Legend of the Five Rings

THE CARD GAME

LEARN TO PLAY

An Empire in Turmoil...

"There! Do you see that?" Doji Kuwanan's armor, lacquered in the blue and silver colors of the Crane Clan, clinked as he pointed to the thin column of dust rising along the horizon where plains met sky.

His patrol partner, Takeaki, shielded his eyes from the bright glare of the sun and squinted. "A merchant's cart? The spring rains are late this year," he said, kicking up dust of his own under his armored zori sandals.

Around them, birdsong mixed with the chants and drumming of the peasants as they rhythmically tilled the soil and spread seeds atop the furrowed earth. A cool breeze brought the earthy smell of fertilizer to the pair of samurai warriors and sent ripples across the plains.

Kuwanan shook his head. "There's too much dust for a single cart. And no caravan's due for weeks yet." He hurried atop the nearby arched bridge to get a better look. A blur of dark brown silhouettes emerged from behind a gently sloping hill, speeding toward them.

"Quiet!" Kuwanan bellowed at the farmers, who ceased their dance of sowing and planting in an instant. The distant thunder of galloping hooves soon overtook the sound of chattering birds, and Takeaki muttered a curse.

"Someone's coming! Get back to the village!" Kuwanan shouted, and the peasants scrambled up to the road. He and Takeaki strung their bows and took up defensive positions atop the bridge. "If the Lion are finally mounting an attack, let them try to take this village from us!" He nocked an arrow and prepared to take aim.

Game Overview

Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game is a game in which each player takes the role of one of the seven Great Clans of Rokugan and contests for their clan's supremacy. This plays out as a series of political and military conflicts as each player attempts to defeat their opponent while preserving their clan's honor.

This Learn to Play is written as an introduction to *Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game*. It should be used as a guide for new players while learning and playing their first game. This book takes players through an entire game round, teaching the rules and introducing the strategy of the game along the way.

A comprehensive Rules Reference can be found online at www.L5R.com. That document addresses more advanced topics such as the interpretation of card text, the resolution of timing conflicts, and a detailed phase sequence timing chart. It is recommended that new players become familiar with the game using the Learn to Play book and only look up details in the Rules Reference as they occur during play.

A Living Card Game

Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game is a two player game that can be played using just the contents of this core set.

In addition, *Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game* is a Living Card Game® (LCG®). Its experience can be customized and enhanced through the purchase of regularly released 60-card expansions called Dynasty Packs, 78-card Clan Packs, and 234-card Premium Expansions. Unlike collectible card games, all LCG expansions have a fixed distribution: there is no randomization to their contents.

Components

The components in the game are presented here for identification purposes. A complete card anatomy can be found in "Appendix III: Card Anatomy" on page 23.
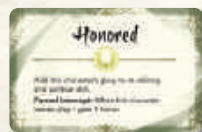
7 Stronghold Cards
(1 per clan)

17 Province Cards
(10 neutral and 1 per clan)

117 Dynasty Cards
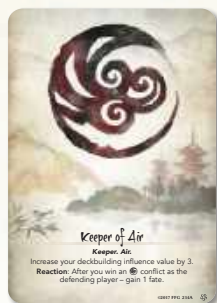*(15 cards per clan and 20 neutral cards)*

98 Conflict Cards
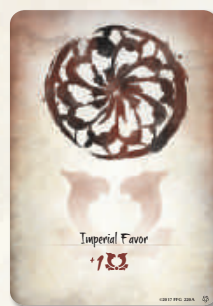*(9 cards per clan and 28 neutral cards)*
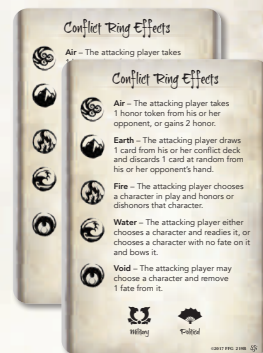
20 Status Tokens
(double-sided)

5 Role Cards
(double-sided)

40 Fate Tokens

50 Honor Tokens

1 Imperial Favor Card
(double-sided)

2 Reference Cards
(double-sided)

5 Ring Tokens
(double-sided)

1 First Player Token

2 Honor Dials

Dial Assembly

Assemble each honor dial by using the plastic dial connectors to attach the dial to the faceplate, as shown in the diagram below.

Game Setup

To set up the game, perform the following steps, in order:

1. Select Clans

When playing a game of *Legend of the Five Rings*, each player plays as one of the Great Clans of Rokugan. Those clans are: Crab, Crane, Dragon, Lion, Phoenix, Scorpion, and Unicorn.

For players new to Rokugan, it is recommended that they begin with either Crane (🐦) or Lion (🦁). For players who wish to play with a favorite clan, any clan will play well in a player's first game.

Crab 🦀   Crane 🐦   Dragon 🐉   Lion 🦁   Phoenix 🦅   Scorpion 🦂   Unicorn 🐴

2. Create Decks

Each player will need two decks, five provinces, and a stronghold. To create those decks, do the following:

◈ **Gather Clan Cards**: Each player should take each card bearing their chosen clan's symbol and set them in front of them. One of those cards is a province card—set that card aside, as it will not be used in this first game.

> **Set this card aside:** The Art of War (11)

The Lion player gathers the 26 cards with a 🦁 clan icon, setting aside the province card.

Clan Icon

◈ **Gather Neutral Cards**: The neutral cards contain provinces, dynasty cards, and conflict cards (each identified by their card backs). Each player should take 1 copy of each neutral dynasty and conflict card, set aside the cards listed below, and set the remaining neutral cards in front of them with their clan cards.

> **Set aside all copies of:**
> Keeper Initiate (124) and Seeker Initiate (126)
>
> **Set aside 1 copy each of:**
> Otomo Courtier (122), Seppun Guardsman (123), Miya Mystic (125, and Wandering Ronin (127).

Neutral Icon

The Lion player gathers 6 neutral dynasty cards and 14 neutral conflict cards.

◇ **Gather Provinces**: Organize the neutral provinces into two piles:

➤ Fertile Fields (18), Entrenched Position (17), Night Raid (21), Elemental Fury (16), and Shameful Display (24)

➤ Manicured Garden (19), Ancestral Lands (15), Meditations on the Tao (20), Rally to the Cause (23), and Pilgrimage (22)

◇ Each player should take one of those piles and set it in front of them with their clan's stronghold.

Strategy: Which Provinces to Use?

