

Legend  
of the  
Five Rings™



## Issue #14

6 Ronin upon the Lands

7 Top 10's

8 Legend of the Five  
Rings History

11 Who's Who:  
Ed Bolme

12 The Brotherhood  
of Shinsei

15 A Talk with Taka

16 Fox Clan

20 Not Enough Koku?

21 Zen's Card Focus

22 Empire League

24 Taka's Treasures

28 News from Court

29 The Mantis Clan  
and Yoritomo's Alliance

32 Clan War Scenario

34 Fire & Shadow  
Card List

35 LBS Water  
Conservation

36 Slaves of Mortals

44 LBS Combat FAQ

# Imperial Herald





# CLAN WAR



Daimyo Edition

Summer 2000



## A Message from the Brand Manager

Good morning, Rokugan!

As many of you already know, I am taking over as brand manager for the L5R trading card game. Luke Peterschmidt has moved up a step in the org chart and will oversee not only the L5R game, but also our forthcoming **WCW Nitro**, **Marvel Superheroes**, and other trading card games. At the same time, Wizards of the Coast worked out an agreement with Pinnacle to take the **Doomtown** TCG off my desk and turn it back over to Pinnacle (and AEG). And, finally, we have hired a new person to handle the "Classic" games. The upshot of all of this is that the L5R TCG is now my sole and complete responsibility.

That's nothing but good for you, me, and the game. Not that I didn't like being in charge of the **Doomtown**, **Rage™**, and **Netrunner™** games, but it's nice to be able to devote all of my time to one brand. But don't worry—I am not going to get lazy; my responsibilities with the brand have increased. I'll be working no less hard!

2000 is going to be a very interesting year for the L5R game.

We release **Fire & Shadow™**, our next big expansion, shortly. The **Honor Bound™** and **Ambition's Debt™** expansions both sold out within two weeks of release, so I have increased the print run for the **Fire & Shadow** set. I still don't expect it to be gathering any dust; if we have any left after about three months, I'll be slightly surprised.

L5R novels. Yes, L5R novels. Guess I've said all I need to say about that!

A new intro set will come out this summer. We're taking all of the lessons we learned with the **Siege of Sleeping Mountain™** set and are making an even better teaching guide. You'll be impressed.

The L5R TCG is hopping overseas. Our European office ordered 45 percent more cards for the **Fire & Shadow** set than it did for the **Ambition's Debt** expansion. The French team made a good showing at Gen Con®, and the French Nationals are the

largest national L5R tournament held to date. I am working toward localizing the rules in French, German, Spanish, and other languages. I will talk about other localization plans in future issues.

The Kotei tournaments will be more carefully organized and better executed, plus we have no less than three global storyline tournaments coming this year.

Gen Con? Well, Gen Con will be the biggest thing to hit the L5R TCG yet. I want everyone there. If you haven't been to Gen Con, you should go. It's a gamer's paradise. I drove 20 hours straight to my first Gen Con, and it was worth it—although it took me until this last year before I could actually play in a Gen Con tournament! Anyway, we have big plans to make Gen Con an L5R show and an L5R event. Please be there, and help us make noise!

There are going to be gambles, too. There will be no new basic set this year; we are carrying the **Pearl Edition™** set through the year, and forecasts show the supply should last (though barely). We, of course, will have continual difficulties with acquiring enough paper and printing capacity, given the new surge in TCG popularity.

And, finally, at Gen Con '99, Luke and I told you all that everyone would want to be Imperial Assembly members this year. The L5R team has made a concerted effort to make the Assembly a cool place to be. Not only will you get four timely, punctual, and informative issues a year (with promo cards, of course), but we are offering members-only products. The personalized Imperial Assembly Honor counters last issue were a start. For our next, check out this issue. You will not be able to find this in any stores.

Wow. I've already written too much. Enjoy the issue, enjoy the game, and talk to you next Herald!

Ed Bolme  
Brand Manager

Imperial Herald  
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# Sent Home Bowed

by Luke Peterschmidt

Hey, folks!

Luke Peterschmidt here, and as you most likely know by my conspicuous absence from the "Message from the Brand Manager" column, I have moved away from the day-to-day business of running the L5R TCG. Ed Bolme has taken over the reins, and I'm sure he'll do a great job. My new job (besides keeping my wandering Kolat eye on Ed) has me working on some other projects, but I am certainly still a huge L5R squid. My Mantis deck is 6 and 1 in the Wizards of the Coast internal league! (Mantis and Crab—I'm a fan of the underdog, I guess.)

Once the L5R world gets into your bloodstream, it doesn't leave. The game is fun, the story is wonderful, and the fan experience is like that of no other product I have ever even heard of. My prediction is that in 20 years people will look at the L5R TCG as one of the most inventive products ever made and a testament to the best side of the gaming industry.

I feel privileged to have been able to participate in the greatness of the L5R experience. I have had the joy of working with real teamwork people who keep egos out of decisions. I got to sit in the "inner circle" at the finals of the War in the Heavens tournament. I witnessed the strength of the L5R game as it survived one of the most chaotic times in the gaming industry and emerged stronger than ever. And my Mantis deck is 5 and 1 in the internal league.

The responsibility of the position was never lost on me. I did not want to leave the game in the same shape as it was when I took it over—I wanted to improve it without losing the core of what makes it special. I made all sorts of decisions and tried all sorts of new things. Some went really well, like global storyline tournaments and the improved sealed-deck environment. Others weren't so hot, as we proved that no one in this building can count to 40 without using the number 35 twice (ugh). It was chaotic at times, but I hope that the players all see the value in trying new things and I will be encouraging Ed to also try new things to keep the game on the cutting edge of innovation.

One of my last big L5R projects is the upcoming Heroes of Rokugan™ set. While the L5R story has many mythical heroes, the real heroes of Rokugan are the

players, new and old, who make the game what it is today. Brand managers will come and go. We will succeed, and we will fail. The only constant is you, the players. Some of you will leave and new ones will come in, but the L5R brand will always be more than a game; it will be the sum of its players. No other game can say that.

I am being sent home, but not destroyed. I'll be hanging out in the fief. As I leave, I bow to the players. Luckily, I was sent home with Refugees, so I added a token. Gratified with my newfound token of wisdom and pride, I glance back towards the fight and see that it will indeed be a brilliant L5R victory!

In case I forgot to mention it, my Mantis deck is 5 and 1 in the internal league.

*Cherry blossoms fall  
Empty tea cup, pencils down  
Sword beneath my desk*

Luke Peterschmidt  
Brand Director  
Wizards of the Coast





# Imperial Assembly Membership FAQ

by Andy Heckt

## How much does it cost?

Imperial Assembly membership is \$15 (U. S.) for residents of both Canada and the United States (that's correct—we reduced the price for Canadian members); \$25 for people outside of Canada and the United States. Residents of Europe and South Africa need to contact their regional office listed in the "Taka's Treasures" section on page 26 for prices in their region.

## What do I get?

First, you get a membership card with your DCI number for your wallet, often good for discounts with our licensed vendors such as Kamwied and Flying Tricycle.

In the year following your sign-up, you get four issues of the Herald, published quarterly. Each issue comes with one promotional card (though #11 had one **Legend of the Five Rings™** card and three **Legend of the Burning Sands™** cards, and #13 had six L5R cards and one LBS card) and a cover letter for your Clan.

Lately members are seeing an increase in their number of benefits. The last few issues have allowed members to use their cover letters as order forms for merchandise available only to them. This issue includes such an offer, as will future issues. Also in this issue, members will see a one-time increase in the value of their Koku and Dinari, which are found on booster wrappers and deck-box tops (see "News from Court" on page 28 for details).

## How can I join?

There are three methods:

**Phone:** 1-800-324-6496 or 1-888-4-5RINGS

**Internet:** [www.wizards.com/L5R/imperialcourt/fanclub.asp](http://www.wizards.com/L5R/imperialcourt/fanclub.asp)

**Mail:** Send a copy of the form below (or the same information in any other format) to your regional representative (p. 26).

## When do my benefits begin?

Three to five weeks after you sign up, you'll receive two mailings: your membership card, and a welcome pack containing a letter of welcome, your Clan's latest letter, and the current issue of the Herald (but no promo cards). The members-only cover-letter offers are only available to members at the time of mailing, not to new members.

## What is a Clan affiliation (favorite Clan) for?

Your Clan affiliation determines which Clan letter you receive with each issue of the Herald. It also appears on your membership card and affects the storyline based on your rankings in tournaments. You are not allowed to sign up as a Ninja.

## What's a DCI number?

The DCI uses a number unique to each individual for identification in tournament participation and members-only benefits. It also allows us to easily distinguish between the three Chris Browns in New York, for example.

## Why should I join, when I can get the Herald from my Stronghold store for free?

Stronghold stores receive a small number of copies of the Herald to encourage membership in the Assembly and to introduce new players to our game. Please don't take them if you aren't a new player, because, in doing so, you deny a new player discovery of the richness of Rokugan and the L5R game. Stronghold stores should only use their copies of the Herald to aid in the growth of the game. Also, even though the Herald is a primary benefit of membership, it is not the only one. If you are not a member of the Imperial Assembly, you miss out on the members-only benefits, for example.

## Can I get the current issue or back issues?

New members receive the current issue (without promo cards) when they join. Current members receive each issue via first-class mail, generally within thirty days of the date we mail it. Should you move and register your forwarding address at your post office, you will receive the Herald at your new address (or it comes back to us). Printing extra issues to keep as back issues is an expense better spent on future issues.

## Can I get past offers or promos?

No, only current members receive these benefits. Don't delay joining or renewing, because the future holds some really nice offers.

Andy Heckt

Fan Club Operations, DCI

"I'm not just the chancellor; I'm also a member!"

## Imperial Assembly Membership Form—Issue #14

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DCI # (if any): \_\_\_\_\_ Favorite Clan: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email address: \_\_\_\_\_

Circle one:    New member    Renewing member

Payment (circle one):    Check    Money order    Visa    MasterCard

If paying by Visa or MasterCard:

Card #: \_\_\_\_\_ Expiration date: \_\_\_\_\_

**For a chance to win a set of thirty-three special cards:**

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



# Ronin upon the Lands

by Jean-Marie Baveaux

In the midst of far, unknown lands, a small, ronin tribe once plotted against a dark throne. Raised in the beliefs that magic and wisdom are stronger than ignorance, the seven of them gathered to prepare a battle plan. The enemy wouldn't see them coming: One doesn't fear what one ignores. One can suspect but never prepare to face reality.

They joined the noble Phoenix Clan for the battle, following the path of the iron-winged bird as they crossed the ocean. Each fighter wore the same suit of armor, to be easily recognized by comrades on the battlefield. May Amaterasu be blessed for this inspiration, for it revealed the size of their army to those of us who saw it. All were loyal to their Clan, dedicated to their cause, and ready to give their lives for the glory of their families and the blessings of their ancestors.

As the Phoenix had the most impressive units, we felt confident of the battle's outcome. These days would see the bravest standing up. Even should they die on the path to victory, no one here would forget the sacrifice of these ronin lives.

The ronin were Stéphane Cornier, Bruno Di Napoli, Antoine Blanchard, Raphaël Pinard, Matthieu Poupart (National Champion '98), Claude Martin, and Pierre Petitbois. They came from the strange piece of land called France, which I also call my own, and made up the very first French team in L5R history at Gen Con. Since June they had worked together on a single deck.

After four days of battle, many had fallen behind, and the clans could not wash away the blood of the fallen. Stéphane had won, undefeated, in the second day of qualification, and Bruno followed his champion with only one game loss. Antoine, following Stéphane's example, won the third day's tournament, undefeated. Raphaël was the first to qualify on Day 1, and Matthieu, as the French National Champion, automatically qualified on the last day.

After celebrating those victories over valorous opponents with barrels of American-brewed sake, the bravest had to face their fate. On the last day, only Antoine lobbied for the imperial throne. Tired by the fights and their wounds, the others chose to take control of the imperial city's walls. After a harsh struggle, Stéphane and Bruno planted the French flag on the north and east walls

(Mark Wooton, the UK champion from Scotland, took the south). Antoine, the last Phoenix in the event, saw the sign from his comrades-in-arms atop the walls and carried on with faith and courage—until he faced the Monk who would teach him the meaning of wisdom. No one but a Monk could have taught that lesson that day. Bret Swanson, in one turn, slayed Antoine and, inspired by his own strength and the nobility of the clan he had just defeated, reached the prize. From the walls, the French saw the body of the fallen Antoine shiver as he died. But no tears were shed. It was with pride that the seven ronin came and fell, after they faced such noble warriors. All saw that day the bright colors of the flag that many more will carry in 2000, as we expect fifteen French players to come for the great battle. Congratulations to all Gen Con players! May your ancestors be proud.

After two years of effort, the French association "Daimyos Impériaux" (Imperial Daimyos) has led the L5R game to the top. It ran the first French Nationals, gathering 107 players. Within a year, three hundred French tournaments were organized, gathering eight hundred players weekly. In October 1999, the second L5R French Nationals gathered 184 players.

The French team won at Gen Con Belgium, the Luxembourg convention, and most of the side tournaments of Gen Con UK. It also captured two walls at Gen Con US and included a semifinalist.

In March 2000 the Daimyos Impériaux will organize the first France-only storyline tournament. At Gen Con 2000, more will join us.

I look forward to seeing you all again.

Au revoir mes amis.

## French Top Ten

1	Antoine Blanchard	1078	Phoenix
2	Christopher Mosca	900	Crane
3	Thierry Bonnet	789	Crane
4	Stephane Back	600	Lion
5	David Feldman	600	Lion
6	Alexis Courteix	600	Phoenix
7	Laurent Lepvrier	600	Scorpion
8	Antoine Blanchard	570	Non-dis-un-aligned
9	Emmanuel Porquet	350	Scorpion
10	Alexandre Lavillat	340	Non-dis-un-aligned



# Top 10's

## Crab

1	Stephen Rill	950
2	Michael Watts	925
3	Randy Eaton	900
4	Chris Dilday	816
5	David Sloat	800
6	Mc Lean Oglesby	800
7	Lam Nguyen	800
8	Brian Haggerty	750
9	Jerry Schmidt	750
10	Scott Kunian	750

## Crane

1	Eric S Wiener	1565
2	Amy Chandler	1176
3	Joseph Scott	985
4	Jeremy Patterson	953
5	Russell Frame	950
6	Richard Kenan	950
7	Christopher Mosca	900
8	Jeff Powlishta	900
9	Arthur McGoey	900
10	Royden Jones	850

## Dragon

1	Christian Mueller	1035
2	Stephane Labine	993
3	Jim Tyler	975
4	Dave Hoerig	932
5	Charles Way	900
6	Jamie Granich	900
7	Mark Rajic	813
8	Brian Bankler	804
9	Warren Tom	800
10	Peter DeGlopper	769

## Lion

1	Daniel Walters	1016
2	Donavin Sulser	972
3	Sean Kraus	950
4	Kirby C. Vosburgh	950
5	Walter Louie	926
6	Eric J Belser	905
7	Scott M Walker	900
8	Kevin Knox	900
9	Michael Fahrenkopf	900
10	Kevin Luha	900

## Naga

1	Bronson D James	975
2	Corey Stone	950
3	Peter S Ruland	900
4	Thomas Seyffarth	900
5	Paul Gales	900
6	David Glewwe	900
7	Kyle Fehir	823
8	Jack Sterling	718
9	Doug McLemore	680
10	Matthew Sebourn	576

## Phoenix

1	Jim Beck	1386
2	Paul M Higgins	1285
3	Antoine Blanchard	1078
4	Justin Parco	975
5	Eddie Corderi	971
6	Andrew Stuart	950
7	Neil Rubel	932
8	Jay Kimberling	906
9	Phil Roberts	900
10	James Gearin	900

## Scorpion

1	Toby Dewley	1152
2	Paul Bennett	1059
3	Andrew Woodworth	950
4	Kevin Masterson	949
5	John F Mathews	925
6	Tom Jones	900
7	Michael Hall	865
8	Nic A Neidenbach	850
9	Jake Holub	850
10	Nelson Robert	850

## The Shadowlands Horde

1	Ramon Pena	947
2	Todd Leistra	926
3	Craig K Scudgington	863
4	Sigfried Trent	834
5	Joe Curd	750
6	Bryan Settle	750
7	Darrian Dalangin	692
8	Charles Fortman	623
9	Matt Deboer	600
10	Brian Medus	500

## Toturis Army

1	Philip Stillson	1109
2	Shane Anderson	1032
3	David Surette	975
4	Mason Garrison	900
5	Richard Lipman	900
6	Richard Lipman	900
7	Ronald Carlson	857
8	Jon Paulson	850
9	Duane Maxwell	825
10	Marco Coelho	700

## Unicorn

1	Richard Riley	1150
2	Jorge Pereira	1139
3	Jack Fair	1058
4	Mark Tiepelman	1032
5	Jennifer Bratt	1023
6	Michael Jordan	996
7	Melinda Brand	975
8	John D. Baker III	950
9	Ulrike Hausteine	950
10	Jon Dennis	946



# Legend of the Five Rings History

## Part I of III

This is the first part of a concise, if necessarily imprecise, history of Rokugan.

### Prehistory

At the dawn of time, the nine children of the Sun and Moon fell to earth, becoming at that moment less than gods, but still far more than mortals. Eight of them fell together; the ninth, Fu Leng, fell some distance from the others. The first eight formed an empire, installing Hantei I as the Emperor. The other seven brothers and sisters gathered clans about themselves, naming them the Crab, the Crane, the Dragon, the Lion, the Phoenix, the Scorpion, and the Unicorn.

Suddenly Fu Leng reappeared at the border of the Empire leading a huge army of goblins, undead, and foul creatures from the Shadowlands, the dark place where he had fallen. Fu Leng's army attacked the fledgling Empire, defeating the clan armies again and again.

When complete defeat looked inevitable, a mortal man named Shinsei approached Emperor Hantei and asked for seven mortals, one from each clan, to follow him into the Shadowlands to defeat Fu Leng. These seven brave warriors became known as the Seven Thunders, and, together with Shinsei, they embarked upon their hopeless quest.

Fu Leng's forces continued to crush all opposition, but when they reached the gates of Otosan Uchi, Hantei's capital, they suddenly faltered. The Thunders had achieved their goal! The Shadowlands forces broke and fled back to their miserable home.

Of the Seven Thunders and Shinsei, only the Scorpion Thunder returned, near death and bearing twelve Black Scrolls. "Guard these carefully," he said as he died, "for they were the defeat of Fu Leng."

