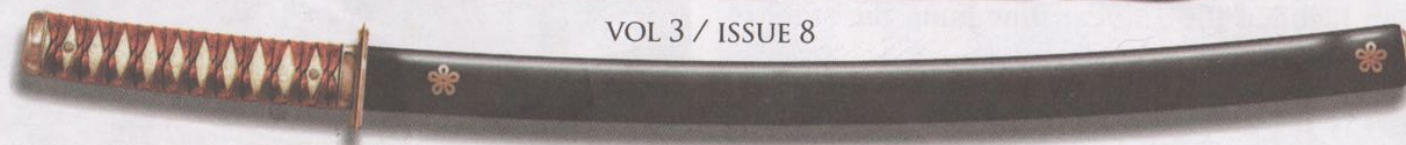


THE IMPERIAL HERALD

VOL 3 / ISSUE 8



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

A New Home

BY DUNCAN MACPHAIL

In the land once called the Ivory Kingdoms, a new city has been built. This city is the first built by the new colonists, and it is a second home of their ruler, the Divine Empress Iweko I. Second City is the last expansion set in the lead up to Emperor Edition. As a game expansion it has to fill two important roles, closing out Celestial Edition while heralding in the new base set of Legend of the Five Rings CCG. Second City also marks a transition in the story with the expansion of Rokugan in the aftermath of the Destroyer War.

Second City was designed and tested concurrently with Emperor Edition. While we were selecting cards to reprint, we found some which were close to what we wanted, but not perfect for our goals. This gave us an excellent opportunity to design new versions of these classic cards, such as *Redoubled Attack*. Anyone familiar with the early days of L5R knows that one of the most classic and defining cards was *Rallying Cry*. When it was rotated out of legality with Diamond Edition, the designers created the new card *Spearhead*, which debuted in the expansion *Winds of Change*. *Spearhead* has since been an underperforming card; it doesn't see enough use to justify reprinting it. *Redoubled Attack* replaces *Spearhead* for the Emperor Edition arc giving players the option to straighten up to two units after the attack - nearly as effective as *Rallying Cry*.

Remote Village is another great example of cards



Kyuden Kitsune is a Stronghold that develops new strategies for the Mantis Clan, highlighting the new Mantis honor theme. The Kitsune family has had time to integrate themselves into the Mantis Clan and now it is time to bring honor to their Clan. Creating an honor-running deck for a Clan with traditionally low personal honor presented a design challenge. Most Mantis Clan strongholds start at 2 honor, and they aren't worried about increasing their Family Honor through the course of the game. *Kyuden Kitsune* starts at 4 honor; still less than most other decks trying to win by an Honor Victory, but enough to be competitive. The limited action on *Kyuden Kitsune* lets you bow a Forest to gain honor; this will often be your Bamboo Harvesters when you play against a high honor clan. The defensive trait on *Kyuden Kitsune* improves the value of battle actions that send home attackers; it negates one attacker's movement each battle.

lation and is getting somewhat of a facelift. The simplicity and efficiency of Jade Works remains in its new counterpart, still costing three gold and producing three gold, but unlike Jade Works it fits into a specific gold chain because of its new Farm keyword. The utilitarian Remote Village is sure to be a staple in some decks come Emperor Edition.

Second City tells the story of a generation rebuilding its home. The Events found in Second City show us both the success of the Clans and the challenges they must overcome. The Crab Clan is *Rebuilding Kyuden Hida* to stand for another thousand years, and it will not fall easily again. *Rebuilding Kyuden Hida* prevents other players from taking Battle actions before the defender, making it a valuable defensive tool. Famine and banditry plague the lands of Rokugan, as seen in the Events *Times of Strife* and *War Weariness*. Times of Strife gives Battle actions an additional cost if you have no presence at the battlefield, while *War Weariness* bows the first Personality to perform an action in each phase of the game. Each of these Events creates an effect on the game that lasts for multiple turns, showing the sweeping changes of the times. These Events present interesting choices for deck builders but take care in these desperate times that you don't succumb to their effects yourself!

With each new generation come new faces. Some of the new characters of Second City are featured in the artwork of several cards.

Yoritomo Minori is a Mantis Clan magistrate with an interesting heritage, for she is half Naga. On the cards *A Quiet Transaction* and *A Fugitive Apprehended*, Minori is in the spotlight as a shady magistrate. Her trait indicates that Minori draws strength from her brothers, almost like a Naga. Already mistrusted because of her unique heritage, Minori understands that as a Mantis Clan Magistrate she has two roles; she must uphold the laws of the Empire by bringing

criminals to justice, but sometimes she must also become a criminal to further the goals of the Mantis.

Another character who about lurks in the dark places is *Goju Yurishi*. This apparition can disappear from the battlefield and return to plague you again on later turns, making him as elusive as his master. Yurishi is featured on the cards *Silent Terror* and *Goju Plot*. Why does the Shadow Dragon have its eye on Yurishi? Yurishi's origin is shrouded in mystery; all we know is that he has the keyword Dragon Child. This could indicate a literal relationship or it may simply refer to the dragon's favor. Both Yoritomo Minori and Goju Yurishi are the result of 2010 Winner's Choice tournaments.

You will see slightly fewer experienced Personalities in this set as many favorite characters are retiring with age, assuming they survived the Destroyer War. In fact, you will see fewer Personalities overall. With Second City there will be six Personalities for each Clan, except the featured Clans who will receive seven. The size of the set is the same, but six more Dynasty cards are dedicated to support a wide range of decks. *Shinden Shorai*, The Temple of the Future, is one such card. Lion Clan women travel to Shinden Shorai to give birth to the next generation; this Region lets you bring a Personality into play during the Action Phase to accelerate your deck and potentially attack with a personality one turn earlier.

Speaking of featured Clans, let's take a look at the Second City starter deck exclusive cards for the Dragon, the Mantis, and the Scorpion Clans.

Dragon's Breath Castle is the second defensive Stronghold that the Dragon Clan has received this arc. It had to be different from Last Step Castle or players would simply use whichever one was more powerful for the remainder of the Celestial arc. This stronghold features an honor-gaining trait that is much easier to counter than Last Step Castle. This works to your advantage however, because Dragon's Breath Castle is built for battle where you can lure the enemy into attacking, crushing him against the walls of the castle. The Stronghold's Reaction gives you an immediate advantage in the battle, as one of the enemy leader's Personalities will be bowed before he can even use a Sneak Attack. You can leverage even more advantage at the beginning of each battle when you bring *Tamori Ruya* into play. Like the Stronghold, Ruya can bow an enemy as a Reaction, and his Reaction is even triggered by the Stronghold's ability. Other players will find it infuriating to attack into these defenses.

Dragon's Breath Castle can support a variety of Dragon Clan decks, including the new Defenders of the Mountain theme. Further developing this theme is *Tamori Yayu*, an excellent defender able to counter the advantages of Cavalry to ensure that he is in position to hurl fire at your enemies. Like most Tamori, he is an Earth Shugenja, letting you take advantage of Spells such as *The Earth Flows* to gain more honor from the battles you win.