These two sets of provinces were chosen to play well with certain clans. If the province sets cannot be easily split between the players, they should select randomly which player uses which set of provinces.

A player playing Crane, Dragon, Phoenix, or Scorpion should use the first set of provinces.

A player playing Crab, Dragon, Lion, or Unicorn should use the second set of provinces.

◇ **Shuffle Decks**: Each player shuffles all their dynasty cards together into a single dynasty deck, then shuffles all their conflict cards together into a single conflict deck.

Shuffle Dynasty Cards   Shuffle Conflict Cards

3. Create Play Area

Each player places one of their provinces (the one with the ⬤ symbol in the lower right corner) facedown in front of them and places their stronghold on it. Below their stronghold, each player places their shuffled dynasty deck. To the right of their dynasty deck, each player places their other four provinces, facedown, in a random order. Finally, each player places their shuffled conflict deck to the right of their row of provinces. This creates each player's play area.

4. Create Token Pool and Ring Pool

Place all fate tokens, honor tokens, status tokens, and the Imperial Favor card in a pile within reach of each player. Place one copy of each elemental ring in a pile within reach of each player in a distinct row.

5. Gain Starting Honor

Each player gains honor tokens equal to the honor value indicated in the lower left corner of their stronghold.

Honor Value on Stronghold

6. Determine First Player

Randomly select a player to be the first player. Place the first player token in front of this player.

7. Fill Provinces

Each player places one card from the top of their dynasty deck facedown onto each of their empty non-stronghold provinces. Players will have the opportunity to play these cards from their provinces during the game round.

8. Draw Starting Hand

Each player draws four cards from their conflict deck to form their starting hand. These cards are typically used during the conflict phase to help players win conflicts.

The game is now ready to begin!

Key Concepts

This section introduces a number of foundational concepts to keep in mind while learning and playing the game.

Two Decks

Each player commands their forces from two different decks: a DYNASTY DECK which contains the characters that are played from a player's provinces and the holdings that defend those provinces, and a CONFLICT DECK which contains the events, attachments, and sometimes characters that a player can play from their hand during a conflict to turn the tide in their favor.

Dynasty Deck Card Back

Conflict Deck Card Back

Provinces and Strongholds

A player's province cards represent the variety of locations and occurrences in the lands of Rokugan. They are arranged in a row of four between that player's dynasty and conflict decks.

Provinces

One of those provinces is selected at the start of the game to house that player's stronghold. This is that player's stronghold province.

During the game, players declare conflicts against one another's provinces, and if the attacking player wins a conflict it can result in a province being broken. If three of a player's four non-stronghold provinces are broken, attacks may be declared against that player's stronghold province. As soon as a player's stronghold province is broken, that player loses the game.

Stronghold

Honor and Dishonor

Honor represents both the behavior of a player's clan and the outward perception of that behavior. Players begin the game with the amount of honor designated by their stronghold card, between 10 and 12. Various effects in the game cause honor to be gained, exchanged between players, or lost. If a player has **25 or more honor** in their pool, that player immediately wins. If a player has **no honor** in their pool, that player immediately loses.

Honor Token

Fate

Fate is the game's primary resource, representing the karma and destiny a clan has accrued. The primary use of fate is to spend it to play characters, attachments, and events.

Fate Token

Winning and Defeat

There are three ways by which a player can win the game:

◇ Break the province which holds their opponent's stronghold

◇ Accumulate 25 honor

◇ Have their opponent run out of honor

Ready and Bowed

Cards enter play in a ready position (upright, so that the card's text may be read from left to right). At the end of a conflict, or in order to use certain card abilities, cards will bow, which is indicated by rotating a card 90 degrees (sideways). A bowed card indicates that a card has been used, and a card is not able to bow again until it is readied by a game step or card ability.

Ready

Bowed

First Player Token

The first player token is used to indicate which player acts first in each action window and when players declare conflicts. When players are instructed to do something in player order, the player with the first player token does so first, followed by the other player.

First Player Token

The Five Rings

When players declare conflicts against one another's provinces, those conflicts are defined by the five rings. Rings determine the reward a player gets for attacking successfully, but each element can only be used once per round. The five rings are represented by double-sided tokens which begin the game in an **UNCLAIMED RING POOL** that any player may draw from. Once a ring has been chosen to declare a conflict, that ring is **CONTESTED**; and once a winner of the conflict is determined the ring is **CLAIMED** and put into that player's **CLAIMED RING POOL** so that it cannot be used again until the following round.

Suggested Play Area (Crane Player, mid-game)

Opponent's Play Area

First Player Token

Stronghold

Home Area

Honor Pool and Honor Dial

Fate Pool

Dynasty Discard

Dynasty Deck

Non-Stronghold Provinces

Conflict Deck

Conflict Discard

Phase Sequence

Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game is played over a series of rounds. During a round, players bring new characters into play from their provinces, decide how honorably they will act in the coming conflicts, declare military and political conflicts against one another's provinces, and check the fate of each character and ring in preparation of the next round. Each round is divided into the following four phases:

1. Dynasty
2. Draw
3. Conflict
4. Fate

Each phase is described in detail, below.

Phase 1: Dynasty

The dynasty phase represents the clans' attempts to marshal their forces and allocate resources from their provinces.

The dynasty phase consists of three steps:

Step 1. Reveal Facedown Cards in Provinces

Each player, starting with the first player, turns all facedown dynasty cards in their provinces faceup. This process starts from a player's leftmost province that has a facedown card on it and proceeds to the right.

Two characters are in their provinces ready to be played.

A holding is in play. Its ability can be used.

Character cards in provinces are not yet in play, and players will not be able to use those characters until they are played during step 3.

Holding cards in provinces are in play and their abilities can be used.

Step 2. Collect Fate

Each player collects fate equal to the fate value on their stronghold card. (Each core set stronghold collects seven fate.)

Step 3. Take Dynasty Actions

In player order, players alternate opportunities to do one of the following: play a character card from their provinces, trigger an action card ability, discard a unique character to put fate on a copy of that character in play, or pass.

Playing a Character from a Province

In order to play a character from a province, a player must first pay that card's cost (indicated in the upper left corner of the card) by spending that much fate from their fate pool to the general token pool. Next, move that card from the province into that player's **HOME** area – the part of the play area in front of their provinces. All characters enter play in a ready position.