### Scorpion Clan Coup (Scrolls 1-3)

The Emerald Empire of Rokugan had existed in relative peace for a thousand years since the defeat of Fu Leng. But the Scorpion Clan daimyo Bayushi Shoji came to believe that the ancient prophecies of Uikku indicated that the 38th Hantei Emperor would bring forth a consuming evil that would destroy Rokugan. Those days, people saw the imperial line as weak, and this helped Shoji to decide how to save the Empire from its doom.

In a daring coup, Shoji killed the Emperor and seized control of the imperial capital Otosan Uchi. For days his forces fended off the massed armies of the other clans. He tried to explain his actions, but the clan emissaries would hear none of his "Scorpion lies."

Shoji gambled that the Crab daimyo, Hida Kisada, would stand by his side. Kisada had openly scorned the Hantei Emperor, and the Crab respect strength. But in the end, due to a diplomatic error by Shoji, the Crab Clan supported the besieging forces and doomed the coup to failure. In the resulting battle, the Lion Clan daimyo, Akodo Toturi, killed Shoji in the throne room.

### Interlude

After the Scorpion Clan Coup, the son of the dead Emperor became the 39th Emperor of Rokugan. He was a vain and churlish man spared from the coup by the intervention of Phoenix magics and a healthy dash of good luck.

Enraged at the Scorpion for killing his father, he demanded a pogrom against the Scorpion Clan, seeking to destroy them utterly. As part of a series of vengeful actions, Hantei declared that he would take Bayushi Kachiko, the most beautiful woman in Rokugan and widow of the recently deceased Shoji, as his new bride, ending the Bayushi line.

Akodo Toturi, having learned something of Shoji's motives before Shoji died, believed this course of action unwise, and he protested the Emperor's actions. Toturi's failure to protect the 38th Hantei Emperor, combined with Toturi's public rebuke of the new Son of Heaven, was too much for Hantei the 39th. Hantei ordered Toturi stripped of his family name, and he ordered all other Akodo to abandon their names as well. Further, Hantei refused Toturi the opportunity to commit seppuku and instead condemned him to the life of a ronin—the ultimate disgrace.

In hiding after the coup, the Scorpion shugenja Yogo Junzo received news of the new Emperor's actions. He betrayed his family's thousand-year oath to guard and protect the Black Scrolls and opened one of them, hoping to find a way to use its power to strike back at the Empire destroying his clan. When he opened the scroll, its malevolent powers consumed his spirit, and



he became a puppet in the service of Fu Leng, who, though defeated, was far from powerless. The opening of the Scroll also unleashed a deadly plague that began to spread through the Empire, killing thousands.

The plague reached Ootosan Uchi and infected the young Emperor, who was as yet without an heir. Bayushi Kachiko sent word to all of the clans that the Emperor was dying and that he would name as his successor the clan noble who best exemplified the code of bushido and the command of the Tao of Shinsei.

### **Imperial Edition**

The clans warred actively. The Crab, having seen how the Scorpion seized Ootosan Uchi and watched the Empire begin to fragment, realized that they now had a chance to take the throne for themselves. After defending the Empire for a thousand years against the fearsome Shadowlands, they now entered into negotiations.

Kuni Yori induced the Crab Yakamo to lend his name to a fearsome oni, which manifested itself in the material world and commenced an extensive battle of wills with Yakamo for control of Yakamo's name.

For reasons not understood even by the Dragon generals, Togashi Yokuni, the Dragon daimyo, retained Toturi, the disgraced ronin, to lead their army at Beiden Pass. Among the Dragon troops was Mirumoto Hitomi, young scion of the Mirumoto family. Hitomi had many strong passions, and her greatest was a hatred for the hero of the Crab Clan, Hida Yakamo, who killed her beloved older brother years earlier in a duel of honor. She claimed Yakamo cheated, which he, of course, denied.

Hida Yakamo had already lost a hand in a duel with Hitomi. Kuni Yori, a powerful Crab Clan shugenja, grafted a hideous claw-like appendage to Yakamo to replace his missing hand, using a terrible ritual that neither would discuss.

Stepping out of the mists of legend and rumor, a strange group of humanoid serpent-creatures known as the Naga reappeared in Rokugan, though sightings of the creatures were few and far between. Toturi sent Mirumoto Daini to investigate these sightings.

### **Shadowlands**

A series of battles were fought at the strategic crossroads of Beiden Pass. Hida Sukune, the youngest son of the Crab daimyo, failed to anticipate Toturi's battlefield tactics, and his forces were overwhelmed. Yakamo's forces arrived and, in payment for Sukune's failure, crucified Sukune on the Terrible Standard of Fu Leng. The Crab followed this hideous banner back into battle.

Yakamo located Hitomi in the fray and, empowered by his claw, crushed one of her hands—the one holding the sword of her brother—destroying it.

Nevertheless, the Crab failed to hold Beiden Pass, although it had now become clear to all that they had cut a deal with the Shadowlands.

The Naga sent an emissary, called Dashmar, to the Imperial Assembly to inform the Empire that the Naga had awakened from an ages-long slumber to fight the rising tide of evil they sensed in the Shadowlands. Concerned primarily with the Empire's civil war, most imperial courtiers took no serious heed of Dashmar's words. Rebuffed, he sought to locate those individuals who would hear the wisdom of the Naga and act accordingly.

In the libraries of the Phoenix Clan, the Elemental Masters detected the opening of the first Black Scroll—and perhaps more. They dispatched one of their number, Isawa Tadaka, to seek out and recover the Black Scrolls, so that the Phoenix might learn the scrolls' true nature.

The Scorpion Clan began to rebuild its forces in secret, reoccupying many of its ruined castles and fortifications. Kachiko used her power as the Emperor's wife to end the Crane's purge of the Scorpion and to restore the Scorpion to some measure of safety. She also began to secretly poison the Emperor, seeking to torture him greatly before killing him as punishment for killing her husband. Acting with great decorum, Kachiko became, in some sense, the unofficial regent of the Empire, wrapping the bureaucracy around her finger.

### **Forbidden Knowledge**

More Black Scrolls were recovered. Many shugenja now knew of their existence and of the awesome powers they could convey. Isawa Tadaka and Isawa Uona became corrupted by the knowledge gained from the scrolls, but still the Phoenix Council of Five strove to understand their significance.

Battles large and small grew common. Land was taken, retaken, and lost over and over, churning the peasants' farmlands into huge fields of mud. The harvest was terrible. Famine, combined with the still-raging plague, exacted a tremendous toll on the Empire.

The barriers between the material world the nether regions of the underworld began to weaken. Immensely powerful Elemental Terrors—oni of heretofore unknown powers—emerged.

Kachiko tended Hitomi's injury, seeking to twist Hitomi's hatred for Yakamo into an all-out desire to destroy the Crab Clan in vengeance for refusing to support Shoji's coup. Kachiko provided an ancient and



powerful artifact, the Obsidian Hand, for Hitomi's use, and it began to darken her soul.

Kachiko also managed to trap her lover, the Crane daimyo Doji Hoturi, in the imperial capital. She used another ancient artifact, the Egg of P'an Ku, to create a duplicate of Hoturi. This False Hoturi left the capital and returned to the lands of the Crane, where his boorish behavior and increasingly insulting remarks caused great disgrace. He recruited a mad army from the Shadowlands and began a wild campaign of terror.

### Anvil of Despair

The chaos in the Empire led to a rise in banditry and criminal acts. The Unicorn Clan assumed a large role in trying to stop this tide of crime. The peasants gained a newfound respect for the Unicorn as the guardians of what little peace and security they retained.

Yogo Junzo, now a corrupt, undead minion of Fu Leng, reappeared in the Empire leading a vast army of goblins, oni, ogres, trolls, and other foul creatures. A portion of this force linked up with the False Hoturi, while the remainder began destroying the monasteries of the Brotherhood of Shinsei.

After months of combat, Toturi's army of Dragon bushi and ronin had become a battle-hardened force of incredible discipline and loyalty. The man once reviled throughout the Empire as the ultimate disgrace, honorable again, now led one of the most powerful military forces in the Empire, supported in large part by selfless peasants' gifts of food and shelter. Instead of turning his attentions to the petty civil wars the rest of the clans fought, Toturi set his sights clearly on the Shadowlands Horde, the true threat to Rokugan.

Mirumoto Hitomi engaged in an extensive, secret dialog with Togashi Yokuni. Afterward, Yokuni vanished from the Dragon lands and held a secret rendezvous with Kachiko. Kachiko knew a terrible, terrible secret: the Emperor had become possessed by a foul spirit, and the power and evil of that spirit could only come from one person.

The Emperor of Rokugan, Son of Heaven, was now the vessel of the dark god Fu Leng.

Yokuni told Kachiko that the return of Fu Leng was long prophesied. The wards against him kept strong by the closed Black Scrolls had now become so weakened that Fu Leng could physically control a mortal body. Out of revenge for his original defeat, Fu Leng chose to possess the Emperor himself. Fu Leng, however, did not know that the Emperor's weakness was not caused by disease, but by the poisons Kachiko continued to administer. Unable to take a new host, Fu Leng was

trapped in a body unable to stand, unable to walk, unable to do anything other than scream in anger.

But the power of Fu Leng continued to grow as each Black Scroll was opened and read. Soon he would overcome the infirmities of his host body, and then the Empire would know an eternity of darkness.

Yokuni instructed Kachiko that a great cycle was ending and the future was in the balance. She must return to the palace, despite her horror, and continue to poison the Emperor's body, keeping Fu Leng as weak as possible.

Yokuni also revealed that the lineal descendant of Shinsei himself walked the Empire as they spoke. Shinsei's descendant was aware of his place in the cosmic drama as well—the Seven Thunders of legend had been reborn to face their ancient foe, and Shinsei's descendant would locate them, instruct them, and gather them together for the final confrontation.

While Kachiko was away from the palace, the guards at Otosan Uchi detected a massive fleet of ships sailing northward up the coast. Incredibly, the Crab Clan had constructed troop ships in secret and used them to move their army, unseen, north to attack the capital. Hot-headed but tactical genius Matsu Tsuko led the Lion Clan armies guarding Otosan Uchi against the Crab.

Before the battle began, a messenger appeared from the capitol. As Tsuko read the message, the blood drained from her face and she dropped to her knees, fists clenched. The message was simple: Tsuko was to allow the battle to be fought without her direction. There was no rational reason for such a compromise of the capital's defense, but the chop on the order was the one mark she could not ignore, the one sigil that commanded obedience.

It was the signature of the Emperor himself.

The armies clashed. The Crab forces ultimately won, for, despite the ferocity of the Lion bushi, without direction they could not maintain an effective strategy across the entire battlefield. The triumphant Crab army, led by Hida Kisada himself, strode to the great, oaken doors of the palace and hewed them from their mounts.

Kisada, Yakamo, and a small detachment of bushi entered the palace to confront the Emperor. They fought their way past the remaining imperial guards, finally locating the Emperor's inner chambers.

There was a bitter fight within. Yakamo emerged carrying the unconscious body of Kisada, who had the ancestral sword of the Hantei firmly lodged in his gut. The Crab army retreated as insane laughter echoed hollowly from within the imperial palace.



# Who's Who: Edward Bolme

I began my obsession with gaming when introduced to the original white-boxed D&D set (before it was labeled "The Original White-Boxed Set") when I was 12. Well, okay, maybe it began earlier, when I was introduced to **D-Day** and other Avalon Hill and SPI games; or maybe even earlier, when playing **Dogfight** and **1863** and other plastic-pieced mass-market war games. Or maybe the roots of my obsession date all the way back to when the doctor dropped me on my head. Who knows? Certainly an infancy spent screaming with colic prepared me well for the professional tortures that lay ahead.

I explored roleplaying, war-gaming, and occasional miniatures-gaming until the fateful day the first print run of **Paranoia** made its appearance and found its way into my hands at a con at Texas A&M.

**Paranoia.** Mmmmmmm.

After buying the game, I tormented my masochistic friends through adventure after adventure. As the body count increased and the level of humor plummeted, they began to pester me to submit the adventures I created.

The pestering turned into badgering, and then into harassment. Eventually I submitted an adventure just to get some peace. No joke.

Lo and behold: it was accepted. **Alpha Complexities**, in fact, was chosen as the first adventure for **Paranoia**: 2nd Edition. Quite an honor.

Thereafter I spent my time in the freelance trenches writing for **Paranoia** (including the novel Title Deleted for Security Reasons), **Cyberpunk**, **Castle Falkenstein**, **Necroscope**, **Ralph Bakshi's Wizards**, **Cybergeneration**, **Men in Black**, and **Shatterzone**, as well as working on **Mekton**, **Ghostbusters International**, and other games. I am perhaps best known for being the psychotic voice of Rache Bartmoss. After numerous failed nominations, I finally won a GAMA award for "Six-Guns and Sorcery."

Then the **Magic®** TCG made its appearance. It failed to catch my interest, but its success led to the **Netrunner** TCG, which was my first project with Wizards of the Coast. As the official unofficial onsite R. Talsorian Games rep, I got to know several people within WotC,

most of whom no longer work here. My discreet inquiry into getting a job at WotC was met with cool, even cold, indifference. I was apparently not good enough.

Fine. Be that way.

Then, at Gen Con '96, I discovered the **Legend of the Five Rings** TCG and fell in love. I schmoozed a set of Emerald Edition decks and a bunch of boosters (schmoozing is one of the primary skills of a freelancer) and taught all of my friends. Since Five Rings Publishing Group had an office near my home, I approached them for freelance work.

In stark contrast to WotC, Ryan Dancey of FRPG hired me in the blink of an eye. This, I thought, was cool. Working for a small, elite, lean, mean, dark-horse company trying to beat WotC at their own game.

I started on April 1. And they then told me about the impending buyout. Amazing coincidence, huh?

After starting out as staff editor, I was thrust into the brand-management track ("Quick! Swim!" Sploosh!). After working with the **Dune**, **Rage**, and **Star Trek Dice** games, I progressed to the **Doomtown** TCG and now the **L5R** TCG. I have also earned the title "Master of Fire" for my ability to hoop up the masses at conventions. If you meet me at a show and I can't speak audibly, you know why. Oh, I love my job.

I've submitted a whole batch of cards for the **L5R** and **Doomtown** TCGs and worked on the Ceremony of the Samurai and Way of the Unicorn modules for the **L5R** RPG. Andy Heckt and I are working on an adventure series for the game, as well.

I am married to an absolute godsend of a woman who won't let me shave my head ever again, and we own a food-obsessed cat. Throughout my life, I have had chewed-up bread spit in my ear, kept a heron in my bathtub, visited the little town of Bolme, Norway, eaten an entire watermelon with my bare hands, and fallen down more stairs than I care to count. I am blessed with a cool job working with some of the finest people I have ever known.





# The Brotherhood of Shinsei

by Ed Bolme and Ree Soesbee

"Clans of Rokugan" articles, like this issues Brotherhood and Mantis articles, are introductions to the clans. For a more detailed look at advanced decks and strategies, visit the Legend of the Five Rings website or see the Legend of the Five Rings issue of TopDeck™ magazine.

"When you were born, you cried and the world rejoiced. Live so that when you die, the world cries and you rejoice." -Ikudaiu

Out of the many truths that describe the Shintao monks, one states that you should fear the fury of a patient person. As the Brotherhood has meditated for over a thousand years, they have become very patient.

The origins of this monastic order remain shrouded in mystery, but it is obvious that Shinsei himself founded it, either deliberately or inadvertently. It is as old as the Empire itself—if not even older.

When the Empire was first founded, the fledgling clans found themselves embroiled in a bitter war against the horrid forces of Fu Leng. Fu Leng was one of the Kami who had fallen from the sky and the most beloved of his father, Lord Moon. When the children of the Sun and Moon crashed to earth, Fu Leng fell some distance from the other Kami. While they decided who would rule the Empire, Fu Leng formed his own empire in the Shadowlands. When he finally launched an attack against his siblings, his forces seemed unstoppable.

But one mortal, Shinsei, saw a way to defeat Fu Leng. He led the Seven Thunders, mortal warriors chosen one from each clan, deep into the heart of the Shadowlands, and there they defeated Fu Leng. Of Shinsei and the Seven Thunders, only one returned: the Scorpion Thunder, bearing twelve Black Scrolls.

The Brotherhood of Shinsei has perservered from this ancient time, keeping and preserving the descendants of Shinsei and teaching them Shinsei's wisdom until the day when, as it was prophesied, Fu Leng would return.

Perhaps Shinsei saw the future, or perhaps his followers simply saw the need to be prepared. Whichever the case, the Brotherhood has carefully arranged the tutelage of Shinsei's heirs for a thousand years. At the time of the Scorpion Clan Coup, Shinsei was the man known across Rokugan as the Hooded Ronin, with the bearing of a samurai and the kinship of the ashigaru.

Known mainly as spiritual healers and advisors, the Shintao monks gained another title during the Clan War: warriors. It was a role they did not want, but Shadowlands assaults upon their shrines and temples thrust it upon them. Under Tetsuya's leadership, they took up their staves and proved themselves capable of fighting, with a tenacity that coaxed even the Crab to a respect. Even so, they could not keep the dark forces at bay indefinitely, and the Shadowlands Horde sacked many precious libraries and temples.

Since the Day of Thunder, the Brotherhood monks have gone out among the warring clans to preach a message carried earlier by the Naga—that the clans should unite against the growing forces of the Shadow. But while the clans had ignored the Naga, Takao's strength in combat against Lord Moon's champion gave weight to the monks' arguments.

Recently, the monks learned that their Tao may be a forgery. The fact has torn them apart. The shrines are in turmoil, and their very foundation threatens to split.

The beings of myth conflict with mortals. A Kami has returned, but she seeks to destroy the Emperor—and there is now no Tao, no Uikku, to guide the monks.

But once they find the truth in Norikazu's words, they will be reborn.



