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Imperial Herald™



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The Shadow approaches Volturnum, the dark peril of nothingness seething in its wake. If darkness seals the gates to Jigoku, all things will be unnamed. Rokugan will be unmade.

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Empire League
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Season 2 starts May 15, 2000



Way of the Wolf
Toturi's Army Clanbook
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of the
Five Rings*™

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Empire League, Season II: The Awakening of the Naga

by Mike Liesik

It is said that long before the Kami fell from the heavens, there existed a race of strange creatures known as the Naga. They were filled with pride and fought amongst each other, seemingly without end. Through war and strife, the Naga became a new race. Where once they were clad in gold, they became as the earth, covered in greens and browns. They lost the will to fight against each other and gained access to a new power, the Akasha. Through this newfound gift, each Naga gained the knowledge of every member of his or her race that had ever been, as well as the ability to communicate mentally.

As time passed, the Naga gained a greater knowledge of natural magics, including the power of pearls. This wisdom gave them the power to fight the Darkness that was spreading across the land, destroying everything in its path. After they beat the Darkness back, the Naga referred to that period as "The First Burning of the Land."

After the war, many of the Naga prophets began to speak of the Great Sleep. This was a time when the People would rest for ages, only to awaken when the Darkness returned. As their entire race turned towards sleep, the Naga shugenja cast powerful spells on their cities to hide them from intruders. Behind these protective veils, the Naga disappeared from the face of the land.

So begins the tale of the second season of the Empire League™, The Awakening of the Naga, scheduled to begin May 15.

Clan letters, flavor text, and short stories have told the account of the Naga's first steps into the Emerald Empire. Now players will have an opportunity to relive one of the turning points in the Clan War.

This season, like Season I, will focus on three factions: the Naga, the Dragon Clan, and the Phoenix Clan. The Naga awaken to battle the horrors of the Shadowlands and must find acceptance in the Emerald Empire. Togashi Yokuni, Dragon Clan daimyo, recruits Toturi the Black to lead the Empire against its greatest threat in nearly a thousand years. The Phoenix Clan must

discover the secrets of the Black Scrolls while paying the terrible price that comes with that knowledge.

The new objectives will challenge experienced players by placing restrictions on their win conditions or deck contents. Here are a few examples:

Naga: The Naga Awaken

Your deck cannot contain non-Naga Personalities. You may only have one copy of any Naga card in your Dynasty deck.

Phoenix: Tadaka's Quest

Play with no Action cards, Followers, or Kihos in your deck.

Dragon: Daini's Mission

Win a Military Victory in which Mirumoto Daini is assigned to, or moves into, every attack that destroys a Province.



League members that complete all of the objectives for one or more factions become eligible for a Clan mon pin at the end of the season. Players who do not play one of the featured factions are, as usual, still eligible for the Empire League pin, which they can earn by gaining the most play points. Everyone who earns 10 play points receives a button commemorating that season.

If there is an epic event in Rokugan's past that you would like to see as a future Empire League season, please send an email to me, Mike Liesik, at <toku@wizards.com>, with the subject line "Empire League ideas." Unfortunately I cannot guarantee that I can use your suggestion or that, if I do use it, you will receive credit for it.

Now, go to your local Stronghold store and fight for the glory of your Clan!

A Message from the Brand Manager

It's always interesting trying to figure out what to say in this foreword, because, from your point of view, I wrote this seven weeks ago.

So let me hearken back to last August, and Gen Con® '99. Luke Peterschmidt, then brand manager, stood on a table and addressed the crowd gathered for the War in the Heavens tournament. He told y'all that you'd want to be members of the Imperial Assembly this year. This issue is where you find out why.

Our first limited-edition premium set is *Heroes of Rokugan*™. It's been in the works for over a year, under careful testing, writing, and layout. Ree chose significant heroes and events from Rokugan's past, Dave and his team developed interesting cards, and Paul shelled out more money than we've ever paid for each of the pieces, by the industry's best artists. We even pulled in some artists who haven't done *Legend of the Five Rings*™ work for a long time (if ever), including Chris Rush, Donato Giancola, Mark Zug, Mike Sutfin, and Zina Saunders. And, of course, many of your favorites appear as well.

As an Imperial Assembly member, you can buy this set both early and at a significant discount! Just use the cover letter to order. We'll release it to the public this summer, if there are any left after the Imperial Assembly members each order their sneak-preview copy (limit one per member).

We're letting members order this product early and at a significant discount as a way of saying "thank you" to all of you loyal fans who have supported us over the years. And, if it sells like I expect it to, only Imperial Assembly members will have copies. That would be fine by me, because you folks are the backbone of the L5R fan base, and you deserve it.

We recently did a little market survey, and our data show that 25 percent of L5R players have been playing for six months or less. This means our fan base is growing quickly—in fact, more quickly than we anticipated—which is why the *Honor*

Bound™ and *Ambition's Debt*™ expansions each sold out in two weeks.

To support this new batch of players, we're putting in a fair amount of back-story into the *Herald*, as well as basic strategy guides and the like. We hope to do this without skimping on any of the content the more experienced players demand.

Why have our players increased in number so dramatically? There are several reasons, I think. One is, in large part, actions of players just like you teaching the game to friends. Thanks are also due to the design team (thank you Dave, Ree, Erik, and company) for putting out a couple of seriously cool expansions. Another aspect is that the resources of Wizards of the Coast have allowed the brand to grow more aggressive. And finally, I think the *Siege of Sleeping Mountain*™ learn-to-play set did its job.

Not to say *Siege* was perfect, but it worked. We have taken everything we learned and put it into a new intro set called *Storms over Matsu Palace*™ (see page 54 for more details). This will be an even easier way to introduce new players to the game, and this issue we also have a guide to *Storms* demoing.

We have a lot of things planned for the summer shows. Please, folks, if you at all can, make plans to go to Gen Con and Origins™ this year. Especially Gen Con. We have the big tourney, of course, plus other cool stuff, and I expect to be able to make some announcements and show some sneak previews of our upcoming story arc at that time.

Oh yeah, one other thing. My lovely wife Sarah and I have a baby on the way. The kid is due on July 31. If you are so inclined, I'd appreciate prayers that the kid comes on time. Or maybe one day late. I want to be at Gen Con the whole time, hooping up the crowd and hanging out with the best fans a brand manager could ask for.

Edward Bolme
Brand Manager
Master of Fire

Imperial Herald
Issue 15, May 2000

Published by Wizards of the Coast.

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Thanks to the following for help in
finding materials for this issue:
Maureen Yates
Paul Timm

Imperial Herald subscriptions:
One year (four issues)
\$15 in the U.S. and Canada
\$25 outside the U.S.
See page 24 for more information.

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Legend of the Five Rings History

Part II of III

This is the second part of three that give a concise, if necessarily imprecise, history of that wonderful land of Rokugan.

Crimson & Jade

Beset by the the armies of the False Hoturi, the Crane armies under Daidoji Uji had given much ground but had in turn learned much of their foe. The clan had emptied its coffers to recruit, arm, and equip a mercenary force led by the man named Yoritomo—the Son of Storms, daimyo of the Mantis Clan, and mercenary bushi from the islands off Rokugan's coast.

Historically a pawn of the Great Clans, the Mantis Clan enticed the Minor Clans of the Empire to enter into an alliance led by it, the most powerful of the Minor Clans and flush with Crane gold. The alliance drew from Minor Clans across the Empire, united by a common cause: to stop the bloodshed, to force the Great Clans to honor their ancient obligations and oaths, and to ensure that the Empire was saved from those who would destroy it.

Where Yoritomo once boasted that he could field a thousand samurai, the legions that now bore the mon of the Mantis stretched farther than the eye could see.

The False Hoturi, leading his horde through the pass into the Fields of the Asahina Temple, believed that this would be the final conflict; the Crane Clan would die here, in a region of the Empire that had not seen conflict in the thousand years since the Founding. As the horde crossed the final rise, the False Hoturi was stunned to see not the demoralized and broken remnants of the Crane army he had pursued for months, but a razor-sharp line of infantry prepared to charge across the prepared ground and engage his forces!

The battle that day was epic. The leader of the Crane was Doji Hoturi, still weakened but determined to end this foe who sullied the name of the house of Doji. The real Hoturi reached the False in the middle of the melee and issued an ancient challenge. Two blades flashed, but only one struck true. In moments, the threat to the Crane was dead, cleaved entirely in two by Hoturi's lightning-fast stroke. At that moment a great war cry rose from the Crane army. No matter what the

storytellers say, know this: even the most cold-hearted, infernal oni from the deepest pits can know mortal fear.

Meanwhile, far across the Empire, a more tragic tale unfolded.

Matsu Tsuko reeled from the Lion's defeat at the gates of Otosan Uchi. Hida Kisada may have died in the attempt (or so the rumors say), but Tsuko failed utterly to protect the capitol and her emperor. As the days grew longer and winter grew close, Tsuko was left to her own bitter memories of the day she was forced to stand and watch as the Crab and their Shadowlands allies crushed the armies of the Lion.

Far to the south, Hida Yakamo tended to his injured father. Rumors had gone forth that said Kisada was no more, but his incredible strength of will kept him alive when anyone lesser would have perished.

Kisada's eldest son and heir, Hida Yakamo, looked around him at the grim faces of the Crab warriors and saw little that raised his spirits. Where once there was a fierce pride in the duty to defend the Empire against the Shadowlands, now Yakamo saw only broken faith, sullied honor, shattered illusions, and fear on the faces of his bushi. Kisada would never lead the armies of the Crab again, oni stalked the land bearing Yakamo's name, and the bitter memory of Sukune haunted them still. Yakamo thought long and hard on the price of victory. Then he made a fateful choice.

Tsuko, too, made a fateful choice. Something within her cried out for solace, and she subconsciously knew that only Toturi could put her aching soul to rest—Toturi, the only person fit to lead the honorable warriors of the Lion. In this time of turmoil and confusion, only he had shown a clarity of purpose and unswerving duty toward the Empire. He was the dishonored son of her own clan, the man the Lion called "Toturi the Black." Today, no Lion samurai would follow Toturi, regardless of the need. Tomorrow, those who did not might indeed cause the end of the Empire and the enslavement of humankind.

Tsuko sneaked into Toturi's camp late at night, deftly avoiding the sentries. She made her way to his command tent and surprised the guards,

but Toturi himself stepped from the shadows of his tent, saw Tsuko standing in the frigid night air, and beckoned her to join him within.

Tsuko explained herself quickly. If the Lion were to survive, they must break their ancient oath to defend the Emperor and instead embrace the true nature of that promise—to defend the Empire itself. But the Lion are a proud and honorable clan, and their vows bound them with the strength of a hundred generations. Tsuko herself swore an oath to serve the Emperor personally. Her honor prevented her from breaking that oath, yet her conscience demanded that she cease serving the evil creature that occupied the Emperor's body.

Likewise, the samurai of the Lion Clan had sworn an oath to follow her, appointed the Lion daimyo by the Emperor on the day he was disgraced. Tsuko knew that the Lion would not—could not—join Toturi's army. While she lived, they must follow her and the promises that bound the clan together. The only solution was to pass the reins of power back to Toturi and remove herself from consideration.

A flash of steel, a moment of intense pain—then Toturi's blade swept through the crisp night air and Tsuko was no more. In the morning, Toturi read her death poem and wept. In the days ahead, the Lion would learn the true meaning of sacrifice and virtue.

A second cut was made that night as well. Howling with the incredible, burning pain, Yakamo sawed the Tainted claw from his own wrist, searing the putrefied stump in the embers of the fire that warmed Kisada's chambers. The pain was too great for even Yakamo to bear in silence, and his screams echoed through the dank chambers of Hida Palace. Yakamo dragged himself from Kisada's chambers and staggered into the inner sanctum of the Crab Clan. There, among a hundred other rare and fabulous items, was an articulated hand made entirely from the finest jade. As his vision narrowed and his breath grew short, Yakamo placed the hand on his wrist and wrapped the joint with a silken cord inscribed with the wards and protections against evil taught to every Crab bushi in childhood.

Yakamo's last sight was of a strange, hooded figure leaning over him, pressing cool herbs into his tortured flesh and whispering a soothing ritual.

Kuni Yori, the Crab shugenja who had negotiated the treaty with the Shadowlands and grafted the claw to Yakamo's hand years earlier, now fled his home for the dark lands beyond.

Far to the north, the Elemental Masters of the Phoenix had all been corrupted from studying the Black Scrolls—

all save Isawa Kaede, who had vanished. Yet for all the knowledge, still the questions remained unanswered. Isawa Tadaka, always the strongest of their number, summoned an oni and gave it his own name to bind it to the material world. By torturing this oni, the Phoenix learned much of the dark god Fu Leng and his minions. The price they paid is terrible indeed, however, as it drove the Masters, save Kaede, towards madness. The worst-affected, Isawa Tsuke, engaged in a murderous rampage against his own kin, striking down any Phoenix shugenja who crossed his path.

Alone in his mountain fastness, Togashi Yokuni alone knew that the great cycle was nearly complete and the events he had waited a thousand years to witness were about to unfold. The Seven Thunders walked the Empire, and Shinsei's descendant had arrived to end the menace of Fu Leng once and for all. Yokuni might save an Empire, but if he did, he would kill his own brother.

Time of the Void

1997 Origins Award-Winning Best TCG Expansion

The armies of the clans gathered together at last to fight Fu Leng and the Shadowlands Horde, now firmly entrenched behind the walls of Otosan Uchi. As the winter gave way to spring, the Empire prepared itself for one last battle. Hanging in the balance: the fate of the entire world.

Tsuko's sacrifice had shown some of the Lion where their true path lay, but many of their number chose to obey their oaths, an allegiance they did not like but would fulfill nonetheless, and defend the imperial palace against Toturi's army and the Thunders. To them, an oath was a bond, never to be broken.

The Hooded Ronin was revealed as the descendant of Shinsei. Shinsei's unbroken line had preserved secrets of the battle against Fu Leng and of the thousand-year cycle that was ending. With the aid of Togashi Yokuni, the Hooded Ronin located and brought together all seven reincarnated Thunders.

The Naga fought and destroyed a sizable portion of the Shadowlands Horde on the outskirts of the capital using bows, their own pearl magic, and tactical guidance provided by Mirumoto Daini, a Dragon samurai sent by Toturi to the Naga years before.

The Elemental Masters fought against the insane Isawa Tsuke in a brutal series of magical battles. Tsuke's brutal firestorms removed many of the Phoenix shugenja from the assault on the capital and killed most of them. In the end, Tsuke was destroyed by Shiba Ujimitsu, the Phoenix daimyo, who died in the conflict. Of the

Elemental Masters, only Tadaka lived—and Kaede, who remained missing.

Hida Yakamo faced the oni who bores his name, and a terrific battle ensued. Yakamo brutally struck the oni, but the spray of its corrupt blood temporarily blinded him. As the oni's weapon rose for a killing blow, Mirumoto Hitomi slayed the creature, saving her hated nemesis, if only for the day.

Just before the day's battle began, the mercenary daimyo Yoritomo met with the Seven Thunders at the war council. This time, instead of kneeling, he only bowed and demanded recognition as a Major Clan daimyo from Toturi and the Seven Thunders. Yakamo's laughs saved this tense moment, and Yoritomo's demand was granted—for if he helped save the day, he would have earned it, and if the day was lost, the title would be pointless.

The Unicorn battle maidens rode down Yogo Junzo's horde, killing the undead creatures Junzo commanded. Otaku Kamoko killed Junzo herself by trampling him with her mighty steed.

At the gates of the palace, the pro-Empire Lion fought the pro-Emperor Lion in a battle that quickly degenerated into a melee, with Lion killing Lion without thought to allegiance or goal. Toturi rode into the midst of the fray at the head of his troops, sword held high, and for a moment the chaotic Lion forces paused, waiting for an order—any order. Toturi wheeled his steed around and cried, "For Matsu Tsuko and for Rokugan!" and pointed his sword at the gates of Otosan Uchi. Thus he stopped the intra-clan battle and averted the total self-destruction of his former clan.

As the field of battle was at last won, the Seven Thunders, Togashi Yokuni, and the Hooded Ronin proceeded into the palace to hunt down and destroy Fu Leng.

In the throne room, Togashi Yokuni revealed that he was in fact Togashi, one of the original Kami who fell to earth and founded the Empire, and therefore brother to Fu Leng. Fu Leng mortally wounded Togashi, but before Togashi died, Mirumoto Hitomi, the Dragon Thunder, plunged her Obsidian Hand into Yokuni's chest and pulled forth his heart. She crushed it, taking its power as her own, and from within the shriveled heart she pulled out the Twelfth Black Scroll, hidden in Togashi's heart for a thousand years.

Fu Leng laughed to see the Twelfth Black Scroll, since opening it would make him fully manifest in the world. But as Hitomi opened the scroll, the Hooded Ronin took

great delight in informing Fu Leng that while he was now fully free, he was also one with the body he had possessed—and thus mortal.

At the end of the great battle that ensued, Toturi and Hoturi killed Fu Leng with a simultaneous strike of their ancestral swords, carrying the day.

Countless people died on that day. The dead included Doji Hoturi, Togashi, Yogo Junzo, four of the five Elemental Masters, and thousands of clan samurai and ronin of greater or lesser repute.

Jade Edition

In the end, Toturi was proclaimed Emperor and the whole Empire began the slow process of rebuilding. In deference to the sacrifice of his lifelong friend Doji Hoturi, Toturi selected a Crane for his advisor. He also issued charters for each of the clans, reaffirming their place in the Empire, delineating their duties to the throne, and seeking to partition honor to promote peace. This included the Scorpion Clan, who were reinstated to their position, and Toturi's own army, which became the imperial guard.

Meanwhile, in the Shadowlands, Kuni Yori wrote *Oaths and Betrayals* and began to build himself a following among the vile creatures he had grown to understand.

And finally, in the dark mountains of the Dragon, Mirumoto Hitomi proclaimed herself daimyo of the Dragon. She abandoned her family name and started a new family of the name Hitomi, forcing all of the Togashi family to renounce their loyalty to their family line under pain of death. Some did, while others fled the Dragon lands and joined the Brotherhood of Shinsei or the Naga. The Obsidian Hand, which had now turned Hitomi's entire arm to obsidian, had given her dark knowledge and powers, and she saw the terrible purpose to which her life must lead.



She might not be *quite* ready for *Storms*, but Kaylee recommends L5R cards.

Who's Who: Erik Jason Yaple

Name: Erik Jason Yaple

Date of Birth: None of your business

Birthplace: Upland, California

Occupation: Game designer and all-around nice guy

Credits: Assistant designer: **Legend of the Five Rings**

Design-team member:

Legend of the Burning Sands™,

Doomtown, Clan War™, and 7th Sea

Hobbies: Pro wrestling fanatic, games of skill and chance

Finishing Maneuver: Guillotine leg-crop

Code Name: Road-Block

In high school I played football, and I was good at it—ranked among the top 5 percent of high school athletes and named one of the Top 100 high school football players in California. I began gaming in high school during the off season, to fill time. I soon found out that, at heart, I was a gamer! I passed up the opportunity to play college football and got a job selling games at All Star Games in Diamond Bar, California, where I worked with Matthew D. Wilson and eventually met David Williams. During my game-store days, I was elected student body president of my community college. I graduated from Citrus College with an Associate's degree in English and went on to California State University at San Bernardino, where I obtained my Bachelor's degree in English and Creative Writing under some of the nation's leading poets and fiction writers. After Citrus College I came onboard at AEG, where I served as David Williams' assistant and intern. I now work full time as a game designer at AEG.

My L5R work officially began with the first episode of the *Hidden Emperor™* set (although I was a part of the early pre-*Imperial Edition™* playtesting). I knew Dave Williams back before AEG existed, and when he began his L5R work, I knew I would collect the game (after all, two of my friends worked on it), but I never knew how much I would love it. My friends and I sold

off our **Magic: The Gathering®** cards and took up L5R as our only TCG. We would stay at the game store until 2:00 A.M. playing huge, multiplayer games and then reopen the store a few hours later for the morning shift.

About two and a half years ago, I asked Dave if there were any job openings at Alderac. Within a month I began working at AEG. I always wanted to work in the games industry in some capacity; I just never thought of it as a full time job.

My work began with **Doomtown**; the game was still in development and I got to give some input on its initial creation, but during this time I could not wait to

begin working on L5R. **Doomtown** was like boot camp; it taught me a lot of what I needed to know for card-game design. Since *Hidden Emperor*, I have been responsible for a whole batch of cards (enough to fill an expansion or two), the contents of the *Pearl Edition™* starter decks and the *Siege of Sleeping Mountain* decks, the Yodатаi of the **Legend of the Burning Sands**

TCG, and a bunch of work on **7th Sea** and **Doomtown**.

I love card games; I used to play for hours with my grandmother and a Bicycle deck of cards. I also love gaming in general; there is not a style of game that I have not played. I try to push the envelope of card and game design. Cards that take advantage of the TCG genre and games that bring something fresh and new to the community are my motivation.

