

Teikoku

Teikoku is composed of the nouns *Tei* "referring to an emperor" and *koku* "Realm" so it literally means "Imperial Realm".

A game for 3 to 4 players, *Teikoku* puts each player in control of their own clan as a warlord governing the resources and people of their own province. The center of the board depicts the world at large, serving as the Port where players can obtain additional units and resources or wage war with foreign enemies to earn treasure.

Winning The Game

There are three ways to win; each is explained in greater detail throughout these rules. Everything else is far less important:

- 1 – **Victory By Aggression:** Be the first player to obtain 50 Treasure
- 2 – **Victory By Attrition:** Have the most treasure when any 2 decks become empty
- 3 – **Victory By Longevity:** Have the most treasure at the end of Year 3

Starting Game Setup

1. Land

Each player begins with a tray showing 4 card slots and a treasure slot. Before play begins, players **load each of the land slots with a Peasant card**. These represent the small number of loyal civilians already living in your Empire.

2. Starting Cards

Players each begin with a **starting Deck of 9 cards including: 3 Ronin, 3 Archers, 1 Monk, 1 Samurai and 1 Unique Warlord** to lead their clan.

3. Drafting From the Special Decks

Shuffle each of the 4 special decks face down. Include 8 cards in each deck. All remaining cards from each special deck are removed from play without being revealed. Note, there are 10 different cards in each special deck with two copies of each. So in any game, no special deck card will appear more than twice, and since only 8 cards are used, some of the special cards for that deck will not appear at all in some games.

Before play begins, each player chooses **1 Special Card** from any of the 4 special decks (Yakuza, Ninja, Elements or Market). Players then **shuffle their deck of 10 cards and draw 5 cards** from their deck to form their opening hand.

4. Treasure

Each Player begins the game with **25 Treasure**. In a 4-player game the port begins the game with **0 Treasure**, in a 3-player game the port begins with **25 Treasure**.

5. Battle Cubes

Each player has access to **4 battle cubes**. These cubes are used to signify whether a slotted defender has been activated or has their ability inactive. Each season when players slot new cards into their land, the cards are inactive so their blood and gold value are effective but the text on the card for a “while slotted” ability does not take effect yet. **During the Refresh phase** at the end of the season players may activate all of their slotted cards by adding a battle cube on top of the card to show it has now become active and its slotted ability is now in effect. Once activated, cards **remain active** until they are killed or discarded (even if they slide during the recovery phase).

6. Dice

Players also have access to six sided dice, referred to in these rules as 2D6 or 1D6 to signify one six sided die. The Port has its own 1D6 above the middle slot that will be added to the gold and blood values of the port card in the middle slot if players choose to interact with it.

The Game Space:

The game space includes a center row of 3 Port card slots, 4 special deck slots, a Units deck, an Eta deck and 4 season icons along with the land tray assigned to each player. The game begins with 3 cards selected randomly from the Units deck face up in the Port row, and the remainder of all decks face down.



First Player

The **Fujiwara Clan** Player begins the game with the first player token and game play continues clockwise around the table. At the end of each season the first player marker is passed one seat to the left.

Seasons: *The Winds of War*

The game board displays 4 season icons on it. All games begin during winter and the D4 year marker should be placed on the winter icon at the start of play. A season lasts until each player has had a complete turn. Players advance the season marker to the next season at the end of the Refresh phase. Seasons confer the following global bonuses and restrictions on all players during the season:

Winter = Players Cannot Attack Any Other Players
Spring = Players Draw +1 Card and Hand Limits Are +1 This Round
Summer = The Port Is Closed. Players Cannot Attack or Acquire From Port
Autumn = Players May Banish 1 Card From Their Hand During Movement

Card Values: *Gold And Blood*

Each card in a player's hand has a Gold value (displayed as a number over a gold coin) and a Blood value (displayed as a number over a blood droplet). Each card may be "spent" in combination with the other cards in a player's hand for either its *Gold* value **or** *Blood* value **or** *When Played* special text effect. Once a card is spent, it is added to the player's discard pile.

Alternatively cards may be **Slotted** into any empty slot in the player's land during their movement phase. Slotted cards begin the season with their **ability inactive** (their blood value and gold value are active for defense immediately). Any card with a bonus "**While Slotted**" is activated at the end of the **Refresh phase** and remains active in all subsequent turns unless the card is removed.

Hand Draw and Hand Limit

Each Season, starting with the opening of the game, players will **draw 5 cards** into their hand. Players have a **hand limit of 7 cards**. Players may choose to play, discard or hold cards over in their hand until the next season.

Important Note: During Movement Players may "withdraw" a card into their hand (or multiple cards if their abilities allow) from slotted positions on their own land. **The Hand Limit is only enforced during the Refresh phase**, so players may withdraw cards raising their hand size **beyond the hand limit**, but would need to discard down to the end limit during Refresh if necessary. This is a clever way to store cards on your land during an earlier season, and muster them into your hand for a more effective attack in the current season.