## Brotherhood Top Ten

1	Lon Wilks	900
2	Cory McDowell	700
3	Bret Swanson	617
4	Matthew Farney	592
5	Travis Wolcott	500
6	Heath Scheiman	500
7	David Stern	500
8	Bas Hamer	482
9	Kevin Hoffer	400
10	Dane Ilario	350



## Military Monk

The House of Tao Stronghold

### Dynasty Deck (40)

Events (7)

- 1 Blessings of Isawa
- 1 Imperial Gift
- 1 Inheritance
- 1 Iris Festival
- 1 Kisada's Funeral
- 1 March of the Alliance
- 1 Recovering the True Tao

Holdings (14)

- 3 Black Market
- 3 Jade Works
- 3 Merchant Caravan
- 3 Prayer Shrines
- 2 Temple to Shinsei

Personalities (17)

- 3 Hoshi Eisai
- 3 Hoshi Maseru
- 1 Hoshi Maseru Exp.
- 3 Ikudaiu
- 1 Ikudaiu Exp.
- 3 Shioda
- 3 Yoshun

Regions (2)

- 2 Farmlands

### Fate Deck (41)

Actions (18)

- 3 Block Supply Lines
- 3 Charge
- 3 Destiny Has No Secrets
- 3 Rallying Cry
- 3 Refugees
- 3 Superior Tactics

Elemental Ring (1)

Ring of Water

Followers (9)

- 3 Berserkers
- 3 Cultists
- 3 Imperial Legion

Item (1)

- 1 Gunsen of Water

Kihos (12)

- 3 Be the Mountain
- 3 Chasing Osano-Wo
- 3 Flee the Darkness
- 3 Great Silence, The

Considered intermediaries of the Fates, the monks have the goodwill of most of their fellow Rokugani. Normally guided by the Tao of Shinsei, they have heard rumors that the document they consider the font of their wisdom and guide to enlightenment is a forgery. In spite of this, their ranks have grown to include some of the Empire's greatest luminaries. New monks, showing signs of true wisdom, have accepted the mantle of the Elemental Acolytes.

Most Monk decks focus on Military, Enlightenment, or a combination of the two. The first deck listed here is pure Military, using The House of Tao and leading with the Ring of Water. Use your superior mobility to attack your opponent's undefended Provinces.

Alternatively, you can assign where your opponent has defended if you have superior force and the Flee the Darkness/The Great Silence combo. Be the Mountain is another nasty addition. Defensively, it can give +5F to one of your defenders. Offensively, you can have your Cultists cast it on a defender. Using Cultists to cast it lowers your opponent's Province Strength to 0 with no consequent Force bonus for your opponent.

The second deck can win via Military or Enlightenment. Play The House of Tao with Kaede Sensei and lead with the Ring of Water. Against Unicorn and Ninja, lead with the Ring of Earth, dropping the Armor of Earth as quickly as possible. Finding the Harmonies gets the Ring of Water back into play. Mystic Ground can get you the Ring of Earth as well, since it prevents the destruction of your Province. Look out for the Sneak Attack/Deadly Ground combo, as that prevents Mystic Ground from activating. The deck-manipulation Kihos net you the Ring of Air and should get you the cards you need for the rest of your Rings.

## Hybrid Monk

The House of Tao Stronghold

### Dynasty Deck (41)

Events (5)

- 1 Blessings of Isawa
- 1 First Scroll Is Opened, The
- 1 Imperial Ambassadorship
- 1 Imperial Gift
- 1 Iris Festival

Holdings (17)

- 3 Black Market
- 1 Grove of the Five Masters
- 3 Jade Works
- 3 Merchant Caravan
- 3 Prayer Shrines
- 1 Prophet's Tower
- 1 Retired Advisor
- 2 Temple to Shinsei

Personalities (17)

- 3 Hoshi Maseru
- 1 Hoshi Maseru Exp.
- 3 Hoshi Wayan
- 1 Hoshi Wayan Exp.
- 2 Ikudaiu
- 1 Ikudaiu Exp.
- 3 Shioda
- 3 Yoshun

Regions (2)

- 2 Mystic Ground

### Fate Deck (43)

Actions (11)

- 3 Iaijutsu Art
- 3 Loss of Face
- 3 Sneak Attack
- 2 Storms of War

Kihos (19)

- 3 Banish All Shadows
- 3 Boundless Depths of Water, The
- 3 Chasing Osano-Wo
- 2 Dharma Technique
- 3 Double Chi
- 3 Finding the Harmony
- 2 Great Silence, The

Followers (3)

- 3 Warrior Monks

Items (4)

- 1 Armor of Earth
- 2 Armor of Osano-Wo
- 1 Gunsen of Water

Elemental Rings (all 5)

Sensei (1)

- 1 Kaede Sensei



This deck is all about Tattoos. The goal is to develop your Tattoo powers first to delay your enemy from attacking, then crush Provinces. The deck has several nasty combos.

Mitsu Exp. can get a Dragon Tattoo. If you are attacked, he can bow for a ranged attack, straighten with A Stone Circle, get more Fire tokens from his Dragon Tattoo, and repeat. Mind you, his ability prevents him from getting more Fire tokens, but the Dragon Tattoo does not. Thus, if you have him overlaid and have the Stone Circles for it, he could dish out a Ranged 5 Attack, a Ranged 3, and another Ranged 3, and still be a 7F/7C monstrosity.

When playing against an Event-heavy deck, give Shiryo no Tetsuya to Botsumoku. Every time an Event goes off, Botsumoku gains +2F/+2C. Otherwise, slap Tetsuya on someone with a Dragon or Mountain Tattoo, and double those bonuses.

The Dragonfly Tattoo works great with the Mountain or Dragon Tattoo, and can turn people into real Province-busters. Ditto the Centipede Tattoo, especially early in the game. Finally, the Crane Tattoo is great for Mitsu or people with the Dragon Tattoo. If they lose a battle, hey, they're bowed, but they lose all of their tokens when they go to the discard pile, so they'll straighten shortly.

#### Rare and Fixed Cards Used

The Stronghold and Vows of the Brotherhood are fixed cards but still easy to get. Slap the Wave, Tattooed Men, the Monastery, and Shiryo no Tetsuya are all rares from the Hidden Emperor set (episodes 2, 2, 3, and 6, respectively) and should be easy to find or inexpensive to buy on the singles market. None of them are essential, except possibly Shiryo no Tetsuya, who is very valuable in this deck. Hoshi Wayan Exp. and Ikudaiu Exp. are rares from the Honor Bound and Ambition's Debt expansions, respectively, but as they are both R2s and Unique, they should be pretty easy to find or buy.

#### Variants

This deck has only three cards that are not Jade legal: The Courage of Osano-Wo, Warrior Monks, and Dance of the Elements. You can replace The Courage of Osano-Wo, which is illegal in Jade Extended format, with the Event of your choice, depending on your play environment. Warrior Monks and Dance of the Elements are illegal in Strict Jade format. You could use Temple Guard in place of the Warrior Monks and Master of the Rolling River instead of Dance of the Elements. Setsuban Festival works if you don't have Slap the Wave.

Edward Bolme

## Tattooed Monk

The House of Tao Stronghold

### Dynasty Deck (40)

#### Events (4)

- 1 Blessings of Isawa
- 1 Courage of Osano-Wo, The
- 1 Fair Voice of Lies, The
- 1 Monsoon Season

#### Holdings (16)

- 3 Jade Works
- 3 Large Farm
- 2 Monastery
- 3 Prayer Shrines
- 1 Prophet's Tower
- 3 Stone Circle, A
- 1 Vows of the Brotherhood

#### Personalities (20)

- 2 Botsumoku
- 3 Hoshi Eisai
- 3 Hoshi Kumonosu
- 3 Hoshi Maseru
- 3 Hoshi Wayan
- 1 Hoshi Wayan Exp.
- 1 Ikudaiu Exp.
- 1 Mitsu Exp. Togashi Mitsu
- 3 Togashi Mitsu

### Fate Deck (40)

#### Actions (13)

- 3 Centipede Tattoo
- 2 Crane Tattoo
- 3 Dragon Tattoo
- 2 Dragonfly Tattoo
- 3 Mountain Tattoo

#### Elemental Rings (2)

- Ring of Air
- Ring of the Void

#### Followers (7)

- 1 Shiryo no Tetsuya
- 3 Tattooed Men
- 3 Warrior Monks

#### Kihos (18)

- 3 Dance of the Elements
- 2 Fist of the Earth
- 2 Flee the Darkness
- 1 Mercy Shrouds the Earth
- 3 Root the Mountain
- 3 Ryoku
- 2 Slap the Wave
- 2 Walk Through the Mountains

# A Talk with Taka

*We caught the wily trader after hours. Upon introducing him to some sake, we got an inside look into the workings of his treasure house.*

**Imperial Herald:** It appears that business is going well for you. To what do you attribute your success?

Yasuki Taka: The economy. Koku abounds in Rokugan these days. There has been a marked increase in tournaments sanctioned this year over those past. At an average of 200 Koku awarded at each one, well, you can see the inflationary spiral. Then there's the success of the last three expansions, each selling out in mere weeks, and all of the Koku that represents.

**IH:** With all of this demand, how are your supplies holding up?

YT: As usual. The exotic wares from the Burning Sands, however, move off the shelves very quickly. Kolat Recruiters were in high demand the last few months; I even had one person request thirty-six of them! I had to choose between upsetting one person and upsetting thirty-five, so I instated the "one card per customer" policy for the first month a card is on the shelf.

**IH:** What is up with the katanas?

YT: The last issue covered this. We had trouble getting the katanas past some border guards and things, and I really wanted a sword to be something special, so I decided to make them exclusive as tournament prizes.

**IH:** Why do people have to pay shipping costs for everything but cards?

YT: The reason is simple: it's less work for everyone, and I can deliver the cards more quickly this way. Writing down an order and filling it while keeping track of a return envelope and card protection was more time-consuming and costly than providing the shipping materials myself. I still require payment for shipping other items, both to cover freight costs and, in part, to recover a portion of the cost of the item itself. Because of this, I cannot offer discounts on shipping for bulk orders; it's cumulative.

**IH:** What new wares can readers expect from your treasure house in the future?

YT: I really hate to say, as I'm still working on securing them. The newest items, of course, are

the shinomono (war banners). The "possibility" list includes Mandarin-collared denim shirts, chops, jewelry, license-plate holders, and such.

**IH:** How does it feel to hold thousands of Koku at once?

YT: Horrible, actually. Unless it's well organized, that is. I really prefer to get Koku in bundles of twenty booster packs tied off with rubber bands, rather than loose. And that way, you don't have to sit there and cut all of the Koku out to glue to index cards! Now, you do need to cut out the deck boxes, and if you organize them in rows on paper, it sure does make my life easier. On occasion, I've had to return Koku sent loose in cut-out little mylar squares—totally uncountable.

**IH:** Why are you offering Imperial Assembly members such great bonuses lately?

YT: Politics. Pure and simple politics. Assembly members scratch my back, so I do the same in return. And who's to say they don't deserve it?

**IH:** Is there any truth to the rumor that you are a Kolat?

YT: What's a Kolat?







## Fox Clan

by Ree Soesbee

Continued from last issue, this is the Fox Clan information for the **Legend of the Five Rings** roleplaying game.

### Kitsune Behavior

Rokugan's kitsune spirits are tricksters—good-natured but eager to play pranks and teach lessons. They are not evil, nor are they truly good. They are neutral entities with little understanding of human ways. Some few leave their spiritual selves behind and join mortal society, giving up their powers and abilities for the space of a moon, a year, or a hundred years, in order to interact with the Emerald Empire.

Kitsune put up with nearly anything to learn valuable skills or come to understand new ideas. They like to teach as well; a samurai who fulfills a kitsune's wish to learn had best be prepared to learn some harsh lessons as well.

The most ancient legends of Rokugan's tribes speak of how some tribes feared and hunted the kitsune, while others worshipped them. It is said that the kitsune inhabited the land long before the Kami came, and that the first Hantei sought their wisdom when he wished to ease his sister, Shinjo, of a great burden. Legends tell of kitsune guarding samurai for favors, and of kitsune stealing samurai's lovers. In some legends, kitsune aid the peasantry, while in others, they steal food from lowly travelers. They are most likely guilty of all of these things, but they do not speak of them.

### The Unicorn

"No one loves the mother more than the child who has been taken from her."

—Shinjo

As suddenly as they had left, Shinjo's clan returned. They rode great, towering beasts and screamed of blood and vengeance as they charged through the Shadowlands and the Crab lines, and toward the heart of the Emerald Empire. The first daimyo of the Unicorn invited the Fox to rejoin their clan and become one once again with the Ki-Rin, but the Fox Clan refused. They had been too long independent to bow their head to another, no matter what blood ties bound them.

When the Unicorn returned to the Empire, the six clans were in chaos. Some clans shouted that the Unicorn were truly the children of Shinjo and should regain all of their rights and properties. Other clans argued that these warriors were impostors and had no claim to Shinjo's legacy. Some of these turned to the Fox, offering to support the Fox if the Fox would turn against the newcomers and cut down those who would sully their ancient ancestor's name.

The Fox did not join in the argument.

They remained in the lands given to them by the Emperor and did not attempt to rejoin their "former clan." They had walked the forests alone for too long to now journey behind another. Kitsune Hanru said, "Follow your own path. To walk behind another is to do nothing more than to become

captured in another's pitfalls. We know our weaknesses and our strengths. For nearly a thousand years, we have walked alone. I see no reason to change that path."

The Unicorn and the Fox maintain amiable relations, and indeed, the only people with free access to kitsune libraries, besides the Emperor and the kitsune themselves, are the Unicorn. The Unicorn have never pressured their "little siblings" to return and seem quite proud to claim relations with the Fox. In their eyes, the Fox have served Shinjo well, and the Unicorn have great respect for the minor clan. Still, even the Unicorn do not truly consider them equals.

### The Kitsune Myth

Popular Rokugani legends of the "spirit-foxes" known as kitsune call them everything from demons to Kami, attributing to them bad fortune and magical spells and abilities, and even calling them seducers and maho-users. These scornful words spring from the Rokugani culture's genuine fascination with a creature that does not want its attention. The moment you look for the kitsune, the kitsune is gone. On the day you decide to stop looking, you may see one out of the corner of your eye. Only the Fox Clan has any innate understanding of the gentle woodland spirits, and their that clan's tie to the kitsune runs deep—deeper than blood.

To understand the truth behind the kitsune—both the creatures and the clan that bears their name—requires a samurai to take an extended stay in the woods of the Fox Clan, learning their traditions and secrets. Then, if the samurai proves truly dedicated, and truly understands the nature of these most elusive spirits, he or she may catch a brief glimpse of a woman with fox-red hair and amber eyes before she slips

back into the woods, lost to all but spirits. The spirits come and go as they please; no mortal controls them.

To demand that Fox Clan members show you a kitsune only makes them laugh.

Kitsune, according to legend, are mysterious, clever, wise, and mischievous. They are pranksters with a good sense of humor, and they are creatures of kindness and loyalty. Tales say that if you show kindness to a kitsune, the spirit follows you, hoping to one day return the kindness. A popular myth speaks of a woodsman who set a trap to catch a wolf that was stealing his oxen. He captured a fox instead. Having a kind heart, he bandaged its wounds and set it free. Days later, when he had forgotten his act of kindness, the wolf came to steal his oxen once more. The wolf cornered the poor woodsman and was about to eat him alive, when a valiant fox leapt from the bushes and knocked the wolf to the side, allowing the hunter to spear the beast with his small knife.

Kitsune possess the magic of illusions and misdirection, which helps them to hide in the thick woods and to deceive those who seek them. According to some legends, the kitsune feed on the living spirits of mortals in order to fuel their magic. The Fox Clan refutes this myth, and it is considered the height of bad form to mention it within hearing of a Fox samurai. Several noted duels have been fought over the subject.

Kitsune are said to change forms into whatever they please, either male or female, and to appear exceedingly beautiful in mortal form. Few tales tell of kitsune who permanently give up their fox-form to live among Rokugani samurai; the kitsune love their woodland and their freedom too much remain in one form for long.

Ancient tribes of Rokugan spoke of a battle that occurred between the kitsune and the tiger-spirits, a race of half-beasts now unknown in Rokugan. According to the tale, the kitsune tricked the tigers into leaving Rokugan forever. Scholars, particularly those Isawa who have studied the tale, say that it is apocryphal. They believe that the story describes the separation of Rokugan from the Ivory Kingdoms to the distant south, and that these mythical "tiger-spirits" were most likely a primitive tribe that journeyed south before the time of the kami and the creation of the Shadowlands.

#### **Fox Culture**

"Fall down seven times; stand up eight."  
-Fox Clan banner

Modern Fox culture is still very simple, a legacy of their previous duties. They maintain an excellent library, keeping all records of imperial courts and mandates. Although the kitsune do not track the political and courtly affairs of the Empire as do the Seppun, the kitsune library is renowned for its legal and historical information. They intended it to be their legacy to Shinjo, when she returned: details of all of the decisions made by the Emperors and of the lineage and legacy of the clans' champions, their children, and their extended families. When a clan or noble family finds itself without an heir, the Empire turns its eyes to the Fox, for they maintain the lineages in exacting detail that goes as far back as the first war with the Shadowlands. The only clan whose records the kitsune do not have is the Unicorn. No records were kept by the Ki-Rin, and though the Fox have repeatedly attempted to piece together the lineages of the Ide, Iuchi, Otaku,



#### **The Lady**

Myth describes the Lady of the kitsune, Akomachi, as either a ten-tailed fox spirit or a magnificent woman with silver hair and hands as flawless as snow. Both visions are correct, according to most Fox samurai. The Fox worship her as a secondary image of Benten, Fortune of beauty. In all of the Empire's myths, she is a unique creature capable of granting wishes and stealing hearts forever, even from those who glimpse her face only once. She is said to be the mother of the kitsune race, the patron of the Fox Clan, and (because of that) another image of Shinjo, the Kami of the original Ki-Rin.





and Shinjo, they have gleaned only the briefest of details.

Despite the difficulties that sprang up at the beginning of their interactions with the Fox, the Unicorn repeatedly show that their nature is honorable, and they bring nothing but friendship and allegiance to those who stayed behind. In fact, many of the Unicorn refer to the Fox Clan samurai as their kin, a tribute to their shared lineage.

#### **Hunting with a Fox**

The Fox are a peaceful people prone to study rather than to war, but their natural inclination toward trickery and deceit does not bring them much honor in the Emperor's court. Although they connect deeply with the spirits, particularly those of forest and field, great gatherings politely shun them. This trend is even more pronounced since the return of the Unicorn Clan. Recently, whispers have circulated that the Fox shouldn't be a clan at all; they have outlived their usefulness as "Shinjo's voice" and should now rejoin the true children of the Ki-Rin, or become ronin and give their land to the Scorpion or the Crane.

The children of the kitsune are wily, and they know the politics of deception and trickery, much to the chagrin of the Great Clans. No political ploy levied against them succeeds, no word reaches the Emperor's ears but that they introduce a counter-rumor to invalidate it. Although the Fox do not often match wits against the Great Clans, they are more than willing to risk their lives to protect their clan and the forest that surrounds it.

