

GAMEWRIGHT®

HONOR OF THE SAMURAI™

THE CARD GAME OF INTRIGUE, HONOR AND SHAME

3-6 PLAYERS • AGES 10 TO ADULT

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INTRODUCTION

Honor of the Samurai is set in 16th century Japan. It was a time of great unrest, and almost continual warfare. When you play Honor of the Samurai, you become a samurai (an elite warrior) of the era, represented by a samurai card. You start out the game serving your honorable daimyo (warlord), represented by a daimyo card. Your aim is to serve an honorable master, and to become the most honorable samurai of the land. Both you and your daimyo strive to gain honor in various ways, such as becoming shogun, making favorable marriages, and acquiring castles and honorable possessions. If your daimyo should die, you will have to find another honorable master to serve, or you will not be able to gain any honor. You must protect yourself from attack by hostile daimyo, and from the fearsome ninja spies and assassins. To do so, you will need to amass some power. Power comes from raising armies, having ninja at your disposal, and guarding yourself with house guards and castles. The cards used to play the game represent all these possibilities. During the game, you must carefully plan how your samurai and your daimyo will control their respective houses (in the game a house is a line of cards belonging to a samurai or a daimyo). You will also have to think about how and when to play the cards in your hand, which can be used to add to your houses, dishonor your opponents, save face when dishonored, or employ the services of ninja. The strategy of the game is highly interactive, and players are subject to sudden reversals of fortune.

The extraordinary dynamics and richness of the history of Japan, which is the basis of this game, led us to write game directions

interlaced with history. The game's characters and their relationships are real, and the strategies and behavior of leading historical daimyo (warlords) like Takeda Shingen, Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu inspired our game play. You will find their stories in the history section at the end. **Throughout the directions, essential rules appear in boldface.**

OBJECT OF THE GAME

The object of the game is to earn 400 honor points.

GAME COMPONENTS

Cards: The Honor of the Samurai deck contains 110 cards. Most cards have three basic attributes: honor, ki, and strength.

Honor: Daimyo, okugata (honorable wife), and possession cards have honor points. At the beginning of each turn, players add their current honor points to their cumulative honor score.

Ki: A measure of spiritual strength. In the game, this spiritual strength is expressed by allowing a player to draw or play extra cards. For each three points of ki, a player earns an extra card action.

Strength: For each three points of strength, a player may roll one battle die when engaged in combat.

For complete descriptions of each card and its use, please refer to page 8.







Honor Chips: Honor chips are used to keep track of players' honor points. The chips come in denominations of 5, 10, 25, 50,

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and 100. Players should always trade up to higher denominations whenever possible (exchange five 5's for a 25, two 25's for a 50).

Custom Dice

Honor of the Samurai comes with six custom dice. Each face of these dice has an historically appropriate mon, or family crest. The numerical value assigned to each mon is shown in the table below.

Numerical Value	1	2	3	4	5	6
Mon						

GAME SEQUENCE AND PLAY

Setup

- Remove the samurai, daimyo, and 'By Imperial Decree' (shogun) cards from the deck.
- Place the 'By Imperial Decree' card face up in the middle of the table. The card will go to the daimyo who takes the powerful title of shogun.
- The dealer then shuffles and fans the ten daimyo cards. Starting with the player on the dealer's left, each player draws a daimyo card which he places face up on the table in front of him.

• The dealer then deals each player a samurai card. Any extra samurai cards should be set aside and not used again in the game.

• Next, the dealer cuts the remaining daimyo cards, one by one, back into the deck and shuffles the deck. The player to the dealer's right then cuts the deck, after which the dealer deals seven cards to each player.

The remaining cards are placed in the center of the table as the draw pile. One player should be designated as the "banker" and put in charge of dispensing the honor chips.

Play proceeds clockwise starting with the player to the dealer's left.

Card Layout

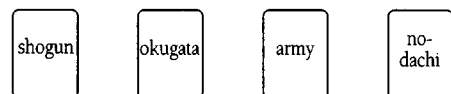
Each player may play cards to the house of his daimyo as well as to that of his samurai. To represent these houses, each player lays out his cards in two horizontal lines, one above the other. The top line represents the daimyo's house, and the lower line the samurai's. Each house may include only one okugata (honorable wife) and no more than five army cards. There is, however, no limit to the number of possession cards and house guard cards that a player may place in his layout. Once a card is placed in the layout, it may not be removed except by the use of a ninja spy.

Card placement could look like this after a few rounds of play:

Top line: The daimyo's house



Lower line: The samurai's house



Sequence of a Turn

For each turn a player follows these steps in this order:

- 1) collect honor chips (see "Tracking Honor" below)
- 2) determine the number of card actions (drawing or playing a card) permitted
- 3) draw and play cards, or discard them
- 4) make a declaration (optional)
- 5) declare the turn over.

1) **Score honor:** At the start of his turn, each player tallies his honor points by adding the honor on each of his cards on the table in both houses. He declares his increase in honor points by stating "I gain xx honor points" and then receives the appropriate number of honor chips. This is explained in detail on the next page.

2) **Determine the number of card actions:** The act of drawing

or playing a card is termed a "card action." Since each samurai (player) starts the game with six ki, and for each three ki he earns one card action, a player will always be entitled to at least two card actions. He may accrue additional card actions by earning more ki. **To determine the number of card actions that he has earned, a player totals his ki and divides that number by three.** Thus, a player with 12 ki is entitled to four card actions, 15 ki gives five card actions. Five card actions is the upper limit. Even if a player has more than 15 ki, he may still only draw or play a card five times. Neither discarding nor playing the save face card is considered a card action. Dishonor is counted as two card actions.