Entrenched and Slotted Defensive Units

Any card slotted on player land in a location with a D6 or +2 above the slot is "*entrenched*" and benefits from the D6 icon or +2 stated above the land slot where it is placed. If the card is attacked it adds the relevant bonus to its **blood and gold** value. This means units posted in defense closer to your city are harder to kill or bribe than units placed further away on your front lines.

For example: A Samurai slotted in the front slot of your castle (next to the gate) has a value of 5Gold and 5Blood. That same Samurai entrenched in your 4th slot (near the D6 icon) has a value of 5Gold+D6 and 5Blood+D6 as its standard defense. If attacked, the attacker must reveal the cards and **total value of their attack first**. Then the defender would roll 1D6 and add the result to their Blood and Gold value, giving their entrenched Samurai a possible defense of 11 Blood and 11 Gold if they rolled a 6. This variance makes it a challenge for attackers to gauge how much power to expend when trying to successfully attack entrenched units.

The Seasons:

Each Season occurs over six phases as printed on the play space next to each player's draw deck. Players take each of the following actions in order. The first player handles their Troop Movements, then each other player does so, and then the first player handles their Port engagements and so on. Any player may choose to skip an action, but once an action phase is concluded, players may not return to that phase until the cycle begins again next season.

Phase 1 Troop Movement: Withdrawing and Advancing

Troop Movement is an important way to manipulate your deck, stashing cards in your land slots for later use, defending your Treasure, slotting cards with abilities for future use and optimizing the power of the cards you currently own.

Withdrawing

A player may withdraw any **one card** from their land slots and place it directly into their **current hand**. Cards added to your hand count immediately so it can be a good way to have added power to complement your draw. However it does leave one of your land slots and weakens your defenses.

Advancing

Next the player may advance as many cards as they choose from their current hand into any open slot(s) of their tray, including a slot where they have withdrawn a card. Adding cards to your slots strengthens your defenses but reduces your current hand value, making you better defended but weaker offensively.

Phase 2 The Port: Acquiring Units & Bounty

The 3 cards face up in the center row may be **attacked with Blood** or **acquired with Gold**. This is the primary way players add units to their deck and can be the easiest way to earn treasure.

Acquiring Units

To acquire a card from the center row, a player must spend Gold from their hand equal to the Gold value of the card they wish to obtain. Keep in mind, gold in your slots, draw deck or discard pile cannot be used. **Only your hand value can be spent.**

For example, a player with a Samurai and a Peasant in their hand has a 8 Gold value of 8 (the total of the coins on the cards in their hand). They might purchase a

Samurai **from** the port with a Gold value of 5 if one is available and another card with a Gold value of 3 or less if one is available. Any cards acquired from the Port are *exhausted* and are **added to the player's discard pile** directly, along with the cards from their hand they used to pay the associated cost.

Note: **Cards must be spent in their entirety.** So if a player wishes to buy a Ronin from the Port with a Gold cost of 2 but only has a Samurai in their hand with a gold value of 5, they will end up “overpaying” for the Ronin. Likewise a player **cannot spend 1 Samurai with a value of 5 to buy 2 Ronin** with a total cost of 4 because each card must be spent in its entirety on each purchase. However, a player can spend a Monk + a Ronin to buy a Samurai.

Attacking Bounty

A player may also choose to attack a card in the Port by **spending the card's Blood value**. A Port card defeated by an attack is **not** added to the player's deck. Instead, the player acquires a **Bounty of treasure up to the Blood value** of the defeated card, but limited to no more than the total amount of Treasure presently available at the Port. If the attack is successful the cards necessary to pay for the attack are exhausted from the player's hand to their discard pile and the killed NPC is **banished from the game into the Pit**. If the attack is unsuccessful the cards used from the player's hand are exhausted and discarded but the victorious NPC remains available in the Port.

Note the middle Port slot adds a D6 to the card in that slot for Gold value and Blood value. Whenever a card is acquired or defeated from the Port, the other cards in the port **slide to the left**, and the next card from the Units deck **immediately fills** the right-most slot. Removing the card in the left slot will cause the middle card to slide left and become available without a die roll. This method can also be used to move a card from the right slot to the middle slot, giving it the extra protection of a die roll. Controlling the finished position of the cards in the Port at the end of your turn strategically can make acquiring or attacking desirable cards more expensive and difficult for your opponents.

A player may attack or acquire an **infinite number** of cards from the Port, limited only by the amount of blood and gold available in their current hand.

Players may attack cards in port with Blood **even if 0 Treasure is available**, as a way to **reposition cards** in the Port slots, though **they won't be able to retrieve any bounty** for doing so because bounty is always limited to the amount of treasure currently available in the location.

