

# CHIYO'S SECRET



A Game for 5-8 Players  
Designed by JB Howell

*In a fictional feudal province of Japan, the uneasy balance between secrets and subplots remained quietly—albeit delicately—settled until the day the regional Daimyo discovered the Geisha's secret. For these many long years the Daimyo had coveted, consulted, and trusted the Geisha. However, during that time she had secretly despised the Daimyo and loved his most loyal samurai in secret. They bore a child 20 years ago, who has now grown into a formidable young man.*

*Upon discovering the Geisha's secret relationship, the Daimyo raged and dishonored the samurai, ordering him to kill the Geisha and commit seppuku. The samurai refused and fought his way free, helping the Geisha escape. The samurai was declared a ronin and both were declared fugitives. In hiding, the Geisha's son began to spread many of the secrets the Daimyo shared with his mother over the years and the Daimyo's honor began to come into question by the city nobles. Now the Shogun is on his way to the city to consult the Daimyo and uncover the truth. The Daimyo has called all his noble allies and the ronin's main rival to hunt for the Geisha and the ronin in hopes of exposing the conspiracy against him.*

# Setup

1. Place the Shogun Board in the center of the play area and place the Shogun Track marker on the Shogun Track's first space.
2. Place the "Temple" Establishment Board in the center of the play area and place the Rival and Daimyo tiles on it.
3. Separate the Role Cards out by type and build the Role deck according to the number of players (see chart on bottom of next page), returning any unused Role cards to the box. Shuffle the Role Deck, then deal one face-down Role Card to each player. *A player may look at their Role card at any time but must keep them secret from the other players.* Deal a Player Aid to each player.
4. The player with the Motonaka card must reveal their Role Card for all players to see. That player collects the Influence cards, the Geisha card, the Ronin card, and the Patron cards (both full-sized and mini cards).
5. Take the Establishment Boards that are marked for the current player count, leaving those for a higher player count in the box. Shuffle the Establishment Boards together and deal one between each pair of Noble players.

*Motonaka is not considered a Noble and is skipped over when setting up the Establishments. Instead, place an Establishment Board in front of Motonaka, to occupy the space between the players seated to Motonaka's left and right.*

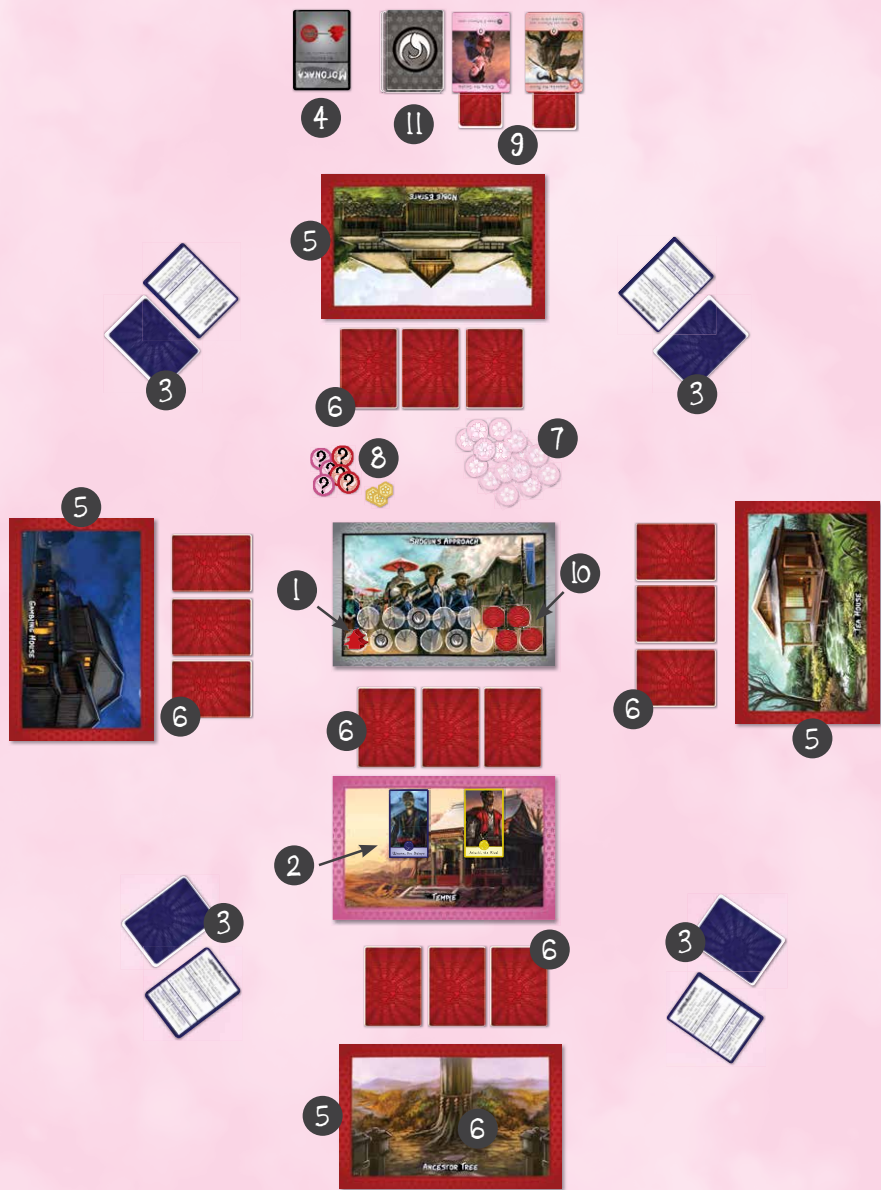
6. Motonaka builds the full-sized Patron deck by taking all full-sized Patron cards marked for the current player count (player count is printed on the cards). Leave all cards for higher player counts in the box. He then shuffles all full-sized Patron cards together forming the Patron deck. Randomly deal three Patron cards face-down to each Establishment (including the Temple). This will deal all Patron cards out to Establishments.
7. Shuffle all Honor tokens together in a face-down pool, beside the Temple.
8. Set the Action Markers and Suspicion Tokens beside the Honor pool. Set the Honor Cards to the side. *The Action Markers are only used when a game effect specifically mentions them.*
9. Motonaka Chooses the Geisha's and the Ronin's Disguises - Motonaka *secretly* performs the following tasks. *Other players should look away!*