Example: A player with 14 ki would be entitled to four card actions (the first 12 ki give the player four card actions while the remainder of two ki cannot be used). If at any time during his turn, he gains an additional point of ki, then he would immediately gain a fifth card action because his ki would now equal 15. Although any further accumulation of ki would not entitle him to additional card actions, it would act as a kind of "insurance" against possible future losses of ki.

3) **Drawing, playing, and discarding cards:** A player may use his card actions either to draw new cards or to play cards. Any card played counts as a card action; this includes playing ninja and dishonor cards. Save face is the only card which does not count as a card action.

A player may not hold more than seven cards in his hand at any one time. This means that a player with seven cards in his hand must either play or discard a card before he can draw

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another card.

4) **Make a declaration:** Players may make one declaration per turn at any time after they score their honor. Declarations are not card actions. Declarations are:

- Declaring your daimyo to be shogun, if no other daimyo already possesses the title. Take the 'By Imperial Decree' card (shogun card) from the center of the table and place it by your daimyo. You will now earn extra honor points. (See 'By Imperial Decree' card description.)
- Attacking the player whose daimyo possesses the title of shogun, or who possesses a castle. An attack results in a battle.
- Allying your samurai with a daimyo who is controlled by another player. (This is explained below.)
- Dissolving an alliance. (This is explained below.)
- Dissolving an alliance causes a loss of 25 honor points.

5) **Declare the turn over.**

Gaining and Losing Honor

A player (samurai) gains honor by serving an honorable daimyo. The honor of both daimyo and samurai can be increased by a favorable marriage as well as by the acquisition of honorable possessions. **At the beginning of each turn, a player receives honor points equal to the sum of the honor points shown on his cards on the table (not the cards in his hand). A samurai without a daimyo is considered a ronin (lone samurai), and cannot gain honor.** Honor can be lost by dishonorable conduct such as using a gunpowder weapon, employing ninja, or receiving a dishonor card.

Tracking Honor Points with Honor Chips

The game comes supplied with honor chips. At the start of each turn, a player collects chips equal to his honor. Cards played during the turn will not produce honor until the beginning of the next turn. Players store their chips in a pile above the daimyo's house. If a player loses honor, he removes the corresponding value of chips from his pile. In a situation where a player without chips loses honor, he incurs negative honor. To keep track of this negative honor, the player will move his chips below the samurai's house. Chips in this position always indicate that the honor points are negative. When a player with negative honor gains honor, he removes the chips from below his house. Once these chips below the house are gone, any additional honor chips a player earns are then placed above the daimyo's house as explained above. Any honor that is not a multiple of 5 is rounded up (i.e., 17.5 honor points are scored as 20).

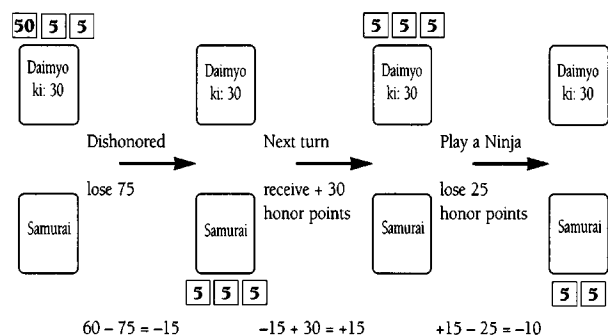
Example: Player 1 finishes his turn with 60 honor points. During the next round, player 2 dishonors player one with a dishonor card. Player 1 loses 75 points, and thus his score is reduced to -15 points (that is, $60 - 75 = -15$). He keeps track of this loss by removing the 60 points of chips from above his daimyo's house, and putting 15 points of chips below his samurai's house. On player 1's next turn, he gains 30 points from his cards on the table. Thus, his score increases to 15 (that is, $-15 + 30 = 15$). He keeps track of this increase by removing the 15 points of chips from below his house and placing them above it. To continue the example, suppose that player 1 next plays a ninja card and suffers a 25 point loss of honor. His score becomes -10 (that is, $15 - 25 = -10$). He

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removes 15 points of chips from above his daimyo's house, and places 10 below his samurai's house.

The diagram below illustrates the changes in player 1's honor points described above.

Figure 1:



Allying with Another Player's Daimyo

Sometimes the daimyo you control may die in battle or be assassinated. Your samurai then becomes a **ronin**, and he **cannot collect honor**. There are only two ways to remedy this situation. First, you may play a new daimyo from your hand, an action which will entitle you to collect honor on your next turn. Second, you may serve another player's daimyo as his second samurai.

To serve a daimyo who is controlled by another player,

declare an alliance during the declaration phase of your turn. On your next turn, you will serve your new daimyo as second samurai. The samurai who controls that daimyo remains the first samurai. **You may not form an alliance with a daimyo who already has a second samurai.** Only two samurai may serve a single daimyo at any one time. **The daimyo may not refuse a second samurai.**

As second samurai, you collect honor points each turn that are equal to the sum of:

- 1) half the total honor points shown on cards controlled by the daimyo.
- 2) half the honor points shown on the shogun card, if your daimyo is shogun.
- 3) half the honor points of the cards in your second samurai's house.

Any honor points held by the first samurai have no effect on you.

