
SHU
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RULEBOOK

Long before stories were etched into stone or inked onto parchment, the lands of the forest whispered their own tales of harmony, of balance, and of a fragile understanding between humankind and the ancient spirits of the wild.

In those early days of human awakening, people lived in scattered enclaves tucked quietly along rivers, forest edges, and sunlit glades. Life moved with the seasons, guided by the rhythms of the natural world. Small communities gathered near bamboo groves, drew water from mountain-fed springs, and shared stories around open hearths. The wilds were vast and mysterious then—untamed, revered, and gently guarded by spirits who had long called the land their own.

These Yōkai, ancient and elusive, dwelled in the trees, stones, and streams. Neither gods nor beasts, they existed somewhere in between, keepers of the balance, manifestations of nature's many moods. For generations, an unspoken agreement held: humans stayed to their paths, and the Yōkai watched from the shadows.

But as time passed, change crept in.

The people multiplied. Curiosity gave way to ambition. Farmsteads grew into villages and trails became roads. With each generation, the forests grew thinner and the open skies wider. Settlements stretched beyond their borders, drawn to fertile soil and the promise of something greater. Bridges crossed rivers. Gardens replaced glades. And with each step forward, something was left behind.

Though not driven by malice, this expansion stirred ancient forces.

The Yōkai, guardians of forgotten hollows and sacred groves, began to react.
At first, they answered with subtle signs: a broken tool, a veiled path, a strange fog at dawn. Mischief, not menace. A gentle reminder that the land was not empty. But as the villages pushed further into untouched places, the spirits grew restless. Crops withered beneath full moons. Roofs sagged without cause. The balance had shifted, and the forest was unsettled.

In this game, you will guide your family's farmstead beyond the familiar edges of the land. As your settlement grows, more people will gather under your banner. You will cultivate the land, build new communities, and shape the future.

But beware: your expansion may unsettle the spirits who still linger in the wild places. The Yōkai are watchful, and their mischief may hinder your plans if their presence is not acknowledged.

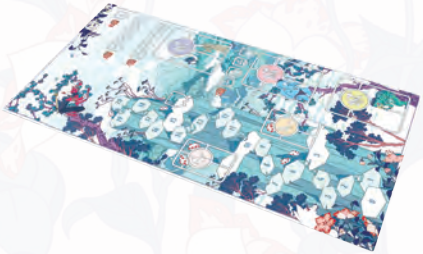
Grow your influence, adapt your strategies, and attract the right folk to your settlement in order to earn victory points (VP). The player with the most VP at the end of the game will be declared the winner.

Progress is possible—but harmony is never guaranteed.

COMPONENTS



4 double-sided player boards



1 main board



13 Development tokens
(4 × Age 2 二, 4 × Age 3 三,
4 × Age 4 四, 1 × Age 5 五)



52 starting cards
(13 per player)



5 double-sided Milestone cards



90 Folk cards
(34 × Age 1, 30 × Age 2,
26 × Age 3)



9 Prefecture tokens
(4 × 1, 4 × 2, 1 × 3)



1 5-VP token



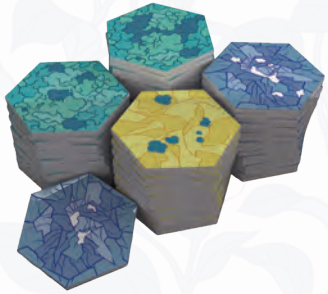
20 silver coins



10 Pilgrim tokens



10 Reward tiles
(5 × level 1 [orange],
5 × level 2 [pink])



65 Terrain tiles
(55 Forest sides, 45 Hills sides,
30 Mountains sides).
These are double sided, and the front and the backs don't match.