- a) Separate the Assassin mini cards from the rest of the Patron mini cards, then shuffle the Patron mini cards (including only those cards matching the current player count and without the Assassins) together to form the Disguise deck. Leave the Assassin mini cards face-up in front of you, to be used during the Prelude.
- b) Draw two cards from the top of the Disguise deck. Memorize them and then hide one underneath the Geisha card and the other underneath the Ronin card. Motonaka can reference these cards any time as needed but must keep them secret.

10. Motonaka shuffles the four City Markers together, and places one face-down over each of the Shogun Track's final four spaces. *Motonaka may peek at these City Markers at any time, but the Noble players cannot look at them.*

11. Motonaka shuffles the Influence cards to make the Influence deck, and places it face-down near his play area.

# 5 Player Game



NUMBER OF PLAYERS	ROLE DECK CONFIGURATION	NUMBER OF PATRON CARDS
5	2 Allies, 1 Betrayer, 1 Usurper, 1 Motonaka	15
6	3 Allies, 1 Betrayer, 1 Usurper, 1 Motonaka	18
7	3 Allies, 1 Betrayer, 2 Usurpers, 1 Motonaka	21
8	4 Allies, 1 Betrayer, 2 Usurper, 1 Motonaka	24

# The Prelude

Motonaka has taken the mantle of the realm's information broker and knows the hearts of all the nobles in the Daimyo's holding. Before beginning the game, Motonaka should read the following passages (*in italics*) aloud, and will be responsible for remembering all of the information he learns during this Prelude. If Motonaka is not comfortable remembering the information, then he is allowed to take notes (so long as those notes do not fall into the Nobles' hands!).

*"Nobles of the Daimyo's holding, please close your eyes.*

*"I am Motonaka, broker of information, and I have disguised Chiyo the Geisha and Fusanobu the Ronin among the Patrons at your Establishments. I have summoned the Shogun to put an end to the Daimyo's inquiry, and I will win the day if the Shogun reaches the Daimyo's stronghold.*

*"Allies of the Daimyo, keep your eyes closed, but raise your thumbs so that I might know you.*

*"Allies, put your thumbs back down.*

*"Betrayal, keep your eyes closed, but raise your thumb.*

*"Betrayal, put your thumb back down.*

*"Usurper(s), open your eyes and look around you.*

Choose one of the three Assassin mini-cards in front of you, show that card to the Usurper(s), then tuck it face-down under the Shogun Board. This Patron is now the True Assassin, which the Usurper(s) will need to win the game.