Example: The daimyo you serve has 20 honor points. Because he is also shogun in a three player game, he gains an additional 50 honor points for a total of 70 points. Your samurai has a 5 honor point okugata card. Thus, on your turn you gain 40 points: one-half of the daimyo's honor ($20 + 50 = 70$, divided by 2 = 35 honor points) plus one half the 5 honor points from your okugata card. Since half of 5 is 2.5, it is rounded up to 5, and your total is then 40 honor points.

The daimyo you serve may use your strength immediately should he decide to engage in combat. As second samurai, you

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have no right to decide whether your daimyo can launch an attack. This choice rests solely with the first samurai.

As second samurai you may give army, okugata, possession cards and/or house guard cards to yourself or to the daimyo you are now serving. You may also play save face cards on the daimyo to save him from defeat in battle.

If you are second samurai when the first samurai is killed (or assassinated), then you immediately become the first samurai. You take control of the daimyo you are serving (yes, you take the entire daimyo's house from your opponent and move it to your side), and collect full honor points at the beginning of your next turn. Treacherous as this may seem, such events did occur. See the story of Oda Nobunaga at the end of this book for one example.

If, as second samurai, you assassinate or attempt to assassinate the first samurai, you incur double the dishonor for such treachery.

When you are second samurai, you may dissolve your alliance with the daimyo you are serving by making a declaration during your turn. It takes one round of play for the alliance to be dissolved. **Dissolving an alliance is dishonorable, so you must immediately lose 25 honor points if you do so.**

As the daimyo who has a second samurai, you may use the strength of the second samurai immediately for attack and defense. You collect no additional honor for having a second samurai. A second samurai always poses a threat of assassination, and you must defend against this threat. House guards are always

a help. **There are three tactics you can employ to dissolve an alliance with a second samurai.** You can assassinate him, dishonor him, or (even more radical) play a daimyo card from your hand to your second samurai, and send him on his way. The second samurai must accept the new daimyo and detach. When a second samurai is dishonored, the alliance is automatically dissolved, unless a save face card is played.

Assassinations

When the ninja assassin card is played, the person playing it must **declare against which daimyo or samurai the card is targeted**. Then, the samurai playing the card must **roll a single die to determine whether the assassination attempt will succeed**. For the assassination attempt to succeed, he must roll a 3, 4, 5, or 6. However, if the targeted house contains a house guard card, then he must roll either a 5 or 6. If the daimyo is assassinated, then the daimyo card as well as any other cards in the daimyo's house are discarded. The samurai serving that daimyo becomes ronin. An assassinated samurai must discard all the cards in his house (in both cases only the line of cards played on the table, not the cards in his hand); however, any daimyo he serves remains unaffected. Despite his death, the samurai card remains in play, just as if another family member has been promoted to fill the vacant position. If a daimyo who owns a castle is assassinated, that castle must be discarded.

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Battle

Battles are fought by rolling dice. The number of dice each side can roll is found by taking the strength of the daimyo's house, and adding to it the strength of the samurai's house. If there is a second samurai, the strength of the second samurai's house is also added. The total is then divided by three. This number (which is rounded down) tells how many dice to roll. Each side in turn rolls his allotted number of dice, and totals the sum. The side with the highest total wins.

Battle sequence:

- 1) Attacker asserts intent to attack during his turn.
- 2) Attacker counts strength and divides by 3 to determine the number of dice to roll.
- 3) Attacker rolls dice and adds sum of the dice.
- 4) Defender counts strength and divides by 3 to determine the number of dice to roll.
- 5) Defender rolls dice and adds sum of the dice.
- 6) The player with the higher sum is declared victor. In the case of a tie, roll the dice again.

Battle Protocol

- 1) Only a daimyo may attack.
- 2) Only the shogun or a daimyo with a castle may be attacked.
- 3) If the loser is not shogun, he may use a save face card to avoid "death."
- 4) Any other player may play a save face card for a losing daimyo (if the daimyo is not shogun).
- 5) Without a save face card, the losing daimyo "dies," his entire house is discarded, and the first and second samurai become ronin.

- 6) A daimyo who defeats the shogun must assume the title of shogun.
- 7) The winner may either add the loser's castle to his layout, or else discard (burn) it.
- 8) A player is limited to one castle per daimyo, though the daimyo may "upgrade" his castle by replacing it with the newly captured one.

Reshuffling the Discard Pile

When all cards from the draw pile have been used, the discard pile should be shuffled thoroughly to create a new draw pile.

Winning the Game

Play proceeds until one player has accumulated 400 honor points. That player is then declared the most honorable samurai, and is the winner.

For your first game, play with no more than three or four players, and don't focus too much on winning. You are just learning. As you gain experience, you may want to include more players. A five or six player game requires a certain decisiveness on the part of each player to keep the game moving, so large games are best attempted by experienced players. You may set a lower number of points as the goal: 250 or 300 points will give a shorter game.

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CARD DESCRIPTION AND USAGE

Daimyo: **Function** – Head of the daimyo's house.

Honor varies **Ki** varies **Strength** varies

There are ten different daimyos in the deck. Each one has different attributes. Each player starts the game with one daimyo who heads his upper house.

Samurai: **Function** – Head of the samurai's house.

Honor 0 **Ki** 6 **Strength** 0

Each player is dealt one samurai card. This card heads the player's lower house and remains in play throughout the entire game. It cannot be discarded even if the samurai is assassinated or commits seppuku, that is, ritual suicide.

'By Imperial Decree' (shogun): **Function** – Indicates your daimyo holds the title of shogun.