After a character is played, its controller has the option of placing any number of fate tokens from their pool on that character. Placing fate on a character will keep that character in play for additional game rounds.

Card cost

Additional fate may be placed on a character after paying its cost.

Once the option to place fate tokens on a character has been completed or passed, the province from which the character was played is **REFILLED** by taking a card from the dynasty deck and, without looking at the card, placing it facedown on the province.

Strategy: Placing Additional Fate

Placing additional fate on a character is an investment in that character's future impact upon the game. The best way to leverage this impact is to invest in your most powerful and important characters. Placing 3 fate on a character with a cost of 1 grants you three additional turns of 1-cost impact, while placing the same 3 fate on a character with a cost of 4 grants you three additional turns of 4-cost impact. Being able to maximize the impact of each additional fate that is spent is an important strategic concept in the game. It is generally wise to place more fate on characters with printed cost 3 or higher and fewer fate on characters with printed cost 2 or lower.

Also keep in mind: any fate a player does not spend remains in that player's pool from round to round. So, if you have extra fate that you don't have an immediate use for, hold on to it, as it could prove useful later in the game.

Unique Characters

A card with the ✿ symbol in front of its title is a unique card. Each player may not have multiple unique cards in play with the same title. As an action during the dynasty phase, a player may discard a unique character from their provinces to place one fate from the general fate pool on a unique character they have in play with the same title.

Note: Each player may have a copy of the same unique card in play at the same time, so long as no single player has multiple unique cards of the same name.

Action Abilities

Many cards have triggered abilities, indicated by the bold timing header at the start of their ability text (action, reaction, or interrupt). During the dynasty phase, a player may trigger an action ability on a card they have **in play**, or on an **event card** in their hand.
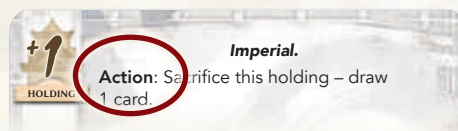
*Imperial Storehouse has an action ability, which can be identified by the boldface "**Action:**" timing trigger.*

If an action ability causes a province to become empty, that province is refilled by taking a card from the dynasty deck and placing it facedown on the province.

Pass

Once a player passes, they forfeit the opportunity to take any of the above actions for the remainder of the phase. The first player to pass gains one fate. The remaining player continues to play characters and trigger actions until they also pass. Once both players have passed, play proceeds to the draw phase.

Phase 2: Draw

The draw phase represents the plotting and scheming of the clans as they prepare for the conflicts ahead.

In this phase, each player determines how honorably they intend to act during the upcoming phases of the round: in essence, they are bidding their honor in order to draw more cards from their conflict deck. These cards, kept in a player's hand, represent secret agendas, surprising tactics, tricks, schemes, and hidden information.

The draw phase consists of four steps:

Step 1. Honor Bid Selection

Each player secretly selects a number between 1 and 5 on their honor dial.

Step 2. Reveal Bids

Each player reveals their selection.

Step 3. Transfer Honor

The player who selected the higher number gives their opponent an amount of honor equal to the difference between the two selected numbers. If both players selected the same number, no honor is given.

Step 4. Draw Cards

Each player draws a number of cards from their conflict deck equal to the number they selected on their honor dial.

Once the above steps are complete, proceed to the conflict phase.

Draw and Refill

During a game, players are frequently instructed to "draw cards" and to "refill provinces." Cards are always drawn from the top of a player's conflict deck and added to that player's hand. Provinces are always refilled facedown from the top of a player's dynasty deck. If a player's province is empty, they must immediately refill it.

Strategy: Honor Bids

There are several things to consider when determining how best to bid.

First, are you happy with the cards in your hand? Do they seem that they will be useful in the upcoming round? If you like your hand, you might consider bidding low to acquire more honor so your opponent has less flexibility in future turns. If you feel that you need more options, you might consider bidding high to draw more cards.

Second, consider how much honor you and your opponent each have, and be wary of high bids that could cause you to lose the game or lose honor you may need later.

Third, are there cards that you have—or that your opponent may have—that care about which player has a higher or lower honor bid? You may need to bid high to evade an opponent's I Can Swim (187) or low to play Good Omen (208).

After considering all of the factors, make your bid with confidence and see what happens—you can never know for sure what the opponent is going to do, and trying to best navigate this decision is one of the unique strategic moments of the game.

Phase 3: Conflict

The conflict phase represents a series of military and political confrontations between two clans. A military conflict represents a military battle or a physical fight. A political conflict could represent a trial, an argument or debate, or a contest of court intrigue and scheming.

In this phase, two steps will occur:

Step 1: Declare Conflicts

Each player has two opportunities to declare conflicts against their opponent. These **CONFLICT OPPORTUNITIES** alternate between players in turn order. During these conflicts, players attack and defend with their characters, attempting to deplete each other of resources, claim rings, and/or break each other's provinces in an attempt to advance toward winning the game. When a player has the opportunity to declare a conflict, they can either declare the conflict against an opponent's province using one of the rings in the unclaimed ring pool or pass their conflict opportunity so their characters are ready to defend. A character generally can only attack or defend in a single conflict during the conflict phase.

For more information on how to declare and resolve conflicts, see page 14.

Step 2: Contest Imperial Favor

After all conflict opportunities have been declared or passed, both players contest the Imperial Favor with a glory count.

Bushi. Champion.

Reaction: After you claim a ring during a ⚔ conflict in which this character is participating – resolve that ring's effect.

A lion is more than his roar, his mane, his teeth, his heart.

← Glory Value

To do so, each player counts their total amount of glory (the number on the right-hand side of a character card, above the text box) on ready characters they control and adds this number to the number of rings in their claimed ring pool. The player with the highest total claims the Imperial Favor card and sets it to one side or the other (military or political) next to their stronghold. This player is said to "have the Imperial Favor," and the side to which the card is set will influence the following game round by providing its controller with a +1 skill bonus during conflicts of that type. If players have the same total, the Imperial Favor remains in its current state (either unclaimed, or under the possession of the player who currently has it, remaining set to its current side).

After the Imperial Favor contest is complete, proceed to the fate phase.

Imperial Favor
+1 ⚔ ☯

Phase 4: Fate

The fate phase represents the moment at which the forces of karma and destiny make themselves known, and the various personalities in play move one step closer to their ultimate fate as the game round comes to a close.