32 Farmstead Community tokens



24 Village Community tokens



16 City Community tokens



12 resource markers
(3 per player)



4 score markers
(1 per player)



16 Age tokens
(4 per player)



1 first player marker



1 scoring pad



1 rulebook



SETTING UP THE GAME

GENERAL SETUP

1. Place the main board in the center of the table.
2. Divide the Folk cards into 3 decks by Age. Shuffle each deck and place it face down on its corresponding space of the main board. Reveal 5 cards from Age 1, 4 from Age 2, and 3 from Age 3, placing each set of cards in a row next to its deck.
3. Separate the Reward tiles by level and shuffle them separately without looking at them. Place 1 level 1 tile near space "5" on the score track and 1 level 2 tile near space "10". Return the rest to the box.
4. If playing with fewer than 4 players, place Age tokens of an unused color face down on these spaces: 1 Age token on each row if you are 3 players, or 2 if you are 2 players.
5. Divide the Development tokens by Age. Check the dots on each token and remove from play any token with more dots than the number of players (i.e., remove tokens with 4 dots •••• in games with fewer than 4 players, etc.). Place them face up on their corresponding spaces on the main board.
6. Place the 5-VP token on space "15" of the score track.
7. Divide the Prefecture tokens by the number on the back side (1, 2, 3) and place them face up at the top of the main board. Arrange each pile so that the lowest VP token is at the bottom and the highest is on top. Remove any tokens with more dots than the number of players, as you did with the Development tokens (see step 5).
8. Place all Terrain tiles, silver coins, and Pilgrim tokens in the center of the table within everyone's reach.
9. Randomly determine the first player and give them the first player marker.



PLAYER SETUP



Each player performs the following steps:

10 Choose a player board and place it in front of you. All players must use the same side (side with or without a flower).

11 Take the 3 resource markers of your color and place 1 of them on space "1" of each resource track.

12 Take 8 Farmstead tokens, 6 Village tokens, and 4 City tokens, and place them on their corresponding spaces on your player board. This is your reserve.

13 Randomly draw 1 Milestone card. Again, all players use the same side. Place it next to your player board.

14 Take a starting deck of 13 cards (with the same top banner color), shuffle it without looking, and place it face down near your player board.



15 Take 2 silver coins and the 4 Age tokens of your color. Take the score marker of your color and place it on space "0" on the score track of the main board.

16 Take 1 Forest Terrain tile and place it on the starting space of the map on your player board.

The sides without a flower in the upper-right corner of the player boards and Milestone cards are identical in all cases, and ensure equal starting conditions—recommended for your first game or for a more balanced experience. The sides with the flower offer unique boards and goals for a more challenging game.



PLAYING THE GAME

In the golden stillness of the evening, one looks upon the land and sees more than fields and rooftops; each stone and seed a story passed down. Generations have walked these paths, adding their strength, their laughter, and their hopes to a growing legacy. To witness this quiet unfolding, a family rooted, a village thriving, is to know a life well lived.

In this game, each player has their own personal deck of cards. During the game, you will improve your deck by replacing your weaker starting cards with more powerful Folk cards. Whenever you are instructed to draw a card, always draw it from your own deck. You also have your own discard pile; always discard to your own pile unless instructed otherwise. If you need to draw and there are no cards left in your deck, shuffle your discard pile and create a new deck.

The game is played in rounds, each divided in 3 phases (described below), until an end-game condition is met. Players first perform 2 phases simultaneously, then a third phase, starting with the player holding the first player marker, and proceeding clockwise.

At the end of each round, the first player marker passes to the next player in turn order.

Each round has the following structure:

REVEAL PHASE (SIMULTANEOUS)—PAGE 10

Each player reveals cards one at a time until they choose to stop or they "bust" by revealing 7 or more Yōkai icons. If a player busts, they can only play either the Action phase OR the Recruit phase. If they stop without busting, they may play both phases.

ACTION PHASE (SIMULTANEOUS)—PAGE 11

Players increase their Compass, Hammer, and Book tracks based on the cards they revealed, then perform **1** of the main actions: **Explore** (page 12), **Expand** (page 13), or **Develop** (page 15).

RECRUIT PHASE (IN TURN ORDER)—PAGE 16

Players gain bonuses from the bottom part of the cards they revealed, then Recruit cards from any Ages they have unlocked.



FOLK CARDS

1. Recruiting cost
2. Yōkai icons
3. Action phase icons
4. VP granted at the end of the game
5. Age (Age 1, Age 2, Age 3)
6. Illustration
7. Bonuses gained during the Recruit phase. Note that any gold coins not used during this phase are lost.

