

THE  
IMPERIAL

# HERALD

VOL. 2 / NO. 17

**PREVIEW**  
**LOTUS EDITION**

**NEWS**  
**OF**  
**ROKUGAN**

CIRCA LOTUS EDITION



## Coming Soon!

### Lotus / Dark Lotus

Fall, 2005

The new base set for Legend of the Five Rings has forced the Design, Story and Brand departments of Legend of the Five Rings to 'push the envelope' like never before. Long time players will enjoy the nostalgia factor, new players will enjoy the story melding with the mechanics, and regular players will enjoy seeing that Lotus / Dark Lotus is not just a rehash of Diamond or Gold or Jade or Emerald or Imperial.

This release sets the tone for the entire new arc. Everything up to the packaging and release method will be new and revolutionary. I recently had the opportunity to review the full Lotus / Dark Lotus set as a whole, instead of my usual method of 'poking my head in' once in a while. I was excited as a player, proud as a Brand Manager and eager as a fan of Legend of the Five Rings.

I would like to use this opportunity to thank Mark Wooten and the Lotus play testers for their hard work and dedication.

The culmination of a tremendous amount of work is almost here.

### European Championships

2005

We are quickly approaching one of the most important events of the year. The European Championships have a long and proud history. Uniting some of the best Tournament Organizers and players in Europe, this tournament is a seminal event on the L5R calendar.

The 2005 European Championships will have the greatest storyline impact of any EC to date. The winner will be allowed to choose and help design a Fortune that will become a card in a future expansion. The player will provide input for the artwork for the piece, which will then become the artwork on boosters for the set the card is released in.

In addition, the winner will be able to declare who their clan will go to war with in the Lotus arc and those two clans will be the basis for the next Learn To Play set. The rulebook will include a 'how to play clan X' article by the winning player.

Most importantly, this event will be a 'dry run' for the 2006 World Championships.

### Booster Draft

Fall 2005

AEG is proud to announce the formation of official Booster Draft rules for Legend of the Five Rings. This format will provide players with a new means of enjoying the greatest storyline game in existence, while allowing providing retailers a means to vary their tournament structures and utilize L5R stock.

Through the hard work and diligence of players and playtesters, we are the recipients of a fun and exciting new play format. The playing fields are now level. Don't have a huge card collection? No worries. Don't know the intricacies of card interaction for every card for the past four sets? No worries. Want to introduce new players to the best ccg around and let them keep their cards? Here ya go!

Booster Draft will be a fully realized, supported and rewarded play style that will be a huge part of the game as we move into the next ten years of Legend of the Five Rings.

THE  
IMPERIAL

# HERALD

THE OFFICIAL LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS™ QUARTERLY VOL. 2 / NO. 17

## Editorial

Hello, fellow citizens of the Empire!

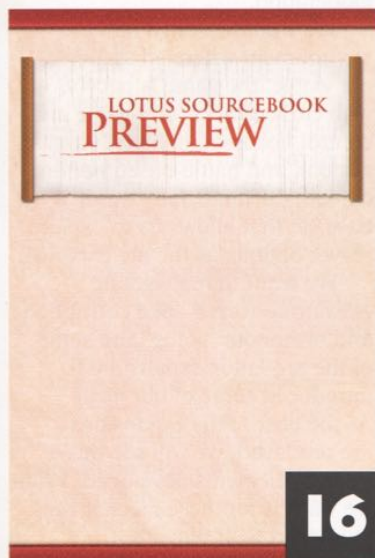
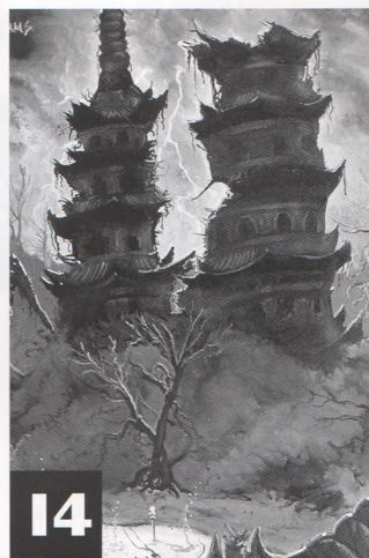
Man it's been a grueling couple of weeks! We've had so much work to do on *Legend of the Five Rings*, but I think the results prove themselves well worth the effort. There's cool stuff in the pipe, and I'm not just saying that because they pay me the big bucks and I needed something to write. .well, it's not the only reason. .

Seriously, though, there are some really neat things coming your direction. Work is well underway on *Lotus*, I just got a glimpse of the cool artwork for *Code*, and we're on the finishing stretch on the first 3E sourcebook, a volume that compiles the *Gold and Diamond* story arcs plus a little bit of *Lotus*.

On a larger scale, there are awesome developments in the community. The *Koteis* are in full swing, with a level of player interaction in the story that we've never seen before (and that's saying something). Official online powwows with players are also planned (check [l5r.com](http://l5r.com) for details) and the forums have developed into a fun (if sometimes insane) place for L5R players to hang out.

If you have time, do drop by and have a look.

Rich Wulf  
L5R Story Guy



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# LOTUS EDITION DESIGN DIARY



by Mark Wootton,  
Player Design Team

**W**hen it comes to designing, we go in with ideas that do not wind up in the finished product leaving players disappointed. Do you get the picture? The design diary entry works more like a snapshot indicating where we are at any given moment (so keep that in mind). We'll let you have a look at the print for May 2005.

Let me run you through the process. It began with the Player Design Team around Christmas 2004. Over the holidays, we went through every Diamond legal card, and any other card we could think of from the old expansions to come up with the best cards to make a base set. The best cards are not necessarily the 'best' cards. If you print all of the best cards purely from a power point of view, you get a rapidly degenerating environment. What we are after is a good mix and not just one that works for constructed play. Then, we spent over a month refining our list. By the end of January, we were ready to give a base set to the playtesters. Let's look at our ideas at that juncture.

For the first time in a base set there will be about 100 new cards. Why?

First, we felt that we did not have all of the cards we wanted for the environment if we relied only on pre-existing cards. Secondly, we felt that by including new cards, but keeping them only in the common and uncommon slots, we would create something fresh for the existing player base, without creating "chase" cards. We wanted to take all of the good stuff from Diamond, and improve areas that were not as strong by adding exciting cards.

We also tried to take a holistic design philosophy. One issue for players is the dominance of certain archetypes, usually "blitz" (honour or military) and "control" (meaning total lock out of the game, dishonour, chi death, duelling). However, whenever you take an action, there is an opposite and equal reaction to deal with. Speedier military decks keep control in order. Defensive honour decks keep blitz military under control. Powerful battle control decks keep honour sorted

out (you could add your own ideas to the list). What we do in Lotus is say, "Everything, but in moderation."

We want to design an environment where all strategies are viable, the game is pace-y, with early attacks, mid-game and control, focussed military, passive honour, and battle-based honour, chi-kill, duelling, and swarm: a base set that allows us to explore player options as the arc expands.

We want to reinvigorate existing concepts—like corruption and dishonour. Lotus (and some of the pre-Lotus expansions) introduced some of our ideas. As the post-Lotus expansions are produced, we will see these exciting elements developed. What we want is for these mechanisms to interact with player's personalities.

That was where we stood at the end of January. We knew what we wanted Lotus to be but next we needed fresh eyes to look over it. Of course, when we gave it to the Alpha testers, they found holes, so, for the next month they helped us refine the set, as well as



consider at a number of the new mechanics to introduce with Lotus. Many of these have been discussed already like the duelling mechanic which you might recognize. But we are also looking for other fundamental ideas, all requiring extensive testing. We are not afraid to go back to the drawing board and, if anything we come up with is not an improvement, then we will abandon it.

Recently, the Alpha testers have been joined by the Beta testers, to look at the whole thing afresh. I have been told that the environment is too blitzzy, too control-oriented, too attachment biased, too attachment penalising, that dueling is too good, that it is not good enough and that honour is too fast and too slow so...we are getting it right!

What I know for certain is that we have in place the most extensive and multi-national approach to playtesting ever. Five continents are represented: North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Australasia. Our playtesters are all excellent players, with a range of motivations, not only those of just hard-bitten top-level tournament types. By throwing the playtest net this wide, we get a broader view before we go to open playtest.

Playtesting will represent final opportunity for everyone to put his or her views in. Certainly the set will be close to finished, but a few wrinkles still will have to get sorted out. I hope that the player base will respond positively to that opportunity. This will be the most inclusive and participatory process a base set has ever gone through!

Let me give you a few teasers because everything may have changed by the time you read this, nevermind by the time we go to print with the set (none of this takes into account that we will not know until August whether we even have enlightenment as a win condition, by the way!).

We deliberately did not Lotus bug any of the strongholds and sensei. This allows us to shift things as we watch the environment pan out pre-Lotus. In some cases, we are moving the stronghold abilities onto Sensei and vice-versa. We are MRP-ing several cards to enrich the environment. I am not afraid to change existing Lotus legal cards if I feel it necessary. Here are my predictions based on where we are on 7 May 2005.

When you get Lotus you can look back at these predictions and figure out how many of them made it to the final set!

Crab will get proactive abilities on the strongholds; the mountain will not move, heroes will come forth and we will start to see more distinct deck types.



Crane will feature one personal honour within their duelling strategies and their mastery of the court will rival that of the Scorpion in different ways. And, the Harriers will always be on hand to guard their lands from aggression.

Dragon will be happy getting the sensei that they have always wanted. We will try to feature both the enigmatic and mystical aspect of the Dragon; rings and fate will be what makes them tick.

Lion will go back to being both highly effective shock troops and masterful tacticians, always defining the terms you fight them on, and taking great honour and glory in every battle.

Mantis will bring a brand new theme to the table before Lotus does and it will be BIG! The islanders have found a secret way to master the seas to complement their already ingenious strategies.

Phoenix will become the true masters of the celestial links, but we hope that they will work in tandem to more powerful ends. They will always flirt with the dark side.

Ratling will find that they have learned abilities from their new comrades that harken back to days gone by. Look for explosive growth of the tribes or the ability to steal an opponent's strengths.

Scorpion will continue to vie with Crane for the courts, manipulating any who make a "mistake," but fear the dark nights, be very afraid...the shadows will be moving.

In the Shadowlands Big Onis will continue to stalk, goblins swarm and corruption will be an ever-present threat; the Lost rise up to exert their ruthless influence.

