



ROKUGAN™

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CONTENTS

Introduction 4

Chapter 1: Character 5

The Crab 5
 The Crane 7
 The Dragon 9
 The Lion 11
 The Mantis 13
 The Phoenix 14
 The Scorpion 16
 The Unicorn 18
 The Imperial Families 20
 The Minor Clans 21
 The Lost Clans 23
 The Ronin 24
 The Nezumi 24
 The Naga 26
 Character Classes in Rokugan 29
 NPC Classes in Rokugan 30
 Samurai 30
 Courtier 33
 Shugenja 36
 Ninja 39
 Inkyo – Enlightened Monk 41
 New Skills 44
 Feats 46
 Rokugani Equipment 51
 Religion 61
 Honor and Alignment 62
 Rokugani Prestige Classes 65
 Artisan 65
 Butei 66
 Dragon Swordmaster 68
 Elemental Guardsman 69
 Emerald Magistrate 70
 Kolat Agent 71
 Lion's Pride 72
 Master of the Akasha 73
 Mastermind 74
 Ratling Shaman 76
 Shadowlands Veteran 78
 Shinjo Explorer 79
 Siegemaster 80
 The Storm Legion 81
 The Sword of Yotsu 82
 Wasp Bounty Hunter 83

Chapter 2: Magic in Rokugan 84

Hierarchy of the Spirits 84
 Ritual Magic 87
 Secret Lore 88
 Spells and Magic 91
 Shugenja Spells 91
 Elemental Schools 95
 New Shugenja Spells 96
 Void Magic 107
 New Void Spells 107
 New Maho Spells 111

Chapter 3: Life in Rokugan 115

A Gaijin's First Samurai 115
 The First Party 116
 Maintaining a Campaign 117
 Other Differences 118
 Customs and Culture 119
 Time and Seasons 120
 Lore of the Land 123
 Customs and Law 125
 Government 125
 Crime and Punishment 125
 Travel 126
 On (Face) 126
 Honor 126
 Games 127
 Etiquette 128
 Learning 129
 Adventurers 129
 Languages 130
 Coin and Commerce 130
 Clan, Family, and Emperor 131
 War 131
 Coinage 132
 Craft and Engineering 133
 Magic in Society 135
 The Shadowlands Taint 136
 Acquiring the Taint 137
 Symptoms of the Taint 137
 Treating the Taint 138
 Curing the Taint 138

Chapter 4: Geography 139

The Lands of the Crab 139
 Hida Kuroda, Crab Champion 139
 Hida Kuon, Crab General 140
 Important Sites 140
 The Lands of the Crane 142
 Yasuki Hachi, Emerald Champion 142
 Kakita Kyruko, Temptress 143
 Important Sites 143
 The Lands of the Dragon 144
 Mirumoto Temoru, Dragon Taisa 144
 Tamori Shaitung, Family Daimyo 145
 Important Sites 145
 The Lands of the Lion 146
 Akodo Ginawa, Family Daimyo 147
 Kitsu Dejiko, Vengeful Samurai-ko 147
 Important Sites 148
 The Lands of the Mantis 149
 Tsuruchi Okame, Wasp Hunter 149
 Yoritomo Kitao, Mantis Champion 149
 Important Sites 150
 The Lands of the Naga 150
 Akasha, Legacy of the Naga 150
 Ghedai, Guardian of the Shinomen 151
 Important Sites 152
 The Lands of the Phoenix 152
 Isawa Nakamuro, Master of Air 152
 Shiba Aikune, Phoenix Bushi 153
 Important Sites 153

The Lands of the Scorpion 155
 Bayushi Paneki, Defender 155
 Bayushi Kaukatsu, Diplomat 155
 Important Sites 156
 The Lands of the Unicorn 157
 Horiuchi Shem-Zhe, Scholar 157
 Moto Chagatai, Unicorn Khan 157
 Important Sites 158
 Unaligned and Minor Clan Lands 159
 Hantei Naseru, "The Anvil" 160
 Toturi Sezaru, "The Wolf" 160
 Akodo Kaneka, "The Bastard" 161
 Toturi Tsudao, "The Sword" 161
 Toku, Monkey Champion 162
 Usagi Ozaki, Hare Champion 162
 Satoshi, Ronin Shugenja 163
 Important Sites 163
 Shahai, the Dark Daughter 165
 Daigotsu, Lord of the Shadowlands 166
 Te'tik'kir, Crippled Bone Shaman 167
 Yoe'ettr, Tattered Ear Adventurer 167
 Major Geographical Features 167
 Beyond Rokugan 172

Chapter 5: Deities and Cosmology 173

Travel Through the Spirit Realms 173
 Death and the Spirit Realms 174
 Jealous Realms 174
 Ningen-do 174
 Chikushudo 174
 Gaki-do 174
 Jigoku 175
 Meido 175
 Sakkaku 175
 Tengoku 175
 Toshigoku 175
 Yomi 175
 Yume-do 176
 The Seven Fortunes 176
 The Lesser Fortunes 176
 The Kami, the Sun and the Moon 177
 Fu Leng 178
 Ancestors 178
 Sins 179
 Penance 179
 Dragons 180