No one person makes or breaks a project. At AEG, teamwork is a big part of our daily lives; I am a big proponent of teamwork. I think this is due to my football days and presidential term in college. I am proud to serve on this team. I may not have the most high-profile job in the company, but I know that work I do matters and affects the game industry in some way.

Where will the future take me? I do not know, but like William Ernest Henley said, "I am the master of my fate / I am the captain of my soul." I have a few things coming up that keep me motivated during the long days.



Strike at Midnight: Everything Dies

by Ree Soesbee

Battle screamed across the wide plain like a living being, consuming the souls of the fallen and twisting the skies into black, fluttering clouds. The day had not changed. The dawn was no more than another moment, passing beneath shining blades.

Battle was all-consuming. Nothing else existed in this place.

A Phoenix legion camped briefly beneath a spreading forest, their helms battered from wear. The Mantis had taken a hard toll on the Shiba guard, sending hundreds of the Phoenix to their death. Now, armies of the Phoenix marched against their enemies, avenging their clan with their enemies' blood.

The war had lasted for as long as they could remember, one battle after another in a ceaseless stream of days and nights. There was little rest, and the legions of the Great Clans gathered in small clusters, warring on their ancient enemies in moving strikes, attempting to inflict greater losses with each attack.

"Someone comes." The scout squinted past the trees. "Wearing Phoenix colors."

Members of the legion looked up from their rest, the coals of the past night's fire crackling at their feet. One man carrying a broken spear pushed through the brush and paused when he saw the legion. They were twenty samurai, all darkened with ash and fatigue, their once-right kimonos torn and bandaged. Some carried naginatas, and one bowman stood among the group, but most held their katanas at their sides. Hands calloused with war clenched as the lone Phoenix swordsman approached, then relaxed when they recognized his colors. He was a Shiba, and new to this place.

"Friend." The Shiba captain smiled. "Welcome. We are in need of your strength. Hurry, there is little time. Yoritomo's forces are but a few minutes from our position, and their shugenja aid their steps with the magic of the winds."

"I am . . . Odoshi," replied the newcomer. His voice betrayed confusion, weariness.

"We are the Fallen Petal legion, medium regulars from the gates of Shiba Palace itself. My name is Shiba Atano." The captain nodded briskly, pointing out past the forest's edge before continuing. "The Mantis are there, marching on our position, the Crane stand to our west, and the Scorpion mass to the east."

"The Scorpion? Are we at war with the Scorpion?" Odoshi said heavily, his tongue thick in his mouth.

"We war on everyone, Odoshi," the captain replied. Before he could explain, a scout screamed in pain as an arrow pierced his eye. The man fell from his high tree branch, clutching his head in choked agony, and the Mantis attacked.

The clearing detonated with fire and ash as the Mantis raced through the forest in among the Phoenix, surrounding them. The Mantis held strange weapons—kamas, twirling chains and short knives, that rang against the katanas of the Phoenix samurai. They leaped toward the Shiba in a wave, completely disregarding their own lives and burying the Shiba beneath the weight of their numbers. Odoshi staggered back, his knees shivering with weariness, but his sword was quick in his hand and one of the Mantis fell screaming at his feet.

A rush of bloodlust overcame Odoshi, and he howled in rage. Beside him, three more Phoenix charged with lowered spears, tearing at Yoritomo's samurai. Another shout rose from the east, and Odoshi drew his sword back through a Mantis just in time to block an unexpected blow. He spun to face the opponent, and for a moment their eyes locked.

I know you.

The thought was a blow, and both Odoshi and the unknown Mantis staggered back from the fighting, their swords lowering.

"No," Odoshi whispered. Another flash of memory, and the face of a terrible oni echoed in the Shiba yojimbo's mind. The Mantis's sword shook, and his eyes closed as if he, too, had seen the beast's face.

"You . . . you can remember . . .," the Mantis said quietly, beneath the roar of the battle around them. "And with you, I can remember as well. Tell me!" His eyes lit with an almost insane rage, and he lifted his sword once more. "Tell me what you know!"

"I don't understand . . ." Odoshi backed away.

"You must know!" Enraged, the Mantis leapt at Odoshi, and the Phoenix barely had time to lift his sword. The Mantis's charge was too hasty, too unprepared. He sank onto the Phoenix's sword with a gasp, his weapon falling

from his numb fingers. Clutching at Odoshi's vest, the Mantis whispered through bloody lips. Odoshi could barely hear his voice as the Mantis clawed his way forward. "Please," the man hissed, "tell me how we died."

Odoshi had no words. He watched as the young Yoritomo warrior fell to his knees, dragging Odoshi's sword to the ground as he died. Around him, more Mantis fought and died on Phoenix spears, their screams cut short by the swift strikes of the Shiba guard. He stumbled, and one of the Mantis nearly fell over him with a shout as Yoritomo's troops pressed their faint advantage. Soon the numbers would be even and the Mantis samurai would be forced to fight or run.

Drawing his sword out of the fallen Mantis, Odoshi once more joined his companions in combat, lending his strength to their aid. Questions would come later . . . and with them, rest. The combat seemed to last for hours, bloody beneath the forest's green leaves. At last, the Mantis commander signaled to his battered legion to withdraw, and Yoritomo's samurai began to move backwards, out of the forest grove and back onto the plain.

"Shall we let them go, sir?" shouted one of the Shiba as their bowman pelted the fleeing Mantis with arrows.

"Hai!" called the captain. "We've suffered too many losses to leave the shelter of the trees. Let them retreat, and count your wounded."

Odoshi pressed his back to a nearby tree, gasping for breath. The combat had been savage; the ground was littered with corpses.

"Ten, sir," called one of the sergeants. "Three who will not rise for days."

"Bring their bodies. We move the camp immediately, farther into the forest. There is another grove, less than a li from our position. Bring the others along when they rise."

"Days?" Odoshi blurted out, surprised. "Sergeant, their throats have been cut. They will not rise—now or ever."

The soldier simply looked at Odoshi sadly and turned away. At his feet, one of the dead began to move, reaching for a weapon as wounds began to close.

"By Shiba himself, taisa-sama," Odoshi said, using the captain's formal title. "What is this place?"

"This is Toshigoku, Odoshi-san," the captain said with haunted eyes, "the realm of spirits killed in honorable combat. We are the Legacy of the Forge, the lost souls who cannot complete our quests for Jigoku."

"Toshigoku . . ." Odoshi sank to his knees, his sword limp in one balled fist. "Then . . . I am dead?"

"Hai." Emotionless, the taisa turned away.

"Captain-sama," Odoshi said softly, and the captain turned to look back at the samurai. "How . . . how did I die?"

"You must discover that for yourself, Shiba," said the commander. "We cannot help you."

It was a dream. Oni roared, their claws lifting flesh from bone, tearing through the gathered samurai like scythes through grass. The moon shone down hollowly on a bloody cliff, and an oni raised its arms in victory.

Odoshi screamed once, sitting up from his tortured sleep, and then was silent. The scout glanced back at him, barely noticing his distress, and kicked the low ashes of the fire into a soft blaze.

The Shadowlands had come to the Phoenix lands. He had died of the Taint.

Odoshi looked at his hands but could not see any sign of corruption. Perhaps he was not Tainted.

"The captain said that we all rise when we are killed here," Odoshi began quietly, catching the ear of the scout. "Will the Mantis rise as well?"

"Hai," the scout said, "and fight again—so rest. You will need it."

"No." Odoshi threw back the cover of his cloak, reaching for his sword and pushing himself to his feet. "I have to go."

"Go?" The scout laughed. "Go where? This is Toshigoku, samurai. There is no place to go."

"I must go to the Mantis and speak to them."

"Madness. Do you think that because you cannot die you are immortal?" Stepping toward him, the nameless scout pushed his finger into Odoshi's face. "There are tortures, samurai, such as you have never seen before. Many things can be done to mortals' flesh when you know they will always return."

Shuddering, Odoshi stepped back. "I must go. And if you try to stop me . . ." He reached warningly for his katana and placed his hand on the comforting silk wrappings of the hilt.

"Return if you can, then." The scout smiled, watching Odoshi back into the woods. "We will be here. We will always be here." His chuckle, dry and ironic, echoed through the forest like that of a man gone mad.

Outside the Mantis camp, one man waited. "I knew you would come, Phoenix. Our destinies—even in this bitter place—are intertwined."

"We died together." The words rang of truth, and the Yoritomo soldier narrowed his eyes. "My name is Kanbe. I fought in the Clan War, and I served at Yoritomo's side. I do not fear you, Phoenix."

"I do not want your fear," Odoshi said. "I want only your assistance. I must know . . ." Odoshi lowered his voice to a whisper, then gripped the Mantis's wrists in strong hands, twisting their fingers together as a shudder shook the ground beneath them. "I must know how we died."

Shocked, the Mantis looked up. Their eyes locked.

Memories flooded them, seizing their thoughts one by one. Childhood; gempukku; Odoshi saw a beach on the Mantis isles and a beautiful young girl with a delicate smile. Then the oni came, and bitter pain flooded the shore.

"The Shadowlands came for us," the Mantis said as they clutched one another's hands, unable to part. "The oni destroyed us, even as we fought to reach Hitomi's side. I can see . . ."

The Crane, his sword falling through the air with the stroke of a master duelist. Too late—and the oni cut beneath his blade, tearing the Kakita's heart from his chest. One dead, and the rest unprepared for the ferocity of the oni's sudden assault.

"The Scorpion," said Odoshi. "He . . ."

A blade whirled through the air, cutting into the oni's arm. Blood slid down, and the creature cried in pain. No one had seen the Shosuro move; none had heard his blade drawn forth. Turning its attention from the body of the fallen Unicorn, the oni shot a breath of noxious gas toward the Scorpion, and the man clutched at his throat, choking in agony as he fell to the ground.

"We were the last." Odoshi did not know who spoke—himself or the Mantis samurai—but the words were true.

Two men stood against the oni, and on the hilltop Hitomi unsheathed a blade that shone in the light of an empty moon. Only a few more steps—but the oni barred the way. "You will die, samurai, and the moon will not rise. At last, we shall have our revenge for the death of our master and seal the Empire's fate in darkness."

"I will go!" shouted the Mantis, pushing his way past the Phoenix at his side.

"You do not deserve the honor, dog!" Odoshi heard himself cry out. Blood spilled from bitter blades, and the oni's claws slashed through them both with a single stroke. They had died together, fighting against each other even as the oni destroyed them.

"No!" Tearing himself away from their vision, the Mantis placed his throbbing head in his fists, blotting out the sight. He twisted out of Odoshi's grasp. "We are dead, and the Empire has paid the price," he said, but his voice was no more than a low growl of emotion. "The oni defeated us. By now, Hitomi's final stroke has been completed, and with no second to protect her, the oni will have torn her to ribbons. Nothing can save the Empire now."

Kanbe snarled, turning away from his dishonor. "We were the lucky ones. At least our deaths were quick. There is nothing we can do for the Empire now. It cannot be saved." He pulled his cloak more tightly about his shoulders, stepping back toward the glowing lights of the Mantis camp. "Go now, Phoenix, and let me spend my eternity in hatred."

Odoshi moved before the Mantis, stepping between Kanbe and the Mantis encampment. A dark fire burned in the Shiba's eyes. "My clan fought for the Empire once, until it burned us to the ground. We gave our lives—our very soul—to see that it was safe from danger, and by the Seven Fortunes and the Kami, I will not give up now!"

After a pause, Yoritomo Kanbe nodded. "I saw the strength of the Phoenix fires when we took Kyuden Isawa. Many of my clan died that day . . . but many more will die when the Moon does not rise."

"We were her champions!" Odoshi raged, pounding his fist upon his chest. "How could we fail?"

Kanbe's voice echoed hollowly from the barren field around them. "We failed because we did not expect to lose."

"I cannot exist with this shame," Odoshi whispered, his fury rising. "Knowing that we have failed, that the Empire will suffer for my defeat. Shiba help me, but I cannot go on with that dishonor in this empty land."

"And what can you do about it, Shiba?" Kanbe snarled. "Die once more?"

"I can try. I was once told that a Phoenix can have two deaths—one in shame, and one in honor." Odoshi fell to his knees, freeing his kimono and baring his chest. "If for nothing more than my father's memory and my clan's trust, I must. Let my second death be here. Let it signify that I was willing to keep my word, even after death."

"Then I, who took your life before, will give you death now—an honorable death," the Mantis amended, "for the sake of all our souls. In honor of those who died fighting to save Hitomi . . . and the Empire."

"I should trust the word of a Mantis?"

"I cannot make that decision for you," Kanbe said.

Odoshi nodded. After a moment, he drew his wakizashi and pondered the light upon its blade. Then, without a thought, without even sinking to both knees, he plunged the short sword into his belly and tore apart the skin. His face paled, his eyes locked onto Kanbe's, and their minds touched once more.

I am your enemy. Why did you trust me?

Because the Empire is more important than our war.

The Mantis's blade sang through the air, slicing Odoshi's head from his body with a stroke as true as thought.

All he could see was her eyes.

Tsukune's eyes.

"Death brings life, samurai—to die by the hand of the one who killed you, in honor and in remorse. That is the path to return . . . and Shiba taught you well."

A brilliant light, and then . . .

The darkness lifted, and the oni stood before Odoshi once more. Its back was turned, and its claws and fangs shone with blood in the light of the swelling moon. On the ground, bodies littered the bloody grass, their flesh torn apart, their swords broken. A moment ago, he had been one of them. He looked down at the still forms and recognized Kanbe's face. It was filled not with anger or hatred, but with the still peace of death.

The oni charged up the mountain toward the silent figure at the peak, lifting its bared claws in gleeful victory. It raked its claws toward Hitomi's unprotected throat, her sword frozen in the final motion of seppuku. Lunging directly behind the oni, Odoshi lifted his sword in a mighty blow, cutting the oni's arm and protecting Hitomi from its assault. The blade seared through the oni's wrist with a smell of decaying eggs, and smoke whispered from the cut.

Mere seconds had passed—not hours or days. Seconds—and Hitomi's seppuku was not yet complete. The oni howled, sensing that victory had been stolen from its grasp, and turned to claw Odoshi. "I killed you!" it shrieked through terrible fangs.

"Only once." Odoshi snarled, and plunged his sword into its heart.

When Hitomi completed her stroke, Odoshi stood behind her, the oni's corpse at his feet. With a clean stroke he freed her silent spirit, and together they ascended into the heavens—the Moon and her reborn star.

*Everything dies. The Lion fall in battle,
The Scorpion beneath poisoned knives—
But only the Phoenix know the path to return.
—Shiba's koan*

Strike at Midnight: The Tournaments

by Mindy Sherwood-Lewis

If you've gotten to this point, you must have read Ree's story based on the Strike at Midnight tournament results we received. (What? You haven't? Do that right now—page 10!)

For those of you new to the game, or those who have been under a rock somewhere, Strike at Midnight was our first global storyline tournament of 2000 and our third global storyline tournament overall. It included 229 stores in 17 countries, which included Australia, Belgium, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Puerto Rico, Spain, the United Kingdom, the U.S.A., and West Malaysia.

Of those 229 stores, I've received reports from 184 stores, with a total of 2,285 players, or 12.42 players per store. That's down a bit from what we had at the Storming of Morikage Castle last year, which is a little surprising since we have a lot of new players. Perhaps the fact that part of the story (Hitomi's ascension) was predetermined discouraged some players from participating. Or maybe it was the snowstorm that hit parts of the eastern U.S. and Canada that week.

While numbers were down a bit, the spread across Clans was more even this time around. While a lot of players were concerned that the Phoenix would be the new "bandwagon" Clan, that wasn't the case. Unlike with the Unicorn at

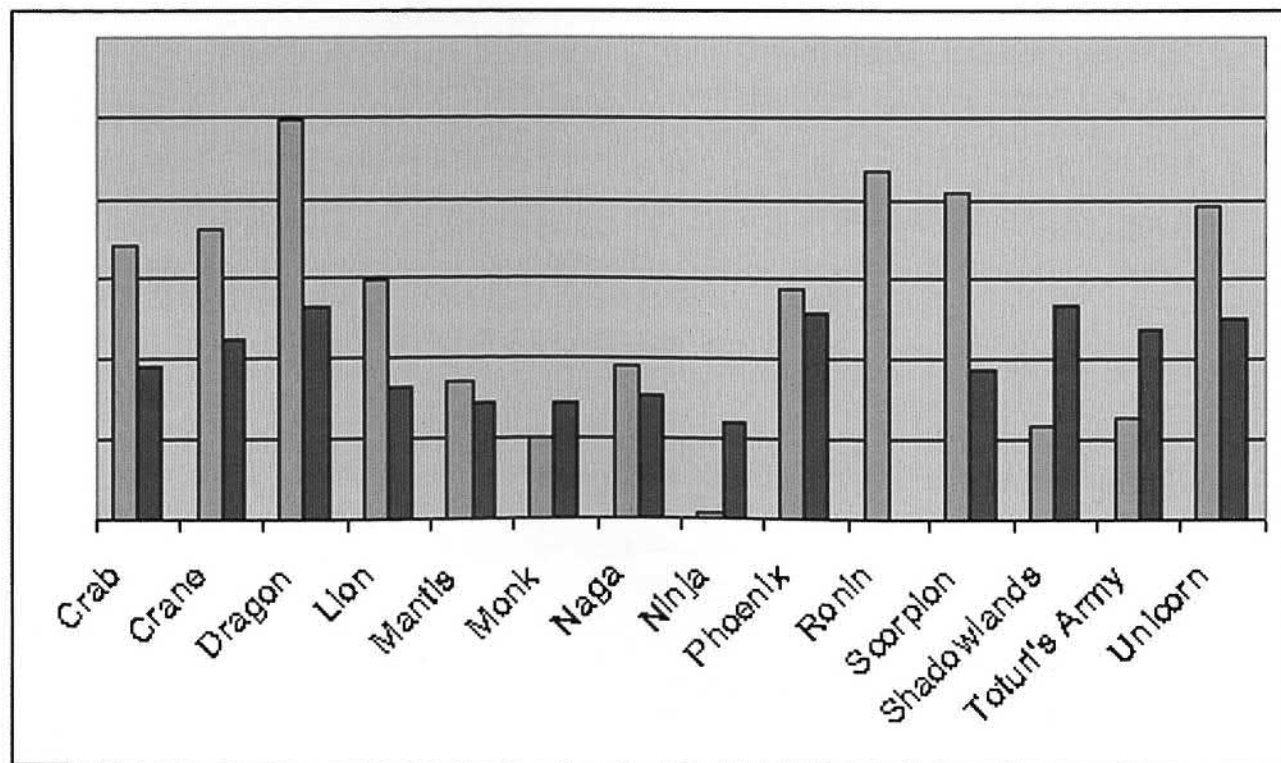
Morikage, the Phoenix player numbers were not overwhelming. As you've seen from Ree's story, the Phoenix did win, but it was by a very close margin over the Shadowlands. In fact, there were more Shadowlands players, but they did not score as many first-, second-, and third-place finishes as the Phoenix.

The Clan breakdowns look like this for Strike at Midnight:

Brotherhood	154	Phoenix	267
Crab	200	Scorpion	205
Crane	242	Shadowlands	282
Dragon	277	Toturi's Army	248
Lion	176	Unicorn	261
Naga	174	Yoritomo	160
Ninja	126		

The graph below compares Imperial Assembly affiliation (light-colored bar) with players at the Strike at Midnight tournaments (dark bar). Shadowlands and Toturi's Army had more players than adherents. The Ronin bar is alone because you cannot claim Ronin affiliation in a tournament.

As usual, I'd like to thank all of the stores and tournament organizers that put together Strike tournaments for their areas. You folks are the greatest!



The Crane Clan

by Edward Bolme and Ree Soesbee

The Crane were founded by Lady Doji, the most refined of the children of the Sun and Moon. As the first Hantei Emperor took the throne, Doji offered one of her children to be his bride. From that time until now, the Crane Clan has always been ready with a bride for each emperor, and thus Crane ties to the imperial throne are close indeed.

This political leverage has given the Crane Clan no end of advantage over the years. They share a border with the Lion Clan, and many wars have been fought, largely incited by Scorpion machinations. Most observers, Lion historians especially, believe that imperial intervention alone is responsible for the survival of the Crane to the present day.

During the Scorpion Clan Coup, leadership of the Crane fell to Doji Hoturi. He had an ongoing dalliance with Bayushi Kachiko, the bride of the Scorpion daimyo, and within a few days he saw her go from daimyo's wife to conspirator, to widow, to the Empress and wife of the young Hantei the 39th. Worse yet, the woman Hoturi loved was of limitless guile and now limitless power, who hated the Empire for the justice meted out upon her clan.

Kachiko kidnapped Hoturi and used the Egg of P'an Ku to hatch the False Hoturi, an evil, twisted doppelganger bent on the destruction of the Crane Clan and the defamation of Hoturi himself. The False Hoturi led a wild crusade with a legion of Shadowlands insane and undead troops, desperately pursued by the Crane samurai Daidoji Uji, until at last Hoturi escaped, joined with Uji, and slew the False Hoturi at the Asahina temples.

Toward the end of the Clan War, the Crane helped in the assault on Fu Leng's forces at the Day of Thunder. Together with his childhood friend Toturi (the former Lion daimyo), Hoturi, though mortally wounded, slew Fu Leng.