If the Units deck ever becomes empty the Port is undefended and no additional units will arrive there. Players may attack the port treasury directly and take Treasure equal to the blood value of their attacks, though no additional units may be acquired.

Phase 3. WAR: Bribes, Banishments & Bounty

A player may choose to attack another player by targeting the card in the left-most occupied slot of their enemy's land. Attacking means **either** spending **Gold to Bribe** an enemy card or spending **Blood to Banish** an enemy card.

If a card is present in column one, it **protects the cards placed behind it** and the rear column cards may not be attacked until all cards in front of them have been removed. Unless a special card specifically says it may attack “any defender”, it must target the front-most card in an enemy’s castle only.

In all cases, attackers and defenders must use the **whole value** of their card as one amount. Meaning, a Samurai with a Blood value of 5 can banish a Peasant with a Blood value of 2, but would forfeit the remainder of 3 Blood. They **cannot save the remainder** to be used in a subsequent attack on another unit this season.

Bribes

Paying the **Gold value** of any card slotted on enemy land is a Bribe that causes the unit to leave its post and join its friends in its owner’s discard pile.

Note, bribed units are discarded by their owner to their own discard pile and are not acquired by another player. This is a very effective way to return less helpful cards like Peasants back to their owner’s discard pile where they will go on to clog up their future draw hand values.

Cards without a Gold value may not be bribed. For example, a Ninja Assassin **can’t be bribed** because it has **NO Gold Value** as their fear of the vengeance of their clan matters more than death itself. However, an Eta with a **0 Gold Value** can be bribed by any enemy. **No Value and 0 Value are not the same.**

Banishment

Paying the **Blood value** of a slotted card is a successful attack that kills the unit and causes it to be **banished to the Pit permanently**. This is a powerful way to weaken your opponent’s defenses and the strength of their deck overall. For example, a card with a high Gold Value and a low Blood Value can be killed for a much lower blood cost than the gold price enemy paid to acquire it.

Cards with **NO Blood value** may not be killed, but they may be bribed. For example, attempting to kill an Opium Trader would only cause the Yakuza to replace them with a new one, making an attack on them with Blood value futile – but a Yakuza Opium Dealer would always be willing to accept a sufficient Bribe to return to its owner’s discard pile. **No Value and 0 Value are not the same**

In all cases, the **attacker must commit the attacking cards BEFORE any die roll results are known**. This can cause an attacker to “overpay” in gold or blood to remove an entrenched card if a die roll is lower than anticipated, or to fail an attempt to remove an entrenched card if a die roll is higher than expected.

Acquire Bounty

Once the last defender in a player’s defense slots is removed, the attacker may make an attack on that enemy player’s treasury. To do so the attacker must have at least one card remaining in their hand that can be played for a blood value of at least 1. Players **may not use gold** to acquire bounty, making decks with many blood value cards better at attacking enemy treasuries than decks, which focus more on gold value.

Once the attacker plays a blood value card against a defender who has all 4 land slots vacant, the attacker may **loot the vault by rolling 2D6 + 1 for each unused Battle Cubes** the attacker possesses. Therefore taking a maximum of 16 treasure (12+4 from 2D6 + 4 unused cubes) or a minimum of 2 treasure (2D6 with 0 cubes) from the enemy vault back to their own treasure pile.

Bounty Example:

Fujiwara attacks Tokugawa. Fujiwara kills all of the defenders on Tokugawa land. Fujiwara plays a Ronin from his hand against the now vacant Tokugawa land. Fujiwara has 2 slotted cards on their own lands and 2 unused Battle Cubes. Fujiwara now rolls 2D6+2 with a total result of 10. Tokugawa loses 10 Treasure immediately and Fujiwara gains 10 Treasure immediately.

Barren

Much like the Port, a defending Player may only be forced to pay Treasure up to the amount they have in their treasury at that time. If a player has 3 treasure, enemies may continue to attack and banish slotted cards from their land, but they will receive a maximum of 3 treasure for doing so. No player or Port may ever have negative treasure or grant more treasure than it owns to any attacker. In this way poverty may be an extraordinarily powerful defense.

Fortification

If a player has **no cards slotted** in any of their 4 land slots, that player **cannot be attacked by enemies and is considered fortified** within their castle walls. Initially this means that only one Player may raid the Treasury of an enemy in a season. This limits the Treasure any player can lose in a season to a maximum of 16 (2D6+4BattleCubes Bounty taken). This also prevents “ganging up on” any one player, since **enemies may work together to breach a vault, but only one of them will actually be able to get treasure** from doing so.

A player may choose to keep their slots open in subsequent seasons as a way to prevent future attacks but doing so comes with some serious downsides.

