

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS • INTERACTIVE STORYLINE COLLECTIBLE CARD & ROLEPLAYING GAMES

THE
IMPERIAL

HERALD

VOL. 2 / NO. 20



RESULTS FROM THE
WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS
RISE OF THE SHOGUN
ENCYCLOPEDIA

THE EMPEROR WOULD RISK
EVERYTHING TO ATTAIN IT.
THE SHOGUN DENIES IT.
THE WOLF BELIEVES IT BEYOND REACH.

WHAT WOULD YOU DO TO GAIN
ENLIGHTENMENT?
WHAT WOULD YOU DO ONCE YOU
HAD IT?



TEST OF ENLIGHTENMENT BRINGS THE RESULTS OF THE 2006 KOTEI SEASON TO THE TOURNAMENT SCENE. All the Enlightened characters and cards created by the Kotei events are featured with an attractive card binder and a full-color booklet. Best of all, this exclusive set will be tournament legal for GenCon Indy 2006 and the World Championships. Don't miss out on adding the power of the *Test of Enlightenment* to your decks this July!



THE IMPERIAL HERALD

THE OFFICIAL LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS™ QUARTERLY • VOL. 2, NO. 20

PUBLISHED BY
ALDERAC ENTERTAINMENT
GROUP, INC.

CREDITS:

BRAND MANAGERTODD ROWLAND
LAYOUT & DESIGN . . BRENDON GOODEYAR
EDITORS . . . FRED WAN, SHAWN CARMAN,
KEN CARPENTER
PROJECT MANAGER.KEN CARPENTER
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS . .SHAWN CARMAN,
EUGENE EARNSHAW, KERRY MACKERT,
RUSTY PRISKE, TODD ROWLAND,
MARK WOOTTON, BRIAN YOON
COVER ARTISTCHRISTOPHER APPEL

ADDITIONAL ART:

CHRISTOPHER APPEL, STEVER ARGYLE,
DREW BAKER, EDWIN DAVID, QUINTON HOOVER,
MICHAEL KOMARCK, APRIL LEE,
MALCOLM MCCLINTON

www.L5R.com

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS AND ALL RELATED
MARKS ARE TM ALDERAC ENTERTAINMENT
GROUP. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

MOST PRODUCT NAMES ARE TRADEMARKS
OWNED BY THE COMPANIES THAT PUBLISH
THESE PRODUCTS. USE OF THE NAME OF ANY
PRODUCT WITHOUT MENTION OF TRADEMARK
STATUS SHOULD NOT BE CONSTRUED AS A
CHALLENGE OF SUCH STATUS.



4



6



12



21



24



28

L5R World Championship Report	4
A Path of Violence	6
Gen Con Story Summary	10
Guide to the Kimono	12
Rise of the Shogun Card Encyclopedia	14
Gen Con Indy Seminar Review	21

Samurai Edition Preview	24
Khan's Defiance Fiction	26
Art of the Duel: Preview	28
Koku Redemption Form	30
Koku List	31



By Todd Rowland

REPORT FROM THE L5R WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

On a dark day in the Shadowlands, a valiant army met the vile oni of Jigoku to battle for the future of Rokugan. Under the leadership of the Emperor, several brave samurai secured ancient gifts for their Clans, and escaped the horde. What will these gifts bring to the Clans? Will they mean great power, or greater challenges?

The 2006 *Legend of the Five Rings* World Championships was an amazing event. Over 380 players in attendance made this the biggest stand alone L5R event ever. Members of every Clan fought for the right to enter the Tomb of the Seven Thunders and secure their Clan's prize. But that was not the only event to happen over the weekend – The Granddaughter of the Great Bear, the Challenge Booth and many random, smaller storyline events took place.

The Battle at the Tomb Qualifier 1 began with the Emperor inside the Tomb and the small defending force outside, ready to take the brunt of the Oni's assault. As the Clans fought, Nikolett Nagy of Hungary saved

the life of Mirumoto Hirohisa, but doomed the life of Bayushi Shun who was devoured by Yojireru no Oni. Later in the day, Carlos Saez Riano helped Shinjo Turong save the life of Moshi Sayoko during the battle.

As the second Qualifier began, the cavalry of the Lost crested a hill overlooking the battle. Both sides paused, and then the forces of Rekai and Tsume slammed into the oni's flank, bringing hope to the dwindling defenders of the Tomb. During the battle a Sanru no Oni swept down, killing the Emperor's standard bearer. Christophe Donnart's win with the Crab in a match against the Lion chose Hiruma Sakimi to be the one who kept the standard from touching the unclean ground of the Shadowlands, bringing great glory and honor to her Clan. Finally, as the battle drew to a close, Dominic Adenuga's win with the Shadowlands over the Ratling spelled the end of Chitik (and there was much rejoicing...).

The second day of the World Championships saw the beginning

of the Elimination rounds as well as the Granddaughter of the Great Bear storyline event. Karl Chamberlain won this event with the Dragon, securing a home for Kisada's granddaughter among the children of Togashi. The Clan Councils were also held Saturday night, and the decisions will have great and lasting impact on the future of the Clans. Some of these decisions have been spread to the public, and some have been kept secret. The Scorpion players have even done an amazing job of spreading some misinformation along the way as well!

Sunday brought the finals of the Battle at the Tomb, as well as another side storyline event. The aptly named "Save a Guy" Tournament allowed the winner to choose one character who would definitely survive the encounter at the Tomb. Jesus Mera won with Dragon, though his choice is still being discussed with the Story Team as of the time of this article. The finals of the Battle at the Tomb saw Faber van Kraanen playing his Ratlings against Reda Lounis's Crane. The Broken

Shinbone Pack's trait, which makes them immune to dueling, was the clincher in these games. Reda played incredibly well, nearly clearing forty honor in both games, but the inability to gain honor from dueling held him back just enough for the Ratlings to win the day. Faber Van Kraanen won the 2006 World Championship and was first to enter the Tomb of the Seven Thunders!

All the players were taken across the street and into the basement of another building where the Tomb awaited. The Top of Clan players were allowed to enter, one by one, while everyone else had to wait outside, hoping for a glimpse of what they might choose. Several players chose not to reveal their gifts, though some did.

See the far-right column for details on which clan took what item(s).

After the ceremony at the Tomb, we returned to the Challenge Booth, where Will Jones, fighting for the Badger Clan, narrowly defeated Adrian Burton,

representing the Tortoise, and in so doing found a home for Kazumasa, the Adventurer.

The 2006 Legend of the Five Rings World Championships was simply an amazing event. The entire staff at AEG would like to thank everyone who took part. The players' enthusiasm was incredible. We can't wait for the next L5R World Championships! Utz! BANZAI!!!



CHOICES FROM THE TOMB

Ratling

Faber Van Kraanen
An Hourglass

Crane

Reda Lounis
Chose not to reveal

Unicorn

Pablo Rojo
A Jade Boat and
Kama

Scorpion

Javier Jimenez
Chose not to reveal

Phoenix

Mariano Gallardo
Chose not to reveal

Lion

Owen Michaud
An Urn

Crab

Salman Barakat
The Tao of Fu Leng

Dragon

Kostas Adamopoulos
The Jade Mirror

Shadowlands

Tobias Vater
Chose not to reveal

Mantis

Fraois Carrire
Chose not to reveal



A PATH of VIOLENCE

Month of the Boar, year 1168

The Crab looked down the hill at the small village. Eddies of snow blew across the cold ground and smoke hung in the air like it was painted there. There were no villagers to be seen as they were all huddled against the encroaching cold.

Hida Sozen never took his eyes from the village as he gave his orders. His orders were exact, leaving little room for interpretation. Rikyu and Nichie gave no response other than affirmation and moved away to prepare their small squads.