Kitsune Ohsuki brings a friend when she enters play, a forest spirit in the form of a sparrow. After Ohsuki enters play, her summoned spirit remains as a separate card; she can defend your Provinces in battle without risking the advantage the Spirit's ability grants you. Ohsuki is just one of the Kitsune in the new theme we expect to find at home in this Stronghold. With a menagerie of forest spirits to help them, the shugenja of the Kitsune can make use of spells such as *Rage of the Spirits* or *Taming the Beast* to bolster their defenses.

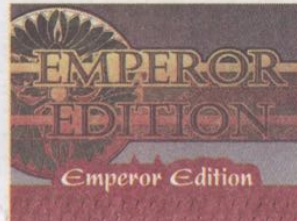
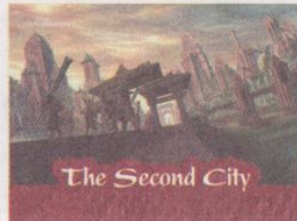
Law of Darkness Dojo is a bold new design for the Scorpion Clan. The trait encourages you to go into battle, where your honor losses can cut down the enemy like steel. The Battle action gives you a fighting chance in an opposed battle; though it may hardly matter to you whether your troops win or lose on the field, let alone whether they attack or defend, this Stronghold gives Scorpion players the option for a true switch deck. Switch decks can be difficult to build, and require specific design to make the two victory conditions work together instead of pulling the deck apart.

Law of Darkness Dojo requires Personalities with stat lines for military decks and a balance of dishonor and battle actions, and for this reason, magistrates such as the experienced *Bayushi Kahoku* can make the most efficient use of this stronghold. Kahoku is a strong and versatile weapon on the battlefield; his battle action can take down a Personality with as much as 7 Force, or you can split the effects between two different targets. Magistrates really shine with their ability to use actions such as *Discovering a Conspiracy*, a useful control card that has additional effects when used in battle. Where switch decks in the past have chosen between military and honor victories, *Law of Darkness Dojo* provides the opportunity to play a new switch style - military dishonor, creating a paradox for opponents. Do you defend and potentially lose quite a bit of honor, or not defend and lose a province?

These departures from traditional play styles create exciting new paradigms that will continue to be explored throughout Emperor Edition, and they all begin with Second City!



ALSO IN THIS ISSUE



2011 Tournaments Update

BY NICOLAS BONGIU

Another successful Kotei season has ended, and by now you know what happened during the climax of the Celestial Edition Storyline. While Kali-Ma was bound to be defeated due to the Empire's Glory results, the havoc she wrecked on the heart of the Empire was significant, requiring a massive rebuilding effort that more than justified the 25-year time jump the story is taking.

However, those 25 years were not times of absolute peace. As the invader was repelled, intrigue took back its rightful place in the courts of the Empire and critical decisions were made: decisions that would alter the fate of Rokugan. As is customary, storyline tournaments will allow you to have a meaningful say in what happened during that relative peaceful period and thus determine who the important figures of the Emperor Arc will be.

A NEW GENERATION OF JEWEL CHAMPIONS

While Matsu Kasei has managed to retain his position as Turquoise Champion and thus will be in need of a prominent aide, all other Jewel Champions (including their dark counterpart, Onyx and Obsidian) will be new personalities in the Emperor Storyline. That of course means that you, the players, will face off to determine who will obtain those prestigious positions during various tournaments.

Looking at the schedule below, you will notice that we are starting those specific tournaments a little later than last year, in an effort to provide you with 2 major events at least per month and thus strengthen your impact on the game's most significant positions. Another new aspect of the Jewel Tournaments for 2011 is the Costume Contest. Each Jewel tournament will hold one, and the TO will take a picture of the winner. We will in turn make sure that those players and costumes are immortalized in the card game by way of a card illustration in a future set. We fully acknowledge the effort players make in participating in non CCG related activities, and this will be one of the many ways we will reward those players for their involvement. Visit www.l5r.com in the coming weeks for more information and the exact write up of the story prize for each of those tournaments.

MAJOR TOURNAMENTS ALL AROUND THE GLOBE

As L5R was celebrating its 15 year anniversary in 2010, we decided to bring the celebration to more than the traditional Europe and US major events by rewarding the player bases in the Pacific Rim and South America with their own "Summer Convention", or Zone Championships. 2011 will be no different, and the story prizes at each of those special events in the L5R Winter Season will undoubtedly shape the Empire for years to come.

As is now customary and to foster good relationships between communities spread across large zones, both Pacific Rim and South American Championships will be run in different locations from last year: Chile will host its first SA Champs in Santiago in November, while The Philippines will hold the PacRim one in October.

The story prize offered will provide unparalleled coordination. Among the greatest legend of Rokugan are the stories of samurai whose feuds have become the stories that parents tell their children to inspire and terrify them. Yakamo and Hitomi. Naseru and Kaneka. Noritoshi and Jimen. Now it is time for a new legend to be told.



expand thanks to the release of the War of Honor game (which you've amply read about in the previous issue of this magazine), so too do the ways to impact the L5R Storyline. GenCon 2011 will offer the first War of Honor exclusive Story prize and will let players decide who will become the next Shogun of the Empire. This tournament will be run in the Extended format (Samurai and Celestial) on Friday August 5 so bring your decks and tiles and claim the most prestigious military position in the Empire for your Clan!

In addition, GenCon will feature the first ever Storyline Prize associated with a costume contest. It will give the participants of the official L5R Costume Contest at GenCon the opportunity to decide the affiliation of the Darling of the Imperial Court, the samurai whose appearance in court captures the attention and the interest of virtually everyone during the Winter Court of that year. Who will be the Doji Ayano of the first Winter Court of the Emperor Arc?

As you may know, the European Championships will be held in 2011 in Dublin, Ireland, from October 28th to 31st. This will be another great moment in the L5R tournament season and will give us a chance to offer prizes on par with those offered at GenCon.

The Second Chance event and the Invitational tournaments will offer the exact same choices as their GenCon counterparts: the chance to elevate a dead Personality to Fortune status and to appoint one samurai to the prestigious position of primary yojimbo to a high ranking official of the Empire.

The European Championships will also feature events whose prizes are similar in nature to the GenCon rewards. Thus, there will also be a Storyline Costume contest but this time it will let the winner determine the identity of a samurai whose radical ideas and progressive fashion will shake the very foundations of traditional dress in the court of the Imperial Governor in the distant Second City.

The storyline War of Honor Event, on the other hand will allow the winner to select any one currently living personality affiliated with his faction from the Forgotten Legacy or Second City expansions. This character will be revealed as the rikugunshokan (commander) of his clan's army, the highest ranking military officer in the clan other than the Champion.

Finally, the Main Event will let the winner decide who will be appointed as Ivory Champion, the Colonies equivalent of the Emerald Champion and a major character in the Emperor Storyline.

character of their faction. They will discuss with one another the nature of the feud between their two characters, and help work with the Story Team to create the background of their rivalry. The beginning of this saga will appear in a fiction penned by the Story Team. After that... who knows how far into the story of L5R it will progress?

GenCon Indy, which will host the 2011 World Championships, will see a large amount of storyline tournaments, none bigger than the Main Event. In case you have missed our preview of those Storyline prizes, here's a brief recap for you.