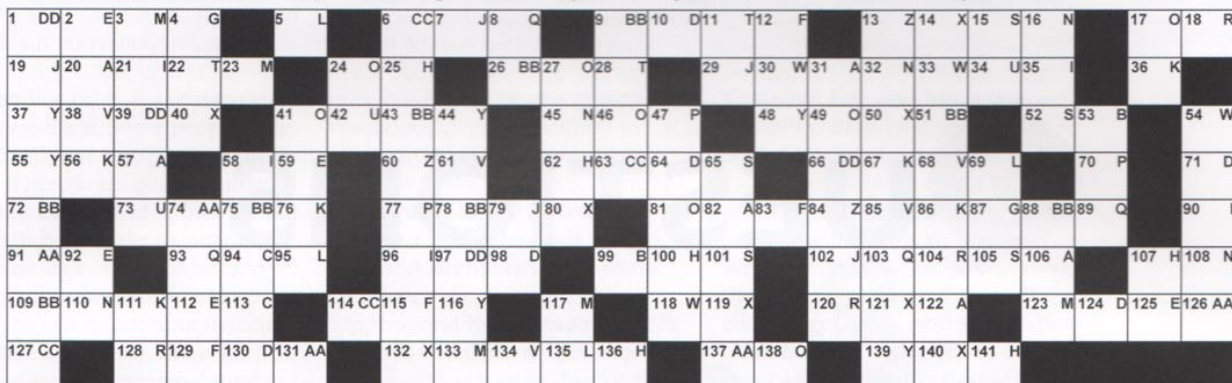
Unicorn will feature their three armies as distinct entities: the Baraunghar, Junghar and Khol will be relying on multiple tactics, from light units, magistrates, battle maidens, to samurai and shugenja working together not to mention the main heavy cavalry of Khol.

Illus. Drew Baker © 2005 AEG



## Anacrostic Puzzle

Answer clues A-DD to complete the following "Friday Fiction" quote by transposing the letters from the answers into the numbered squares in the quote block. You can also work backwards, placing letters into the clue answers if you figure out any words in the quote. Reading the first letter of each answer will give the source of the quote (character's name and fiction's title). Note that words wrap around the grid and are separated only when indicated with a black square.



- |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>A. Kuni Family Daimyo<br/>122 31 20 57 106 82</p> <p>B. Northern Provinces<br/>the Moto<br/>53 99</p> <p>C. Rokugani chess<br/>113 94</p> <p>D. Consciousness of the<br/>Naga<br/>10 98 130 64 124 71</p> <p>E. Ratlings like these<br/>kinds of things<br/>59 2 125 112 92</p> <p>F. Lion Clan Poet<br/>129 12 115 83</p> <p>G. Light of Darkness<br/>87 4</p> <p>H. Toku or Bokatu<br/>62 100 25 107 136 141</p> <p>I. Creator of artifact in<br/>clue O, below<br/>21 35 96 90 58</p> <p>J. Ratling or Ninja<br/>102 29 19 7 79</p> <p>K. The name of The<br/>Nameless One's soul<br/>56 67 76 111 86 36</p> <p>L. Scorpion Clan Statue<br/>95 135 69 5</p> <p>M. There are this many<br/>Onisu<br/>3 117 23 133 123</p> <p>N. Mantis Trait<br/>16 108 32 45 110</p> <p>O. Item made by person<br/>in clue I (2 words)<br/>46 49 17 41</p> | <p>P. How the Shadowlands<br/>makes some feel<br/>70 47 77</p> <p>Q. Former Emerald Cham-<br/>pion became this color<br/>89 103 8 93</p> <p>R. Witch<br/>18 104 120 128</p> <p>S. Artist with a "Keen Eye"<br/>65 101 15 52 105</p> <p>T. Ignominious<br/>28 22 11</p> <p>U. Kabuki's cousin<br/>34 73 42</p> <p>V. Inheritance or Alliance<br/>134 68 85 38 61</p> <p>W. Earth Sanctum<br/>118 30 33 54</p> <p>X. Lotus Lead Designer<br/>(Initial + Last Name)<br/>50 40 121 14 132 80 119 140</p> <p>Y. Sneak or ranged<br/>139 44 116 55 48 37</p> <p>Z. Mak<br/>84 60 13</p> <p>AA. Fu-Leng was the<br/>Kami<br/>126 137 74 131 91</p> <p>BB. Of fire or void<br/>109 9 51 72 78 88 26 43 75</p> <p>CC. Omoni's pet goblin<br/>6 127 63 114</p> <p>DD. of Good Faith<br/>97 66 39 1</p> |
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- 81 24 138 27

# FAN MAIL

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

by the  
L5R Story Team

**A** selection of story questions, selected from the L5R Forums. Names have not been changed to protect the innocent:

*Agasha Yunara asks:*

**Q.** I was just thinking, we know Shiba Tsukune has recovered the ancestral sword since becoming a fortune. And she has been known to meet with Aikune, not to mention we have a lot of powerful Shugenja. My question is, why wouldn't she simply find a way to return the sword now?

**A.** What you suggest is certainly possible, but there are complications. Amaterasu decreed that the sword would be removed from the mortal realm, and it's usually not wise to interfere with a goddess' wishes. Though Lady Sun is dead now, her word still carries a great deal of weight among the other celestial personages of Rokugan. That being said, this matter will be resolved in an upcoming fiction (perhaps by the time you read this).

*ZombieTonyBlair asks:*

**Q.** What happens if a Khadi's body gets destroyed when they aren't close enough to another living being to inhabit it's body, i.e. Iuchiban tripped and fell down the stairs, breaking his neck, when everyone else happened to be out of his citadel on business.

**A.** He would temporarily become an incorporeal spirit and wander aimlessly until he found a suitable host.

*Moto Hotei asks:*

**Q.** Story has been determined by sillier things than errata; the Horiuchi being case in point. So why not make errata directly affect the storyline too? What I mean is: The Unicorn are sweeping across the empire, taking down cells of rampaging Bloodspeakers all over the place. Since 'the nail that sticks up gets hammered down' Iuchiban (pre-toasting) notes that for whatever reason, the Unicorn are responsible for taking down most of his followers. He proceeds to focus his attention on screwing them over a bit; in

the process, crippling the efficiency of the Unicorn's new Khol Wall, and... I dunno... braking Utako Tarako's legs.

**A.** This is actually a rather neat idea. Fu Leng knows story canon has been determined by stranger things. In my opinion, so long as such an event does not disrupt the believability and enjoyment of the fiction, I'm all for it. It gives fans who have been around for a while a neat inside insight to how the game and story develop.

To explain Hotei's Horiuchi reference for those who don't know: the Horiuchi family was originally created when a typo led to "Iuchi Shoan" being named "Horiuchi Shoan." Though we didn't deny the mistake, we left the name as it was and developed story to explain it. Such an act is not an isolated incident in L5R history to say the least.

*Shiba Genji Asks:*

**Q.** WHO WAS THE GREATEST KAMI?

**A.** Hida. Duh.

# "WHERE DID YOU GET THAT CARD?" "PROMO CARDS" ALTERNATE ART FOIL VERSIONS

**P**romo cards. Some people love them, some people hate them, but everybody wants them. There are a good number of promo cards in L5R, and getting them can be as easy as opening a magazine (like, say, this one), or as difficult as beating a hundred people to win a tournament. Essentially, however, there are only two types of promo cards, and now that we're on the cusp of a new base set, seems like a good time to discuss them.

The first type of promo is alternate art or foil versions of existing cards. These cards are a lot of fun, just because they're different and new. The great thing about these cards is that we can distribute them freely without upsetting the game environment. No matter how few or many of these cards we give away, we know that the game isn't changing because a player is replacing a normal version of their Clan Champion with a shiny version (although I'll testify in court that my foil *Togashi Satsu* shows up exactly when I need him far more often than my basic version). Of course, the problem here is that not everybody cares what version of a card they have, as long as they have it. L5R is a game, after all, and no matter how pretty a card may be, appearance doesn't change its playability. So, we generally save cards like this for use as special "Thank you" gifts for players & Bounty Hunters, to give away for special events and Koku Redemption. This keeps them suitably exclusive, without having to worry about impacting play.

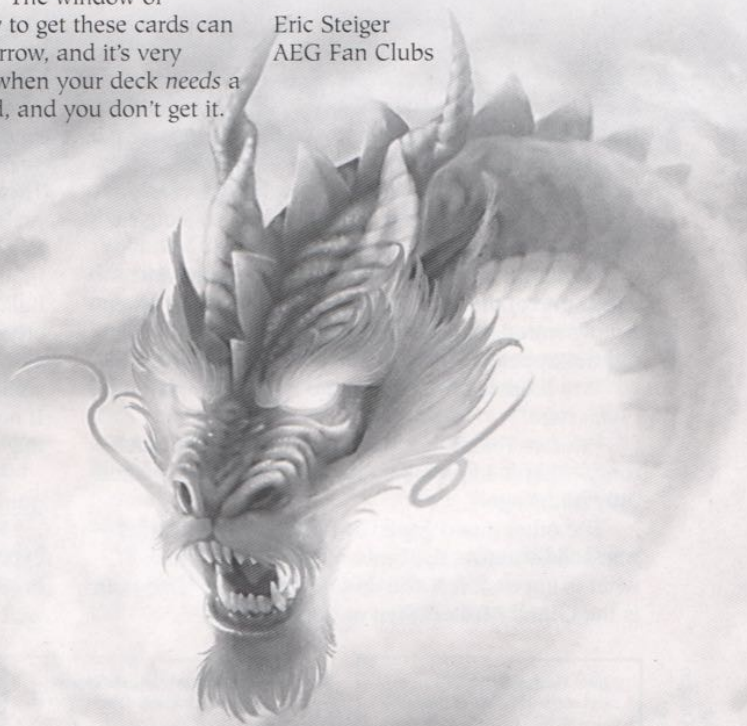
Sometimes, however, we want promos to be desirable for their

play value, and be an extra-special reward for doing something to support the game. Cards like *Warrens of the Nezumi* (originally only available in the Heroes of Rokugan set), *Interesting Times* (given to attendees of last year's GenCon Indy seminar), box toppers, and Herald promos all fit into this category. Cards like these are meant to be desirable for their play value, and to reward the truly dedicated players who constantly take their L5R game to the next level. The great thing about these cards is that they're strong cards that people really want. The bad thing about these cards, though, is...that they're strong cards that people really want, and can't always get. The window of opportunity to get these cards can often be narrow, and it's very frustrating when your deck *needs* a certain card, and you don't get it.

That's not fun, and fun is the primary goal of L5R. So we are bound by duty to correct it.

Just like issuing errata or reversing rulings, reprinting promo cards is something we take very seriously, because we understand that people go through a lot of effort to get them, and seeing them reprinted as a common, or even rare card, can be frustrating after doing all that work. But our first priority is to keep the game fun, and occasionally that means making certain cards a little more available. So go to lots of events, collect your promo cards, but most importantly, enjoy them. They're there to make the game a little more fun for you.

Eric Steiger  
AEG Fan Clubs



Illus. Steve Argyle © 2005 AEG

## ...SHOWS UP EXACTLY WHEN I NEED HIM

# FATE OF THE GRAND MASTER

by Rich Wulf

The heavy oaken doors opened with a slow, ponderous growl. The bitter mountain wind blew a plume of snow onto the grey stone floor. Two stocky guards shivered in the cold, pulling their fur-lined cloaks tightly about their bodies. On the path outside stood a ragged man dressed only in loose-fitting robes. His long hair and beard blew wildly in the wind. His face was grave and focused, staring past them into the castle.