The fate phase consists of seven steps:

Step 1. Discard Each Character with No Fate

Each character that has no fate tokens on it is discarded (this occurs in player order). When a character is discarded, place it in the discard pile that is associated with the deck from which the card originated.

Note: When a character leaves play, all attachments on that character are discarded.

Step 2. Remove Fate from Characters

Simultaneously remove one fate from each character in play.

Step 3. Place Fate on Unclaimed Rings

Place one fate from the general token pool on each unclaimed ring.

Step 4. Ready Each Card in Play

Each player readies each of their bowed cards.

Step 5. Discard Cards from Provinces

In player order, each player must discard each card in each of their broken provinces. Additionally, they may discard any number of faceup cards from any of their unbroken provinces. Each province that becomes empty when a player discards cards in this way is refilled with a facedown card from the top of that player's dynasty deck.

Step 6. Return All Rings to the Unclaimed Ring Pool

All rings are returned simultaneously.

Step 7. Pass the First Player Token

The player with the first player token passes it to their opponent. That player is the first player for the next round of the game.

The end of the fate phase marks the end of the game round. Proceed to the dynasty phase of the next game round. Continue to play through game rounds until one player has won the game.

What's Next?

You now have the rules needed to play your first game.

You can now play a few more practice games with the starter decks, or, if you are ready, you can dive into custom deckbuilding on page 22 and construct your own decks.

Strategy: Discarding Cards

This step is an opportunity for you to replace any dynasty cards you don't feel are going to help you in the upcoming rounds. Discarding a card in this manner provides an opportunity to replace it with a new card from your dynasty deck, so if there is a specific card or type of card you need, take advantage of this free attempt to find it. Of course, if you like each of the dynasty cards in your provinces, you shouldn't discard any of them!

Conflicts

During the conflict phase, each player has two opportunities to declare a conflict against one of their opponent's provinces. The players alternate declaring conflicts, starting with the first player, until all four conflicts have been declared. When it is a player's turn to declare a conflict, they may elect to pass instead, if they either cannot declare the conflict or wish to retain their characters to attack or defend in a future conflict.

Passing a Conflict

A player always has the option to pass on declaring a conflict during a conflict oppportunity, but doing so relinquishes that conflict opportunity for the phase. If a player passes a conflict opportunity, they do not need to declare which of the two conflict types they passed (see Conflict Declaration, below), and may still declare either a military or political conflict during their next conflict opportunity.

Declaring and Resolving a Conflict

To declare and resolve a conflict, perform the following steps, in order:

1. **Conflict Declaration** – The attacking player determines which characters are attacking, where they are attacking, and how they are attacking.

2. **Declare Defenders** – The defending player determines which characters are defending.

3. **Conflict Actions** – The players alternate using card abilities in an attempt to gain the upper hand in the conflict.

4. **Conflict Resolution** – A conflict result is determined, and the consequences of that result are applied to the game.

Each of these steps is described in detail below.

Conflict Declaration

In order to declare a conflict, the attacking player must:

> ➤ Declare the type of the conflict to be initiated. There are two types of conflicts: military and political. A conflict's type determines whether characters use their military or political skill value when resolving that conflict. Each player is permitted to declare one conflict of each type during the conflict phase.

Military

Political

> ➤ Declare the element of the conflict to be initiated by selecting the ring token of that element. This element determines which reward (known as a ring effect) the attacking player gains if they win the conflict. A conflict of a certain element can only be declared if the ring token of that element is in the unclaimed ring pool. If the attacking player selects a ring with fate tokens on it, those tokens are immediately moved to that player's fate pool.

The Void ring is selected from the unclaimed ring pool and set to its political (blue) side to indicate that a political Void conflict is being declared.

> ➤ Declare which province they wish to attack. To do so, take the ring token of the declared element and place it on the chosen province with the declared type faceup. This indicates which province is being attacked. A player can only declare a conflict against an opponent's stronghold province if three or more of that opponent's other provinces are broken.

The attack is declared at Meditations on the Tao.

➤ Declare which **ready** characters (under the attacking player's control) are being committed as attackers. Slide those characters forward to separate them from the attacking player's non-committed characters. At least one character must be declared at this time in order to initiate a conflict.

The two ready characters with the highest political strength are committed to the attack.

The above items are considered to be performed simultaneously. If any of the above cannot be completed, the conflict cannot be initiated.

When a conflict is declared, if the province that is being attacked is facedown, turn the province card faceup. This may trigger effects that have an impact on the conflict and could influence the result of the conflict.

Declare Defenders

The defending player now has the option to declare characters as defenders.

➤ This player declares which **ready** characters (under the defending player's control) are being committed as defenders and slides them forward to separate them from the defending player's non-committed characters. That player may declare no defenders if they so desire.

Note: A character with a dash (–) for a skill value cannot participate in a conflict of that type.

Strategy: Selecting Rings

One of the more challenging and rewarding decisions you will make during the game is which element to select when declaring a conflict. Sometimes this decision is guided by the abilities of cards in play, but often it is a question of which effect you want to resolve—or prevent your opponent from resolving.

If you do not know which ring to choose, the earth (⊕) and void (◉) rings are both reliable choices to increase your options and deny cards and characters that your opponent may need in the next conflict or round.

If either player has a character with a high glory value, the fire (🔥) ring allows you to honor or dishonor it, as that will make the character stronger (or weaker) for as long as it stays honored (or dishonored).

While the effects of the air (🌀) and water (🌊) rings tend to be more situational, sometimes it is valuable to select them if they have accumulated fate so that you have more resources to play the next cards you will play from your hand or provinces. And don't forget the value of choosing a ring whose effect you don't need if you want to deny your opponent the opportunity to attack with that ring, or to bluff an attack your opponent may overcommit to!

Conflict Actions

During this step, the players take turns using action abilities to influence the conflict and gain the upper hand.

The defending player has the first opportunity to act, and the opportunities alternate back and forth between the players until both players pass consecutively.

With an action opportunity, a player may:

> ➤ Activate an action ability on one of their cards in play. An action may be triggered from a character or attachment, from an unbroken faceup province, or from a holding (see page 20) or stronghold. Note that each ability can only be triggered once per round (unless the ability indicates otherwise).

> ➤ Play an event card from their hand by paying its fate cost and resolving its action ability. If an event has a reaction or interrupt ability, that ability specifies the condition which must be met for the card to be played, and does not use up an action opportunity.

