

Legend of the Five Rings

THE CARD GAME

Defenders of Rokugan Crab Clan Pack

By the valor of the Crab Clan, the Emerald Empire has enjoyed a thousand years of peace. Yet that peace does not come freely. The constant battle against corruption and death would destroy any other samurai, but those heroes who defend Rokugan's southern border are tempered with courage and determination. To assault the Crab is to attempt to bring down the mountain with swords and spears. The mountain does not fall.

While the other clans of Rokugan know little of the Crab's ancient foes, they are familiar with the clan's samurai. Grim, pragmatic, lacking in social graces, and often violent, the defenders of Rokugan are often looked down upon as uncultured brutes. Faced with constant horror, the culture of the Crab is defined by martial prowess, creative engineering, and comradery. There is great depth to the clan, and it has adapted tremendously from its origins as followers of Hida-no-Kami.

The Demon of First Conflict

As Hida traveled Rokugan before settling on its southern border, he defeated many mortals in battles of strength, cunning, and skill. Many of these mortals joined him and became the first followers of the Crab. As his clan grew, it became clear that he could not rule them all on his own. To this end, he called for all who would claim themselves to be his equal step forward and prove themselves worthy of his respect.

Only three individuals answered his call, for the rest feared Hida's might and prowess. First to come was Hiruma, a small man whose bow was stained and twisted by long use. The second was Kaiu, a large and burly warrior who carried a hammer that had begun and ended many works of steel. The third was Kuni, a

cloaked figure whose quiet voice carried great weight among his peers. He asked them why they believed themselves worthy of leadership, and they had no answer—only their determination.

"Very well. There is a demon who calls itself Hajimeno Tatakai no Oni. Bring me its head, and you shall have proven your worthiness."

Together, they devised a plan and put it into motion. Kaiu forged the blade that would destroy the beast. Hiruma scouted the land to find the demon's lair. Kuni communed with the kami, beseeching them for aid in the coming confrontation.

Unfortunately, Hajimeno Tatakai no Oni was not witless, nor without eyes in its own place of power. When Kuni called forth to the kami of the land, twisted kansen also heard his words and whispered to the demon of the heroes' approach. Before the would-be demonslayers had reached the great beast's lair, it descended upon them in the night. Under assault and unprepared, the three were forced to improvise their defenses.

Taking up Kaiu's blade, Hiruma engaged the beast in single combat. Together, Kuni and Kaiu engineered a ritual of imprisonment, using Kuni's knowledge and Kaiu's creativity to turn their temporary camp into the site of the demon's undoing. Just as Hiruma's fate seemed sealed, Kaiu joined the battle with his great hammer, invoking a strike that Kuni had taught him and drawing the demon's eye so that Hiruma could lure it into the trap that his allies had laid.

But once more the kansen warned the demon of what awaited it. Hajimeno Tatakai no Oni stopped just short of the wards Kuni had assembled and victory seemed out of reach.

Kuni realized that so long as the kansen spoke to the oni of his mystical attacks, he would never be able to ensnare the beast. And so it was that he made a dread choice, calling those kansen to him with his own blood. As the twisted kami swarmed to corrupt Kuni, the great demon saw a rival to its power and turned its focus. In that instant, Kaiu sprung forth, driving the oni into the trap with mighty blows of his hammer. The demon was trapped, prepared invocations sapping at its strength and exposing it to its utter defeat at the hands of Hiruma.

When the three returned to Hida, bringing with them a powerful sword, a demon's head, and their lives still intact, the Kami knew he had found true equals among his clan.

Shifting Loyalty

By the end of the fourth century, strife had grown between the Doji champions of the Crane and their vassals, the Yasuki. Those champions had begun to take offense to the more unscrupulous elements of the Yasuki family's dealings, regardless of how wealthy it made the clan. Yasuki merchants were under pressure to cease their smuggling operations and end their criminal business ventures. Well aware that doing so would put them at a disadvantage to their competitors in the Scorpion and Mantis clans, the Yasuki daimyō refused to do so.

Meanwhile, the borders between the Crane and the Crab lands on Rokugan's southern coast erupted when Emperor Hantei Fujiwa instructed the Crab clan to seize the Hardwater Peninsula (what is now Shinkyō Province) from the Crane to rein in the rebellious Crane Champion. With their superior military forces, the Crab immediately conquered the region.