"What brings you to Shiro Morito, traveler?" asked one of the guards, teeth chattering. The other simply stared at the stranger, awed by how the cold did not appear to affect him.

"My brother sent for me," he replied simply. "I am here."

"Master Tokei?" the guard retorted in a dubious tone. "That is impossible, the message was delivered only hours ago."

The other guard gaped at his friend then cuffed him solidly across the brow. "How do you know what is impossible?" the other guard said. "This man is the Grand Master! Step out of his path!"

"Your friend speaks a great deal of sense," the stranger said. Tokei's eyes fixed on the guard. Stars seemed to prowl in his depthless gaze.

The guard nodded and quickly ducked to one side, bowing deeply as he mumbled an apology. Tokei ignored them, striding directly into the castle. Though he had just walked in snow six inches deep he left no footprints on the floor, nor did any snow mar his dull brown robes. A heavy-set older samurai in armor of midnight blue waited at the end of the hall. His face was weathered by the passage of time, creased by exhaustion and bitterness. Yet when he saw the stranger, there was a light there, a flash of something that had not been seen in some time. If not for the stranger's beard and longer hair, one might easily have been mistaken for the other.

"Tokei," the samurai said, face breaking into a quirky grin. "It is truly you."

Naka Tokei looked at Lord Morito with a dark expression. "I have been back for nearly a decade, brother," he replied. "If you were curious as to my well-being, why did you not seek me out?"

Year 1165,  
Month of the Dragon  
(Mid Spring)

Agashi Hamanari becomes catatonic with visions of the future.

Year 1165,  
Month of the Horse  
(Early Summer)

Iuchiban Conquers the City of the Lost, Daigotsu flees.  
War of the Rich Frog begins, Unicorn attack the Lion in Kaeru Toshi

Illus. Drew Baker © 2005 AEG



Year 1165,  
Month of the Monkey  
(Late Summer)

The Rain of Blood begins — Iuchiban rains chaotic blood magic upon Rokugan, corrupting many and turning them to his service.

Tsuburu no Oni slain by Hida Isamu.

Emperor Toturi III charges the Dragon Clan with restoring order to the Empire following the Reign of Blood.

Ninube agents leave the Egg of Pan Ku where Kitsu Juri will find it. Matsu Nimuro uses the Egg to make a copy of himself.



Illus. Franz Vohwinkel © 2005 AEG

Year 1165,  
Month of the Serpent  
(Late Spring)

Iuchiban escapes his Tomb.  
Mysterious fires consume one quarter of Toshi Ranbo, the Imperial City.  
Doji Domotai wins the Topaz Championship

Year 1165,  
Month of the Goat  
(Mid Summer)

Iuchiban attacks Shiro Hiruma, is repelled by the aid of forces led by Kokujin and Kyofu.  
Former Imperial Advisor, Ide Tadaji, dies.

Morito shrugged. "I could ask you the same, Tokei," he answered. "I think we both know the answer to that."

Tokei only nodded solemnly. The two brothers had been close once, so close that when Morito was cast out of the Unicorn Clan, Tokei followed him into exile, even going so far as to take his brother's name in a friendly jest of fealty. For years they lived the lives of mercenaries, knowing no loyalty but to the koku and to one another. On the day they met Naka Kuro, the Grand Master of the Elements, Tokei saw a better, nobler path. He had begged Morito to join him, but Morito only laughed.

There was no profit in enlightenment, Morito had said. That had been the end of it. The brothers had not seen one another again until today, over forty years later.

"Where is he?" Tokei asked.

"This way," Morito said, turning and sliding open the door behind them. "We have done all we could for him, but very little has changed."

Tokei followed his brother into the adjoining chamber. It was dark within, illuminated only by the dim light of a small lantern that rested on the floor beside a small palette. A young man lay upon the palette, dressed in robes as white as his ghostly hair. His blue eyes stared emptily at the ceiling. He might have been mistaken for a corpse if his chest did not move ever so slightly with each breath.

"Nizomi," Tokei whispered, kneeling beside the prone figure. He rested one hand on Nizomi's chest and whispered a brief prayer to the kami.

"It is my fault, Master Tokei," said in a choked voice.

Tokei peered over his shoulder. A pale man in light blue robes and an emerald mantle knelt in the shadows. His head was bowed, white hair spilling over his shoulders.

"What happened, Keitaro?" Tokei demanded.

"We were on patrol," Keitaro replied. He looked up at the Grand Master, and his eyes were red with tears. "Nizomi believed that one of Iuchiban's rogue cells had fled in this direction so we followed. I was worried that it may be a trap but Nizomi insisted that we pursue. Two Asahina-trained shugenja and a dozen trained bushi vs. a cultist rabble — he said there would be no problem. The twilight of the Bloodspeakers was nigh, it remained only for us to extinguish the sparks. Sekawa has warned me again and again that the boy was too brash... I did not listen."

"The Bloodspeakers did this?" Tokei asked.

"No," Keitaro answered. "When we arrived at the cave, the Bloodspeakers were already dead. Hakai was there."

Tokei scowled. "The Onisu of Death," he said in a low voice. "The one that attacked Kyuden Nio."

"The monster that killed Kimita," Keitaro confirmed with a hopeless sigh. "He slaughtered the other bushi with a wave of his hand. I still do not know how I managed to drive him off and escape with Nizomi."

"He allowed you to live, Keitaro," Tokei said. "It was not you he wanted, nor Nizomi." The Grand Master spoke softly now. "He wished to draw me here."

"And I fell into his trap," Tokei said in horror. "I sent for you immediately."

"You did nothing wrong, Keitaro," Tokei said. "I never even received your message. I sensed something had happened to Nizomi and came immediately." He looked down at Nizomi again. "His body lives, but his soul has been taken."

"The soldiers of the Ox are at your disposal," Morito said. "As many as you need. I don't care what sort of demon this Hakai is; if he's harmed my brother's son we'll find a way to kill him."

"Nizomi is not my son," Tokei replied.

"Keitaro said he was," Morito said, confused.

"It is complicated," Keitaro answered.

"You thought I died during the Clan War, brother," Tokei said. "In a way, I did. The spell I cast to save Nanashi Mura tore me from the mortal realm and cast me into Jigoku. An Oni Lord tortured me in that place, where time has no meaning. Only the bravery of a doomed friend offered me the chance to escape. I made my way across the Spirit Realms, through blood and thunder, seeking the way home. When the time came for me to return, the elemental dragons feared that I had seen too much that no mortal was meant to see. They separated my soul into two halves, good and evil." He brushed one hand gently across Nizomi's brow. "Nizomi was born from that other half. He is part of me. I left him with the Crane because even I am uncertain which of us is composed of that good in Morito Tokei and which of us is evil. I gave him to the Jade Champion to be trained, distancing myself so that, if the need arose, Nizomi could stop me."

"I have never understood the strangeness that is your life, Tokei," Morito said, "but that doesn't matter. I will stand by you, as will all the Ox Clan."

Illus. John Donahue © 2005 AEG



Year 1163,  
Month of the Rooster  
(Mid Fall)

Daigotsu's followers build tenuous alliances with the Kolat and the Moto family.

Year 1165,  
Month of the Boar  
(Late Fall)

Rosoku issues the Challenges of Enlightenment to the Empire.

Year 1165,  
Month of the Ox  
(Mid Winter)

Yasuki Hachi makes an arrangement with Yoritomo Kumiko to cease all Mantis piracy for two years.

Mirumoto Masae named Keeper of Air.

Year 1163,  
Month of the Rooster  
(Early Fall)

Iuchi Katamari learns the mysteries of the Doomseekers from Adisabah the Cruel.  
Yajinden discovers the Realm of Thwarted Destiny.  
Emperor Toturi III sends the Shogun to the Kaiu Wall.

Year 1165,  
Month of the Dog  
(late Fall)

The Bloodspeakers attack Gisel Toshi. Toku, daimyo of the Monkey Clan, is among the casualties. The city seems to be destroyed, but is removed and concealed by Isawa's last wish.

Year 1165,  
Month of the Rat  
(Early Winter)

The Empire challenges Iuchiban's forces to meet his armies at Toshi Ranbo. There is no response.  
The famed poet, Rezan, falls into a deep depression and enters the Shadowlands.



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"And you would die by me," Tokei said. "Hakai is too powerful for you to fight. Hakai feeds off of death and violence. If you came with me the fight would only be more difficult."

"I cannot let you charge into this demon's trap alone, Tokei," Morito said.

"There is no other way," the Grand Master said. He rose, closing his eyes. His face looked much older all of a sudden, his shoulders bent with weariness. "He will torture Nizomi's soul as the Maw tortured mine. He will attempt to break Nizomi as they could not break me. If I do not stop him, Hakai will transform him into the very thing I have feared."

"And if you face him and lose, he'll have you both," Morito countered. "This creature is no fool. Would he have challenged you if he did not have a plan?"

Tokei was silent for a time. "No," he admitted, "but I can think of no other way to confront him than directly."

"You were always the wise one, Tokei," Morito said, resting a hand on his brother's shoulder. "I was always the cunning one. I have a plan."

The robed figure stepped into the cavern. A nimbus of crackling magic surrounded his body, illuminating the darkness. He held a limp body in his arms, clad in robes as white as death, face covered with a thick hood.

"You are quick, Grand Master," said an oily voice from the darkness. The tall, sinuous form of Hakai stepped into view. Its form was humanoid, but only barely. Grey, pallid flesh was draped over a form that was nearly skeletal. It wore robes of fine silk and an elaborate golden headpiece. Shadow seemed to seep from its form. Its eyes burned with a hateful red light.

"I have come for Nizomi's soul," Tokei said.

"It is here," Hakai said. He held up a sphere of shimmering white. Brief flickers of shadow moved within it.

Tokei set the body on the floor and moved purposefully toward Hakai. A powerful force struck the Grand Master from behind, hurling him to the floor. Tokei turned with a startled expression but his arms flung out to his sides of his own accord. He was lifted bodily into the air by an invisible force and held there, helpless.

Hakai tilted its head slightly and made a disappointed clicking sound as he circled the hovering Grand Master. "I expected you to succumb

to my ally, Naka Tokei, but not so easily. I am disappointed."

"What have you done, Hakai?" Tokei demanded. "What power is this?"

"I should think the taste would be familiar," Hakai replied. "Centuries ago a madman came to this place with the Kuni on his heels. It was here that he finally gave his soul to the nameless thing that haunted his dreams. It was here that the greatest of all Oni Lords was born. Though that entity has been banished from this world his power can still be felt here, where he was truly born."

A hollow whisper reverberated through the cavern as the foul presence spoke its name.

"Akuuuuuumaaaaaa."

Tokei's eyes widened with horror.

"Did you not wonder, Grand Master, why the Onisu took so little interest in the conflict between Daigotsu and the Bloodspeakers?" Hakai asked. "The time for serving mortals is done. Demons shall rule the Shadowlands again. The banished Oni Lords must return. You, who know the paths of the Spirit Realms like none other, can help us realize that day. Akuma will finish what the Maw began. My lord will turn you to our cause, and Rokugan shall become a banquet of chaos and death."