- 1) Players can only gain the important benefits of many valuable cards by choosing to slot them actively.
- 2) Players can ‘bank’ cards for their upcoming hand by having at least 1 card slotted from the prior season to increase the value of their current hand.
- 3) Players with undesirable cards in their deck may put those cards at risk in slots as a way to remove them from their deck, or as a way to eliminate the chance of drawing them in their upcoming hands.
- 4) Players with empty slots at the end of the season will be forced to fill them with cards from the Eta deck, devaluing their deck over time as explained later in these rules

Strategy Tip:

Assaulting an enemy with **enough strength to gain treasure for yourself**, rather than weakening an enemy and making it easier for your other opponents to break through is a key element of the game. As is talking other players into using their resources to weaken each other for you.

Phase 4 Commerce: Special Cards, Trade & The Pit

During the Commerce phase each player may seek to strengthen their deck by acquiring valuable cards from the Special Decks, Trading special cards for new ones, or banishing unhelpful cards to The Pit.

Commerce

During Commerce each player may spend **5 Treasure to acquire a special card**. Players decide which card(s) to buy from the: Market, Yakuza, Elements or Ninja special decks but are never obligated to buy any cards. Any card(s) purchased via Commerce **may be looked at by their new owner** and are then exhausted, added to the player's **discard pile immediately**.

Treasure spent by any player during Commerce is placed in the Port treasure stash and **becomes Treasure available in Port as bounty** to any subsequent player who defeats a slotted Port unit. Players may not gain bounty from the Port until Phase 2 of the following season.

Trade

A player may also choose to Trade any **unspent Special cards** by banishing them from their active hand to obtain a different special card from the same special deck **or** another special deck. **No treasure is necessary to complete a Trade**. A player may **not** trade a card they acquired via Commerce during the same turn. Any card spent in Trade is banished to the Pit while the newly acquired special card is added to the player's discard pile.

There is a **hard limit of 2 Commerce and Trade transactions per player per turn**. So a player may spend 10 Treasure to acquire 2 new special cards or 5 treasure to acquire 1 new card and Trade an existing card for another new card or trade 2 special cards or acquire no new special cards during Commerce.

Strategy Tip

Commerce & Trade can also be a useful method of depleting a special deck that is already low on cards as a way of forcing the game to end while you have the most treasure.

The Pit

Players may also banish any cards remaining in their hand into The Pit. Only cards **from your hand** may be sent to the pit. Each card being banished costs 2 Treasure as a Pit fee, with the treasure being added to the Port bounty. This is a good way to clean cards like Peasants out of your deck, but it requires that you hold them all season in your hand and expend Treasure to banish them. The much cheaper way to accomplish the same result is to convince enemy players to kill them for you at their own expense during the War phase instead.

Phase 5 Recovery: Eta, Discard and Draw

The Recovery phase presents players with choices about the best way to manage their land and their hand to prepare for future seasons.

Eta: The Untouchable Filth

Eta are the lowest caste members of feudal Japanese society. Considered *untouchable filth* far below even your lowliest Peasants by society. **Players must draw and slot 1 Eta card in each empty slot on their land.** Eta have 0 blood and 0 gold with no abilities. They may be killed or bribed by enemies for free.

Removing Eta & Sliding Forces

When Eta are added to your land, **you may choose** to immediately discard them to your discard pile or to allow them to remain on your land as squatters.

Immediately removing the Eta requires you to place them in your discard pile but gets your slots cleared without using a troop movement withdrawal action. However, if Eta are removed this way, **all remaining troops slotted on your land slide to the left until all void slots are filled.** This may cause entrenched units to slide left and **lose their D6 or +2/+2 bonuses** and may cause units with high value to be more at risk as they move further toward your defensive front.

Any slotted units that have been activated **retain their cube and remain active** even if they slide to the left.

Leaving Eta & Allowing Squatters

Alternatively, a player may allow the Eta to remain on their land. This may allow you to keep a valuable unit in your entrenched slots, but causes you to have slots filled with Eta squatters that severely hamper your defenses until withdrawn.

Eta **do get the D6 or +2/+2 slot bonuses** if they are entrenched in applicable slots. If an Eta is killed it goes back to the Eta deck. If an Eta is bribed it goes to the owner's discard pile.

Defending cards **DO NOT slide left** if the Eta are removed via attacks, bribes, troop movements or other means. Defenders **ONLY slide left if the Eta are discarded immediately** when they are prevented from squatting on vacant land.

Drawing Eta

If Eta cycle from your discard pile to your draw pile, when the Eta are later drawn into your hand they are **immediately returned to the Eta deck.** An Eta may also be banished to the Pit during Autumn. In essence, drawing an ETA is weakening your current hand once by including a 0 value card that is immediately discarded back to the Eta deck.

Phase 6: Refresh

The Refresh phase ends the season by allowing each player to replenish their depleted hand, to activate slotted defenders, and to complete a variety of procedural measures to ready the game state for the next season.

