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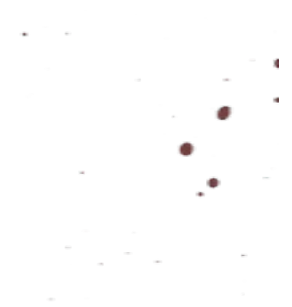
RED STEEL

2009-2010

Franchise Guide



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I have no parents; I make the Heavens and the Earth my parents.
I have no home; I make Awareness my home.
I have no body; I make Endurance my body.
I have no eyes; I make The Flash of Lightning my eyes.
I have no limbs; I make Speed my limbs.
I have no laws; I make Self-Protection my laws.
I have no strategy; I make the Right to Kill and the Right to Restore Life my strategy.
I have no designs; I make Seizing Opportunity by the Forelock my designs.
I have no miracles; I make Righteous Actions my miracle.
I have no principles; I make Adaptability to all Circumstances my principle.
I have no tactics; I make Emptiness and Fullness my tactics.
I have no friends; I make my Mind my friend.
I have no enemy; I make Carelessness my enemy.
I have no armor; I make Righteousness my armor.
I have no sword; I make an Empty Mind my sword.



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Core Vision

This world is not our world. It is like our world.

Even more: it is made out of things from our world.

But, things in this world are *brighter, sharper, more intense...*

Things in this world are familiar... yet, here, they are more what we wish they were.

This is a world where cool things happen.



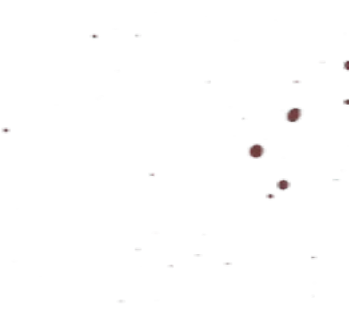
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PART 1: A WORLD OF STEEL & DIRT

A Quick Guide to the Setting for Red Steel 2



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A rocky, dust-strewn desert plain...

Ramshackle homes tumbled together among weeds and cracked pavement...

Glass towers stretching up to scratch the sky...

Here is where you take your revenge.



Story Overview

Hundreds of years ago, a huge meteorite crashed in the desert. The impact created a huge caldera (crater), and caused a good deal of destruction in the meantime.

The area at that time was inhabited by a nascent mining community, protected by a group of clansmen that would evolve into the Kusagara clan. Naturally, these clans-folk came to investigate this mysterious fiery stone from the sky, once the dust had settled and the magma had cooled.

The founder of the Kusagara clan, a metal-smith and sword-master named Akira - a great genius of metallurgy and martial techniques - soon discovered that the meteorite was a unique kind of metal unlike anything seen previously. Akira experimented with methods to work with this metal. After many years, he had learned enough to create weapons - katanas.

During his time working with the metal, Akira created fourteen blades. Each blade ended up with a particular "power" or "ability". Although these swords were of course not sentient or "magical", the fabrication techniques that Akira used, combined with the types of alloys he concocted from the meteoric metal, coupled with the 'focusing' techniques of the Kusagara, created a breakthrough: the weapons could be used to actually generate force, sometimes in extraordinary amounts, and this force could be used as part of combat techniques.

These energies are measurable with the scientific instruments (see the work of Reich, Tesla et al) - the central force is electromagnetism, although the meteoric metal seems to cause an exchange into heat and/or inertia in some cases, something that the scientists studying the metal today are at a loss to explain.

Each of these fourteen swords was given to highest ranking families of the Kusagara clan for safekeeping and for the protection and benefit of the people of the North American high desert.

The swords become the Clans

Over time, it became clear that these swords could have an effect on its owner - changing their personality or physical selves (just as a particular diet, or exercise regime, will change a person over time). Invariably, the keepers of the Akira blades experienced unusual and unexpected side-effects - many of these were quite profound, and in one case the guardian became a kind of psychopathic monster, wreaking destruction on hundreds of people before he was brought down.

This period of time saw much conflict as the original Kusagara inheritors decided that the swords must be separated from their owners, and the secret of their creation hidden forever. They attempted to retrieve the swords, that they might be destroyed or hidden.

Much drama was lived out during The Katana War - yet, in the end, they failed. The result was a great dispersal of the blades - each sword was taken by its keeper to a new location, where they founded a new clan under their own name and banner. Thus the great patchwork of clans was born, some allied, some warring, some protective, and some destructive.

The meteorite was buried and hidden. To the outside world the secrets of the creation of the swords were destroyed, but in truth they went underground with Jian's ancestors keeping the secrets safely hidden through the centuries.

Over the years the connection and communication between the clans waxed and waned. Different clans dealt with their sword in different ways. Sometimes the blade would remain hidden, locked away in the safest refuge that could be found, as with the Kusagara. Other times the sword would rotate through the members of a clan, each guarding it for a fixed



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period of time. In other clans the sword would simply become the prize of the most powerful, leading to anarchy, chaos and a constant series of coups and assassinations. In each instance the power of the sword seemed to create a picture of itself in the structure, temperament and character of the clan that held it. Some attempts were made to claim other clan's weapons, but these generally failed (with a few notable exceptions).

Now

In the lawlessness and chaos of Redworld, the fourteen clans of the Kusagara have come to serve different purposes in different places. In some towns, like the Kusagari of Caldera, they are an important force for law, order and the protection of the citizenry – adhering to a code of conduct, assisting the state's authorities and acting as bulwark against lawlessness and crime. In other places the clan exists solely for the benefit and protection of its own members, staying as segregated from the larger population as possible. Other clans, thankfully a minority, have become the equivalent of crime families, using their martial skills, and the power of their Katana Chikara to rule by threat, intimidation or the naked use of power.

Redworld

Red Steel is set in a “counterfactual” world where the United States as we know it today never formed, and the world has developed on a course that, while it resembles the real history of the world, in the end creates a very different place.

Counterfactual Assumptions

- In addition to European colonial expansion to North America, there was a wave of Sino-Japanese expansion to the Western/Pacific coast.
- After the American Revolution the United States evolved differently than we are familiar with. As a result the monolithic super-power we call “The United States of America” never emerged.
- The Louisiana Purchase was defeated in Congress and did not happen. So a huge portion of North America still belonged to the French.
- There was no American Civil War. The southern states were allowed to secede in order avoid blood-shed. Abraham Lincoln was not assassinated. There have been conflicts between the two countries over the years but none has managed to blossom into a full-scale conflict.
- Spain/Mexico never ceded Texas and other Southwestern territories to the US.
- Without a unified country on the North American continent there was no “USA” to enter what we would call “The Second World War.” As a result, Germany was only checked by the Soviets to the east, quickly and easily conquering, and most of Europe. With the backing of the FUS (the original 13 colonies, basically) Britain was able to fend off Germany, but before the Nazi designs on the continent could be completed, Hitler was successfully assassinated by the senior members of his staff and the war ended.
- In Redworld this war was called The Second Great European War. Much of the conquered European territory became part of the vast “Volksreich” created after the death of Hitler.
- During this period Japan easily conquered and held vast portions of South Asia, China and the Pacific.
- Without “WWII” many inventions that have directly shaped our modern world were never developed, or developed much later. These include jet engines and aircraft, programmable computers, missiles and rockets, automatic weapons, radar, penicillin, helicopters, nuclear power, microwave ovens and spam (the meat, not the email).