Chapter 6: History of Rokugan 181

Pre-History 181
 First Century (1–100 IC) 181
 Second Century (101–200 IC) 183
 Third Century (201–300 IC) 184
 Fourth Century (301–400 IC) 184
 Fifth Century (401–500 IC) 185
 Sixth Century (501–600 IC) 186
 Seventh Century (601–700 IC) 187
 Eighth Century (701–800 IC) 187
 Ninth Century (801–900 IC) 189
 Tenth Century (901–1000 IC) 189
 Eleventh Century (1001–1100 IC) 190
 Twelfth Century (1101–1200 IC) 190

Chapter 7: Organizations 199

The Imperial Magistrates 199
 The Emerald Legions 199
 The Bloodspeakers 200



Ronin Brotherhoods	201	Strangers in a Strange Land	50	Table 1–15: The Butei	67
The Kolat	202	Exotic and Martial Weapons	59	Table 1–16: The Swordmaster	68
The Brotherhood of Shinsei	203	Gold and Koku	60	Table 1–17: The Elemental	
Ninja	203	The Code of Bushido	62	Guardsmen	69
Appendix 1: Magic Items	204	Honorable vs. Dishonorable	64	Table 1–18: The Emerald Magistrate	70
Appendix 2: Monsters of Rokugan	206	Clan Alignments	65	Table 1–19: The Kolat Agent	71
Kansen	206	True Names	77	Table 1–20: The Lion's Pride	73
Free Ogre	206	A Note on Prestige Classes	84	Table 1–21: The Master of	
Mujina	207	The Oracles	86	the Akasha	74
Appendix 3: Conversion Rules	208	"All" Spells	94	Table 1–22: The Mastermind	75
Appendix 4: Suggested Reading	211	A Note on Duration	95	Table 1–23: Community Modifiers	76
Appendix 5: Glossary	212	Other Spells	96	Table 1–24: Favors	75
Index	215	Military Ranks	119	Table 1–25: The Ratling Shaman	76
Open Game License	219	Vassal Families	120	Table 1–26: The Shadowlands	
Open Game Content	220	A Note About Statistics	140	Veteran	78
Character Sheet	222	The Seven Fortunes	176	Table 1–27: The Shinjo Explorer	79
List of Sidebars		The Lesser Fortunes	176	Table 1–28: The Siegemaster	80
Bonus Languages	7	List of Tables		Table 1–29: The Storm Legionnaire	81
Naga in Oriental Adventures	27	Table 1–1: The Samurai	30	Table 1–30: The Sword of Yotsu	82
Bonus Spells by Favored Element	39	Table 1–2: Ancestral Daisho	30	Table 1–31: The Bounty Hunter	83
Low Skills	44	Table 1–3: The Courtier	35	Table 2–1: Meishodo Creation	
Void Bonus	46	Table 1–4: The Shugenja	37	Costs	89
A Note on Katana	48	Table 1–5: Shugenja Spells Known	37	Table 2–2: Replacement	
Technique Feats	49	Table 1–6: The Ninja	40	Kitsu Spells	91
		Table 1–7: The Inkyo	42	Table 2–3: New Incarnation's	
		Table 1–8: New Feats	46	Identity	102
		Table 1–9: New Weapons	58	Table 2–4: New Incarnation's	
		Table 1–10: New Armor	59	Identity	102
		Table 1–11: New Items	61	Table 2–5: Wheel of Fortune Table	106
		Table 1–12: New Poisons	61	Table 7–1: Traits to Abilities	208
		Table 1–13: Honor Gains and Losses		Table 7–2: Trait Scores to	
		per Honor Rank	63	Ability Scores	208
		Table 1–14: The Artisan	66	Table 7–3: L5R Insight to d20 Level	208
				Table 7–4: Skills	210

INTRODUCTION

Nimuro's chest heaved. He could feel the trickle of warm fluid down his shoulder, and he knew it for his own blood. The *no-dachi* — the great sword passed down by his ancestors — weighed heavily in his hands. After hours of battle against the Dragon Clan, he was exhausted beyond measure. His vision was beginning to blur. His knees could barely support his thick body and heavy, battle-scarred armor. All around him the *ashigaru* and *bushi* clashed with one another in a cacophony of steel upon steel, marked only by the screams of the wounded.

This was *jigoku*. This was hell. Never had he seen a battle so fierce, so bloody.

This was what Nimuro lived for.

A crazed shriek echoed from one side and Nimuro turned to see a group of six spearmen charging his position, weapons aimed at his heart. As a trained samurai of the Lion Clan, Nimuro was the most powerful weapon in his army. His defeat could win or lose the day. Though these peasants outnumbered him six to one, they would be fortunate if they survived.