"Then release Nizomi," Tokei demanded. "If I am the one who truly has the potential for evil then let him go. He is no use to you."

Hakai chuckled. "For one whose name means 'enlightened' I am surprised you never recognized the truth," he said, staring into the depths of the sphere. "The dragons defeat themselves with their mystery. Had they told you the truth, they would have saved a great deal of suffering."

"What truth?" Tokei demanded.

"They split you into two beings, for shared pain divides," Hakai said. "Like all mortals, both of you are evil. Both of you are good." Hakai looked at Tokei and cackled maliciously. "Together perhaps you might have stood a chance, but your fear of yourself made you push Nizomi away. Now both of you will serve us, Grand Master, as will all the other souls I consumed that day at Kyuden Nio."

The Onisu knelt beside the prone body, still clutching Nizomi's soul in one hand. It reached out and pulled the hood aside.

To his credit, Hakai was only surprised for an instant when he saw the bearded face that looked back at him.

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**Year 1166,**  
Month of the Dragon  
(Mid Spring)

Agasha Hamanari awakens, is executed on false charges of Bloodspeaker sympathies.

Iuchiban erects the Iron Citadel in the ruins of Otosan Uchi.

The Gozoku reveal themselves to Toturi III as the source of the Emperor's waning political influence.

**Year 1166,**  
Month of the Hare  
(Early Spring)

The Shogun's armies arrive in Toshi Ranbo, ready to defend the Emperor from the Bloodspeaker menace.

Isawa Sezarū defeats Jama Suru and Mohai with the aid of Iuchi Katamari, Katamari and Sezarū leave Rokugan seeking insight into Iuchiban's power.



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**Year 1166,**  
Month of the Serpent  
(Late Spring)

**Year 1166,**  
Month of the Horse  
(Early Summer)

The War of the Rich Frog ends in a bloody battle at Sukoshi Zutsu, a previously unimportant village. Matsu Nimuro dies; the Unicorn claim Sukoshi Zutsu.

Ikoma Otemi named as Lion Clan Champion.

Ryoko Owari returned to Scorpion control.

The Legion of the Dead battle the Legion of Blood in the Realm of Thwarted Destiny.

Hida Kisada returns to the mortal realm through Oblivion's Gate.

Daigotsu's soul recovered from Meido; the Dark Lord's power is fully restored.

An instant was enough. The true Naka Tokei sat up and snatched the demon's wrist and spoke words of magic. Ripples of jade fire cascaded from its body and into the Onisu. Hakai screamed as the magic tore through its corrupted form, green light pouring from his eyes as the light of purity began to tear it apart. The Onisu wrenched itself away, Nizomi's soul tumbling from its gaunt fingers. Tokei caught it in midair and whispered something into its depths. It streaked off through the air in a flash of white light and was seen no more.

Even as Hakai retreated, Tokei turned to Akuma's prisoner and spoke another spell. The air rippled outward from the Grand Master and Akuma's voice moaned in pain. The man in Tokei's robes fell to his knees. The Grand Master helped his brother to his feet.

"What an idiotic trick," Hakai roared, shuddering with pain. "You would deceive an Onisu and an Oni Lord by dressing your brother in your robes?"

"You fell for it," Morito said dryly.

"And you will die for it!" Hakai shrieked.

The roar of Akuma filled the cavern, but even it was dwarfed by the cacophonous rumble that followed. A wave of heat, a flash of cold, a shudder of the earth, a ripple of the wind, a tremor in the elements heralded the appearance of a man in stark white robes, his ghostly hair flowing loosely over his shoulders. He stood between the Onisu and the two brothers, his youthful features reddened with rage.

"Through blood and thunder I have come, father," Nizomi said. "Let us show these demons their place." The young shugenja began to chant.

"Hai," Tokei said simply, and joined Nizomi's prayer.

Hakai shrieked in pain as the power of the Grand Master and his son coursed through him. The dark presence of Akuma retreated from the cave, fleeing to the safety of Jigoku rather than face their combined power. Though there was little to see, Morito felt awed by the spiritual energies he felt summoned in the cavern. The triumphant howl of released souls reverberated through the stone, the song of all the heroes that Hakai had slain finally released to their final reward.

In moments it was over, and one less Onisu haunted the Empire.

Tokei stopped on the mountain road, looking back at Shiro Morito with a thoughtful expression.

Keitaro and Nizomi had gone on ahead, both eager to return home and tell their comrades of the victory they had shared here. Tokei did not share their eagerness.

"Always so grim," Morito said, riding beside his brother. "You won, Tokei. Enjoy it."

"What have we won, Morito?" Tokei replied.

"Hakai is dead but twelve good men died to his trap. Akuma still lingers at the boundaries of perception, waiting for his chance to enter this world again. To say nothing of his brothers and sister."

"So he will come again," Morito said. "You will stop him again. That is that." He looked at his brother with a broad smile. "At least now you know you will no longer fight alone. You may not think of Nizomi as your son, but he sees himself as such. He is a worthy man, a powerful shugenja, and a fearless warrior." Morito smiled bitterly. "We always walk a different path, Tokei, but I cannot help but envy you. My sons are all fools."

"We both make choices, Morito," Tokei said. "Had you seen what I have seen, I do not think you would wish to be in my place." He looked at Morito seriously. "And I do not think that I would wish to see what you have seen."

Morito frowned uncomfortably. "Some days I wish I'd taken old man Kuro up on his offer and gone with you to join Toturi," he said. "You're a better man than I, Tokei, protecting the Empire while I hide in the mountains."

"So says the man that disguised himself as a Grand Master and stood unarmed against the Onisu of Death," Tokei said. "You underestimate yourself, Morito. But then one never knows the strength of steel until it is tested." He looked at his brother meaningfully. "We both protect Rokugan in our own way."

Morito looked away. "I will remember what you have said, brother," he said, turning his horse back toward the castle. "Be safe, and carry the Fortunes, and enjoy the horse. Finest breed in the Empire, though I'd not say that in earshot of a Unicorn."

"Thank you, brother," Tokei said with a laugh. "Be safe."

The Grand Master continued on his way, for once enjoying the slow ponderous rhythm of horseback travel over magic. At the shadowed threshold of Shiro Morito, the Lord of the Ox Clan watched his brother until he vanished into the mountains, then returned to the darkness.

Year 1166,  
Month of the Goat  
(Mid Summer)

Bayushi Sunetra disappears.  
Bayushi Paneki named as Scorpion  
Clan Champion.

Emperor Toturi III married to Akodo  
Kurako in a secret ceremony.

Toku named Fortune of Virtue by  
Toturi III.

Year 1166,  
Month of the Rooster  
(Early Fall)

Following accusations that the  
mantis used a Black Scroll to  
attack a Phoenix village, war  
erupts between the Mantis and  
Phoenix Clans.

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Year 1166,  
Month of the Boar  
(Late Fall)

Kakita Tsuken named Keeper of  
Fire.

Doji Jun'ai named Keeper of Water.

A man claiming to be Daidoji Uji  
enters Rokugan via a spirit passage.  
He claims to be from a nightmarish  
realm where Fu Leng was never  
defeated.

Shiba Aikune returns the Soul of  
Shiba from the Celestial Heavens.

Rosoku murdered in a suicide attack  
by the Bloodspeaker, Shukumei.

Gozoku overthrown by the Shogun.  
Many members of the conspiracy  
secretly granted leniency if they ally  
themselves to Kaneka.



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Year 1166,  
Month of the Monkey  
(Late Summer)

Kaiu Sugimoto named  
Keeper of Earth

Year 1166,  
Month of the Dog  
(Mid Fall)

Iuchiban slain by Isawa Sezaru  
The Blood Hunt begins. Most  
of Iuchiban's remaining  
followers are hunted down by  
the Imperial Legions.



WILLIAMS

Williams

# L5R BOOSTER DRAFT FORMAT

by Ryan Carter, Player Design Team

**D**raft is a format that offers many possibilities for both the casual and serious tournament player. Casual players will enjoy going up to the local store a few times a week for some pick up drafts, and competitive players will have a fresh new environment to explore. You might ask, "If draft is so great why isn't everyone playing it?" The truth is, up until now, the mechanics of L5R draft have left much to be desired. Playing with Strongholds designed for constructed and drafting packs, made without much consideration for the format, results in clunky and overly complicated games. Recognizing the importance of the format, the Player Design Team happily decided fun and interesting draft rules were long past due. These are the rules that we think will finally give L5R a draft format that players will enjoy.

A draft begins with 8 players who each receive 4 booster packs. The tournament organizer determines the mix of packs, but each player must get the same number of boosters from each expansion set. Players are then seated randomly in this arrangement:

1-2-3-4

5-6-7-8

Once arranged and seated in their Councils, players may open their first booster, determined by the tournament organizer. Players may look through that booster and select one card from that pack. Once that card has been selected, it becomes part of their card library and is no longer considered part of that booster pack. The rest of the booster is turned face down and passed to the person on his left. Once everyone has selected their card, they may pick up the booster that was just passed to them and select another card for

their card library, again passing the remains of the booster to the person on their left. This continues until the last card is selected and there are no more cards.

Once the first booster is depleted, the tournament organizer signals which booster players open next. Like the first booster, players select their cards, but this time players pass the booster to the right instead of to the left. Players continue until that booster is depleted and go on to the third booster. The passing direction continues to alternate, with odd-numbered boosters passed to the left and even-numbered boosters passed to the right.

After all the boosters have been depleted, players begin the deck building process. In addition to the drafted cards each player adds the following cards from the draft pack to his card library:

1x *Nanashi Mura*

5x *Brilliant Artisan*

8x *Spearhead*

1x *A Favor Returned*

1x *Gifts and Favors*

The tournament organizer should supply draft pack cards. Proxies may be used.

Players then have a time limit set by the tournament organizer for deck building.

## Special Rules:

Deck will be constructed 20/20 exactly, no more no less.

No sensei or wind cards are allowed.

If you need to draw a card or fill an empty Province and the required deck is empty, first refill your deck by taking all cards from your appropriate discard pile and shuffling them. Then draw or refill as normal.

All card count restrictions in the rulebook are waived, so players may include as many

copies of any card in their decks as they were able to draft. The Restrictions such as the Uniqueness and Loyalty rules are not waived during game play.

Once players have created their decks, they declare two Storyline-legal Factions. They are considered to be playing both those Factions, for all card and rule purposes, throughout the tournament. Once that is done, the tournament begins. The tournament format is single elimination using the following bracket based off Council seats.

1 vs 8      2 vs 7

4 vs 5      3vs 6

The PDT is excited about getting this format out to the player base. We hope to see players picking up draft the minute they lay their eyes on this. Look for an article about the design process behind draft (in the next heard or on l5r.com).