> ➤ Play an attachment card from their hand by paying its cost and attaching it to (i.e., placing it partially underlapping) a character in play. Once in play, an attachment modifies the character's skills and may provide additional abilities for the character.

> ➤ Play a character from their hand by paying its cost. The character's controller may place it in the conflict participating on their side, or in their home area. The controller may choose to place any amount of fate from their fate pool on that character at this time.

> ➤ Pass. If a player passes and the opponent then takes another action (other than "pass"), the passing player **is** able to re-enter the sequence.

After using one of the above action opportunities, a player should announce the total relevant skill present on both sides of the conflict that would be counted if the conflict were to resolve with no further actions (see step 4 on page 19).

Once both players pass consecutively, proceed to the next step.

Strategy: Actions in a Conflict

There are a number of different ways action abilities may influence the outcome of a conflict. Some might increase or decrease a character's relevant skill, some might bow, move home, honor, or dishonor a character, and others might have more specific effects.

◇ *Bowing a character means that its skill will not be counted toward the resolution of the conflict.*

◇ *Moving a character home removes that character from the conflict entirely, but leaves it ready to participate in future conflicts.*

◇ *Honoring or dishonoring a character (see "Personal Honor" on page 21) will modify its skill based on the character's glory value.*

The back and forth exchange of action abilities is a source of tension and an opportunity for tactical skill to influence the game.

Akodo Toturi and Akodo Gunsō are attacking the Scorpion player's Fertile Fields in a military Earth conflict. Shosuro Miyako has been declared as a defender.

With the cards they have in hand and in play, the Scorpion player can take several possible actions to influence the outcome of the conflict:

1. *They could play Way of the Scorpion to dishonor Toturi, reducing his military and political skills by 3.*

2. *They could play Fine Katana on Miyako to increase her military skill by 2.*

3. *They could play Rout to move the Akodo Gunso home from the conflict, so that only Miyako and Toturi remain as participating characters who count their skill.*

4. *They could play Adept of Shadows into the conflict, giving themself a second defending character and allowing them to immediately trigger Miyako's reaction ability.*

Alternatively, they could take actions to set up future maneuvers:

5. *They could trigger City of Lies to reduce the cost of the next event they play by 1 (so Rout costs 0 when they play it next).*

6. *They could trigger Fertile Fields to draw one card and increase their available options for trying to win the conflict.*

7. *They could trigger their stronghold, City of the Open Hand, to make their opponent lose one honor and bring their opponent one point closer to losing the game.*

After the Scorpion player takes an action, the Lion player has the opportunity to counter what they have done with an action of their own. Play continues back and forth until both players pass consecutively.

Conflict Resolution

During this step, players determine the result of the conflict by comparing skill values among their ready participating characters. This determines whether the attacked province breaks, whether the ring effect resolves, and who claims the contested ring.

Step 1. Compare Skill Values

The conflict's type indicates which skill value is used to determine the result. During a military conflict, use military skill; during a political conflict, use political skill.

Each player determines the total skill value (matching the conflict type) of their participating **ready** characters, including all relevant modifiers to those characters' skill values. The player with the higher total wins the conflict.

Note: A bowed character does not count its skill toward the resolution of that conflict.

In case of a tie, the conflict is won by the attacking player. If a conflict is tied with both players counting zero skill, the conflict resolves with no winner.

The Lion player counts eight military skill and the Scorpion player counts five military skill. The Lion player wins the conflict. Note that the Adept of Shadows does not count its skill because it is bowed.

Step 2. Apply Unopposed

If there were no defending characters in the conflict (ready or bowed) at the time skill is counted and the attacking player wins the conflict, the conflict is considered unopposed. If a conflict resolves unopposed, the defending player loses one honor.

Step 3. Break Province

If the attacking player wins a conflict, check to see if the defending province is broken. If the attacking player won the conflict by an amount of skill equal to or greater than the province's strength (located in the upper left corner of the card), the province is broken.

Note: If the attack is resolving against a player's stronghold province or a province with a holding in it, the stronghold or holding adds its bonus strength value to the strength value of the defending province.

Turn a province 180 degrees to indicate that it is broken.

Unbroken   *Broken*

Card abilities on broken provinces are ignored and cannot be used, and further conflicts cannot be declared against broken provinces. A broken province remains broken for the duration of the game.

When a player's province is broken, that player must discard each dynasty card in it. They then refill that province with a facedown card from the top of their dynasty deck.

A player is still able to play cards from a broken province, and to replace new facedown cards from their dynasty deck onto that province.

Step 4. Resolve Ring Effects

Each time the attacking player wins a conflict (regardless as to whether or not the province was broken), that player may choose to resolve the ring effect of the conflict's element. The ring effects are as follows:

⊛ **Air**: Either take 1 honor token from your opponent, or gain 2 honor.

⊕ **Earth**: Draw 1 card from your conflict deck and discard 1 random card from your opponent's hand.

⊛ **Fire**: Choose a character in play and either honor or dishonor it.

⊛ **Water**: Either choose a character and ready it, or choose a character with no fate on it and bow it.

⊛ **Void**: Choose a character and remove 1 fate from it.

If the defending player wins the conflict, they do **not** resolve the contested ring's effect, but do claim the ring as they have successfully defended the attack (see Step 5).

Step 5. Claim Ring

The player who won the conflict now claims the contested ring and adds it to their claimed ring pool, even if they did not resolve the ring's effect. If no player won the conflict, the ring is returned to the unclaimed ring pool.