Honor 30-150 **Ki** 0 **Strength** 0

Awarded to the daimyo with the military strength, honor, loyalty, and administrative skills to unify the country, protect it from invaders, and keep the peace at home, the title of shogun was one of great honor which only the emperor could bestow. The actual title "Seii-tai shogun" or "Barbarian-Quelling Generalissimo" was inscribed on a sheet of rice paper bearing the gold

imperial chrysanthemum crest, and was presented to the lord who was to become shogun. Though never used by the shogun himself, this crest depicted on the shogun game card represents the imperial authority by which the title was granted. In Honor of the Samurai, the title of shogun confers extra honor points which vary with the number of players (see the card for the honor points).

For each turn your daimyo is shogun, you will receive extra honor points. Be careful, however. Not only may the shogun himself be attacked by other daimyo, but the additional honor points you earn by serving the shogun also mark your samurai as an attractive target for attack. So be on the lookout against assassination attempts, and expect dishonor to come your way. In addition, the daimyo who is shogun may not use a save face card to prevent his removal should he lose in battle.

Okugata: **Function** – Bring honor and ki to a house.

Honor 5 or 10 **Ki** 3 or 4 **Strength** 0

Okugata means honorable wife in Japanese. Since an advantageous marriage had the power to create an important strategic alliance between two clans, daimyo were forever scheming to forge the best matches for their sons and daughters. For example, O-Ichi, the beautiful younger sister of Oda Nobunaga, was married three times to advance the political designs of her brother. Likewise, Tokuhime, the daughter of Oda Nobunaga (see Historical Notes), was married in 1561 to Tokugawa Ieyasu's eldest son, Nobuyasu, to cement an alliance between the two families. However, when she learned that Nobuyasu and his

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mother plotted to kill her father, Nobunaga, she reported this information to him. He, in turn, reported it to Ieyasu. To preserve the alliance, Ieyasu had Nobuyasu and his mother put to death. In the game, okugata bring both ki and honor to their samurai or daimyo because they symbolize powerful connections.

Ninjas: **Function** – Perform covert operations for their masters.

Who has not heard of ninja, those shadowy warriors clothed in black who could scale the highest fortress walls, slip undetected into the most heavily guarded rooms to slay an unsuspecting victim, then disappear into thin air? Armed with an array of poisoned darts, throwing stars, daggers, and mysterious exploding powders, a single ninja made a formidable opponent any time. But in the dead of night, he must have seemed invincible. While a samurai was expected to adhere to a strict code of honor which even dictated how he might use his sword, no such principles bound a ninja. Effectiveness was all that mattered. Why run the risk of honorable confrontation when a knife plunged into the back of a sleeping victim might accomplish the same end? However dishonorable this dark side of war might seem to a samurai, he recognized its value in certain circumstances. Ninja existed for such occasions, and judging from the fact that entire regions in Iga and Koga bustled with ninja activity, we can be pretty sure there were plenty of such occasions. Though ninja have disappeared into the footnotes of history, those who are curious to learn more about these stealthy warriors of the past

can visit the ninja museum in the city of Iga Uneo and even, perhaps, attend the annual ninja festival that is held there.

In Honor of the Samurai, the use of a ninja is dishonorable, and **a player using a ninja loses 25 honor points.**

There are three types of ninja cards: the ninja spy, the elite ninja spy, and the ninja assassin.

A ninja spy may steal or destroy one possession card from any one house, but he is not permitted to steal okugata (even a ninja would not stoop so low) or house guards. To destroy a card, steal it and discard it. A stolen card may also be placed in any house of the player who stole it, even that of his second samurai.

An elite ninja spy is better trained and more effective than an ordinary ninja. A good education is always valuable and these master ninjas have had the best. Trained in all of the deadliest martial arts, they are able **to steal or destroy two possession cards from any one house**. A player who steals two cards may: 1) place both items in the same house, 2) split up the two cards by placing one in the house of his daimyo and the other in the house of his samurai, 3) destroy both cards, or 4) play one and destroy the other. A ninja spy may steal or destroy any of the following cards: swordsmith, Noh theater, gunpowder weapons, nodachi, daisho, and army cards.

A player with a **ninja assassin card may attempt to remove either an opponent's daimyo or samurai by throwing a single battle die. For the assassination attempt to succeed, he must roll a 3, 4, 5, or 6. However, if the targeted house contains a**

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house guard card, he must roll a 5 or 6. In any case, the house guard, in protecting his master, makes the ultimate sacrifice and is placed ceremoniously in the discard pile. If a daimyo is assassinated, his entire daimyo house must be discarded. All cards in the samurai's house except the samurai card are discarded when the victim is a samurai.

Though most of the time a player will use these cards to attack his opponents, he may use them against his own daimyo or samurai if he thinks such a tactic will help him.

House Guards: **Function** – Protect his master's house.

A daimyo lived in constant fear for his life. Because many had risen to power by assassinating their allies and kin, they knew all too well the dangers that surrounded them. Some went to great lengths to protect themselves, constructing secret passageways and storing hidden weapons. Ever-vigilant house guards lurked everywhere. Takeda Shingen, fearful for his safety even while in the bathroom, installed two special doors in his lavatory that were designed to prevent sneak attacks. Tokugawa Ieyasu hoped to discourage would-be assassins by insisting that special long pants be worn at court. Termed "naga bakama," or "court style," these pants hung over the feet, thus making it difficult for the wearer to run. Concerned lest a noiseless intruder sneak up on him, Ieyasu had the main hallway of Nijo Castle in Kyoto specially constructed with loose floorboards that "sing" like a nightingale whenever anyone walks down it. Even today, those fortunate enough to visit Nijo Castle can hear its famous nightingale hallway sing. House guards also were essential to a daimyo's

defense against assassination, and just their staggering numbers suggest the degree of fear in which their masters must have lived. Hideyoshi, for instance, had 2,000 house guards, Ieyasu over 6,000. In the game, house guards protect against assassins. For more details, see the instructions concerning the ninja assassin card.

