

# review

Sudeki (US/XBox)  
Published by Microsoft

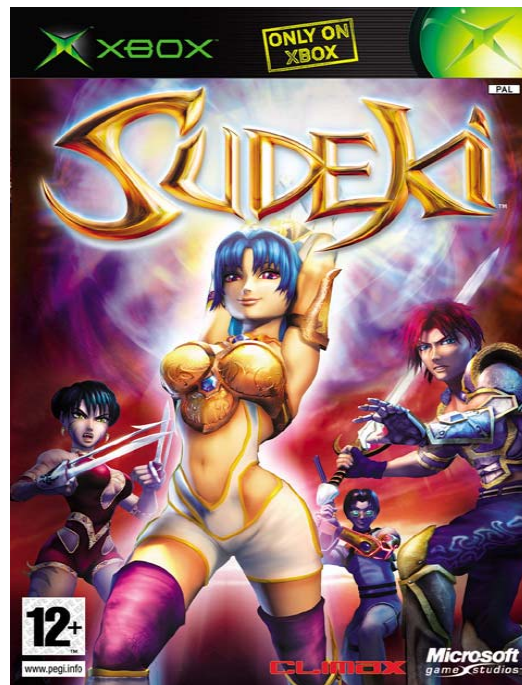
by Patrick Lichty

## video game

I first became aware of *Sudeki* when it was featured on a 2004 cover of *Play Magazine*, with the ultra-buxom sorcerer princess Ailish wielding her royal staff in a halo of lightning. The promises of Final Fantasy-killing and the anime styling led me to hope that *Sudeki* would represent a new level of game play for the console cowboys.

Let's start with the basic premise. According to a prophecy, the fate of the worlds of light and dark, once separated by demiurges, is now at hand, to be determined by a fabled party of four. Of course, you are at the helm of the legendary party, which consists of Ailish, the powerful if bratty sorceress / princess; her chief scientist Elco; the beast priestess Buki, and the warrior Tal. Let's just say that you have to battle great odds, solve puzzles, cross continents, occasionally split up for missions, and so on, to gather elements of the great crystals that will bring peace to the land.

Let's face it, *Sudeki* (which sounds awfully like the Japanese for "awesome"), doesn't have an inspired plot. The cities have plenty of non-player characters to talk to, the art is gorgeous, and the game engine works well. I enjoyed the fact that the melee controls did what they were supposed to, and the functionality of the interface was well designed, too. In addition, the coexistence of science and magic worked well, but self-referentiality with regard to the various characters' genres got a little tiring.



The problem with *Sudeki* is that the cut-scenes are sometimes not well acted, the gender roles are egregious caricatures, even for a fantasy RPG, and the game is linear and short. For all its strengths, *Sudeki* seems to have counterbalancing shortcomings. Don't get me wrong: *Sudeki* is fun eye candy, but it struck me as a beautiful, yet basic RPG with some novel interfacing and a good render engine, as well as content that is a little insulting to the "older" player.

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