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Kiki-Jiki, Mirror Breaker



Adrian Sullivan · *Single-Card Strategies*
 Wednesday, October 27, 2004

I was going to write about [Seshiro the Anointed](#) this week. But, that will have to wait. After I placed 6th this weekend at the [Wisconsin States](#) event, Scott Johns wrote me a short little e-mail that derailed my other thought for this week's column:

Your deck from States looks great! Care to do an article on it for this week's column? :)

Now, tell me, who could resist that smile?

So, this week is going to be a bit different from our usual Single Card Strategies. Rather than bring up a card and then show how to go about using it, I'm going to show you the deck that I brought to this weekend's [State Championships](#). This week, the column will be, in a sense, presented in a backwards fashion. Still, though, it fits: the deck is its very own Single Card Strategy. And that card is [Kiki-Jiki, Mirror Breaker](#).



Now, of course, I'm not the only person out there that thought of what could be done with [Kiki-Jiki](#). Mike Flores thought a [wee little bit](#) about it. Tons and tons of people talked about [Kiki-Jiki](#) in various forums in fact. And, of course, my little coven and I over at my mailing list Cabal Rogue thought about it. Cabalist Ben Dempsey was the first one to send a preliminary list, and it was close enough to what I'd been musing on that I thought maybe we might have something. In the end, this was the "official" list:

Kooky Jooky by Cabal Rogue
 Standard Deck - 2004 Champs
 60 cards

7 Mountain	4 Birds of Paradise	4 Commune with Nature
11 Forest	4 Sakura-Tribe Elder	4 Magma Jet

2 City of Brass	4 Eternal Witness	2 Sensei's Divining Top
1 Okina, Temple to the Grandfathers	4 Viridian Shaman	
1 Pinecrest Ridge	3 Hearth Kami	10 other spells
	2 Duplicant	
22 land	3 Rootrunner	
	4 Kiki-Jiki, Mirror Breaker	
	28 creatures	

The primary design comes from Ben Dempsey, Brian Kowal, and yours truly, but there was a lot of chipping in from other people. I spent countless playtest hours with my good friend Adam Kugler, and in the end, I'm really pleased with the final list. I can't say how many people out there tried to build **Kiki-Jiki** decks, but I think we did a great job. We had five people play the deck (I would say 6, but Eric Taylor won't tell me all of the changes he made, he just called them "horrible" changes), and received a 1st ([WI](#)), 4th ([MN](#)), 6th ([WI](#)), and 12th ([GA](#)). Andy Wolf took in the 12th place in Atlanta, but he said that he owed it all to a fantastic mess up, and if he hadn't erred he would have been in the Top 8 as well.

That's a showing I can be happy with.

So, we have a decklist. We know it gets out a **Kiki-Jiki**, but what then? What exactly does this deck do?

Doppelgangers

Somehow, when I think of the copies that **Kiki-Jiki** goes around making, I keep thinking of *Evil Dead 3*. Ash is looking into the mirror and it mimics him like a mirror should, but when he isn't looking, it does its own thing. All the little tokens that **Kiki-Jiki** makes are only reflections, they won't stick around long, and sure they can attack right away, but they better do something more. And they'd best do something good.

Pure 187s: Eternal Witness, Viridian Shaman, and Duplicant



When these cards come into play, something happens. You either get to regrow your best spell, destroy an artifact, or remove the opponent's best creature from the game and have your own temporary copy. The Shaman and the **Duplicant** can really wreak havoc on the right opponent. Artifact heavy decks lose all of their relevant artifacts incredibly quickly, and creature decks will need cards like **Pristine Angel** to keep a gun on the table.

Eternal Witness is a little different. **Regrowth** is such a powerful spell that it has been Restricted in Type 1 pretty much forever. As a little experiment, the new "1.5" (new name pending) is allowing unrestricted access to **Regrowth** (we'll see how long *that* lasts), but as nice as a **Regrowth** on legs is, getting a **Regrowth** *each* turn is truly ridiculous. When you play **Magic**, things happen – people kill your best cards or you use a card to good affect. Recouping these losses at the simple cost of tapping a **Kiki-Jiki** is pretty amazing. Beyond that, giving yourself insurance in case you lose a good card (you can't copy what isn't on the table) is pretty good too.

Spirits in the Material World: Hearth Kami and Rootrunner

These two really have so much going for them. First of all, **Hearth Kami** can work a lot like a weak version of **Viridian Shaman**. Copy a **Hearth Kami**, and you can sacrifice the copy to kill an artifact. That's nice by itself.

Rootrunner, though, is where things can get outright mean. Copy a **Rootrunner** and sacrifice it to put a land on top of your opponent's deck. On their turn, they draw it. Copy a **Rootrunner** and sacrifice it to put a land on top of your opponent's deck. On their turn, they draw it. Repeat. In the meantime, if you happened to have any **Hearth Kamis** in your graveyard, the good ol' Soulshift mechanic will fetch them back for you. This deck doesn't have the fast and furious comborificness of **Intruder Alarm** plus **Kiki-Jiki** to make one million and one attacking creatures, but it can just lock your opponent out of it all.

If they don't have a way out the turn you play it, they never will find one.

The left-overs: mana, not just heaven sent

Of course, your last few creatures are goodies too. They only make mana, but this is a pretty big deal. **Kiki-Jiki**, **Mirror Breaker** costs $\{2}{2}{2}{2}$. In a two-color deck, having access to a triple color can be a hard bargain. I know that Ben's first version of the deck ran with Black instead of Green (I hadn't even considered that direction, though **Kiki-Jiki** and **Chattering Rats** seems nice), but Green is really where it's at. Green means that you can have **Birds of Paradise** and **Sakura-Tribe Elder** to help you get the rest of the color going.