The Main Event will allow the winner work with the Story Team to create a new personality affiliated with their Clan who will assume the position of Imperial Governor of the Colonies. Although the winner will not be given free reign, a great deal of input will be allowed in terms of selecting the new character's personality, family of origin, profession, and many other details that will have a direct impact on the resulting card.

The Second Chance tournament will also have its impact on the storyline, as it will allow a player to choose a Personality from their Clan who died during Celestial Edition to become a Minor Fortune. This was the first story selection of the 2011 Kotei Season, and as such, many players missed out on the opportunity to take this prize for their favorite character and Clan. Fortunes are made from the sheer devotion of their followers and sanctioned by the reigning Emperor and this is our way to show that in the card game!

Every GenCon has a Storyline tournament organized for the players who are already qualified for the Main Event (and thus don't have to go through the qualifying sessions) and this year, they will play for the honor to choose the official yojimbo of any Imperial Daimyo, Jeweled Champion or Emperor's Chosen. Similar prizes in the past have yielded stalwart Personalities such as Bayushi Jutsushi Experienced so it will no doubt be a hotly contested prize.

There wouldn't be a major event in L5R with new additions, and as the playable formats

GenCon Indy...will see a large amount of storyline tournaments, none bigger than the Main Event.

A RENEWED COMMITMENT TO LOCAL EVENTS

Last but not least, we are renewing our commitment to local environments, by having multiple Winner's Choice and stronghold store tournaments (for those of level 10/15 and 20). This will ensure that everyone, regardless of their financial capabilities will get a chance to impact the story in one way or another. Those tournaments have started right after the Kotei season but they will intensify over Fall 2011, culminating with the release of Emperor Edition at the end of the year.

AEG fully understands that the game starts at a local level and is looking forward to helping stores and communities stay strong with the coming of Emperor Edition, an arc during which every aspect of the game will be improved, as we will explain in the next issue of the Imperial Herald!

2011 Jewel Events

DATE	LOCATION	TO	TO EMAIL
September 10	Luxemburg City	Tom Mulheims	phantasiespiller@gmx.net
September 24	Athens	Manolis Trahiotis	mantrah@hotmail.com
October 22	Feeding Hills, MA	Eric Devlin	saberinc@optonline.net
October 29	Rosario, Argentina	Javier Espana	magical@gmail.com
November 26	Sacramento, CA	Bryan Reese	breese@alderac.com
December 3	Adelaida, Australia	Leigh Gregurke	bogus_prophet@hotmail.com
December	Spain	Pablo Rojo	brotheler@hotmail.com
December	Chicago, IL	Mike Colson	damnukids@gmail.com

Volunteer Thanks

BY NICOLAS BONGIU

As it has been stated earlier, the Kotei Season has come to an end and AEG would like to take the time to thank the tireless work of the Tournament Organizers (and their staff of volunteers) who gladly accept to take sole responsibility in running one of the now 60 Kotei around the world; events that are a major part in the L5R tournament scene.

With their contribution and feedback, we hope to bring the Kotei experience to new heights.

As of the time of printing, the Emperor Edition playtest is over and I would like to thank the playtesters of the game we love for their extra hard work with the new base set. Base set playtest is always a little different due to the number of cards involved and the existence of reprints, and our playtesters have put in extra work to make sure the final product will be fantastic.



To The Second City...

BY SHAWN CARMAN

Second City is the September 2011 expansion of the L5R CCG. There are several distinguishing characteristics of the set, not the least of which is the fact that it is the final expansion of Celestial Edition legal cards to be published by AEG; all cards in the set are legal for the upcoming Emperor Edition, and it will be immediately followed in the Winter of 2011 by the base set for the new arc. The expansion reveals a great deal about the Empire in the aftermath of the conflict with the gaijin Destroyers as well as how Rokugan exists in the year 1198, twenty five years after the conclusion of the Destroyer War and Celestial Edition.

The most significant revelation of Second City is something touched on briefly in *Forgotten Legacy*; the existence of the expansion's namesake, the Second City. The Second City is the Empire's most significant base of operations in the land formerly known as the Ivory Kingdoms. That shattered land is now known simply as the Colonies, and has supplied much of the resources that the Empire has used to rebuild itself after the disastrous series of wars that culminated with the Destroyer War a generation ago. One of the Empress' most trusted servants, the Imperial Governor, holds his court in the Second City to oversee the Colonies and the efforts of the Great Clans there. While the Mantis and Spider have the most significant influence there, all clans are represented in one form or another.

Second City also continues the storyline of the War of Serpents, the conflict introduced in the events of *Forgotten Legacy*. With the clans under attack from the mind-controlled forces of the Dark Naga, and unable to strike back at a foe they scarcely understand, their frustrations result in them turning on one another as they have not done since before the Destroyer War began. New alliances are revealed, such as that between the Crab and Scorpion, and new enmities as well, such as the lingering resentment between the Phoenix and the Scorpion over the War of the Twins.

Second City is the first real taste of what Emperor Edition is going to be like, at least in terms of the storyline. Some characters are introduced who will have major roles to play over the next few years, and others are introduced that... well, let's just say the size of their role is going to depend entirely upon you and what you choose to make of them between now and the arc's debut in November. Only time will tell!



Shinjo Sanenari tugged the wrappings away from his face as the winds subsided. He loathed the feeling of cloth against the flesh of his face; it was so confining that he could scarcely tolerate it. Nor was he a tremendous fan of lengthy travel, and he had never before left the Empire until this particular journey. To say that it had not been enjoyable would be an understatement of spectacular magnitude.

One last time, Sanenari glanced over his shoulder into the dim, colorless region from which the caravan had finally, mercifully, emerged. It was called the Western Waste, or at least it always had been called such by the Unicorn Clan, and as far as Sanenari knew, no Imperial cartographer had ever assigned it anything more regal. It certainly did not deserve a proper name, for it was a horrid, wretched place, but it was the only path from the Emerald Empire to the Colonies, and thus the Unicorn maintained a regular schedule of caravans traversing the distance between Outsider Keep and the Second City.

Sanenari struggled not to think of the strange warriors he and the others had fought during this particular trip. They were a mysterious lot, hailing from all different cultures and locations, by the nature of their attire. They plagued the caravans from time to time, but their nature had never truly been discerned. The Unicorn Clan Champion had decreed that they were not to be studied, but rather that they and all their trappings were to be incinerated after defeat. Sanenari saw to it that the Champion's will was fulfilled.

In the distance, the Second City loomed. Carved from the wilderness over the course of two decades, constructed using the greatest styles and secrets of architecture from all the Great Clans. It was a metropolis, greater than anything in the Empire other than perhaps the Imperial City or Ryoko Owari Toshi, and its construction was orderly. There was no chaos to its layout, no substandard quarters with shoddy construction. It was, even from this distance, a marvel to behold.

It was at the behest of his older brother, a man who now bore the name Otomo, that Sanenari had come to the Colonies. There was important business among the Imperial families, but few of those powerful men and women had any taste for travel, even less than he himself did. So he had been sent in their stead. In the grand scheme of things, it was a small price to pay for the benefits of the association he enjoyed, but it was annoying all the same. Or it had been, until he had seen the Second City. Now he thought perhaps there might be benefits to be had here.

