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Law of the Sword

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Building on a Budget
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The time has come. Finally, I will write about a *Champions of Kamigawa* deck. Oh, how I have waited for this moment! When I first laid eyes on *Champions*, I was extremely pleased. The overall theme of the set is great. I am a closet Japan lover (who isn't, really?) and the whole idea just put a smile on my face. One thing in particular especially caught my eyes: Samurai. Loyal defenders, following the way of the sword, Samurai are a force to be reckoned with. The first time I played *Champions* sealed deck at the prerelease, I stated that the set accurately reflected feudal Japan; the guy with the most Samurai was sure to win. Samurai are not only powerful, but they are so darn cool!



After all, there is only one thing that could possibly be cooler than a samurai, and that is Ninja. Notice how there is not a single reference to Ninja in the entire set? It makes a guy wonder if they are lurking in the darkness, making themselves ready to spring in Betrayers. I think America loves the Ninja as much as Japan loves the cowboy...ok, I'll stop myself before going on a Ninja tangent, but c'mon, couldn't we have just one Zombie Ninja?!

Samurai.

Wielder of the big, honkin' sword.

Here is their deck. Is it not nifty?

Building on a Budget: Law of the Sword

(about 30 Tickets...ok much less)

20 Plains

20 lands

Main Deck
60 cards

4 Auriok Glaivemaster	4 Grafted Wargear
4 Leonin Skyhunter	4 Bonesplitter
3 Nagao, Bound by Honor	4 Reciprocate
4 Bushi Tenderfoot	1 Blinding Beam
4 Devoted Retainer	4 Awe Strike
4 Samurai of the Pale Curtain	
	17 other spells

23 creatures

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If there is one thing samurai must do, it is fight evil. These days, that evil is the Affinity Empire. This deck is tricked out to have a great game plan vs. Affinity with cards like *Samurai of the Pale Curtain* and *Reciprocate*. Removing things from the game is supposed to be the secret to beating spirits, according to *Kumano, Master Yamabushi*, but the master never knew that his secret tech would prove so valuable in defeating machines in a world of metal that he could never imagine.

You see, by removing things from the game instead of having them go to the graveyard, you circumvent a number of abilities in *Magic* from triggering. The most important ones vs. Affinity are *Modular* and the *Disciple of the Vault* Trigger. There are many more awesome situations where this comes up, but those two are the important ones.

This deck plays out by casting lots of awesome creatures that are cheap and efficient, and supplementing them with strong Equipment and perhaps the best trick available to white...*Awe Strike*. You can get an awesome start with *Glaivemaster* and *Bonesplitter* – this was one of my favorite decks to draft in limited, and it is still quite powerful in constructed.

One card that I am sure will draw attention is *Bushi Tenderfoot*, aka the Tendermiser. This creature is all about playing with your opponent's head. With *Awe Strike*, he is very easy to flip when on defense – just block with him and another creature, then use *Awe*

Strike to make sure the Bushi lives on to fight another day...and fight he will!

Nagao is likely your biggest threat – he is big, bad, mean, and carries a large sword. He is a 4 mana 5/5 (in combat) attacker that pumps many of his friends like the Pale Curtain and **Devoted Retainer**. There are only 3 because he takes 4 mana to cast and there are only 20 lands in the deck, plus he is Legendary, making it bad to get two out.

Tips on Playing the Deck

- Try to get in a racing situation with your opponent. You will probably win the race, considering you have **Awe Strike**.
- **Bushi Tenderfoot** will not flip with a Pale Curtain in play. Beware. Also, don't flip two tendermisers, or they will mise no longer. Legends are tough love sometimes.
- Remember that **Reciprocate** will kill any creature that does damage to you – not necessarily from attacking. Is Kumano pinging you? He can be removed from the game with this card!
- When things look grim, don't scoop – the lucky **Blinding Beam** might be on the top to save you! While I didn't want to include a bunch of tempo tricks like **Blinding Beam**, having one can really make a difference in some games. I also considered otherworldly Journey for a variety of purposes, but decided against it in the end.



Adding Money to the Deck

Blinkmoth Nexus would be the first card I included, since it gives you more fliers to equip. After that, I would probably start adding more Legendary Samurai – **Eight-and-a-half-Tails** is awesome, and **Sensei Golden-Tail** is pretty solid as well. Once you have these, **Konda's Hatamoto** become more attractive to play, since they are pretty decent when unpumped, but are quite good if you have a Legendary Samurai in play. Other rare equipment might serve useful, such as **Sword of Fire and Ice** or **Sword of Light and Shadow**. They could be better than the **Grafted Wargear**, but I would try to keep **Bonesplitter** in the mix. A toolbox of equipment with **Steelshaper's Gift** may also be in order. Oh, and lets not forget about a full compliment of **Savannah Lions/Hound** of Konda, with **Chrome Moxen** to boot. For a white weenie deck, there sure are a lot of money cards you can add!

Until next time, listen to your **mother**.

-Nate Heiss

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