy, addressed the teacher: "But, sensei, we have already studied the Clan War. Couldn't we study another topic instead?"*

*The teacher smiled at the impertinent question and replied, "So, my student, you feel that you have learned all that there is to know about the Clan War. If this is true, then you should be able to instruct your master now."*

*The boy smiled, confident of his abilities, and began to speak. He recited the tale of the Emperor's wasting disease and Kachiko's treachery. He told his teacher of the feud between Hitomi and Yakamo, and how they each earned a new hand for their troubles. He spoke of Beiden Pass, the False Hoturi, Kisada's assault on Ootosan Uchi, and the discovery that the Emperor was really Fu Leng. Finally, he spoke of the Day of Thunder and the triumph of the clans over He Who Would Not Be Named.*

*His teacher smiled and nodded throughout the recital, encouraging the boy to recall every single detail. Then, when his student had finished, he asked, "Is that all?"*

*The student bowed, "Hai, sensei."*

*At last, the teacher frowned. "But what of Hiruma Goshiro, the Crab who turned against his clan and fought alongside the Scorpion? Or Shiba Naname, the Phoenix yojimbo who willingly gave his life to help recover the Black Scrolls? Do you even know of Akodo Tadaji, the so-called Butcher of the Osari Plains?"*

*The boy blinked. "No, sensei. I do not know their stories."*

*His teacher smiled again, "Then sit down, my student, and I will instruct you . . ."*

History is about to repeat itself. Aren't you lucky?

In L5R **Diskwars**, the story of the Clan War will be told once again. Beiden Pass, the False Hoturi, and even the Day of Thunder will all repeat—this time, however, from a different angle. The stories never told will finally see print and explain many of the events that went on behind the scenes during the Clan War. Your favorite characters will still be there, but this time around they will share the spotlight with some other characters you might never have noticed. Finally, you'll get to see the pebbles that caused the avalanche.

L5R **Diskwars** is completely compatible with Fantasy Flight Games' wildly successful **Diskwars**. You can mix and match disks from both games or run an army completely composed of Rokugani disks.

The biggest change to the original **Diskwars** format is the introduction of Strongholds and dueling. Each Clan Stronghold is a Terrain disk that has a special ability that a player can use once per turn. The Phoenix, for instance, can cast a Spell using one of their Shugenja without activating that disk. This allows you to cast a Spell and move, or even cast two Spells in the same turn. The dueling mechanic simulates dueling from the L5R trading card game, using the unique missile-fire system of **Diskwars** to determine who lives and who dies.

In addition, other innovations to the **Diskwars** mechanics will soon see print. Small Terrain disks such as roads, rivers, and forests will be added, allowing more complex setups and a wider selection of scenarios. Specific places in Rokugan, such as Beiden Pass and the Osari Plains, are also a possibility.

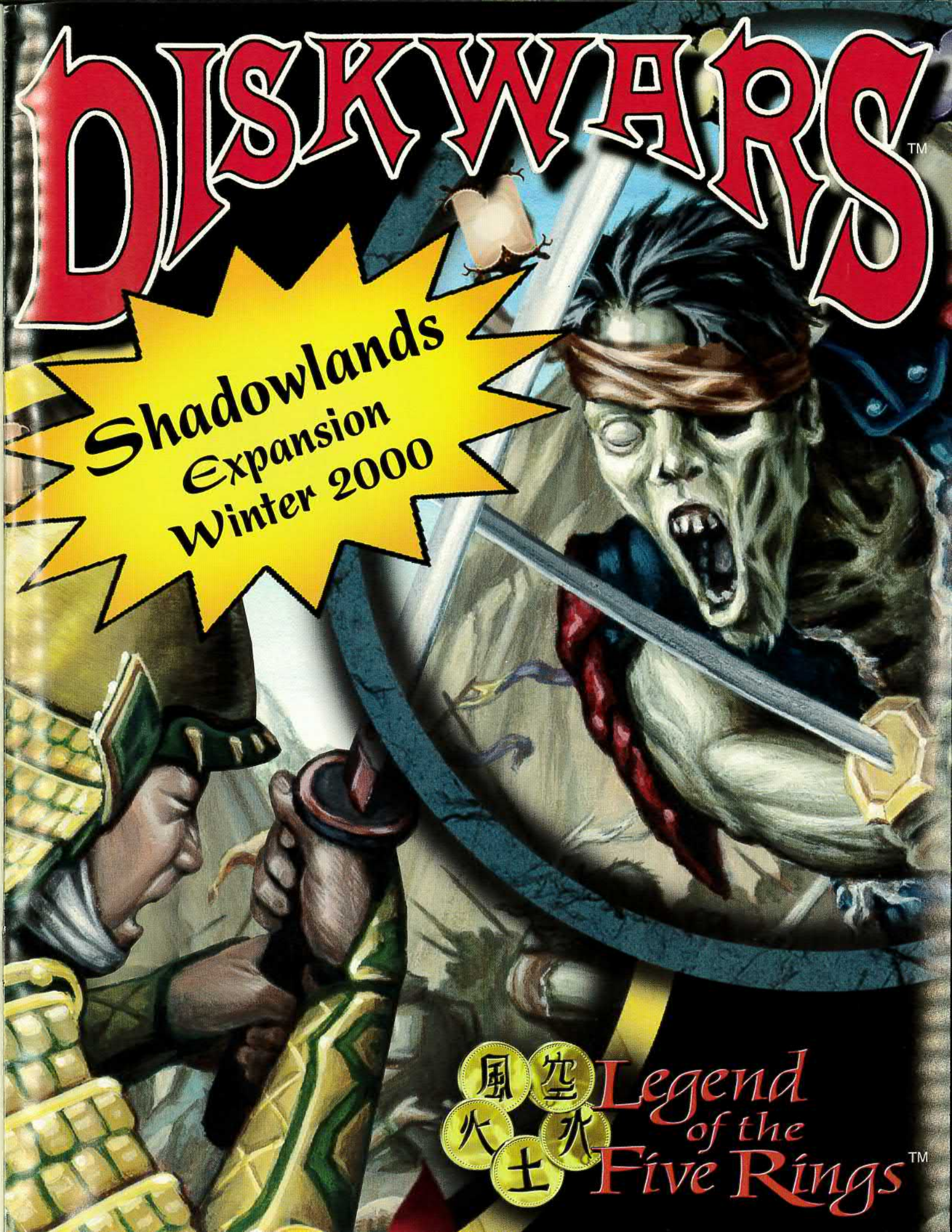
Another new design feature that could be introduced soon is the concept of two-sided disks. These unit disks will have different abilities and stats on each of their sides, forcing you to use a little more strategy in the way you deploy and move your army.

In other words, it's a whole new Clan War . . . all over again.



# DISKWARPS™

Shadowlands  
Expansion  
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Legend  
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*Legend of the Five Rings*™

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February 2001