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# LOTUS SOURCEBOOK PREVIEW

by Shawn Carman

**T**his year, the Legend of the Five Rings Role-playing Game has undergone significant changes. First and foremost, the Third Edition of our popular game has been released in a beautiful full-color edition that updates every aspect of the game to the modern CCG timeline with carefully revised and expanded mechanics for every system that players have come to know and love over the past eight years. Using this new compiled edition, the RPG can proceed in its most consistent and comprehensive incarnation to date.

Almost as important as the new edition is the revised schedule for the RPG. For years, there have been five to six new L5R books released every year. Beginning with 2005, we are cutting that number in half. From now on, there will be three books released per year. Undoubtedly, there will be fans disappointed by this decision, but we believe that doing so is in the best interests of the line. Fewer books allow for more development time, allowing the writing team to focus as they write, playtest, and edit the books. This can only result in a higher quality product, and certainly L5R fans are entitled to the highest quality books we can produce. This process also allows us to spend more resources on a single book. Beginning with the Third Edition rulebook, all L5R RPG releases

will be hardbound, full color editions filled with the art that has made the L5R franchise so popular with fans all around the world.

With Third Edition already on the shelves, the third and final release for 2005 will debut in the fall. The Lotus Sourcebook will be the grandest sourcebook ever released for the game, encompassing complete guides for players and game masters to the Gold and Diamond story arcs, as well as extensive insight into the forthcoming Lotus story arc that will begin with the CCG release in October. The information contained within this book will foreshadow many important developments that will not be seen in the Lotus storyline for months, so fans of the CCG will find it of interest too. Not only will the Lotus Sourcebook preview upcoming story developments, but it will allow RPG players to affect the L5R storyline for the first time in history: the book will contain an exclusive player vote that will allow individual groups to determine how the saga of Rokugan will unfold in both the CCG and the RPG.

Among the new mechanics that the Lotus Sourcebook will contain is a reintroduction of Advanced Schools and New Paths, mechanics that first saw publication in the Second Edition Game Master's Guide and the Time of the Void Sourcebook,

respectively. These revised mechanics will allow characters from the same family, clan, and School to take radically different paths with regard to their mechanics.

To get an idea of what the Lotus Sourcebook will contain, included are two examples of new mechanics introduced in the book, as well as a complete outline for what the book will contain (at the time of editing).

## **Example Advanced School: The White Guard (Unicorn Clan)**

The White Guard are the most fearsome unit in all the Unicorn armies, rivaled only by the Utaku shiotome where their reputation for destruction on the battlefield is concerned. The White Guard was almost destroyed centuries ago when the Moto daimyo led his forces into the Shadowlands with plans to destroy Fu Leng's minions there. The White Guard fell in battle and rose again as the Black Guard, among the deadliest of the Shadowlands' forces. The few White Guard who survived bore the shame of their brothers' defeat, and became sullen warriors obsessed with their own deaths. It was only after the Moto tribe emerged from the Burning Sands, led by Moto Gaheris to destroy the Black Guard, that the White Guard reclaimed their former glory.

The White Guard are unparalleled horsemen and warriors, and study the teachings of both the Tao and the Fortunes in their pursuit of purity. Each man and woman who joins swears an eternal oath to serve the Khan and the Guard above all others, and takes up the study of religion with incredible zeal to forestall any possible corruption.

*Required Rings/Traits:* Earth 5; Agility 5, Strength 4

*Required Skills:* Horsemanship 5, Theology 5, any one Weapon Skill at 5

*Other:* Only Moto samurai are accepted into the White Guard's ranks

### Techniques

#### Rank 1: Shield of the Righteous

So pious are the White Guard that even the kami respect their devotion. If the White Guard is declared the target of a spell, he may spend a Void Point to add his rank in Theology to the TN of that spell. If the White Guard is the target of multiple spells per round, he may spend multiple Void Points to affect each spell at the rate of one Void Point per spell.

#### Rank 2: In My Ancestors' Name

The White Guard are merciless combatants possessed of incredible speed and devastating power. The bushi may make one additional attack per round.

#### Rank 3: Fury of Heaven

The certainty brought on by the White Guard's religious devotion transforms them from simple samurai to an unrelenting force of nature on the battlefield. The bushi receives a number of Free Raises on all Weapon Skill rolls equal to half his ranks in the Theology Skill, rounding down.

### Example New Path: Suzume Storyteller (Minor Clans)

The tiny Sparrow Clan is often overlooked by the Empire at large, and bears precious little to dignify it in the minds of most samurai. Their stark, almost ascetic lifestyle is one that leaves little time to pursue activities such as those prized by samurai. The one exception is the unique emphasis that the Suzume family, lords of the Sparrow, place upon oral history and storytelling. This is a

necessity for the Sparrow, as the atmospheric conditions of their lands causes rapid decay in all paper products. As a result, the Suzume have a rich tradition of storytelling that has made them popular in certain courts around Rokugan. In a strange twist, younger storytellers tend to be more popular than their older kinsmen, as the older generation of Suzume has an undeserved reputation of engaging in lengthy, boring stories from which listeners cannot escape.

*Technique Rank:* 2

*Path of Entry:* Suzume Bushi 1

*Requirements:* Storytelling 3

*Path of Egress:* Suzume Bushi 2

#### Technique: Ten Thousand Tales —

A true storyteller can find the perfect story to fit any occasion, and can use parables of ancestors to deflect almost any debate or accusation. The storyteller may spend a Void Point to use his Storytelling Skill in place of Courtier or Etiquette for a period of one hour. All Techniques or Advantages that would normally affect one of these Skills affects Storytelling in the same manner. The storyteller may choose to end this effect prematurely, or may spend an additional Void Point to change his Storytelling from one Skill replacement to the other.

### The Lotus Sourcebook — Outline

#### I) Chapter One — Introduction

- A) Brief description of what's in this book and how to use it
- B) Advanced Characters — Rules for playing beyond Rank 5
  - 1) Insight Ranks for 5+ characters
  - 2) Other paths of advancement
    - a) Advanced Schools (1 per clan)
    - b) New Paths (3 per clan)

#### II) Chapter Two — The Gold Era, the Time of the Four Winds

- A) Introduction to the Gold Era
  - 1) Short fiction
  - 2) Story background
  - 3) Clan synopses
    - a) Champions & Daimyo
    - b) Alliances
    - c) Enemies
    - d) Objectives

- 4) Tips on running an adventure in the Gold Era
- B) A Perfect Cut
  - 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Yasuki Hachi
    - b) Naka Tokei
- C) An Oni's Fury
  - 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Shiba Aikune
    - b) Miya Gensaiken
- D) Dark Allies
  - 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Kuni Kiyoshi/Omen
    - b) Asahina Nizomi



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- E) Broken Blades
  - 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Kaelung
    - b) Asahina Sekawa

- F) Fall of Otosan Uchi
  - 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Bayushi Tai
    - b) Ikoma Otemi

- G) Heaven and Earth
  - 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Doji Yasuyo
    - b) Bayushi Kwanchai

- H) Winds of Change
  - 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Togashi Mitsu
    - b) Shosuro Furuyari / Bayushi Atsuki

- I) Who's Who
  - 1) The Sword
    - a) Toturi Tsudao
    - b) Bayushi Paneki
    - c) Doji Jotaro

- 2) The Anvil
  - a) Hantei Naseru
  - b) Seppun Isei
  - c) Bayushi Sunetra
- 3) The Bastard
  - a) Akodo Kaneka
  - b) Akodo Ijiasu
  - c) Shosuro Higatsuku

- 4) The Wolf
  - a) Isawa Sezaru
  - b) Toturi Koshei
  - c) Soshi Angai

- 5) The Dark Lord
  - a) Daigotsu
  - b) Goju Kyoden
  - c) Omoni

- 6) Other Important figures
  - a) Isawa Kaede
  - b) Bayushi Kaukatsu
  - c) Doji Tanitsu
  - d) Tonbo Toryu

- J) New Mechanics
  - 1) The Four Winds — Blood of Toturi
  - 2) The Tsuno
  - 3) The Onisu
  - 4) The Steel Throne
  - 5) The Shadowed Tower
  - 6) Isawa's Last Wish
- K) Adventure — Shadow of the Four Winds

### III) Chapter Three — The Diamond Era, the Rise of Iuchiban

- A) Introduction to the Diamond Era

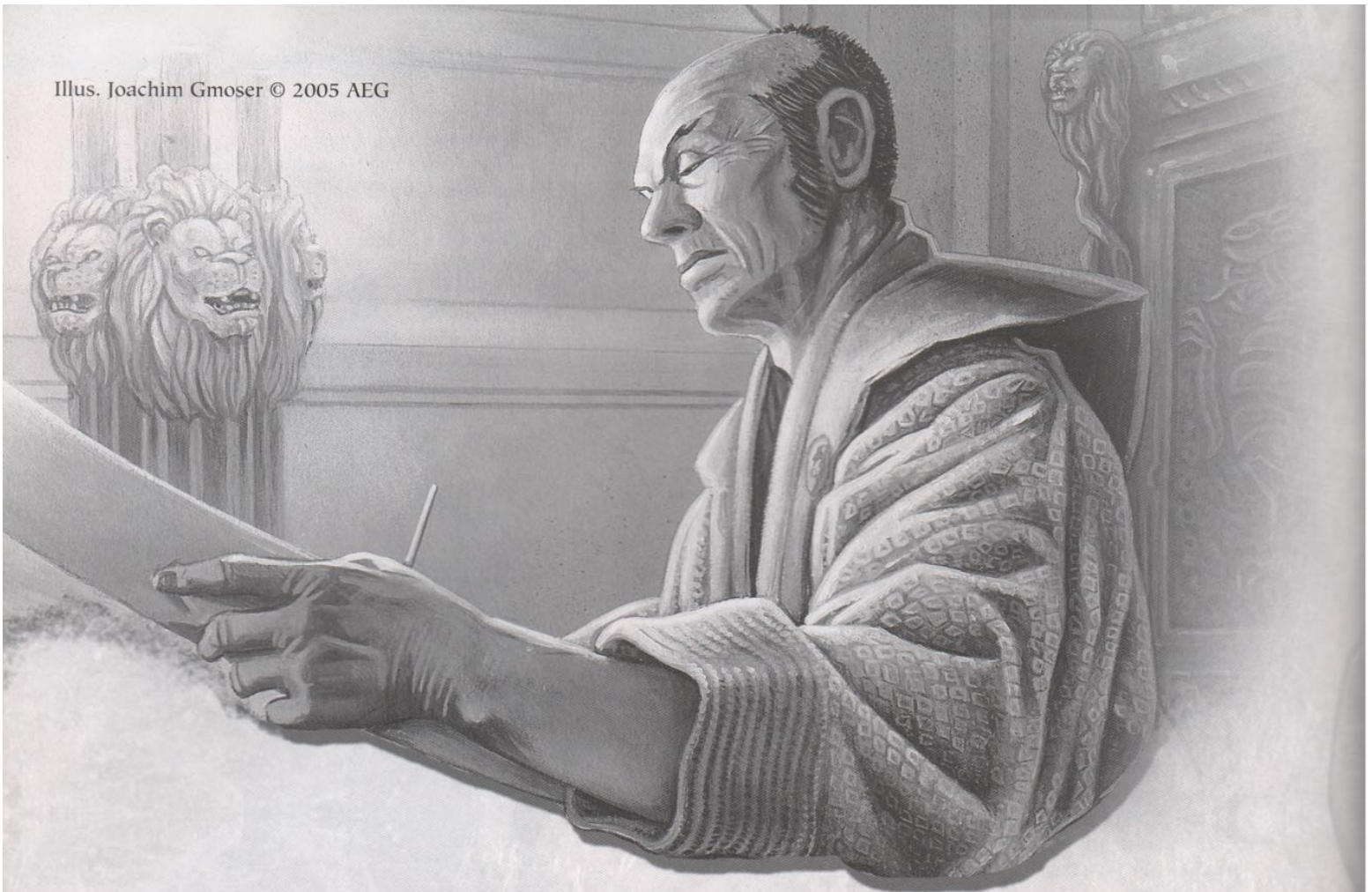
- 1) Short fiction
- 2) Story Background — The years between Gold & Diamond
- 3) Clan Synopses
  - a) Champions & Daimyo
  - b) Alliances
  - c) Enemies
  - d) Objectives
- 4) Tips on running an adventure in the Diamond Era