From their earliest years, children of the Fox Clan learn the paths and dangers of the outdoors, play in the fields and woods, and use the thousands of plants that grow in Rokugan. Hardly a province in the Empire does not wish for a permanent Fox Clan resident as

midwife, herbalist, and healer. The Fox know the myths and the medicinal properties of each woodland thing, and from their first steps they learn to walk the secret paths of the animals. They have an almost uncanny ability to track and hunt, and they are most at home when alone in a forest, no matter where that forest lies in the Empire.

Even when another clan invites them to spend a season in its court (or when the court invites them to the fabulous Ootosan Uchi itself), Fox are rarely idle. They spend their days in healing crafts and hunting, acting as guides in the provinces they know and learning the ways of the land in unfamiliar areas.

The Fox are in an unusual position: of all of the Minor Clans, they alone have a Kami in their lineage. Moreover, a spirit creature adopted them, and its blood runs in their veins; thus, their nature is twofold. They are not truly the children of Shinjo, but neither are they born of ronin stock nor granted their position through the Emperor's generosity. They are not a Great Clan, but they have represented Shinjo for over seven hundred years—a renown not shed easily, even this long after the Unicorn's return.

#### **Fox Art**

The Fox are not renowned for their art, although they are dedicated to its pursuit. Rather than conform to the interests of the imperial court in paintings and great statues, Fox Clan samurai find no greater beauty than that in the Empire's wild places. They travel in groups to visit such beautiful locations as Ki-Rin's shrine and the shores of Shinden Asahina. The Fox believe that to remove something from its origin (such as plucking a flower or transplanting a tree) decreases its beauty. They value trees that grow in strange and gnarled patterns, and often



leave offerings to the beauty of such a place. A visitor will find no ikebana arrangements in Kyuden Kitsune—only small, flowering plants that grow freely over the palace's outer walls. A visiting Phoenix once remarked upon the overgrown and strangely wooded beauty of the Fox lands, and it is precisely that response the gardeners of the Fox wish to evoke. If a tree wishes to lean, they allow it to lean, tidying only the weeds and young growths that cluster around its base.

Because of this quirk, the imperial court does not receive Fox Clan art very well. The Fox bring twisted wooden staves worn to a polish by the wind and the tide and covered in natural pearls plucked from oysters in the Crane bay. The courtiers of Otosan Uchi ignore or forget their handiwork and their reason for it. They call it "informal" and "rough," without regard for the hundreds of waves that wore the wood into its current state.

#### **Kitsune Magic**

The kitsune have a unique relationship with the spirits of the forest and of wild places, an affinity reflected in their study of magic. Although they do not rank among the more powerful shugenja in the Empire, they are the most attuned to the wilderness and the most practiced in deception and trickery. A Fox Shugenja knows to use enemies' weaknesses against them. Fox magic may not be among the most respected in the Empire, but it can be one of the most effective, if used with imagination and subtlety.

The kitsune have another advantage over their more "book-learned" cousins. Well-versed in the land, the plants, and plants' medicinal properties, they can cure common illnesses and diseases. Woodland spirits are less likely to refuse

them, and are most adept at casting spells outdoors.

Fox bushi are less common, although they do exist. Shugenja of the clan can defend themselves in battle, as each learns to use at least one weapon. The kitsune feel that it is important to have the ability to maintain safety without magical aides.

#### **Fox Land**

Kitsune Mori, the forest of the Fox, lies between high hills and twisted valleys, and grows in a thick tangle over many li of land, up and down between the plains of the Scorpion and the Crane. The forest spreads across the edge of the Ronin Plains and covers the lower hills where the Wasp keep their palace above the Lake of Silent Dreams. It is a verdant place filled with animals and rich vegetation, and the greenwood smell of the trees stays in your clothes for days. Though the ground is fertile, the Fox Clan does not promote agriculture and quickly takes arms against any who raise an axe toward the older trees.

Fox lands cover the entirety of the Kakusu province, and they hide their palace well behind li after li of thick forest. All travelers know the legends of forest spirits, and rarely does a visiting samurai camp anywhere but on the road itself. To venture deeper into the forest may mean giving oneself over to the trickery of a passing kitsune spirit, something most samurai seek to avoid at great cost.

The kitsune spirits are not the only small Kami that inhabit the woodland. Unlike its greater cousin, Shinomen Forest, Kitsune Mori is a place of idyllic beauty and wide groves. No trace of foul enchantment taints its

(continued page 40)



# Not Enough Koku?

by Andy Heckt

Before I came to work for Wizards of the Coast, I collected Koku. I sent it in for the Black Scrolls the day I received the issue (was it #5?) and still didn't get them. The next issue I wrote a letter as part of my order for three cards. I still have that letter, written in 1998:

Taka-sama-

I ask you three times . . .

Please accept my humble offer of 60 Koku . . . Truly, please accept them, for you can use them better than I . . . Humbly, I beseech you. Take them before my wife throws them out.

In return I ask you to consider my position: My Isawa Uona has not found her (8-M) **Oracle of the Void**. My Togashi Yokuni cannot find (8-T) **Otaku Kamoko** to gather all Seven Thunders. And my (7-T) **Arrows Know** (not) the Way.

If providence cannot smile my way, I ask you to consider that I shall be forced to fight (7-Y) **To the Last Man**, to stop the Darkness foreseen in the (8-K) **Augury**, which threatens to strike upon the (7-S) **Plains of Orosan Uchi** and destroy any chance of my (7-V) **Winning Kachiko's Favor**.

Your servant,  
Iuchi Katsumi  
Rokugan Teratologist

And now I am Taka (and Frank is Shiryo no Yasuki). I should ask Frank if he took pity on me or was just rewarding my fanaticism, because I received my three cards . . . and a Unicorn Stronghold card!

Nice story, huh? So what? Well, I never understood back then how anyone could ever afford to get a katana. I mean, 2500 Koku! That was probably \$6000 or more worth of product!

Then I came to work at Wizards and learned of Koku prizes given out at tournaments. Even the third-place finisher of a four-to-eight-player tournament could get 20 Koku. \$50 worth of Koku for playing a game with three-plus friends and doing some paperwork?! And the winner could get 100 or more Koku (nearly \$300 dollars worth of product)! After collecting since the Emerald Edition™ set and only turning in some 200 Koku, I left some 800 Koku to a friend when I came to Wizards. 1000 Koku over two-plus years--and much more of it thrown out!

So why am I telling you all of this? Two reasons. For one, I empathize with those who don't play in tournaments. But if I had reduced the price of the katana, everyone who had paid full price would scream "Unfair!" Also, I want you to play in some sanctioned tournaments if you think Taka's items are expensive. Better yet, sanction some yourself. If you have at least eight players (for the three-judge system), you can play in your own tournament. To learn about sanctioning a tournament, see "The Tao of the DCI" in issue #12 or <[www.wizards.com/DCI/Sanctioning.asp](http://www.wizards.com/DCI/Sanctioning.asp)>.

Andy, a.k.a. Experienced Yasuki Taka  
(not the Kolat version, really!)

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## Fire & Shadow

### Worldwide pre-release event

### March 11 & 12, 2000

There will be over 200 stores in 15 countries participating in the first ever worldwide pre-release tournaments for Legend of the Five Rings.

To find a store near you that will be hosting this event, go to  
[www.wizards.com/l5r/fireandshadow](http://www.wizards.com/l5r/fireandshadow)

# Zen's Card Focus: Come One at a Time

by Zen Faulkes

Come one at a time, or don't come at all.

It hasn't been a friendly environment for big Personalities in the L5R TCG lately, with many decks containing nothing but "off-the-box" Personalities. After all, it generally doesn't matter if your army is made up of one 5F Clan Champion or five 1F individuals. Force is Force.

Come One at a Time bucks those trends. This Terrain lets a single defender issue challenge after challenge, which favors big, well-equipped Personalities over swarms of 2F/2C Personalities. If all goes well, Come One at a Time can destroy just over 50 percent of an attacking army, with the rest running away. Because it all hinges on a single defender, a battle with Come One at a Time in play is a great opportunity to play Legendary Victory.

Now, many dueling decks hire cheap Personalities and use Reactions that trigger on entering a duel to win them. That's fine, but a lot of tricks (e.g., the Double Chi Kiho) only work for one duel (Togashi Yoshi and Toshimoko Sensei are notable exceptions). Remember, you'll almost always be outnumbered using Come One at a Time. Having tricks up your sleeve only wins you so many duels.

The risk is that this card only lets one defender issue challenges. A lone Personality is vulnerable, and you obviously can't stop everything that your opponent might throw at your armies. But with a little planning, you can stop a lot. It's easier to protect one Personality than many, so cards that do so (e.g., Shield Wall for ranged attacks, Obi of Protection for duels, Tsuchi-do for being sent home) become more valuable when using Come One at a Time.

Playing Come One at a Time is like getting two actions for the price of one: you prevent your opponent from playing a Terrain and start a duel before your opponent can act. After that initial duel, Hiruma Sensei gives you the extra time needed to issue challenges.

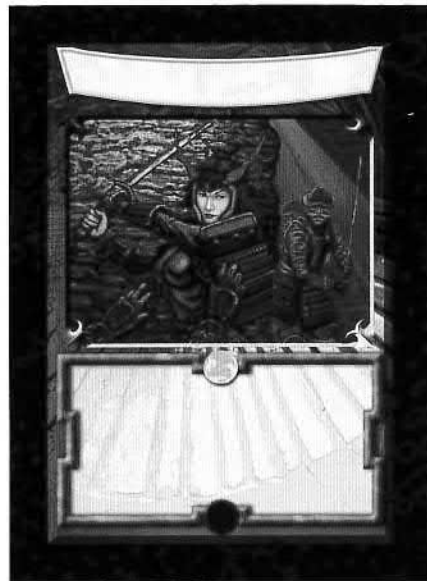
Although you'll typically only want to assign a single defender, so that you can start a duel immediately, it can be worth playing this Terrain when you have more than one defending unit. Besides preventing your opponent from playing a Terrain, it can force your opponent to leave other units in the battle, so that you never have a single defender capable of wiping out the attacking army with duels.

Some combos take advantage of the fact that this Terrain allows your opponent to chicken out. They're

fun to act out! If your opponent starts to bail out of the battle, snarl "Coward!" as the unit retreats. Drop Cowardice from your hand to sting for a 5-point Honor hit and a Dishonored Personality. Or smugly announce, "You can go . . . this time," before you play Let Him Escape. Because Let Him Escape diminishes your foe's hand, it makes it harder for remaining units to survive your next duels.

Of course, it may be better if your opponent can't leave. Playing Come One at a Time at a Province with Beiden Pass attached, or with Winter Warfare in effect, can get bloody.

Being able to destroy a lot of enemy Personalities is usually reward enough, but wouldn't it be nice to get something more for winning all of those duels? In Sepulcher of Bone decks, every duel won creates another Follower token on your side. Daidoji Kademono gains +1 Chi for every duel he wins, making him a more and more formidable opponent as the battle wears on. But could any card be more appropriate in a combo with Come One at a Time than a Bloodsword? Imagine Ginawa on the battlefield, surrounded by an ever-widening pile of bodies, while the dreadful power of the blade grows . . .





# EMPIRE

## LEAGUE

by Jessica Lawson

**Legend of the Five Rings** players will get a new way to play in March. The Empire League™ will challenge you to create new deck types, either while playing for your favorite Clan or while trying something different. Each league season highlights a major period in Rokugani history. As in all epic events, some factions play larger roles than others, and these are the Featured Factions for the season. Featured Factions each have special play objectives that you must meet. These objectives follow the story of the season. Those who complete all of their Clan's objectives receive a title from their Clan and a special mon pin. Don't worry if your favorite Clan isn't featured this season—its time will come. You can play other factions as well, and that earns play points but does not involve special objectives or titles.

### How does the league work?

The format for the Empire League is Open (40/40). You find your own opponents; there are no pairings or set rounds—but you can't play the same person twice in a row.

You can reach only one play objective per week, with the exception of the first and last weeks. You may change decks as often as you like during a season.

#### League Structure

Week 1: All play objectives are released with the story.

Weeks 2–5: You may fulfill one objective or faction per week (in any order).

Week 6: Fulfill as many objectives as you can.

#### Play Points

You earn play points through league play. You get 2 play points for a win and 1 play point for a loss. Your first victory in any given faction, however, earns you 5 (instead of 2) play points.

### Does the league affect the storyline?

No. The league recreates the past; it doesn't seek to change it. The purpose of the league is to offer a fun environment in which to play the game. It challenges people to build new decks types to meet the objectives, and it rewards good play with cool prizes. It also allows players to fill in the details of the Empire's epic events.

### When will it be my Clan's turn for glory?

The season dates listed below are the dates that your retailer can first get the kit for each faction. Season starting dates may vary from store to store.

Season 1—The War to Defeat Fu Leng  
3/20/2000

Featured Factions: Brotherhood  
Shadowlands  
Toturi's Army

Season 2—The Naga Awaken  
5/15/2000

Featured Factions: Dragon  
Naga  
Phoenix

### Prizes and Titles

Seasonal button: Each player who earns at least 10 play points receives a league season button.

Faction mon pin: Prizes are awarded in the Featured Factions each season. The player who completes all objectives for a Featured Faction and has the highest play-point total earns the faction's mon pin and title.

Empire League pin: The player with the most play points and who has not won a Featured Faction prize earns an Empire League pin.

Each player can earn only one prize per season (with the exception of the seasonal button). If a player is eligible for more than one prize, the player chooses the prize he or she receives.

The player who earns the prize for his or her faction also earns a title for that season. The Faction titles are shown below, with their pins.

### The Story

Each season highlights an epic event in the history of Rokugan. The first season tells the story of the Empire's war to defeat the forces of Fu Leng. The Featured Factions are:



**Toturi's Army**, representing Emperor Hantei the First leading the armies of his brothers and sisters

**The Brotherhood of Shinsei**, representing "the little man" Shinsei, who showed the way

**The Shadowlands Horde**, representing Fu Leng and his minions, who seek to conquer the Empire

Each season, four different objectives are included along with the story for each of the Featured Factions. In the War to Defeat Fu Leng, the Emperor Hantei spends years building the Emerald Empire before the invasion begins. Players representing the forces of the Emperor must do the following to complete the "Building the Empire" objective:

Bring at least one of each of the following Holdings into play: a Copper Mine, a Garden card, a Geisha House, a Gold Mine, an Iron Mine, a Marketplace, a Silver Mine, Stables, and a Temple card.

Meanwhile, Fu Leng gathered his evil horde of goblins, oni, and undead, so the players representing the Shadowlands Horde must do the following to complete the "Gathering the Horde" objective:

Bring all the Personalities in your deck into play.

For the Brotherhood's part in this tale, Shinsei gathers the Thunders and travels to the Shadowlands to defeat Fu Leng. So one of the objectives for the Brotherhood is to "Battle Fu Leng":

Win a battle in which you have assigned seven different Personalities, each representing one of the seven Major Clans (Crab, Crane, Dragon, Lion, Phoenix, Scorpion, and Unicorn).

Each league season tells the exciting story of an epic event in the Emerald Empire. Sign up for the Empire League at your local retail store—and if your store is not yet planning to run it, encourage it to sign up now!



Brotherhood of Shinsei  
Enlightened One



Crab  
Battlemaster



Crane  
Negotiator



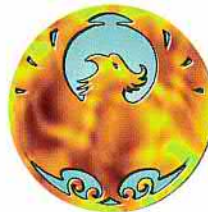
Dragon  
Emissary



Lion  
Tactician



Naga  
Naga Warlord



Phoenix  
Elemental Master



Scorpion  
Distractor



Shadowlands  
Oni Overlord



Toturi's Army  
Imperial Champion



Unicorn  
Emerald Magistrate



Yoritomo's Alliance  
Alliance Warlord





# Taka's Treasures

## What are Koku and Dinari?

You can find Koku and Dinari on the backs of booster packs and on one of the inside flaps of deck boxes. For this issue only, if you are an Assembly member, your Koku and Dinari are worth even more than usual. See "News from Court" on page 28 for more information.

So, how do you use the Koku and Dinari once you've found them? Send them to Taka in exchange for **Legend of the Five Rings** and **Legend of the Burning Sands** cards, T-shirts, and other merchandise! Make sure to follow the shipping and handling directions carefully, and send your order to the address of the office closest to you, listed on page 26.

Because Taka is such a wily businessman and has made deals with everyone, he accepts points from any of the Five Rings Publishing Group games. That's right; Koku, Dinari, Teeth, and Spice are interchangeable!

## NEW Members-Only Offer!

**14-1 Y2C Button Men™** Receive both the Mirumoto and Kakita Y2C Button Men, featuring art by April Lee not produced on any card in the game. Relive the duel to determine whether the one-sword or two-sword technique is supreme! Test the skill of your pick against your friends. Bring the Button Men to your next tournament and challenge your opponent to put down his or her deck and match your skill with Button Men! Ordering details provided only to members on their cover letters.



**14-6 War Banner** Wear the color of your Clan to war! Bear your Clan mon into battle! Honor your Home! Come prepared for your next tournament as the Samurai did for battle, displaying the standard of your Clan. Produced by Kamweid exclusively for the Imperial Herald, this banner features your Clan's mon prominently upon the Clan's color. Mount it on a pole (instructions included) or hang it on your wall. Specify Clan: Crab, Crane, Dragon, Lion, Mantis, Monk, Phoenix, Scorpion, Unicorn, Naga, Shadowlands, or Toturi's Army.

1000 Koku, plus \$3 S&H in the U. S. and Canada/\$5 S&H elsewhere

750 Koku, plus S&H, for Imperial Assembly members (include DCI number when ordering to verify membership) for orders received before May 1, 2000



## 14-2 Legend of the Five Rings Clan Shirt

Each shirt has a Clan mon on the front and a Clan-specific piece of art on the back and is in that Clan's color. 100% preshrunk cotton, available in L, XL, XXL, and XXXL. Currently unavailable at stores. Specify Clan and size.

500 Koku, plus \$4 S&H in the U. S. and Canada/\$10 S&H elsewhere





# The Card Shop

Here are some cards that may help you gain an edge. All selections are limited by availability—first come, first serve. **Cards 14S–14X are for Assembly members only.** The order form must accompany each order. All artwork is © 1996–2000 by the respective artists and Wizards of the Coast and is used with permission. Cards are 20 Koku (or Dinari) each. Only one of each card per order.