Emperor Toturi the First appointed Kakita Yoshi as his advisor. In the wake of the Emperor's disappearance, Yoshi helped Toturi's regent maintain a semblance of control, sacrificing the stability of his clan for the stability of the Empire.

Meanwhile, the Emerald Champion, the revered Crane duelist Kakita Toshimoko, faked his death and assumed a low profile to search for Shinsei's True Tao, stolen by the Kolat. He could not save the Emperor from the Shadow, but he could save the Empire by restoring the True Tao.

At the same time, Daidoji Uji and the new Crane Champion, Doji Kuwanan, found themselves at odds. Uji, acting on the commands given him by his ancestors, reopened the war between the Lion and the Crane by attacking Shiro Yojin, and when Kuwanan moved to block him, it led to civil war.

This proved disastrous to the Crane, for in the hour of the Empire's greatest need, the three most powerful Crane personalities outside of the imperial court took themselves out of the picture. Likewise, the Crane military forces were all embroiled against each

other, weakening their own forces and burning their own fields in warfare.

This is not to say that the Crane had no effect on developments.

Toshimoko found half of the Tao by hunting down the Kolat master Kage and attacking him for it. Wounded, Toshimoko gave the Tao to Rekai to carry to the Brotherhood, knowing that Rekai's Unicorn steed was the only hope to outrace the Shadow that would surely come to destroy the precious scrolls. Rekai's steed, born of the line of Otaku Kamoko's own war stallion, bore her successfully, and half of the Tao was saved.

As this happened, Kage realized that he could no longer protect the Tao from the Shadow and sent the other half of the great work with a ronin ordered to meet Rekai at the Temple of Shinsei. The Shadow's minions, however, outran the Kolat messenger and slew him, scattering one half of the True Tao into the ocean, lost forever.

At last, after long battles, Daidoji Uji chose to commit seppuku to save the honor of those following him. When Kuwanan came to Shiro no Yojin to accept Uji's seppuku, the Crane ancestral sword began to ring and did not cease its sound until Uji's hand touched its hilt. The katana chose Uji, for the spirit within the ancestral sword found that his actions had not been dishonorable. He had only done as his ancestors commanded. Because the sword restored Uji's honor and gave Kuwanan a suitable reason to pardon Uji and his troops, the Crane civil war ended.

Emperor Toturi has been found and returned to his throne, though now his eyes are pure black and he is prone to fits of fury. In one such rage, he slaughtered the imperial court, Kakita Yoshi with it. And since the Shadow has sealed access to Jigoku, Yoshi's ghost now stalks the halls of Otosan Uchi, seeking rest, a peace that can only come if the Crane Clan can lead the Empire to the heart of the Shadow.

Crane Top Ten

Eric S Wiener	1670
Tyler Running Deer	1199
Wolfgang Baur	1149
Terry L Madden	1008
Neil Canuel	913
Les Purcell	746
Shawn C Hopkins	574
Clark Scott	533
Paul Johnson	518
Jay Luo	493

The Esteemed House of the Crane

Satsume Sensei

Dynasty Deck (40)

Events (4)

Emergence of the Tortoise	1
Emperor's Peace	1
Peasant Revolt	1
Seize The Day	1

Holdings (19)

Fantastic Gardens	3
Kabuki Theater Troupe	3
Marketplace	3
Port	3
Sanctified Temple	3
Tax Collector	2
Tunnel System	2

Personalities (15)

Asahina Tomo	2
Doji Shizue	2
Doji Yosai Exp.	1
Kakita Ichiro	2
Kakita Torikago	2
Kakita Yoshi	2
Kakita Yoshi Exp.	1
Kakita Yuri	2
Otomo Sorai	1

Regions (2)

Campsite	2
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Fate Deck (39 + Satsume Sensei)

Actions (33)

Block Supply Lines	3
Encircled Terrain	3
Entrapping Terrain	3
Flooded Pass	3
Imperial Summons	3
In Search of the Future	3
Kolat Bookkeeping	3
Ring of Earth	1
Rugged Ground	3
Treachery and Deceit	3
Tricked	2
Wide Terrain	3

Spells (6)

Torrential Rain	3
Whispers of the Land	3

The Amazing Forceless Crane

by Edward Bolme

I am a fan of interactive play, so at first glance, this turtling Honor-runner may seem the antithesis of decks I like. But I also build theme decks, and while this deck is a turtling deck, I think it's pretty innovative for one simple reason: it can't kill anybody.

None of the Personalities have any Force. There are no Weapons and no Followers. There are no Iaijutsu Challenges, Chi-reducing tricks, or Kolat Assassins. In short, this is a bunch of pacifist Cranes trying to demonstrate their nobility before the uncultured boors of [insert opponent's Clan name here] crush this fragile flower of grace and purity.

Okay, so maybe you lose, maybe you win. I will say that an early version of this deck nearly won a multiplayer game. If it were not for one of my opponents having two-count them, two-copies of Threat of War in his hand, I would have won, but those two turns of delay cost me dearly.

If you win-hey, you won! Good for you! And if you lose with this deck, what has your opponent done? Beat up on a bunch of fragile sycophants like a neanderthal. Big whoop. And if your opponent manages to actually have someone killed in combat-it could happen-oh, what a gloatfest you can have! In short, you have the moral superiority no matter which way the game pans out. It's a good deck for getting on your friends' nerves (sure worked for me).

The crux of the deck is to have lot of Action cards and the Imperial Favor. With the Experienced Doji Yosai, the Experienced Kakita Yoshi, and the Imperial Favor, you can send home three attacking units. That'll do a lot for your defenses.

Aside from keeping these guys ready for imperial intervention, use the Favor to draw cards as fast as you can. You need a handful to keep the barbarian hordes at bay. Nothing stops a Province-crusher as fast as a fistful of cards and the Whispers of the Land.

Rare and Fixed Cards Used

Unfortunately, the deck does not adequately function without a selection of rares. The Experienced Doji Yosai, Kakita Yoshi, Torrential Rain, and Treachery and Deceit are all necessary to this deck. The Experienced Doji Yosai and Treachery and Deceit should be pretty readily available as singles, though you might have a harder time finding Yoshi and the Spell.

The two Events, Seize the Day and Emergence of the Tortoise, are in the deck to slow down the Military decks. You can do fine missing a Dynasty Phase, and not getting to add Followers and such before your Attack Phase causes you no pain. I haven't personally seen these cards used much, so they should be pretty cheap singles.

Variants

Again, this deck does not survive well outside the Open format. In the Extended Jade format, you might want to look at using The Bronze Gong of the Hantei and the Kakita Palisades.

There are other variants you can make with this deck. Seppun Sensei and Yoritomo Sensei both work well for this, depending on your play environment. And when the *Soul of the Empire*™ set comes out, you might want to look at using the new Crane Stronghold for this deck.

The Reliable Daidoji

by Mike Liesik

The first thing that comes to mind when someone says "Crane" is usually Honor. This deck is designed to operate even if your Honor is below 0 whilst crushing your opponent militarily.

The Iron Fortress of the Daidoji was printed in the *Hidden Emperor 6* set and gave a new spin to Crane Military. It encouraged the use of members of the Daidoji family by reducing their Honor requirements by 5 while discouraging the use of Personalities without the **Samurai** or **Shugenja** traits by increasing their Gold cost by 3. Every Personality is a member of the Daidoji family, allowing all but one of them to enter play if your Family Honor is at 0.

Since this isn't an Honor-runner, there are no Honor-producing Holdings in the deck. On top of that, the deck uses Kisada Sensei. While Kisada increases your starting Province Strength by 2, it also limits the sources from which you can gain Honor after your Family Honor reaches 10. Should you choose to play with a different Sensei, I would recommend Hantei.

The Dynasty deck is fairly straightforward. What better way to keep your troops equipped than with two Armorerers and a Master Smith? The Crossroads reduce the cost of over half of your Holdings to 0 and the rest, with the exception of the Master Smith, to 1. Two of the Events give you more Gold, while the other two make it more difficult for the other players to target your Personalities.

The Fate deck is designed for attack but is also reliable when defending. With staple cards like Rallying Cry, Deadly Ground, Charge, and Superior Tactics, this deck has a solid base. The Heavy and Medium Infantry help stop cards like Refugees while adding considerable Force to your army. The Daidoji Yari sends home an opposing unit but also gives an additional +2 Force to Daidoji Tsumerai. There are two Explosives in the deck to destroy some of the more annoying Holdings that the other player may control (like Kitsuki Iyekao, Oracles, and Fu Leng's Skull).

Rare and Fixed Cards Used

As previously mentioned, the Stronghold was printed in the *Hidden Emperor 6* set, making it fairly easy to obtain. The Charter and the Yari are fixed cards in the *Jade Edition*™ and *Pearl Edition* sets, respectively. Inheritance and Daidoji Uji are rares from both the *Jade Edition* and *Pearl Edition* sets. Shiryo no Yurei and Kachiko's Promises are rares from the *Dark Journey Home*™ and *Fire & Shadow*™ sets, respectively.

Variants

This is a Strict Jade deck, which makes it incredibly easy to suggest changes for it. In an Extended Jade environment, the only card that I would remove would be Charge, which I would replace with Destiny Has No Secrets. While you do have to reveal your hand when using Destiny, you can use it when defending, and it provides a +2 Chi bonus to boot. In Open format, I would add The Courage of Osano-Wo and The World Stood Still, taking out The Enemy of My Enemy and Restoring the Doji Treasury.

The Iron Fortress of the Daidoji

Kisada Sensei

Dynasty Deck (40)

Events (4)

The Enemy of My Enemy	1
Inheritance	1
Kachiko's Promises	1
Restoring the Doji Treasury	1

Holdings (15)

Armorer	2
Bushi Dojo	2
Charter of the Crane Clan	1
Hiruma Dojo	3
Jade Works	3
Marketplace	3
Master Smith	1

Personalities (18)

Daidoji Kedamono	2
Daidoji Osen	3
Daidoji Reikai	3
Daidoji Sembai	3
Daidoji Tsumerai	3
Daidoji Uji	3
Daidoji Uji Exp.	1

Regions (3)

Crossroads	3
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Fate Deck (40 + Kisada Sensei)

Actions (28)

Accessible Terrain	3
Charge	3
Deadly Ground	3
Diversionsary Tactics	2
Explosives	2
Iaijutsu Duel	3
Rallying Cry	3
Refugees	3
Superior Tactics	3
Unrequited Love	3

Elemental Ring (1)

Ring of the Void	1
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Items (4)

The Daidoji Yari	1
Naginata	3

Followers (7)

Heavy Infantry	3
Medium Infantry	3
Shiryo no Yurei	1

Tournament How-Tos

by Mindy Sherwood-Lewis

There are three parts to successful tournaments: sanctioning them, running them, and reporting them. We've tried to make at least two of those parts as easy as possible, and we can give you some advice on the third.

Sanctioning:

If you have been running tournaments for one of our other games, you should already have the Tournament Organizer's Handbook. In it you will find a section titled "Red Multigame DCI Sanctioning Application" (it's near the back). There are two applications here, one that will let you sanction one tournament (make copies for future use) and a second that will allow you to schedule a series of tournaments. Fill it all out, and mail or fax it in no less than three weeks prior to your tournament date. Voila! Your event will be sanctioned, and will appear in the listing on the DCI website so that people can find out about it.

If you have not previously sanctioned any tournaments with us, you'll need to get the TO Handbook. To do that, send an email to <thedci@wizards.com>, and let them know that you want to start sanctioning events, but that you need the proper paperwork to do so. Include your postal address to speed things up. If you don't have email, call Customer Service at 1-800-321-6496 and request the tournament sanctioning paperwork.

In the case of global storyline and prerelease tournaments, there is specific sanctioning paperwork that is sent out to the Stronghold stores. These are the only locations that can participate in such premiere events. We don't accept regular applications with those events written in as the name of the event. Either you receive and send back the specific form by the deadline, or you are not allowed to participate.

Running the tournament:

A large part of the Tournament Organizer's Handbook are the floor rules for running tournaments. You should read through these rules before running your first event. You will want to make sure before the tournament that you have let players know when and where it will be held, what the tournament format will be, and when

they should plan to arrive for registration for the tournament. If you have a limit on how many players you can accommodate, make that part of the information as well.

Make sure that you will have enough time, so that you will not need to rush your players, and so that you will feel comfortable while running the event.

There are several resources that you should plan to have on hand to help you run a smoother tournament. These include the most current rulebook, a print-out of the Accumulated Rulings and Frequently Asked Questions (both can be found at our website at <www.wizards.com/l5r/magistrates>), a pad of DCI membership application forms for new players, and the tournament report forms. If you have a computer handy, you can even run the pairings and results from the CD that is included with your TO Handbook.

Reporting:

Again, we have tried to make this as easy as it can possibly be. There is one form that needs to be filled out (although you may need to make copies if you have a large tournament). This form can be found in your TO Handbook, although once you have sanctioned a tournament we send you one with the sanctioning number on it. It is very important that you fill the form out properly, that you send it in to us promptly, and that you keep a copy of all reports for one year. Remember, your players are playing in sanctioned tournament because they want to see their points. If you don't turn in the report, they don't get any points for having played, and any certificates that were issued for that tournament are invalidated.

The report form must be turned in within two weeks of your tournament date. Make sure that your form is complete. For this to happen, each player's name must be on it, with their DCI number, the clan that they played in the tournament, and where they finished in the tournament. Please give us the finishing order of more than the top three players!

For ease of recording the results, we are going to begin requiring that you only use the two-letter clan abbreviations on the report forms. There will be a new form by the time that you are reading this article, and it has the Clan codes on it.

Storyline Tournament Results, Part I of II

by Ree Soesbee

One of the most wonderful things about the **Legend of the Five Rings** TCG is, unquestionably, the world of Rokugan. In storyline tournaments, the players can affect and alter the events that shape the Jade Empire, carving their own niche within the story of the game. These tournaments have been held from the beginning of the game's popularity, and, over time, have shaped the world.

Listed below are some of the major storyline tournaments held during the *Hidden Emperor* saga, along with a list of winners (when known), Clans, and cards created to reflect the tournament results. Along the way, numerous cards have been created to reflect overall deck trends that did not directly result from tournament victories. These include several cards reflecting the Crane civil war, flavor text written by players at the Morikage tournaments, the card Yoritomo Furikae (to represent a particularly valorious Mantis player), the Honorable Dragon movement's affect on Hitomi's ise zumi, and other singular contributions far too numerous to mention.

This list is only the beginning and will continue in upcoming issues of the *Herald*. If you don't see a past storyline tournament here that was run during the dates included in this issue, please contact both <mizuko@aol.com> and <mouse@wizards.com> and ask us about its result. I hope I've included them all, but if one got lost in the cracks, I'll happily make restoration. And remember, we create the card sets several months in advance of their release; often a TCG storyline tournament's result will occur some three sets after the tournament is reported. That's not because we want to delay a Clan's victory, but rather, because we are currently working on a set that is far in the future.

I couldn't have compiled this list so effectively without the help of Kitsu Sei (Neil Laughlin) and his wonderful website:

<<http://www.munitions.com/~fianna/lien/storytm.html>>

Orc Con '98 (February 12-15)

One-on-One Tournament: To Gain a Tattoo

A Crane player won this tournament, which covered the offer of a Dragon Clan tattoo from Hitomi and prepared Doji Reju for his journey to the Dragon lands.

CARD: Doji Reju Exp.

Multiplayer Tournament: The Wedding of Hida O-Ushi

Hida Yakamo, the Crab Clan Champion, offered his sister's hand in marriage as the prize. A Unicorn player won the tournament, and the short story "A Good Little Wife" commemorated the event. A live-action roleplaying-game event held after the tournament narrowed the field of potential Unicorn suitors down to Shinjo Yasamura.

CARD: Hida Yasamura

Games University (March 1998)

One-on-One Tournament: The New Emerald Champion

This tournament determined which clan would provide the Emerald Champion, replacing the vanished Kakita Toshimoko. Scott Orlando's Crane deck won the tournament.

CARD: Seppun Toshiken (the name, and the fact that Toshiken would join a Crane player for 1 less Gold)

Multiplayer Tournament: Creating a Minor Clan

This tournament was to establish the creation of a new Minor Clan, an offshoot of whichever Clan won the tournament. A Toturi's Army player won the tournament, which bodes for some verrry interesting times ahead. This tournament ultimately resulted in the formation of the Monkey Clan, led by the legendary daimyo Toku.

CARDS: Toku Exp.; Creating the Monkey Clan

Strategicon '98 (May 22-25)

One-on-One Tournament: The Kenshu Supai

While peasants whisper of Kolat and nobles tell fables of Ninja, no Rokugani disputes that there are such things

as spies. The Great Clans have used spies, infiltrators, and traitors since the first Kami created the houses. Spies are not creatures of myth, but members of our own houses, close to our hearts with knives and whispers telling our secrets to our enemies. One of the clans has the foremost kenshu supai (spymaster) in the Empire, and his greatest achievement is the placement of a spy in another of the Great Clans.

The winner of the tournament determines the clan of the spymaster, which has a well-placed spy in the clan of the opponent beaten in the final round.

The final round occurred between Scott Orlando, playing Crane, and Marc Devico, playing Lion.

The Lion were victorious, Marc was granted the official title "Rokugan's Kenshu Supai," and now we know that not all hearts of the Cranes are true to their champion and their families.

CARDS: Daidoji Osen; Kitsu Osen

Multiplayer Tournament

In Rokugan's dark lands, the clans search desperately for some sign of their missing emperor. In forests untouched for a hundred years, over mountains deemed unpassable, the servants of the clans move, eager to find any clue to the mystery of Toturi's vanishing. While on the search, they find a tower unknown to the day, lying hidden in a small valley of brambles and thorns. The door has been kicked open, the tower is in shambles, and on the floor lies, bleeding, one of Rokugan's enigmatic Oracles. The Oracle raises a hand, reaches out, and touches the rescuer's hand.

A flash of light.

A burst of thunder, roaring through the sky.

A whispered death.

And a new Oracle is born.

The winner was Ben Peck (yes, the artist!), playing old-style Crab.

CARD: Hiruma Osuno, returned to the Crab Clan as the Oracle of Earth

Ben Con '98 (May 22-25)

Unusual-Format Tournament: To Join a Great Clan

It is a time of strife in Rokugan. With the rise of the Mantis and the crippling of the Phoenix, the line between the Minor Clans and the Great Clans grows faint. One of the Great Clans, in need after the bloodshed of the Clan War, will merge with the armies and lands of a nearby Minor Clan, absorbing that clan's power into the Greater Clan. One Minor Clan will be no

more, and one of the Seven Houses will gain a new source of strength.

This tournament alternated multiplayer and one-on-one rounds, with players using the same decks throughout. In the final multiplayer round, the victor was Peale Chuang and the (imperial-style) Crab Clan.

CARDS: Toritaka Genzo of the Dark Journey Home set; future Crab Toritaka Personalities

Origins '98 (July 3)

One-on-One Tournament: Claiming the Bayushi Provinces

This tournament played out the titanic, historic battle to determine who controls the empty Bayushi lands now that the Scorpion have been exiled. Will Yoritomo make good on his threat to claim the Scorpion lands as "unaligned lands," as his charter states he has the right to do? Or will another clan wrest the prize from his fingers?

The Mantis army, battered but not broken, was forced north toward Beiden Pass, the crossroads of the Empire. The Crane have captured Bayushi Palace and have offered to hold it in trust for the Scorpion children until they reach their majority.

In the end, a Crane player, named Joel Mazorra, won. This, one of two major storyline tournaments of 1998 that ended in a Crane-versus-Crane duel, helped set the Doji-versus-Daidoji civil war into motion in the storyline.

CARD: The Iron Cranes

One-on-One Tournament: Oni-body Home?

The story prize determined which clan had an oni of some sort caught in one of its castles. According to Kitsu Skya, winner of the tournament (playing Lion), the oni is trapped because the castle was built upon sanctified ground.

CARD: The Fallen Lion Fortress

Gen Con '98 (August 7-9)

One-on-One Tournament: The Jade Champion

Hidden far beneath Otosan Uchi, ancient texts lie in a secret library. Uncovered by the chancellor's guard, a document gives precedence to an imperial appointment—the Jade Champion! Takuan, seizing the opportunity to renew the magic lost during the Clan War, holds the first Jade Champion tournament in three hundred years—and a new shugenja champion of the Empire rises to claim the title!

(continued on page 51)

L5R in the British Isles

by Mark Wooten

Stoke-on-Trent was part of the heart of industrial England's driving force in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Known as "The Potteries," it is famous for . . . well, I guess that is obvious. Perhaps it is a little less well known for being one of the strongest areas for L5R back in the early days of the game. Some of the players even attended the Day of Thunder tournament with their much-feared Phoenix Corrupted Dragon decks. Other areas were also getting into the game: Sheffield, Liverpool, and Manchester—the industrial north. In Ireland, Dublin, Cork, and Limerick all began to get active playing groups.