- B) Reign of Blood
  - 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Iuchi Katamari
    - b) Adisabah the Cruel

- C) The Hidden City
  - 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Toku
    - b) Isawa Nakamuro

- D) Wrath of the Emperor
- 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Kakita Munemori
    - b) Te'tik'kir
- E) Web of Lies
- 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Moshi Mogai
    - b) Kakita Korihome
- F) Enemy of my Enemy
- 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Rama Singh
    - b) Ide Tang
- G) Code of Bushido
- 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Hida Kisada
    - b) Daidoji Uji
- H) A New Path (Path of Honor or Path of Sorrow)
- 1) Short Fiction
  - 2) Timeline
  - 3) Adventure Hooks
  - 4) Important figures
    - a) Toturi Kurako
    - b) Ik'krt
- I) Who's Who
- 1) The Bloodspeakers
    - a) Iuchiban
    - b) Yajinden
    - c) Shahai
  - 2) The Gozoku
    - a) Seppun Toshiaki
    - b) Doji Akiko
    - c) Bayushi Kamnan
  - 3) The Imperial Family
    - a) Toturi III, the Righteous Emperor — Update
    - b) Kaneka, the Shogun — Update
    - c) Isawa Sezar — Update
    - d) Toturi Kurako
    - e) Doji Yasuyo
  - 4) Seekers of Enlightenment
    - a) Rosoku
    - b) Kaiu Sugimoto, Keeper of Earth
    - c) Mirumoto Masae, Keeper of Air
- J) New Mechanics
- 1) Advanced maho rules (Iuchiban's control)
- 2) Khadi (heartless sorcerer rules)
- 3) The Path of Enlightenment
- 4) The Shameswords
- 5) The Realm of Thwarted Destiny
- 5) The Shadow Dragon
- K) Adventure — After the Rain
- IV) Chapter Four — The Dawn of the Lotus Era**
- A) General information, resolution of Diamond Arc, hints of what is to come
- B) Way of the Crab
- a) Champion stats — Hida Kuon
  - b) Alliances, Objectives, Important Personages
  - c) Mechanical bits (Including updated Kaiu Engineer School)
  - d) Brief Clan Index
- C) Way of the Crane
- a) Champion stats — Doji Kurohito
  - b) Alliances, Objectives, Important Personages
  - c) Mechanical bits (Including updated Doji Magistrate School)
  - d) Brief Clan Index
- D) Way of the Dragon
- a) Champion stats — Togashi Satsu
  - b) Alliances, Objectives, Important Personages
  - c) Mechanical bits (Including updated Mirumoto Swordmaster School)
  - d) Brief Clan Index
- E) Way of the Lion
- a) Champion stats — Ikoma Otemi
  - b) Alliances, Objectives, Important Personages
  - c) Mechanical bits (Including updated Akodo War College School)
  - d) Brief Clan Index
- F) Way of the Mantis
- a) Champion stats — Yoritomo Kumiko
  - b) Alliances, Objectives, Important Personages
  - c) Mechanical bits (Including new Tsuruchi Magistrate School)
  - d) Brief Clan Index
- G) Way of the Phoenix
- a) Champion stats — Shiba Mirabu
- b) Alliances, Objectives, Important Personages
  - c) Mechanical bits (Including updated Kaiu Engineer School)
  - d) Brief Clan Index
- H) Way of the Scorpion
- a) Champion stats — Bayushi Paneki
  - b) Clan info — future alliances, objectives, important personages — 1000 words
  - c) Mechanical bits (should include but not be limited to an updated Yogo Shugenja School and two new kata) — 3000 words
  - d) brief clan index (referencing characters of this clan with stats elsewhere in this book)
- I) Way of the Unicorn
- a) Champion stats — Moto Chagatai — 750 words
  - b) Alliances, Objectives, Important Personages
  - c) Mechanical bits (Including updated Shinjo Bushi School)
  - d) Brief Clan Index
- J) Way of the Imperials
- a) Champion stats — Yotsu Irie, Captain of the Imperial Guard
  - b) Alliances, Objectives, Important Personages
  - c) Mechanical bits (Including updated Toturi Bushi School)
  - d) Brief Clan Index
- K) Way of the Minor Clans
- a) Champion stats — Morito — 750 words
  - b) Alliances, Objectives, Important Personages
  - c) Mechanical bits (Including updated Morito Bushi School)
  - d) Brief Clan Index
- L) Way of the Shadowlands
- a) Champion stats — Kokujin, Prophet of the Dark Lotus
  - b) Alliances, Objectives, Important Personages
  - c) Mechanical bits (Including updated Daigotsu Bushi School)
  - d) Brief Clan Index

#### Appendix: Player Vote



# NEWS OF ROKUGAN

## CIRCA LOTUS EDITION

by Rich Wulf

Emperor Toturi-sama,

*It seems, as ever, that I report to you in a time where we are both showered with blessings and beset by curses. Though the plague of the Bloodspeakers has been forever purged from our fair domain, the effects of Iuchiban's evil continue to echo across the land. Of course nowhere is this more evident than in Toshi Ranbo. How the Keepers will react to recent tragedies and lead us into the future will, I think, have a profound effect in whether hope blooms across the Empire or withers on the vine. In the meantime, we can only hold fast to our honor and continue onward.*

*Your faithful servant,  
— Miya Shoin, Imperial Herald*

### The Crab Clan

The lands of the Crab continue to prosper under the leadership of Hida Kuon. Following the destruction of the Bloodspeaker, Iuchiban, Hida Kisada has retreated from the public eye and has spent a great deal of time in Koten with his great grandson, Ichiro. My heralds also report that Matsu Aoiko, the Lion heroine who was instrumental in Iuchiban's defeat, has also been a frequent visitor in the Crab ancestral halls.

With the Crab lands in a state of relative peace, I instructed several of my heralds to collect local folklore for use in a volume I am currently compiling. One tale they delivered from the Toritaka lands was particularly interesting, sufficiently so that I thought you might enjoy hearing of it.

Tani Hitokage, the Valley of Spirits, is the home to the Toritaka. The smallest of the Crab Clan's families, they were once known as the Falcon Clan. Their bushi were uniquely talented in the art of hunting unquiet spirits and bringing them to their final rest.

The Valley of Spirits itself is haunted by many restless spirits, and it is not unusual for someone who dies a violent death within that place to return as a vengeful ghost. This is well understood by the inhabitants, and as a result many locations that are known to have violent pasts are marked by white ribbons the Toritaka call 'spirit markers' that indicate the location of a haunting.

As it happens, a group of bandits affiliated with the notorious Forest Killers had been chased out of the Shinomen by a squad of dauntless Crab magistrates, whereupon they fled into the Valley of Spirits. They ran down the bandits, one by one, until

only the leader remained. They found him standing at a crossroads, his horse dead from exhaustion. To the chief magistrate's surprise, he held a sword to his own throat.

"Another step and I will slay myself!" the bandit warned. "I will die with no thought but revenge! Because I will die in this haunted place my spirit will return and seek vengeance on all of your families."

"But my friend," the lead magistrate replied. "Did you remember to sharpen your sword?"

A confused look crossed the bandit's face, and in that instant the magistrate put an arrow in his eye.

"Now we are accursed, master!" a terrified yoriki wailed. "The bandit will return to haunt us!"

"We would have been, if the bandit had died thinking of revenge," the magistrate replied with a smug grin. "He died trying to remember if he had sharpened his blade."

The bandit's ghost never returned.

### **Crane**

The lands of the Crane are at peace, but I cannot deny there is a strange silent tension in the air as well. I cannot explain whence it may originate. I can only theorize that now that the Crane possess mastery of the courts and their former enemies number among their greatest allies, that perhaps the Crane realize that the future can bring nothing better. In time, the precious balance that has brought them such power and esteem will waver, and then who knows what the future might bring?

But such thoughts are those of a pessimist, and I am no pessimist. Instead, I congratulate the Crane on their well-being even in the wake of current tragedies, and wish them nothing but continued good fortune.

It was my great honor to receive an invitation to the marriage of Doji Domotai and Ikoma Kusari. I can report that the bride was radiant and the groom was the very image of a noble samurai. The two make a striking couple, and I must say that if ever there was a couple destined for greatness, it must be the daughter of noble Kurohito and the son of brave Korin. I will be watching their future exploits with interest, and of course report them all to you dutifully. The future of the Crane Clan is, I think, in good hands.

While attending the wedding I had opportunity to meet with Usagi Ozaki, the renowned lord of the Hare Clan. I confess I was quite surprised to see him there, as the Minor Clans usually avoid gatherings of powerful Great Clan samurai. Yet he was there, the personal guest of Lord Daidoji Kikaze. Taking the opportunity to converse with him, I learned of an intriguing tale.

As you may know the history of the Hare Clan is closely tied to that of the Bloodspeakers. Upon Iuchiban's first return, the ronin Reichin was an implacable thorn in the side of the mad immortal. Were it not for this brave hero's efforts, Iuchiban and his cult might not have been defeated. In return for his heroism, the Emperor rewarded Reichin with Minor Clan status and a family name — Usagi.

For hundreds of years the Hare have quietly battled the Bloodspeaker cultists wherever they could be found, and the cultists have harbored a burning hatred for the Usagi. When Iuchiban escaped from his prison again and the Rain of Blood fell over Rokugan, he commanded his general, Suru, to punish the Hare. An army of blood-maddened souls and shambling undead descended upon the house of the Hare. Ozaki ordered his men to stand fast. There would be no retreat. This was the foe their clan had been founded to fight against, and they would not fail here. Though he had sent his son to find what allies he could muster, he truly expected no one to step forward to defend a Minor Clan.