14A  
Akodo's Leadership



14B  
An Empty Victory



14C  
Bloodstrike



14D  
Dairya Exp. 2



14E  
Isawa Norikazu Exp. 2



14F  
Kakita's "The Sword"



14G  
Kolati Apprentice



14H  
Lord Moon's Bones



14I  
Moto Tsume Exp. 2



14J  
Shinjo's Judgment



14K  
Shurin Storms



14L Slaughter of the  
Imperial Court



14M  
Souls of the Betrayed



14N Sword of the  
Emerald Champion



14O  
Thy Master's Will



14P  
Treachery and Deceit



14Q  
Tribute to Your House



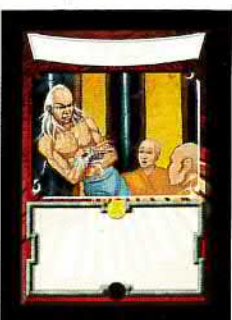
14R Victory at  
Hiruma Castle



14S  
Face of the Nameless



14T  
Forgotten Lesson



14U  
Way of the Void



14V  
Death of a Butcher



14W  
Milk of the Scorpion



14X  
Shosuro Tage





14AA  
Ajbar ibn Kaleel



14AB  
al Amaq



14AC Ancient Pillars  
of Qaharaba



14AD  
City of Flames



14AE  
Dark Journey Home



14AF  
Elite Sentries



14AG  
Emiral



14AH  
Gazing into the Rift



14AI  
Jinn Horde



14AJ  
Kali-Ma



14AK  
Qashima



14AL Ritual of the  
Awakening



14AM  
The Black Heart



14AN  
The Fallen Star



14AO  
The Final Strike



14AP The Goddess  
Ascendant



14AQ  
The Royal Throne



14AR The Tale of  
the Fourth Avatar 1



**Order Form—Imperial Herald #14 (All offers herein begin on 2/20/00 and expire 8/1/00.)**

Redemption policy: Send your orders via certified mail or other traceable means. We are not responsible for lost orders. All selections are limited by availability. Imperial Assembly members who provide their DCI number on the outside of their envelopes receive priority. During the first four weeks from the postmark of this issue, only one request of each card per customer will be taken. Additional requests during this period will not be processed until after this period expires. If an item you have ordered is not in stock, we will select from your listed substitutes or return your Koku if no substitutes are provided. Self-addressed, stamped envelopes for card orders are no longer required. Shipping and handling for all other items is still required. Write down orders by item number. Please allow two to six weeks for delivery. Make checks payable to "DCI!"

Item #s: \_\_\_\_\_

Alternate choices (card requests): \_\_\_\_\_ Shipping & handling total: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ DCI #: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Street: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

**SEND ORDERS TO:**

**For the Americas and  
Asia/Pacific:**  
Fan Clubs/Taka's  
Treasures  
P.O. Box 707  
Renton, WA 98057-0707  
U. S. A.

**For the U. K., Ireland,  
and South Africa:**  
WotC U.K., Ltd.  
Customer Service  
P.O. Box 61  
Maidenhead, Berkshire  
SL6 1FX ENGLAND

**For France:**  
WotC France  
Customer Service  
B. P. 103  
94222 Charenton Cedex  
FRANCE

**For Italy:**  
WotC Italia S.r.l.  
Customer Service  
via G. Stephenson 43/A  
20157 Milano  
ITALY

**For the rest of Europe:**  
WotC Belgium  
Customer Service  
B. P. 2031  
2600 Berchem  
BELGIUM





**14-3 Legend of the Burning Sands Clan Shirt**  
Each shirt has the Faction name on the front, and they all have the same artwork on the back. 100% preshrunk cotton, available in L, XL, XXL, and XXXL. Currently unavailable at stores. Specify Faction and size.

*500 Dinari, plus \$4 S&H in the U. S. and Canada/\$10 S&H elsewhere*



**14-4 L5R Logo Shirt** The Legend of the Five Rings logo is in full color on this black T-shirt.

**14-5 LBS Logo Shirt** The Legend of the Burning Sands logo is in full color on this blue T-shirt.

Both shirts are 100% preshrunk cotton, available in L, XL, XXL, and XXXL. Currently unavailable in stores. Specify size.

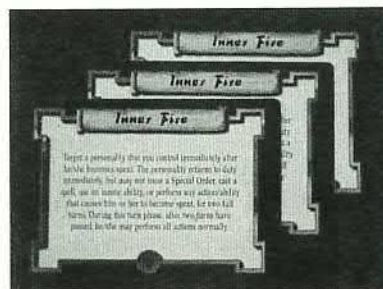
*250 Koku or Dinari, plus \$4 S&H in the U. S. and Canada/\$10 S&H elsewhere*



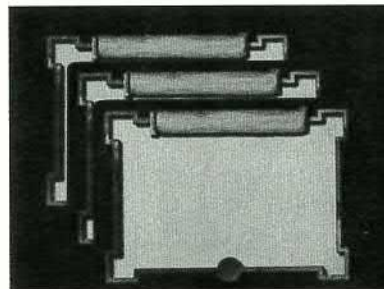
**14-7 Set of Three Fight for Position Promo Tactical Cards** 30 Koku



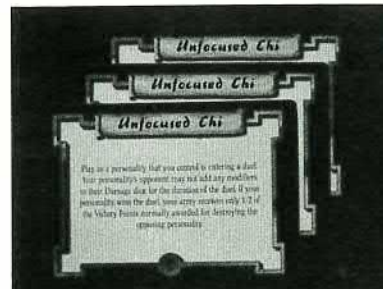
**14-10 Set of Two Dairya and Choruru Promo Force Cards** 30 Koku



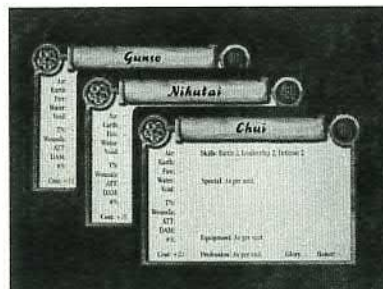
**14-8 Set of Three Inner Fire Promo Tactical Cards** 30 Koku



**14-11 Set of Three Blank Tactical Cards** 30 Koku



**14-9 Set of Three Unfocused Chi Promo Tactical Cards** 30 Koku



**14-12 Set of Three Leadership Package Cards** (one each Nikutai, Gunso, and Chui) 30 Koku



**14-13 Hantei the 38th Promo Figure** (previously offered in *InQuest* magazine) 30 Koku, plus \$1 S&H



# News from Court

by Andy Heckt

## Fifteenth Day of Darkness

Fellow members of the Assembly, I bring you word from the imperial capital. For over two weeks Lady Sun has hidden her face, and the chaos within the palace has grown. Hitomi walks the land, and Toturi's power weakens, but the power of this Assembly grows in the absence of his supreme authority.

## The Favor

I have negotiated a deal with Yasuki Taka for Assembly members only. Assembly members who provide their DCI number with their order from Taka's Treasures have their Koku and Dinari increased in value to 3 Koku/Dinari per wrapper and 10 per deck! This offer is only applies for non-card items and only for items in this issue.

Taka has secured a number of Button Men only seen at the Y2C convention. He thought it only natural to offer them to members, as we had offered the ten-button set from Gen Con '99. Read your cover letter for details. You'll note also that within this issue appear six cards that only members can order. Provide your DCI number with your Koku when ordering these, to verify your membership.

## Canada

Residents of Canada: Due to improvements in transport, trade, and regional offices, you pay domestic rates for membership and shipping. That's correct! \$15 U. S. to join or renew Assembly membership—so call 1-888-4-5RINGS now!

## Banners

This, the first new item Taka has procured, is available to everyone, but members receive a sizeable Koku discount. Kamweid, a merchant from beyond the great mountains, has come forth with the nobori for the clans. Don't miss out.

## Renewal

For many of you in this assembly, this is your final issue pending your renewal. If you are unsure, check the expiration date on your cover letter. In the eight months I have served as chancellor, the promised four issues have

come, benefits for members are on the increase, other membership offers continue to increase, and prices are remaining the same for most of you. I have made the effort to show you the promise of what your membership will do for you; now I give you the opportunity to remain a member. You can renew by three methods:

**Phone:** 1-800-324-6496 or 1-888-4-5RINGS

**Internet:**

[www.wizards.com/L5R/imperialcourt/fanclub.asp](http://www.wizards.com/L5R/imperialcourt/fanclub.asp)

**Mail:** Send a copy of the form below (or the same information in any other format) to your regional representative as listed on page 26.

## Access to the Chancellor

For questions you have regarding membership benefits, Koku redemption, or change of address, contact me (if you're in the Americas or Asia/Pacific):

**Phone:** 1-800-324-6496 or 888-4-5RINGS

**Email:** [frpg@frpg.com](mailto:frpg@frpg.com)

If you aren't in the Americas or Asia/Pacific, contact your regional representative as listed on page 26.

## Membership Drive

Many memberships expire this month; check your card or cover letter. We encourage you to renew: thirty-three foil cards come out with each of the three sets starting with the Honor Bound set; the complete, ninety-nine-card foil set tells the tale of the Clan War that brought Toturi to power—and Toturi has gifted some of them to me! A new or renewing member this issue, and the member who encouraged him or her to join or renew (as given on the form) will each receive the Fire & Shadow foils. We will contact the winners and announce them next issue. The second two sets of foils, from the Ambition's Debt expansion, go to Ryan Asato and Sean Thompson, of California. Congratulations! In issue #16, a member who has joined or renewed since #12 and his or her "sponsor" will each receive all ninety-nine foils.

# The Mantis Clan and Yoritomo's Alliance

by Ree Soesbee and Ed Bolme

"They will rise, and the prize shall be theirs. But be warned; do not destroy what you cannot rebuild." -Itako

For a thousand years the Great Clans of Rokugan fought amongst themselves. At times the wars were small; at times they threatened to tear the Empire apart. Whichever the case, one military truth remained constant: the Great Clans were fond of sending the eager young samurai of the Minor Clans—ever willing to prove their worth—to die. The horrid cost this exacted from the smaller clans helped keep them weak. But in these tumultuous days, a leader has emerged from among the "lesser houses."

His name is Yoritomo.

Yoritomo, of the House of the Mantis, is one of the best-known warriors in the land. His brash, arrogant style revolves around peasant weapons rather than the honored weapons of the samurai. Many revile him for his low birth and scorn him for his aggressive nature, but they also fear him for his incredible strength and agility. He is a samurai of legend.

In the early days of the Clan War, the Crane were hard-pressed by the advances of the Lion and the ravages of the False Hoturi. They turned to the Mantis Clan, paying large sums of gold for mercenary samurai troops to expend for Crane safety. Under Yoritomo's guidance, however, the Mantis did not hoard this gold, but spent it to hire ronin and units from other minor clans to bolster their ranks.

As the Day of Thunder approached and the Empire mustered itself to battle the fiend that sat upon the Emerald Throne, Yoritomo stood before the doors of each of the Minor Clans in turn, shouting his message. "The Great Clans have forsaken you," he cried, holding his banner aloft. "We go to remind them that they cannot use us as pawns or as tools. Apart, we are nothing—streams in the wilderness. Together, we are the ocean's wave that they cannot overcome!" The Fox rallied swiftly to his side, weary of the Crane wars that blackened their lands. With the kitsune, traditionally the voice of the Minor Clans, came the loyalty and allegiance of other clans of the Triple Alliance. The Wasp and Sparrow stood beside the Fox, joining Yoritomo in his quest to stop the Great Clans of Rokugan from treating the Minor Clans as ashigaru and gain the respect that they give each other: the respect of samurai.

At the Day of Thunder, Yoritomo at last won his position. In the war council before the final assault of Fu Leng, he did not kneel, but only bowed. With the assembled Minor Clans firmly behind his leadership, he demanded from the assembled daimyos that they grant the Alliance status as a Great Clan. Should they deny his demand, the Minor Clans would attack the assembled armies to prove their willingness to die for their honor.

In that tense moment, on that desperate battlefield, Crab Champion Hida Yakamo laughed in sincere appreciation for Yoritomo's daring, and, at last, the Minor Clans gained equal standing in the Empire.

But some who marched under Yoritomo's banner now see more. They see a brave general, capable of demanding loyalty and organizing a mighty army out of the scraps of the once-minor clans. They see in the Mantis daimyo a new Emperor, and rumors fly of an assault on Otosan Uchi. Certainly Yoritomo and his Alliance have greater goals than the cessation of war, and if they must take their wages in blood, they will do it for their own voice, not at the demand of the Great Clans.

Upon this much, they all agree.

And still the Alliance's power grows. The Mantis successfully stormed Phoenix lands and hold Kyuden Asako. Yoritomo's son, an adopted Bayushi samurai named Aramasu, has loaned the Mantis a tremendous amount of power, stolen from the Scorpion while they were in exile. With that information and the knowledge of the secret roads of the Empire, Yoritomo and the Alliance have risen to become one of the most powerful clans in the Empire.

And still, for Yoritomo, it is not enough.



## Yoritomo's Alliance Top Ten

1	Shawn Megaw	872
2	John Ager	850
3	Craig Forsythe	750
4	Jeremy Ratcliffe	650
5	Jody Mooney	551
6	Patrick Gamblin	550
7	Nema Hafezi	541
8	Jeff Schomoke	531
9	William Ringland	500
10	Craig Gaddis	500



## Mantis One-on-One

### Dynasty Deck (45)

- Events (2)
  - 1 Monsoon Season
  - 1 Unexpected Allies
- Holdings (17)
  - 2 Bushi Dojo
  - 3 Jade Works
  - 2 Large Farm
  - 3 Master Smith
  - 1 Oracle of Earth
  - 3 Ratling Nest
  - 3 Small Farm
- Personalities (23)
  - 2 Mukami
  - 3 Ratling Conjurer
  - 3 Ratling Scavenger
  - 3 Ratling Thief
  - 3 Rik'tik'tichek
  - 1 Ropp'tch'tch
  - 3 Tchickchuk
  - 2 Tsuruchi
  - 3 Yoritomo Furikae
- Regions (3)
  - 3 Ratling Villages

### Fate Deck (48)

- Actions (25)
  - 3 Battle Hardened
  - 3 Contentious Terrain
  - 3 Deadly Ground
  - 2 Diversionary Tactics
  - 3 Encircled Terrain
  - 3 Rallying Cry
  - 3 Ratling Hordes
  - 3 Stand against the Waves
  - 2 Superior Tactics
- Elemental Ring (1)
  - Ring of the Void
- Followers (21)
  - 3 Chitatchikkan
  - 3 Ratling Pack
  - 3 Ratling Scout
  - 3 Ratling Conscripts
  - 3 Tattered Ear Tribe
  - 3 Ratling Archers
  - 3 Ratling Bushi
- Sensei (1)
  - 1 At'tok'tuk Sensei

Yoritomo, arguably the most powerful military leader in Rokugan, is on the march. Having dealt with the duplicitous Scorpion, the Mantis have moved toward Phoenix lands while keeping an eye on the Crab. What is Yoritomo's goal?

The meteoric rise of Yoritomo and his amalgamation of minor clans has led others to look beyond the old power structure. This is a time of change for Rokugan. Abandoned by most Kami, suffering through a month of darkness, governed by a possibly mad Emperor, the land cries for stability. Would a Shogunate be out of the question?

Steve DiRusso and Eric Devlin

## Mantis Multiplayer

### Dynasty Deck (80)

- Events (4)
  - 1 March of the Alliance
  - 1 Inheritance
  - 1 Imperial Gift
  - 1 Iris Festival
- Holdings (24)
  - 3 Large Farm
  - 3 Port
  - 3 Trading Port
  - 3 Island Wharf
  - 3 Small Farm
  - 3 Pearl Divers
  - 3 Merchant Caravan
  - 3 Marketplace
- Personalities (51)
  - 3 Yasuki Kurjiro
  - 1 Yoritomo
  - 1 Yoritomo Exp.
  - 1 Yoritomo Exp. 2
  - 3 Yoritomo Yukue
  - 3 Yoritomo Denkyu
  - 3 Yoritomo Kamoto
  - 3 Yoritomo Furikae
  - 3 Yoritomo Komuri
  - 3 Yoritomo Kanbe
  - 3 Yoritomo Takumi
  - 3 Yoritomo Tsuyo
  - 3 Tsurushi
  - 1 Tsuruchi Exp.
  - 3 Mukami
  - 3 Mukami Exp.
  - 3 Bayushi Aramoro
  - 3 Hyobe
  - 3 Hasagawa
  - 2 Daikua
- Region (1)
  - 1 Plains of Otosan Uchi

### Fate Deck (77)

- Actions (43)
  - 3 Block Supply Lines
  - 3 Charge
  - 3 Counterattack
  - 3 Deadly Ground
  - 3 Diversionary Tactics
  - 1 Egg of Pan Ku, The
  - 3 Entrapping Terrain
  - 3 Frenzy
  - 3 Mantis Bushi
  - 3 Mantis House Guard
  - 3 Rallying Cry
  - 3 Refugees
  - 3 Sneak Attack
  - 3 Superior Tactics
  - 3 Yoritomo Technique
- Elemental Rings (3)
  - Ring of Earth
  - Ring of Void
  - Ring of Water
- Followers (16)
  - 3 Elite Spearmen
  - 3 Kobune Crew
  - 3 Mantis Samurai
  - 3 Wasp Archers
- Items (15)
  - 1 Ancestral Weapons of the Mantis
  - 1 Battle Standard of the Mantis
  - 1 Dragon Pearl, The
  - 3 Kitsune Nagamaki
  - 3 Mantis Fleet
  - 3 Naginata
  - 3 No-Dachi

This is a power and mobility deck. The multiple Ports in the deck provide Gold, mobility, and Force to your army. The Dynasty deck is pretty straightforward; the Fate deck contains the surprises.

The Mantis Fleet combines nicely with the Ravine, allowing you the Cavalry mobility while still letting you use the card. The Kobune Crew allows you to play the Mountains of the Phoenix and then scoot away, leaving the enemy to blow up. Even better, have your Mantis Bushi bow your enemy's weak Personalities before you leave, so that when the Terrain resolves, he or she has to target a heavy-hitter.

### Rare and Fixed Cards Used

Emergence of the Tortoise is a basic-set rare; it's in there to give you a free turn of attaching Followers and attacking. I think it's an undervalued card and should be cheap to buy. The Mantis Bushi are also rare but pretty important to the deck. They appeared in the Pearl Edition set, so you should find them easily.

Yoritomo, his Armor, and the Battle Standard of the Mantis are all in there for Force bonuses. They are not necessary. Any samurai will do to replace Yoritomo, and Yoritomo Technique might be a good replacement for the Items.

The Wedge is in the deck because I actually have one.

The Toturi Sensei and Mantis Marine Troops are rares from the Honor Bound and Ambition's Debt expansions, respectively, but as R2s, they should be pretty easy to find.