*"Usurper(s), close your eyes. Now, all players may open their eyes."*







# Overview and Objectives

Following Chiyo's and Fusanobu's escape, you will take the role of the prominent figures in the Daimyo's holding, and you will guide the events that lead to this great tragedy's conclusion.

While you make every attempt to appear as an ally to the Daimyo with your actions, you are motivated by your own secret loyalties. You will win the game if the faction you support is able to achieve its goals during the Final Act (see page 13). **Note: Motonaka is able to win prior to the Final Act.**




## Daimyo's Ally

*Loyal to your lord, you wish to expose and capture Chiyo and Fusanobu, and send them to be executed for their crimes against the Daimyo..*

All Ally players will win if the True Ronin , the True Geisha , the Daimyo , and one or more Imperial Patrons  are together in the same Establishment, as long as that Establishment is not also owned by the Betrayer!

## Betrayer

*Loyal to no one but yourself, you wish to take advantage of these tragic events. If you ambush and present Chiyo, Fusanobu, and the Daimyo to the Shogun, you can seize power for yourself!*

You will win if the True Ronin , the True Geisha , and the Daimyo  are together in one of **your** establishments.

## Usurper

*A conspirator loyal to Fusanobu's Rival, you wish to lure the Daimyo and Fusanobu together in an establishment with the True Assassin, so that the Rival and his master can seize power over the holding.*

All Usurpers will win if the True Ronin , the Daimyo , and the True Assassin  are together in the same Establishment.

## Motonaka

*You are Motonaka; Chiyo and Fusanobu's son. You wish to discredit the Daimyo and hide your parents until the Shogun arrives to witness the Daimyo's incompetence.*

You will win if the Shogun Track marker reaches its destined City Marker before any other faction is able to win the game.

# Key Concepts





## Establishments and the Temple

You are the co-owner of the Establishment Boards to your left and right, and your neighbors at the table to your left and right are also co-owners of those Establishments respectively.

When an effect in the game refers to “your Establishments,” it is referring to the Establishment to your left or to your right.

Each Establishment can hold the Daimyo token, the Rival token, and/or any number of Patron cards. The area in front of each Establishment is reserved for the cards and tokens that are “at” that Establishment.

The Temple is a special Establishment in the center of the play area, which is not owned by any player, and is not considered to be adjacent to any player.

*The Temple is a sacred place. Noble players cannot move the Daimyo , Rival , True Ronin , or True Geisha  to the Temple using Loyal Actions.*

## The Geisha, the Ronin, and their Disguises

At the start of the game, the Geisha (Chiyo) and Ronin (Fusanobu)—known collectively as the **Fugitives**—are disguised and hidden among the Nobles’ Establishments. They will appear as normal Patrons, but it is possible for certain actions to reveal their true identities over the course of the game.

When a game effect refers to the True Geisha or the True Ronin, it is referring specifically to those characters’ cards, which do not enter play until they are revealed by a Noble player’s Loyal Action.

When both the Geisha and the Ronin are revealed, the game enters its Final Act (see page 13).



## Patron Cards

Three Patron cards are dealt face-down to each Establishment (including the Temple) at the start of the game. Many actions will involve questioning these Patrons, in an effort to unmask the True Geisha and Ronin. These Patron cards bear the following features:

1. The Patron's name, used only to differentiate it from the other Patrons.
2. The Patron's Type, either Commoner (🌿), Imperial (👤), Samurai (🍱), or Assassin (🕷️). These Types can be referred to through certain actions or effects. Additionally, one of the Assassin-Type Patrons is the True Assassin (important to the Usurper faction's win condition), and the Daimyo's Allies require one Imperial-Type Patron at the key Establishment to win.
3. The Patron's Honor Value. The player with the highest combined Honor at their Establishments (plus any Honor tokens they have accumulated) takes the first turn during the Final Act, which can be highly advantageous.
4. The Patron's ability text. This ability text resolves only when that Patron is interrogated by the Rival tile (see page 11).

### Face-Up and Face-Down Patrons

A face-down Patron is considered not to have any text, Type, or abilities. If a "True" character is face-down, it has disappeared into the population. *Face-down characters cannot count towards win conditions until they are revealed by a game effect, even if you know who they are!*



# How to Play

Starting with the Noble player seated to the right of the **Tea House Establishment**, player turns proceed clockwise, and continue in this fashion until the Final Act is triggered (or until the game ends, if Motonaka is able to win before the Final Act).