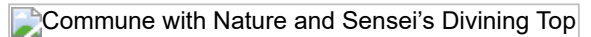
The most important thing going on here is that you are not only fixing your colors - you are also speeding up your mana. **Kiki-Jiki's** ability is so incredibly powerful that you want to be able to get it going as quickly as possible. In your best cast scenario, this deck can have a **Kiki-Jiki** on the table by turn 3, with mean copying tricks going by turn 4. This won't happen very often, but every time it does, you can bet your opponent is going to be in some trouble. Generally speaking, it shouldn't come as any surprise that we like it when our opponent is in trouble.

Yes, you will on occasion be copying these creatures too. A copied **Sakura-Tribe Elder** can work a lot like a **Thawing Glaciers**, and the last time I checked, **Thawing Glaciers** was a pretty good card. A copied **Birds of Paradise** is usually a lot less useful. On occasion, though, it can serve as a nifty skeet shot in the air for your opponent's flying bullets, or make **Kiki-Jiki** into a de facto **Birds of Paradise** himself.



What to do when you're not copying

There are other cards in the deck other than the creatures, of course. When you're copying this deck's creatures, in general you're getting yourself farther along or stunting your opponent. But what are you doing when you're not copying? The answer is simple: you're hunting for the best thing to do.



The entire rest of the deck is focused on finding the best thing to do now. **Magma Jet**, **Commune with Nature**, and **Sensei's Divining Top** are all looking for something.

Commune with Nature is the simplest here. Commune is concerned with two things: finding the best creature for the current situation, such as getting a **Kiki-Jiki** into your hand. Now, **Time of Need** can find your **Kiki-Jiki** directly, but a **Commune with Nature** can find you a **Birds of Paradise** or **Sakura-Tribe Elder** if you need mana. It can find you a **Hearth Kami** or **Viridian Shaman** if you need to kill an artifact. It can find you an **Eternal Witness** to bring back a burn spell or a dead **Kiki-Jiki** (or just get back the **Commune with Nature** if you want to look a little deeper for the right card).

Magma Jet is great. Not only does it kill something, but the Scry mechanic gets the job done in helping massage your library to the right stuff. Unlike the Commune, all it really helps do is bury stuff that you don't want to draw, but that is good by itself. Sometimes we really don't want a spell, we need a land, or vice-versa. Sometimes we really just want to find that **Duplicant**. Jet gets us two cards closer to our goals.

Sensei's Divining Top is yet another card that just finds what you need. I've already written an [entire article](#) on this card (inspired, primarily, by my work on this deck), and it really shines here. Both **Magma Jet** and **Commune with Nature** can help out the Top by getting rid of cards you don't want to see from the top, and **Sakura-Tribe Elder** can serve the same trick by shuffling for a land.

A short note on the land

Trial and error can result in a lot of things. When I first built my copy of the deck, I ran four **Shivan Oasis**. Ben and Brian quickly showed me that **City of Brass** was better. Eventually, though, I came to realize that I did get into some serious hurt from those Cities. Down I went to 3. Then to 2. But, I needed a little bit more color. After a lot of trial and error, a single **Pinecrest Ridge** won out over its varied competitors for the coveted 60th card in the deck. This probably

took about three weeks of counting during playtesting, but it worked out fine in the end. The mana combination allowed a third color in the sideboard and a solid two-color base in game 1.

And now, in honor of Top 10 Week:

Top 10 Kiki abuses that I didn't play with this weekend

#10 – Intruder Alarm – Everyone and their brother has tried this one out. It's explosive, certainly, and generally means an instant win. Not much good on its own, though.

#9 – Solemn Simulacrum – I mean it when I say that I hate this guy right now. No, I'm not talking about Handsome Jens Thoren™, I'm referring to mana acceleration that is this expensive. Still, though, he works quite well with the Mirrorbreaker.

#8 – Nantuko Cultivator – I've always had a soft spot for this guy. Get a one-shot big attacker and get rid of any land that you still have in your hand. Then do it again. Not a half bad way to dig deep. Combine with **Terravore** for yet more fun.

#7 – Flametongue Kavu – This guy single-handedly shut down most creatures from even being able to see play when he was legal in Type 2. Put him on Xerox and watch nearly every critter around cry.

#6 – Siege-Gang Commander – Not a bad way to get out a lot of damage. Combine this with a **Mana Echoes** for a ton of mana.

#5 – Ancestor's Chosen – Can you kill me now? Can you kill me now?

#4 – Triskelion – Pimp-bot. The Pig. Trike. He's got a few different names, but he's a machine gun with the Mirrorbreaker. I actually did run him in earlier lists of the deck, and is it really any surprise that Andy Wolf couldn't resist playing him?

#3 – Chittering Rats – Not as big as a **Rootrunner**, but just as good at making a lock-out. Plus, playing with Rats is always fun (and always will be while Mark's at the helm).

#2 – Rukh Egg – Man, oh man. Sure, it starts out as an overpriced wall, but will anyone want to kill it? When Kiki comes to town, out fly the Rukhs!

#1 – Blistering Firecat – It's not the best, but I know if I put it lower on this list, someone would say I was just pandering to the readers who claim I have a thing for Red. Really, I don't!

I hope that you enjoyed my approach to the deck. I know that I think it is not only really fun, but incredibly powerful. Unfortunately, I didn't win States with it, but at least I came close, and at least someone else playing the deck did win it all.

Congratulations [Adam!](#) What a great finish!!



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