### Variants

Sad to say, the deck starts to have difficulties as soon as you leave the Open environment. Neither Daikua, who is a Sneak Attack all by himself, nor Hyobe, who prevents you from bowing on the attack, is Jade-Ex legal. Sneak Attack and Rallying Cry could cover them, but that's space lost from your Fate deck.

Are You with Me? and Emergence of the Tortoise are not necessary, but they help out. Replace them as you wish.

When playing Strict Jade, you lose the Sailors and Trading Port. Elite Spearman can replace the Sailors, and the Path of Akodo can replace the Port, to get extra work out of that Kobune Crew.

I already discussed replacing the Standard and Armor above.

Yoritomo Technique can adequately cover Deploy Reserves. Chasing Osano-Wo can replace The Spirit of Water. And any power card, like Charge, can replace Wedge.

Edward Bolme

## Mantis Power and Mobility

Kyuden Yoritomo Stronghold

### Dynasty Deck (40)

#### Events (4)

- 1 Are You with Me?
- 1 Assault on Otosan Uchi
- 1 Emergence of the Tortoise
- 1 Famine

#### Holdings (16)

- 3 Island Barricades
- 3 Island Wharf
- 3 Pearl Divers
- 3 Port
- 3 Shipyard
- 1 Trading Port

#### Personalities (20)

- 2 Daikua
- 3 Hyobe
- 3 Kitsune Diro
- 2 Mukami
- 1 Yoritomo
- 1 Yoritomo Exp.
- 2 Yoritomo Chujitsu
- 3 Yoritomo Nodoteki
- 3 Yoritomo Takuni

### Fate Deck (40)

#### Actions (19)

- 2 Another Time
- 1 Confusion at Court
- 1 Crushing Attack
- 2 Deadly Ground
- 1 Deploy Reserves
- 2 Encircled Terrain
- 2 Forward, March!
- 3 Mountains of the Phoenix
- 2 Ravine
- 2 Traversable Terrain
- 1 Wedge

#### Elemental Ring (1)

#### Ring of the Void

#### Followers (11)

- 3 Kobune Crew
- 3 Mantis Bushi
- 2 Mantis Marine Troops
- 3 Sailors

#### Items (5)

- 1 Battle Standard of the Mantis
- 3 Mantis Fleet
- 1 Yoritomo's Armor
- Kihos (3)
- 2 Master of the Rolling River
- 1 Spirit of Water, The
- Sensei (1)
- 1 Toturi Sensei



# Clan War Scenario

by Ken Carpenter

## THE SOUL OF ROKUGAN

A waning moon shone dimly through high, wispy clouds, providing barely enough light to see where the river met land. A breeze filled the fleet's sails, drawing it closer to a dark shadow against the sky that could only be Otsan Uchi—as if the wind itself was a conspirator in Kisada's plan to conquer the heart of Rokugan.

As ranks of samurai stood ready on deck, the only sound the gentle clatter of their armor. Soon they would leave the ships and form into an army on the plain just outside of the Emperor's city.

Kisada, daimyo of the Crab Clan, stood on the aft deck watching the city's shadow rise. At his shoulder stood his son, Yakamo.

Kisada spoke softly, the way the wind whispers through the leaves of spring. "Rokugan must not be led by weakness and infirmity. Neither may Rokugan be led by the wiles of a Scorpion woman. Strength is the soul of Rokugan!"

Yakamo glanced at his father and then away. He did not respond. He wondered at the events that had led them here, to the gates of Otsan Uchi, with the intent of wresting the Emerald Throne from the only heir to the Hantei line. Still, it was his father's decision and he would give his life to see his father's will carried out, as would any true Crab samurai.

The signal. Not far ahead a lantern waved from side to side along the river's edge. Some weeks before, a small group of Hiruma scouts arrived to locate a safe area for the Crab army to offload their ships. The bobbing lanterns testified to the scouts' success.

Within an hour the Crab army stood organized on the riverbanks, awaiting orders to march, as the leaders received the latest intelligence reports. Only once before in the history of Rokugan had a clan made such a bold move against the Emperor and his city . . . and it had heralded the death of the Scorpion Clan.

This is a small portion of the battle that took place outside of Otsan Uchi as the Crab army, led by the daimyo Kisada, attempted to capture the city and the Emerald Throne for Kisada. Though Kisada did not appear in the forces for the represented portion of the Crab army, he led the army, and the results of this portion of the battle have repercussions to the outcome of his aspirations.

## SCENARIO FORCES

### Crab Army

Crab Forces

#Mdl	Model Type(s)	Cost
1	Hida Yakamo, general	352
	Writ of the Sword	35
<u>16</u>	Crab Heavy Elite	<u>432</u>
17	<b>Subtotal</b>	819

#Mdl	Model Type(s)	Cost
1	Hida Tampako	124
	Writ of Command	35
<u>20</u>	The Damned	<u>380</u>
21	<b>Subtotal</b>	539
1	Hida Tampako	124
	Writ of the Sword	35
	Fan of Command	25
<u>20</u>	Hiruma Medium Elite	<u>340</u>
21	<b>Subtotal</b>	524
1	Kaiu Family Chui	25
<u>20</u>	Crab Heavy Infantry	<u>300</u>
21	<b>Subtotal</b>	325
	Hiruma Gunso	20
<u>12</u>	Hiruma Archers	<u>180</u>
12	<b>Subtotal</b>	200
92	<b>Total</b>	2427*

\*If players choose to create their own forces for this scenario, the Lion forces are limited to 80 percent of the total cost for the Unicorn forces.

### Crab Tactical Deck

3 x Another Time	3 x Banzai Charge
3 x Charge	3 x Counter-Charge
2 x Defensive Position	2 x Frenzy
3 x Grim Determination	2 x Know the Terrain
3 x Parade Ground Practice	3 x Test of Might
3 x The Waves Break	

### Lion Army

Lion Forces

#Mdl	Model Type(s)	Cost
1	Ikoma Ujiaki, general	304
<u>16</u>	Lion Heavy Elite	<u>432</u>
17	<b>Subtotal</b>	736
1	Matsu Imura	153
<u>11</u>	Lion Warcats	<u>176</u>
12	<b>Subtotal</b>	329
1	Ikoma Ryoza	105
<u>20</u>	Lion Elite Spearman	<u>300</u>
21	<b>Subtotal</b>	405

1	Kitsu Motso	155
15	Imperial Sentinels	345
16	<b>Subtotal</b>	500
66	<b>Total</b>	1970*

\*If players choose to create their own forces for this scenario, the Lion forces are limited to 80 percent of the total cost for the Crab forces, and their army cannot include Matsu Tsuko, who the Emperor ordered not to participate in the battle.

#### Lion Tactical Deck

3 x Banzai Charge	2 x Burst of Speed
3 x Charge	3 x Counter-Charge
2 x Fallback and Regroup	3 x Grim Determination
2 x Iaijutsu Duel	2 x Know the Terrain
3 x Parade Ground Practice	2 x Strength of Purity
2 x Test of Might	3 x Turtle Shell

## SCENARIO RULES

### Deployment and Setup

The Lion forces react quickly to the presence of the massed Crab troops marching on Otosan Uchi. As a result, they are not as well prepared as their enemies generally find them—the Lion player must place the first unit. Unit placement then alternates normally with the Crab placing their remaining two units after the last Lion unit has been placed. Placement areas are noted on the scenario map.

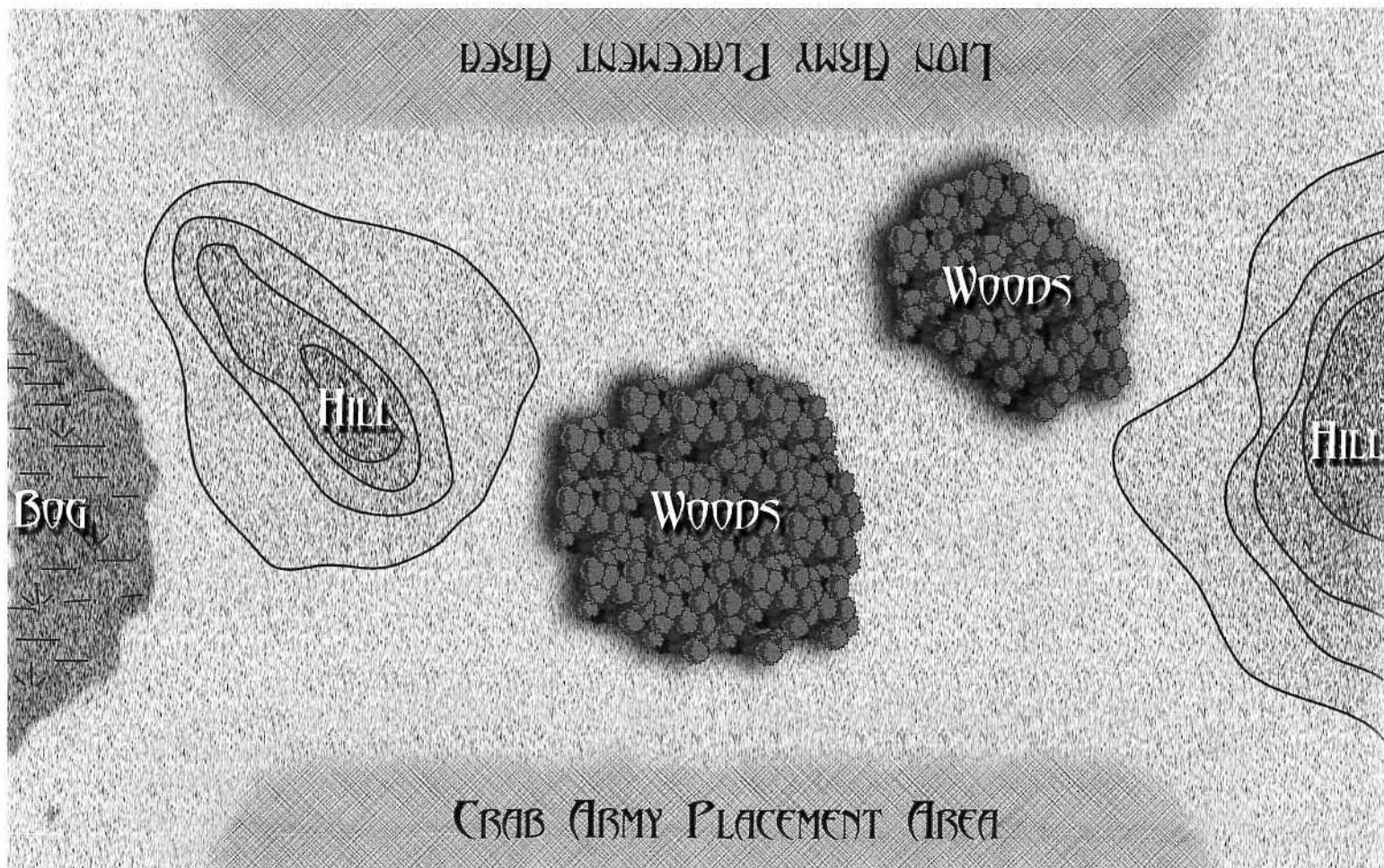
### Objectives

**Crab:** The objective of the Crab army is to get through the Lion forces quickly, before reinforcements arrive. Its aim is to deliver Kisada to the Emperor's throne room so the Crab daimyo can challenge the Emperor to a duel.

To achieve a Decisive Victory, the Crab player must exit 1400 Koku worth of his or her forces off of the Lion side of the battlefield by the end of Turn 7. The Crab player achieves a Marginal Victory by exiting 1000 Koku worth of his or her forces off of the Lion side of the battlefield by the end of Turn 10.

**Lion:** The Lion army achieves a Decisive Victory by preventing both Crab victory conditions. It achieves a Marginal Victory by eliminating 1400 points of Crab forces.

It is possible for both armies to claim Marginal Victory, which indicates that both Clans achieve some of their objectives but pay dearly to do so.





# Fire & Shadow Card List

## Actions

Ancestors Possess the Living	R
Ascendance	R
Assuming the Championship	R
Bloodstained Rage	C
Chasing the Shadow	R
Come One at a Time	C
Command of the Kami	U
Crisis in Command	C
Crow Tattoo	U
Dangerous Choices	R
Defeat the Reserves	C
Divided Loyalties	R
Elemental Attunement	R
Fearful Presence	U
Fearsome Strength	U
Gift of the Emperor Victory	R
Harsh Lessons	C
Hidden from the Empire	C
Hummingbird Tattoo	U
Journey to Otsan Uchi	C
Kolat Assistance	R
Last Refuge	U
Last Words	C
Mismanaged Troops	U
My Life for Yours	U
Never Yield	U
New Beginnings	U
Of One Mind	U
One Last Battle	R
Owned	U
Pestilence	C
Primal Rage	U
Relief	C
Remember What You Have Seen	C
Remember Your Oath	R
Rights of the Challenged	C
Run for Your Life	C
Sharpest Blade	R
Shifting Ground	U
Shosuro Technique	R
Single Combat	C
Slaughter of the Land	U
Soul's Sacrifice	U
Spirit of the Bright Eye	U
Spreading the Shadow	U
Tattoo of the Night Sky	U
Tricked	C
Venerable Stature	C
White Shore Plain	U

## Events

Cross-Clan Wedding	R
Dark Energies Run Red	U

Emissary of the Ivory Kingdoms	U
Far from the Empire	R
Final Words	R
Honorable Sacrifice	U
Kachiko Calls to Thunder	U
Kachiko's Promises	R
Mine Cave-In	U
Moto Ride to the Shadowlands	R
Return of Myth	U
Return of the True Champion	U
Triumphant Victory	R
Yoritomo Refuses the Throne	U

## Followers

Ambush Strategist	C
Crab Cavalry	R
Decoy	R
Emerald Magistrates	R
Hurricane Initiates	C
Kaiu Siege Engine	C
Oni no Megada	C
Ratling Youth	U
Skeletal Elite	R
Spectral Guide	U
Yabanjin Sorcerer	C

## Holdings

Ashalan Sandsmith	C
Corrupted Dojo	C
Den of Mujina	U
House of Contracts	C
Imperial Surveyor	C
Oracle of Thunder	R
Pitfall	C
Provision Storehouse	C
Shipping Lanes	C
Shokansuru	U
Shrine of the Dragon	
Champion	C
Tax Collector	C
Temple of Divine Influence	R

## Items

Blade of Kaiu	U
Burden of the Word	R
Grandfather's Jaw	C
Masamune Katana	C
Ninja-to	R
Sanctified Blade	C
Scrolls of Norikazu	R
Skirmisher's Pike	C
Sword of the Sun	R
Third Mask of Iuchiban	R

## Kihos

Fate's Merciful Hand	U
Feeding on Flesh	R
Heart of the Damned	C
Know the Evil	U
Maintain Balance	C
Pearl Magic	C
Proud Heritage	C
Stepping between the Cracks	R

## Personalities

Agasha Fujita	U
Asako Kaushen	U
Asako Sagoten	C
Balyezn Rafiq	U
Bayushi Aramasu Exp. 2	R
Bayushi Aramoro Exp. 2 Aramoro	R
Bayushi Muraian	C
Dakosho	C
Djabab	U
Doji Chomei Exp.	R
Doji Jiro	C
Hanoshi	C
Hida Nezu	U
Hida Rohiteki Exp.	R
Hitomi Bujun Exp. Mirumoto Bujun	R
Hsi Tsu	C
Ide Buodin	C
Ikoma Gunjin Exp.	R
Isawa Toiko	C
Jian	U
Kaiu Endo	C
Kakita Ichiro Exp.	R
Kitsu	R
Kitsu Gongsun	U
Kitsu Huiyuan	R
Kitsuki Mizuochi	U
Kitsune Shudo	C
Kitsune Tsuke	C
Kumo Exp.	R
Mack'uk	C
Mara Exp.	R
Matsu Suhada	C
Mirumoto Songui	C
Mirumoto Sukune Exp.	F
Mirumoto Watanubo	U
Mirumoto Yuyake	C
Miya Yuritogen	U
Mohai	U
Moto Notu	R
Moto Toyotomi	U
Ninja Shadow-Walker Exp.	R
Oni no Okura Exp.	R
Osakuda	U

Otaku Xieng Chi Exp.	R
Purusha	C
Ryosei Exp. 2	F
Sanjuro	C
Seppun Toshiken Exp.	R
Shasyahkar	R
Shiba Gensui Exp.	R
Takao Exp. 2	F
Togashi Jodome Exp.	R
Toritaka Kitao	C
Tsuruchi Exp. 2	R
Ujina Tomo	C
Yoritomo Okan	U
Yotsu Sabieru	U

## Regions

Akui Cliffs	C
Bridge to Jigoku	R
Campsite	U
Fields of the Dead	C
Heimin Village	U
Mantis Isles	U
Road of Dust	U
Shi-Khan Wastes	U
Sleeping Lake	R

## Sensei

Dark Moto Sensei, The	R
Hantei Sensei	U
Kitsu Sensei	R
Satsume Sensei	U
Seppun Sensei	U
Taka Sensei	R

## Spells

Blood and Darkness	R
Capturing the Soul	R
Eternal Darkness	U
Miya's Sasumata	R
Ryoshun's First Gift	C
Shinobi Corruption	U

## Strongholds

Iron Mountain	F
Kyuden Kitsune	F
Temples of the Crow	F

# LBS Water Conservation

by Mark Wooten

The desert is no place for honor or etiquette. In the Burning Sands, only two things count: water and control over some part of the Jewel of the Desert, Medinaat al Salaam. The game play and winning strategies reflect this pretty well. I will discuss the techniques you can use to make this happen and how some of the Factions perform in relation to these techniques.

The LBS TCG has an ever-diminishing resource that alters the pace of the game as players use it: Water. Remember when building a deck that some Factions actually become stronger as Water dries up, even when they fall way behind in the overall Water balance.

Two strong archetypes are the Raiding deck and the Drought deck. They become strong as Water decreases because their real strength lies in their focus on moving the Water around. With less Water in play, they can move a higher percentage of it around. They can move Water from your side of the table to theirs and repeatedly create scenarios in which your Military deck effectively destroys its own Water. They very often focus on defensive cards and/or Hero elimination through duels or Battle Action cards, which tend to kick in better when the attacking player has fewer options.

Hero destruction in the LBS TCG is much more significant than Personality destruction in the L5R TCG, mainly because the majority of Heroes cost Water. This means that each time you bring one into play, you pay an irretrievable cost, and you lose your investment when you lose the Hero. Secondly, because the combat system has built-in attrition, each Hero in play tends to reflect a larger part of your resources. The loss of Water grows more significant the faster the deck. A fast Senpet Jinn or Dahab Anarchy (gorillas and Undead) deck can classically bludgeon its way past a Moto Raider, Jackal/Alliance Drought or Assassin Dueling deck. The faster Military decks burn their Water to achieve speed, often buying Heroes that cost almost as much in Water as they destroy with one attack. After early losses, the more control-oriented decks seek to turn that into a weakness as they eliminate these Heroes before or after a single attack. They then steal yet more Water, gradually depriving the Military deck of key people.