Still, it was mid-1998 before a significant tournament scene began to take off in Britain. At first Scotland (through Glasgow and Dundee) and Liverpool led the way, but quickly after that Manchester, Sheffield, Rhyll, and Nottingham followed. The year of 1999 was definitely vintage for L5R in the U.K. and Ireland.

Gen Con U.K. '98 saw 49 participants at our first-ever storyline tournament, with over 30 attending the previous day's Open event. By 1999 that had risen to 68 and 55, respectively.

Geographically, the game has spread. The south of England has now taken up the game with much more gusto, and in Scotland a large and growing group has emerged in Edinburgh. The first two global storyline tournaments had 4 Stronghold stores participating. Strike at Midnight had 18!

U.K. and Ireland players tend to be story players. This often extends to non-storyline tournament play. People get a lot of satisfaction from finding new and innovative ways to play using their Clan of choice. They also like to find ways of reflecting story considerations in their decks at the big storyline events. We had Kage and Purging the House in one of the winning Crane decks in the Kolat Master tournament. The winning Unicorn at Gen Con U.K. had Token of Jade for his Kamokos. The Toturi deck that won the Leader at Voltturnum contest had Isawa Kaede in his deck to remove the **Ninja** trait from his Toturi's Army Personalities. All were pretty sharp decks but found ways to add just that extra touch of flavor.

The downside of this is that it can sometimes get a bit "samey" in small, local playgroups, with the same players turning up with the same Clans. This has broadened out a bit more recently, though the fear of being labeled with the dreaded "bandwagon" badge puts some people off. We are trying at the moment to find ways of organizing events that have larger numbers and more diversity, to give people a mixture of play experiences with others from outside their area.

The spirit of play in the U.K. and Ireland is still as it should be. Don't be fooled by this or the "story player" tag, though. There are many good players, the level of competition can be fierce, and U.K. players have acquitted themselves well overseas when they have traveled. Even in the final rounds of last year's Kotei tournament, however, you could see players allowing their opponents to change the order of their play or correct their minor mistakes—and that was with a flight to the U.S. and War in the Heavens on the line.

The U.K. and Ireland also have their own player-run fanzine for the L5R and **Legend of the Burning Sands** games. Every Assembly member gets a free copy, courtesy of the U.K. Wizards of the Coast office, which photocopies the originals and sends it out on a bimonthly basis with either the *Herald* or a nationwide tournament listing. We are very lucky in the U.K. and Ireland to have a guy by the name of Keith Anderson—and his boss Carl Crook—responsible for organized play. They are both very supportive of what the players are trying to achieve, and Keith is a dedicated L5R player. He gleefully took the opportunity at last year's Midnight Madness to give his Junzo deck a run out, when the rest of us were too hit with jet lag. I know for a fact that he intends to be back this year if given a chance! If you want to get a game in the U.K. or are just over visiting and want to find out the tournament schedule for any given area, contact the office in Maidenhead at +44 1628 780530 (from Ireland) or +44 345 125599 (from the U.K.).

Generally, Assembly membership has been on the up. It now stands at over two hundred, where just over a year ago it was at about one hundred, and two years ago half that. That means that the U.K. and Ireland combined are close to the number of members in France, the biggest L5R country in Europe. In Ireland particularly, L5R outsells the **Magic: The Gathering** trading card game! We have yet to achieve the dizzying heights of over 180 players for our national Kotei, but we hope that this year might see close to a hundred players.

Contacts

For **Scotland**, contact Mark Wootton at +44 1337 857463 or <kakita@kakita.freemove.co.uk>.

For **Northern England and Wales**, contact Adam Jones at +44 1617 071481 or <goju@oddthink.co.uk>.

For **Southern England**, contact Paul Bravey at +44 1753 579135 or <paul@pbravey.freemove.co.uk>.

For **Ireland**, contact Jim Brophy at +353 503 48657 or <kbrophy@iol.ie>.

UK Top 10

Mark Armitage	571
Quinton Dalton	488
Mike Jones	295
Mark Wootton	263
Jason Neil Jones	214
Richard McAley	205
Darren Hulme	204
Neil N Jones	193
Warren Clarke	187
Gareth Davies	184

Ratings: The Point System Revealed

by Andy Heckt

This is the system used for points for all DCI-sanctioned L5R tournaments since March 1, 1999. Important points that everyone needs to read before going any further:

- This is not the same system that AEG used.
- We have moved to a system for invitations, whereby only points gained under the DCI are considered for most events. We may still issue invitations based upon "lifetime" ratings in addition to the current ratings.
- Beginning with *Herald* #13, we rotated the rankings to show only those points accumulated since March 1, 1999.
- Effective April 1, 2000, we are retroactively removing what used to be "participation points" and replacing them with "Clan Points," which are explained below.
- Please note that Wizards of the Coast may place modifiers on some tournaments to increase their value. We will only do this for tournaments that we run. You cannot solicit for this increase, so please don't ask. Any such increase in value will be announced prior to the event.

Point System

Tournament Base Value (TBV) equals 5 times the number of participants. Each player receives the point amount shown for his or her placement in the tournament.

Percentage of TBV

1st place	100%
2nd place	80%
3rd & 4th place	60%
5th-8th place	40%
9th-16th place	20%

Clan Points

As the card environment changes each expansion, some Clans are perceived to gain an advantage. To reward players who stick to one Clan regardless of the card environment, we are implementing Clan Points. Clan Points will not add to your overall rating but only count toward the individual Clan rating. Thus, a player who always plays the same Clan can receive upwards of 20% of the TBV just for showing up and being the only person playing that Clan. Clan Points (CP) equal the total number of players divided by number of players playing the same Clan as you.

But My Points Are Wrong!

If you believe that a tournament has inaccurate results, you now have the ability to appeal. The website is listed below. Before filing an appeal, however, please follow these three simple steps to double-check your points:

1) Search for the tournament in question in the DCI database:

~~<<http://events.wizards.com/dcitournament/default.asp?gate=5R>>~~

Change the Status to "All." If the tournament doesn't show up, the event was never sanctioned and therefore we have no involvement; it will not change your rankings.

2) Look at the status of the tournament. If it shows as having been received but does not show rankings, please wait for the next ratings run (the 15th or 30th of the month). If it shows as delinquent, call the organizers and pressure them to turn in their results. If it shows as cancelled but you participated, call the DCI at 1-800-324-6496 and ask for DCI Investigations.

3) If the tournament has rankings, review them for accuracy. If you believe a received tournament's rankings are inaccurate, you can submit a final appeals form. See ~~<<http://www.wizards.com/DCI/appeals.asp>>~~ or contact the tournament organizers and have them contact us to resubmit their results with accurate notation.

If you believe your Clan affiliation was noted incorrectly, the *only* means by which we can change it is if the tournament's organizer resubmits the entire tournament with all player affiliations noted correctly.

Tournament organizers *must* do the following: fill in all of the information requested on the Event Summary form. This includes player names, DCI numbers, and Clan affiliations. The tournament organizers are also required to keep records of their tournaments for one year (see section 12 of the DCI tournament rules in the tournament organizer handbook).

Not following the appeals process and just emailing or calling someone at random here at Wizards of the Coast places you in line behind everyone who follows the appeals process properly.

Top 10's

Crab Top 10

Brian Duff	1135
Bob Yager	754
Douglas Wimberley	669
Keven Walker	575
Alexis Kampas	555
Gunnar R Lundquist	502
Bradley Todd	497
Ted Renner	462
Bob Schultz	442
Brian L. L. Olea	440

Naga Top 10

Marty Loftus	702
Charles Jones	556
Barry Osser	494
Luis Matos	459
Michael J Watkins	456
Paul Gerardi	401
Sean Cabin	379
Bob Brown	366
Jacob Lesgold	299
Mike Jones	295

Scorpion Top 10

Torrey C Martinez	864
Robert Ciccolini	798
Lang M Johnson	729
Dennis J. Quearry	638
Mark Armitage	571
Wade D Greninger	551
Paul Bennett	534
Brian Floyd	525
Jason N Peto	515
Toby Dewley	459

Shadowlands Top 10

Darrian Dalangin	1336
Ramon Pena	1335
Todd Leistra	902
Scott Parker	735
Sebastien Duthu	582
Ernest Barcelo	559
Mike s Colson	538
Adam Martinez	504
David Salsman	466
Robert Hutchinson	396

Toturi's Army Top 10

Ronald Carlson	1757
Jon Paulson	1261
Conrad Jackson	1062
Noah Overton	933
Seth Mason	904
Adam Schroader	890
Michael G Jahnke	879
Jeff Furnish	862
Leon Phillips	839
Alice W Martinez	819

Overall Top 10

Paul M Higgins	1868
Jim Beck	1813
Ronald Carlson	1757
Antoine Blanchard	1715
Eric S Wiener	1670
Darrian Dalangin	1336
Ramon Pena	1335
Gregory Osborn	1330
Richard Riley	1306
David Deveau	1277

Lion Top 10

Noel Meyer	868
Brian Farmer	751
Matt Levy	664
Brian Welshans	638
Drew Turnbull	599
Travis Watts	462
Ash Thomason	451
Jose Castro	444
Kyle Taylor	410
Marty M Schuchman	397

Phoenix Top 10

Paul M Higgins	1868
Jim Beck	1813
Antoine Blanchard	1715
Shawn Williams	1254
Afshin Coleman	1034
Devin B Precourt	919
Brian James	867
Jaime Garcia	826
Raphael Pinard	685
Richard D Williams	682

Monks Top 10

Bret Swanson	1089
Matthew Farney	734
Stefan J. Zarzynski	685
Thomas Cottone	512
Chris M Allen	512
Jonathan Scharrer	463
Jason Marlis	443
Jeremy M. Nagorny	328
Albert Verdaguer	279
Jeff Hicks	233

Yoritomo's Alliance Top 10

Jeff Schomoke	674
Jody Mooney	573
Peale Chuang	565
Sergio Martin	540
Jeff Kyer	511
Jeff Hicks	387
Jason Cadd	371
Jacobe Callahan	366
Demetrios Saites	325
Zac A Clark	324

Unicorn Top 10

Richard Riley	1306
David Deveau	1277
David Claxton	1042
Sean Nordell	947
Bryan Reese	882
Daniel Metaute	784
Erik Batt	775
Sandra Bozan	744
Lepvriar Laurent	719
Sergio Martin	707

News from Court

by Andy Heckt

Members of the Assembly,

Toturi leads the armies into the Shadowlands. The spirits of the dead have been deprived of Jigoku and walk among us. The Empire is in chaos, and only a mighty hero can bring order. But Yoritomo has refused Shinjo's offer of the throne! But from among the dead have come forth the *Heroes of Rokugan*.

The Favor

The *Heroes of Rokugan* set is this issue's members-only item. This special, 27-card set is exclusively available to Assembly members for a limited time before going on sale to the general public. Each member is restricted to one set, regardless of the number of memberships you have. The details of this offer appear on your cover letter and are only available to those members who received the initial mailing (as is true of any members-only item). New or returning members do not receive this offer.

You'll note that within this issue we continue to offer six cards that only Assembly members can order from the wily trader. Provide your DCI number (and Koku) to Taka when ordering these items to verify your membership.

Canada

As announced last issue, the improvements in transport and trade have allowed us to offer residents of Canada domestic rates for membership and shipping. That is correct! \$15 U.S. for Canadians to join or renew Assembly membership—so call!

Renewal

If you didn't renew or join before this issue, you now know why I've been beating that drum: members-only offers like this issue's *Heroes of Rokugan* set. The *Herald* is now back onto its quarterly schedule. Issue #16 is due in July, #17 in late September, and the first issue of 2001 in January/February. Benefits for members only are on the increase, other membership offers continue to grow, and

our prices remain the same for most of you.

You can join or renew by three methods:

- Call 1-800-324-6496 or 1-888-4-5RINGS.
 - Visit <http://www.wizards.com/L5R/imperialcourt.asp> for online memberships.
 - Mail to the address below. European members: instead mail to your closest regional offices as listed at the bottom of page 31.
- Fan Clubs at the DCI
P.O. Box 707
Renton, WA 98057-0707

Access to the Chancellor

With any questions you have regarding membership benefits, Koku redemption, or changes of address, contact me at:

Telephone: 1-800-324-6496 or 1-888-4-5RINGS.

Email: fanclubs@wizards.com

Members in Europe and South Africa: contact your regional office as listed on the bottom of page 31.

Membership Drive

The set of thirty-three *Fire & Shadow* foil cards goes to Nick Ladd of Asheville, NC, and Bob Kensinger of Hendersonville, NC (thanks for the recruitment, Bob!). We continue to encourage more membership. For those of you looking to renew, here is a great chance to grab another member for your gaming group. Our final drawing for the membership drive will occur for Issue #16. We will draw from the names of everyone who has joined or renewed since Issue #12 and award a complete set of the Clan War foil cards to one such person and a complete set to the person who encouraged him or her to join.

(continued on page 37)

Imperial Assembly Membership Form—Issue #15

Send this form with a check or money order for \$15 (in the U.S. or Canada) or \$25 (anywhere else) made out to "The DCI," or your MasterCard or Visa number (and expiration date), to: Imperial Assembly, P.O. Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707.

Name: _____ DCI # (if any): _____ Favorite Clan: _____
Street: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____
Phone: (_____) _____ Email address: _____
Circle one: New member Renewing member
Payment (circle one): Check Money order Visa MasterCard
If paying by Visa or MasterCard:
Card #: _____ Expiration date: _____

For a chance to win a set of 100 Clan War foils:

Who encouraged you to join (can't be you)? _____ His or her DCI #: _____

What are Koku and Dinari?

You can find Koku or Dinari on the back of every booster pack and on one of the inside flaps of every **Legend**

of the **Five Rings** or **Legend of the Burning Sands** deck box. So how do you use the Koku or Dinari once you've found them? Send them to Taka to exchange them for L5R and LBS cards, T-shirts, and other merchandise! Make sure you follow the shipping and handling directions carefully and pay close attention to the order form for the address of the office closest to you to which to send your order.



Taka's Treasures



15-1 NEW Members-Only Offer! *Heroes of Rokugan* limited-edition collector's set. See pages 27-30 for more info. Ordering details are provided to members in their cover letters.

15-6 War Banners. Carry the color of your clan to war! Bear your clan mon into battle! Honor your home!

Come prepared for your next tournament as the samurai did to battle, displaying the standard of your clan. Produced by Kamweid exclusively for the Imperial Assembly, this 1 x 3 banner prominently features your clan's mon upon the clan's background color. Ready to be mounted on poles (instructions included) or hung on your wall. Specify clan when ordering (Crab, Crane, Dragon, Lion, Mantis, Monk, Naga, Phoenix, Scorpion, Shadowlands, Toturi's Army, or Unicorn).

1000 Koku, plus \$3 S&H U.S. & Canada, \$5 outside the U.S. & Canada



15-13 Hantei the 38th promo figure (previously offered via *InQuest* magazine) 30 Koku + \$1 S&H

The Card Shop

All selections are limited by availability—first come, first served. Only request one of each card per order, please! Cards 15XA–15XF are for Assembly members only.

If you are looking for a little something to give you an extra edge against your opponents, here are some cards that may help you in your quest. Each order must be accompanied by the order form. All artwork is ©1996–2000 by the respective artists or Wizards of the Coast and used with permission. **Cards are 20 Koku or Dinari each.**

15A
At'tok'tuk Sensei



15B
Death of Onnotangu



15C
Exile's Road



15D
Honor, Bah!



15E
Kage



15F
Morikage



15G
Nio Sensei



15H
Norikazu Sensei



15I
Shiryo no Kaze



15J
Shiryo no Takuan



15K
Shiryo no Yasuki



15L
Shosuro Dojo



15M
Tangen's Lies



15N The Legion of
Two Thousand



15O
The Prophecies



15P
Tsuruchi's Legion



15Q
Void's Path



15R
Yokatsu



Members-Only Cards

15XA
Dirty Politics



15XB
Dying Effort



15XC
Footsteps of Madness



15XD
A Better World



15XE
Casualties of Fate



15XF
Dairya



Heroes of Rokugan





Legend of the Five Rings



For ages, the people of Rokugan have honored their ancestors and followed their guidance. Now the Shadow has blocked the bridge to Jigoku, and the dead walk amongst the living, unable to reach the afterlife.

The final battle is now at hand. The Shadow has gathered its forces and seeks to close the gateway to the dead, forever separating Rokugan from its past.

The clans of the Empire, alerted by Hitomi and the returning Dragons, have united in their common goal to fight their greatest threat. But this is not just a battle for the living. From the land of the dead return some of Rokugan's greatest heroes . . . and worst villains.



He tore the fire from the heavens when his sword broke, hurling it at his enemies. He built a palace from the stone of a single mountain, carving it with thunder alone.

With a warrior's motion, he drew a blade hidden in his robes and leveled it at the Hantei's throat. "There is nothing that can take your life as easily as steel."



Through hellish sacrifices, he forged the swords upon an altar of blood and fire, a stone made of an oni's skull covered in flesh, fire, and the molten steel of the Moon's own hatred.

luchiban bound the spirits of four great champions into his blades, twisting their souls to match his designs. He imbued them with a thirst for blood, a thirst that could never be quenched.



This set is being offered only to the Imperial Assembly for a limited time (one set per customer). Any remaining sets will go on general sale at Origins™ and Gen Con®.

Members whose membership expired after January 1, 2000 and who have forgotten to renew after expiring with issue #14 can still get the *Heroes of Rokugan* set at the same discount offered to current members, if they renew their membership before June 1, 2000.

To join the Imperial Assembly, call 1-800-324-6496 or visit www.wizards.com/LSR/imperialcourt/fanclub *Heroes of Rokugan*,



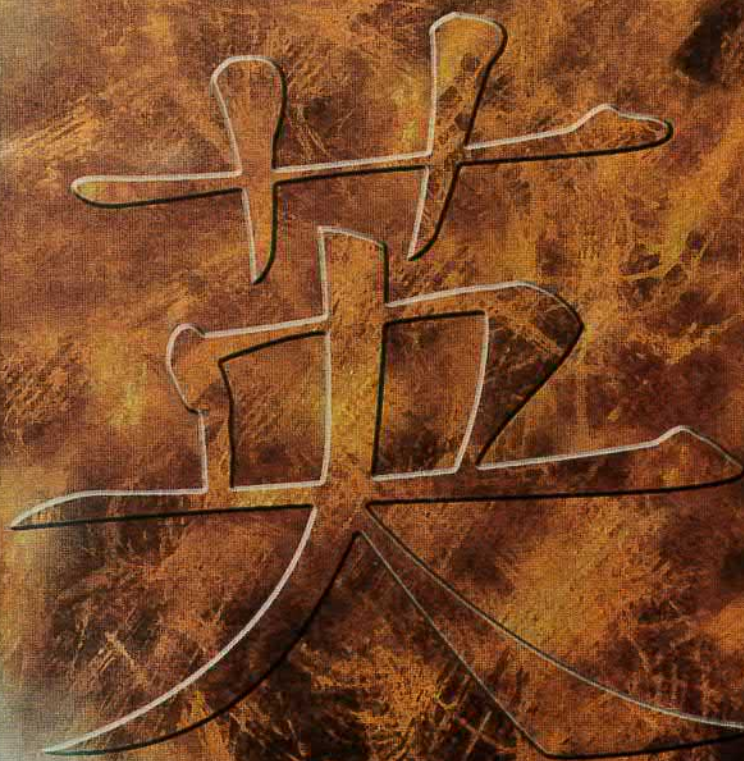
As the Shadow seeks to destroy the gateway to the land of the dead, the land's greatest heroes and villains emerge from its portal to join the battle for the future of Rokugan!

The Heroes of Rokugan set is more than a collector's set for the Legend of the Five Rings trading card game. Within its illustrated binder lies "The Herald's Tale" written by Miya Mashigai, which tells the stories behind each of the twenty-seven cards included.

Also summarized for the first time is the Legend of the Five Ring story for each edition and expansion.

This is a limited edition set. It is initially being offered to Imperial Assembly members as an exclusive thanks for their special support.

The set includes the Ratling Stronghold Warrens of the Nezumi, as chosen by Assembly members in issue #11.



15AA
Augury



15AB
Blinded by Fate



15AC
Blood Calls for Blood



15AD
Dahab Translator



15AE
Discorporation



15AF
Glass Eye of Qaliqu



15AG
Jeweled Monkey



15AH
Jinn of Destruction



15AI
Kara



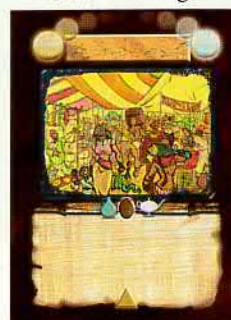
15AJ
Lurza



15AK
Marayid



15AL Masters of the
Blood-Red Tiger



15AM
Nim



15AN
Quick Justice



15AO
Rite of Assassination



15AP
Saqr al Fediq



15AQ The Tale of
the Fourth Avatar (2)



15AR
The Thoroughfare



Legend of the Five Rings Order Form - Herald #15

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Item #s: _____
 Alternate choices (card requests): _____ Shipping & handling total: _____
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Orders from this issue of the *Herald* will be accepted from 5/1/00 to 9/1/00.