## Note - Motonaka does not take a turn!

As a Noble player, take the following steps on your turn:

### 1. Choose and perform *one* of the following **Loyal Actions**:

- **Spy**: Move two Patrons, then Ask Motonaka a Question
- **Search**: Move one Patron and the Daimyo, then Search the Establishment
- **Interrogate**: Move one Patron and the Rival, then Interrogate a Patron

### 2. Choose and perform a **Secret Action** of your choice

- **Honor the Shogun**: Advance the Shogun Track marker and draw an Honor token
- **Meet the Informant**: Motonaka either draws an Influence card or plays an Influence card.
- **Frame Patrons**: Choose two patrons at your Establishment with no Suspicion tokens and flip them face-down.

## Moving Patrons and Tokens

When moving a Patron and/or Token as part of your Loyal Action, you may move each of the selected cards/tokens to any Establishment(s) of your choice. However, you cannot move the Daimyo or Rival to the Temple! In addition, there is no limit to the number of Patrons that can be at an Establishment.

*When moving a face-down Patron card, do not turn it face-up (or vice-versa).*

## Loyal Actions

### Spy

*Move two Patrons, then Ask Motonaka a Question.*

Motonaka knows all the Patrons' and players' identities. By taking this Loyal Action, you may ask him one of the following three specific types of questions and receive a "yes" or "no" answer.

### Question your Neighbors' Loyalties

When choosing this option, you must specify a Role. You must inquire about both of your neighbors simultaneously and cannot single a player out or inquire about a non-adjacent player. For purposes of this question, treat Motonaka as though he were not at the table, skipping over him to the next player in order.

*Example - "Is either of my neighbors a Usurper?"*

### Question a Patron Type

To question a Patron Type you must choose a single Patron Type and choose either the Ronin or Geisha. Asking this question can help narrow the list of suspects down, to better track the Fugitives.

*Example - "Is the Ronin disguised as a Commoner?"*

### Question the Face-Up Suspects

To question the Suspects you must choose either the Geisha or the Ronin. Motonaka will reveal whether or not that Fugitive is face-up.

*Example - "Is the Geisha face-up?"*

## Motonaka's Deception

Motonaka is allowed to lie **exactly once** during the game. This exception aside, he must answer every other question truthfully.

*Therefore, if Motonaka lies when answering a question the first time it is asked...he must tell the truth when asked a second time!*

### Caveat

During a Search or Interrogation, Motonaka cannot use his one lie to say that a Fugitive was revealed if one was not. The True Geisha or True Ronin cannot enter play falsely as a result of Motonaka's lie. *However, he may use his lie to say that a Fugitive was not revealed, even if one was!*

## Why Would a Player Move a Patron?

You and your fellow players might move Patrons for a variety of reasons. The most obvious reason is to move those Patrons together to win the game. However, you may also wish to move a Patron...

- To increase the total Honor at your Establishments
- To prevent a suspected opponent from setting up a win
- To set up a player sharing your Role for a win
- To Investigate specific groups of Patrons
- To mislead your opponents

## Running Out of Suspicion Tokens

Chiyo's Secret includes only six total Suspicion tokens. If a Search or Interrogate action would require you to place Suspicion tokens on Patrons, and none remain in the supply, then you cannot place new Suspicion tokens. Therefore, it is prudent not to push the investigation beyond its limits!

### Search

***Move one Patron and the Daimyo, then Search the Daimyo's Establishment***

After moving the Patron and Daimyo, take the following steps:

- Peek at up to three Patron cards at the Daimyo's current Establishment.
- Choose and reveal one, two, or three of those Patrons by flipping them face-up. *Warning – For each Patron you reveal beyond the first, you will be forced to take an additional Secret Action later in your turn (see page 12).*
- Ask Motonaka, “Have I just revealed a Fugitive?”

### Search Scenario 1

**Motonaka answers “No”**

Your Search Action is inconclusive, and you proceed with your turn as normal.

### Search Scenario 2

**Motonaka answers “Yes” and neither the True Ronin nor True Geisha have been revealed yet.**

Motonaka places one Geisha's Suspicion Token and one Ronin's Suspicion Token on each of the Investigated Patrons.