Sanenari smiled and spurred his horse forward.



...And Beyond

By the time you read this article, you will doubtless have heard of the impending advancement of the Rokugani timeline from 1173 at the end of the Destroyer War, to 1198 at the beginning of Emperor Edition. Normally, the timeline of Rokugan advances in synch with real time, with a month passing in game for each month that passes in reality. This allows for realistic pacing and advancement, under normal circumstances, but it can prevent the tales of certain kinds of stories. The timeline advancement grants incredible freedom for us to tell all manner of stories, many of which have never been attempted, or at least not been attempted in a very long time. Not since the timeline advancement at the beginning of the Gold Era has there been an opportunity of this nature, and we intend to make the most of it.

The first seeds of the time jump are found in the *Forgotten Legacy* and *Second City* expansions, which will introduce not only a large number of new characters and vital story information, but give you the identity of a few familiar old faces that have survived into the new era as well. Some of your favorite characters have hung on, but instead of the greatest heroes of the Empire, they are the new leaders and sensei of their clans, teaching an entirely new generation to surpass even their own great accomplishments, accomplishments that you have made possible with your tournament play and story choices over the years. More so than perhaps any other arc in the game's history, this arc will be shaped by your choices over the course of the past few arcs. The Rokugan you will witness in November will be your Rokugan, crafted by your hands. Quite frankly I'm just thrilled to be a part of it.

Obviously there are a great number of questions about the new storyline and how it applies both to the upcoming tournament events, as well as what happened to your old favorite personalities from previous arcs. I can't get into too much detail right now, but to whet your appetite, I thought I might take a look at the personalities from *Forgotten Legacy*, *Second City*, and *Emperor Edition*, and give you just a few examples of the kind of things you can expect to see, both in questions and answers, in the next few months.

- ❖ What former Crab is making dramatic changes to the methods by which the **ancient Brotherhood of Shinsei** operates throughout the Empire?
- ❖ What secret led to the disgrace of **Kakita Mitohime**, a young samurai-ko widely regarded as one of the finest students of the Kakita technique in her generation?
- ❖ Why is the Dragon Clan Champion known as the **Laughing Dragon**?
- ❖ Why did the formerly well-respected warrior **Akodo Kano** decline the position of Lion Clan Champion when it was offered to him?
- ❖ Who is **Yoritomo Minori**, and why do so many among the Mantis whisper that she is born not simply of man, but of the Naga as well?
- ❖ How did the legendary **Shiba Tsukimi**, also known as the Blind Phoenix, gain her amazing perceptual abilities after losing both eyes during the War of the Twins?
- ❖ Who is **Shosuro Rin** and why is she known, and feared, as the Eye of Shadow?
- ❖ How did the legendary grandmaster of the Order of the Spider, **Michio**, finally meet his end during the decades of peace following the Destroyer War?
- ❖ What purpose do the new **Doomseekers** fulfill within the Unicorn Clan and their role in the Colonies?

Look into the Void

BY BRYAN REESE

You have certainly heard a lot about Emperor Edition and many of the exciting new features we are rolling out. You have also certainly heard us describe it as premium. Our aim is to provide you with a premium experience across the board. We have upgraded every facet of the game. The templating on cards has been improved to make it easier to read and easier for new players to understand. We have upgraded the packaging, giving you beautiful works of art highlighting your favorite clan, and have designed the packaging in a way that you can carry your cards around in it. We have also upgraded the packaging of both our War of Honor and our Forgotten Legacy special sets, making them both beautiful and functional. There are many more upgrades we are planning, one of which I would like to talk to you about today.



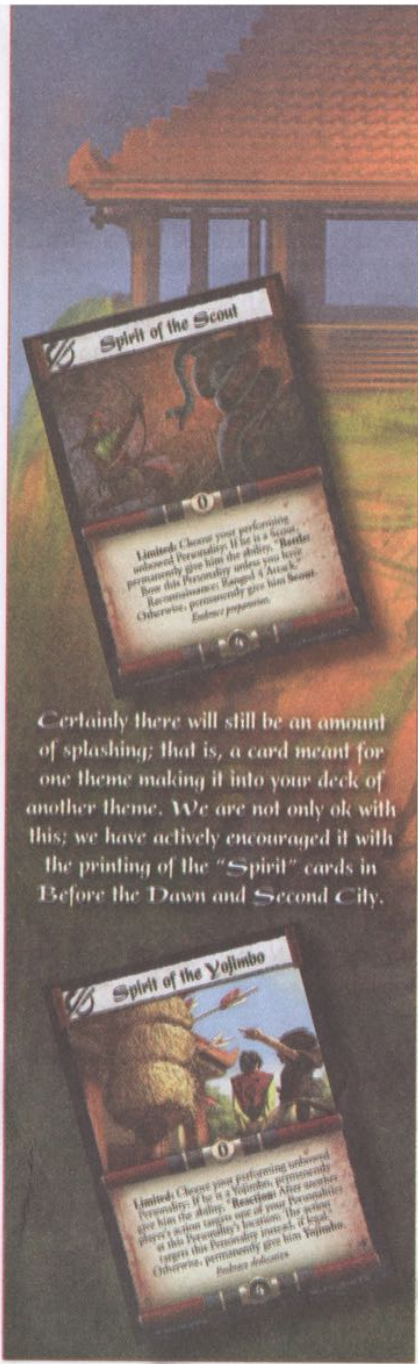
A PEEK INTO THE FUTURE OF EMPEROR EDITION

Another option we have for expansion Strongholds is to make Strongholds that support a sub-theme of a theme.

First I must lay down the foundation with some of the reasons for these sweeping changes. As you already know, with Celestial Edition we on the Design Team started heavily focusing on themes; that is aiming at giving each clan four different decks, plus any number of decks your intuition can, and always will, come up with. This was done for many reasons that have been discussed at length in other places, so no need to discuss them further here. It was a good first attempt, in my opinion, and I feel Celestial Edition as a whole has been a very successful arc. There were some improvements that could be made however, and we are working at addressing those in Emperor Edition.

There weren't truly four decks per clan, as some themes were never meant to be playable by themselves, but rather to improve or enhance one or more other themes. Dueling is a great example of this. For the Crane and the Dragon, dueling was one of their four themes, but we wanted to enhance their other decks. In this, we feel we were successful,

damage than the positivity they create. Sometimes generic Strongholds, such as Shrine of Champions or Tetsu Kama Mura, strike a perfect balance of not too weak but not too strong: a Stronghold you can always come back to and rely upon when you cannot find another Stronghold to play your deck out of. However, while these types of Strongholds are lifted up on a pedestal, used as examples of why the generic Stronghold theory is a good one, they are the outliers and are not the standard.



Certainly there will still be an amount of splashing; that is, a card meant for one theme making it into your deck of another theme. We are not only ok with this; we have actively encouraged it with the printing of the "Spirit" cards in Before the Dawn and Second City.