When the attack came, not thirty minutes later, the Crab hit the village like a wave. There were only a dozen of them, all told, plus two yoriki that hung back when the fighting started, but the Scorpion had not expected an attack here at this time. The village served no strategic purpose and the onset of winter was not normally the time to start an offensive. The village magistrate fought bravely, but did not fight long. Nichie and Rikyu brought their groups from either side as Sozen took three other samurai right down the middle.

The Scorpion villagers did not stand aside in the face of this assault. They fought back with whatever weapons they had at their disposal. At one point, Sozen found himself

facing a group of four, armed with a variety of kitchen implements. They were led by a Samurai wearing no mon or colors.

The two groups, samurai and peasant, stood facing each other, as a pause in their running battle allowed Sozen and the ronin to assess each other "Who are you, who would stand in the way of justice?" Sozen yelled at the stranger.

"I am but a ronin, sir Crab, who found himself in this village. I have enjoyed their hospitality and I am loathe to watch them threatened."

Sozen smiled grimly. "Then you shall watch them no longer." He advanced on the ronin quickly, allowing his companions to deal with the villagers, while he dealt with their spokesman. The ronin was a step quicker, however, and avoided the first blow.

"You are used to dealing with ashigaru? You are a step slow." The ronin's taunts reached Sozen's ears but did not faze him. He mounted a second assault, putting a little extra speed on his blow. This time, when the ronin dodged it, he lashed out with a counter blow, which Sozen sidestepped. "Is this justice, Crab? Where you slaughter helpless villagers that have done you no wrong?"

Sozen's eyes darkened. "Do you dare question my intentions here?"

The ronin smirked. "Why not? You are planning to kill me anyway. I do not think one insult will change my fate, one way or another. Besides, you are the only one who heard me and you will be dead in a few moments."

"My day will come, but it is not this day, ronin. You are not my killer."

The ronin laughed. "Maybe it is as you say. Or maybe you will die at the hands of one whose name you do not know." This time it was the ronin who went on the offensive, but Sozen was prepared for the attack. He stepped to the side and dropped down, while slashing at his attacker's legs. The ronin leaped over Sozen's blade, but the Crab expected that and twisted his katana while reversing his sweep. He caught the ronin as he landed.

Without giving an extra moment's thought, Sozen turned and continued to his objective.

When there was no one standing against him – the survivors of the assault were rounded up and forced to sit in the center of the village to watch the proceedings – Sozen smiled. The smile was not one of joy or mania. It was contentment. He swept his arm wide to encompass the village and the rice fields surrounding it.

"Burn it!" he yelled. "Burn it all!"

Month of the Dragon, year 1165

Mirumoto Sozen threw the scroll to the floor. "This is pointless."

Togashi Kazuki looked at him impassively. "That is no way to treat wisdom. You have thrown away the collective knowledge of those who followed our lord and kami. What do you think prompts a man to reject wisdom revered by generations of his ancestors?"

Sozen scoffed. "You find symbolism in everything, Kazuki. Even someone bored of studying."

"This is why I was asked to tutor you. It isn't often that a Mirumoto is assigned a Togashi tutor. Our Lord Satsu must see something in you that others do not. When Lord Satsu tells you to study the ways of enlightenment, do you put them aside?"

Sozen sighed. "I would never dream of gainsaying Lord Satsu. I just do not understand why I am here. I am a warrior. I wish to defend our mountains and attack our enemies alongside my brethren. With all due respect, Kazuki-san, I am not a monk and I have no desire to be one."

Kazuki nodded. "I have not been asked to make you one.

I was just asked to tutor you. However, do not think that being a warrior and understanding the teachings are mutually exclusive. I am a samurai, just as you are, but I still walk the path and study the teachings."

"So I am to try and find enlightenment in these words?"

Kazuki shook his head. "Do not look for enlightenment. Look for inspiration. And do not look for it just in these scrolls. Look for it everywhere. If I can teach you anything in the time we spend together, it will be that."

Sozen just shook his head.

Rikyu pulled his cloak tighter around himself, to stave off the chill night air. He watched the final embers of the village glow dully against the cold before returning to his own campfire. Nichie casually prodded the wood in the fire with a stick, causing the flames to jump higher.

"Aren't you at least a little bit cold? Rikyu grumbled, as he sat beside her.

Nichie just shrugged. Then she yawned and said, "So, why this village? Did Sozen tell you?"

Rikyu shook his head. "Sozen did not tell me, but I heard rumors. Apparently our orders did not come from Lord Kuon, but from his grandfather." Nichie's eyes narrowed but Rikyu quickly amended his comment. "With Lord Kuon's agreement, of course. They believe that the Scorpion have been behind certain activities in Crab lands."

Nichie nodded. "The attempts on Lords Kuon and Kisada. Yes, I had heard of those."

"There is no proof, of course. The Scorpion are too sneaky for that. Still, everyone knows who is behind it. So these raids are to remind the Scorpion that we know and that their deeds will not go unpunished."

"So why insignificant villages like this one?"

Rikyu shook his head. "No village is insignificant to the ones who live there. But, attacking places that have no strategic importance gives the Scorpion the opportunity take their deserved punishment and feel no need to retaliate. It also helps our purposes as it makes the peasants feel unprotected. A populace that does not feel sheltered by its clan will not produce as well. It is longer-term thinking. The tactic may not be subtle, but it is effective."

Nichie arched her eyebrow. "Do you think it will work?"

"It is not my place to question the orders of my superiors. Such concerns are above my station. I just follow orders and kill who I am asked to kill, whether it is creatures of the Shadowlands or peasants of the Scorpion."

Nichie smiled. "You are a simple man. Yet, not."

"Where is Sozen, anyway?"

"Off meditating. He always does after a battle."

**The Great Carpenter Wall, month of the Horse,
year 1167**

Hida Sozen's katana bit deeply into the flesh of a goblin. He did not pause to watch the creature fall as he stepped towards the next one. Never turning from his enemies, Sozen was nevertheless aware of Hida Nari to his flank, moving through the crowd of goblins with brutal efficiency. The two Crabs were outnumbered by ten to one. It was far from a fair fight.

"Another glorious victory for the Crab and the empire! Those goblins won't be trying to sneak past the wall again!" Sozen's enthusiasm could be contagious but Nari seemed immune.

"As you say."

"Come now, Nari-san. I have rarely seen someone with your skill in a fight. Do you get no thrill out of seeing your enemies fall? Their death is your victory. What could be greater than that?"

Nari shrugged. "I do my duty."

Sozen goaded her on. "Just your duty? You get no enjoyment out of it?"

Nari looked away. "No." She paused. "Do you ever feel like there should be something more to find out of life? That there should be some deeper purpose?"

"A deeper purpose than serving the clan?"

"I do not mean instead of serving the clan. I just mean that there should be something else. I mean, is this all there is for me? Is violence my only destiny?"

Sozen smirked. "Now you sound like some people I knew in the Dragon. They talked about spiritual awakening and enlightened paths and greater callings and all that. I just found it to be dreadfully boring. There was one monk that I remember well, though. He told me that you can find inspiration in all things. I didn't understand what he meant then, but I do now. Here, look at this plant." Sozen reached down and picked up the remains of a weedy growth that was uprooted during their skirmish.

Nari eyed it. "What of it? It is dead and served no purpose when it was alive. Do you expect me to find inspiration in that?"

Sozen shrugged. "Kazuki thought you could. It is just a question of finding out what the inspiration is. If you figure that out, you will have your answers."

Nari shook her head. "It is just a dead weed."

"Yes. Kazuki's meaning was not always clear." Sozen looked at the weed and then casually at the body of a goblin nearby. Its skull was split by a katana, whether Sozen's or Nari's was not clear. Sozen saw the blood and gore pooled around the body and the wide-eyed expression of shock frozen on the wretch's face.