VICTORY POINTS (VP)

There are 2 types of VP:

Orange VP: Scored immediately by advancing your marker on the score track of the main board.

Purple VP: Scored at the end of the game.
These can be negative VP.



If a player reaches or passes the 5 VP or 10 VP space on the main board track, they immediately gain the bonus shown on the corresponding Reward tile.

The first player to reach 15 VP takes the 5-VP token.

REVEAL PHASE

All players do this simultaneously.

Reveal cards from the top of your personal deck one at a time, until one of the following occurs:

- You have revealed cards with a total of 7 or more visible Yōkai icons.
- You choose to stop.

Each card will show 0, 1, 2, or 3 Yōkai icons, representing spirits that your activities have upset. The more cards you reveal, the more resources and bonuses you gain, but if after revealing a card you reach a total of 7 or more Yōkai icons, you are affected by **Yōkai Mischief**.

If you are affected by Yōkai Mischief, you may **perform only 1** of the 2 following phases (Action or Recruit). Skip the other one completely.

If you stop with 6 or fewer Yōkai icons, you may perform **both** the Action and Recruit phases in order.

PILGRIM TOKENS

Sometimes, a Yōkai may appear. A flicker of light in the forest. A song in the wind. When treated with humility and care, even the most elusive spirits may grant peace... or small favors. Pilgrims play a vital role in keeping this harmony. Traveling lightly and with reverence, they listen to the land, observe its silences, and interpret signs others might miss.



You may use Pilgrim tokens to assuage the spirits of nature and thereby cancel Yōkai icons on your revealed cards.

As long as the total number of Yōkai icons visible on your revealed cards is fewer than 7, you may place 1 of your Pilgrim tokens on one of your revealed cards to ignore all Yōkai icons on that card. You can use only 1 Pilgrim token each round.

Used Pilgrims are discarded at the end of the round.

Note that **as soon as the seventh Yōkai icon is revealed**, you cannot use a Pilgrim to prevent Yōkai Mischief.

ACTION PHASE

All players do this simultaneously.

GATHER RESOURCES



Each player increases their Compass, Hammer, and Book tracks based on the icons shown in the right part of their revealed cards.

For each icon, advance the marker on the corresponding track 1 space. If a marker reaches the end of its track, it cannot go further.

If the icons are separated by a slash /, you must choose 1 to gain. In the image on the right, for example, you must choose between advancing your marker 1 space on either the Hammer, Compass, or Book track.

Then, choose 1 of the 3 main actions to perform.

MAIN ACTIONS

During the **Action phase**, you may perform 1 of these 3 actions:



Explore (page 12)



Expand (page 13)



Develop (page 15)

EXPLORE

Venturing into the forest is an act of both ambition and reverence. Among the misty groves and sun-dappled clearings lie hidden pockets of fertile ground, waiting to be claimed. But each step deeper into the wild invites the watchful gaze of the spirits who still call these woods home.

At the beginning of the game, the map on your player board is covered in mists. You may Explore 1 or more spaces on your map, as long as you have enough Compasses on your Compass track to pay for new Terrain tiles.

There are 3 types of Terrain: Forest, Hills, and Mountains. You will clear the mists by Exploring and placing Terrain tiles on the spaces matching the corresponding type. You can only Explore spaces adjacent to Terrain tiles you already have on your map.

Exploring new spaces has a cost based on the type of space you are clearing:



1 Compass → **Forest**



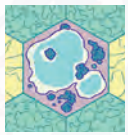
2 Compasses → **Hills**



3 Compasses → **Mountains**

After paying the required Compasses from your Compass track, take the appropriate Terrain tiles from the common pool and place them on your map.

You may not place Terrain tiles on Lake spaces:



BONUSES ON THE MAP

The map on your player board has icons printed on certain spaces. If one of these spaces is covered by a Terrain tile, you gain that bonus immediately.

If a space has a red number on it, that is a **penalty** which will be taken into account at the end of the game **only if** that space is still **visible** on your map (i.e., not covered by a Terrain tile).