Castles: **Function** – A defensive structure.

Honor 5, 10, or 15 **Ki** 0, 1, or 2 **Strength** 3, 4, or 5

Can only be held by a daimyo.

Can only be used for defense.

Cannot be counted in attack strength.

Allows other players to attack you.

The castle fortress was a classic form of Japanese architecture. A castle added greatly to a daimyo's defensive strength. Likewise, in the game, a castle fortress is considered defensive and thus cannot be used to attack. A daimyo with a castle may, however, be attacked by another daimyo. If victorious, the attacking daimyo may either seize the other daimyo's castle (and upgrade his own castle should he have one and choose to do so), or he may decide to "burn" (discard) it. Since no daimyo may hold more than one castle at a time (and only a daimyo may hold a castle), a player can only upgrade his existing castle by simultaneously discarding the castle he already holds. If a daimyo with a castle fortress is assassinated, the castle must be discarded. Ninjas may not steal castles. At the end of the instructions, you may want to read historical information about the castles in the deck.

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Dishonor: **Function** – Bring dishonor to an opponent.

Honor 0 **Ki** 3 **Strength** 0

Counts as two card actions.

Causes targeted player to lose 75 honor points.

Targeted player may choose to have his samurai commit seppuku and thus preserve honor.

In the Japanese code of honor, a samurai might incur dishonor simply by failing to observe an obligation or fulfill a responsibility. When played, the dishonor card shames its recipient. **A player who receives a dishonor card has three choices: 1) lose 75 honor points, 2) play a save face card and reduce that dishonor to 30 points, or 3) order his samurai or daimyo to commit seppuku and thereby incur no loss of honor.** If a samurai or daimyo commits seppuku, all cards in his house must be discarded except the samurai card which remains in play on the table. It is as if the samurai were replaced instantly by a new samurai who has risen through the ranks. Second samurais who are dishonored are detached unless they can play a save face card.

Save Face: **Function** – Reduce dishonor; prevent death in combat.

Prevents 'death' after defeat in combat.

Save face reduces dishonor from 75 to 30 points.

Cannot be used by the shogun.

In Japanese culture, an individual could often save face after disgrace by presenting a gift or an offering. Nonetheless, a daimyo or samurai defeated in battle would frequently commit seppuku to

preserve his honor. A save face card may be used either to prevent death after defeat in combat, or else to reduce the loss of honor from a dishonor card to 30 points. Thus, the recipient of a dishonor card who possesses a save face card may reduce his honor point loss to 30 points by immediately playing a save face card.

In battle, the defeated daimyo will 'die,' which means that all the cards in his house, including the daimyo card, must be placed in the discard pile. If, at the time of defeat, the player introduces a save face card, he saves face and 'lives.' In this case, no cards will be lost and the daimyo does not have to be discarded.

A daimyo who is shogun cannot use a save face card to prevent his own death, nor can he use it to reduce dishonor.

If a daimyo holding a castle uses a save face card to prevent his own death upon defeat in combat, his castle is lost to the successful attacker.

A player may introduce a save face card at any time in the game. He does not need to wait until it is his turn. He may play his save face card on other players should he wish to prevent the death of those players after defeat or to preserve their alliances.

Possessions

Both samurai and daimyo may have possessions in their houses. Possessions are: armies (cavalry, lancers, foot soldiers, and warrior monks), no-dachi, daisho, noh theater, swordsmith, and gunpowder weapons.



Army cards: **Function** – To serve both samurai and daimyo.

Honor 0 **Ki** 0 or 1 **Strength** 1, 2, or 3

In the Sengoku era, the armies consisted of cavalry, lancers, infantry, and warrior monks. Each group had different strengths in battle. The cavalry was the elite mounted force. The Takeda, in particular, perfected the cavalry charge with devastating results for its opponents. The lancers, bristling with long spears, proved especially effective against foot soldiers and cavalry. Shingen called them "silent as the forest," and deployed them defensively like a picket fence. There were the infantry, or Ashigaru, which consisted mostly of poorly trained peasants who wore bowl-like hats from which they also ate their rice. There was little martial glory for them, and often they would flee before or during a battle. But a few daimyo, notably Takeda Shingen, instilled discipline and loyalty in their Ashigaru and thus were able to forge them into effective fighting units.

There were also warrior monks, the Ikko-Ikki, who carried fearsome polearms with long curved blades. Though not bound to any daimyo, they did, at times, support one or another if it served their interests. Because they are spiritual fighters, warrior monks possess one point of ki, in addition to their battle-strength of one.

No house may contain more than five army cards.

Ancestor's No-Dachi

Honor 5 **Ki** 1 **Strength** 3

A no-dachi is a long sword that was popular during the 13th and 14th centuries. Some of these blades were so long that they had to be carried slung over the back and could not be drawn with one hand. Wielded by a powerful armored samurai on horseback, its curved razor-sharp blade must have looked terrifying to the hapless footman who faced it.