Sozen stared into the eyes of the dead creature. In that moment he saw its entire life, and its death. He saw that its entire existence had brought it to this place, and that its death was simply the next stage of that journey. He saw all possible outcomes of the goblin's life. Each one, from the most tragic to the most glorious, ended in the creature's death. All of the other futures fell away until the goblin lay at Sozen's feet. The inevitable had occurred and the goblin had died here and now.

Sozen looked back at the weed and then back to the goblin. The Crab's eyebrows rose and his mouth opened in surprise. He started to smile.

Sozen walked to the campfire. "Post watches and get some sleep. At first light I will inspect the village to ensure our objective is complete. Then we will march. We have further targets and from the smell on the air, we will get a heavier snowfall tonight. Our travel will be slow going."

Rikyu nodded. "Hai, Sozen-san."

"How many villages are we to destroy, Sozen-san?" Nichie asked.

"As many as it takes for the Scorpion to understand that we are serious." Sozen smiled. "Our cause is just, Nichie-san. The Scorpion tried to bring death in their way, but were unsuccessful. We act in our way and we are successful. It is our duty to continue."

"I never questioned our duty, Sozen-san. I just am unaccustomed to forays against such lightly defended targets."

"Remember Nichie, that we fulfill our destinies when our blade completes its task, whether that task was difficult or not."

The woman cocked her head. "Destinies?"

Sozen smiled. We all have a role in the universe, Nichie-san. This is what I'm not sure my former clan understood. They spent their time trying to discover the secret to enlightenment."

Rikyu shrugged. "A fair enough goal, if there are no more important issues to deal with."

"There are no more important issues than understanding and accepting your place in the universe, Rikyu-san. Where I could not follow the Dragon's path, was that they thought

that the search for enlightenment was their purpose it and of itself. From my perspective they were merely a dragon chasing its own tail. If enlightenment is, as I have found, the true understanding of your role, and they say that their purpose is to discover enlightenment, then they say that their purpose is to discover their purpose. How can you get an answer to a question like that?"

"I'm not even sure what the question is."

"Exactly." Sozen nodded. "Understanding the question is crucial if you want to find the answer."

Nichie stared at Sozen blankly while Rikyu laughed softly. "Riddles. You can take the samurai from the Dragon, but you cannot take the Dragon out of the samurai."

Sozen laughed. "I suppose so. I do not think that the Dragon's path is without merit. It just wasn't my path. If great men like Kaiu Sugimoto have taught us anything, it is that the path to enlightenment is not something that can be mapped, as the crossroads are not the same for each person. In fact, I doubt whether it can be the same for any two."

"So," Nichie asked, "what is the question?"

"Don't you understand? I cannot really answer that for you. As far as I know, it is different for everyone. I can tell you what it was for me. The question was, 'what is your role? What purpose do you serve?' When I realized that, the universe opened up for me."

"How did you find your purpose?"

"I realized that there are certain things that occur in nature and the world around us that cannot change. Things are born. They live. They die. Every living thing has a life to live, from the lowest creature to the Emperor himself. Sometimes it is my job to end life. I use my sword to bring down goblins, or those Scorpion peasants when they stand in the way of our objectives, or whom or whatever I am ordered to kill."

Nichie arched her eyebrow. "You make it seem so simple."

Sozen smiled. "Once I realized my purpose, it was really that simple. The hard question was, why did it take me so long to realize what was so evident?"

Bayushi Paneki sat cross-legged at a table. He picked up a small bowl and deftly plucked a piece of fish from amongst the rice with his chopsticks.

"Enter. Do not stand out there if you have something to report."

Shosuro Ohan pushed the shoji screen aside and entered the room, at her champion's order. She slid the screen closed again before bowing deeply and saying, "My apologies, Lord

Paneki, but I did not wish to interrupt your meal."

Paneki nodded to the attractive courtier. "I appreciate your courtesy, Ohan-san, but I can eat while I hear your report."

Ohan bowed again. "Of course, Paneki-sama. It seems that some of our southern holdings have been attacked by the Crab." Paneki's eyebrow rose as Ohan continued. "The invading assaults have been by small groups who attack our villages and burn them and their crops, leaving some survivors, but nothing else of value."

Paneki absent-mindedly picked at the rice in his bowl. "What intelligence do we have? Who is commanding these raids?"

"As you are aware, Paneki-sama, we have placed a representative in each of the villages along the Crab border, in order to maintain watch. These samurai pose as ronin, so as to not alert the Crab of our interest."

Paneki nodded. "Yes, of course. I value the Shosuro's discretion in such matters."

Ohan nodded. "While these men have died during the raids, each sent a report with a villager, with as much information as he could gather before the Crab struck. The attackers, of course, thought they were taking the villages by surprise, so did not believe that messages had been sent."

Paneki picked at his food and motioned for Ohan to continue.

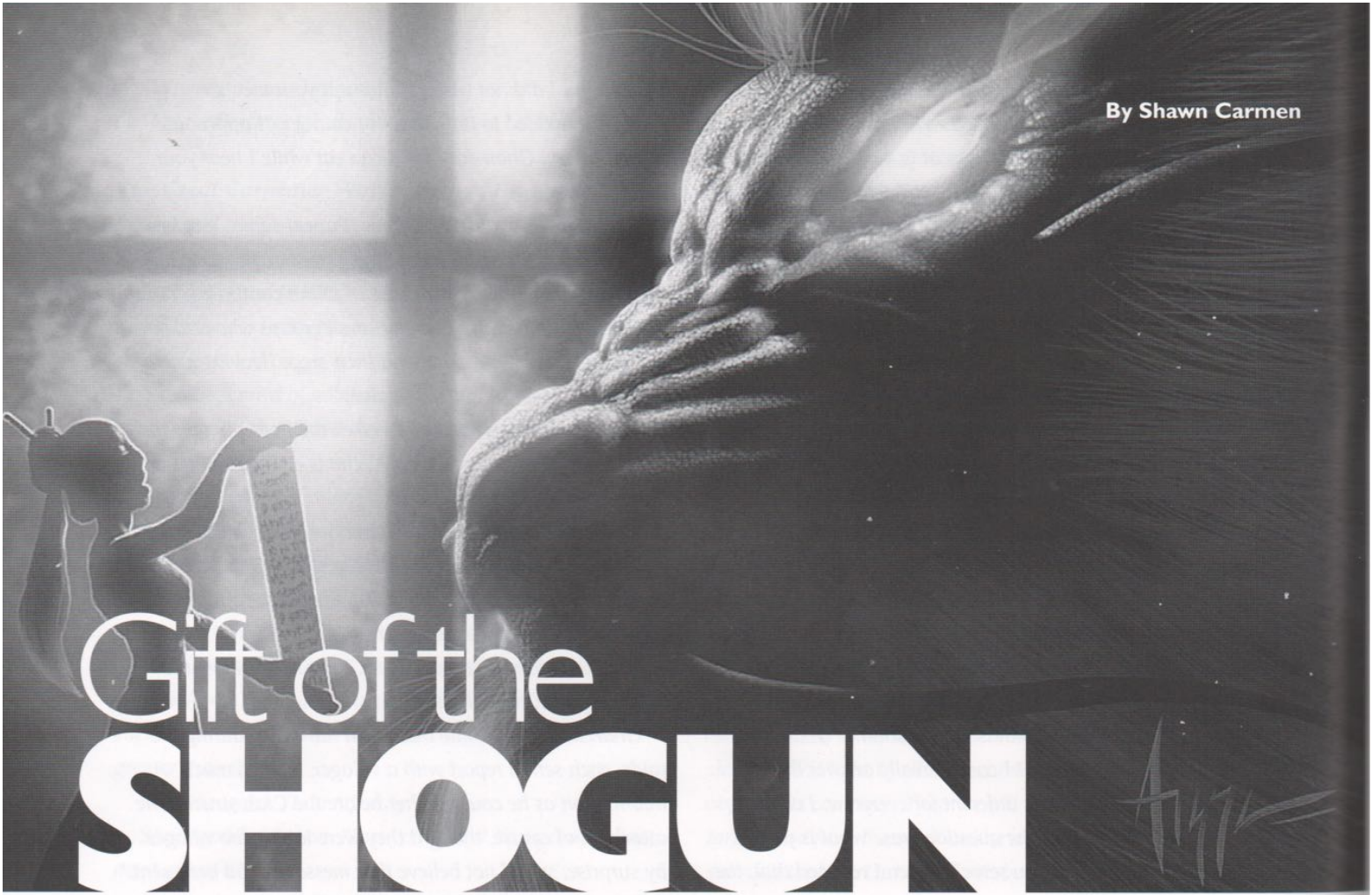
"Piecing these reports together, we know that the raids are being led by Hida Sozen, but they have been commanded by the returned Great Bear. It seems that the Crab champion's grandfather has made some baseless accusations that we have made attempts on his life, and wishes to strike back at us."