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Stronghold Focus: Warrens of the Nezumi

by Zen Faulkes

You asked for it; you got it.

Imperial Assembly members remember the poll taken a few issues back asking which faction should get its own Stronghold. It's time to examine the Stronghold that the vote brought us: the Warrens of the Nezumi.

The Ratlings won the vote, but their Stronghold starts with them at a disadvantage: they start with only three Provinces. Ow. If you think that 12 Province Strength will buy you time to develop, remember that Evil Feeds upon Itself destroys the Warrens' 12-Strength Province as fast as it does any wussy 5-Strength Province. Province-killing Events are extraordinarily painful to the furry ones, so you might want to use Defenders of the Realm.

You might occasionally turn the disadvantage of having few Provinces to advantage. Force of Honor might outperform Block Supply Lines. Fewer Provinces makes life harder for Cavalry decks and easier to move units (with, for example, Wide Terrain). But such fringe benefits are so tiny that players should look for ways to get their Province count up.

The best Province-gainer card for Ratlings is probably Rebuilding the Empire, because they meet its conditions from the start. If you ask for the Benefices of the Emperor, the lowest Focus value given snags a player a new Province. Ascension of the Mantis is hard to pull off, but the Ratlings have a better chance than most; after all, Ratling decks are renowned for the sheer volume of their cheap Followers. Finally, Victory at Hiruma Castle is worth checking out (and not just for the appropriately themed artwork!). You forfeit destroying a Province to gain a Province, but if you've just destroyed a defending army, it may be worth the trade.

With an unmatched 12 Province Strength, only this Stronghold is so well equipped to use Flaming Ground. This can give defending Ratling armies a +6F bonus that isn't associated with any one Personality, so there's no obvious target for your foe to send home or duel.

There's not much to say about the cost reduction for Ratling cards, except that the long-maligned Ratling

Scavengers cost nothing—they're finally worth what you pay for them.

Ratlings are immune to the Shadowlands Taint. This does more than drive Jama Suru batty: your Ratlings can be a little bad without paying the price. Go on, cast A Terrible Oath: your Rats won't be Shadowlands, but they do still get +2F/-1C. Burden of the Word gives a Ratling a +3F/+3C bonus with no downside. Unfortunately, most cards that Ratlings could use with impunity have other drawbacks. Corrupted Jade Sliver and The Porcelain Mask of Fu Leng, for instance, are Shadowlands themselves (you still won't get past a Crystal Gate). Legacy of the Dark One and Rise Again! are Maho (which Kuni Utagu still won't like). Ratlings might find themselves in the unusual situation of being Undead but

not Shadowlands (with, for example, Thy Master's Will or Gift of the Maker)!

Not only are they incorruptible, Ratlings are fearless. Another little "gravy" trait.

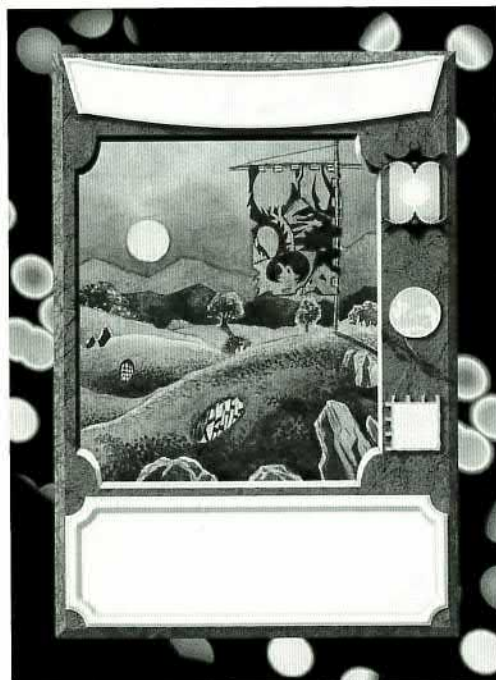
Finally, Ratlings can bow and self-destruct to destroy an opposing Follower. Considering the prominence of Followers in most current decks, this is a solid ability. Of course, it requires a lot of warm, furry, expendable Ratlings, like the token Followers from Ratling Villages. But if you don't want to lose all of those Followers for good, check out Plains of Foul Tears. This Region puts those Followers right back into your hands instead of destroying them. Of course, this is also true for your opponent, but he or she will probably spend much more Gold reattaching them than you will. You could use Troops from the Woods to capitalize

on this advantage.

But the biggest advantage of the new Ratling Stronghold is one that isn't written on the box: Warrens of the Nezumi give you an excuse to talk in a high-pitched voice all game and let loose that fearsome Ratling war cry:

"Squeak."

Editor's note: Warrens of the Nezumi is part of the Heroes of Rokugan card set.



The Dragon Clan

by Edward Bolme and Ree Soesbee

The Dragon Clan was founded by the Kami Togashi a thousand years ago, and Togashi ruled the clan until the Day of Thunder. He would pretend to die once or twice a century, each time reappearing in a new guise and with a new name. Not many even in the Dragon Clan knew of this deception, and outside the clan, only the Scorpion daimyo knew the truth.

The Usurper Bayushi Shoji asked Togashi for his advice before setting upon the coup. Togashi agreed that Shoji was doing the right thing, knowing that by agreeing he had condemned Shoji to failure, thereby precipitating the events that would lead to the return of Fu Leng.

The Scorpion Clan Coup came and went, and the Lion daimyo Akodo Toturi was disgraced. Kachiko took the throne and began poisoning her husband. The Clan War began. In all of this, the Dragon Clan stood aside at all but one point: Yokuni appointed Toturi—a dishonored and disgraced ronin thrown from the pinnacle of power to a lowly state—to command the Dragon forces.

Under Toturi's leadership, the Dragon won the Battle at Beiden Pass. Mirumoto Daini, under Toturi's orders, investigated rumors in Shinomen Forest and returned with an alliance with the Naga. And when Fu Leng possessed the Emperor's poisoned body, Togashi commanded Kachiko to return to the throne room and continue poisoning the body of the Dark God, lest he conquer the Empire.

When the Day of Thunder came, Togashi entered the throne room with the Seven Thunders. He attacked Fu Leng, who broke Togashi's back and left him crippled. Mirumoto Hitomi, the Dragon Thunder, did nothing as the other six Thunders attacked Fu Leng and were defeated . . . until, at last, she plunged her Obsidian Hand into Togashi's chest, ripped out his heart, and crushed it, stealing his power for her own. Hidden in that heart was the Twelfth Black Scroll, last of the ancient scrolls used to bind Fu Leng, and as Hitomi opened it, Fu Leng was fully released—and made mortal.

With the death of Fu Leng and Togashi, Hitomi claimed the Dragon Clan for her own. She purged the house of those still loyal to Togashi, sending Togashi's son Hoshi and many others to seek refuge among the monks. With the stolen power of a dragon at her disposal, she began tattooing monks with her Tainted blood, driving many of them mad and binding them all to her service. Then, using the knowledge she had of Darkness (for the Obsidian Hand was the hand of the Moon himself), she began experimenting with a creature of the Shadow trapped beneath Kyuden Togashi. That creature was Shosuro, the Scorpion Thunder and the Shadow's greatest servant, confined by Togashi long ago.

Shosuro's torment awakened the Shadow itself, the only thing not named at the start of time. Its power was founded in the fact that it had not been defined. Faceless and shapeless, its powers had given rise to those Ninja who could change shape, merge with shadows, and do other spectacular things.

When the Shadow awakened, the Naga became alarmed and sought to destroy Hitomi's prisoner, to weaken the Shadow before

it could fully rise. Mirumoto Daini himself forswore his Dragon allegiance and joined them. The monks, with Hoshi and other Dragon expatriates, joined the Naga in the Siege of Sleeping Mountain. The allied forces drove ever closer to Hitomi's lair as she threatened to release the Shadow and destroy the world.

Hitomi spurred her experiments on, hoping to alter the Shadow within Shosuro, but in the end Shosuro escaped her clutches and vanished.

Her experiment suddenly over, Hitomi stepped aside. She let Hoshi take the castle and assume the championship. She went to the Shrine of Three Sisters, there to challenge the source of the Shadow's power: the Moon, Onnotangu himself, who had never forgiven his children for the perceived wrongs they had committed at the beginning of time.

By this time, the Shadow had hold of Emperor Toturi, and the Kami Shinjo, returned from the Burning Sands, led an attack upon Toturi at the capital. The Moon sent his champion, resplendent in the Moon's own armor, to defend Toturi. Just then, Hitomi challenged Onnotangu. Hitomi, with the hand of the Moon, the blood of a dragon, and the will of a mortal, sought to slay a deity. Their duel was long and hard, and it seemed as though Hitomi would die . . . but at the critical moment, the monk Takao killed the Moon's champion, distracting the Moon for a split second. In that brief moment, Hitomi killed the Moon.

The Shadow was Onnotangu's creature; Hitomi thought that by destroying Onnotangu she could erase the Shadow's connection to the Celestial Heavens and thereby make it subject to the attack of mortals. She was right: when the Moon died, the Shadow became vulnerable—but with the First Goju still leading the members of the Shadow, the Shadow has not been defeated.

There followed twenty-seven days of darkness as the Sun went into mourning. At midnight of the twenty-seventh day, Hitomi prepared to commit seppuku and ascend into the heavens as the new Moon. But that is a story for another day.

Dragon Top 10

Gregory Osborn	1330
Matt Rynearson	787
Matt Loomis	760
Jeremy M. Nagorny	628
Josh Timmers	549
Ken Yeung	524
Eric Sprinkle	490
Raul Caballero	478
David Brown	461
Jesse J. Michalica	421

Dueling Dragons

by Mike Liesik

This deck focuses on one of the Dragon Clan's greatest strengths: dueling. Its purpose is to defend while gaining Honor through duels.

The core of this deck relies on your duels as your defense. With over a quarter of your Fate deck containing duels, you should be able to get a few early. The Items in your deck

all either affect your duels or gain bonuses as a result of your duels.

This deck uses Yokuni Sensei instead of the more traditional dueling Sensei, Toshimoko. The ability to refuse challenges to your low-Chi Personalities can be important. Yokuni restricts the other players' production by clogging their Provinces with useless cards.

Your best defense in this deck is Come One at a Time. With this Terrain and the proper cards, one of your Personalities can single-handedly level an entire army. I'd say that the

best, if most lengthy, combo in the deck is to give Hitomi Kobai the Mirumoto's "Niten," Nunchaku, and a Bloodsword. Once another player attacks, play Come One at a Time and plow through all opposition. Each time Kobai wins a duel, he receives a permanent +1/+1 bonus and his Bloodsword gets its usual +2/+2 token. As long as you continue to win your duels, the Nunchaku ensures that you get to challenge each of your opponent's Personalities before your opponent takes his or her first action.

Hitomi Kazaq and Hitomi Nakuso are both in the deck for their control factors. Against decks that rely on Followers or Force bonuses, these two tend to play an important part in defending Provinces. A Master Smith token on either of these two serves to increase their desired effect.

There are copies of only three Kihos in the deck. Facing Your Devils is quite effective with Agasha Tamori on the first turn. The other player will be forced to either discard cards with total Focus values of 6 or duel a 5-Chi Personality. Strike of the Silent Waters is another good surprise. Who needs a Focus when Tamori can give you the same effect with a card that is much more easily obtained? The Wind's Truth not only has a Focus value of 4 but can also strategically steal the other player's most valuable Honor gains.

Rare and Fixed Cards Used

The Stronghold is available in the *Fire & Shadow* set, making it easily attainable. Hitomi, Streets of Otsan Uchi, and the Charter are fixed cards in the *Hidden Emperor 2*, *Scorpion Clan Coup*™ 3, and *Jade Edition* sets, respectively. Clan Heartland is a rare printed in the *Crimson & Jade*™ set as well as in the *Pearl Edition* set. Imperial Gift is also a rare but has been printed in every basic set. You can replace both of the rare cards with cards of your choice, as neither is vital to the playability of the deck.

Variants

This deck is legal in an Extended Jade environment. To play it in a Strict Jade environment, you only have to remove four cards: the three Iaijutsu Arts and the Streets of Otsan Uchi. Removing the Arts will give you three less duels, so I would recommend replacing them

with either Stand or Run or Critical Duel. You can replace the Streets of Otsan Uchi with

a Tidal Land Bridge or Akui Cliffs. In Open format, the only change that I would make would be to remove the Imperial Gift and replace it with A Soul of Thunder.

Iron Mountain

Yokuni Sensei

Dynasty Deck (40)

Event (1)
Imperial Gift 1

Holdings (19)
Ancient Sage 2
Charter of the Dragon Clan 1
Fortress of the Dragonfly 2
Gold Mine 3
The Hiruma Dojo 3
Jade Works 3
Large Farm 2
Master Smith 1
Small Farm 2

Personalities (18)
Agasha Tamori 3
Hitomi Exp. 3 1
Hitomi Reju 1
Hitomi Kazaq 2
Hitomi Kobai 3
Hitomi Naku 3
Kitsuki Kaagi 2
Togashi Yoshi 3

Regions (2)
Clan Heartland 1
Streets of Otsan Uchi 1

Fate Deck (39 + Yokuni Sensei)

Actions (20)
Come One at a Time 3
Dragonfly Tattoo 3
Dragon Tattoo 3
"Enough Talk!" 2
Iaijutsu Art 3
Iaijutsu Challenge 3
Iaijutsu Duel 3

Elemental Ring (1)
Ring of the Void 1

Items (11)
Bloodsword 3
Mirumoto's "Niten" 3
Nunchaku 2
Tetsubo 3

Kihos (7)
Facing Your Devils 3
Strike of Silent Waters 2
The Wind's Truth 2

The Prophecies of Asako Yurito

by Ken Carpenter

AEG recently began publishing **Clan War** journals, which advance the **Clan War** timeline in accordance with past expansions of the TCG. The first of these books, *Desperate Journey*, follows the Anvil of Despair on its final journey into the Shadowlands through fiction, scenarios, and new personalities.

In addition to being the journal, "Desperate Journey" was the name of a **Clan War** storyline event held the last weekend of March and the first weekend of April at seventy-five locations in eight countries. *The Prophecies of Asako Yurito* scenario was provided for use in the final round of the Desperate Journey tournament. It uses a revised Victory-Point system too complex to include here, but you can find it on our official **Clan War** site <www.Clanwar.com>.

In the months following the disappearance of the Anvil of Despair and its escort, worry began to gnaw at the Elemental Council of the Phoenix Clan. They had known the danger of sending the anvil to Amaterasu's Furnace deep in the Shadowlands but had believed strongly that the mission would succeed. Now, however, they were less certain.

They approached the Asako and asked that the Asako use their special talents to determine the fate of the anvil and those who accompanied it. The lights burned day and night in the ancestral home of the Asako. After many weeks, Asako Yasu returned to the Elemental Council to report on his family's findings.

"The fate of the anvil is beyond our reach. We have looked down every path but cannot find it. There is, however, important news of Asako Yurito."

Yurito had been charged with delivering the anvil. As one, the council drew a sharp breath and waited for Yasu to continue.

"He is dead."

They released their breath and looked at Yasu in confusion and frustration. It was Tsuke who spoke first; quick to anger, Tsuke always spoke first.

"In what way is that important news? With the lack of contact from any member of the anvil's escort, we had assumed that all had perished."

Yasu's blind eyes remained expressionless as he waited for the muttering of the council to dwindle into silence. Then he continued.

"Before Yurito died, he underwent a . . . transformation. His mind drew upon energies beyond mortal knowledge and withdrew secrets from a shadowed place. We have determined that his last act in life was to write down those secrets in the form of prophecy. The prophecies lie with his body, hidden in the mud and decay of the Shadowlands near Amaterasu's Furnace. Much of the anvil's escort lay near Yurito in death.

"Let me further explain that these prophecies are incredibly powerful and could be very dangerous in the wrong hands."

Tsuke's eyes narrowed suspiciously. "Does anyone else know of these prophecies?"

Yasu's face suddenly grew tired, almost defeated. "Yes," he said. "Shortly after we discovered the existence of the prophecies, one of our servants disappeared. A quick inspection of his quarters and a few divinations determined that he was a spy, though we are not sure for whom. We can be sure that at least one other clan has access to this information. It would be foolish to delay the formation and discharge of a rescuing force."

Tadaka addressed the council. "Perhaps we should enlist the aid of another clan, one who can reach the prophecies more quickly. In exchange for our information, perhaps we can share in the knowledge of the prophecies."

Yasu's head dropped even lower, and he slowly turned and left the council as it began to debate the best course of action. The Asako had done their work, and his opinion would no longer sway the council, but he knew that time was slowly passing away, never to be recaptured.

So it was that a race between clans began, each desperate to reach the body of Asako Yurito before the other, and each willing to engage in any violence necessary to claim the prize. Such was the legacy of Asako Yurito's prophecies.

Map

Similar to the map used in *Tides of Darkness*, the scenario in which Yurito died, this confrontation takes place deep in the Shadowlands. Setup areas are located at the far ends of the battlefield, as marked. Note that the placement areas have the armies starting about 4 feet apart.

Armies determine their placement area normally (players each roll 1 die and add their general's Battle skill). The player with the highest total chooses his or her placement area and sets up the first unit. Placement continues normally until all units are set up. In addition, the player who began placement begins the battle with the Hand of Fate.

Special Rules

The body of Yurito is placed as marked on the battlefield. The first unit to end a Primary Movement Phase in base-to-base contact with Yurito's body manages to take possession of the scrolls containing his prophecies. The prophecies are considered in the possession of the highest-Glory Personality in the unit. If there is more than one Personality in the unit or no Personality at all, the prophecies are in the possession of the unit's leader. If there is no leader in the unit, the prophecies are in the possession of any model in the front rank. While in possession of the prophecies, the possessing model has #S reduced by 1 (e.g., from 3 to 2, 2 to 1, or 1 to 0).

This scenario uses the hostage rules from the

Lion Clan expansion. Using these rules, a unit may attempt to wrest possession of the prophecies from an enemy unit.

In addition, if the unit that possesses the prophecies becomes broken or routed, it drops the prophecies on the ground (if the unit was not engaged), or the prophecies enter the possession of an engaged enemy unit (if the unit was engaged). If more than one enemy unit is engaged with the possessing unit when it becomes broken or routed, the player of the enemy units may decide which unit gains possession of the prophecies.

A unit that possesses the prophecies may exit the battlefield off of the table edge in its own army's placement area and is not considered a casualty when doing so. All other units that leave the battle are considered casualties and count toward the opponent's VP.

At the end of the game, or when the possessing unit leaves the battle, the army that possesses the prophecies gains an additional 4 VP.

Ending the Game/Determining the Winner

The finals for this tournament have an eight-turn limit. At the end of the eighth turn, play stops and VP are compared. Use the revised VP system found at <www.Clanwar.com> or at any of the Desperate Journey tournament locations. If the VP are tied, the win goes to the army that possessed the prophecies at the end of the battle. Otherwise, the army with the highest VP wins.

(continued from page 24)

What's happened to the Clan shirts?

The Wily Trader has struck a better bargain with a gai-jin merchant, Kamwied, which can produce different shirt designs more frequently. What this means for us is:

Anyone can buy a Clan shirt from Kamwied at <www.5rings.net>.

Assembly members get a 10% rebate on Kamwied's L5R products!

The shirts are still available from issue #14 for orders received before 8/1/00.

T-shirt certificates won from tournaments will be redeemable until January 1, 2001.

Note: we are still doing logo shirts.

Survey

A big thank-you to all those who took the time to fill out and mail back your surveys. We are using the information to determine what members feel the Herald should become. As promised, we also have a gift for those who sent the ones we received. It has two parts. First, anyone who is a current member as of issue #15 will receive a six-month extension on his or her membership. If you are not a member as of issue #15, or if your membership expired and you didn't renew, you'll need to join to claim this gift. Second, we have two cards for you: the Pearl mon-backed Stronghold of your Clan and a reprint of a pre-Jade Clan Personality with the new card design and a new promo border.

Thanks again to all of you who participated.

Big Con Survival Guide: Sidebar and Pep Talk

by Edward Bolme

A lot of folks out there might be kind of intimidated by the thought of going to one of the big shows like Gen Con or Origins. I know that when I was younger, I vacillated between "it'll be too big and I won't know what to do" and "it'll be too small and not worth the money."

Finally, I ended up doing freelance game design. West End Games was publishing my first adventure module. Gen Con was coming up and I had vacation time. This was my big chance to meet my editors and possibly score some new contacts. So I decided to go to Gen Con.

I didn't have enough money at the time to buy a plane ticket, as I was busily paying off my new truck as fast as I could, so I opted to drive.

Did I mention that I lived in Houston at the time?

Yep. My first show, I had my truck, my time, my sleeping bag, and a pocket full of survival money. I didn't have an entry badge, I didn't have directions, I didn't have a place to stay, and I didn't have a clue what to expect. After a 20-hour drive, I ended up at the show. Very low on sleep.

And you know—getting by at Gen Con was not a big deal.

For food, there are a number of restaurants close to the convention center, a food court at a mall a few blocks away, and overpriced snacks on site for the desperate or wealthy.