Emperor Edition is different however, as we are striving for four truly independent themes. Certainly there will still be an amount of splashing; that is, a card meant for one theme making it into your deck of another theme. We are not only ok with this; we have actively encouraged it with the printing of the "Spirit" cards in Before the Dawn and Second City. However, we are dedicated to giving each clan at least four different deck types that are fun to play and feel appropriate to the theme. After all, you don't have to win to have fun, as long as you are getting a good experience and enjoyment out of your deck.

Part of getting that enjoyment though, is having a functional deck. Even if it does not win, the ability to feel like your deck functioned as it should have is important. At times, this can be difficult, as there are a lot of components to making sure your deck functions as it should, or at least as you feel it should. I can lose a game, but if I felt like I was really a monk, using the power of Kung Fu and/or mystical tattoos to fight off my enemies, I am going to walk away happy. One of the larger components of making sure this happens is having a Stronghold to support the deck you wish to play. In Celestial Edition, this didn't always happen and some themes went almost the entire arc without a Stronghold to support them. Arguably the best example of this is the Mantis Economic Warfare deck, which did not have a Stronghold dedicated to it for much of the arc. When it finally did get a Stronghold, Aramasu's Vigilance, it instantly became a fan favorite and the deck skyrocketed in playability. This leads me to the heart of the article.

Emperor Edition will have four Strongholds, one per theme, included in the base set. All will be created by the same artist, Noah Bradley, whose work you discovered with The Forgotten Temple. We had been flirting with the idea of having more than two Strongholds in the base set for some time before making this decision. The initial idea was to have the Strongholds in the dual bugged expansions also be dual bugged. This meant by the first expansion of Emperor Edition each clan would have three Strongholds for the four themes. While this was better than Celestial Edition, it meant that not all four themes would be represented with a Stronghold until the fourth expansion, which is typically the last set before dual bugging starts again. This was simply too long, so we started talking about including four Strongholds. While we were debating the merits of this, Chris Stevenson was talking about the same thing on the podcast Strange Assembly (www.strangeassembly.com). He made some valid points that we had not yet considered, and when you combined his points with the discussions we were already having, it became clear that this was the right move. This leaves some lingering questions though. What about generic Strongholds? What will be in the expansions? While there were also other questions, these were the large ones.

Generic Strongholds, for anyone unfamiliar with the term, are Strongholds that do not promote one deck or another, but are rather generically useful Strongholds for many themes to play out of. Examples of this would include Shattered Peaks Castle, Crossroads Fortress (from Samurai Edition), and Shrine of Champions. Historically these types of Strongholds have been looked upon as a good thing as they would seem to maximize player creativity. I would argue though that they are in fact a red herring, causing more



What typically happens is these Strongholds wind up either too weak to ever see play (such as Crossroads Fortress) or they are so strong that they simply become the best option (such as Shattered Peaks Castle and Dragon Guard's City). Both of these two scenarios are bad, and they create a boring scenario where you are stuck, or at least perceive you are stuck, playing only one Stronghold for a significant length of the arc. This perception can often times stymie creativity. For an example of this, look at Great Hall of Records. A Stronghold with a solid ability, but due to its perceived weakness when compared to Central Castle, it has seen very little play this arc. However, a few players have gone against the grain, giving it a real shot, and as of this writing Great Hall of Records has won two Kotei, representing half of the wins from the Lion this Kotei season. For the above reasons I am actually glad we are getting away from completely generic Strongholds like Central Castle, working more on Strongholds that specifically support a deck type but are generic enough to be inviting to personalities which don't follow your specific theme (such as Kyuden Hida experienced or Shamate Keep).

This leads us to the second question: What will be in the expansions? We have a couple of options for this. First, we can use the expansion as a "do over" of sorts. For example, had we implemented this plan for Celestial Edition and Fortress of the Forgotten had been in the base set, by the time The Plague War expansion rolled around, we would have been able to tell that Fortress of the Forgotten was not pulling its weight, allowing us to try another berserker Stronghold for the Crab Clan.

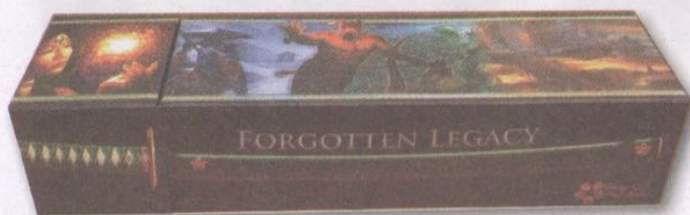
The other option we have for expansion Strongholds is to make Strongholds that support a sub-theme of a theme. An example of this could be Dragon monks and fire tokens. Again, using Celestial Edition as an example, we could have had Pillars of Virtue for your standard monks, and then a Fire Token Stronghold specifically designed to enhance and improve upon the fire token theme, giving Dragon players even more options when building their decks.

We on the Design Team are excited about this new way of designing the Strongholds, and we feel you will be happy with the results. This is merely another way we are improving L5R to give you that premium experience we having been promising. This is not the end though, and there will be plenty more upgrades to L5R for you to see by the time Emperor Edition launches. Enjoy!

The Customer is not King, He is Emperor

BY NICOLAS BONGIU AND TODD ROWLAND

It should be no secret to a Legend of the Five Rings fan that we are coming to a new era in the game. Emperor Edition is on the near horizon and L5R has been undergoing dramatic changes to prepare for this new arc. As you've seen from Before the Dawn and Forgotten Legacy, AEG is ramping up the experience of being an L5R fan, and it is only getting started.



AN IMPROVED INTERACTION

L5R is what it is because of the story, and that's the best place to start talking about Emperor Edition. As seen in Forgotten Legacy, the frame of the story is moving several decades ahead from where we left it after the rampage of Kali-Ma's forces. The Emerald Empire is, for the first time, actively spreading its boundaries by seeking to control lands in the former Ivory

displays for the CCG have become greatly collectible and reusable, as was first seen in Before the Dawn. Future expansions such as Second City will continue to deliver Clan-themed display boxes that will also serve as functional card storage devices, and will give you, the L5R fan, an outlook on what your Clan's color will be for the entire arc, since all 9 Clans will have at least received either a display box or a starter. It is our



its boundaries by seeking to control lands in the former Ivory Kingdoms. However, not all is well in the Colonies: the assassination of the Imperial Governor is still fresh on the minds of the Great Clans and some seek to turn this tragedy into a political gain. Would they be Great Clans if they acted otherwise?

And this is where the players will begin scripting the next great era of Legend of the Five Rings, an era of discovery. Clans will work through the early part of the Emperor Edition arc to establish a stronger foothold in the new colonies. Many new ways of interacting with the story as a Clan member will be introduced as you work together to strengthen your Clan's claim of dominance over the new lands and the valuable resources that await there.

Of course the events from Forgotten Legacy leave many of the Dark Naga causing mayhem, turning this from a simple exercise in moving over peasants, transferring resources and setting up fiefdoms to a constant battle for control and survival in a completely new environment.

Far from home and the direct rule of the divine throne, the inherent antagonism of the Clans will be sure to bring disagreements to violence. Will the actions of the players cause the Clans' colonies to feel a sense of independence from their homeland? Will their adherence to loyalty install a governor eager to serve the will of the throne? And what if the players of several Clans disagree with the Clan that installs the new Governor? AEG's intent is to give the players greater control than ever before in both setting their own Clan goals and attempting to achieve them.