Paneki shook his head. "Whenever something threatens that they cannot understand, some people wish to blame the Scorpion. Such is our destiny. When coming from a man who brought one who openly serves the Dark Lord into the presence of the Emperor, such accusations do not concern us. Thank you, Ohan-san. I appreciate the sacrifice of the Shosuro in the villages."

Ohan bowed. "We do our duty, Lord Paneki."

The Scorpion champion ate another piece of fish as Ohan pulled the screen behind her. As he chewed, he looked thoughtful.

Then he smiled.



By Shawn Carmen

Gift of the SHOGUN

STORY RESULTS FROM GEN CON INDY 2006

At Gen Con Indy 2006, some of the finest L5R players in the world came together for the North American Championships to determine what clans would endorse the Shogun's protection of the Imperial City during the Emperor's absence. The players were clearly divided on the subject, and there were more questions regarding storyline implications than at any tournament in recent memory. In the end, however, the winners of each individual faction were selected and they made their choice: to support the Shogun and gain the fealty of one of his advisors, or to reject his so-called "protection" and instead send one of their own to defend the city and pursue their clan's interests.

The news that the Crab supported the Shogun's claim to defend Toshi Ranbo came as little surprise to most in the Imperial Court. What do the Crab respect if not strength and the benefit of protection against one's enemies? As the sons of Hida defend the Empire, so too does the Shogun protect the Emperor, or at the very least his family and holdings. For their support, the Shogun's advisor Otoyā began the long journey to Kyuden Hida. With a reputation for ruthless and unorthodox tactics, some of which were developed during his brief period of service to the Steel Chrysanthemum and the Stone Crab, Otoyā's insight may yet prove quite useful to the Crab in their constant battle with the Shadowlands.

The Crane surprised many by accepting the Shogun's defense, a move which, some speculate, may indicate their new Champion, Dojo Domotai, has little faith in the Empress' ability to properly oversee her city's defenses. Others see the trust the Empress places in her Imperial Advisor, Doji Tanitsu, and wonder if the Crane are not playing some carefully constructed gambit against the Shogun. Regardless of the reasons, the Crane were soon host to the enigmatic Naoharu, a man with the social acumen of a Doji and the ruthless scruples of a Yasuki. Within the confines of Shiro Daidoji, Naoharu and Lord Kikaze's advisor, the man called Daidoji Fumisato, began a discussion of rather delicate political

matters involving the Crab and the rice trade throughout southern Rokugan.

The Dragon likewise accepted the Shogun's teachings, and in return the Lady Kitsuki Iweko, acting guardian of the Dragon front line during the absence of Mirumoto Rosanjin, welcome the duelist Fusami to Shiro Kitsuki. Politely turning away inquiries into her past, Fusami's unique dueling style bears some similarities to both the Dragon and Crane styles but remains uniquely her own. With Shiro Kitsuki besieged by the Crane repeatedly over the past few months, the Dragon welcomed Fusami into their dojo with great enthusiasm, hoping to gain new insight from her teachings that can help to win a victory over their enemies.

The Lion have been supporters of the Shogun for years, and so few were surprised by their endorsement of his protection. One of the two brothers in Kaneka's service, a man named Uchito, was fostered to the Lion. It was a demonstration of the Shogun's favoritism to the Lion, as Uchito has a record as both an innovative tactician, a talented leader, and possesses incredible familiarity with the ronin and criminal groups operating throughout the Empire. With Uchito advising them, the Lion leaders possess an opportunity to strike a real blow for justice in Rokugan, but only after their new vassal proves himself in the war against the Dragon and Unicorn.

The ultimate loyalties of the Yoritomo family, lords of the Mantis Clan, can never be ascertained with any real certainty. Though they have never betrayed the Emperor, they have always acted in their own best interest. Facing a lengthy court battle with the Phoenix over their status as a Great Clan, the Mantis took the opportunity presented by the Shogun's

offer and recruited the services of Sachina, a former geisha with an almost uncanny ability to manipulate others to her whim. Despite initial difficulties with personality conflicts, Sachina's integration into the Mantis delegation to the Imperial Court has been a rousing success, and one that has made the Phoenix decidedly uncomfortable.

The Phoenix Clan is where Kaneka's loyalty lies, and while some have questioned the authenticity of his service to them, the Phoenix have chosen to believe that the Shogun's oath is genuine and binding. The Council of Elemental Masters voted unanimously to support his defense of Toshi Ranbo, as did his friend and ally Shiba Mirabu, Champion of the Phoenix. For their faith, the Shogun sent to them the massive warrior known only as Masakazu. Despite his gruff exterior and complete lack of tact, Masakazu's demeanor conceals a keen mind and the heart of a loyal and unstoppable warrior. Masakazu quickly found his role as the Council's yojimbo, spending much of his time accompanying the diminutive Master of Fire, Isawa Ochia.

The Unicorn accepted the Shogun's offer, an unsurprising move given the longstanding friendship between Kaneka and the Khan. Out of respect for his allies, the Shogun returned to them what was once lost, the brilliant and innovative shugenja known only as Rikako. Rikako was raised among the Unicorn in the orphanage maintained by the Horiuchi family. Her return is a journey home, but not one that will be simple. Until her loyalty can be proven, the Khan has ordered her to study with the Order of Death, the shugenja in service to the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang.

Alone among the Great Clans,

the Scorpion refused to accept the Shogun's patronage. Many expected them to do so, believing they would adhere to the age-old adage of keeping one's friends close and one's enemies closer. Perhaps it was for this reason, to prove to the Empire that the Scorpion cannot be anticipated, that Champion Bayushi Paneki refused the Shogun. The Clan of Secrets has but one loyalty, and that is to the Empire.

The One Tribe stood shoulder to shoulder with the Scorpion in refusing the Shogun's offer. The revelation that one of Kaneka's oldest allies, one of his so-called advisors, was a Naga was too much for the tribe's representative, the noble Zin'tch. That the Shogun would so casually bring one of the Nezumi's ancient enemies to court is an insult the One Tribe cannot and will not bear.