The Fortunes favored Nimuro.

In a single moment, the exhaustion departed his body and he embraced the Void. His blade leapt through the air. A pivot, a half turn, and Nimuro stood twelve feet away, holding his *no-dachi* in one hand, extended to his left and behind, perfectly level with his shoulders. The long mane of his helm had barely been disturbed by his sudden movement.

A patter like raindrops echoed in his path as the blood of the peasants struck the earth. A clatter of broken weapons and fallen bodies replied a moment later. They did not have time to scream. Such was the skill of the Lion.

"Lion!" screamed a voice from across the battlefield, and Nimuro turned, eyes narrowed.

The chaos parted. Even soldiers in mortal conflict struggled to escape the path of this new arrival. Nimuro saw that this man was also samurai, his equal: a tall man, wearing an emerald skirt of lacquered armor and a great helm shaped like a scowling dragon's maw. His chest and arms were bare, painted with swirling tattoos of smoke and flame. He held a sword in each hand, both pointed at Matsu Nimuro.

"Lion!" he shouted again. "I am Mirumoto Teika, Guardian of the Shrine of the Dragon Champion. The heart of Isawa Taigen pulsed its last upon my blades. My ancestors humiliated yours in the Battle of the Great Climb. Only your death shall satisfy my need to prove my excellence!"

"I am Matsu Nimuro," the Lion roared in reply. "General of the armies you see before you! I am the Golden Lion of Toshi Ranbo, and if you are so proud of your ancestors perhaps you can give them my regards when I send your soul to meet them!"

The Dragon nodded, face expressionless behind his iron mask.

The Lion raised his *no-dachi* in salute. The Dragon bowed.

The two armies paused, both eager to see the outcome of this duel.

This was *jigoku*. This was hell.

This was what Nimuro lived for.

WELCOME TO ROKUGAN

Legend of the Five Rings™ is a game which takes place in the Empire of Rokugan. The players take on the roles of heroic samurai, mysterious shugenja, enlightened monks, cunning ninja, and wily courtiers. It is a land of heroic conflict on an epic scale as well as deep political intrigue. A samurai's life

depends not only on his skill with his blade, but on the depth of his honor. A misspoken word can slay a bushi as quickly as an assassin's blade in the Emperor's court, and the horrors of the Shadowlands wait eternally to corrupt the unwary.

It is a land where honor is as sharp as steel.

WHAT IS LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS?

Legend of the Five Rings began as a collectible card game in 1995. The game told the great saga of the Clan War, a tale of betrayal, heroism, and ultimate triumph. Unlike other card games that emerged at the time, however, this one had a twist. The players could affect the outcome of the storyline through their actions in the game. To many, *Legend of the Five Rings* was as much a role-playing game as a card game, albeit on a grander scale, and a role-playing game seemed to be the natural outcome.

In 1997, the first edition of the *Legend of the Five Rings Role-Playing Game*™ was introduced. The game retold the tale of the Clan War, this time allowing players to take a personal role in the Empire they knew and loved.

Over six years after its debut, *Legend of the Five Rings* is still growing, and going strong. With a collectible card game, a role-playing game, and a miniatures game to its name it seemed only natural to expand into the wildly popular *d20 System*™. What you hold in your hands is the result of this latest effort: *Rokugan*™, the *d20 Companion* to *Legend of the Five Rings*.

You will need a copy of the *Dungeons and Dragons*® *Player's Handbook*™ and *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*™ to use this product. The two companion volumes to this book, *Magic of Rokugan*™ and *Creatures of Rokugan*™ may come in useful, but are not entirely necessary.

USING THIS BOOK WITH ORIENTAL ADVENTURES

The *Oriental Adventures*™ sourcebook presents a view of Rokugan compatible with most *Dungeons and Dragons* campaign settings, ready to be dropped in at a moment's notice. While this volume is compatible with *Oriental Adventures*, it is in a number of ways a more exclusive view of Rokugan as presented in the *Legend of the Five Rings* card game, role-playing game, and the Clan War miniatures game.

This book takes advantage of a number of variant rules to project a more intricately detailed version of Rokugan as a complete campaign setting. While this means that it may take a bit more effort to adjust your own setting to accommodate the Empire, the end result should be very rewarding.

WHY "THE FIVE RINGS"?

The *Book of Five Rings* is a collection of observations on swordsmanship and philosophy (more accurately, swordsmanship as philosophy) written in Japan by the samurai Miyamoto Musashi in the year 1643. He was a ronin — a masterless samurai who stood undefeated after years of wandering and dueling. The book is divided into five "rings" named after the traditional Japanese elements — fire, earth, water, air, and void.

The life and writings of Miyamoto Musashi exemplify the world of Rokugan in a variety of ways, and the game was therefore named in honor of his most famous writings.