AN IMPROVED PRODUCT

Aside from the rich story of a new world and new discoveries are the new physical components. The

have at least received either a display box or a starter. It is our goal that at the end of the Emperor Arc, each Clan will have one Clan themed starter and booster box, to hold his favorite clan's cards or simply carry decks.

From your initial response to the unveiling of the new packaging, we have also learned which points could be improved and this is where Emperor Edition itself comes into play. By the time your feedback on the Before the Dawn packaging came to our attention, the Second City one was already wrapped, and it could not be altered, but for Emperor, we are aiming at bringing your level of customer satisfaction even higher.

Emperor is a base set, and just like Forgotten Legacy being a direct to player set, this has advantages but also limiting factors. One of the latter is that you need to cater to all customers from various factions (the 9 Clans in the case of L5R). We decided to address this by going even further down the Clan exclusive packaging road by increasing the size of our starter display and aiming at making the L5R starter of each Clan a full-on experience in and of itself. While this sounds pretty vague on paper, here's what it means.

With this new storyline, AEG seeks to top all that has come before, and reward players with a rich experience, full of new characters, new lands, and new challenges.

As Bryan alluded to in his article on design, we have decided to include one stronghold per theme for each Clan in its Starter. But there's more! Conscious that the story aspect of the game is very important and that the time jump can cause some identification issues with Personalities you have little connection with, we have included short bios on all the Personalities from your Clan that

are included in your starter deck so you can have a little "who's who" to get started with and get an idea of who you may want to vote for the exclusive storyline vote included in your starter.

Since these additions ended up taking more space than a regular starter would allow, we've turned the starter display into a double deck card carrying box. Featuring only your Clan mon and art from the set, it will ensure you can bring both your sleeved deck and your trades (or 2 sleeved decks) pretty much everywhere you want to, providing a smaller alternative to the Forgotten Legacy box (which can hold 6 sleeved decks).

The box will also include a full color rulebook, larger than the traditional one for a base set, as well as a Clan focused fiction, so that you and your friends who might be interested in joining our great community sees the specificity of the Clans through the ever so important Story lens.

All in all, we are making this starter deck an all-inclusive product with



added value for both new and old player alike.

As for the booster box, we listened to your feedback on the lack of sturdiness of the central divider and are bringing it in line with the

one present our other products (Thunderstone and Nightfall). This will let it retain its card storage capabilities as well as allow for deck transportation (since each "tray" will be wide enough to store sleeved cards) As for its size, it will be similar to the one of the current boxes, but with its own unique theme. That way, it will stand out in look but not size

with the other Emperor Edition retail products.

We would love to tell you more about the rest of the amazing contents, but it will unfortunately have to wait for another Herald and our exclusive previews on www.l5r.com. In the meantime, enjoy this initial work in progress of the logo of the Edition.

Emperor Edition is the Arc to be an L5R fan. L5R has had incredible moments in the past, from the Day of Thunder through the Race for the Throne. With this new storyline, AEG seeks to top all that has come before, and reward players with a rich experience, full of new characters, new lands, and new challenges. Nothing is sacred in the new colonies, beyond that which the players define as such. The brakes are coming off: this is more than ever your story to tell.





The End of Celestial ... And A New Beginning

BY RÉDA LOUNIS AND SCOTT HADSALL

The Celestial arc has seen a variety of successful decks. Lion (with Central Castle) dominated the early portion of the up until the stronghold received errata, at which point the Dragon (with Last Step Castle) made a significant impact. Embassy of the Crane honor and Fields of the Dead breeder picked up where the Dragon left off, creating a complex meta-game dilemma for many during the second Kotei season. Now, as the Celestial era comes to a close, every clan has made significant leaps forward to compete at major events around the world.

The Emperor Edition format began with Before the Dawn and continues with Forgotten Legacy and Second City marking the next chapter in L5R's epic history. Looking back at Celestial and forward at Emperor, we asked several players and play test teams about their thoughts on where the current format was, and where it is going at the end of the year.

IMPERIAL HERALD: How did the individual clans perform in Celestial?

Meik Nowak: It speaks for itself that Lion were successful during both Kotei season of the Celestial Arc. Nevertheless, Celestial was a little bit weird for the Lion because they couldn't rely on a specific keyword like other Clans. They were able to build some unbelievably good decks



Daniel Briscoe: With the Spider cards and themes that have been previewed so far, Spider is going to be relying on its ability to control the ebb and flow of battle. Both the Sohei and Minions of the Lying Darkness themes are focused on military, and if Celestial has been any indication, Spider will be trying to focus exclusively on what happens during the attack phase. Spider has lived and died on the battle phase for the entirety of the Celestial arc, using overwhelming numbers to leverage the advantage. Since Breeder doesn't seem to be a theme, they will have to better utilize the personalities they are given to exact the maximum amount of damage to their opponents.

thanks to a great personality base, the cornerstone of which was Matsu Kasei, the samurai everyone over the arc came to love or hate.

Chris Nicoll: Crane was terrible for the first half of the arc. It was a real turn off for a lot of Crane players as Scouts never got the support they needed to be competitive, but Embassy of the Crane changed everything. Being able to play honor or dishonor gave the players some versatility (finally) in deck construction, and Doji Shikishi also created a huge advantage that Crane had lacked. You can easily see where these changes have led to great Kotei results in 2011.

Yves-Marie Le Carrères: Overall, Mantis decks lacked punch; they often went second and their best deck type had to play big attachments to develop enough force in an environment with good to great attachment destruction effects. Mantis also was vulnerable to control decks and wasn't fast enough to compete with late-arc honor decks. The Mantis Magistrate/Economic Warfare theme was very weak at first but has grown nicely, both in the player's hearts and in competitiveness, especially since the release of Aramasu's Vigilance. There are now plenty of good cards that focus on gold cost; almost enough to build a tier-one deck.

Loïc Jézéquel: With a world champion it will probably be hard to say the Phoenix performed badly. However, one could contend that they could have obtained better results given the variety of powerful decks and personalities they have access to. The new Stronghold they received in Before the Dawn, Temple of Purity, will hopefully let them achieve their potential by bringing better results in this year's last Kotei, and the last few months of the Celestial format.

IMPERIAL HERALD: Emperor Edition is releasing this Fall. Forgotten Legacy has been released and Second City previews are around the corner, giving Emperor Edition the kind of jumpstart that creates excitement. However, players really want to know what themes and decks they'll be looking to build in order to compete for the first storyline tournaments of the new arc. With that in mind, what do the individual clans need to perform well in Emperor Edition?

Jared Noble: Crab in Emperor Edition will require a careful personality balance to remain competitive. There is a definite need to see clutch dual-trait non-unique Personalities if the Crab Clan is to remain competitive with multiple themes and victory conditions throughout the arc. The Crab will need a well-balanced sprinkling of utility personalities in the Economic Warfare decks, while not detracting from Crab's long-standing military strength. All in all the new versatility being given to the Crab is bound to be its biggest strength, given adequate support and minimal requirement to avoid the conundrum created for instance in Samurai-era Phoenix with Samurai/Shugenja load balancing.