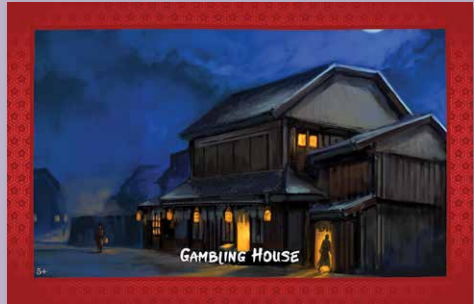
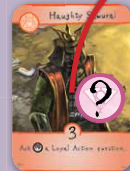
Search Scenario 2 example

## Revealing the True Fugitives

If a Patron has exactly one Suspicion token and no other Patron has that same Suspicion token, then that Patron is unmasked as the corresponding Fugitive! Motonaka reveals the Patron mini-card that was secretly tucked under the respective Fugitive card, then replaces that Patron with the Fugitive's "True" card and resolves the True card's text..

*Remember, Motonaka cannot use his one lie to falsely say that an innocent Patron is a Fugitive. If a Suspicion token is placed, or if a True Fugitive enters play, then you can safely accept this as the truth.*

If both True Fugitives are revealed, proceed to the Final Act at the end of this turn (see page 13).

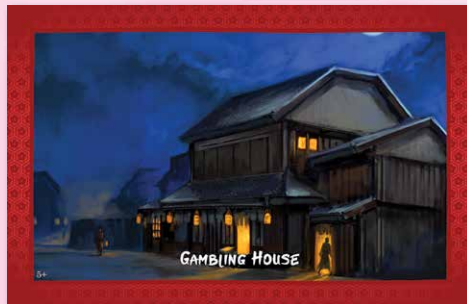
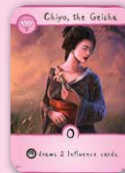


### Search (Cont.)

#### Search Scenario 3

**Motonaka answers "yes" and either the True Geisha or the True Ronin have already been revealed.**

Motonaka places one of the remaining unrevealed Fugitive's Suspicion Tokens on each of the Investigated Patrons.



Search Scenario 3 example

## Interrogate

*Move one Patron and the Rival token, then Interrogate one Patron.*

After completing all of your movements, you may choose either one face-up Patron with a Suspicion token or up to two face-down Patrons at the Rival's Establishment.

### Interrogating a Face-Down Patron

Choose up to two face-down Patron cards, reveal **one** of them by flipping it face-up, and ask Motonaka "Did I reveal a Fugitive?"

If Motonaka answers "Yes," then place Suspicion token(s) on the Interrogated Patron as though that Patron had been Searched (see page 9). This may even unmask the Patron as a True Fugitive!

If Motonaka answers "No," then you **must** fully perform that Patron card's ability (even if it would not benefit you).

### Interrogating a Face-Up Patron

To Interrogate a face-up Patron, that Patron must have one or more Suspicion Tokens on it. Ask Motonaka either "Is this Patron the Geisha?" or "Is this Patron the Ronin?"

If Motonaka answers "No," you must remove the appropriate Suspicion token from the Patron card and proceed with the rest of your turn as normal.

If Motonaka answers "Yes," then the specified Fugitive is unmasked! Motonaka proceeds as indicated in the "Revealing the True Fugitives" section (page 10, or above). Additionally, you **must** fully perform that True Fugitive card's ability text.

*Once you have completed your Loyal Action, you must take your Secret Action for the turn.*



## Secret Actions


With the Shogun on his way, it's better to be safe than sorry. While you are investigating to further your own plots and keep up appearances with the Daimyo, it is also prudent to prove your loyalty to the Shogun by taking a Secret Action.


**Remember:** If you revealed more than one Patron card during a Search Action this turn, you must take one additional Secret Action for each Patron revealed beyond the first.

When taking multiple Secret Actions, you must take *different* Secret Actions (if able). *For example, if you revealed three Patrons with a Search, you would take each different Secret Action once.* If you are unable to take the “Frame Patrons” action in this case, then you may repeat a Secret Action as needed.

## Honor the Shogun

Advance the Shogun Track marker one space along the Shogun Track, then draw a random Honor token from the Honor pool in the center of the play area. *Keep these tokens hidden from other players.*

If the Shogun track marker lands on (or passes) a space marked with a , then Motonaka may choose to draw or play one Influence card.