Thus it was to his great surprise that hope dawned on that bleak day and a legion of Daidoji Kikaze's iron cavalry descended from the Shinomen Forest. Unprepared for such a foe, Suru was forced to abandon his forces and flee. The Hare are apparently quite grateful for the Crane's aid, and Ozaki has reportedly been a frequent guest in Shiro Daidoji. While rumors abound that he is aiding the Daidoji lord in some secret project, they are no more than that — rumors. I shall report more on this intriguing alliance should more information present itself.

### **The Dragon Clan**

Without Rosoku to guide us, what will the future bring? Will Rokugan find renewed enlightenment even without Shinsei's wisdom or will the truth be forever lost? It is said that the Dragon Clan can see into the future, but if they know the answers to these questions they have chosen not to share them.

Monks of the Three Orders have been seen abroad in greater numbers than at any time in recent history. Even many members of the reclusive Hoshi family have been seen in the Empire's villages or traveling its highways. Though they frequently stop to offer aid, physical labor, or their trademark enigmatic wisdom none will speak of the special reason for this increased activity. The most that my heralds can report is that the monks appear to be searching for something. Of course curious behavior from the Dragon Clan is nothing new, and had I nothing curious to report, I would likely be quite worried.

On a more positive note, one recurring rumor that has filled me with hope involves one of the Dragon Clan's most renowned heroes. Togashi Mitsu, the legendary figure who fought beside your father in the Clan War, has been sighted numerous times, everywhere from the Crab Provinces to Khol Wall to the Mantis Isles. The tales I have heard involve the wandering master's trademark mix of bold heroism and rampant insanity. He is said to have appeared from nowhere and defend a Shiba farmer from a dozen Yoritomo sailors with nothing but a rake, not killing a single man. He is said to have appeared in Musume Mura, spending a week enjoying the company of the geisha there and then disappearing without a word. He is said to have been seen in the ruins of Otosan Uchi, meditating for days on end at the peak of the sole remaining spire of Iuchiban's Iron Citadel.

That Mitsu is not dead, as previous rumors have suggested, is good news. The fact that he has returned amid so many other dark omens and doomsayers only ignites one more brilliant light against the darkness. So long as the legends such as Mitsu walk the Empire, hope walks there as well.

### **The Lion Clan**

Shortly after the marriage of Domotai and Kusari, I left Crane lands following a rumor so disturbing that I was compelled to investigate personally. This rumor led me to Lion lands, where I found little has changed since my previous report. The Lion continue to make preparations for war, gathering supplies and drilling troops. Anti-cavalry tactics are a particular focus of Akodo and Matsu warriors alike; the Lion consider the Unicorn their most dangerous enemy and do not appear concerned at all if the Khan is aware of the fact.

Yet this is not what drove me to visit the lands of the Right Hand. I was drawn by tales of a peasant uprising, led by a charismatic ronin named Utagawa. Apparently this Utagawa had organized a large uprising of Lion peasants, revealing to them that Matsu Nimuro had known of the potential dangers to Kaeru Toshi months in advance, yet had done nothing to prevent the war. This Utagawa had planned to gather those peasants who had lost homes and families to the war and abandon Lion territories altogether, moving north to find new homes in Dragon territory. Naturally the Lion did not take kindly to a ronin encouraging a mass exodus of their peasants, and last I had heard Utagawa and her followers were besieged in a small Lion village.

When I arrived I discovered the matter had come to a curious resolution. The peasants had returned to their homes and labor. The Lion troops had disbanded without bloodshed. Utagawa was nowhere to be seen.

When I asked some of the farmers who had witnessed the events what had occurred, they reported that a strange ronin had appeared before Utagawa and spoken to her with quiet wisdom. Though distressed by the idea of abandoning her followers to the Lion, she ultimately agreed that no good would come from facing the Lion soldiers directly. Together, she and this mysterious stranger, this man named Tamago, vanished into the wilderness.

### **The Mantis Clan**

You are of course aware of the recent mysterious disappearance of ambassador Rama Singh from the city of Toshi Ranbo. This event was both curious and disturbing, for Ambassador Singh's clever mind and honorable nature had done a great deal to cause many members of the court to adjust their previously low opinions of gaijin. I know I am not alone in hoping that whatever Rama Singh's fate might be that the people of his homeland did not take his disappearance as an insult.

If reports from my herald on the island of Aramasu's Pride are to be believed, such is definitely not the case. Apparently a number of gaijin have

been sighted on the island in recent weeks, all wearing clothing and weapons similar in style to those possessed by Ambassador Singh. These visitors do not appear to be hostile, at least not toward the Mantis, and have been invited into Yoritomo Kumiko's household as honored guests.

With each passing week, more of these visitors arrive. As none of them appear to speak Rokugani my herald was unable to inquire as to the purpose of their visit. Sadly, none of the attendant Mantis courtiers had the time or inclination to translate on his behalf. From what little I knew of Rama Singh, his garb and weaponry were the symbols of the Kshatriya, his homelands counterpart to our samurai class. If these visitors are, like Singh, Kshatriya then these gaijin are warriors.

Could the Mantis be enlisting warriors of the Ivory Kingdoms for use in their war against the Phoenix? How did the Mantis gain their trust? Is this perhaps an indication that Rama Singh has returned to his homeland safely due to Mantis aid and these warriors are offering their services in return? The possibilities are numerous and I can only speculate, but my instincts tell me that if gaijin involve themselves in a war on Rokugani soil the results can only lead to disaster. Yoritomo Kumiko is a clever and capable leader; I only hope she realizes this truth as well.

### **The Phoenix Clan**

It is with a heavy heart that I must report that little has improved for the Phoenix Clan since my last report. My heralds traveled to the provinces of each family to determine what trials face the Phoenix, and none had glad tidings to report.

The Agasha continue to suffer significantly as a result of the ongoing war between the Phoenix and the Mantis. The Agasha control the clan's southernmost lands, as well as a particularly profitable section of coastline that has been continually harassed by the Mantis fleet. Numerous villages and ports along their coast have seen repeated attacks, and some have been lost altogether. The Agasha are easily the smallest Phoenix family, and have been unable to marshal a strong defense against the Mantis despite the continued assistance of the Shiba. Ironically, the Agasha's most important city, the City of Remembrance, has gone completely untouched despite numerous Mantis raids throughout the area. It seems that the Mantis have chosen to completely avoid the city altogether, although whether this stems from some guilt over the city's near destruction after the Rain of Blood or is simply some bizarre matter of principle that only Yoritomo Kumiko understands, none can say.

The Shiba are, as always, the Phoenix Clan's first line of defense. Innumerable Shiba bushi have been relocated to villages and ports all along the Phoenix coast, but there is simply too much land to adequately cover it all, and patrolling the entire shore would require the Shiba to completely abandon their other borders. Unfortunately, the Shiba have virtually no experience with naval



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combat, and have had to hastily construct a ramshackle fleet in order to meet the Mantis on the open seas.

The Isawa family's reputation as the Empire's most powerful shugenja has been proven many times, and never so dramatically as in this conflict. Isawa shugenja have secured virtually the entire Isawa coastline with their magic, placing powerful wards and defending against incursion with devastatingly powerful elemental spells. Even the Isawa have limits, however, and the family's resources are not so extensive that they can secure the entire clan's coastline. My heralds made mention in their reports that there is budding resentment among the clan's other families that the Isawa have secured their own lands and failed to defend the lands of others.

One would expect the Asako to remain apart from such worldly matters as warfare, given that they are devout pacifists. In this instance, however, my heralds have discovered that the entire family has mobilized to help those peasants suffering from the war. Monks, shugenja and even the enigmatic henshin can be found in virtually every coastal city or village the Phoenix possess, healing and rebuilding. The results are an increasingly close bond between the Asako, Shiba, and Agasha, even as the Isawa seem to be driving the other families away.

### **The Scorpion Clan**

No one can say what truly happens within the confines of Scorpion Clan lands. The samurai who

serve the Clan of Secrets have ever been gracious and forthcoming hosts to those Miya who deliver your word to their lands, but we heralds have never been deluded into believing that we have any inkling of their true agenda. I will endeavor to report what I can.

Bayushi Paneki appears to have adjusted quickly to leadership. His skill at misdirection and manipulation have served him well, although few speak of such things in polite conversation. The only trait that appears to exceed his proficiency at leadership is his loyalty to his Emperor. For that, we can be thankful, as Paneki is not known for his mercy toward his enemies.

The Scorpion make it their business to foster alliances with everyone, much in the same way as their traditional rivals among the Crane. Even the Crane are no longer opposed so vehemently in the court by Scorpion diplomats. It seems as if the trend of the Scorpion permitting the Crane to rule unopposed could be holding, although many find this exceptionally unusual. For my part, if I may, I find myself wondering how the Scorpion are spending their time, if not in courtly intrigue. Were I among the Scorpion's rivals, I would find their apparent low profile both of great interest and worthy of extreme concern.

With regard to their traditional rivalries, the Scorpion have no more vehement opponents than the Mantis. Of late, however, this has not proven to be the case. Relations between the two, while still quite cool, seem to have improved recently. Some attribute this to a recent visit to Ryoko Owari Toshi by the general Yoritomo Naizen, a particularly

vehement detractor of the Scorpion. Whatever may have taken place there is unknown, but it seems to have turned the tide of Mantis-Scorpion relations. Granted, all this may be nothing more than a result of the Mantis's involvement in their war with the Phoenix.

There have been sketchy reports of skirmishes between the Scorpion and Crab scouts along their southern border, but my heralds have been unable to confirm such accounts. We are continuing to investigate the matter.

### **The Shadowlands**

I would not be so arrogant as to presume to claim knowledge of what has taken place in the Shadowlands since the fall of Iuchiban, but for the first time I believe I can offer a reasonably accurate idea of the happenings in that dark realm. This information comes from a number of sources, gathered from all across the Empire by my most resourceful heralds. Several spent time among the Crab in an effort to gain some insight into their foes, while others visited a certain monastery maintained by the Asahina family and the Jade Magistrates. I feel confident that you are aware of which facility I speak, my Emperor, and will refrain from further detail in the event that eyes other than those you endorse read this manuscript. Yet another source of information comes from the Dragon Hitomi Kobai, who was recently severed from his connection to the Shadowlands but who retains some vague insight into their activities. Sadly, he is as enigmatic as one would expect a Dragon to be.

What we can say with certainty is that Daigotsu has made no effort to resume hostilities with the Crab. The return of the Hiruma's ancestral armor, which I detailed in my last letter to you, appears to have been a sincere gesture, as the armor was thoroughly inspected and found to bear no Taint or any other sinister underpinning. The Hiruma, while ecstatic to have such a precious treasure returned, seem upset by the gesture, and uncertain how to interpret it. I must say that I share in their consternation.