Julien Braun: Scorpion control deck could use a dedicated Stronghold with an ability helping against its traditionally difficult matchups (Lion and Battle Maidens). On the military side, Scorpion Personalities need to provide an alternative (through brute force or efficient abilities) for players wanting to create a military deck that can go toe to toe with other clans.

The Celestial arc is drawing to a close in a few months, and Emperor Edition will herald a new era for the Clans.

Case Kiyonaga: In Celestial Unicorn didn't have a Stronghold whose strength could even compare to the top clans. Unicorn

weaknesses of poor force-to-gold ratios and a somewhat awkward gold scheme meant the normal strength of cavalry wasn't enough to keep them competitive for long. Unicorn needs a few changes to be competitive in Emperor Edition. The first is a Stronghold that can compete with the rest of the clans; something closer to Outsider Keep than Utaku Plains. The second is cards that help their themes but are also playable on their own. Think cards like Moto Hunters or Desperate Rush. The third aspect is cards printed primarily for their themes and not shared by multiple other clans. While not every key-worded card needs to be clan specific, cards that were effectively Unicorn-specific were primarily Battle Maiden cards. They don't need cards that say "target your Unicorn personality" but they do need cards that are more useful across their themes. Having 10 Battle Maiden cards would be great...if the theme were top tier. The problem was that it wasn't, so all the Battle Maiden cards were relegated to mostly non-competitive decks and Unicorn players were forced to look elsewhere to compete.

IMPERIAL HERALD: Forgotten Legacy has been released and everyone is talking about what an amazing set it is. From packaging to art, to the cards themselves, what do the Clans receive from Forgotten Legacy that you're looking forward to playing moving from the Celestial arc into Emperor Edition?

Lyon Play Test team: Forgotten Legacy gives the Dragon clan Togashi Osawa experienced, who has a very useful Battle/Open action that works even if bowed. They also get a Follower that retrieves Kiho from the discard pile, which helps not only Monk military decks, but potentially Enlightenment. Kitsuki Nubane could cause a resurgence of Last Step Castle in the Celestial format, and Mirumoto Kojinrue is a great Kensai. Like Crane, they will enjoy Duel of Haiku and Sword for Hire with their honor and dueling decks.

San Diego Play Test team: Matsu Koyama will be a staple in Emperor as he supports several themes. Reducing the force of each personality and follower in a unit by four is strong, but bowing them if the effect reduces them to zero force is icing on the cake. This personality supports both Paragon and switch decks along with the four personal honor Akodo Tsudoken experienced, whose straighten ability creates more protection against bow effects. There are also several strategies that the Lion will find useful: Cast Aside the Weak, while a Dark Virtue, is still as useful for the Lion as it is to the Spider. Consideration is great support for Tacticians, and of course, The Perfect Moment.

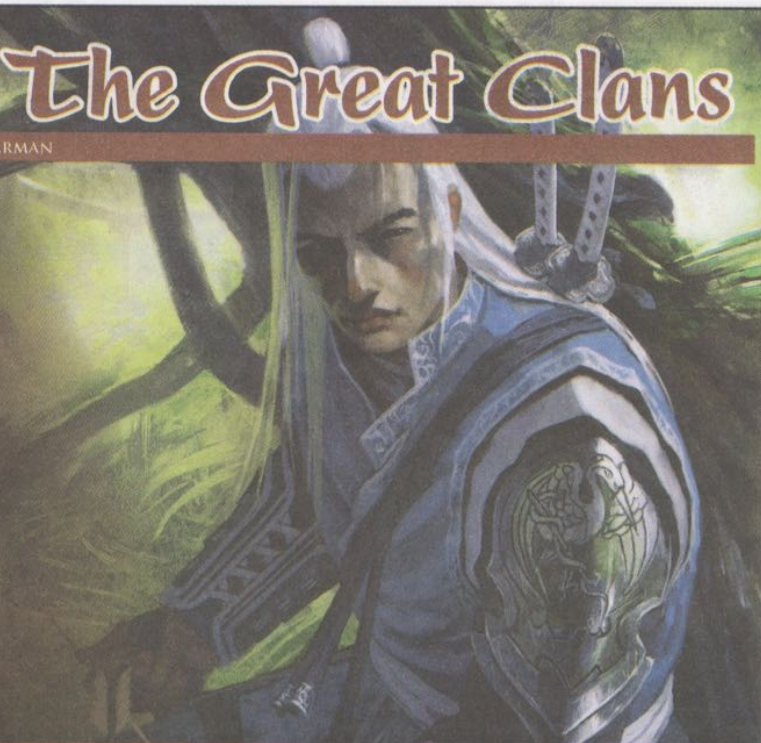
Landvisiau Play Test team: We're really excited to see Shosuro Makiko give Scorpion dishonor a tool to manipulate the Imperial Favor. Shosuro Aroru is a fantastic card that will undoubtedly terrorize players the entire arc. Bayushi Toshino is a good start to the Paragons of Loyalty theme which gives them access to some of the same Strategies as Lion and Spider. A Yojimbo's Duty and Asset Denial will also give Scorpion some great tools to take advantage of their unique themes.

The Celestial arc is drawing to a close in a few months, and Emperor Edition will herald in a new era for the Clans. Four themes per Clan create a wide variety of decks for each player to have fun with. Forgotten Legacy, arguably the best direct-to-player set in the history of L5R, leads the way into the new format, with a number of powerful Strategies sure to define the early portion of Emperor Edition. Adding the Eternity bug for future arcs, upcoming rules changes for Emperor, along with some of the best art we've ever seen on L5R cards creates a whole new look and feel for the game. Truly, when we use the phrase "Premium product" with regards to Emperor Edition, one look will be all it takes to understand why.

RPG Spotlight – The Great Clans

BY SHAWN CARMAN

In our last issue, you got a first glance at the Kuni Witch Hunters, an old favorite that's been updated to our new 4th edition rules and appears in the Great Clans sourcebook. The release of Great Clans is only a few days or weeks away (barring time-space issues which allow you to read this article after its release, of course!), so I thought perhaps this time you might enjoy a look at something new rather than a recreated School from days past. You'll find a tremendous amount of both in the Great Clans, and I know it's going to have a tremendous amount of material to support your campaign, whenever it may be set and whatever the clans might be doing in it!



New Basic School: The Daidoji Scout School

Although the Iron Warriors are the most well-known public face of the Daidoji family, they also study a style of warfare specialized in scouting, ambush, and precision strikes against vulnerable enemy assets like commanders and supply caravans. Daidoji Scouts readily employ traps and surprise attacks, accepting a certain amount of dishonor in their own conduct for the sake of the Crane Clan's greater good. They rely on the rest of the clan to provide them with political cover for their questionable actions.

Techniques

Rank 1: Surveying the Land

The Daidoji scouts are masters of observation and pursuit, tracking their opponents, harassing them, and delaying them with traps and ambushes. You gain +1k0 with Stealth and Hunting Skill Rolls. Any rural/improvised traps you create are exceptionally deadly, and inflict +1k1 additional damage.