Swords in Japanese Culture

The sword has often been called the "soul of the samurai" and, indeed, no object in Japanese history better symbolizes the martial spirit of the nation. At birth, a sword was placed in the young samurai's room. At his death, one was there also. It was the weapon with which he slew his enemies and took his own life. It symbolized his honor, his strength, and his unwavering fealty to his lord. Famous blades, such as those made by the great Masamune, were treasured as family heirlooms. In some cases, special blades were even thought to have magical powers. Prized in a way that it is difficult for us to understand today, a fine sword transcended the laws of ordinary commerce. There is, for example, a story about a noble who had helped another lord win a war. As a favor, he was given the choice of a famous sword or an entire province. He chose the blade which thereafter was called the "One Province Sword."

Ancestor's Daisho

Honor 10 Ki 1 Strength 1

Daisho is a term for the pair of long and short swords which only a samurai was allowed to own and wear. The long sword (called a tachi or katana depending upon how it was mounted) was a samurai's primary fighting weapon. The short sword, termed either a tanto or wakizashi, depending upon its length, was his personal weapon. It was also the sword with which he could commit seppuku. By the Sengoku era, most samurai carried the katana as their long sword. Its advantage lay in the speed with which it could be drawn and thrust in a single motion. Unlike his European counterparts who often engaged in lengthy duels, a samurai preferred to strike with a single draw of his katana, much like a gunfighter of the old west. The shorter sword shown on the game card is called a wakizashi.

Master Swordsmith Masamune

Honor 10 Ki 1 Strength 4

Working with primitive tools in a darkened forge, a master swordsmith was able to transform a pile of raw iron chips into a gleaming work of art that was at once beautiful and terrifyingly effective. By the 13th century, when Masamune was alive, swords attained a level of quality that was never to be surpassed. Every aspect of the forging process was kept secret, handed down from master to apprentice. According to one story, an apprentice to Masamune was so curious to know the temperature of the water used in heat-treating a blade that one night he tried to slip his

hand into the tub. Catching the fellow dipping his hand into the water, Masamune cut it off with his sword.

Because a daimyo who supported a master swordsmith was assured of having a supply of mighty and honorable blades for himself, his generals, and his troops, this card brings much honor and strength to the player who possesses it. A samurai who owned a blade by the famous Masamune was doubly fortunate. Masamune blades were particularly sought after by the Tokugawa. However, those forged by Muramasa, another swordsmith of note, were banned by the Tokugawas. According to popular superstition, once a Muramasa blade was drawn, it must taste blood. Otherwise, it would turn against its owner. But Tokugawa Ieyasu had other reasons for banning them. Not only had several Tokugawa family members been wounded by Muramasa blades, but once, while examining a blade that had cut through the helmet of Toda Shigemasa, the sword slipped and cut Ieyasu. It turned out to be a Muramasa blade. Quite naturally, the enemies of the Tokugawa placed great value on Muramasa blades.

Gunpowder Weapons

Honor -20 Ki -2 Strength 6

Introduced into Japan in 1560, the arquebus (a kind of musket) changed warfare. No longer did adversaries have to confront one another and observe the customary martial etiquette. Gone was the elegance of the personal encounter between two skilled martial artists. Indeed, a poorly trained farmer using a gun could kill a samurai without even introducing himself. From a samurai's

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viewpoint, no honor could be gained from such a death. Thus, gunpowder weapons were considered dishonorable, and the gunpowder weapon card carries negative ki and negative honor, but much strength.

Noh Theater

Honor 20 Ki 3 Strength 0

Noh is a unique Japanese art that combines dance, music, chanting, and exquisite costumes. Developed over five hundred years ago, it flourished especially under the patronage of Tokugawa Ieyasu and his descendants. Almost every prominent daimyo also maintained his own Noh theater with actors and musicians. In his spare time he would study Noh, because familiarity with the Noh arts of music, dancing, and chanting was as much expected of a warlord as was martial skill.

HISTORY

Background

According to legend, the Emperor of Japan is a direct descendant of the sun goddess, Amaterasu. He alone possesses the three sacred treasures (the sword, the mirror, and the necklace of comma beads) which symbolize his divine right to govern Japan. By the tenth century, the emperor had lost all economic and political power. Although he continued to symbolize the nation and its traditional culture, he had, in fact, become a figurehead manipulated by others. More often than not, he was just a child

hidden away in an aristocratic playworld, a victim of court intrigue and the machinations of ambitious regents. Married off while still young, he was often retained as emperor only until he fathered an heir. Then he was forced into retirement and a new child emperor installed.

By the 12th century, the samurai had become the real power behind the throne. While the emperor languished, a virtual prisoner in his own court, samurai warlords controlled the country. As the elite warrior class, samurai lived according to a strict code of honor known as bushido, or "the way of the warrior." A samurai dedicated his life to his lord, or daimyo, whose interests he served and from whom he derived personal honor. Low ranking samurai, organized into trained fighting units, served samurai generals who, in turn, lived and died for their regional warlords. Thus, at all levels of society, the constant struggle of men to acquire honor and avoid dishonor reinforced the existing order.

At the top of the military hierarchy was the shogun, or commander-in-chief, who appointed regional military governors, termed shugo, to govern the provinces. The practice of installing a shogun began in 1192 when the emperor appointed Minamoto no Yoritomo to the post. Thereafter, the powerful Minamoto, Hojo, and Ashikaga families each vied with one another for the title. By 1467, however, this system had fallen apart, and the country plunged into a devastating civil war known as The Onin War. For ten years, warlord battled warlord until the country was exhausted, the capital city of Kyoto lay in smoking ruins, and the power of the shogunate had been destroyed. The destruction of the shugo created a power vacuum in the provinces which the daimyo rushed to fill. With the collapse of the shogunate,

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daimyo were now free to attack and seize neighboring provinces. During this period of almost constant warfare known as the Sengoku era (1467-1568), or the “age of the country at war,” the gifted and the ruthless battled one another in a futile effort to unify Japan and thereby gain the title of shogun.