For shelter, it's relatively painless to share a room with people. I've slept with as many as eleven in one room, though I'm sure hotel security would not have been pleased to learn that. I was able to schmooze floor space from my editor. You might try to share a room with a friend or acquaintance, or schmooze floor space from another L5R fan (we've got good fans). I know some people just sleep on the floor or couches at the convention, because gaming goes on 24 hours a day. It may not be private or restful, but it is inexpensive. Of course, if you choose this tactic, you'll also have to locate showers, upon which problem, since I have always been sleeping in a room one way or another, I can give no advice.

The show floor alone was worth the trip. It's the world's largest game store, filled with up-to-the-minute products, lots of attentive demo folks, and more stuff than you imagined existed. I was able to spend so much time on the floor looking, learning, and buying, that only last year did I finally participate in my first tourney.

The same goes for Origins. If you act now, you can get a room at either show, I believe. Depending on how much you eat or drink, you can get by on \$20 a day. Get some juice and bagels for breakfast, a burger and such for lunch, and a decent dinner, and you'll be okay. Save that money for buying games!

Oh, and bring comfortable shoes.

Origins

July 13 to 16, Columbus, OH
www.wizards.com/origins/ORG2K

Thursday: 10:00 A.M. L5R - Pearl Sealed-deck format
12:00 P.M. LBS - Sealed deck format
3:00 P.M. L5R - Strict Jade format, 40/40
Friday: 10:00 A.M. L5R - Open format, 40/40
12:00 P.M. LBS - Open format
3:00 P.M. L5R - Strict Jade format, 40/40
6:00 P.M. L5R - Kamwied's Team Challenge
(see <www.5rings.net> for info)
Saturday: 10:00 A.M. L5R - Midwest Kotei Tournament,
Open format, 40/40
12:00 P.M. LBS - Sealed-deck format
Sunday: 10:00 A.M. L5R - Multi-player, Open format
12:00 P.M. LBS - Open format

Gencon

August 10 to 13, Milwaukee, WI
www.wizards.com/gencon/G2K

Thursday: 10:00 A.M. L5R - Battle at Oblivion's Gate Qualifier #1,
Open format, 40/40
12:00 P.M. LBS - Sealed-deck format
3:00 P.M. L5R - Pearl Sealed-deck format
Friday: 10:00 A.M. L5R - Battle at Oblivion's Gate Qualifier #2,
Open format, 40/40
12:00 P.M. LBS - Open format
3:00 P.M. L5R - Strict Jade format, 40/40
9:00 P.M. L5R - Strategic
Saturday: 10:00 A.M. L5R - Semifinals, Battle at Oblivion's Gate
(by seeding, qualifying only)
12:00 P.M. LBS - Sealed-deck format
7:00 P.M. L5R - Kamwied's Midnight Madness
(see <www.5rings.net> for info)
Sunday: 9:00 A.M. L5R - Finals, Battle at Oblivion's Gate
(by qualifying only)
12:00 P.M. LBS - Open format

Fire & Shadow Prerelease

by Mindy Sherwood-Lewis

The weekend of March 11 & 12 was the occasion of our first-ever worldwide L5R prerelease tournament. Previous prereleases (for the *Pearl Edition*, *Honor Bound*, and *Ambition's Debt* sets) were restricted to the U.S. and Canada due to logistical issues. We were pretty confident in the fall that we would be able to get the *Fire & Shadow* event moved up enough in the schedule to get materials to everyone in time to run prereleases worldwide. It still came with some significant challenges, but, for the most part, it worked as planned.

We had 214 stores participate in 16 countries, which included Australia, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the U.S.A. We've received reports from 112 of those stores and had a total of 1467 players participate (based on reports received). That works out to an average of 13 players per store.

Normally, a prerelease would be your first chance to see the new cards (a week to two weeks before they go on sale to the general public), and that is certainly a large draw for the tournament.

Getting to compete with new cards that don't yet have killer combos can be another reason, and just a chance to test your deckbuilding skills in a limited environment can be another. Prerelease tournaments can be a great first-tournament experience for newer players, as everyone is on a much more even footing where card base is concerned.

Of course, with the spoiler that came out in the issue of *TopDeck™* magazine that hit the streets roughly a week and a half before the prerelease tournaments took place, the first reason to play in one was negated for some players. This may be why the numbers were down just slightly in comparison to the *Ambition's Debt* prerelease. While we saw that the list in *TopDeck* was hugely popular, it is unlikely that we will be timing such an item the same way in the future, as hurting tournament turnout was an unintended consequence and not our ideal situation.

Thanks to everyone who ran a prerelease tournament for the *Fire & Shadow* set, and thanks to the players who participated. The chatter on the list server afterwards showed that most of you had fun, and that's what tournaments are all about!

Race To Volturnum

Global Storyline Event: May 12-14, 2000

The armies of the Empire are on the move.

As one, they march into the Shadowlands, raising the banners of the Great Clans amid the Empire's gathering legions. The Unicorn lead them into the Darkness, using knowledge of their ancient journey into the Empire from the Burning Sands. One man, Shinjo Shono, knows the hero's path. The quest: to face the Shadow at its heart, assault the blackness that threatens the Empire, and slaughter Goju and his minions before they can control the passage to the spirit realm of Jigoku. If they fail, the Shadow will destroy the Empire's future as well as its past.

But between the armies of Rokugan and the City of Shadows, a massive horde of oni, goblins, ogre, and all manner of foul Shadowlands creatures await. Their general, Akuma, stands proud above a scorched terrain, demanding surrender from those bold enough-foolish enough-to enter his lands. Assaulted from all sides by terrible beasts of Fu Leng, the legions of the Empire grind to a halt. They must fight, or be slaughtered by their enemies.

The war is about to be joined.

While the armies pause, the Shadow continues its mission. Soon it will overwhelm the Empire, burst the gate to Jigoku asunder, and enslave and make faceless the spirits of the ancestors. The Empire's only hope is to send a small group through the Shadowlands, racing to Volturnum apart from the body of the Empire's legions. While the imperial troops face Akuma, small pockets of samurai leave the main group, desperately searching for the swiftest route to Volturnum.

Only a few samurai will ever see the face of Oblivion's Gate. One group, and one alone, will reach the city first. For the honor of their clan, those brave heroes will strike the opening blow against Goju and his faceless Shadows. They will enter the City of Shadow before the rest, and their actions will decide how the battle is joined. It is the last hope of a dying Empire, the opening strike against the Darkness, and the first duty of all those who fight for honor, glory, and the Jade Empire of Rokugan.

Will you find the path to victory?

To find a store near you that will host this event, go to www.wizards.com/rtv and check the list of participating Stronghold stores.

Tournament Player, Inexperienced Version

by Tige Rustad

I am/was a complete—and I do mean complete—tournament layman. I had never been to a con, tournament, or any gathering of gamers too large to fit in my living room. On the other hand, I am by no means a rookie at L5R. I've been losing L5R games to my friends Andy and Ed ever since the *Shadowlands*™ expansion came out. This was it, though. A chance to actually participate in the story I'd followed for the last three (?) years, to mold the future of Rokugan, to forever leave a mark on the L5R world with my mighty . . . Dragon Enlightenment deck. Okay, maybe not so mighty. Ahem.

For those of you who have never been to a tournament before, it works like this: First you sign up for the tournament with the organizers, give them your money, declare which Clan's Stronghold you are playing, and give them your DCI number. If you don't have one they have you fill out an information card and provide you a new one—no extra charge! While waiting for the official games to start, people play, trade cards, argue obscure L5R trivia ("Togashi Yokuni was too a Kolat, and I can prove it!"), and purchase more cards. (Note: you can't modify your deck from the time you begin your first game until the tournament ends.) After everyone signs up for the tournament, the organizer pairs people up randomly. At our tournament we had about thirty people playing. The first four or five rounds of play are Swiss, which means that you aren't eliminated during this portion, and after each round you play against people who have records similar to yours—so, after losing my first match, I played someone else who had lost the first match. After the Swiss rounds, the players with the best records (usually the top eight or sixteen people) play single-elimination rounds until the best deck wins. Or the second best deck, in the occasion that the best deck gets drummed out early on due to bad luck. Sniff.

There is something very cool about sitting across from someone you've never met before, shaking hands, and then trying to wrest the Empire from their unworthy hands. My first match began with a bad omen: my opponent was wearing a T-shirt he won at another tournament the night before. For those of you who think that there is no such thing as a Phoenix Military deck, just pray that the Kami allow your delusion to continue. On the fourth turn I lost my first Province and most of my fledgling army. On the fifth I lost my second Province (notice a pattern?). Although I lost the

game in record time, I did manage to decimate a large portion of the other player's army in a whirling Iaijutsu-matic frenzy. As we had plenty of time remaining (rounds are normally 40–50 minutes), we played again, and this time my deck did far better. Unfortunately, time ran out.

I should point out at this time that the best choice I made when designing my deck was to make it fun; I really didn't think I would win my first tournament. And even though I only won a single game, I still had a blast getting out my combinations. Having Hitomi Akuai wipe out Troll Raiders after they resolved, or having Agasha Gennai use The Path of Wisdom to fill my hand, were the little victories that made losing a lot less painful.

Just getting Kokujin into a duel and devouring the Shugenja's soul with him was worth it.

I stuck around to watch the finals. A Crane deck stalled a Unicorn to win by Honor. They winner took home 500 Koku! I may have twice that number in wrappers at home after three years! Second place got 200 Koku. The top four people each got a shirt.

Some advice: Generally there are 10 minutes between rounds, and only if you're lucky will people break for lunch (we couldn't, as the store had to close at 6 P.M.), so eat well beforehand. Know where the bathroom is located. Bring your cards for trading. Pack Ninja Thief to get the Clan Sword or Twelfth Scroll. Make some new friends/opponents and find out where they play for fun.

—Hitomi Tige of the Moon's clan!

The Final Word on Seppun Sensei

The phrase "Your Honor losses and gains cannot be changed, redirected or copied" does not apply to the initial calculation of the loss or gain. For example, Lies, Lies, Lies will still only produce a gain large enough to bring you to your Starting Honor if you are less than eight points below it.

Likewise, any ongoing effects that impose special rules on your Family Honor are considered to be part of this initial calculation rather than the changes – they apply before the gain technically exists. Among other things, this includes the *Shadowlands* Horde ("You cannot gain or lose honor"), Dark Path of Shadow ("You cannot lose Honor from opponent's card effect or your Ninja cards."), part of Rise From the Ashes ("no player can gain honor"), and Yoshi Sensei ("When a player pays full Gold cost for a Personality . . . , the player cannot gain over 1 Honor").

Heroes of Rokugan Card List

ACTION

Revealing the Ancient Wisdom

EVENT

Cherry Blossom Festival

FOLLOWER

Spirit Legion

HOLDING

Anvil of Despair

ITEMS

Atarasi's Armor

Judgment

KIHO

Shinsei's Riddle

PERSONALITIES

Celestial Dragon

First Oni, The

Goju Yume

Gusai

Hida Osano-Wo

Isawa Ijime

Kakita Rensei

Matsu Hitomi

Mirumoto Tokeru

Miya Mashigai

Otaku Shiko

Qatol

Rezan

Seppun Murayasu

Shosuro Furuyari

Someisa

Yasuki Kaneko

REGION

Land of the Dead

SPELL

One Virtue and Seventy Faults

STRONGHOLD

Warrens of the Nezumi

Ninja Top 10

Nathan A. Roberts	105
Brandon M Flores	924
Dawniel Ramsdell-Loescher	825
Mathew E Manders	597
Orlando Rodriguez	555
Scott Hadsall	547
Martin A. Helsing	514
Leon Phillips	467
Bill Beese	460
Dennis Hooijmaijers	415

A Farewell . . .

I have only recently arrived in Medinat al-Salaam, a traveler from distant lands. Apprehensive at first, I soon became enthralled by her many facets and diverse inhabitants. My mission was to breathe new life into it, to set a spark that would attract more pilgrims to the City of Peace.

Alas, this was not to be. Now, my job is as a messenger. It has been decided that Wizards of the Coast will no longer support this game. We will not be printing any new cards, and *Herald* #16 will be the last issue of the *Imperial Herald* with LBS content (we will be printing the conclusion of Patrick Kapera's "Slaves of Mortals" story there). Also, the DCI will no longer be supporting tournaments, effective June 1. Tournaments already scheduled for the summer are still sanctioned and we will continue to update ratings until September 30.

As players, you have already done a great job of website and tournament support for this game, and I truly hope this continues. There are some excellent sites out there, such as:

<<http://www.cdsolution.com/burningsands/>>
 <<http://www.sihope.com/~rreinhardt/lbs/lbsoasis.html>>
 <<http://www.users.bigpond.com/naseby/lbs.htm>>
 <<http://yojirosan.tripod.com/index.htm>>
 <<http://www.geocities.com/TimesSquare/Tower/7310>>
 <<http://www.planet.net.au/~zfaulkes/moonless.html>>

Of course, we will continue to host the list server.

I will be at both Origins and Gen Con this year, so if you were planning on attending, I would be happy to talk to you or play some games.

It is with a heavy heart that I bid farewell to the City of a Thousand Stories. My thanks to all the distributors, retailers and players who supported this great game.

Ryan Miller

Brand Manager, Classic Games

Ebonite Defender of the Faithful

Wizards of the Coast

The Art of War

by Mike Liesik and Frank Chafe, with introduction by Mindy Sherwood-Lewis

Many of the philosophies of the L5R combat system were derived from Sun Tzu's two-thousand-year-old book, *The Art of War*. Sun Tzu always emphasized that one of a general's most important virtues was adaptability. This article is dedicated to honing your ability to bring multiple elements together to make a devastating effect. Since folks have been asking for a return of this article, we asked Mike and Frank to put together some combos that they thought were powerful, fun, or just downright scary. Both chose some combos that include *Fire & Shadow* cards, so you may or may not have seen some of them by the time this issue reaches you.

Ambush Strategist + Tsuruchi

The Strategist has a Gold cost of 6 and Force of 2, but when used in conjunction with Tsuruchi's ranged-attack bonus for attached Followers, it becomes so much more. Using the Spearmen as an example, from the beginning you have a 6-Force unit capable of three different ranged attacks. When you bow the Strategist, Tsuruchi gets a Force bonus of 4 and the Spearmen get a Force bonus of 3. In the end, you lose 2 Force to gain 7. Seems like a good trade to me. Even Farmlands tokens, which gain Ranged 1 Attacks when attached to Tsuruchi, get Force bonuses from this.

Tattooed + Purging the House

This combo only works if you aren't playing Dragon, Monk, or Shadowlands. The idea is to have only Personalities that are aligned to your Clan in your deck. When you get out a few Personalities, take a look at which one your deck can run without and play Tattooed on that card. This gives your Personality the **Tattooed** trait and removes all of his or her Clan affiliations. You can then play Purging the House to

destroy all of your Personalities that aren't aligned to your Clan and permanently give all of your other Personalities in play +1F/+1C. This combo lets you get around Purging's restriction against bringing Personalities that aren't aligned to your Clan into play, while giving all of your Personalities the bonus.

Moto Ride to the Shadowlands + Stale Winds

Moto Ride gives all Personalities and Followers assigned to attack a player with one or more Shadowlands cards in play +2F. Stale Wind gives all Personalities in play with a Personal Honor less than 2 the **Shadowlands** trait until the end of the turn. When you use this properly, all of your Personalities and Followers get +2F when you attack your opponent and then, by

the time your opponent gets to attack, Stale Wind has already expired, robbing him or her of the bonus. Just watch out for Counterattack.

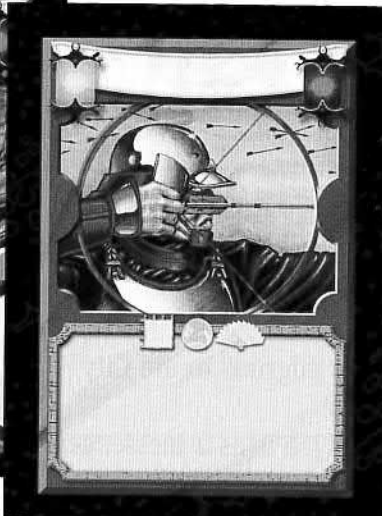
Sanctified Blade + Foxwife

When you attach a Foxwife to one of your Personalities, the Personality's Personal Honor increases to 5 and he or she receives +1F/+1C while the Follower remains attached. The Sanctified Blade gives its Personality a

Chi bonus equal to his or her Personal Honor. These two cards in conjunction give any Personality +1F/+6C.

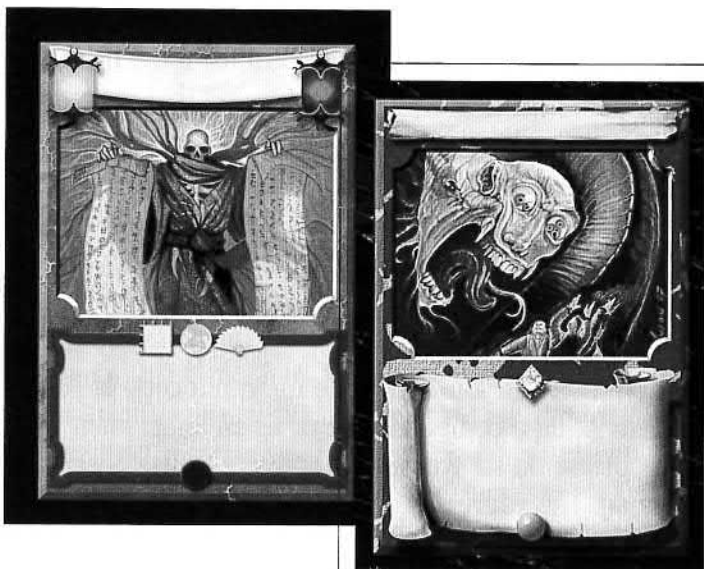
Slaughter of the Land + Garrison

Slaughter is a Terrain that allows units outside of the battle to make ranged attacks, as long as their controller has at least one unit in the battle. Garrison is a 1-Gold-cost Fortification that acts as a unit in a battle at the Province to which it is attached. Play this Terrain, and your cards can make ranged attacks without fear of your opponent's battle actions. Storms of War, however, gives you quite a headache.



Yokai no Junzo + Strength of the Dark One

Strength is a Battle Ritual that creates Fear equal to the number of participating Shugenja and targets every unit in the opposing army. Yokai no Junzo states that all Fear effects created by his Personality may target Personalities as though they were Followers. Put Strength on the Personality with Junzo, and watch the entire opposing army bow as they quiver in Fear.



Come One at a Time + Hitomi Kokuji

With Kokuji as the sole defender at a battle and Come One at a Time in play, you can easily subvert all of your opponent's Personalities. Come One at a Time allows a lone defender to challenge an opposing Personality to an unrefusable duel, and Kokuji lets you take control of a Personality that opposes him in a duel, if he wins. Watch your opponent's jaw drop as you attack him or her with his or her own Personalities on your next turn.

Agasha Sagoten + Tribute to Your House + Chrysanthemum Festival

Tribute to your House is a very tricky card to play. It causes you to lose your rightmost Province and reduce your Family Honor to your starting Family Honor. All of your Honor gains for the rest of that turn affect your actual Honor total and not your current total. After the turn is over, you go to your new total.

Agasha Sagoten allows you to gain 5 Honor if no player has less Honor than you do. Multiple copies of him in play make for an interesting combination. Play Tribute and then launch yourself up by 5, 10, or 15 Honor, possibly launching yourself over 40 to win. Chrysanthemum Festival allows you to gain back that Province or avoid being hindered when you play Tribute.

Fortress of the Dragonfly + Geisha Assassin

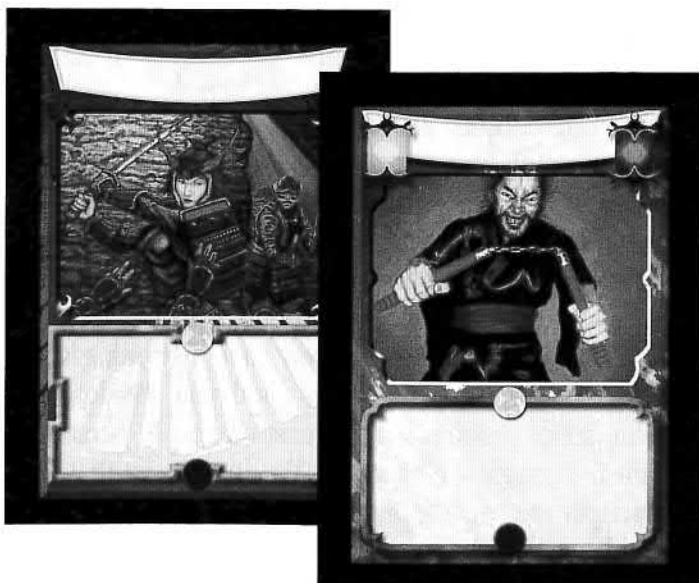
Fortress of the Dragonfly is a 3-Gold-cost Holding that is neither a Retainer or Fortification. These are strong points in and of themselves, but the card also gives all of your Personalities in play a +1 bonus to their Chi. With three of these out in play, you can bring into play your Geisha Assassin at 3 Chi without paying a single Gold. This will only go to making the Assassin that much more effective and all of your Personalities that much harder to kill in duels and with that pesky Evil Portents card.