And deep in the confines of Kyuden Bayushi, in the cell where the Scorpion hold the ambassador from the Shadowlands, Daigotsu Soetsu, another of the Shogun's advisors has appeared. Quelsaurth, a jakla of the Cobra bloodline, a representative from the Naga race that has known Kaneka since his youth. Both the Shogun and the jakla refuse to let such an opportunity pass them by, and Kaneka asked Qelsaurth to travel and speak with Soetsu, to learn all that he could of the Lost, their petition for Great Clan status, and what sinister purposes may hide beneath it. The Naga gladly agreed, and now plumbs the soul of Soetsu for whatever secrets may be gained. The Scorpion, anxious to have the creature among them, whisper to one another asking but a single question: can even the Naga fall to darkness?

Guide to the KIMONO

DRESSING PROPERLY FOR L5R EVENTS

Costuming for a Legend of the Five Rings LARP can be a confusing and daunting task. Often, players lack resources and access to materials that would help them to create authentic period attire. Before considering creating or purchasing a costume for a Legend of the Five Rings LARP, a player should first take a practical look at the most accessible of Asian costuming: the Japanese kimono.

The Japanese Kimono is a timeless and practical piece of Asian attire that almost anyone can own on a budget. The cheapest and simplest of places to purchase your kimono, obi and other Japanese goods is through eBay and other online vendors. There are many styles of kimono, and the proper means of wearing and sizing the kimono can be fairly complex. This article will focus on a simpler approach to wearing the kimono, bypassing many of the traditional methods, to make LARPing in kimono less daunting a task.

Women have a wide selection of kimono from which they can choose. The various kinds of kimono worn reflect upon the season, her age, martial status, and even how formal an event she is attending. A woman need only three things to wear the kimono properly: the kimono, matching obi (belt), and zori (sandals).

A kimono needs to be as long as you are tall, if you are going to wear it in the traditional style. The measurement from wrist to wrist should match your own. When putting on the kimono, remember to put the left atop the right (the other way around is for funerals), and to have the collar at least four fingers off the back of the neck. The kimono should end at ankle length. When the obi is on, it should not create an hour glass figure like a corset – but rather create a tube-like effect. Towels and padding are often used under the kimono to prevent the hour glass figure an obi can create.

To help your kimono sit properly, fold the collar in half to the inside and hand sew in place, being careful to sew the collar to only the inner lining of the kimono so the stitches do not show on the outside of the kimono. Yakuta are the exception to the rule of folding the collar.

The most informal of kimono, for both genders, are called yakuta. Yakuta are simple, lightweight cotton kimono that are worn during the summer or around the house when doing chores. They are very informal, and also the cheapest to purchase. Complete sets of new yakuta kimono, with their matching informal obi (belt) can be purchased online for less than fifty dollars. The yakuta kimono is worn with a simple obi called a Hanhaba Obi, and generally no other kind.

The furisode is a very popular and highly sought after kimono among collectors. It is prized for its long, swinging sleeves and colorful

decorations and style. The furisode kimono is specifically worn by unmarried women under the age of 25. It is considered a formal to slightly informal (not as low as a yakuta) kimono. Geisha wear a variation of a furisode called hizurki.

Whether the wearer is married or not, homongi and tsukesage kimono styles can be worn as a pre-formal Kimono next to furisode & tomesode in rank order. This kind of kimono has decorations throughout the entire kimono. These kimono are the most flamboyant kimono for married women and also the second most for unmarried women, which allows you to go to not only a function but also other formal occasions.

The tomesode is classically a highly formal kimono for married women. It has a signature look, being solid black with decorations only upon the bottom of the kimono. Iro-tomesode are not black, but have a similar function for formal occasions and only have decoration upon the bottom of the kimono.

There are two other kinds of kimono a female might encounter. There is the uchikake, which is specifically a

kimono worn only for weddings (it is a wedding dress basically). Secondly, there is the nagajuban. The nagajuban is actually the undergarment meant to be worn under the kimono. When wearing a kimono, it is suggested that you invest in a nagajuban, or purchase an undershirt and ankle length skirt for modesty.

Once you have selected the proper kimono for yourself, next is selecting the correct obi (the decorative belt worn around the kimono). There are different obis for different kimonos, and levels of formality. The most formal of obis is the maru obi, followed by the fukuro obi, followed by the nagoya obi, and lastly the hanhaba obi.

When wearing an obi, you never tie your obi in the front. Obis tied in the front are the calling card and style of prostitutes in Japan. There are many complex methods of wearing an obi. The presentation and application of wearing an obi is an art unto itself. There are many online resources and books that will show you how to properly wear an obi and what is required to wear an obi in the traditional style (accessories such as the obijime, obiage, obidome, and more).



Photo Credit
Ellis Photo www.ellis-photo.com

Once the kimono and obi are purchased, feel free to experiment! If you are going with a non-traditional style, you have unlimited options as to what you can do. If you want more advanced insights into traditional Japanese attire, I strongly recommend the following book: 'The Book of Kimono' (1987), by Norio Yamanaka. This book provides detailed instructions on how to wear a kimono, everything required to wear one properly, and even the history of Japanese fashion. Should you desire to make your own kimono and other traditional Japanese garb, I recommend: 'Make your Own Japanese Clothing: Patterns and Ideas for Modern Wear', (1996), By John Marshall.

Above all else, from traditional style, to unique creations that defy traditional senses, have fun with your costuming.



Photo Credit
Kilted Gryphon Photography

RISE OF THE SHOGUN

CARD-BY-CARD ENCYCLOPEDIA

RELEASED: September, 2006

FEATURED CLANS: Mantis, Phoenix, Scorpion

Total of 156 New Cards

50 Common, 50 Uncommon
50 Rare, 6 Fixed

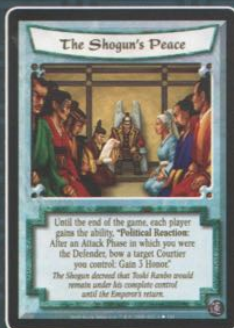
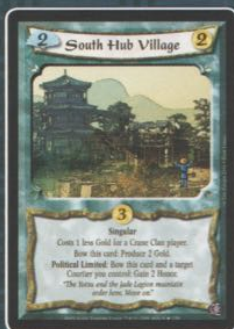
BOOSTER DISPLAY SKU: 14130

DECK DISPLAY SKU: 14120















THE LAST SEVEN Cards in this encyclopedia are promotional cards that have or will soon be released. We've left their text blank so we don't ruin the surprise for you.

Keep an eye out for them!

By Todd Rowland



Gen Con L5R SEMINAR

GEN CON 2006 SEMINAR REVIEW

The 2006 Legend of the Five Rings Seminar at Gen Con Indy was a huge success. There was such a large turnout that we had to hold two sessions, both times to packed rooms. For those unable to attend, here is a glimpse of what we discussed: L5R future and the exciting new projects we have in store for 2006 and 2007.

Shawn Carman opened with fiction that set the stage for one of the grand conflicts in *Rise of the Shogun*. The City of Lies was alight with fires and chaos as the peasantry rose up and rioted. Madness overtook the populace, but the madness of the Dojo of Bitter Lies rose to meet the chaos. Bayushi Kwanchai smiled as he ordered his men to retake the city that was theirs.

Rise of the Shogun explores the new government dynamic with the Shogun at the head of the Empire, as well as other plots, like the continuing Unicorn aggression and the Phoenix

attempts to sniff out corruption within while rebuilding after the war. *Rise of the Shogun* also features clan themes which have only been hinted at previously – the Battle Maidens come forward with tournament level decks; the Deathseekers and others receive more attention; spells feature greater power at reduced cost, giving Shugenja a stronger place in the world.

From there we moved into a look at the 2007 Kotei Season, which will be bigger and better than the incredibly successful 2006 season. As war engulfs the Empire, the results of the 2007 season will literally redraw the map of Rokugan, with clans gaining and losing territory on a major scale. Samurai Edition will see a new Rokugan.