However, the Crane clan would not give up without a fight. The Daidoji could not defeat the Crab in open warfare, but they lay siege to the Crab nonetheless, cutting off their supply routes and forcing the hardened warriors to stay locked on the peninsula they had seized.

Against the economic might of the Crane, the Crab found a siege unsustainable and their supplies quickly ran out. It was at this time that Yasuki Kamoru (the Yasuki daimyō) rejected the Crane clan and came to the aid of the Crab. He ordered his family to smuggle supplies to the Crab forces so that they could withstand the siege, and suddenly it became apparent that the Crane would not be able to easily retake the peninsula.

Open war raged between the Crane and the Crab as they fought over the land and the fate of the Yasuki. When the fighting finally ceased, the Crab had retreated to the western coast (having greater priorities on the Wall) but the Yasuki family stayed loyal to their new lords. Having struggled for centuries

in court, the Crab needed the bargaining power (and wealth) of the Yasuki, and the Yasuki needed the protection of the Crab against Crane retribution for the wholesale betrayal.

Ever since, the Crane and Crab have been at each other's throats—sometimes blatantly, but most often by way of subtle economic warfare. The Daidoji have maintained their wealthy advantage for centuries, but with the recent natural disasters that have been striking the coast, and the Yasuki's willingness to deal in illicit trade, the tides may have finally begun to turn.

Families of the Crab

The Hida

After centuries of war against the Shadowlands, the Hida have been forged into warriors whose courage and skill cannot be contested. They man the Kaiu Wall valiantly and without respite, knowing that each battle could easily be their last. Yet this does not dissuade them, for the family's reputation for stubbornness and martial strength has proven critical in the successful defense of Rokugan against its hellish foes.

The Hida daimyō is Hida Kisada, the Great Bear and the Defender of the Wall. None have challenged him. Perhaps none ever will.

The Hiruma

While it is the task of the Hida to guard Rokugan against the Shadowlands, they cannot fulfill that task by strength of arms alone. The Hiruma family serve their clan's duty as scouts, messengers, and saboteurs. Reconnaissance from Hiruma raids into the Shadowlands informs the strategy of the Hida and Kaiu defenders, and many invasions have been ended prematurely by valiant warriors striking into the Shadowlands and destroying critical threats before they reach the Wall. The willingness shown by the Hiruma for self-sacrifice echoes their shame at having no lands or holdings, for Shiro Hiruma long ago fell to the forces of the Shadowlands and has never been reclaimed.

The Hiruma daimyō is Hiruma Yoshino, a cunning scout willing to find allies wherever necessary to fulfill her duty and defend the Kaiu Wall.

The Kaiu

While most renowned for the Wall that shares their name, the Kaiu serve as more than just vaunted architects. The family's talented engineers are also responsible for inventing and constructing siege weapons, arms and armor, and the many traps that slay invading monsters before they can reach Rokugan. Most find respite putting their mathematical minds to use making toys and inventions for leisure, so they do not burn out fighting an endless war.

The Kaiu daimyō is Kaiu Shihobu. She does not put herself above her followers in skill, only in responsibility. She can often be found in workshops constructing new weapons of all sizes.

The Kuni

It is said that one cannot defeat an enemy one does not understand. The Kuni exemplify this belief, as they have made it their sworn duty to unlock the secrets of the Shadowlands. To understand the horrors of Jigoku is a trying task that often leads the monks and shugenja of the Kuni towards death or corruption. Yet they understand the risks that they face, and so rely on dispersed masters to instruct their apprentices in varied mystical traditions, lest one of those traditions fall to evil.

The Kuni daimyō is Kuni Yori, a cunning shugenja who is willing to sacrifice everything in his quest for knowledge and power.

The Yasuki

As merchants, courtiers, and diplomats, the Yasuki fulfill a vital role in the Crab clan. Thanks to the political savvy of the Yasuki, the Crab is able to keep their coffers full and to find allies in their war against shadow. For a clan whose resources are drained by constant attacks, such negotiators are necessary, lest their supply of weapons, warriors, and (most of all) food run out and their line of defense be broken.

The Yasuki daimyō is Yasuki Taka, a wily trader who travels Rokugan making deals for the betterment of his clan. With the Empire unwilling to support the Crab clan in its defense of the Kaiu Wall, he has found new allies amongst the Mantis who may prove valuable as the days darken over Rokugan.