Claimed Ring Pool

Step 6. Conflict Ends

Once all results of winning a conflict have resolved, each character in the conflict bows and returns home. The conflict is now over. Proceed to the next player's next conflict opportunity, if any remain.
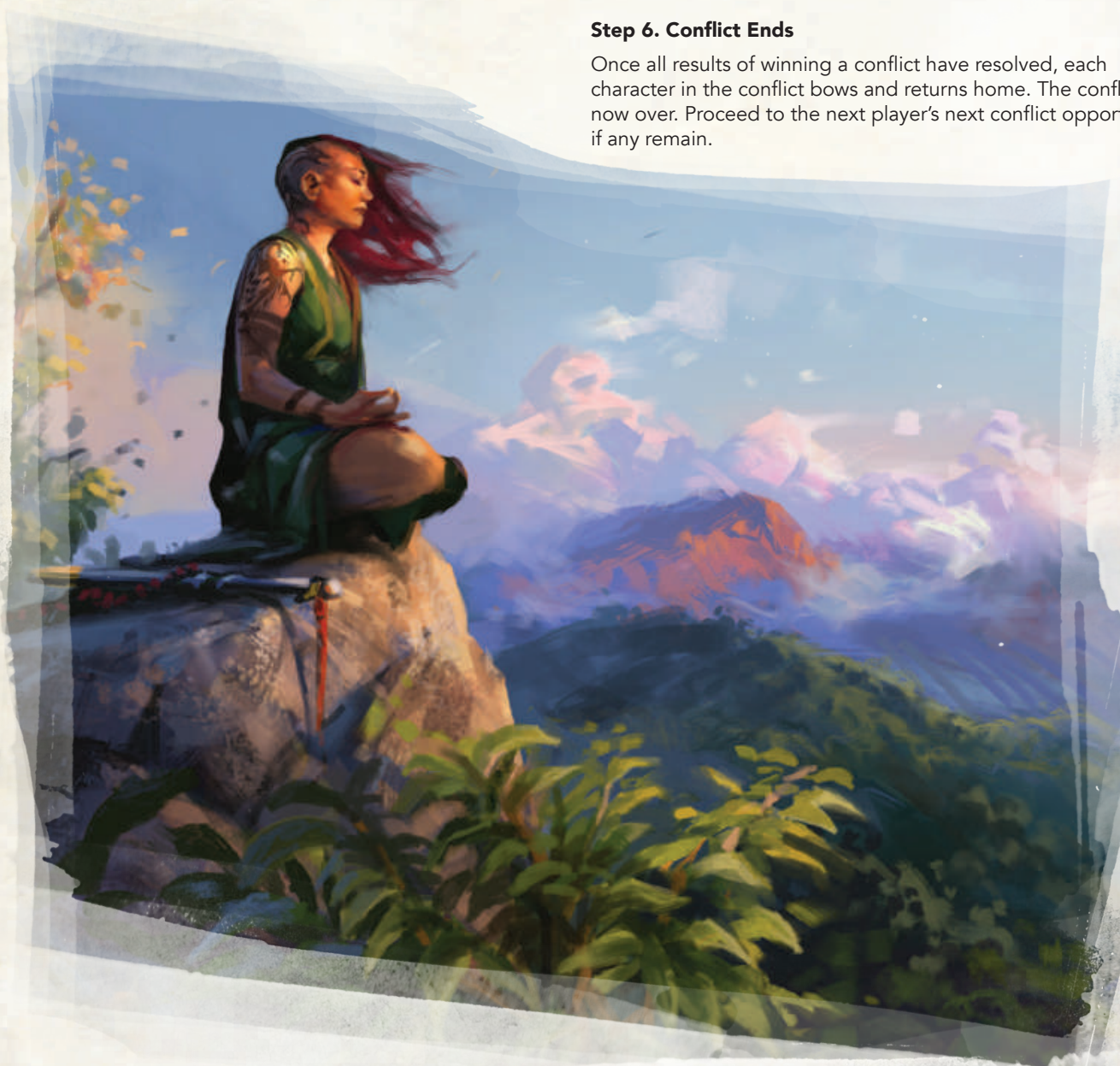
Additional Rules

This section covers some of the more situational concepts that players may come across during play. For a comprehensive guide to all aspects of the game, see the online Rules Reference guide at www.L5R.com.

Card Abilities

Some of the most exciting elements of *Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game* are the unique card abilities. These abilities contribute to the game to influence its outcome. A basic approach to card abilities can get you pretty far: do what the card says! Some abilities constantly affect the game, but many are triggered at specific times.

Constant Abilities

A **CONSTANT ABILITY** is any card ability that is not prefaced by a bold-face timing indicator. Constant abilities are active so long as the card on which they are printed is in play.

Triggered Abilities

A **TRIGGERED ABILITY** is an ability that is initiated by a player at a specified point in the game. The player controlling a card usually has the option of triggering its ability or not.

Each instance of a triggered ability (per copy of a card in play) may be triggered once during each game round, unless otherwise indicated by the ability itself.

There are 3 basic types of triggered abilities: **ACTIONS**, **INTERRUPTS**, and **REACTIONS**. Actions may be triggered by a player during any of the game's action windows. There are action windows in every phase, but most often this will occur between and during conflicts in the conflict phase. Interrupts and reactions may be triggered by a player any time the condition described in the ability's text is met. Some interrupt or reaction abilities may be prefaced by the word **Forced**. The initiation of such an ability is mandatory any time the specified triggering condition occurs. (**Note**: Forced abilities are still constrained by the general once-per-round limit that applies to all triggered abilities.)

Each triggered ability consists of one or more of the following elements:

◇ **Triggering condition** — This describes the time at which an ability may be triggered.

◇ **Cost** — This describes anything the card's controller must do in order to use the ability. Note that if the triggered ability is on an event, that event's fate cost must also be paid for the card to be played.

◇ **Targeting requirements** —This describes which game elements the triggered ability can affect. The word "choose" indicates that one or more targets must be selected in order to use the ability.

◇ **Effect** — This describes what the ability does to the game state each time the ability is used. An ability's effect is always separated from its triggering condition and/or cost and/or targeting requirements by a dash (–).

Important Terminology

Attacking and Defending

When a player declares a conflict against an opponent's province, that player is the **ATTACKING PLAYER** and the characters that are committed to the conflict on that player's side are **PARTICIPATING** as **ATTACKING CHARACTERS** (also referred to as **ATTACKERS**).

The opponent whose province is being attacked is the **DEFENDING PLAYER** and the characters that are committed to the conflict on that player's side are **PARTICIPATING** as **DEFENDING CHARACTERS** (also referred to as **DEFENDERS**).

Sacrifice

If a player is instructed to **SACRIFICE** a card, the player must select a card they control that meets the specified criteria and place it in the appropriate discard pile.

Traits

A card's **TRAITS** are presented in bold italics at the top of its text box. A trait is a flavorful descriptor that carries no rules of its own, but may be referenced by card abilities.

Keywords

A **KEYWORD** is a card ability that conveys specific rules to its card. The keywords in the game are listed "Keywords" on page 26.

Holdings

Holdings are a card type that represents the lands, structures, fortifications, and other locations that may be found in a player's provinces.

Holding cards in a player's provinces are not played. A holding modifies the defense strength of a province when it is attacked, and is active as long as it remains faceup in the province.

The Imperial Storehouse holding increases the defense strength of the Pilgrimage province from 5 to 6.