While Daigotsu may have ceased his hostilities, there are other powers within the Shadowlands that appear to have designs on the Empire that are equally sinister, perhaps even more so. My heralds have spoken to several individuals, including the mighty Hida Kisada, who claim that the Air Dragon that fell in battle at Oblivion's Gate has succumbed utterly to corruption, and now exists only as a twisted, manipulative creature of shadow. This Shadow Dragon allegedly works through subtle means, of the sort once employed by the Lying Darkness, to corrupt and seduce noble souls. If the rumors are to be believed, this Shadow Dragon very nearly subverted an entire Spirit Realm to his will, and may have had a hand in Iuchiban's final defeat.

Of greater concern than the Shadow Dragon, who may or may not exist in any event, is the madman Kokujin. Your Majesty is doubtless aware of this maniacal outcast's sordid past. My heralds have encountered multiple reports of Kokujin abroad

in the Empire, each time in a different location. The accounts of his latest activities are extremely worrisome – he no longer appears as a murderer or conqueror, but as a prophet. The madman seeks those who are lost, weak, or confused. To these souls, he preaches visions of a dark future and their place within it. To many, his words are dangerously seductive. The threat this man poses, particularly in this troubled time, is considerable. Already, I have dispatched my heralds to search for other sightings, and informed Togashi Satsu of the outcast's activities. I pray that it is enough.

### **The Unicorn Clan**

Even though it has been less than a year since the War of the Rich Frog was concluded, it seems that the Khan has not been idle. His military has been almost completely rebuilt, replacing all those who were casualties of war. How this is possible, I cannot imagine. Given the rate at which my heralds estimate the Lion are recovering, it is entirely possible that the Unicorn army now outnumbers the Lion's by a significant margin. If hostilities should resume between the two clans, an event that remains ever more likely given the activity in Sukoshi Zutsu, the Unicorn would have a decided advantage. If the Lion are aware of this situation, they do not appear to be backing down from the challenge in any significant way.

Sukoshi Zutsu was a small, quiet Lion village only two years ago. Today, it is a Unicorn military stronghold to rival Shiro Henka, growing at a truly impressive rate. It is rapidly becoming one of the Unicorn's largest military strongholds, much in the same way that Toshi Ranbo was transformed from a small border city to a sprawling cultural center in very little time. Perhaps even more disturbing are the reports that Chagatai is stationing only his most belligerent, violent soldiers at the outpost. Many of the men, my heralds report, lost family or close friends in the conflict against the Lion. If there is even a minor border incident anywhere near Sukoshi Zutsu, I fear it will rapidly explode into a second, possibly bloodier conflict.

Even as the Unicorn gather forces at their village fortress, the Khan's men scour the Empire alongside the Shogun's legions. This is a matter of great concern to you, my lord, as all know. The Khan appears to have sworn loyalty directly to Kaneka, although he has yet to make any formal declaration as such.

Regardless of Chagatai's ultimate loyalties, the good he has done for the Empire in aiding the Bloodspeaker purge cannot be denied. Thousands of Iuchiban's followers died upon the blades of his men, and for that your loyal subjects will always be grateful. We can only hope that his honor will ultimately temper whatever ambitions he may have.

### **The Nezumi Tribes**

The Nezumi are an enigma, and not one we are likely to ever fully understand. An assignment to speak with them and document their ongoing activities is widely regarded as a punishment among



Illus. Ed Cox © 2005 AEG

the ranks of your heralds. In truth, I assign only those who are particularly skilled and highly trained to such details, for only the finest heralds can have any real hope of deciphering the strange culture of our Nezumi allies.

In my last report, I detailed the account your heralds uncovered of the Nezumi's struggle against the being they called the "Tomorrow Chieftain." This chieftain appears to have been at least temporarily defeated, although if it is crafted from the stuff of dreams as the Onisu were, it will return eventually. The Onisu, after all, have been destroyed several times, only to return to plague us once more.

The Nezumi speak of a lost city deep within the Shadowlands, a relic of the alleged Nezumi empire that existed before the rise of mankind. If their fanciful tales can be believed, the One Tribe is

preparing an attempt to recover this city from Daigotsu and his oni lieutenant, a demon that the Nezumi attempted to name but which the herald was hopelessly unable to understand. They claim that the city was hidden, or "forgotten," by an ancient Nezumi ritual that has now faded, allowing the city to reemerge into the Shadowlands. Of far greater importance, however, is their repeated insistence that the city is pure and untouched by the Taint, and that it will remain so because of the magic used to conceal it for so long. Such a thing is almost impossible to believe, but if it is true, then the Crab could gain a new fortress deep inside the Shadowlands, within very short distance of the City of the Lost. I know that I do not need to express how vital such a beachhead could be in our struggle against the Shadowlands.

# THE KEEPERS ARE CHOSEN



by Eric Devlin,  
Brand Manager

In June of 2004, *Legend of the Five Rings* players around the world embarked on the Path of Enlightenment. This path has led the Great Clans, the Nezumi, and the denizens of the Shadowlands after the five Books of the Elements. Although daunting in and of itself, the Books are not the only thing at stake in this series of storyline events. Whichever Clan produces the most victories in a particular Path will present a hero that recovers the Book and takes the title of Keeper for that element.

Four of the books have already been found. By the time you read this, the fifth book will also have been found. The Great Clans have risen to the occasion gloriously, thus far preventing the evils that lurk in the Shadowlands from recovering any of the volumes.



Mirumoto Masae has found the Book of Air and has been named Keeper of Air.



Kaiu Sugimoto has found the Book of Earth and has been named Keeper of Earth.



Kakita Tsuken has found the Book of Fire and has been named Keeper of Fire.



Doji Jun'ai has found the Book of Water and has been named Keeper of Water.



The hero that finds the Book of the Void will take the title 'Keeper of the Void' in an upcoming fiction as well.

As the Path of Enlightenment challenges laid forth by the Emperor are being completed, a new challenge lies before you.

# UPCOMING MAJOR STORYLINE EVENTS

**T**he European Championships — Tension has built between the Emperor and the Shogun for some time. The Great Clans will begin to choose their sides and the lines between these brothers will be drawn. Second only to the World Championships, this event will bring out the depths of this feud, bound to touch every corner of Rokugan, to light.

GenCon SoCal — The home Winter Court always promises intrigue and posturing on the part of the Great Clans. What of the Nezumi? Will they hold some special influence in Court this time around?

Test of the Topaz Champion — Which clan will step up to the challenge of this annual tournament to name its champion? Bring in the New Year right at an event that always proves memorable.

Watch <http://www.l5r.com> for the latest details on all of these events as well as the Challenge Booths that will accompany the European Championships, GenCon UK, and GenCon SoCal.



## Hammer and Anvil

We are pleased to present the new series of Retail Storyline Kits for 2005-2006. The Hammer and Anvil series will chronicle the sibling rivalry sweeping over Rokugan. The ubiquitous Kaneka and the Khan, Moto Chagatai, lead the Shogun's army in the name of the Emperor. Will this charge lead right into Toturi III himself, and his Imperial Legions? Will the memory of Tsudao keep

them from war? Does Sezarú even care what his brothers do?

This series of Retailer Kits also marks the debut of the Legend of the Five Rings Booster Draft format. Each kit will contain all of the necessary components for retailers to host Booster Draft events. Anticipate this format will play a major part in next year's tournament scene.



# MY FAVORITE CHARACTER

by Eric Devlin,  
Brand Manager

I have been assigned the task of supplying the 'favorite L5R character' article for this Herald. Now, I have to be honest here. I could have gotten out of it. Heck, I helped to decide what was going into the issue. I could have passed it along to someone else, but that would mean missing an opportunity to honor one of the greats of L5R that has never received his due.

So, who is my favorite character? I'm sure it's not going to be a surprise to anyone when they hear that it is the indomitable representative of all that is right with the Shadowlands, *Moto Tsume*.

Tsume started as a boxable 4/4 with a cool ability who was a Samurai (*Enough Talk* anyone?). Cool, not overpowering and he was an integral part of every Shadowlands deck. He was a workhorse that players could identify with. He wasn't some unfathomable Oni or Ogre. He was a Samurai that walked the dark path.

*Moto Tsume* was always the personality that Shadowlands players felt that they could have a beer with. You could sit around the bar and chuckle over using *The Cowards Way* on *Togashi Mitsu*. He would be having a dark ale, of course.

Over time *Moto Tsume* became more powerful and joined the other 'big guns' of Rokugan. You could stack him up with anyone and he wouldn't embarrass you. Some might be stronger, some might be more cost effective, but *Moto Tsume* was right up there. And then he was gone and things just haven't been the same.

I remember the good old days of *Teeth of the Serpent* and the *Dark Oracle of Water*.

'Sure I'll ally with you' heh, heh, heh. 'What's your personalities personal honor?' heh, heh, heh. (Tsume's ability {what others might call a liability} caused people with honor to bow if they assigned to the same battle as *Moto Tsume*.)

Almost as much fun as *Fight to the Setting Sun* and a chair thrown by Jon Palmer.

When *Moto Tsume* was removed from the game for a while I engineered an attempt to affect the storyline as a player. Some fellow Shadowlands adherents and I collected roughly \$600.00 worth of rare cards that were anti-Shadowlands in nature (*Ki Rin*, *Purity of the Seven Thunders*, etc.). Prior to each match at GenCon one of those cards was ripped up by each Shadowlands player. We collected the fragments and presented them to Ree in a Shadowlands baseball cap (now a collectors item!).

*Moto Tsume* was soon back in action.

Would I have done that for *Oni no Akuma*? Would any of the other Shadowlands players? How about *Kyoso no Oni* or *Moto Sada*? No. Not a chance. Tsume just had that certain *je ne sais quoi*.

Having worked in the industry for a while by now I have witnessed some horrendous examples of squidding and I promised myself that I would never squid anyone. Ever. Well, I came very close to breaking that rule when I first met Rich at one of the events Team Whiplash runs in New England.

What is squidding you ask? That's when someone approaches someone in the game industry (often at random) and starts explaining, in detail, how great their card combo/rpg

character/scenario/painted miniatures are. I remember people talking to me about their characters at GenCon when I was selling L5R shirts. Shirts! I was on the lowest rung of the gaming ladder and people were regaling me with stories of their D&D characters.

Well, we went to pick up Rich when his flight arrived and I don't think I waited until we were out of the airport before I started in on my complaints about how Chagatai could possibly take out *Moto Tsume* who had been the champion of the Gods of Death for hundreds of years. I backed off a bit when I saw the 'uh oh, it's a stalker' look in Rich's eyes.

Rich and I get along much better now, but he still hasn't allowed me to change the game to Legend of the Five Shadowlands or let me make *Moto Tsume* a Fortune. But I do have plenty of time to work on him.



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**Warlord:** Deveronian Dwarf Elf Free Kingdoms Mercenary Nothrog

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Ontario, CA 91761

## THE IMPERIAL HERALD

VOLUME 2 / Issue 17

Published by Alderac Entertainment  
Group, Inc.

Brand Manager . . . . . Eric Devlin  
Layout & Design . . . . . Mario Rivas  
Editors . . . . . Katie Yates  
Operations Manager . . . Mary Valles  
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## ENEMY OF MY ENEMY



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