Draw 5 Cards

Players each draw 5 new cards from their remaining draw deck. When their deck becomes empty, the player shuffles all cards from their discard pile and the shuffled cards become their new deck. Decks are shuffled face down and if a player runs out of cards (because too many of their cards have been killed) they must play shorthanded until they acquire more cards from the Port or special decks.

While Players **draw 5 cards** (6 in Springtime), it is important to note that the **hand limit is 7 cards** (8 in Springtime). This gives players a strong incentive to hold two cards over from one season to the next. It also becomes useful to keep track of how many cards each enemy is holding, and all players **must reveal** how many cards they have in their hand **whenever asked**.

Note: Each special card deck has a visibly different card backing. Seeing a special card at the top of a player deck gives information to players about what may be coming soon in their enemy's next hand. Eta cards are double sided, making them easy to see for opponents when they become the top card of your deck or when you draw them.

Battle Cubes: Activating Slotted Cards

Any cards on your land that were slotted earlier this season **may** now become active. Players that choose to activate a slotted card signify this by placing one of their Battle Cubes on the face of the now activated card. With four slots, each player can have a maximum of four slotted cards at any one time. If an active card becomes killed or removed from a slot for any reason the player retrieves their battle cube and may use it again on a future card when it becomes activated.

Battle Cubes can also be used for an offensive purpose. If a player attacks an enemy and is able to loot their treasury, the attacker obtains 2D6 treasure plus one for each of their dormant battle cubes. That means having zero slotted units can increase your bounty by 4 if you successfully raid an enemy's treasury. Players may choose to **deactivate a slotted card** by removing its cube during Refresh for this purpose.

Note: With only 4 battle cubes and 4 land slots, knowing which cards to slot, when to activate them, and how to maneuver them is an essential key to victory. Sometimes you may choose not to slot a powerful card in order to use the land for another card instead, or to keep more battle cubes available on the eve of a major attack. You may also find that slotting powerful cards makes you a target of enemies and appearing weak may be more important at times than being strong.

Discarding Cards

When the Season ends, players **must** discard down to the current hand limit. Players **may** discard further by discarding any remaining unspent cards from their hand. This is useful with the Kabuki Spy for example.

First Player Token Advances

After an entire season has been played and Phase 6 has been concluded, the first player token is passed one player to the left. That player now becomes the first player for the next Season.

Change of Seasons

Players advance the season counter to the next season and the rules of that season apply to the current Round.

Change of Year

If the Autumn Season has ended, change the season to winter again and increase the season counter D4 by 1 to designate the next year. Therefore the D4 will be a 2 in

year 2, and a 3 in year 3 with the game ending at the conclusion of Autumn in year 3 unless the game ends in another way.

Subsequent Seasons

All Subsequent Seasons of the game follow the same six phases of activity that the first season followed until the game ends and a winner is declared.

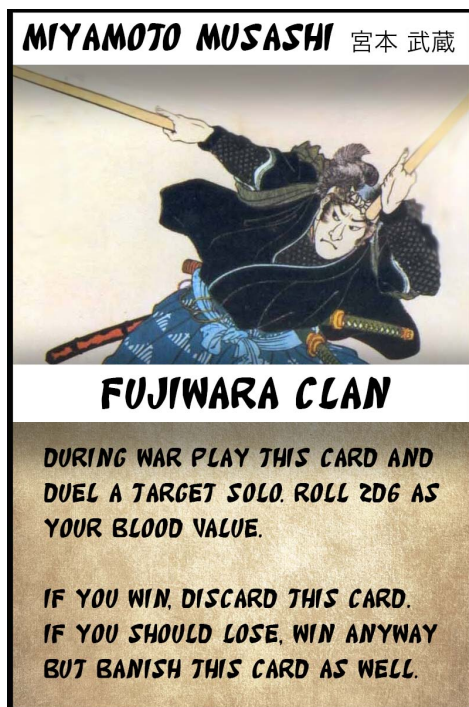
The Four Clans

<https://allabout-japan.com/en/article/5818/>

<https://www.japan-guide.com/>

The four clans featured in Teikoku are based on real Japanese feudal history and their class advantages/disadvantages are tied to their lore. We are not experts in Japanese history and have taken some poetic license for game play purposes. We do hope the theme and substance of the game encourages players to learn more about the world the game is based on, and have tremendous respect for the culture we were able to draw our ideas from in making Teikoku.

Player 1 The Fujiwara Clan



Musashi remains renowned for his two-sword Niten Ichi-ryu ("Two Heavens as One") sword style, which he perfected while in Kumamoto castle. While he was not a clan leader, he is immortalized in Teikoku for his fighting prowess and the advantage he provides the Fujiwara clan as a Kensei in one vs. one duels of opportunity.

