

# Broken Blades™

Released August, 2002. 152 new cards, 4 Strongholds (3 new). Three different 84-card starter decks, 11-card boosters.

**INTEREST AND SALES FOR BROKEN BLADES WERE HIGH** when it debuted at GenCon 2002. The reason might have been that in the weeks leading to the release, AEG's Marketing Director, Mark Jelfo, released card previews to fan websites left, right, and center. By the time the expansion had officially released, players already knew what a third of *Broken Blades* would look like.

By this time, the *Gold* playing environment had been running for a while, and players and designers alike seemed to have pretty clear ideas about what worked and what worked too well. A large amount of this set seemed meant to bring more diversity to the playing field by thwarting particularly popular choices in deck construction.

*Broken Blades* was the first expansion with a single rule sheet instead of a complete rulebook. There were just too many opportunities for unexpected mistakes to creep in every time the whole rulebook got reprinted!

## Key Cards

Luckily, for a set with "broken" in its name, not too many cards got accused of being overpowered. There were a couple of standouts, but many usable cards just weren't all that glamorous.

### **Overwhelmed**

Brutal. Killer. Deadly. Sending home a unit from battle is good. Killing units is better. Forcing a player to send home two units or nuke the highest-Force Personality in their army? And a non-unique rare? From the word "go," *Overwhelmed* was *Broken Blades*' hottest card.

### **Scroll Cache**

This card doesn't seem to offer much. You can attach several spells at once, but you're seldom up against the clock playing spells. Its discount doesn't combine with others. It makes 1 gold spells free, but there aren't many great 1 gold spells. Why players wanted *Scroll Cache* was hidden at the end of the card: it lets you draw other cards. Cards that let you draw more cards win games.

### **Loyal Yojimbo**

Almost anything that would take a Personality off the table (besides battle) now had to contend with a bodyguard.

### **Corruption's Price**

Like *Loyal Yojimbo*, this card upset a strong deck archetype, namely decks using free Shadowlands Holdings. Since it could destroy a non-Shadowlands Personality, it was strongest against non-Shadowlands decks.

### **Mystic Dojo**

*Mystic Dojo* does for shugenja decks what *Hiruma Dojo* does for samurai decks, although not quite as well. Nevertheless, reducing the cost of shugenja by 4 has the potential to speed a shugenja-heavy deck significantly.

### **Yoritomo Kumiko**

Poor *Kitao* barely had a chance. Most Mantis players hated her. When presented with the Daughter of Storms, plenty of players showed where their loyalties lay. *Kumiko*, like *Yoritomo*, had a lot of small traits adding up to one solid package: good stats, no Honor requirement, and a bonus for weapons and Naval followers.

## New Themes & Strategies

"Bring 'em back alive!" might have been the Design Team's motto for this set. A major thrust of *Broken Blades* was to stanch the tide of Personality destruction that had emerged in decks since the release of *Gold Edition*. *Loyal Yojimbo*, *Kisada's Fist*, *Pirate Wharf*, *Kisada's Shrine* and *Razor's Edge Dojo* were all clearly aimed at making "I kill your guy" tactics slightly less efficient. Crab players were particularly pleased by *Kisada's Shrine*, because it and *Relentless Assault* were the first cards that let the Yu trait do something new.

Corrupt decks, also widely viewed as more efficient than they ought to be, were on the receiving end of *Corruption's Price*, which destroyed Holdings with the Shadowlands trait.

A few cards made the choice of Wind slightly more important than it had before. *The Shogun's Fealty* was a "carrot:" it encouraged playing a less-popular Wind by giving a player the Favor if nobody else had the same Wind. On the other hand, *Dangerous Extremes* was a "stick:" it discouraged military players from using a popular Wind, because if two players had the same Wind, neither could attack without first destroying one of their own Provinces.

## This Expansion's Story

*Akodo Kaneka* is unhappy with his advisor, *Shosuro Higatsuku*. Very unhappy. Dragon magistrate *Kitsuki Remata* reveals that the papers showing that *Akodo Kaneka* had ties to the *Yasuki* family were forged. The scribe who provided the forged documents was, as it happens, being blackmailed by *Higatsuku*, leading all to suspect that the *Scorpion* is leading some sort of plot against *Kaneka*. In the face of such extreme suspicion, *Higatsuku* breaks his *wakizashi* to demonstrate loyalty, and does *Akodo Ijiasu*.