Rank Two: Scouring the Shadows

Daidoji scouts are masters of observation and pursuit, tracking their opponents, harassing them, and delaying them with traps and ambushes. You gain +1k0 with Stealth and Hunting Skill Rolls. Any rural/improvised traps you create are exceptionally deadly, and inflict +1k1 additional damage.

gains from wearing armor or from School Techniques. (You cannot ignore the natural Reduction of creatures, or Reduction bestowed by magical or supernatural effects.) If you attack an opponent who has no Reduction from armor or Techniques, you gain +1k0 to your damage rolls against that opponent.

Rank Four: Strike and Move

The Daidoji scout strikes with the swiftness of the wind itself. You may make

may spend a Void Point as a Free Action to attempt a deadly precision strike on your next attack (this may be done with a melee or a ranged attack, but cannot be done more than once in the same Turn). Any Maneuvers called on this attack require 1 less Raise (to a minimum of 1 Raise), and if you successfully hit, you gain a bonus of +1k1 to your damage roll. Furthermore, if your opponent is unaware of your presence, your Raises on this attack are not limited by your Void Ring.

And just in case that particular new School wasn't to your liking, how about a shiny new Ancestor Advantage? Hmm. Let's go with the Mantis Clan this time!

Moshi Azami [6 points]

Moshi Azami is a Mantis Clan member.

New School: Daidoji Scouts [Bushi]

- ◆ **Benefit:** +1 Reflexes
- ◆ **Starting Honor:** 3.5
- ◆ **Skills:** Athletics, Hunting (Traps), Kenjutsu, Knives, Kyujutsu (Yumi), Stealth (Sneaking), and one Bugei or Low Skill
- ◆ **Outfit:** Light or Ashigaru armor, rugged clothing, daisho set, bow, knife, any one weapon, trap-making gear, camouflage face paint, traveling pack, 5 koku

devastating attacks. When attacking an unaware opponent, you gain a bonus of +2k0 to your attack roll.

Rank Three: Weaken the Resistance

The Daidoji learn to strike with precision, hitting their opponents in weak spots and evading their armor. You may ignore any Reduction your opponent

complex action when wielding a katana, wakizashi, knife, or bow. Your traps now inflict an additional +2k1 damage.

Rank Five: Cunning of Daidoji

The true master of the Daidoji scout techniques needs only a single strike, for his opponent never survives to see the second one. During a skirmish, you

of the Sun Goddess anywhere in the Empire. Prior to the twelfth century, Azami is solely an ancestor for the Centipede Clan.

Her guidance bestows the favor of the Sun upon you – you suffer no ill effects from the sun (e.g., dehydration, sunburn, etc.) and gain Reduction 5 against fire (normal or magical).

❖ Demand: Azami was a profoundly pious woman. She will leave you if you commit any act of impiety or blasphemy against the Fortunes of the Celestial Heavens (deliberately or accidentally).

Interview with Adrian Burton and Steve Argyle

BY SCOTT HADSALL

Finding five minutes of serious is impossible for Steve Argyle. Thankfully for us, Adrian Burton calmed him down long enough for us to interview the newest Art Directors for L5R as we move towards Emperor Edition.

Imperial Herald: *Firstly, how long have you both been involved with L5R?*

Steve Argyle: My first published piece for L5R was back in Diamond Edition, Setai Sensei. I'd been playing the game for a year or two (introduced to the game by Adrian actually!). I was working for Sony as a video game character modeler, but I'd always wanted to get into illustration. One day, I swung by one of our concept artist's desk to drag him off to lunch, and noticed a stack of L5R cards on his desk. I'd found a comrade geek in arms! When I asked the talented Matt Armstrong about his conspicuous stack of cards, he told me that they were his contributor copies, and that he hadn't actually ever played. I fixed that right quick. We would sneak off to a conference room to play during lunch, and after mentioning enough times that I'd love to paint for the game, Matt gave me the art director's email address, with a friendly message of "put up, or shut up." The art director was nice enough to give me a shot on a single card. The rest, as they say, is history.

Adrian Burton: I'm not an artist actually; my job is more the administrative and continuity side. But I saw my first card, basic Otaku Kamoko when I was about fifteen so fourteen years ago. The first piece I was ever able to have any input on was Steve's first one; the awesome Setai Sensei.

IH: *There's a lot of talk about Empire Edition being a premium level product - what does that mean with regard to the art?*

SA: It means that all the artists are sent a solid gold jacuzzi, filled with a mixture of fine chocolate and finer wine, to soak in while they paint. They're also given two loyal and elite assistant-masseuses to make sure they're relaxed and at their best. We



feel the air of pampered refinement will come though in the work. On our side of things, we're spending as much time as we can directing each artist toward the best work they can do. We're rewriting the style guide, taking the best of the last 15 years, and setting that as the new standard. Unfortunately, there were no jacuzzi left for me so I will be doing my direction from my usual perch atop a mound of Mountain Dew cans and Prito crumbs.

AB: In my mind it's all about our ability to work with the artists to convey the image and feel of Rokugan and get that feeling brought out in the cards. That means we give the right art references and the best initial descriptions. When we came on board we issued a survey to our artists asking what they like to do as artists, and

we will be applying those choices to the pieces we assign in addition to all the other factors in giving an artist a card.

IH: *Since Emperor Edition is so large, what does that mean for the quantity of artists? Are there more artists for Emperor Edition than usual? Who are you excited to see pieces from?*

SA: We're very excited to get some old favorites back for Emperor Edition. Mario Wibisono, is just one example and we've been able to get more pieces from our loyal champions, like Drew Baker, April Lee, and Charles Urbach. We're excited to bring up a new crop of talented new artists, who you'll become familiar with very soon. Last, but certainly not least, we're talking with some hugely talented and famous artists for work

in later sets. Seriously, Emperor Edition should be incredible.

AB: The Emperor base set has 58 artists. In addition we went into the galleries and resurrected some classic art pieces as well. Our goal setting up the first Emperor Edition expansion is to keep the number of cards we give to each artist at a number we feel allows them to flourish. For instance, an artist will say they can do ten cards, so we'll likely assign them three or four, unless they have proven to be able to maintain quality pieces when given a heavier work load. We're setting them up to succeed. It does add work on our end because there will be more artists involved but we feel it's going to be worth it. I'm excited to see pieces from Toni Foti, Sergio Camarena and the awesome rookie Wen Juinn.

IH: *We've seen so much of Rokugan in the history of L5R. Moving into the Ivory Kingdoms, how difficult is it to have a unified vision of what exists outside of the Empire?*

SA: Well, since we're just starting it, I'm not sure how difficult it will be. Theoretically, with a good style guide, dedicated direction, and long enough cattle prod, things should work out just fine.

AB: It will be something we need to maintain. Style guides, inspirational art, and communication with the artists will be a big part of that. The Ivory Kingdoms are in many ways a similar idea as Rokugan was at its birth; an amalgamation of many amazing cultures blended into a fantasy land. With a whole new land we get a chance to offer more contrast, new creatures, and fun compositions, which is both a challenge and a reward of its own.