His incomparable abilities as a Kensei sword master and duelist remain beyond compare to this day. During his life from 1584-1645 Miyamoto Musashi remained undefeated in at least 60 documented sword duels to the death, and founded an methodology of swordsmanship explained in *The Book of Five Rings* which is still read today for insight into his tactics and philosophy.

Considered by his peers to be daring and reckless, Musashi won his first duel at the age of 12 after accepting a challenge from a traveling samurai. The Samurai was

fully trained and fully armed, until Musashi beat him to death using only a wooden staff. Better known than his battles are Musashi's many duels, often won using only a wooden sword. Early in his career he defeated several members of the Yoshioka School, and singularly ended the reign of Kyoto's preeminent school of swordsmanship.

In 1612 he fought his most famous duel, against Sasaki Kojiro on the island of Funajima, in the Kanmon Straits between Japan's main island and Kyushu. Musashi aggravated his opponent by arriving nearly three hours late and after killing his opponent it was revealed he was late because he did not have his weapon with him and needed time to carve the wooden sword he used from an oar of his boat on his way to the island for the duel.

Musashi later offered himself as a sword instructor to various major figures, including Tokugawa Ieyasu who rejected him, until in 1633 he finally took up residence with the daimyo of Kumamoto Castle as a renowned member of the Fujiwara clan.

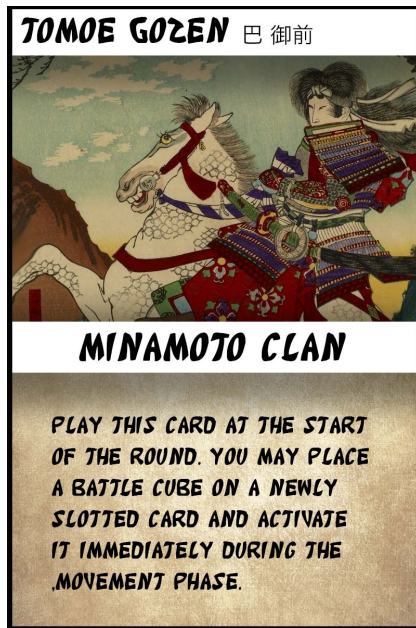
In 1643 Musashi retired to a cave in western Kumamoto to write *The Book of Five Rings*. He completed the work in February 1645, and died in the cave soon after at the age of 62. Musashi remains renowned for his two-sword Niten Ichi-ryu ("Two Heavens as One") sword style, which he perfected while in Kumamoto castle. While he was not a clan leader, he is immortalized in Teikoku for his fighting prowess and the advantage he provides the Fujiwara clan as a Kensei.

Strategy Tips:

Your clan leader card can be extremely powerful if used at the right moments, but is also the only clan leader in the game that can be lost. Choosing when to duel an opponent, how often to duel and which targets to duel can shift the balance of power in your favor or leave you at a huge disadvantage.

Also, while you go first in the game, you are unable to attack other players in the first season due to winter. This gives you an early opportunity to strengthen your deck at the Port, but makes it harder for you to initiate combat before your enemies have had the chance. Musashi would have pursued attacks on enemies constantly with vigor and unparalleled prowess. Do you have the skill and aggression necessary to do it as well?

Player 2 Minamoto Clan



In 1185, the Minamoto family took control over Japan after defeating the Taira clan in the Gempei war. By redistributing the land gained during the Jokyū disturbance, they were able to achieve loyalty among all the powerful people throughout the country. In 1232 a legal code, the Jōei Shikimoku was promulgated and it stressed Confucian values such as the importance of loyalty to the master, to suppress a decline of morals and discipline. The clan always maintained tight control, and any signs of rebellion were destroyed immediately.

Tomoe Gozen lived from 1157-1247 was an *onna-bugeisha* (female warrior) who served Minamoto Yoshinaka during the Genpei War. The Genpei War was fought between the powerful Minamoto and Taira clans.

Tomoe had a number of achievements in the war, including leading 1,000 cavalry, surviving a battle of 300 against 6,000, and collecting hundreds of her opponents' heads for use on spiked poles at encampments. In *The Tale of the Heike*, an epic poem about the conflict, it is written that in addition to Tomoe's beauty, "She was also a remarkably strong archer, and as a swords-woman she was a warrior worth a thousand, ready to confront a demon or a god, mounted or on foot."

As the Genpei War came to a close, her warlord vied for power over the entire Minamoto Clan and it is recorded that Tomoe unhorsed, pinned and decapitated her warlord's strongest enemy at the Battle of Awazu in 1184. What became of her thereafter is unclear, but Tomoe remains the most famous and revered of all the female warriors of feudal Japan, now immortalized in kabuki plays and poems about her indomitable will and brilliant troop movements.

Strategy Tips:

Your clan leader is able to instantly activate a slotted card each time it is played. Making her similar to a Sensei card but able to be used repeatedly. This gives your clan the best method of regrouping, and the fastest way to entrench units. However, once you have all of your slots activated, the card becomes unhelpful unless you wish to change your slotted cards.