Since he can no longer claim to be the *Yasuki* daimyo, *Kaneka* declares himself the empire's military leader — *shogun* — at the suggestion of *Moto Chagatai*. *Chagatai* is the next to break his sword, followed by most of *Kaneka*'s allies, including *Remata* and *Hida Hitoshi*.

*Yoritomo Kitao*, however, declines to break her blade. She — like everyone else there — is stunned when a woman named *Yoritomo Kumiko* appears in *Kaneka*'s chambers. *Kumiko*, who claims to be *Yoritomo*'s daughter, breaks her blade for *Kaneka*, humiliating *Kitao* in the process. Some *Mantis* samurai leave the castle with *Kitao*, but many stay with *Kumiko*, who can somehow keep the stain of her mother's *Shadowlands* taint repressed. Later, *Kumiko* orders her forces to find and sink *Kitao*'s ship, the *Bitter Flower*.

For her part, *Kitao* orders her general, *Naizen*, to find and kill *Kumiko*, and sends an emissary to deliver a message to *Doji Tanitsu*.

The *Crab* fight to retake the *Kaiu* walls from the *Shadowlands*. They are stunned by the appearance of their former champion, *Hida Kuroda*, fighting against them. *Kuroda* is leading the *Shadowlands* forces and commands the oni defending the Wall. Despite the crushing blow to their morale, *Hida Kuon*'s forces slowly begin retaking the watchtowers.

The surviving *Elemental Masters* — *Isawa Hochiu*, *Isawa Taeruko*, and *Shiba Ningen* — finally emerge from their suspension and return to the surface, having barely survived the attacks of *Tamori Shaitung* and *Agasha Tamori*. They are stunned to learn that *Shiba Aikune* has found *Isawa's Last Wish*. "The *Shiba* have grown strong in our absence," *Hochiu* notes, and they immediately begin planning to reform the Council of Masters — as soon as they are able to find new Masters of Air and Water.

*Doji Akiko* approaches *Hochiu* to form an alliance between the *Crane* and the *Phoenix*. "With the *Crane*'s wealth and the *Phoenix*'s magic, none could oppose us, *Hochiu-sama*," she entices.

*Moto Chen* continues to hold *Seikitsu Pass* for the *Unicorn* Clan, despite a series of skirmishes with the *Crane*. *Doji Kurohito* wishes to move his forces through the pass, but is told he must ask for permission from the new *shogun*, *Kaneka*.

The *Dragon* Clan has fared badly in its war with the *Phoenix*. When *Toturi Sezaru* summons *Tamori* shugenja to the lands of the *Dragon*, the *Wolf* easily gains their support by ordering massive supplies be delivered to them regardless of cost.

*Doji Yasuyo* trains with a *kenku*, *Kozue*, who tells her, "You are now ready to learn the true reason for your quest."

*Yogo Tjeki* reaches into the *Spirit Realms* and recovers the missing half of the true *Tao*, the *Way of Shinsei*.

The *Imperial Legions* attack the ruined *Naga* city that is under control of the *Tsuno*. They are unable to find the *Unicorn* sentries around the city, and suspect they are dead.

By exposing a *Kolat* plot in *Hantei Naseru*'s court, *Yasuki Hachi* begins to earn some respect from those who previously thought he was simply at the *Anvil*'s beck and call. *Naseru* is grateful for *Hachi*'s aid, and the two agree to wipe the slate clean between them. The rapprochement between the two pales into insignificance when the *Horde* attacks *Otosan Uchi*. With *Toturi Tsudao* leading the *Imperial Legions* in the *Shinomen Forest*, the city is almost defenseless...

## Tournament Results

The *Shadow Dragon* was a consequence of *Justin Walsh* giving the **Shadowlands** trait to the *Air Dragon* in the final game at *GenCon 2000*.