Barracks + Lesser Oni

Barracks is a 2-Gold-cost Fortification that allows you to attach Followers to it as if it were a Personality, ignoring Honor requirements and halving their Gold cost (rounded down). Then, in battle, you can treat this as a defending unit that can't be sent home. Lesser Onis are perfect for this, as you can attach them for free and dump your hand. This is great for getting a Ring of the Void into play and allows you to build up a big defense really quickly and, most importantly, cheaply.

Come One at a Time + Nunchaku

The Terrain card from the *Fire & Shadow* set that has receives the most talk and attention is Come One at a Time. It allows you to do many things. Defend with one Personality with the Nunchaku and play the Terrain. This allows you the opportunity to duel the opposing Personalities in battle. Or the other players can, as a Battle action, send their units home. Well, if you like playing a dueling deck, then you can duel one of them, win, and then—because of Nunchaku—immediately duel someone else and repeat the cycle until it is all over. It really is a Blackened Sky for dueling. Very cool.



So You Want to Write for the *Herald* . . .

by Andy Heckt and Mindy Sherwood-Lewis

We have been getting quite a few requests from players in regards to submitting articles and art for use in the *Imperial Herald*. We're finally at the point where we have time to handle such submissions.

What We Are Looking For

- Strategy/deck ideas with tips on playing and replacement ideas for hard-to-find and older cards
- Card combos (killer, fun, intriguing)
- Convention and tournament experiences
- Empire League experiences
- Multiplayer game strategies
- Regional perspectives
- Roleplaying game adventures
- Roleplaying game focus materials
- **Clan War** scenarios
- Black-and-white line art

What We Are Not Looking For

(And Therefore Will Not Accept at This Time)

- Fiction (of any kind)
- Card ideas
- Ideas for, or results from, fan-driven surveys or polls

If you wish to submit anything, please follow the guidelines below and look at similar articles in the *Herald* for style notes.

If your article exceeds two pages (roughly 1500 words), you should query us with a short letter before you submit. We recommend you list more than one article idea on which you wish to work. Write a short paragraph (maximum 200 words) describing each idea, and give a rough idea of each article's length. If we find any ideas of interest, we will respond to you indicating which we would like to see in full.

Consistently poor spelling, bad grammar, and weak sentence structure will almost certainly cause us to reject an article. Even if you feel that you have a strong grasp of English and that your article is good, you should have the manuscript proofread by at least one other person and run it through spell-checker. We don't insist that manuscripts are perfect, but we prefer those that require little additional editing.

Avoid massive quantities of formatting, as we'll have to remove it to get the text into Quark. If you have a "look" that you think would be best for the article, submit both a hard (paper) copy showing that look and an electronic version without the "look."

Artwork should be black-and-white line art. We prefer that you not send in your precious originals; send instead a high-quality photocopy. Signatures in artwork should not be large.

Electronic Submissions

If it's possible for you to provide us with a copy of your manuscript on a computer disk or as an attachment to email, please do so. We can also receive article queries via email. The address is <fanclubs@wizards.com>.

Basics

A copy of our Standard Disclosure Form is located on the next page. *A completed form must accompany each manuscript you submit.* Send a cover letter with each full submission. Include a brief description of the article submitted and any other information you feel is relevant. If you wish to be notified of our receipt of your manuscript, you can either send your article to us by certified mail or enclose a self-addressed, stamped postcard with your submission; we'll mail the postcard back to you when your submission arrives. We cannot assume any responsibility for the transit and safekeeping of articles and other materials sent to us. Always keep at least one hard copy of each of your articles.

We may need as long as twelve weeks to make our evaluation of your submission. If you have not heard from us after that much time, feel free to inquire by mail or email about the status of your material. *Please do not contact us by phone to find out the status of a submission.*

Send query letters and completed manuscripts to:

Article Submission Imperial Assembly

1801 Lind Avenue S.W.
Renton, WA 98055, U.S.A.

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Working title of submission and brief description:

I submit my materials voluntarily and on a nonconfidential basis. I understand that this submission by me and its review by Wizards of the Coast (WotC) or Alderac Entertainment Group (AEG), does not, in whole or in part, establish or create by implication or otherwise any relationship between WotC and me that is not expressed herein. I further understand and agree that WotC, in their own judgment, may accept or reject the materials that are submitted with this Disclosure Form and shall not be obligated to me in any way with respect to my submission until WotC shall, at their own election, enter into a properly executed written agreement with me, and only then according to the terms of such an agreement.

I agree that WotC may have a reasonable period in which to review this submission. WotC will return my submission to me, provided that it is received by WotC with a self-addressed, stamped envelope. WotC shall not be held responsible, however, for items or materials that are accidentally damaged or lost. I hereby agree to retain a copy of the submitted materials.

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I warrant that the submission (check one, and provide information if necessary):

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(street address, rural route, or P. O. Box)

(city, state, or province, zip code or postal code, and country if other than U.S.A.)

Raiding as a Winning Tactic in LBS

by Mark Wooten

Raiding is one of the premier strategies for the **Legend of the Burning Sands** trading card game. It is not about destroying your opponent's resources—it is about stealing them. Whilst it is not usually possible to take more than one or two Water tokens with each raid, the overall swing in balance between the players doubles.

Raiding is not usually a fast strategy. So why and how does it work so well?

First, it is a strategy that can feed off of fast decks. Speed has a price, and that price is Water. Most effective Raiding decks take early losses in stride. While the loss of City Sections hurts hand size, players of such decks fully intend to replace their early losses with your Water later. As the game progresses, the price that the faster Military decks pay for some early gains starts to hurt them. Their Heroes still have high Water costs.

The Raiding deck typically has strong defensive Military cards that eliminate the first wave. To add insult to injury, raids grow in potency and you end up repeatedly destroying Water.

The masters of this strategy, beyond all doubt, are the Moto. They are the remnants of the Ki-Rin Clan that left Rokugan centuries before and became fierce nomads using hit-and-run tactics and ultra-sharp sword technology previously unknown in the Sands. The Moto Stronghold gives bonuses to raiding Heroes, and Moto players have more Heroes that can carry extra Water or have special raiding-related abilities than any other Faction. The Moto are also ideal for making use of cards that look for in-Faction Heroes.

Their strongest tactic is to get out some cheap, reasonably potent early blockers. These combine with

powerful defensive actions to hurt the enemy's initial assault. If these first few Heroes die in defense of their Sections, Martyr can often bring in the specialist raiders or Gaheris, the mighty Khan himself, at very reduced cost and without the need for Water payment. The

key cards in this defense are With the Sun at Our Backs, Wisdom of the Stars, and Sudden Strike. Stalling cards like The Purity of Conquest or Belly of the Desert may also help.

Martyr is an interesting card. Unaligned Heroes cost no more than those of your own Faction, with additional costs for only Heroes that belong to another group. For this reason some of the good Unaligned Heroes see play in many LBS decks. You can only use a powerful card like Martyr, however, with two in-Faction Heroes, and it is a great way of using the attrition of battles to your advantage.

Another key to good Raiding decks is ensuring that your primary raiders do not brook any interference. The key card in this strategy is Water from a Mirage. As long as you take no actions, the Hero is untargetable by anyone else. Assigning to battles or raids is not considered an action. Only if you do something in a raid or battle do you lose the protection of the Mirage. If all goes well with your raid, you do not have to use any actions on the Hero, who will raid away, untouchable. The key thing here is to not get caught by a card that turns your raid into a battle, or else your Hero will have to put up a defense!

In fact, Water from a Mirage is not so important against Military decks. The player of such a deck will rarely look to target your Hero; rather, he or she will just try to get your Hero into a battle. Water from a Mirage is really



essential against Dueling decks. Dueling is also a slower strategy, and if you do not establish some early military prowess and a Miraged Hero, the duelists will pick you off at their leisure. Duelists also do not need to burn their early Water in the way that the faster military does. This is where those good defensive cards like Sudden Strike, Wisdom of the Stars, and Martyr—to bring out the big guns—become useful with some offense.

Perhaps the most difficult strategy for raiders to defend against is the more medium-paced Water-efficient Attack decks, particularly those that protect their Heroes with Followers. Some Senpet, Ashalan, and Ebonite decks can do this very well.

One way of dealing with this (and some other decks, too) is to burn your Water quickly to get resources into play. This has two effects. First, it allows you to generate some return offense and bring out your better raiders. Second, the strategy of removing your own Water can be very effective for a Raiding deck. It is high-risk and high-gain. I have played matches where I have used this strategy very successfully. At the end of each Day Phase I run out of Water. The only thing that keeps me in the game is raiding my the other players' Water. As long as I can keep doing this, there will never be any Water for them to raid back. Your Heroes returning from a raid don't place their loot onto your Sections until the end of the Night Phase, so there is nothing for your opponent to take. Next day, you blow it all again and repeat. I feel that my Moto deck is at its strongest when I have 0 to 2 Water tokens and my opponent has 4 to 10 Water tokens! I have also won games with as much as a 12 to 1 deficit.

Either way, slower Water-Conservation decks and Drought decks can be hardest for the Moto and other raiders to deal with.

Do not be fooled. Some people believe that games where there is a finite resource always end up favoring the player that keeps control of the most of that resource. In LBS it is different. There are at least two archetypes that function better the less Water there is around, regardless of which side of the table that Water is on. Raiding is one of those archetypes.

This is the "Classic" Martyr/Gaheris Moto Raider that won U.S. Gen Con and came in second at U.K. Gen Con.

5 City Sections (23 starting Water)

- 1 Merchant Quarter
- 1 River Quarter
- 1 Secret Well
- 1 The Sewers
- 1 Thieves Quarter

14 Heroes

- 3 Argoun
- 3 Gaheris
- 1 Kiyoshi
- 2 Moto Marik
- 2 Shagir
- 3 Yesugai

22 Actions

- 2 Attack at Dawn
- 3 Baha al Din's Brass Lamp
- 3 Faith
- 3 Martyr
- 3 Sudden Strike
- 2 Water from a Mirage
- 3 Wisdom of the Stars
- 3 With the Sun at Our Backs

11 Holdings

- 2 Library
- 3 Safiya's Sweetwater
- 3 Scale Man
- 3 Wheat Fields

1 Item

- 1 Ancestral Sword of the Ki-Rin

7 Omens

- 2 A Coming Storm
- 2 The Last Oasis
- 3 Sandstorm

Strict Jade Reprints

The following is a list of cards that have been reprinted with the Jade Bug. All cards with Jade Bugs (except "Learn to Play" cards) are Jade-strict legal (as long as they follow the legality rules of cards set by the DCI). All news cards with the Jade Bug have been listed on checklists as each set came out.

Strongholds

Ancient Halls of the Lion
Brotherhood of Shinsei
The Esteemed House of the Crane
The Great Walls of Kaiu
The Hidden Temples of the Naga
The Mountain Keep of the Dragon
The Provincial Estate of the Unicorn
The Ruins of Isawa Castle
The Shadow Stronghold of the Bayushi
Shadowlands Horde
Toturi's Army
The Yoritomo Alliance

Kiho

Ancestral Guidance
Catching the Wind's Favor
Double Chi
Fist of the Earth
Freezing the Lifeblood
Fury of the Earth
Gift of the Wind
A Glimpse of the Soul's Shadow
Kaze-Do
Led from the True Path
Master of the Rolling River
One with the Elements
Piercing the Soul
The Purity of Shinsei
The Sight of Death
The Soul Goes Forth
Strength of My Ancestors
The Touch of Amaterasu
Touching the Soul
Unattuned
Void Strike
The Wrath of Osano-Wo Actions
Accessible Terrain
Along the Coast at Midnight
Ambush
Another Time
The Arrow Knows the Way
Arrows From the Woods
A Stout Heart
Avoid Fate
Bad Karma
Bend Like a Reed
Block Supply Lines
Bountiful Harvest
Breach of Etiquette
Brilliant Victory
Burning Your Essence
Careful Planning
Charge
Chi Strike
The Code of Bushido
Confusion at Court
Contentious Terrain
Coordinated Fire

Cornered

Corrupted Ground
Counterattack
Court Jester
Crushing Attack
Daisho Technique
Deadly Ground
Defend Your Honor
Defenders of the Realm
Disenlightenment
Disfavored
Disharmony
Dispersive Terrain
Diversionary Tactics
Duty of the Magistrate
Encircled Terrain
Enlightenment
"Enough Talk!"
Entrapping Terrain
Explosives
Extortion
The Face of Fear
False Alliance
Familiar Surroundings
Fatal Mistake
The Final Breath
Focus
Forward Patrol
Frenzy
Fu Leng's Steeds
Geisha Assassin
He's Mine
Higher Ground
Iaijutsu Challenge
Iaijutsu Duel
Inner Fire
Investigation
Kharmic Strike
Kolai Assassin
Kolai Interference
Kolai Master
Lessons from the Past
Lies, Lies, Lies...
Marries a Barbarian
A Moment of Truth
Narrow Ground
Nemesis
Night Battle
Ninja Kidnapper
Ninja Thief
Oath of Fealty
Outflank
Plans Within Plans
Poisoned Weapon
Political Distraction
Rallying Cry
Refugees
Remorseful Seppuku
Resist Magic

Retreat

Ring of Air
Ring of Earth
Ring of Fire
Ring of the Void
Ring of Water
Rise, Brother
Shadowlands Sickness
Shame
Sneak Attack
Stance of the Mountain
Stand Against the Waves
Stand Firm
A Stout Heart
Street to Street
Strength of Purity
Strike with No-Thought
Superior Tactics
Suspended Terrain
Tattoo Madness
Test of Honor
Test of Might
To Avenge Our Ancestors
Toturi is Drugged
Traversable Terrain
Treacherous Terrain
Troops from the Woods
The Turtle's Shell
Way of Deception
Wounded in Battle

Followers

Archers
Ashigaru
Battering Ram Crew
Brothers of Thunder
Elite Heavy Infantry
Elite Light Infantry
Elite Medium Infantry
Goblin Berserkers
Goblin Sneaks
Heavy Cavalry
Heavy Infantry
Horsebowmen
Imperial Honor Guard
Imperial Palace Guard
Kenku Teacher
Light Cavalry
Light Infantry
Mantis Budoka
Mantis Bushi
Medium Cavalry
Medium Infantry
Mounts
Naga Bowmen
Naga Bushi
Naga Guard
Naga Spearmen
Ninja Genin

Ogre Warriors
Peasant Levies
Pikemen
Plague Zombies
Ratling Bushi
Ratling Conscripts
Ratling Pack
Samurai Cavalry
Samurai Warriors
Scout
Shadowlands Madmen
Shahadet's Legion
Shield Wall
Skeletal Archers
Skeletal Troops
Spearmen
Spirit Guide
Swamp Spirits
The Twelve Ronin
Warrior Monks
Zombie Troops

Items

Armor of Osano-Wo
Armor of Sun-Tao
Armor of the Golden Samurai
Bloodsword
Bo Stick
Climbing Gear
Fan of Command
Goblin War Standard
Jade Bow
Naginata
Night Medallion
No-Dachi
Robes of Shinsei
Ryokan's Sword
Shuriken of Serpents
Star of Laramun
Tetsubo
Wakizashi

Spells

Biting Steel
Blood of Midnight
Earthquake
The Fire from Within
The Fires That Cleanse
Force of Will
Secrets on the Wind
Stifling Wind
Sympathetic Energies
Tomb of Jade
Touch of Death
Walking the Way

Events	School of Wizardry	Ikoma Ryoze	Ryosei
Alliance	Silver Mine	Ikoma Tsururi	Sanado
Architects of the Wall	Small Farm	Ikoma Tsururi, Exp	Sanzo
As the Shadow Falls	Stables	Isawa Kaede	Shabura
Bonds of Darkness	Tomb of Iuchiban	Isawa Norikazu	Shagara
The Celestial Pattern	Trade Route	Isawa Osugi	Shahadet
Chrysanthemum Festival	Trading Grounds	Isha	Shalasha
Corruption of the Harmonies	Tunnel System	Isha, Exp	Shashakar
Dragon Sword is Broken	Unscalable Walls.	Iuchi Karasu	Shiba Katsuda
Emperor's Peace		Iuchi Karasu, Exp	Shiba Kyo
Evil Feeds Upon Itself	Personalities	Iuchi Katta	Shiba Shingo
The Fair Voice of Lies	Agasha Gennai	Kage	Shiba Tetsu
The First Scroll is Opened	Agasha Tamori	Kaiu Suman	Shiba Tsukune
Glimpse of the Unicorn	Akodo Kage	Kakita Ichiro	Shiba Tsukune, Exp
Hurricane	Akodo Kage, Exp	Kakita Toshimoko	Shinjo Morito
Imperial Gift	Akodo Toturi, Inexp	Kakita Toshimoko, Exp	Shinjo Sadato
Inheritance	Akodo Toturi	Kakita Yoshi	Shinjo Sanetama
Iris Festival	Asahina Tamako	Kakita Yoshi, Exp	Shinjo Shirasu
Occult Murders	Asahina Tomo	Kappukusu	Shinjo Tashima
Peasant Revolt	Asahina Tomo, Exp	Kemmei	Shinjo Tsuburo
The Price of War	Ashamana	Kiochi	Shinjo Yasamura
Proposal of Peace	Ashlim	Kitsu Motso	Shinjo Yasamura, Exp
Rise of the Phoenix	Balash	Kitsu Motso, Exp	Shinjo Yokatsu, Inexp
Setsuban Festival	Bayushi Aramoro	Kitsu Okura	Shinjo Yokatsu
The Tao of the Naga	Bayushi Dozan	Kitsuki Yasu	Shioda
Test of the Emerald Champion	Bayushi Goshu	Komaro	Shosuro Taberu
There is No Hope	Bayushi Goshu, Exp	Kuni Yori	Soshi Taoshi
Unexpected Allies	Bayushi Hisa	Kuni Yori, Exp	Suana
	Bayushi Hisa, Exp	Kyoso no Oni	Takao
Holdings	Bayushi Kachiko, Inexp	Mamoru	Takuan
Barbican	Bayushi Kachiko	Mara	Togashi Hoshi
Basecamp	Bayushi Kachiko, Exp	Matsu Agetoki	Togashi Jodome
Black Market	Bayushi Kachiko, Exp 2	Matsu Agetoki, Exp	Togashi Mitsuo
Blacksmiths	Bayushi Yojiro	Matsu Goemon	Togashi Yoshi
Bridged Pass	Bayushi Yokuan	Matsu Hiroru	Toku
Bushi Dojo	Daidoji Sembi	Matsu Hiroru, Exp	Toku, Exp
Copper Mine	Daidoji Uji	Matsu Seijuro	Toturi
Corrupt Geisha House	Daidoji Uji, Exp	Matsu Toshiro	Toturi, Exp
Corrupt Gold Mine	Dairya	Matsu Turi	Toturi, Exp 2
Corrupted Iron Mine	Dairya, Experienced	Mirumoto Daini	Tsuruchi
Corrupted Silver Mine	Dashmar	Mirumoto Daini, Exp	Yasuki Nokatsu
Diamond Mine	Dashmar, Exp	Mirumoto Hitomi	Yasuki Taka
Dragon's Teeth	Doji Chomei	Mirumoto Hitomi, Exp	Yasuki Taka, Exp
Fantastic Gardens	Doji Kuwanan	Mirumoto Sukune	Yodin
The Festering Pit of Fu Leng	Doji Kuwanan, Exp	Mirumoto Taki	Yodin, Exp
Forest	Doji Reju	Mitsu	Yogo Shidachi
Gambling House	Doji Shizue	Morito	Yoritomo
Garrison	Eshru	Moshi Wakiza	Yoritomo, Exp
Geisha House	Genzo	Moshi Wakiza, Exp	Yoritomo Kamoto
Go Master	Ginawa	Moto Sada	Yoritomo Kanbe
Gold Mine	Ginawa, Exp	Moto Tsume	Yoritomo Masasue
Hawks and Falcons	Goblin Warmonger	Moto Tsume, Exp	Yoritomo Takuni
Imperial Ambassador	Goblin Wizard	Mukami	Yoritomo Tsuyu
Iron Mine	Heichi Chokei	Naga Shugenja	Yoshi
Island Wharf	Hida Amoro	Naga Warlord	
Jade Works	Hida Amoro, Exp	Naka Kuro	Regions
Market Place	Hida O-Ushi	Necromancer	Beiden Pass
Master of the Tea Ceremony	Hida O-Ushi, Exp	Necromancer, Exp	Clan Heartland
Master Painter	Hida Sukune	Ninja Shapeshifter, Inexp	Crossroads
Master Smith	Hida Sukune, Exp	Ninja Shapeshifter	Farmlands
Ningyo	Hida Tadashiro	Ninja Spy	Flatlands
Ninja Stronghold	Hida Tsuru	Ogre Bushi	Fortified Coast
Oracle of Earth	Hida Unari	Oni no Akuma	Inaccessible Region
Oracle of Fire	Hida Yakamo	Oni no Kamu	The Kaiu Walls
Oracle of the Void	Hida Yakamo, Exp	Oni no Ugulu	Mountain of the Seven Thunders
Oracle of Water	Hida Yakamo, Exp	Otaku Baiken	Mountain Pass
Oracle of Wind	Hirariko	Otaku Kamoko	Plains Above Evil
Pearl Bed	Hiruma Osuno	Otaku Kamoko, Exp	Plains of the Emerald Champion
Pearl Divers	Hiruma Yoshi	Otaku Kamoko, Exp 2	River Delta
Pitch and Fire	Hisa	Pennagolan	Sanctified Ground
Port	Hitomi	Qamar	Secluded Ravine
Prayer Shrines	Hitomi Kokujin	Qamar, Exp	Sunken City
Retired General	Hizuka	Radakast	Swamplands
Sake Works	Hoseki	Radakast, Exp	Wetlands
Sanctified Temple	Ikoma Kaoku	Ranbe	

Ambassadors Wanted

by Mike Liesik

Have you ever wanted to get paid for teaching someone to play a game that you love? Well, you can (sort of)! If you can play L5R in your sleep and could teach a Ratling to play Go (sorry, Mindy, I couldn't help myself), you may be eligible to become an Ambassador.

