

1-G131

Welcome

to the booth of

Group SNE



Bouken
Adventure Planning Service

the leaders of **Japan's**
role-playing game market!

<http://bouken.jp/spiel2018/>

The History of Role-Playing Games in Japan

The development of **GroupSNE** and **Bouken** equals the very history of role-playing games in Japan itself. Both companies have been active in Japan since the dawn of role-playing games and have been leading the market for more than 30 years.

Introduction and Diffusion of Role-Playing Games

Role-Playing Games reach Japan

The early 1980s: The new genre “role-playing game” gradually gains attention in Japan. During this time, in 1984, the science-fiction RPG *Traveler* (Marc W. Miller, GDW) is translated into Japanese. YASUDA Hitoshi was involved as translator and KONDŌ Kōshi as editor of this publication. Three years later, YASUDA founded his company GroupSNE and KONDŌ the company Bouken (Adventure Planning Service).



Traveller (Hobby Japan). The cover art on the box shows a picture by popular SF-illustrator KATŌ Naoyuki (member of Studio Nue), attracting a lot of attention at the time.

The first RPG magazines appear

In 1986, the first edition of the game magazine “Warlock” was released under the editorial guidance of YASUDA. Initially, the content focused on single-player gamebooks like the Fighting Fantasy series. However, with the publication of the Japanese translation of *Tunnels & Trolls* (T&T; Ken St. Andre, Flying Buffalo), the magazine developed into a cornerstone of a role-playing game support system, e.g. through additional materials or game scenarios. Many GroupSNE and Bouken employees were involved in layout and production, and KONDŌ became editor-in-chief of the magazine's 2nd generation.



Warlock (Publisher Shikaisha). T&T, *Advanced Fighting Fantasy*, *Warhammer* RPG and many more were featured in this magazine and supported with additional material.

Multimedia Diffusion

September of the same year, GroupSNE began publishing the series *Record of Lodoss War* in the computer game magazine Comptiq. This was a so-called “replay,” a transcript of actual play sessions in novel form, in this case of *Dungeons & Dragons* (D&D, Gary Gygax, Dave Arneson, TSR). The precise writing style of MIZUNO Ryō and the opulent illustrations by IZUBUCHI Yutaka received outstanding ratings. *Record of Lodoss War* was and still is very popular: As a novel, the series reached a total circulation of over ten million copies. The series also appeared as anime and computer game and contributed greatly to the spread of RPGs in Japan.



Record of Lodoss War as a novel (MIZUNO Ryō, publisher Kadokawa). After the release of the first volume in 1988, the novel developed into a very successful series with seven main and two additional volumes.

Milestones of Japanese RPG History!

Standards of Production in Japan

In 1989, the time was ripe and GroupSNE released their first role-playing game called *Sword World RPG*. This publication introduced the fantasy world “Forceria,” where one could experience adventures, and which also included the island of Lodoss. *Sword World RPG* immediately topped the charts of Japanese role-playing games. Bouken successively published several games based on *Apple Basic* in the 1990s, an all-purpose RPG system developed by KONDŌ Kōshi. Among them was *Witch Quest*, where players take on the role of a rookie witch and a magical cat. The game was praised particularly for its lovely illustrations by KUGATSU Hime and gained a passionate fan base, especially among younger women.



The so-called full version of *Sword World RPG* was released in 2006 and merged the basic rules with the advanced rules that were later developed (KIYOMATSU Miyuki, GroupSNE, publisher Fujimi Shobo).



New, revised edition of *Witch Quest* from 2001 (WAKIYAKA Tsugumi, Bouken, Majo no kai).

Further Milestones

Even after the 1990s, GroupSNE continued their efforts to translate and support foreign RPGs, but also developed at the same time Japanese games to meet the desires of the time. Examples of the latter include *Ghost Hunter RPG* from 1994 and *Rokumon Sekai RPG*. Furthermore, GroupSNE has published several dozen RPGs to date, developing novels, anime, or computer games based on each game. Finally, in 2008, *Sword World RPG*, the epitome of Japanese role-playing games, was thoroughly updated. *Sword World RPG 2.0* had great success not only with fans of the series, but unlocked new player groups as well.



Rokumon Sekai RPG – Second Edition (YASUDA Hitoshi, KATŌ Hironori, GroupSNE, publisher Shinkigensha). Employs the same fantasy world as the trading card game *Monster Collection*.



Sword World 2.0 – Rulebook 1 (KITAZAWA Kei, GroupSNE, publisher Fujimi Shobo). Official successor of *Sword World RPG*, one of Japan's most beloved games.

The Future of RPGs

At the beginning of the new millennium, Bouken published the cheesy, hyper wired *Asian Punk RPG Satasupe* and *Make-you Kingdom: The latter's* game world, the mysterious “Labyrinth of a Million,” was completely transformed into a huge dungeon (Note: The Japanese word for labyrinth is meikyū, from which derives the pun on words with English make you). Both games were new to the gamer world and enthusiastically received. Starting with *Märchen in the Hood RPG* in 2008, Bouken developed the Dice Fiction series. Its titles opened new territories for role-playing game systems through the bold integration of board and card game elements and received overwhelming support from the gaming community.



Asian Punk RPG Satasupe (KANASHIMA Taichirō et al., Bouken, publisher Shinkigensha). A hilarious Asian satire with illustrations by HAYAMI Rosenjin.



Märchen in the Hood RPG – Peekaboo-Version (KANASHIMA Taichirō, OCHIBAI Nagomi, Bouken, publisher Shinkigensha). A primary schoolboy and his friendly monster experience adventures in their neighborhood.

The Future of Group SNE & Bouken

The two leading role-playing companies in Japan entered into a partnership in 2015 and have increasingly been combining their efforts in game development. You can find their latest and upcoming role-playing games below.

Sword World 2.5 and 30 years of Record of Lodoss War!

Sword World 2.5 - Rulebook I was released in July and Rulebook II in September 2018! Ten years after the release of its predecessor 2.0, this publication represents a major overhaul of the game's rules and setting. In the new gaming world of the continent "Alfheim," players can now experience a refined and improved version of this monument of Japanese RPGs. Take a look at the new game at the GroupSNE booth!

In addition, we are celebrating the 30th anniversary of the popular *Record of Lodoss War* this year! Next to many other plans for the anniversary, a 30th Anniversary Edition of the 1995 *Record of Lodoss War RPG* is part of the program.



Sword World 2.5 - Rulebook I, II (KITAZAWA Kei, GroupSNE, publisher Fujimi Shobo).

GroupSNE

New Edition of Make-you Kingdom and English Translation of Shinobigami!

The current remake of *Make-you Kingdom* was released in October 2018! The adventures in the cynical-poppy "Labyrinth of a Million" reach a new phase. Get into this even more magical game with its fully colored rulebook. The English translation of the hit game *Shinobigami* will also be released this December! The players fight as contemporary ninjas with and against each other, while trying to keep their secrets at the same time. Just try this RPG right here at the booth of Bouken at SPIEL!



Make-you Kingdom - Basic Rulebook (KAWASHIMA Taichirō, Bouken, publisher Kadokawa).

Modern Ninja Battle RPG Shinobigami (KAWASHIMA Taichirō, Bouken, publisher Shinkigensha).



Shinobigami - Modern Ninja Battle Tabletop RPG (English Edition).