And with that, we moved into a look at Samurai Edition. Rusty Priske narrated a short fiction focusing on the Crane and their war with the Dragon. While it appears a contained matter

of one clan versus another, Crane Champion Doji Domotai fears that when the full fighting begins, it could bring the whole of the Empire to one another's throats.

Samurai Edition is being developed with the following mission statement from Mark Wootton: "At the end of every game, all players will feel as though they have actively participated in a dynamic game, that they have made decisions, strategic choices and had the opportunity to both access and play with their deck's resources." Not only is Samurai Edition being designed with this philosophy, but the expansions that lead into Samurai Edition are being developed to support this goal. You may notice a slight change in some cards during the Lotus arc, as the double-bugged sets release, but all of these work towards the strong environment we have planned for Samurai Edition.

At the forefront of this development is the new Design Team. Each of these people has a great amount of L5R and design experience under their belt, and they bring strength to the already great game.

BRENT KEITH, L5R LEAD DESIGNER

- Long-time L5R Player
- Years of professional CCG design experience

MARK WOOTTON, SAMURAI EDITION LEAD DEVELOPER

- Was lead developer for Lotus
- Many years of experience with playtest and Player Design Team

ROGER GINER-SOROLLA, MECHANICS EDITOR

- Many years of experience with playtest and PDT
- Strong knowledge of L5R rules and templating

BRANDON "HAWKE" FLORES, PDT

- Started playing in '97
- Placed within top 4 at many major events, including '02 nationals and '03 Worlds (2nd at both) and 1st at the first L5R cash tournament
- Long-time playtester

BRYAN REESE, PDT

- Started playing in '96
- World Championship win, many other tournament accolades (including recent Kotei events)
- Long-time playtester

DUNCAN MACPHAIL, PDT

- Started playing in '97
- Submitted many cards which have seen print and reprint over the years, since *Iaijutsu Art* in Scorpion Clan Coup

EUGENE EARNSHAW-WHITE, PDT

- Started playing in 2001
- Winner of Gencon 2002, as well as many other events
- Long-time playtester

FABER VAN KRAANEN, PDT

- Started playing in 2000
- Won 2005 European Championship as well as other events
- Long-time playtester

Hand in hand with the Design Team, the new Story Team brings the world of Rokugan to life. These excellent writers went through a long selection process to find the best people to tell your story.

SHAWN CARMAN, LEAD WRITER

- Five years of experience on the team
- His name is synonymous with the L5R story

FRED WAN, CONTINUITY EDITOR & VICE-STORY LEAD

- Three years of experience with the story and RPG
- A year and a half tying together Story and Design in the CCG

DOUG SUN, L5R RPG DEVELOPER

- Experienced freelance writer with credits in numerous RPG lines
- His sole responsibility is to oversee the RPG and make sure it is consistent with the rest of the Brand and that it adheres to a strict schedule

BRIAN YOON, WRITER

- Three years of experience with the RPG
- Has devoted countless hours of personal time to the RPG and the Brand

NANCY SAUER, WRITER

- One of the most prominent fan-fiction writers in L5R's history
- Founder of the Ricepaper Society, an L5R writing group

RUSTY PRISKE, WRITER

- Senior member of the Warlord Story Team for years
- Extensive experience in developing storylines based on fan interest

The Heroes of Rokugan are a group of L5R roleplaying enthusiasts who have run their own Living Rokugan campaign for several years at conventions and on the web. They have seen a great surge in interest and we are working with them to integrate their events into the major storyline of L5R.

Our graphic artists and production staff ensure that the products you receive look the best they can and have the feel of Rokugan throughout.

KEN CARPENTER

- Who won the first L5R Gen Con tournament for the Crab, is in charge of art direction and production, ensuring that all team members' efforts come together into actual product

MARK JELFO

- A well-known name in Legend of the Five Rings. Despite moving to another job, he still loves L5R and works to keep your cards looking the best they can

RODNEY SAENZ

- Several years of experience with L5R, working with AEG on packaging, books, and marketing materials.

NATE BARNES

- Has been doing our logos for a while – you may have noticed how great they've been

BEVAN BELL

- Designed the amazing L5R short film shown at this year's seminar. You will see more of his work in the future.

The story is, and always will be, the core of Legend of the Five Rings. We're working to give you new and exciting ways to tell the story of the Clans. Beyond simply attending storyline events, we envision many other ways for the entire community to give us your input. First among these is the Winter Court Invitational Play-By-Email event. 100 players, some invited, some selected from applicants, will take part in a special, online role-playing event hosted by the Heroes of Rokugan team. These players' actions and the decisions will affect the story and the game. The L5R Story team will regularly take results from the ongoing game and turn them into fiction, so the entire community can see developing plots in the court.

In addition, the first Clan Conferences took place at the 2006 World Championships in Belgium, and we plan to feature them at more major events around the world. These conferences allow Clan players the chance to meet as a group and provide answers to our questions - answers that affect the future of their Clan. The Clans are your Clans, so you deserve the chance to help lead their way.

We also plan to use the Imperial Herald and the fan club to a greater degree. The Assembly Votes will

return in a big way, along with many other benefits. Among these benefits is what you will have noticed with this very issue. It was sent to you First Class mail, rather than Bulk. This should ensure more rapid delivery and reduce the occurrence of issues getting lost.

The Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game has several books in the works and more planned over the next two years. The roleplaying game has seen a major resurgence in popularity with the release of Third Edition, and we plan to give you more great content for your travels in Rokugan. Among these are:

- **Creatures of Rokugan, Third Edition.** The new creatures book brings you many of the monsters and supernatural beings which inhabit Rokugan. It also contains large sections on the Naga, Ratling, and a chapter on Spirit creatures.
- **The Art of the Duel.** Single combat is a way of life in Rokugan. From the Iaijutsu duel to sumo to poetry contests, the samurai of Rokugan are constantly challenging one another. The Art of the Duel brings you details about every clans' approach to the various types of dueling, new schools and techniques.
- **Rokugan, Third Edition.** This is a working title, but we plan Rokugan to be the complete guide to everything you could ever need to know about life in Rokugan. From the daily routine of the lowliest peasant to the inner workings of the Imperial Court, you'll find it all here. Need to know what the most popular form of music is in Crab lands?

From what kind of material do Crane's prefer their chopsticks? This book will tell you.

Nearing the end of the seminar, two major announcements sent a chorus of "ooohs" through the crowd. First of these was the Legend of the Five Rings: Emperor board game. Emperor will be a big-box board game with high production value. Emperor is a military strategy game with the feel of Rokugan. The initial game will feature a board that supports the original six Clans of L5R, with expansions adding additional factions and expansion maps. Watch for more information on Emperor in upcoming issues of the Imperial Herald.

Finally we announced the first Legend of the Five Rings graphic novel, which will release in the winter of 2007. This graphic novel will feature a stand-alone story set in the epic world of Rokugan. Written by our own Shawn Carman, the novel will be released as part of a special direct-to-player set featuring the characters and events from the graphic novel. An alternate art cover version of the comic will also be released into the comic book trade, so look for it at your local comic shops and book stores!

I'd like to close by thanking you, the players, for making Legend of the Five Rings the great game it is today. Your Clans are what you make them, and we are listening and watching. Make your choices with care, for now more than ever Rokugan is a place "Where Honor is a Force More Powerful Than Steel."

SAMURAI EDITION

Designing CCGs is a very fluid process. It is often interesting to look back at what was said in the early part of our design work and then look at what we finish with. After sets have gone through the wringer of initial conceptualization, design, redesign, playtest and then final production, the end product can be different to that which you expected at the start. We are early on in Samurai Edition right now and I am going to give you a sneak peek into where we are in our thinking.