The control decks can struggle against the slower, more defensive, Water-conscious Military. Factions like the Ashalan, Ebonite, and Ivory Kingdoms all have access to a good number of very effective mid-range, high-Strength Heroes. They all achieve their objectives differently, however. The Ashalan conserve their Water at source but do not have

quite the beef that the other two have. They use less Water to buy their people and have some devastating "Stronghold plus a Holding" Heroes, making them slightly quicker. The Ebonites conserve their Water by using it to absorb more damage before its destruction. The Kingdoms can use the precision of Archery and a little dueling to supplement their own high-Strength people.

The other standard victory condition is the Story Victory. This is in some ways analogous to an L5R Enlightenment Victory, but the player looks to play 5 Points worth of Stories chosen from a broad range of Story cards. This means that you can't always predict a Story deck, as you never know which 5 Points worth of Stories your opponent wants to play. The Qabal Faction and the Assassins can both make interesting and effective Story decks, though a Story Victory is the most difficult to achieve.

These are my key principles to improved play, whatever style you choose:

The number, and Fate value, of cards in your hand can be at least as important as the Heroes on the table. During discards, I have kept cards useless for anything but their Fate values instead of cards whose actions I might have used, and had it pay off.

You can destroy City Sections and reduce your opponent's hand size most effectively early in the game rather than late, when both players have depleted hands. Remember this when creating your deck.

It is often good to build decks that interfere with an opponent's strategy rather than just focus on your own goals. For example, every non-Jinn deck should probably include the Brass Lamp Jinn-destruction card. Even against non-Jinn decks its Fate value of 4 finds uses.

The order that you play actions is absolutely critical. With the alternate-action turn structure, attacks could come at any point, and you have to be ready for them. I have seen games won and lost because people hesitated to attack, thus giving their opponent the chance to play another Hero—or because someone played an action before putting that crucial defender on the table.

More than any other game I have seen, the balance of power in the LBS TCG can shift. Within two or three turns, I have gone from certainty that I would win to a position of disadvantage. In the finals of Gen Con U. S. and U. K. Military decks hit me hard early. I won one final and lost one, both with the very tightest of finishes. Look for that opportunity to turn the tables, and when it comes, choose your timing well!



# Slaves of Mortals

## Part I

by Patrick Kapera

"Mortals are convinced that the Jinn are our slaves, that the masters of fire and magic are merely pawns in the eternal human game. But the Ancients knew better—they remembered a time when the jinn were free, striding the world with godly might. Only the jinn, the first-born of Shilah and her husband, Kaleel, knew the awesome secrets of the stars and how to destroy them."

—Israk ibn Kaleel

"It is the doom of mortals that they forget."

—Mekhem the Prophet

The Jinn of Eternal Beauty stepped aside as a crowd of children raced through the tremendous ballroom, smiling widely before returning to her conversation. Others turned to glance at the boisterous chain of youngsters as well, momentarily distracted from the propriety of celebration to enjoy a moment of innocence. Nim, heading the fun, swirled around Ayna's feet and torso before pausing above his shoulder, his laughter the sound of wind-chimes in a gentle breeze. But Ayna, the Jinn of Brutal Harvest, only leveled his feral gaze at the small, floating annoyance.

Feigning the pain of rejection, Nim pulled backward, plucked a rose from a nearby vase, and bowed mid-air in mock supplication. Anya's feet were now embedded in a sea of cats mewing for his acceptance of Nim's gift. One eyebrow on his monstrous face darted upward as he considered the best way to remove Nim from his presence. The crowd hushed around him, suddenly amused by Nim's antics—even at the cost of Anya's pride.

Finally, the Jinn of Brutal Harvest leered into Nim's playful face and reached forward to grasp the rose's thorny stem. Instantly, the newly-plucked flower coiled about Anya's arm, sprouting a dozen new buds that promptly blossomed into full, radiant beauty. A delighted gasp rose all over the ballroom, followed by cheerful applause. Nim bowed respectfully, then darted away at the head of the children and cats once more, slipping out of the room before conversation resumed.

"It is amazing, is it not, Ashalla?" Khaidu spoke, but the attentions of the Ebonite sahir he addressed were drawn over the great railing of the balcony, onto a lower level of the great floating citadel where a steady stream of wounded Ebonite templars flowed into Sehai's quarters.

"... Hmm? I'm sorry, Khan. I was ..."

"Are you all right?" the Moto asked, concerned.

"Yes. Yes, of course," Ashalla responded, her eyes now riveted upon another bridge beside the great spire of flame that spiked through the citadel's center. A lone figure crossed from the other side, his face and hands brutally exposed—as if he had just returned from the storms to the northeast ...

"If you'll excuse me, there is someone I must speak with." Ashalla's words left no room for further pleasantries, and she left Khaidu to a moment of uncomfortable silence that lasted until another guest took her place.

Pashal pushed open the giant bronze doors at the end of the bridge and peered into the dim hallways beneath the headquarters of the Celestial Alliance. Still reeling from the amazing truths he'd learned from the Bearer of the Jidan, he stumbled through the citadel and wondered about his next course of action. He couldn't just tell them and expect anyone to understand. How could they? Even after a year, everyone still assumed that the Ashalan and the Keepers of the Chronicle had abandoned them—and at the eve of war, no less.

How could anyone understand that it was for their own good?

The squire stepped into the temple, heading for the altar. Perhaps the stars would have something more to tell him, or he would find the calm of mind that had eluded him since his meeting with Qer Apet ...

Suddenly, the room exploded into a flurry of wailing arms and voices. Children hopped around him and screamed, the words lost to one another. Pashal, unprepared for such an assault, backed away dizzily,

holding his hand up to his brow as if to shield him from the children and their sharp joy. But this only turned the sounds of laughter and greeting to shrieks of alarm. The children backed away, starting at Pashal's upturned hand and gravel-stained face.

Nim, appearing before Pashal seemingly from nowhere, gently clasped the squire's hand and examined it. Until then, Pashal had not realized how badly injured he was. The lines in his black-stained hands were like canyons, and the calluses on his fingers marred them beyond recognition. He doubted that he could have lifted a sword or drawn back a bowstring. He could not feel anything below the elbow, and his face stung and tickled all at once beneath a thick veneer forged by the sand and the wind near the buried City of Bronze.

Nim's face, normally frozen in a perpetual smile, fell slightly, as if he felt Pashal's pain. He didn't speak but simply tugged at Pashal's clothes to lead him to Sehai the Healer. The other children and the cats fell in line beside them, feeding from Nim's sadness.

"You're back!" Ashalla exclaimed, hugging Pashal closely. "What happened? Did you find the City of . . ." His voice trailed off as she suddenly realized his condition.

"No," Pashal responded. "Nothing. Only sand."

"We need to get you to Sehai." Ashalla took his hand and led him out of the room, assuring the children that he was all right, returning them to their play.

"The wedding? It's happening already?" Pashal noticed the decorations about the citadel as Ashalla led him into its belly.

"You've been gone for weeks, Pashal," Ashalla answered.

"Weeks? It seems like only days . . ."

"That can happen in the storms. But don't worry. You've made it home—and just in time! The ceremony doesn't start until tomorrow. Saqr al Fediq and Sahlah are still in the Searching."

"Those Templars," Pashal pointed ahead to the lines of wounded. "What happened?"

Ashalla watched Pashal carefully. He was different somehow, as if consumed from within. The squire seemed troubled, burdened with heavy thoughts, yet his spirit seemed stronger than ever. Ashalla wondered again what had happened to him, out there in the desert waste. She smiled reassuringly and drew him toward the healer's rooms. "Perhaps we shall find out together."

Sehai's quarters were a quiet flurry as the healer passed from one wounded Ebonite to the next, doing what he

could for each and flagging critical patients. Pashal was exhausted but far better off than most of those whom the healer attended, so he found a nice, simple cushion away from the front rooms, where he could lie down. After he had spent a few minutes alone, a string of lightly wounded soldiers passed outside the door to the small chamber where he rested. Pashal called out to them, asking what had happened. "How were so many of us wounded?" he asked.

"The Jackals," a Templar responded. "They tried to gain control of the Stone again."

"But we fought them off!" another called from the back of the crowd. "They won't forget their mistake!"

The crowd parted for Effendi, the former prince of Medinaat al Salaam, who stepped through to stand beside the squire's makeshift bed.

"How are you, Pashal?" Effendi smiled. "You've looked better."

Effendi's smile was infectious, and Pashal returned it. The Sultan's blood had always been jovial, a trait inherited by both of his children. "I live, Effendi. I live. How is your sister? Enjoying her wedding, I hope!"

"Sahlah is happier than I have ever known. Who knows?" Effendi turned and lifted his hands in conjecture. "Perhaps the jinn can love, after all."

The two fell into a moment of silence, remembering when they first arrived at the citadel nearly a year before. People knew Saqr al Fediq as a human sahir then, though one with amazing knowledge of lost magic. He visited the Sultan's court from "parts unknown" to introduce a miraculous method of transport called "The Crossroads." Saqr had always kept to himself, refusing to join the Sultan's festivals or speak outside open court. And no one ever saw him in his personal chambers.

Yet Saqr was not without a heart. He courted the Sultan's daughter, Sahlah, relentlessly, promising to make her the happiest woman alive if she would accept his hand. She refused, out of loyalty to tradition if nothing else. The Sultan's line could not marry out of their caste, regardless of their heart. But it was obvious to those around her even then—especially her brother Effendi—that the stranger enchanted her.

When the Erba'a Alliance descended on the city and the Caliph murdered the Sultan, the mysterious sahir revealed himself as a jinn who had taken human form, and he offered to save as many of the Sultan's people as he could—beginning with Sahlah and her brother. Betrayed yet desperate, the two had little choice but to accept, and Saqr transported them here, to the one remaining jinn citadel free from Shilah's ancient wrath.



From the high parapets of the citadel, they had watched as their precious jewel burned and the people of the sands destroyed one another.

"Saqr al Fediq has promised to make her happy," Effendi finally continued, "and I am confident that he can. They have my blessing."

Pashal's smile lingered even as his mind returned to pressing matters. "Is Nepherus at the citadel?"

"No. He's with Adira in the city, trying to end the riots. The Houses of Dahab haven't lifted their trade embargoes yet, and the people of the Outer Districts are still revolting. I'm leaving after the wedding to meet with them, but . . . I'm not sure what good it will do."

"Still having doubts?"

"If I were a good son, I would be down there guiding the city. My father wished for me to rule."

"You are a good son, Effendi," Pashal chuckled. "You're just not an obedient one. You're defending Medinaat al Salaam in the only way you know—by fighting. If you were Sultan, you would be bound by propriety and the masses."

"But what good are we doing up here? Planning for a war while our subjects starve? Defending the city while entire villages are lost to Kaleel . . . ?"

The squire's eyes fell, and his mind raced; no one else could answer Effendi's questions. The Ashalan, who would normally be Effendi's counsel, were gone, and the Principles were still learning from their ancient texts. Pashal needed to know the rest of the prophecy—of the Days of Trial and the coming storm.

"May I have a moment with him, Effendi?" Kabdar Fassal was near the bed, his khadja planted into the floor beside him. "I have private words for him."

"Of course, Templar," Effendi replied. With a final glance of support, he rose and retreated to the wedding celebration.

After Effendi left and Fassal determined that no others could hear them, he sat beside the wounded squire. He sighed deeply, considering his words with the greatest care. Pashal had never known Kabdar to be this discerning. "What's wrong, Kabdar?"

"We found something. After the fighting at the Temple, a few of us discovered a wall collapsed by one of the Jackals' volleys. There are hidden tunnels beneath the Temple . . ."

"As we always suspected," Pashal prompted.

"Just inside one of the branch tunnels, though, we found something else—a jinn corpse."

"Dead? How?"

"It is best if you see for yourself."

\* \* \*

As the final ceremony wedding jinn to human became a reality hundreds of feet above them, Kabdar al Fassal, Pashal, and a handful of stunned Ebonite Templars observed another miracle.

"He's human," Pashal marveled as he observed the scene: two figures, both long-dead, locked in a final battle-pose. A glossy black sword gripped in the hands of a human attacker pinned a jinn, thin and wiry, up against the tunnel wall. "But . . . no jinn has ever died by the hand of a human."

"Tabari was only part human," Fassal reminded the squire, lifting the remnants of the Shadowmaster's cloak as proof. "And no human has attacked a jinn in recorded history. Perhaps it is only a myth—the immortality of the jinn. What concerns me is this."

Fassal pointed to the weapon, a remarkable feat of martial engineering. The blade's surface gained a sheen from the torchlight and rippled as the Templars moved about it. It was as if the weapon was made from tar, yet fluid like water. But its most amazing attribute was its reaction to its surroundings. A few quick tests determined that it was not sentient, but reactionary, recoiling from sharp prodding but conforming to touch applied gradually.

"It responds without mind, like a young child," Fassal observed.

"Or a sleeping adult," Pashal said; with that, the Ebonites backed away to a safe distance to discuss their options.

Pashal began. "Tabari did not have the power to destroy a jinn. Bind and control one, perhaps, but certainly not anything like this."

"The jinn is Gathriq," Fassal interrupted, "who killed Tabari's brother, Dawuud, just before the Awakening. It was a powerful spirit—one of Kaleel's chosen, according to the ancient Ashalan texts."

"We need to conduct more research," Pashal continued, "starting with you, Fassal. You're already familiar with the jinn. You need to continue digging. Try to find anything relating to this sword."

Fassal nodded, then Pashal turned to the others. "We need to get the sword back to the citadel."

Kaleel, sequestered within Onaja's small form, inhaled the contents of another soul-jar, his mind loose and warm as another of the Jackals' victims vanished into him. The jinn lord had always enjoyed the suffering of others, but the Jackals' process of stealing and containing souls was unprecedented. The victims suffered the agony

of losing their bodies, then isolation in a magical cell devoid of sight, sound, or touch. By the time Kaleel consumed them, they were like a vintage wine, their terror sweet and pungent.

A murmur among the free jinn hovering within the downed citadel throne-room alerted Kaleel to visitors. He took another long moment to revel in the intoxicating vapors wafting from the soul-jar beneath his inhuman face before gazing upon the humans brought before him: Fatima the Half-Soul and her ally, the Monkey Man, with word from the Jackals, no doubt.

"Speak." Kaleel's voice echoed through the buried citadel's chambers like rolling thunder.

"Word from the Jewel, my lord," the Monkey Man began. "The Sayel Blade has been recovered."

"Excellent," Kaleel growled.

"But," Fatima intervened, "not by us."

"What?" Kaleel suddenly focused upon the three Jackals, bearing down on them. "By who, then?"

"The Alliance."

A moment of silence followed, the only sound in the hall the crawling skin and clacking mandibles of Kaleel's

legions. Tension swelled around the jinn lord as he considered the consequences of losing the Sayel—or, worse, of the Quest finding it. When he finally spoke, his words dripped with blood. "Find it. Bring the sword back to me. Do this, and you will be spared the coming holocaust."

The Jackals glanced quickly at one another, skirting the jinn lord's gaze as they scurried from the hall. All but two of Kaleel's fledgling jinn horde followed, leaving the fallen god to his thoughts. Abjar and Akhad remained with their sibling, waiting for the command they knew would come.

"I will not be denied again, brothers," Kaleel uttered after a time. "The Quest must not enter the war against us."

"Your command?" The brothers loomed over Kaleel's childlike form, scarcely containing their anticipation.

Onaja's slight voice could not convey the weight of Kaleel's order, nor the untold destruction it would unleash.

"Bring Israk home."

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### Night of a Hundred Deaths

Three decades ago, a rivalry emerged between the Hare and Fox Clans, leading to a series of small, armed confrontations.

The Fox claim that the rivalry began when a Hare scout fired upon an unarmed party of Fox shugenja. The Hare deny this.

The small war stalled when Kakita Toshimoko arrived to arbitrate. Unfortunately, before diplomatic discussion could begin, a hundred Fox diplomats were suddenly murdered. The Fox immediately declared war upon the Hare. A small but brutal war erupted and was cut short by the intervention of the

Emperor, who forced a Crane advisor upon the two clans, with veto power over all of their daimyos' actions. Though the clans chafed at the brusque treatment, the bloodshed ended.

The cause of the war was simple for the Fox to ascertain: the Hare used blood-magic and wished to cover their tainted lies with the blood of the Fox Clan. A Fox emissary, sent to the Hare before the war began, returned with tales of secret chambers within the Hare palace, where the Hare performed rituals to the Dark One using their daimyo's blood. Aware that the kitsune's ancient sword held a dark secret, Kitsune Oshirin, the Fox daimyo, reported that an agent

(continued next page)

magnificent autumn leaves; the kitsune permit no sign of taint within the realm of the forest. The kitsune quickly discover the traveler who approaches their homeland with Taint in his or her heart and, just as quickly, turn the traveler's road around and twist the path, to prevent their disturbance and any further trespass.

Tall trees and vine-crusting groves thickly cover the hills and valleys that wind through the forest. Unlike in the Shinomen, however, there are no signs of Naga inhabitation or shrines. The valleys of Kitsune Mori have several areas of caves—clefts in the hillsides and deep incisions into the earth. Some say that a hidden labyrinth of passages connects all areas of the Kitsune Mori, and that the Fox use these passages to ensure their safe (and rapid) travel through the area without disturbing spirits or the forest itself.

### Living with Spirits

The Fox insist that kitsune are nothing more than magical spirits of nature who choose to inhabit their forested lands and the mountains to the north. They do not serve the Fox Clan, nor does the Fox Clan owe them any obligation other than friendship. Although many of the heimin leave offerings outside their own villages to appease the kitsune, the Fox Clan does not worship these spirits, but only reveres them.

Kitsune, as it is said to be with all spirits, are immortal, and they pass some of that tremendous lifespan to their descendants, the Fox. Where a person of the Empire proper can expect to live no more than a 100 years at the most ancient, some Fox are documented to have died at the ripe old age of 250. Such occurrences are unusual, but when they do happen, the Fox keep rumors from forming. Still, many samurai come to Fox lands seeking mystical "waters

of life" that keep the Fox young and healthy for such a long time and allow them to live beyond the time of a normal human.