Dueling

Some card effects in the Crane and Dragon clans INITIATE A DUEL. To initiate a duel during a conflict, choose a **participating** character you control and a **participating** character your opponent controls to be involved in the duel. If the duel ability is triggered from a character, that character is automatically involved in the duel (and must be participating in the conflict).

To RESOLVE A DUEL, each player performs the following steps:

1. Each player secretly selects a number between 1 and 5 on their honor dial.

2. Each player simultaneously reveals their selection

3. The player who selected the higher number gives honor to their opponent equal to the difference, exactly like in the draw phase.

4. Each player adds their honor bid to the relevant skill total of their dueling character (as identified by the ability that initiated the duel) to determine their duel total.

5. Each player compares their duel total against that of their opponent to determine which character wins the duel.

6. The ability that initiated the duel describes what consequences befall the duel's winner and/or loser.

THE DUEL'S WINNER is the dueling character whose controller has the higher duel total, and THE DUEL'S LOSER is the dueling character whose controller has the lower duel total. If both players' duel totals are equal, the duel has no winner or loser.

Personal Honor

During the course of play, some card or ring effects will HONOR or DISHONOR a character. This represents the perceptions that Rokugani society has about that character and the actions they have taken.

Characters can exist in one of the following three states:

> Honored

> Ordinary

> Dishonored

An honored character adds its glory value to both its military and political skill. When an honored character leaves play its controller gains one honor.

A dishonored character subtracts its glory value from both its military and political skill. When a dishonored character leaves play its controller loses one honor.

When a character is honored, it receives an honored status token, and when a character is dishonored it receives a dishonored status token. If an effect would dishonor an honored character (or vice versa), discard the appropriate status token instead and the character returns to the ordinary state.
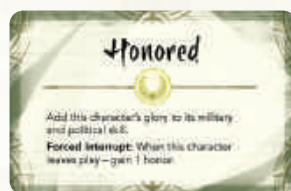
Deckbuilding

The *Legend of the Five Rings: The Card Game* core set is designed to provide a complete game experience and offers significant replayability. After playing a few times with the starter decks, players may wish to explore their own strategies by creating customized decks.

Why Build Custom Decks?

Deckbuilding is a process by which a player may customize their decks with original strategies and ideas. This allows a player to experience the game in new ways: instead of adapting to the strategy of a starter deck, each player may construct decks that function as they desire. When players construct original decks, they don't just participate in the game: they actively shape how it is played.

Role Cards

A role card is a card that a player may include during deckbuilding to alter the contents of their decks. Each role card has one or more traits: an outlook (*Keeper* or *Seeker*) and one of the elements (*Air*, *Earth*, *Fire*, *Water*, or *Void*). Some cards, such as the Keeper or Seeker Initiates (124, 126), require you to include a particular role card before they can be included in your deck. When deckbuilding, you may choose a single role card to alter the contents of your deck.

Keeper of Air
Keeper. Air.
Increase your deckbuilding influence value by 3.
Reaction: After you win an ⬡ conflict as the defending player – gain 1 fate.

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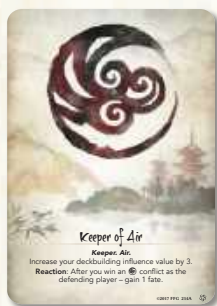
Deck Customization Rules

These deck customization rules are for sanctioned tournament play. Other expansions provide for additional customization options by providing additional cards to choose from. The basic guidelines for a player's customized decks are:

- **1 Stronghold**
- **1 Role Card (optional)**
- **5 Provinces**
- **1 Dynasty Deck (40-45 cards)**
- **1 Conflict Deck (40-45 cards)**

The following restrictions must be observed:

◆ A player must choose exactly one stronghold. Any card with an affiliation that matches a player's stronghold is said to be IN-CLAN.

◆ A player may use one role card. A role card is placed next to a player's stronghold card during setup, and modifies that player's options during deckbuilding.

◆ A player's set of provinces must include exactly five provinces, consisting of exactly one province associated with each element. (Each province has an elemental symbol in the lower right corner of the card to indicate its association.) Each province must be in-clan or be neutral.

◆ A player's dynasty deck must contain a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 45 cards. Each of these cards must be in-clan or be neutral. (A neutral card has no clan affiliation symbol in the upper right of the card.)

◆ A player's conflict deck must contain a minimum of 40 and a maximum of 45 cards. Each of these cards must be in-clan, be neutral, or be purchased from a single other clan by using influence (see "Influence" sidebar, below).

◆ No more than three copies of a single card, by title, can be included in any combination in a player's dynasty and conflict decks.

Influence

Each stronghold provides its controller with a number of influence that can be used during deckbuilding. This influence may be used to include **out-of-clan cards from a single clan** in that player's conflict deck.

Many conflict cards have an influence cost, shown at the bottom of the card. Each bamboo stalk on a card indicates one point of influence cost. The combined influence value of out-of-clan cards in a player's deck cannot exceed the influence value on that player's stronghold, as modified by their role card.

If a conflict card with a clan symbol does not have an influence value, it cannot be used as an out-of-clan card in another deck. Neutral cards can be included in any deck.
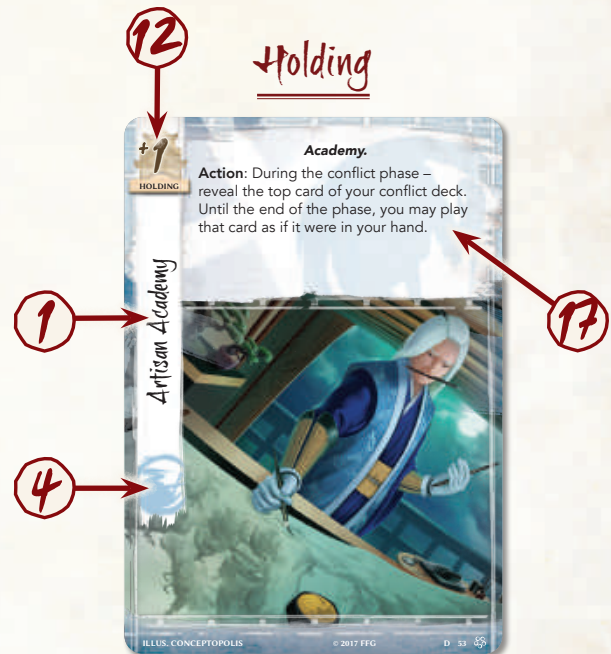
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An influence cost of 2.

