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December 15, 2003



Q: "I was reading a list of **Magic** promo cards listed on another website, and found one named 'Shichifukujin Dragon.' I collect dragon cards, so I want to know if this card is real. If so where can I find a picture of it?"
 --Jamie, Jacksonville, FL

A: From **Ron Foster**, Japan Organized Play Manager:
 "The Shichifukujin Dragon card is indeed real. It was created as a special commemorative card for the opening of the DCI Japan Tournament Center several years ago, in 1996. The card was based on a Japanese legendary lucky dragon, and Christopher Rush was commissioned to do the art. The card text reads:

Shichifukujin Dragon

6

Summon Dragon (0/0)

When Shichifukujin Dragon comes into play, put seven +1/+1 counters on it.

☹☹☹, Sacrifice two +1/+1 counters: Put three +1/+1 counters on Shichifukujin Dragon at end of turn. Play this ability as a sorcery.

"(At the time the card was created, the rules were different--with the rules as they are now, as the card is written it would immediately die upon coming into play!)

"All copies except for one were destroyed. The remaining Shichifukujin Dragon card was encased at the Tournament Center for public view. The Tournament Center was closed on February 28th, 2003, and the card was moved to the Hobby Japan Head Office where it currently resides. Hobby Japan has made a set of life counters and deck boxes featuring the art on the card, but these are only available in Japan. You can see a picture of the Shichifukujin Dragon at The Magic Library (www.magiclibrary.net), an independent fan site that tracks promo and other rare cards."

December 12, 2003



Q: "I saw today that when I clicked on my bookmark for the Sideboard that it directs you to a page with the magicthegathering.com header and is the page for the last European Grand Prix. How do you find the archives for event coverage or articles that were on the Sideboard? I often use these for reference materials and ideas."
 --Alex J. DiBenedetto

A: From **Monty Ashley**, Magic Content Manager:
 "[The Sideboard](#) has been momentarily replaced by a link to the event coverage. Although it looks like the page for the most recent Grand Prix, it's really just the top part; scroll down and you'll see links to other recent event coverage, as well as the Sideboard archives.

"This situation is only temporary; early in 2004, we'll reveal the redesigned magicthegathering.com, which will include all of its old content as well as the tournament coverage and strategy from the Sideboard and *Magic Online* news."

December 11, 2003



Q: "I was wondering why you allow players to drop from tournaments? It seems unfair to me."

--Niels "collectocrat" Gramser, The Netherlands

A: From **Chris Galvin**, VP of Organized Play:

"Hi Niels, thanks for writing. We allow players to drop from tournaments because there's no way to make them play, and there's no reason to punish people for being unable to play if they can't abuse the system or gain unfair advantage by simply dropping.

"Lots of things come up in tournaments. Sometimes they run longer than you thought they would and you don't have the time to finish. Other times accidents or illnesses occur. So long as you have no information that would provide a reason for you to either drop or not drop, such as knowing who you are scheduled to play, there's no good reason to do anything other than just move on with the tournament for the benefit of the other competitors. This is basically the same system used by other sporting organizations such as tennis or golf. Withdrawal from high profile tournaments in those sports is rare, but it does occur.

"Once you do have information that could affect your decision, DCI rules prohibit you from dropping. Your only alternative then is to not show up at your match and accept the ensuing loss by forfeit."

December 10, 2003



Q: "In the new [Comprehensive Rules](#) for *Mirrodin*, why did you change rule 418.5a? Specifically, why did you add 'control-changing effects' to the list of effects that determine an object's characteristics? According to rule 201.2, an object's controller isn't part of its characteristics."

--Eric Twuzike

A: From **Paul Barclay**, **Magic** Rules Manager:

"You need to know who controls a permanent to know what its characteristics are. For example, **Glorious Anthem** gives all creatures you control +1/+1. It needs to give the bonus to a creature you've stolen from your opponent, so you have to work out who controls that creature before you work out what its power and toughness is."

December 9, 2003



Q: "We have a question about the errata text on **Lion's Eye Diamond**. Why does it say 'Play this ability only any time you could play an instant'? When would this ever come into effect?"

--Gabor Debreczeni and Praveen Rathinavelu, Weston, FL

A: From **Mark Gottlieb**, Research & Development:

"Interesting... I answered a very similar question to this a year and a half ago. That question was 'Why was **Charmed Pendant** printed with the text "play this ability only any time you can play an instant?" and the answer can be found [here](#).

"This answer is a little different. The basic theory is the same: Since mana abilities can be played in the middle of playing another spell or ability, any mana ability with a weird extra effect needs this clause to prevent game-breaking chaos. There's a more specific reason why **Lion's Eye Diamond** says this -- because we don't want you to be able to use the mana from **Lion's Eye Diamond** to play a card from your hand! Without the 'play as an instant' clause, you could play the Diamond, announce a spell from your hand such as **Armageddon**, then sacrifice the Diamond to generate mana to pay for **Armageddon**. You'd discard the rest of your hand (but not **Armageddon** because it's on the stack at this point), then **Armageddon** would resolve. With the errata text, you can't pull shenanigans like that. Note that even with this constraint, it was still powerful enough to get restricted in Type 1."