There are numerous shrines in the woods of the Fox, some hidden from the Empire's main paths and roads. Some are over seven hundred years old, built by the first Fox samurai just after Shinjo left Rokugan. Images of white foxes often grace such shrines, carved into freestanding torii arches and placed within small caves that dot the Fox Clan's mountainous northern province.

The Fox Clan holds some of these shrines so sacred that the shrines also contain Shinto shrines to honored Fox ancestors, as well as the white itsune carvings. The name for these fox-carvings is "myobu" (also a name for ladies of courtly rank and noble lineage), and they are considered good luck. Often, women of the Fox Clan who have discovered that they will soon bear children travel to these cave-shrines and spend the night there alone, hoping to gain the kitsune's blessing for their children.

One popular tale of the kitsune shrines concerns their affection for the priests of Inari, the lesser Fortune of rice. Once, long ago, a traveling kitsune couple sought shelter in the temple of the Seven Fortunes. The two foxes cowered beneath the eaves of the temple, but the monks would not let them inside. Though the rain was cold and the female was obviously pregnant with a litter of young, the temple's keepers hurried the foxes away with the brush of a stiff broom.

Nearby, in his small hut, a mikokami monk of Inari opened his door. "Come inside," he called to the foxes, "for though my hut is small, my fire will warm you. Though my food is poor, there is rice that you may eat, and the fair lady may rest herself upon my

humble blanket." In gratitude, the two kitsune bowed their heads to the ground before the humble monk and swore ten oaths to Inari, to protect and defend her temples. Also for this reason, foxes do not eat rice, in remembrance of the monk whose food they took when they were in need. Since that day, small white fox statues could be found at the temples of Inari. Temples to Inari are popular in the small villages of the Fox Clan.

#### **Notable Fox Battles**

The Fox have been involved in numerous battles during their time in the Empire. Though they try to stay out of disputes, their location (directly between the Crab, Crane, and Scorpion) prevents them from maintaining a completely peaceful border.

#### **The Fox and the Crane**

The battle known as the Night of a Hundred Deaths is one of the most recent in the Empire's history, having occurred only thirty years ago. Despite Crane diplomacy, war threatened the feuding Fox and Hare. Finally, a group of Kakita samurai led by the then-young Toshimoko met with the gathered troops of the two clans on the border. After much persuasion and open threats, the Fox and Hare agreed to turn their backs on war and seek a diplomatic solution. But it was not to be. Late that night, a group of assassins apparently hired by the Hare slaughtered a hundred of the sleeping Fox Clan dignitaries. The Fox daimyo, Kitsune Oshirin, declared war upon the Hare, and the two clans met in battle the next morning. The Crane, feeling that the Fox Clan were in the right, sided with them against the Hare, and the battle ended swiftly. Rather than expressing gratitude, Oshirin proclaimed hatred toward the Crane, saying that it was their intervention that had

held off the war and caused the death of his wife. He challenged Toshimoko to a duel, was cut down, and died on the field near his wife's pyre.

By command of the Emperor, a Crane must act as advisor to both daimyos in a hostile situation, and the Crane can challenge, in the Emperor's name, any decision the daimyos make. This has only happened twice in the thirty years since the Night of a Hundred Deaths, both times when the Hare Clan threatened again to invade Fox lands. Both times, the Kitsune smiled in secret triumph, as they used their wiles and cleverness in new ways to destroy the Hare's credibility and reputation in the Empire.

There has been at least the one unexpected casualty of that war, however, and the price of the Hare's downfall has been high.

Long ago, Kakita Toshimoko courted Kitsune Ryoden, the daughter of the Fox Clan daimyo. He fell in love with her and asked permission to marry of her father, Kitsune Oshirin. But Oshirin refused. During the Night of a Hundred Deaths, Toshimoko led the small army of Kakita assigned to defend the Fox lands. He did not succeed, and a hundred Fox samurai died in their beds from his negligence. After the battle, the Fox daimyo challenged Toshimoko to the duel, claiming that it was the Crane's unwanted love for his daughter that blurred his vision to the truth about the Hare's wickedness. He claimed that if Toshimoko had been serious about his love for Ryoden, he would have sided with the Fox from the beginning rather than seek a diplomatic solution to the war. Toshimoko, already one of the finest duelists in Rokugan, was forced to accept the duel and killed the man in a single stroke.

Kitsune Ryoden fled the site in tears at the death of her father. Her brother,

of the Hare Clan was trying to overthrow the Fox in order to capture their ancestral weapon—and planned to free the scroll that lay hidden in the ancient weapon's hilt. This could not be allowed, no matter how many must die to prevent it. If the Crane learned why the maho-using Hare attacked the Fox, however, they would certainly claim the sword for themselves. They would reveal the secret, and the scroll would surely fall into the hands of those who would break its seal and use it for evil.

Now, after much work and guile on their part, the Fox have eradicated their enemy. The Hare Clan is no more, and the sword still lies hidden, deep within the forests of the Fox.







Kitsune Gohei, accepted his father's position with sorrow. Ryoden spent her time in the gardens of the Fox, refusing all visitors and swearing vengeance for her father's needless death. At last, on the day her brother's first child (the babe who would one day become Kitsune Ryosei) was born, Ryoden took her father's armor and sword and set off to the north to seek the wisdom of the Dragon Clan. For many years, she remained among the Mirumoto and the Togashi, learning the skill of weapons and trying to appease her hunger for revenge with Dragon wisdom. She never returned to the forests of the Fox Clan, and when news of her death at the hands of Kakita Toshimoko came to Gohei's court, the clan mourned for a treasured daughter who had been lost to the sacrifices of honor.

#### The Triple Alliance

Three years ago, the armies of Bayushi Tomaru invaded the Suzume Hills, seeking an easy route to the rich Daidoji merchant ports of the coast. Tomaru was a harsh man given to slaughtering peasants and pillaging the land to fuel his war efforts. After his invasion of the Sparrow, he would certainly begin expanding north, taking the lands of the Sparrow's neighbors, the Fox and the Wasp. Ryosei, who had recently inherited the position of Fox Clan daimyo from her ailing father, did not wish to see Scorpion boots crush the verdant forest. When Tsuruchi, the Wasp daimyo, approached her, she paid careful attention to his words.

As the Scorpion charged against the Sparrow in the Suzume hills, the Scorpion found their forces assailed by arrows from the sky. When spells of deception lifted, they revealed a command of Fox shugenja. Tomaru was handily defeated, his troops routed and chased by the spirits of the field.

The Sparrow were nearly as surprised as the Scorpion. After the battle ended, the Wasp daimyo proposed an alliance between the three clans, to prevent the Scorpion or the Crane from attacking one another on the lands and routes in the three clans' territory. The other two clans agreed with little deliberation, and thus began the first major alliance forged between minor clans in the Empire's history. The site of the tremendous battle was named Mittsu Otoko Rengo Heigen (Three-Way Alliance Plain) in honor of the day.

#### Skills and Techniques

Kitsune Family

Benefit: +1 Willpower

Kitsune Shugenja School

Benefit: +1 Intelligence

Skills: Hunting, Herbalism, Calligraphy, Kenjutsu, Meditation, Defense, any one Bugei skill

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 8 boxes

Beginning Spells: Sense, Commune, and Summon, plus 3 Earth, 2 Air, 1 Water

Kitsune Taboos

1-point Flaw; may be taken by Fox Clan members only, up to 3 times

Kitsune, as with other spirits who spend a great deal of time among the people of the Empire, have been "sullied" by their proximity to mortals. To keep themselves distant and avoid losing their spiritual powers, the kitsune who interact with the Fox Clan have adopted several taboos that guide their behavior and mannerisms. Even the more human members of the Fox Clan have adopted many of these, respecting their spiritual guides and making it more likely that a visiting kitsune would not be noticed among them. Not all Fox samurai accept a taboo, but those who do follow it faithfully all of their lives.

It is said that the Fox who accept the burden of taboos are especially beloved by the kitsune, and if they abide by it faithfully, the kitsune will care for them well if they ever find themselves in great need. A samurai may take any of these taboos:

- The kitsune are creatures of the land and of the wood. The samurai may not harm a commoner nor allow the woodland to be defiled or destroyed without cause. The samurai must care for the needs of the common heimin, and, in exchange, they will warmly greet and care for the samurai when he or she visits a village.
- The kitsune are creatures of deceit and mischief. The samurai who chooses this taboo may never tell the complete truth and must cover his or her words with a veneer of falsehood. This is a dangerous taboo to accept, and the samurai must be doubly careful not to mislead his or her lord while adhering to the bonds of the taboo.
- For a spirit to become involved in the affairs of mortals, it must be invited to take action. This taboo requires the samurai to never directly affect a battle or any other major scenario without first having been asked to interfere. The samurai cannot enter houses unless invited to do so by name and cannot offer aid unless first asked for it.
- The samurai cannot eat rice but must make do with the natural berries and foods of the forest, supplemented by a diet of fish and chicken. In this way, the

samurai becomes attuned to the woods and the forest, rather than to agriculture and the ways of humankind, and remembers the kitsune oath to Inari, the lesser Fortune of rice.

- Solitude is abhorrent to many kitsune, who live for affection, dedicated attention, and mischief. If the samurai accepts this taboo, he or she must always share the company of at least two other individuals—even when sleeping.
- As with many spirits, kitsune become ill if unable to keep their promises and follow their word of honour. A samurai who accepts this taboo commits seppuku rather than break a promise (even one given in haste), and when someone else breaks a promise the samurai rapidly becomes deadly enemies with that person.





# Legend of the Burning Sands Combat FAQ

by David R. Henry, official Legend of the Burning Sands rules compiler

Version 3.0, Rev. 8/31/99

**An Engaging FAQ of Legend of the Burning Sands Combat**  
Continuing from last issue, here is more on combat in the Burning Sands.

## **Berserk Ain't Just a Robot**

Berserk is a special way to engage damage. Berserk cards must have the **Berserk** trait, and while players can choose not to use it, there's no real disadvantage not to use it, so most of them always do.

Berserk is special, in that any card hit by Berserk damage cannot use Fate discards to absorb the damage. If someone with Berserk 4 hits you, and your entire army of a 2S Hero and two 1S Heroes dies. (If your opponent didn't have Berserk, you'd probably have only lost one Hero and discarded a Fate card to make up the difference.)

But how does Berserk work with usual engagements? Well, there's nothing stopping you from engaging Berserk cards with normal cards. But if you combine Berserk and non-Berserk cards for a single engagement, the entire engagement becomes non-Berserk. Sorry, but you know how tough it is to keep a head of froth. To gain the benefits of Berserk, you have to engage only Berserk cards. Otherwise, all other rules for engagements work normally.

## **I Shot an Arrow into the Air**

Okay, so we've got down immunity, engaging for damage, the respective advantages and disadvantages of being the Attacker and Defender, and frothing Berserks . . . by the Sun, is there anything left to cover with this FAQ?

Well, yes. There's a very special form of engagement that slightly tweaks the rules. It's called "Archery," and a few Heroes and Followers have it. Other cards might grant Archery as well.

In general combat, melee is an inelegant affair. Even the lordly Gaheris doesn't particularly care who he hits with his 5S engagement; he just sort of lazily swings and smiles as whole divisions die. Not so the Archers. Heroes and Followers with Archery can use Archery when they engage. You have to say they're using it as you engage them, and you can't change your mind

afterward. Furthermore, Archery engagements put a crimp in the otherwise free-for-all rules for the number of a Hero's Followers that can engage: if you want to use Archery, only Followers or Heroes who all have Archery can engage together. This doesn't mean your Hero has to have Archery to allow his or her Archer Followers to team up—Argoun leading two Archers can have the two Archers engage for 6S Archery easily enough, saving up his own 2S engagement for later.

With all of these restrictions, why bother with Archery? Well, it's the only way for you to engage and decide which card in the opposing army takes damage. You engage Yesugai, Moto Clan Archer. Instead of just causing a generic 2S attack that the opposing player can split up as he or she sees fit, you, the Archery-using player, can point out who gets the hit ("Yesugai plugs Janan Barakah like a gasping tuna. Suffer!"). As you can see, this allows you a good deal of control over what goes on in a battle; at least, more than most non-Archery engagements.

Now, Archery does have its limitations. Beyond somewhat limiting what Followers and Heroes can engage together, an Archery engagement can target only a Hero or a Follower. And before you can shoot down a Hero, you have to shoot down all of the Hero's Followers. Even the Trained Peacocks will nobly take the shot to save their master's life. Archery can only target one card at a time. If you're going to shoot those 0S Trained Peacocks with a 6S Archery attack, you get one really dead bunch of Peacocks . . . and that's it.

As with all engagements, immunity still applies to Archery. Gaheris laughs off 3S Archery engagements, just like he laughs off generic 3S engagements. You can target immune cards with your Archery engagements, but if the controller of those cards doesn't want them to suffer the damage, then they won't. In general, don't waste your time doing it.

But the uses of Archery generally overcome its limitations. It doesn't usually kill off huge Heroes, but it is tallies off the annoying groupies who follow in a big Hero's shadow to help him or her and eat

engagement damage. Nepherus, for instance, often tags along in the shadow of Senpet armies, destroying any offending Defensive Omens the opponent plays. A generic engagement might not hit Nepherus; any Archery shot of 1S or higher kills him. Adnan often joins armies to die (with his Fate card clutched boldly to his bleeding chest) in place of Heroes the player actually cares about. Use Archery to ignore the sacrificial lamb Adnan and get rid of the really threatening Heroes.

Some Archery cards have bonuses or penalties to their **Archery** trait. For instance, Ramontet says "Archery +1." That means that if and when he engages for an Archery attack, you raise his Strength by 1—only for that Archery engagement.

But wait! How do Archery and Berserk work together? It's actually rather easy to get a Berserk Archery attack.

(Give any Hero with Archery some Elephants, and engage only the Hero.) Just remember that while you can engage non-Berserks with Berserks, you cannot engage non-Archers with Archers. It's just rather pointless, as an Archery engagement only kills one target anyway, so the ability of Berserk to negate your opponent's Fate discard to suck up damage doesn't make much of a difference.

### **The Light at the End of the Tunnel**

And that's the end! If you have any questions, comments, or improvements for this FAQ, please contact the author at <dhenry@plains.nodak.edu>. I hope you found this useful and easy to understand, and may Lady Sun bless you in all of your endeavors and engagements.

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#### **Q: Do I need someone who's specifically "Mantis Clan" to assign with Yoritomo Chujitsu?**

A: No. You can assign him with any Yoritomo's Alliance Personality as well. The rulebook says they're equivalent and Chujitsu doesn't say anything about being an exception to this rule.

#### **Q: Does One Life, One Action stop a kiho that's been attached via Blessings of Isawa from being cast?**

A: No. It isn't "played" when it's used. One Life, One Action won't stop it from attaching, either, assuming it was legally and successfully cast.

#### **Q: If a kiho is cancelled, can I still attach it to a Personality with Blessings of Isawa or keep it in my hand with the Eternal Halls of the Shiba?**

A: No and no. It needs to resolve for either of those to trigger.

#### **Q: Tchickchuk says "A Ratling Follower can be attached to Tchickchuk when he performs this action." Does that mean I get to do two things at once: use him to make some other Ratling card free and give him a Follower at the same time?**

A: No. That clause only assures you it's legal for him to make a Follower that he's attaching to himself free, since bowed Personalities normally cannot attach cards.

### **Focus on... In Search of the Future**

This will zero out all Force-increasing effects not provided to a card by another card attached directly to it. That includes bonuses cards give themselves, like Matsu Gohei's +2F when attacking, and bonuses from Items or Followers to other Items and/or Followers. Of particular interest is the fact that an Ancestral Sword's own variable Force bonus to itself is stopped before its total stats get added to its Personality. It will only be a 0/(X+1) weapon. It's a very wide-reaching effect, catching even things like Oath of Fealty, Evil Portents, and Stronghold bonuses like on the Spawning Grounds and New Akasha.

Attaching is a two-way relationship, though, and bonuses that a Personality provides to his own cards stay just as live as the ones he receives from them.



## Focus on... Judgement of Toshiken

This reaction renders null and void all card effects which alter Chi, focus values, or how the resolution of the duel is handled. This includes Togashi Yoshi, the **Double Chi** trait, and Kharmic Strike (but not Toshimoko Sensei, because Sensei text is considered to be on your Stronghold and Strongholds are not cards).

It applies for the entire duration of the duel, affecting even cards played after it, such as Poisoned Weapon.

It has no effect on bonuses or penalties which were already in place before the challenge was issued, such as Strength of Purity or Touch of Amaterasu.

It does not change a non-Chi duel to a be duel of Chi.

## Focus on... Hiruma Sensei

### What it does:

It applies to all extra requirements placed on actions, not just true costs. In particular, it defeats Storms of War.

For the first two effects, it doesn't matter who played the card that's trying to impose the restrictions. For instance, the Defender can ignore his own Deadly Ground.

### What it doesn't do:

It does not allow defending players to ignore their actions' own legality, costs, and listed playing conditions. It only overrides other card effects which prohibit or impose additional costs or requirements on otherwise legal actions. Here are some things Hiruma Sensei does not allow:

- Taking a Limited action.
- Playing a Terrain when there is already one in play.
- Taking an Open action which says "You may not perform this action during battle."

It does not override targeting restrictions, whether they're native to the action being taken (ex: Charge) or due to another card (ex: Kitsuki Kaagi's Journal).

It does not make defenders' actions immune to being cancelled or redirected.

## Focus on Kage Sensei and At'tok'tuk Sensei

There has been some confusion (even within the design team) how these two sensei cards exactly work. As of February 1, 2000, both senseis will work as follows: When you have one of these two sensei cards in play, they grant your clan trait onto all of your Kolat/Ratling Personalities in your deck.

This is a REVERSAL of a ruling made on the l5rinfo listserver. The original ruling was more in line with the original intent of the cards, but was confusing and

counter-intuitive to the players. This reversal/ruling should be much easier for everyone to understand and apply.

The following cards should be removed from the Not Jade-ex Legal list presented in Herald #13

Shinjo Yasamura (correction)

Kumo

Mara

Koichi

Ranbe

Oni no Kamu

Kemmei

Shinjo Sadato

Blood of Midnight

Shabura

Shabura exp

Shiba Katsuda

Bonds of Darkness

The Price of War

The Celestial Pattern



Ninja Top Ten		
1	Brandon M Flores	864
2	Dawniel Ramsdell-loescher	575
3	Scott Hadsall	446
4	Mathew E Manders	366
5	Stacey Block	363
6	Robert W. Cain	352
7	Orlando Rodriguez	282
8	Leon Phillips	270
9	Joshua Allred	226
10	Gregory F. Mandarana	217





# The Gate Will Open

*next issue*



# Who Will Lead?

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