Designing a base set has its own challenges and opportunities. The scope to design and introduce completely new cards is more limited than with any other work we do. The main purpose of base set design is to work with existing cards to create a new environment. This environment is also influenced very strongly by what we call the “legacy expansions” – the expansions that cross both the old and new arc. In the Samurai arc

we are trying harder than ever before to coordinate the design of the legacy expansions, so that we have cards that we want in both the Lotus and Samurai environments. I believe we are making real improvements in the way that we do this. One of those improvements is that we are only going to have two legacy sets not three.

This is important not just because of the way that we design the cards in relation to the new arc, but it also means that the jumping in point for new players is less of a barrier. And this is going to be key for Samurai. Many people felt Lotus had elements that had a real retro feel. And to some extent that is what we were shooting for. I think that in Samurai we are going to take the process we began and work with it. We are hoping for a greater simplicity of design. We want things which define the clan and the story simple to grasp. We want new players to be able to see

what clans stand for at a glance. We want to excite and attract new players into those things that make L5R the fantastic game it is.

The main area where this is presented is on strongholds and personalities. We realize that these two elements form a fundamental part of every player's immersion into Rokugan and are also the building blocks of every deck, so we are going back and focusing heavily on the tone and balance of these two elements.

Strongholds will be simple concepts. Although we might not necessarily be able to return to the “Limited: Bow to gain 2 honor” levels of simplicity, we are shooting for strongholds that a new player can pick up, play, and identify with straightaway.

The same goes for the personalities. We are looking to design a number of very simple base-line personalities, but with the intention that they will be played in decks. We hope that

the story of the development of those personalities will be one that players of those clans can identify with. Personalities that are being reprinted will be chosen not just for their effect, but for the elegance of their design. We are also trying to better choose cards on the basis of how well they fit in with clan themes. And we are trying to keep those themes simple and effective (and therefore easier to design for).

The last part of the work that we have started out with is the way the rules work. We have been doing a thorough job of breaking the rules

down to the basics and rebuilding them from the bottom up. And when I say that, I don't mean we are necessarily changing the way the game works in big ways. We may tinker with some elements. What we are trying to do is make the rules work in consistent and clear ways which everyone can see and understand. Roger Giner-Sorolla is the man leading that effort, as a joint venture between the Design and Rules teams. I believe this is going to be the most comprehensive rules review L5R has ever seen.

At the end of the process we will have a brand new and very clearly

written rulebook that will make the game more accessible for new players than it has ever been. Starting to see a theme here? At the end of all this we hope that we will have an arc where the strategy of the game continues to develop and challenge, but also where it is easy to draw new players into that excitement. We want those of you who have been with us for years to not just enjoy the challenge of this game, but also to be able to enjoy that challenge as part of a vibrant and expanding L5R community.

To do that, we have a design mission statement with defined and measurable goals.

Our overall vision is...

And hey, it wouldn't be a real sneak peak if I didn't drop in something to make you wonder. So here it is:

One of the things that we really want to do in this arc is to bring back dishonour as a deck that puts you "on the clock". But we are also looking at ways of making dishonour work so that it does not mean that a player working with honour requirements on his or her personalities is ever locked out of the game. Those of you who were lucky enough to be at Gen Con will have heard the seminar, and know why we are trying to do things in these new sorts of ways. But I will just repeat a summary of our goals here for you.

"At the end of every game, all players will feel as though they have actively participated in a dynamic game, that they have made decisions, strategic choices and had the opportunity to both access and play with their deck's resources."



By Shawn Carmen

KHAN'S DEFIANCE STORYLINE PREVIEW

With the Emperor's death, eyes turn towards Toshi Rambo as most of the people of the Empire wonder who shall control the Steel Throne. But the Empire is vast, and many plans and dreams are unfolding within it....

In the provinces of the Crab, two armies gather. In the south, Hida Kisada looks over his troops with satisfaction. Years ago he led an army into the heart of the Empire, shocking it with his audacity. Now he has another army, and once again he plans to shock an empire. In the north, Hida Kuon has tired of the Scorpion Clan's attempts to assassinate his grandfather and has decided to make his displeasure known with typical Hida firmness. Soon, Kuon vows, the man known as the Defender of the Empire will learn the folly of offending the real defenders of the Empire.

But the Crab may be the least of Bayushi Paneki's troubles. The peasant rebellion centered in Ryoko Owari has spread like a plague through the Scorpion provinces, leaving dead samurai and burning granaries in its wake. The Master of Secrets struggles to discover the secret behind the violence, knowing that his clan's enemies are watching, and waiting. Meanwhile, a young Scorpion named Bayushi Shinzo sits at his master's feet and listens raptly to the ways of a new kind of enlightenment. His mind forever changed by what he has heard, he will demonstrate its rightness in a way his kinsman will be forced to understand.

In Shiro Moto the Khan sits and broods over thoughts of the Steel Throne. Once he thought that Kaneka was the leader the Empire needed, a strong man who acted decisively—but the days go by and the Shogun does nothing but kneel before an empty throne and the Empress who sits beside it. No longer, Chagatai has vowed. If Kaneka will not bring leadership to the Empire then he will. That the Lion will attempt to stop his armies does not bother him; nothing will prove the worth of his actions more than defeating the clan known as the Right Hand of the Emperor.

Her family's castle besieged by the Crane and Lion armies, Kitsuki Iweko eats her morning ration of rice slowly and thoughtfully. The Unicorn have supplied the Dragon with the rice they need to survive the winter, allowing her clan to continue its war. But as she scrapes the last few grains out of the bowl Iweko wonders why exactly the Khan is sending his armies eastward, and why this troubles her more than the movements of the Crane and their allies.

Young and relatively untested, the new Lion Champion Matsu Yoshino begins his first winter as Champion with enemies on two sides. To the north, his trusted vassal Akodo Shigetoshi holds the line against the Dragon, while to the west Ikoma Otemi and his advisor Ikoma Fujimaro prepare the Lion defending the Unicorn border for a long winter of waiting. Yoshino's restless spirit detests the coming winter, knowing that there will be little chance for battle under such difficult conditions. When the spring thaws come, however, he will prove to the entire Empire that he is worthy of his father's legacy, and the Golden Lion of Toshi Ranbo shall live again.

On the plains below Shiro Kitsuki Doji Maseru drills his troops and prays to his ancestors. Every week, it seems, the Lion commanders pull another unit away from their Crane allies and send it to the west to meet the growing Unicorn threat. Maseru doesn't begrudge his allies they troops they need to protect their borders. But he hopes that the political might of the Crane can force the Dragon to sue for peace before they realize just how fragile the lines encircling them have become. Further south, Doji Domotai has become troubled by the omissions and inconsistencies she has been finding in the reports of her Daidoji commanders. The next time Daidoji Kikaze reports to her, she has decided, he will explain the source of this problem to her.

On the Islands of Silk and Spice Yoritomo Naizen watches the conflicts unfolding on the mainland with a wary eye. The ocean offers a bountiful supply of food, and his clan is growing rich selling that food to whoever will pay for it. But money alone will not secure Mantis prestige, and so he waits for the moment to remind the Empire that his clan should not be left out of anyone's calculations.

In the lands of the Phoenix the Last Wish watches Isawa Sezar from afar. Alone and grieving over Aikune's death, it longs for the companionship of a new wielder. Sezar's power and knowledge remind the Wish of Isawa, but there is a coldness within him that his first father never had. Torn between loneliness and fear it struggles to make a choice.

The Warrens of the One Tribe are in mourning for the valiant Chief-of-Chiefs the humans called the Emperor. Naseru gave his life that his pack might live to defeat Tomorrow,

and there can be no greater fate. His Name shall live on forever. Even as the Broken Shinbone returns from the human Tomb of Seven Thunders, another tomb has been discovered on the Plains Above Evil. This one is of Nezumi make, a relic from their lost empire. The One Tribe elders do not understand how this tomb could have simply appeared when the Grasping Paw have called those lands home for so long, but they fear that its appearance heralds something sinister for the Nezumi's future.