December 8, 2003



Q: "Does R&D have a policy regarding cards that mention other cards by name, such as **Dark Supplicant**, **Kookus**, **Kyscu Drake**, **Rohgahh of Kher Keep**, and **Urborg Panther**?"

--Mike Buchanan, Amherst, MA

A: From **Brian Tinsman**, R&D game designer:

"For those who aren't familiar with them, all the cards mentioned refer to specific other cards to pull off some special ability. R&D doesn't have a policy per se, but we do keep a close eye on them. Cards like the ones you mention can be fun to play and provide a challenge to collect. We don't like to do them too frequently though, since not everyone can devote the effort to collecting all the pieces of the combinations. In most sets we like to throw in some cards that are clearly linked to each other, but if we go too far people sometimes feel like we're building their deck for them, which we always try to avoid."

December 5, 2003



Q: "So, I was reading through Mark Gottlieb's article, and clicked on the autocard link for **Helm of Chatzuk**. Then I noticed that the Oracle text is not only different from the original, but adds the cost of tapping the card to the ability cost. Is this some obscure change to the card or is it, in fact, a mistake?"

--Dan

A: From **Doug Beyer**, **Magic** web developer:

"Actually, the **Helm**'s Oracle text does capture the original intent of the card. In Alpha through Unlimited, artifacts came in three varieties:

- Mono artifact - An artifact that taps as part of the cost of activating its ability, such as **Glasses of Urza** or **Icy Manipulator**.
- Poly artifact - An artifact that doesn't tap to activate its ability, so you can activate it multiple times in one turn, such as **Forcefield** or **Crystal Rod**.
- Continuous artifact - An artifact that has a continuous ability, such as **Winter Orb** or **Howling Mine**.

"Nowadays (ever since *Revised Edition*) this terminology has been dropped in favor of calling them all Artifacts, and the tap requirement for Mono Artifacts is now explicitly stated in their rules text. If you squint at the picture of **Helm of Chatzuk** you can see that the type line says 'Mono Artifact,' meaning it was one of the artifacts intended to tap as part of the cost of activating it, and that's what its Oracle text now reflects."

December 4, 2003



Q: "It is extremely hard to decipher whether a *Mirrodin* card is a common or uncommon in **Magic Online**. Rares are even tough sometimes, but the commons and uncommons are so hard to differentiate. I think it has to do with the way the logo was created (there are white lines in the scimitar). Can you enlarge them at all, which appears to be done in earlier sets, or alter it somehow? Compare the cards and you'll notice barely any difference.

"Thank you for a great product, and I'm sure a lot of people are wondering about this."
--Ed McGrogan, Whitesboro, NY

A: From **Scott Norris**, Creative Manager, Online Design:

"We just re-did the *Mirrodin* expansion symbols so that they're larger, and filled in the black so that it's much more distinguishable from the silver.

"This change should go live in an update very soon."

December 2, 2003



Q: "What determines which cards are chosen to be 'Famous Cards'?"

--Jimmy Hadfield, Canada

A: From **Daniel Stahl**, Managing Web Producer

"First of all, to those who might be wondering, *what 'Famous Cards' are you talking about?*, we are talking about the four 'Famous Cards' that appear on each **Magic** expansion home page (for example see the [Mirrodin page](#)). 'Famous Cards' are cards that represent the core concepts of a set and should be memorable to the widest audience."

"Due to the fact that expansion home pages are put up on the site prior to the prerelease tournament, we are limited to what cards we may select as 'Famous Cards'. Due to the large amount of coordination that goes into providing exclusive preview cards to various venues, the expansion home page is allowed to select four cards from the approved marketing list of cards that both represent new mechanics and idea, and aren't exclusives to other publications (such as InQuest)."

"Thus, we typically base our four famous cards from the "Top 10" cards of the set that are printed in the Fat Pack Players Guide. These cards are recommended by R&D as well as approved by marketing and non-exclusives. We generally avoid having two cards of the same color. Are the cards famous? Well... in the most general definition they should at least be "widely known" as being representative of the set."

December 1, 2003



Q: "So, you're changing the artifact background for *Fifth Dawn*. Why not in *Darksteel*?"
--Master of the Kilnmouth Dragon

A: From **Randy Buehler**, Director of **Magic** R&D:
"Because of the way our production schedules work, it's already far too late to implement any changes to *Darksteel*. *Darksteel* cards were finalized and films shot many months ago. In fact, we only just barely made it under the wire for *Fifth Dawn*. Producing eight languages' worth of **Magic** cards for simultaneous release around the world requires a lot of planning and coordination and it means that we lose the ability to change a card set about six months before you guys can buy it."

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