Four daimyo – Takeda Shingen, Oda Nobunaga, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, and Tokugawa Ieyasu – were important leaders in this struggle.

Takeda Shingen (1521-1573). Shingen’s hunger for power and his use of any means to obtain it began early. As a young man, he deposed his father to usurp the family leadership. The expansion of Shingen’s domain was slowed by his war with the lord of the neighboring province, Uesugi Kenshin. For 26 years, they met in many indecisive battles. Eight thousand samurai died in the largest of these confrontations. When Kenshin died of a mysterious abdominal illness, it was rumored that he had been stabbed by a ninja hiding beneath his latrine. Shingen was a notable warrior who commanded the loyalty of his troops. He was a poet, a calligrapher, and even a Buddhist priest. His motto, “swift as the wind, silent as the forest, fierce as fire, steady as a mountain,” was also an apt description of the man.

Once freed from his war with Kenshin, Shingen turned his attention to stopping the growing power of Oda Nobunaga. He attacked and defeated Nobunaga’s ally, Tokugawa Ieyasu, in the field, and laid siege to Ieyasu’s castle at Noda. During this siege, Shingen was mortally wounded by a sniper. Before his death, he admonished his son, Katsuyori (1546-1582), not to attack Nobunaga. “A mountain does not move,” he told him. However,

the impulsive Katsuyori could not sit still; and, in 1575, ignoring his father’s warning, he attacked Nobunaga at Nagashino. There the entire Takeda cavalry was destroyed when it charged Nobunaga’s peasant infantry armed with muskets. The story of this fateful confrontation is told in the film, “Kagemusha”, which also relates how a double of Takeda Shingen convinced his enemies that Shingen was still alive for three years after his death. Katsuyori escaped from Nagashino alive. He fought Nobunaga one more time, but lost and was killed.

Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) came to power at the age of 17 after his father died in 1551. Soon confronted by Yoshimoto Imagawa, whose forces vastly outnumbered his (25,000 to 2,000), his prospects appeared dismal. However, in a daring surprise attack, he killed Imagawa, and scattered his army. Then, freeing Tokugawa Ieyasu who was being held by Imagawa as a hostage, he struck an alliance with Ieyasu. As his power increased, he also expanded his domains. He battled the warrior monks of the Shin sect and destroyed their fortress (see Osaka castle). He destroyed the Takeda cavalry at Nagashino in a battle that forever changed samurai warfare and established him as a “super daimyo.” Thus, with a clear road to the unification of Japan before him, he dispatched his trusted general, Toyotomi Hideyoshi, to subdue the Mori clan. When Hideyoshi unexpectedly faced the entire clan and had to ask Nobunaga for emergency reinforcements, Nobunaga sent all available troops, including most of his 2,000 house guards. At this point, his general, Akechi Mitsuhide, saw his chance. Instead of following his orders to march directly to Takamatsu castle and join Hideyoshi in the fight against the Mori, he returned to Kyoto and attacked the

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defenseless Nobunaga. Though outnumbered and wounded by sword and gun, Nobunaga fought fiercely. It is unclear whether he died by his own hand or was consumed in the great fire that swept through the palace. Had he lived, Nobunaga would likely have been the one to unite Japan and become shogun. Destiny, however, passed the struggle on to his allies, Hideyoshi and Ieyasu.

Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536-1598). Born a peasant, Hideyoshi moved through the ranks in the service of Oda Nobunaga. In the battle of Nagashino, he commanded Nobunaga’s left flank. In 1582, while besieging Takamatsu castle, a courier brought word of Nobunaga’s death in Kyoto. Hideyoshi quickly ceased hostilities against the Mori. Then, in a driving rain, Hideyoshi and his army marched 70 miles in 24 hours in order to reach Himeji castle (the castle of the White Heron). There he raised more troops before moving against the treacherous Akechi Mitsuhide whom he killed. Other battles ensued, but Hideyoshi proved victorious. Together with Ieyasu, he unified Japan and became its ruler.

Perhaps as a reaction to his humble roots, Hideyoshi became a great patron of the arts. He sponsored elaborate tea ceremonies, promoted Noh theater, commissioned opulent furnishings and paintings for the castles he built, and restored a sense of refinement to daimyo culture. In these few years (termed the Momoyama period 1568-1615), Japanese art underwent a renaissance. Invigorated by lavish patronage, Japanese artists strove to create fresh, bold works of art befitting the grandiose achievements and egos of their patrons. Hideyoshi supported Sen no Rikyu (1521-1591), a great tea master who saw beauty in everyday objects. In place of an ancient and valuable tea bowl, Rikyu

might choose to serve tea in a common contemporary one. Perhaps only one flower would stand in a vase, one quiet ink painting would hang in the alcove. Interestingly, Hideyoshi came to share Rikyu’s artistic sensibility; and thus, the same man who on one day might serve tea to dignitaries in his golden tea room might on another serve it to favorites in his tiny two-mat rustic cottage on the grounds of Osaka castle. Under the pretense of needing a vast amount of iron to fashion an enormous statue of the Buddha, he issued his infamous “Sword Hunt Edict” which required all non-samurai to turn in their swords and guns, thereby disarming the population.