If the Shogun track marker lands on a City Marker, reveal that City Marker to all players. If that Marker shows the  symbol, then the Shogun has arrived at the Daimyo's stronghold, and Motonaka immediately wins the game!

## Meet the Informant

Motonaka chooses to either draw one Influence card, or to play one Influence card from his hand. *These cards may impact the game in a variety of unpredictable ways, often obscuring the Investigation or allowing Motonaka to manipulate events to suit him!*

## Frame Patrons

Choose two Patrons among those at your Establishments, who are face-up *and* are clear of Suspicion Tokens. Flip those Patrons face-down, leaving them in the same position as they were. *If you do not have two such Patrons at your Establishments, you cannot take this Secret Action.*

**Once you have completed your Secret Action, play passes to the next player in clockwise order.**

## The Golden Rule

If an ability printed on a game component would appear to contradict the game's rules, always resolve the component's effect *as printed*.

### The Final Act

Once both the True Geisha and the True Ronin have been revealed, the active player finishes his/her turn. After that, the rules of the game will permanently change as noted below:

#### Honor-Based Turn Sequence

When the Final Act begins, determine your Honor by adding together the printed Honor value of all face-up Patrons at your Establishments. Then, reveal your Honor tokens, and add their value to your total.

Deal the “1” Honor Initiative Card to the player with the highest total Honor, the “2” card to the player with the second highest, and onward. (*Motonaka, of course, will not receive an Honor Initiative Card.*)

***In case of ties, Motonaka decides the Honor Initiative order for those Nobles in the tie.***

Once these Honor Initiative Cards have been dealt, play begins again, starting with the player with the lowest Honor Initiative Card, and proceeds in Honor Initiative order for the rest of the game.

#### Patrons Are No Longer Under Suspicion

Players cannot select the “Frame Patrons” Secret Action.

#### Noble Players May Now Win the Game

With both the True Geisha and True Ronin revealed, it is now possible for the Daimyo's Allies, the Usurper(s), or the Betrayer to win the game.

### Conclusion

If a player has met all of the conditions necessary for them to win the game, then that player reveals their Role card and declares victory!

Remember - in order to win as a Noble player, you must have assembled all of the appropriate characters face-up at the same Establishment.

Be careful, and make sure to double-check your faction's victory condition! Revealing your Role card and claiming victory incorrectly can damage the experience.

# Card References

## Lost in the Crowd



*Play only if the True Ronin is face-up at an Establishment.*

Resolving the “Hide” action: pick up all Patrons at the True Ronin’s Establishment, and all Patrons at an adjacent Establishment. Turn them all face-down, shuffle them together, and deal them back out randomly to those Establishments, so that each Establishment holds the same number of cards as it did before.

## Temple Sanctuary



*Play only if the True Geisha is face-up at an Establishment.*

Resolving the “Hide” action: pick up all Patrons at the True Geisha’s Establishment, and all Patrons at the Temple. Turn them all face-down, shuffle them together, and deal them back out randomly to those Establishments, so that each Establishment holds the same number of cards as it did before.

## Assassination Rumors



Move the Daimyo tile to the Temple and place the three Action Markers on it. At the beginning of each Noble player’s turn, remove one Action Marker from the Daimyo. The Daimyo cannot be moved by any other game effect until the last Action Marker is removed from it.

## Shima, Daimyo’s Daughter



Draw an Honor token from the Honor pool, then move the Daimyo and Rival tiles to the Temple. Place two Action Markers on the Temple and remove one at the beginning of each of the next two players’ turns. Noble players cannot move the Daimyo or Rival from the Temple until the last Action Marker is removed from the Temple.

# Components

## 8 Establishments



## 1 Shogun's Approach Board



## 8 Player Aids



## 15 Honor Tokens

5 of each value; 1, 2, 3



## 1 Shogun Track Marker



## 6 Suspicion Tokens

3 ronin, 3 geisha



## 4 City Markers

3 blank, 1 city



## 3 Action Markers



## 24 Patron Cards



7 Commoners

7 Imperials

## 8 Role Cards



4 Daimyo's Allies

2 Usurpers

## 7 Initiative Cards



15 Influence Cards



7 Samurai

3 Assassins



1 Betrayer

1 Motonaka



24 Patron Mini Cards

## 1 Daimyo Tile



## 1 Rival Tile



## 1 Ronin Card



## 1 Geisha Card



## Credits

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Graphic Design by Simeon Cogswell  
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## Thank you to our playtesters:

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