Appendix I: Card Anatomy

This section presents a detailed anatomy of each card type.

Card Anatomy Key

1. **Title**: The name of the card.

2. **Cost**: The fate cost to play the card.

3. **Cardtype**: Indicates how a card is played or used during the course of the game.

4. **Clan Symbol**: The card's clan affiliation.

5. **Military Skill**: The character's military skill value.

6. **Bonus Military Skill**: The bonus value this card provides to the attached character's military skill.

7. **Political Skill**: The character's political skill value.

8. **Bonus Political Skill**: The bonus value this card provides to the attached character's political skill.

9. **Glory**: The card's glory value.

10. **Element**: The province's elemental affiliation.

11. **Strength**: The province's strength value.

12. **Bonus Strength**: The bonus strength provided to a province or stronghold if this holding is in it.

13. **Starting Honor**: The amount of honor this stronghold provides at the start of the game.

14. **Fate Value**: The amount of fate this stronghold provides each dynasty phase.

15. **Influence Value**: The amount of influence this stronghold provides for deckbuilding.

16. **Traits**: Descriptive attributes that may be referenced by card abilities.

17. **Ability**: The card's special means of interacting with the game.

18. **Influence Cost**: The influence cost required to include this card in a conflict deck.

19. **Product Set Information**: Indicates this card's product of origin.

Character

Vengeful Oathkeeper

CHARACTER

Bushi.

Reaction: After you lose a ⚔ conflict – put this character into play from your hand.

"When a samurai has said he will perform an action, it is as good as done." – Akodo's Leadership

ILLUS. DARREN TAN   © 2017 FFG   C 160

Holding

Academy.

Action: During the conflict phase – reveal the top card of your conflict deck. Until the end of the phase, you may play that card as if it were in your hand.

Artisan Academy

+1

HOLDING

ILLUS. CONCEPTOPOLIS   © 2017 FFG   D 53

Attachment

6
8

Guidance of the Ancestors

1
+1
ATTACHMENT

Condition. **16**

Action: Play this attachment from your conflict discard pile.

"Oh blessed ancestors, hear my prayer! May the strength of your honor guide my steps and lead me to righteousness!"

ILLUS. MATT ZEILINGER   © 2017 FFG   C 162

Event

3
EVENT
0

1

The Perfect Gift

4

Action: Reveal the top 4 cards of each player's conflict deck. Choose 1 revealed card owned by each player and add it to its owner's hand. Shuffle.

He had refused twice, but could not bring himself to refuse a third time.

17

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Province

11
PROVINCE
5

Pilgrimage

During conflicts at this province, cancel all ring effects. (If this province breaks, resolve ring effects as normal.)

10

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Stronghold

Shizuka Toshi
+2
STRONGHOLD

City.

Action: During a ⬙ conflict, bow this stronghold. Choose a participating character with ⬙ skill 2 or lower – bow that character.

13   **14**   **15**

11   +7   10

ILLUS. ALAYNA LEMMER   © 2017 FFG   2

Role

1

Keeper of Fire

16

Keeper. Fire.

Increase your deckbuilding influence value by 3.

Reaction: After you win a 🔥 conflict as the defending player – gain 1 fate.

17

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24

Appendix II: Frequently Asked Questions

◇ *Why does the ring effect occur when my opponent wins a conflict that breaks my province Pilgrimage (30)?*

Ability text on broken provinces is not active. During conflict resolution, players check to see if the province breaks before ring effects resolve. Therefore, if the province is broken, the ability on Pilgrimage that would have prevented the ring effect is inactive at the time the ring effect resolves.

◇ *Can I use the effect of the Water ring to ready one of my characters that is participating in the conflict?*

At the time the ring effects resolves, the characters participating in the conflict have not yet been bowed and returned home. So, if the character is ready, it will not be an eligible target to ready again. If a participating character in the conflict is bowed, you *may* use the Water ring effect to ready it, but this won't accomplish much, as the character will soon bow again when it returns home.

◇ *If I break my own province by using the ability on Endless Plains (14), does the conflict end?*

No. Continue to resolve the conflict through each of the conflict resolution steps. The conflict may affect the game in other ways (such as the ring effect or an unopposed result), and actions or reactions may still be played in reference to the conflict or its result. However, during the step to check if the defending province breaks, nothing occurs, as the province has already been broken.

Credits

Phase Sequence

1. **Dynasty phase** *(reveal cards in provinces, collect fate, play characters from provinces)*
2. **Draw phase** *(bid honor, draw cards)*
3. **Conflict phase** *(pass initiative, declare conflicts, contest Imperial Favor)*
4. **Fate phase** *(discard characters with no fate, remove fate from characters, add fate to unclaimed rings, ready cards, discard cards from provinces, return rings)*

Keywords

A keyword is an attribute that conveys specific rules to its card. The following serves as a quick reminder of how each keyword functions. For complete rules on a keyword, see the Rules Reference.

Ancestral: When the card to which an ancestral attachment is attached would leave play, the ancestral attachment returns to its owner's hand instead of being discarded.

Courtesy: When this card leaves play, its controller gains one fate.

Covert: When this character is declared as an attacker, you may choose a character that does not have covert. That character cannot be declared as a defender for this conflict during the "declare defenders" step.

No Attachments: This card cannot have attachments attached to it.

Pride: When this character wins a conflict, honor it. When this character loses a conflict, dishonor it.

Restricted: A character can never have more than two restricted attachments attached to it.

Sincerity: When this card leaves play, its controller draws one card from their conflict deck.

Symbols and Icons

The following is a reference of the symbols and icons in the game.

Conflict Types

Military	⚔	Politics	🍂

Clan Symbols

Crab	🦀	Crane	🐦
Dragon	🐉	Lion	🦁
Phoenix	🦅	Scorpion	🦂
Unicorn	🐎		

Ring Symbols (with Ring Effects)

🜁 **Air**: Either take 1 honor token from your opponent, or gain 2 honor.

🜃 **Earth**: Draw 1 card from your conflict deck and discard 1 random card from your opponent's hand.

🜂 **Fire**: Choose a character in play and either honor or dishonor it.

🜄 **Water**: Either choose a character and ready it, or choose a character with no fate on it and bow it.

🜀 **Void**: Choose a character and remove 1 fate from it.