You start the game going second, and are the first player able to attack another player. You also have the advantage of an additional card at the start of the second season in spring. However, choosing to attack early means forgoing the ability to enhance your deck at the Port. Deciding whether to attack or be patient becomes an important aspect of playing the Minamoto clan effectively. Something Tomoe Gozen would have done beautifully.... but can you?

Player 3 Tokugawa Clan



Tokugawa Ieyasu died in 1616 and is now enshrined at the opulent Nikko Toshogu Shrine in Tochigi Prefecture. The Tokugawa Shogunate lasted over 250 years, and it is also worth noting that one of Ieyasu's best-known vassals was the deadly ninja Hattori Hanzo. He is credited with being among the first military leaders to truly understand the value of economic and non-combat tactics as a way to tilt battles in his favor.

The first Tokugawa shogun was a cold-blooded strategist. Tokugawa Ieyasu lived from 1543-1616 and was the son of the Daimyo of Mikawa Province, now the eastern part of Aichi Prefecture. At age 5 he was kidnapped by the Oda / Taira Clan and held hostage for political leverage. At 6, his father's own vassals bribed by the Oda, murdered his father. At 9, Oda Nobunaga agreed to allow Ieyasu to be transferred to Sunpu, where he lived as a hostage until he was 13 when he joined the Imagawa in their battles against the Oda.

After the leader of the Imagawa was killed by a surprise attack orchestrated by Oda Nobunaga, Ieyasu decided to switch sides and joined the Oda. He later allied with the Shingen clan, teamed up with the Kenshin clan and routinely turned one ally against the other. Ieyasu was committed to victory at any cost. When his own wife and first son were accused of conspiring to murder Nobunaga, Ieyasu allowed her to be executed while his son was forced to commit seppuku.

Eventually his non-military aggressions allowed him to amass an army of more than 160,000 troops and Ieyasu's victory in the Battle of Sekigahara cemented his control over the nation. In 1603, at the age of 60, Ieyasu was granted the title of shogun by Emperor Go-Yozei. In 1614 Ieyasu came out of retirement to personally lead his armies in the Siege of Osaka, a pair of winter and summer engagements involving 300,000 troops, and ultimately ending with the eradication of the entire Toyotomi line of his enemies.

It's worth noting that one of Ieyasu's best-known vassals was the Ninja Hattori Hanzo, and Ieyasu is credited with being one of the first and best military generals in history at using things like economic damage, civil unrest and propaganda to weaken enemies and gain military advantages. Ieyasu died in 1616 at the age of 73. The Tokugawa Shogunate would last over 250 years, only ending with the Meiji Restoration in 1868.

Strategy Tips:

Your clan leader does not directly impact any particular battle. Instead he is able to weaken the progress of your opponents. Choosing to gain sudden advantage by placing an Eta in the draw pile of each enemy, or to severely hamper the long-term power of a single foe by placing two eta in their discard pile. Making use of this ability without encouraging stronger enemies to attack you is crucial.

You start the game by going third, able to see what the players ahead of you are choosing to do and to alter your own play style based on their earlier actions. You become the first player in the third season during summer when the port is closed and attacks on enemies are most prevalent. Planning ahead, deciding which cards to keep in your hand from one season to the next, correctly determining "who is winning" at any moment of the game and acting to rebalance enemy decks gives you a path to victory. Also, keep in mind, the more often you can draw your clan leader card the more often you can use it, so playing with a smaller deck rather than acquiring many cards may be beneficial.

Player 4 Taira Clan

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Taira_clan



While Miyamoto Musashi may be the best-known "samurai" internationally, Oda Nobunaga (1534-1582) claims the most respect within Japan. Beyond being a superb warrior and strategist, Nobunaga was responsible for setting in motion the chain of events that would reunify the nation and end the Warring States Period.

Oda Nobunaga lived from 1534-1582. A superb warrior and strategist, Nobunaga was born into a family with holdings in Owari Province, and following the death of his father in 1551, he united his clan and took control of all of Owari by 1559. He then defeated his major rival in the region, Imagawa Yoshimoto in 1560, and in 1561 he went on to attack Mino Province. Nobunaga then went on to Kyoto in 1568 to depose the ruling Ashikaga shogun, Yoshihide.

Installing Yoshiaki as the new shogun, Nobunaga hoped to use him as a puppet leader. However, as Nobunaga's power rose, strong forces began to coalesce against him. He wiped out the opposing warrior monks of Mount Hiei in 1571, besieged the

Ikko-ikki peasants and warrior monks at Nagashima and when shogun Yoshiaki raised his own forces against his former ally, Nobunaga defeated them and sent Yoshiaki into exile, thus ending the Ashikaga Shogunate in 1573.