Many *Personalities* got named via *Regional Storyline Tournaments* held in 2000. *James Fox* named *The Importunate Vu* after his friend, *GenCon 2000* finalist *Vu Nguyen*, after winning in *Texas*. *Adrian Dion*, inspired by *Mongol* ruler *Kubulai Khan*, proposed *Moto Kubulai* after winning the *Ontario/Quebec* tournament. *Ash Thomason* (*California/Nevada*) named *Akodo Yobi*; *Al Gharet* (*Pennsylvania*) named *Yogo Hatsumi*, and *Eric Newman* (*southeastern U.S.*) named *Isawa Yoriko*. *Jared Devlin-Scherer* (*New England*) originally suggested "Agasha *Shukuen*," and artist *Heather Bruton* was even commissioned to paint a *Phoenix*, but the card became *Tamori Shukuen* somewhere along the way.

*The Steel Throne* was another consequence of the *Shadowlands* winning *GenCon 2001*, and the new *Jade Champion*, *Asahina Sekawa*, also dated back to 2001, and *Tom McDonnell*'s win for *Crane* at *GenCon UK* that year.

*Yasuki Jinn-Kuen* and the reprints of *Yasuki Palaces* resulted from *Crab* winning the bulk of tournaments in the "Battle of *Black Crane Castle*" release tournaments for *A Perfect Cut*.

*Emmanuel Nicotera*, playing *Scorpion*, was the top player of the 214 who participated in *Kumite*, the 2002 *French Championship*, ensuring that *Yogo Tjeki* would discover the missing half of the *Tao*.



**A Time for Action** Uncommon  
Current Errata: None.



**Agasha Chieh** Common  
Current Errata: None.  
Lots of Phoenix players had asked for a shugenja with strong stats instead of a strong ability. -JWA  
Chieh first appeared in the multi-part fiction "A Hero's Death." -SC



**Akodo Fumio** Common  
Current Errata: None.



**Akodo Hakuseki** Uncommon  
Current Errata: None.



**Akodo Yobi** Uncommon  
Current Errata: None.  
A result of the "Name a Character" Global Storyline Tournament. -RW



**Ancient Promise** Uncommon  
Current Errata: None.



**Armor of the Mountain** Uncommon  
Current Errata: None.



**Asahina Sekawa** Rare  
Current Errata: None.  
This card is the result of the Test of the Jade Champion tournament, which Crane won. -RW



**Asako Bairei** Rare  
Current Errata: None.



**At Your Command** Common  
Current Errata: None.  
A moment to give Lyn Hunter deserved props. Yoritomo Kumiko is easily one of the best new character designs in this arc. -RW



**Badge of Purity** Common  
Current Errata: None.  
The item shown here is the same badge that all Kuni Witch Hunters carry on their persons at all times. -RW



**Banzai Charge** Common  
Current Errata: None.  
Mark Smylie is one of my favorite comic artists. It was a blast to get him to work on our card game. -jp



**Bayushi Katai** Common  
Current Errata: None.



**Bayushi Yaro** Common  
Current Errata: None.  
Warlord Story Team member Chris Burns surprised me by putting my D&D character, Zoltan, on a Warlord card. Chris was just as surprised to see himself (as Yaro) in print as I was to see Zoltan. -RW



**Berserker Rage** Rare  
Current Errata: None.  
Very much like *Crimson & Jade's* Wedge, but balanced. -JWA



**Blessed Dojo** Common  
Current Errata: None.



**Blessed Ward** Common  
Current Errata: None.



**Blood in the Shinomen** Uncommon  
Current Errata: None.  
If you look closely, you can see shadows on the faces of the figures. Horne used this effective technique again in Warlord. -jp



**Boundless Sight** Rare  
Current Errata: None.  
The two heroes referred to here are Yasuki Hachi and Toturi Tsudao, both of whom were instrumental in saving the city and turning back Daigotsu. -RW



**Brilliant Armor** Common  
Current Errata: None.  
Chris Appel's rendering style makes armor and weapons look like real steel. This piece was used in lots of advertising. -jp



**Burning Blade** Common  
Current Errata: None.



**Choke the Soul** Rare  
Current Errata: None.



**Chukandomo** Rare  
Current Errata: None.  
One of the first results in a new drive to lower Item gold costs across the board. With fewer advantages than Followers, there is little reason to use Items if they have the same cost efficiency. -JWA



**City of Gold** Uncommon  
Current Errata: None.  
We deliberately started to design fewer Regions per set, starting with this one. It's difficult to design large numbers at once that all have a chance of dislodging existing Regions from current deck designs. -JWA