The retail-based activities (RBA) demo program was designed to create grassroots support of our trading card games on a large scale and to build local gaming communities at the individual-store level. As members of the demo program and representatives of Wizards of the Coast, Ambassadors play an important role in this scheme. By demoing the games at stores or conventions, Ambassadors brainwa . . . er, I mean, create new fans, enthusiasts, and players.

The meat and potatoes of the RBA demo program is the store demo. Ambassadors contact local stores in their area to coordinate a date and time for the demo. The ambassador notifies the demo team coordinator (hey, that's me!) of the demo at least three weeks in advance, and the coordinator ships the store a kit of promotional material. The Ambassador gives each new player who learns the game from the demo a booster pack to suck them in . . . um, I mean, encourage them to continue to play. Both the store and the Ambassador submit demo report forms to the RBA office, after which the Ambassador receives credit for the demo. These types of demos are an Ambassador's main focus.

So what constitutes a demo, anyway? For the purposes of the demo program, a demo is a 3-to-4-hour "class" on how to play L5R, broken down into 20-to-30-minute individual games. The main purpose of a demo is to teach the game to players who have never played before. Playing with gamers who have already played or learned the game is *not* considered a demo.

One of the most important responsibilities of Ambassadors is finding stores in their local areas that need or want demos. Every player knows at least one store where he or she can buy product. These are the easiest stores to find and for which to schedule demos. Not every corner store needs frequent demos, however, so Ambassadors are always looking for additional demo opportunities.

How individual Ambassadors perform or deliver a demo is completely up to them. I have prepared

a demonstration guide for each game covering the material a new player should learn from a demo as well as suggestions on how to impart that knowledge. Ambassadors use the guides to ensure that their demos are consistent, but they may use any style or method with which they feel comfortable.

So what are the benefits of being an Ambassador? Ambassadors get three points for every demo they complete—points that they can redeem at the end of every quarter for various items, including shirts, booster displays, and individual decks. They also get to participate in special promotions, like the recent *Fire & Shadow* First-Day Play, where they played in stores using cards from the new set for four hours on the weekend of its release. I've worked a deal with Taka-sama that allows Ambassadors that do at least five demos in a one-year period to get an Imperial Assembly membership or renewal for only one point. A select few also get to attend Origins and Gen Con to run demos in the Wizards of the Coast booth.

If you want to become an Ambassador, you need to contact me (see below) to request a test. The test helps me analyze your teaching style and game knowledge as well as your customer-service skills. The final decision as to whether or not you become an Ambassador depends on two factors: your test results and the number of Ambassadors already working in your area. If you are selected as an Ambassador, you will receive a letter welcoming you to the program, demo guides for the games for which you signed up, and the fabled demo program handbook approximately three weeks after you submit your test. After you schedule your first demo, you will receive a package that contains everything you could ever need to demo L5R.

To request a test, email me at <toku@wizards.com> or send a letter to:

Wizards of the Coast
Attn: Mike Liesik
P.O. Box 707
Renton, WA 98057-0707

(continued from page 20)

Kitsu Okura defeated Iuchi Karasu in the final round of the Jade Championship. Rumors of maho use by both parties were, of course, totally false. Agasha Tamori and Asahina Tamoko were the other serious contenders.

It's a bad sign when the last two players in a tournament are both wearing Yogo Junzo caps. In the final round, David La's corrupt Lion, under a brutal assault by Chris Jilot's corrupt Unicorn, gambled and destroyed his next-to-last Province to bring out Oni no Akuma. When the Unicorn attacked, Deadly Ground destroyed the Unicorn army and caused the Unicorn's surrender. Third place went to Chris Bergstrom's Honorable Dragon deck, and fourth place to the Vincent's Crane Shrine deck of Nik Olah.

CARDS: Kitsu Okura Exp.; Mantle of the Jade Champion

Gen Con U.K. '98 (September 3-6)

One-on-One Tournament: Return of the Kolat Master
Akodo Kage, the Kolat master of Rokugan, has hidden himself deep inside Rokugan, maintaining his power over the economy and the secrets of Rokugan. His power has doubled since the exile of the Scorpion. But now Kage has discovered something even darker, a black secret that even the Scorpion were afraid to reveal. Kage sends warning of this evil, this "living Darkness," to one clan—the clan that hid him and kept his identity safe from the rest of Rokugan, who believed he was dead.

It's time for the return of the Kolat master.

Tom Mulheim's Iron Crane deck won this tournament, defeating Mark Wootton's Crane Shrine deck in a final "round" in which each player drew five cards and added their Focus values.

Like with the Claiming the Bayushi Provinces tournament, the final Crane-versus-Crane duel in this tournament set into motion the Doji-Daidoji internal dispute in the storyline.

CARD: Asahina Dorai, the Crane Clan scholar revealed in the Dark Journey Home set

Dragon*Con '98 (September 3-6)

One-on-One Tournament: The Dragon's Gift

Long ago, the dragons of the Celestial Heavens looked upon the flourishing Empire and were pleased. Mortals had grown wise beneath the rule of the Children of the Sky, and the Kami had taught the Children of Earth well. The dragons walked among the people, that they might

learn more of them. But when the Age of Man came, the Celestial Heavens drew away, the dragons with them, mourning the loss of their brother, Togashi, and cursing the world that brought his death. Only one dragon still believed in the mortals. In a deep chasm near the Shadowlands' borders, the Dragon of the Void left its final, most precious gift. "Take this," the dragon said, offering a piece of its soul, "and remember me in the dark times to come." The Dragon Pearl. Its form is ever-changing, and its powers hold secrets forbidden to mortals. Its strength could turn to benevolent ends, reuniting the Empire, or to war, tearing the fragile peace.

Eric Wiener's Iron Crane claimed the dragon's gift.

CARD: Dragon's Claw Katana

CanGames '98 (September 25-27)

One-on-One Tournament: Return of a Lost Hero

The Clan War is over, and the smoke has settled from the burning land. Pastures salted by blood have begun to grow again, and the wounds suffered have begun to heal. Yet even as thousands died on the fields of Otosan Uchi, not all were left for the crows. One soul, thought dead and mourned by its clan, has not fallen. On a quest beyond honor, it hides its name and face and continues to serve. Yet in the villages of the Unicorn, a shattered mind seeks the truth behind the veil of lies and unveils its presence to all the Empire. One thought lost has been found, a lone survivor of the thousands of dead and wounded from the final siege of Otosan Uchi.

A corrupt Crab oni deck defeated an Otaku Unicorn deck to win this tournament. The Crab player is believed to have lobbied for the return of Hida Amoro.

CARDS: The Unquiet Grave of Hida Amoro; Hida Amoro Exp.



The Scorpion

The Clan War's First Scroll: Prologue

*This year will (finally) mark the introduction of novels set in the **Legend of the Five Rings** world. Here is an excerpt, the prologue of the first novel, *The Scorpion*, written by Stephen Sullivan. This novel is due out in July 2000. Chapter 1 can be found in the *Wizards of the Coast Summer Sneak-Preview* booklet at better bookstores everywhere and will be on our website in May.*

*There will be a total of three novels this year. Look for the other two novels in September and November: *The Unicorn*, by Allison Lassieur, and *The Crane*, by Ree Soesbee.*

The Gates of Hell

Bayushi Shoji strode through the blood-clotted battlefield, looking for someone to kill. The land around him had been laid to waste by war. Bare trees stretched bony fingers to a sky painted orange with fire and black with smoke. The blood of his enemies stained the land dark and made the small stream in Shoji's path run crimson.

In the distance, the Scorpion daimyo heard the cries of the dying echo among blasted hills. Nearby, only the stream's weeping voice disturbed the silence. Shoji saw no foes remaining to be slain.

The veil of bloodlust lifted, and Shoji saw that many of his people lay dead on the battlefield as well. Eiji had long been a retainer for the daimyo's family. Now his eyes lay open to the sky and his mouth brimmed with his own blood. The retainer was not the last Scorpion casualty, not nearly.

As he crossed the stream, Shoji saw Rumiko lying in the water. Her helmet had fallen off, revealing a gaping hole in the back of her skull, a wound not even her long black hair could conceal. A twinge shot through his heart for the loss of the rare and brave samurai.

Further heartbreak awaited Shoji as he topped the next rise. Before him lay another hill, covered with the bodies of Scorpion retainers. At the crest, propped against a pole supporting the clan's standard, stood Bayushi Tetsuo, Shoji's mother's sister's son.

A black crow perched on the young lieutenant's helmet and pecked at his eyes, first one and then the other. Tetsuo's open mouth made no protest to the bird's

molestation, nor did he wave his one remaining hand to shoo the crow away. Instead, he held his fist clutched tight to the pole, which supported the tattered battle flag of the Scorpion Clan. Tetsuo's other fist lay at his feet. His right arm had been severed at the shoulder.

Shoji advanced quickly up the hill. Hot wind swept yellow dust from the battlefield and stung his eyes, making them tear. He reached the top of the hill, drew his sword, and swiftly killed the bird tormenting his lieutenant's corpse. The daimyo sheathed his katana. He slid the standard pole free of Tetsuo's dead fingers, and the young man's body eased gently to the ground.

Tetsuo's mouth seemed to form an unspoken question: "Why?"

Shoji had no answer. He stared down at Tetsuo's eyes, damaged by the bird. A reflection in the dead orbs saved the Scorpion daimyo's life.

Instinctively, Shoji jumped back—just in time. A huge jade samurai rose up before him from the pile of bodies. The warrior appeared untouched by the battle; whether he had lain in wait for the daimyo or had arrived as Shoji attended to Tetsuo, the Scorpion leader could not say.

The jade warrior raised his long sword high. The late afternoon sun reflected off it, splashing crimson into Shoji's eyes. The daimyo squinted against the glare and drew the sword of his Bayushi ancestors, bracing for the attack.

The samurai came at him swiftly, silently, his huge sword poised over his head. Shoji stepped aside. Their blades met. The sound of steel on steel echoed across the fields of the dead. As their swords parted, the Scorpion daimyo aimed a quick cut at the samurai's neck. The giant parried effortlessly and returned the attack in kind. Shoji caught the slice with his katana. His enemy's blade slid off, barely missing Shoji's shoulder.

The Scorpion circled left to gain the uphill advantage.

The jade warrior pressed the attack. Kicking bodies aside as he came, he forced Shoji back down the hill.

As he retreated, Shoji stepped on the helmet of a dead enemy. The lacquered bamboo gave way. There was no longer a skull underneath to support it. Cursing, Shoji toppled backward.

The samurai bore in, sword raised for the kill.

Years of practice took hold. Shoju lashed out with his right foot as he fell. His metal-shod toe connected with the samurai's left ankle—a vulnerable spot in the jade armor. The samurai lurched forward. Shoju rolled away from the intended blow.

The jade warrior caught himself before he fell and almost recovered. The Scorpion didn't give him a chance.

Lightning-swift, Shoju rolled to his knees and swung his katana in a wide arc. The sword sliced into the back of the samurai's knees, in a spot without armor. Shoju felt the satisfying bite as steel cut through tendons and muscles.

To his credit, the giant didn't cry out as he fell. Instead, he tried to turn toward the daimyo, but his legs no longer obeyed him.

The Scorpion thrust the Bayushi sword between the breastplate and the helmet of his foe. It emerged from the back of the jade samurai's neck. The giant crashed to the ground and moved no more.

Shoju pulled the sword of his ancestors from the samurai. Curiosity overwhelmed him. Who was this man who fought so fiercely? Shoju reached toward the demon-masked helmet and opened it.

A cold chill seized the daimyo's stomach as he gazed at the face of his foe. There was no one there—no body—nothing in the helmet. Only a mirror.

Shoju cursed and rose. He'd seen evil magic before—though never any quite like this. He crested the hill once more and stood beside the body of his dead cousin, Tetsuo.



A vast sea of corpses rolled down from the hill, blackening the plain below. Here great armies had met and fought until not one man remained standing. Nothing moved. No sound disturbed the gruesome tableau save the plaintive whispering of the wind. Even the birds remained silent.

Before him, at the edge of the plain, Shoju saw the Forbidden City, sacred precinct of the emperor, rising like a monumental tomb in the land of the dead. Cautiously, with his sword still drawn, the daimyo walked down the hill toward the city.

He passed more of his people on the way, their faces drawn gaunt with pain and death. At some he paused a moment in contemplation, always cautious not to be surprised again by hidden foes. No more samurai appeared to bar his path.

At last the iron gates of the palace stood before him—silent, monolithic, impassable. Shoju wondered how he would surmount them, and what he would find within the sacred precincts.

As he stood thinking, a sound came from inside the city. Slowly, almost silently, the great gates swung open to welcome the Scorpion daimyo. A droning melody washed over him as the gates parted—a song of blood and death and victory. Shoju had heard the song all his life, but he could not remember its name. The tune stirred the fires in his soul.

Someone waited for him on the other side of the gate.

Beyond the portal, Shoju saw his lovely young wife, Bayushi

Kachiko. She smiled, stretched out her pale arms, and said, "Greetings, Husband. The day is ours."

Storms over Matsu Palace

by Edward Bolme

The forthcoming *Storms over Matsu Palace* is our new learn-to-play set. Patterned after our successful *Siege of Sleeping Mountain* release, this new set incorporates many improvements learned from our (and your) *Siege* experiences. *Storms* should be out in July, just in time for us to use at Origins.

First, the facts.

There is only one deck box: Lion versus Unicorn. Using the Great Clans will, we hope, make it more accessible to the novice.

The decks only use Personalities, Events, Holdings, Actions, Followers, and Spells. There are no Ancestors, Items, Kihos, Sensei, or Regions.

Cards have not been altered from a game-play perspective. Advanced game text not used in the intro version is {set off in brackets} to show the new players that they can safely ignore it for now.

Teaching with *Storms*

Let me remind everyone that the purpose of *Storms* is to lower the entry barrier. Let's face it: L5R can be intimidating. It's a big world, and it's a complex game full of nuance.

For my own part, it took my friends and me the better part

of a year and rereading the rules a dozen times to get it all right. If most people knew this up front, they wouldn't even start. We want to give them a taste of the game and the world without drowning them in detail or flooding them with all of the rules at once.

First off, explain that it's an introductory set. You're teaching the basics of the game. {Explain the advanced text and how it can be ignored for now.}

Order the cards as numbered, with cards L1 and U1 (the first cards drawn) at the tops of the decks. You can go through the sample game provided. This way, you

don't have to teach all of the card types at once; you can just teach each card type as it shows up.

Do not teach the following rules the first game or three:

- * The Imperial Favor
- * Cavalry versus Infantry assignment. (Just say the Unicorn always assign second because they're Cavalry.)
- * Reduced cost for Clan Personalities
- * Dishonor

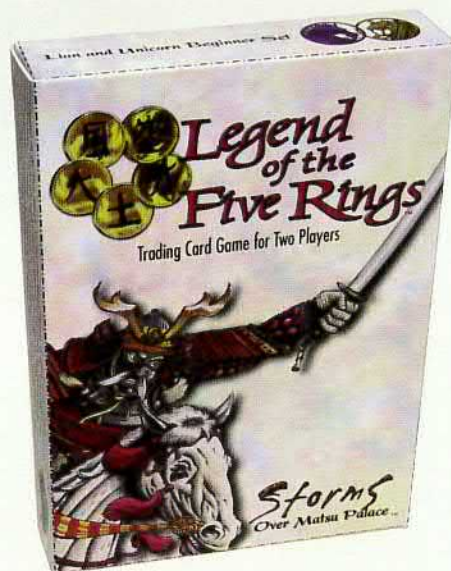
There are two other demo emphases that really help. They are:

- * Attacking is fun. (Let the new player do a lot of attacking.)
- * Winning is fun. (Let the new player win some battles and preferably the game, as long as you don't look like you're throwing the fight.)

This last cannot be stressed enough. Help the other player win by being honest and straightforward, but without being cheesy. I remember being taught another TCG by a competitor. I ended up losing the game, having lost a critical battle toward the end. After I lost the game,

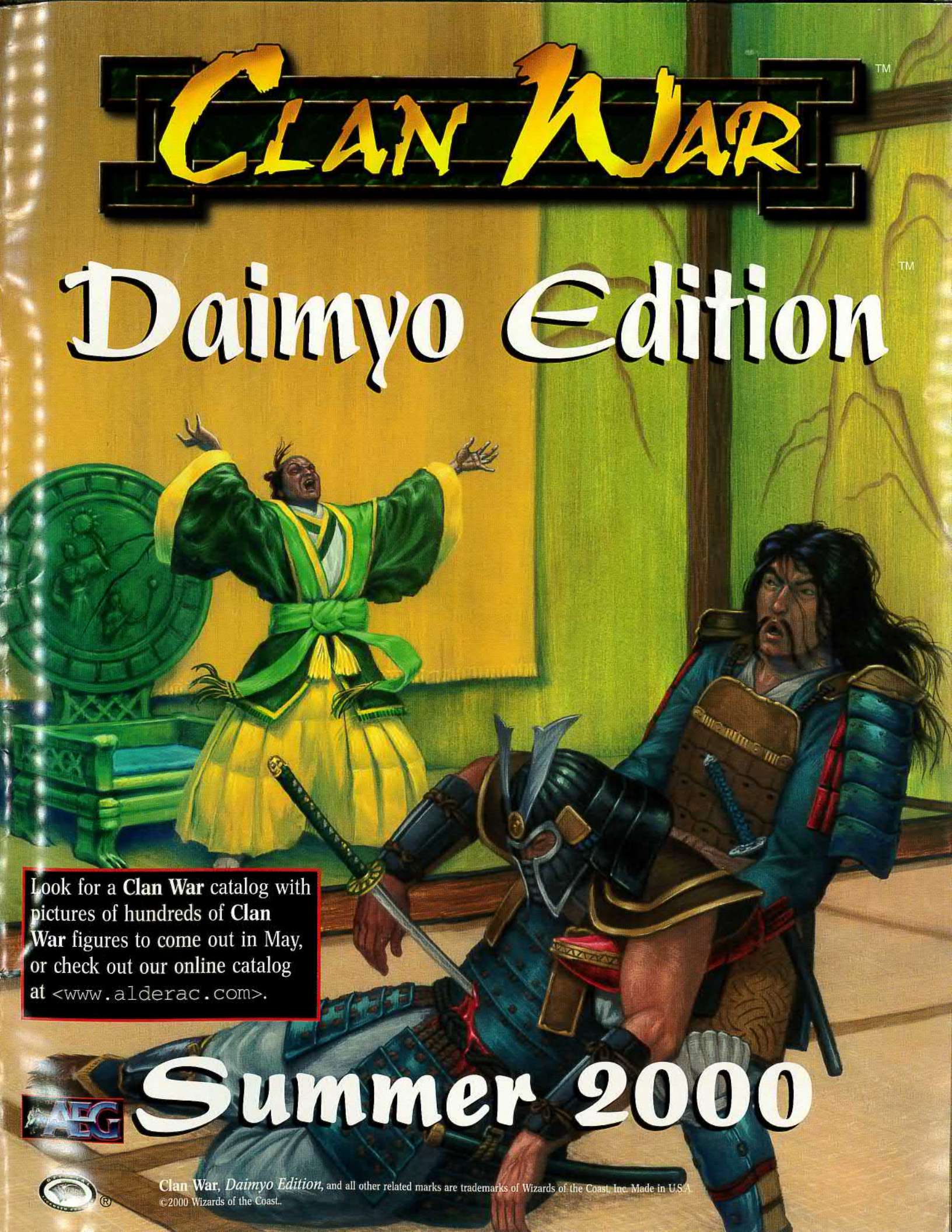
the demoer pointed out that a certain card I had on the table would have enabled me to win that selfsame battle. That, I thought, was unprofessional. And it soured me on the game. Although I know how to play, I never bought a card . . . and that means it was an unsuccessful demo.

That's about it. Good luck!



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Summer 2000



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