Nobunaga succeeded in bringing the southern half of mainland Japan under his control, laying the groundwork for the reunification of the nation. After Nobunaga's betrayal and death in 1582, his vassal Toyotomi Hideyoshi went on to complete what his leader had started. While Hideyoshi and Ieyasu reaped the rewards of conquest, Nobunaga is remembered as the greatest strategist of the era with a keen understanding of diplomacy and a knack for being able to choose when battles happened rather than being drawn into battle at his opponent's timing.

Strategy Tips:

The Taira clan is only played in a four-player game. So while your ability to prevent an enemy from attacking you is very powerful, targeting it properly is essential. Stopping one attacker may embolden the other clans to join forces against you.

You start the game going last in the first season but can't be attacked due to winter. Spring and Summer each year are perilous if your defenses aren't secure. Then in autumn when you become the first player, you are able to make your move... knowing winter comes next and that many enemies will have forgotten your transgressions by the time they can attack you again in the spring.

Attacking someone who can't attack you back feels good, but is it worth it to create that much animosity in future seasons? Do you hold your clan card season to season for the perfect moment, or play it often? Managing the political will of your adversaries is your key to victory. Nobunaga knew how to do it best, but he died in 1582, so you will have to figure it all out on your own.

Adjusting The Game - Rule Variants

As you can see below, there are simple ways to adjust the victory conditions if you want a faster or longer game. There are also ways to provide support to newer players, which provide a more balanced and enjoyable game for everyone as well. The game ends if **any one** of the three following victory conditions is met:

1 Victory by Aggression: Assert Your Dominance and become Shogun

If **one player acquires 50 treasure** they win the game. Some cards like Tunnels that impact treasure immediately without warning can become especially powerful when used to reach 50 treasure for a sudden victory.

Players may agree to increase or decrease the length of the game by adjusting how much Treasure each player starts with and how much a player needs for victory.

Players of unequal skill levels are also encouraged to vary this goal on a per player basis, so the world champion skill level strategist in your group may need to acquire 60 treasure for victory, while the 11 year old novice may only be required to obtain 40 treasure to win.

2 Victory by Longevity: Prosper The Most In A Time of Prolonged Peace

At the end of 3 years (12 seasons with each of the 4 seasons played 3 times) the game ends at the conclusion of Autumn in Year 3 and the player with the most Treasure at that moment wins. You may not have vanquished all of your rivals, but in a time of peace with the most treasure secured your culture and way of life are sure to dominate the realm for generations to come. Some Elements cards affecting the game calendar can become especially powerful to push the seasons forward or recall the seasons back in the final game year.

Players seeking a longer game may agree in advance to play a 4th year as well. The 3-year format usually runs 1 to 1.5 hours. Adding a 4th year tends to extend the game a bit beyond the 2-hour mark.

3 Victory by Attrition: Amass The Most Wealth to Survive Scarcity Best

There are 4 Special Decks and 1 Units Deck. **When any 2 of the 5 decks becomes empty** the game ends and the player with the most Treasure at that moment wins. This is the most common form of victory as players manipulate the deck contents to be sure they have the most treasure at the moment the 2nd deck becomes void. Note the game ends immediately at the moment the 2nd deck is empty. This makes holding a special card for Trade, or having cards that allow you to remove cards from the decks by other means an excellent way to pursue sudden victory.

Again players may agree in advance to lengthen the game or shorten it by changing the number of cards included in each special deck. 8 cards per special deck is the standard game format, but longer games of intrigue can be enjoyed by increasing the deck sizes anywhere up to the full decks of 20 cards in each.

Weaker or newer players may also be given advantages by granting an additional special card to their deck at the start of the game, or altering the cost of special cards from 5 to a higher or lower cost on a per player basis if agreed by all players at the start of the game.

The 3 Player Variant

Three player games can be enjoyed with these minor rule variations:

- 1 - Remove the Taira clan from the game completely.
- 2 - All players still start with 25 Treasure but the 25 Treasure that would normally go to Player 4 instead starts as available bounty in the port.

2 Player Variant

Teikoku is intended to be played with 3-4 Players. A two player game can be useful for learning game mechanics and practicing game strategies but tends to end very abruptly while being much more luck based. Waiting for the right moment to strike, getting lucky draws from the Port and leaning on a crippled opponent continuously usually assure victory. It is strongly recommended to find a 3rd player instead but for a 2 player game:

- 1 - Remove the Taira and Tokugawa clans from the game completely
- 2 - Both players still start with 25 Treasure and the Port starts with 50 Treasure
- 3 - Special Decks start with only 4 cards in each

Solo 1 Player Variant

Please, put the game away. Go out to your local game store and ask if they have tournament nights, RPG groups or other social events planned on their calendar this month. You don't want to play Teikoku solo, you want to meet more people and be able to play the game with them as well. Smile. Life does get better. We promise.