And far, far south of the Empire Kyoso no Oni looks over the Wall of Bone and smiles. The human whelp who calls himself the Dark Lord of the Shadowlands musters the last of his forces behind that Wall, preparing for the battle that will show who is Jigoku's true chosen. After her demon-army has crushed their Lost opponents, and all of the Shadowlands acknowledges the might of the Oni Overlords, she will turn her attention back to the squabbling samurai of Rokugan.





ONE ON ONE

ART OF THE DUEL: THE PREVIEW

From the beginning of the Third Edition of the Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game, we have vowed to make each book in our schedule valuable to each reader. We've added more in each book, and concentrated efforts to make sure we are delivering what the fans want represented in the books. One of the most constant requests we've received is a book concerning dueling techniques and styles. *Art of the Duel*, the latest endeavor from the L5R RPG team, is a book that delivers exactly that.

Art of the Duel is not simply about bushi and their swords (though we do go in depth about those). The book is useful to every type of character, from the most bloodthirsty bushi to the ronin shugenja wandering through the lands. It covers many different types of competitions from all walks of life. We talk about displays of power between shugenja, horse racing, and wrestling. We show all sorts of interesting competitions, such as kemari, a form of Rokugani soccer played by courtiers. We provide rules on how courtiers can best each other with the perfect witty phrase. We describe tournaments that

were established in the beginning of the Empire, and we include traditions created since the Second Day of Thunder. We cover how each Clan views dueling and their contests. We speak on dueling theory, present new weapons, and show how nonhuman races treat Rokugani dueling traditions. We include two full adventures, usable directly out of the book. We have it all.

This abridged excerpt from the book is a discussion of iaijutsu, the foremost style used in Rokugan. Since it is the official method of settling disputes in the Empire, all of the Great Clans have developed their own techniques to learn every secret about the style. Players should have the same opportunity. Rules for iaijutsu were originally listed in the Third Edition handbook. Unfortunately, they did not receive the attention they deserved, and many fans have proclaimed confusion by the rules. In our attempt to address all concerns with the system, we have included this clarification in our newest book. In it, we analyze every step of the duel and clear up all possible questions.

IAIJUTSU REVISITED

Step One: Challenge

When two samurai begin an iaijutsu duel, the first thing they do is adopt their stances and face one another. This is a crucial moment in the duel, as the two opponents size one another up and check each other for weaknesses. This assessment requires an Awareness/Iaijutsu Roll against a TN of 5. If the roll is successful, that duelist may then choose to learn any one piece of information about his opponent from the list below. For each increment of 5 by which the duelist's roll exceeds the TN, he can intuit an additional piece of information about his opponent. The parenthetical notations after each entry show the characteristics of our four example duelists:

- The opponent's Agility
- The opponent's Awareness
- The opponent's current Wound penalty (if any) (None on any duelist)
- The opponent's Iaijutsu Skill Rank
- The opponent's Insight Rank
- The opponent's Reflexes

- The opponent's Void Points
- The opponent's Void Ring

Once this mutual assessment is complete, either duelist may choose to declare his opponent the winner without moving forward with the duel. Doing so is considered an admission that one's opponent is the superior duelist, and that the outcome would certainly result in the death of the one conceding. This is considered an honorable action, as there is no shame in bowing to one of superior ability. If the duel is to the death, however, then the duelist conceding the match is expected to complete this honorable action with seppuku, thereby confirming the result.

Step Two: Focus

Once the two duelists have assessed one another, they begin waiting for the other to make a mistake. This can be an exceptionally long and trying process, as both duelists focus on one another and wait for the perfect moment to strike. At the beginning of the duel, after the Challenge stage (assuming that no one chooses to concede), each duelist selects which characteristic his opponent will use in the duel: Agility, Reflexes, or Void (this characteristic hereafter referred to as "Choice").

With the Choice Traits selected, the duelist that had a higher roll on the Awareness/Iaijutsu Roll to assess his opponent has the option to go first, although he may choose to pass and instead allow his opponent to go first (in doing so, he also gains 1 point of Honor). If the Awareness/Iaijutsu Roll was tied, the duelists make a second roll to determine who will go first. Whoever goes first must declare Focus or Strike. If a duelist chooses to Focus, he must roll Choice/Iaijutsu against his opponent's current TN to Be Hit. If

this roll is successful, the TN to Be Hit of both duelists is increased by 5 and the option to Focus or Strike passes to his opponent. If the roll fails, or if the duelist instead chooses to Strike, then the second stage of the duel has ended, and Stage Three begins.

A duelist may only Focus a number of times equal to his Void Ring, although spending a Void Point allows him to make an additional Focus roll above his normal limit. If he has focused this number of times (and is out of Void Points or is unwilling to spend them) when his turn to Focus/Strike comes again, he has no choice but to declare Strike.

Step Three: Strike

When one duelist fails to make their Choice/Iaijutsu Roll or declares Strike, whether because he cannot Focus any more or because he fears that the TN to Be Hit of his opponent will reach an unbeatable level, he declares Strike. When a duelist declares Strike, he is telling his opponent to hit him. The opponent immediately rolls Choice/Iaijutsu against his opponent's TN to Be Hit, including all increases as a result of Focusing. When striking, a duelist gains a Free Raise to his attack roll for every successful Focus he made during Step Two. Attack rolls made during this stage use Reflexes/Iaijutsu.

Step Four: Resolution

In a duel to first blood, if the first duelist to Strike hits his opponent, the duel is over. If the duel is to the death, then Wounds from the first duelist's Strike are applied before allowing his opponent to Strike, assuming the first duelist succeeds. Either way, the second duelist strikes immediately afterward, regardless of whether the first duelist's strike is successful. If both duelists survive the first strike in a duel

to the death, they may each spend up to their maximum number of Void Points to inflict a number of additional Wounds to their opponent equal to 1k1 of Wounds per Void Point spent. This may also be done after the initial Strike in a duel to first blood, but will incur considerable Honor loss as a result (-1 Rank per Void Point spent, regardless of the offender's current Honor Rank). If they are both still alive, then the duel becomes a skirmish and the combat continues as normal, without the special dueling rules, and both duelists immediately roll for Initiative.

There are occasions when, in a duel to the death, both duelists die after the first strike, usually due to the expenditure of Void Points causing additional damage. This scenario is known as a "karmic strike," and is considered a manifestation of destiny. Any duel, regardless of what type, that results in both duelists failing their Strike rolls is considered a mutual failure and is a source of great shame for both participants.

VARIANT: SIMPLE IS BETTER

If you prefer, you may simplify the resolution of an iaijutsu duel. In this variant, two duelists assume the Full Defense posture and face one another in their dueling stance. Both duelists use the Focus maneuver, as described in the Legend of the Five Rings Third Edition core book, p. 167. During any round, one duelist may declare that he is striking. Both duelists must then make an Initiative Roll, as they attempt to strike their opponent. Unlike the normal rules for using the Focus maneuver, however, striking second in this situation does not cause a duelist to forfeit the benefits of having used Focus because of his opponent's movement.

#

KUREREKUPATI





WHO CAN
STOP ME?

KHAN'S
DEFIANCE



Coming January 22, 2007.
Watch the Khan's Defiance preview trailer at
www.KhansDefiance.com

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT WWW.L5R.COM

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS AND ALL RELATED MARKS ARE TM AND [©] ALDERAC ENTERTAINMENT GROUP, INC.
ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. ILLUSTRATION BY MICHAEL KOMARUK [©] 2006 AEG.