In his later years, Hideyoshi became prone to brooding withdrawal, passionate obsessions, and sudden erratic megalomaniacal acts of a foolish and cruel nature. He attempted to conquer Korea and China, with disastrous results.

At home, his domestic affairs were similarly disturbed. He expelled the Christian missionaries, ordered his tea mentor, Sen no Rikyu to commit seppuku, and became obsessed with securing the future of his chosen successor, Hideori, whom he appointed regent at the age of three. Despite his later madness, he was a gifted leader whom many consider the greatest man in the history of Japan.

Tokugawa Ieyasu (1542-1616). Of the three men who struggled to unify Japan (the other two being Nobunaga and Hideyoshi), it was Ieyasu who achieved the ultimate goal of establishing a family dynasty to rule the country. Having spent most of his youth as a kind of hostage of Yoshimoto Imagawa, Ieyasu was freed when Nobunaga defeated Imagawa. The two joined forces. After

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Nobunaga's death, Ieyasu submitted to Hideyoshi. But, after Hideyoshi's death, Ieyasu broke with the dynastic arrangement established by Hideyoshi to secure power for his son, Hideyori. Civil war raged again. However, in 1600 at the battle of Sekihara, Ieyasu, though outnumbered, was victorious. The boldness of his attack on a superior force holding strong defensive positions inspired the Kobayakawa clan to defect from the rebel alliance in mid battle and join forces with Ieyasu. With the rebel alliance destroyed, Ieyasu was now master of Japan, and in 1603, the emperor appointed him Seii-tai shogun (Barbarian-Quelling Generalissimo). Ieyasu moved the capital from Kyoto to Edo (now Tokyo), undertook moves to centralize the affairs of state, and developed a highly effective administrative framework to maintain peace and perpetuate the status quo. So effective was he that for nearly 300 years, until 1868, the Tokugawa family ruled Japan in peace.

About the Illustrations



Daimyo 1: This helmet is in the shape of a four cornered sack, and is from the late 16th century.



Daimyo 2: This helmet is fashioned after a Chinese style of headgear, indicating that its wearer was of high rank.



Daimyo 3: This helmet and mask are in the o-yoroi style, a style of armor worn from the 10th to 15th centuries. In later periods, this style was used for ceremonial purposes. This particular helmet and mask were worn by Matsudaria Katsunaga.



Daimyo 4: This triple bladed helmet is in the Kamakura style.



Daimyo 5: This helmet was owned by Kato Kiyomasa, one of Hideyoshi's ablest generals. The red sun was his insignia.



Daimyo 6: This helmet with deer antlers and the face of a mythical lion belonged to the nephew of Hideyoshi. Because of his cruel and bloodthirsty rule, he was known as "The Murdering Regent." His ruthlessness led to his downfall, because when Hideyoshi learned of his plan to attack Osaka Castle, he banished him and ordered him to commit seppuku.



Daimyo 7: This helmet depicts the cintamani, a mythical Buddhist jewel that is supposed to have the power to grant all wishes.



Daimyo 8: This suit of armor and the helmet were worn by Ii Naotaka, who was a general under Tokugawa Ieyasu. Ii commanded a fierce and much feared army of samurai, outfitted in red armor, and known as the "Red Devils." His baton is in the style of that used by many high ranking generals and has tassels of oiled paper.



Daimyo 9: This style of helmet was worn by Takeda Shingen. It is adorned with yak hair.



Daimyo 10: This helmet portrays the head of a fierce Buddhist deity.

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About the Castles

Odawara castle was one of the oldest castles in Japan. Some parts of it dated back to 1180. In 1495, Hojo Soun, one of the first daimyo to break with the shogun and establish his own rule, captured the castle and made it the center of the Hojo clan. The Hojo were a proud clan that refused to submit to the authority of Hideyoshi in his drive to unify Japan. Hideyoshi laid siege to the castle and, after capturing it, absorbed the Hojo into his forces. After years of neglect, the castle was dismantled in 1870.

Osaka castle was at one time the mightiest in Japan. Hideyoshi began its construction in 1583 on the site of a former temple fortress of the fanatical Ishiyama Honganji Buddhist sect. Since the Honganji posed a threat to Oda Nobunaga, he attacked and destroyed the fortress in a brutal and ruthless siege.

Himeji castle, known as the castle of the White Crane, is one of the finest and oldest castles in Japan. The original castle, built in the 14th century, and later improved by Hideyoshi who used it as his headquarters, may be visited today.

A Word from Gamewright

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GLOSSARY

Samurai: The warrior class. The name "samurai" is derived from the Japanese word for service, saburau. A samurai lived to serve his master.

Ronin: Literally "Man of the Waves," ronin were samurai who had lost their masters, or whose masters had been disgraced.

Daimyo: Literally "Great Name," a daimyo was a local war lord. The daimyo made and enforced local laws, levied taxes, maintained armies, and defended their domains.

Okugata: Literally "Honorable Wife."

Seppuku: Ritual suicide, also called hara-kiri. Ritual suicide was the last and ultimate way to save face.

Ikki: Rural leagues.

Katana: The standard long fighting sword carried after about 1400. It was worn thrust through the waistband with its edge up.

No-Dachi: A long sword.

Wakazashi: A middle-length sword, used as a personal weapon, and often paired with a long sword.

Daisho: A pair of swords, consisting of a long sword and a shorter one. Only samurai were entitled to carry the daisho.

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