Gain 1 Pilgrim token



Lose 2 VP at the end of the game

ACTIVATING MILESTONES

If you place a Terrain tile on top of one of the 3 Milestone icons on your map, you gain the corresponding bonus shown on **your Milestone card**:



The **ivory bonus** provides a continuous effect that lasts for the entire game.



The **iron bonus** provides an immediate effect that must be applied right away.



The **gold bonus** provides an effect that will score VP at the end of the game.

EXPAND

With the help of your loyal Imomushi worms, the soil turns rich and ready in a matter of days. These gentle giants burrow deep, aerating the land and leaving behind nutrient-rich trails ideal for farming. Where they pass, crops thrive—and the forest seems, for a moment, to yield its bounty willingly.

You may Expand by paying Hammers from your Hammer track to place 1 or more Community tokens on your map. There are 3 types of Communities:



1 Hammer → **Farmstead**

Place 1 Farmstead token from your reserve onto any Terrain tile on your map.



2 Hammers → **Village**

Replace 1 existing Farmstead on your map with 1 Village token from your reserve, then gain the bonus shown in the Village row. Return the Farmstead to the rightmost empty space of its row on your player board.



3 Hammers → **City**

Replace 1 existing Village on your map with 1 City token from your reserve, then gain the bonus shown in the City row. Return the Village to the rightmost empty space of its row on your player board.

If multiple players gain the same bonus during this phase when updating their tracks, resolve them in turn order, starting with the first player.

COMMUNITY BONUSES

The area of Community tokens at the top of your player board is the Community section. Always take the Community tokens starting from the leftmost space and continue to the right-hand side. If a Community token is returned, place it in the rightmost empty space. At the end of the game, you will gain only the VP visible in the rightmost empty space of each type.

FOUNDING A PREFECTURE



Each Community token has a number with a star in the upper-left corner indicating its value. If a group of **connected** Community tokens has a total value of 6 or more stars, you have just founded a **Prefecture**.

When that happens:

1) Take the highest-value Prefecture token from the corresponding pile (1 for your first Prefecture, 2 for your second, 3 for your third).



2) Place the Prefecture token on top of the Community tokens.



These Community tokens add up to 6 Stars.

3) Then, gain the bonus printed on your player board. At the end of the game, you will score the end-of-game bonuses.



In this case, you gain 2 silver coins and 1 VP. At the end of the game, you will gain 2 VP.

You can continue Expanding Community tokens within an already founded Prefecture (turning Farmsteads into Villages and so on). You can place new Community tokens next to an already established Prefecture, but in order to found a new Prefecture, its Community tokens must be separated. **If multiple players found their third Prefecture in the same round**, only the player earliest in turn order takes the 3 Prefecture token. The others take the highest available token from a previous pile, in turn order.

DEVELOP

As generations pass, memories fade and old boundaries blur between village and wilderness. What once was sacred becomes soil for new homes, and ancient roots are slowly forgotten beneath stone and timber. Yet the forest remembers in quiet slumber.

You may spend Books from your Book track to unlock new Ages in order to gain access to better cards:

5 Books → **Age 2**

7 Books → **Age 3**

8 Books → **Age 4**

10 Books → **Age 5**



When you unlock an Age, take the highest-value Development token for that Age from the main board. Then, for Ages 2, 3, 4, and 5, place your Age token on the Development token space you just emptied as a reminder of the Ages that you have unlocked. You may now Recruit cards from that and previous Ages.



RECRUIT PHASE

Word of your flourishing settlement spreads along forest paths and riverways, drawing curious travelers and skilled wanderers. Some come seeking shelter, others bring tools, knowledge, or dreams of a new beginning. With each new arrival, your community grows stronger—its future shaped by the people who choose to call it home.

This phase is performed 1 player at a time in turn order.

You gain the bonuses shown in the **bottom** part of your revealed cards (see "Special Bonuses" on page 19).

Then, you may use gold coins from your revealed cards and/or silver coins from your supply to Recruit 1 or more cards from the central display for any Ages you have access to (see "Develop" on page 15). You can only Recruit cards from the **Ages you have unlocked**. At the start of the game, only cards from Age 1 can be Recruited.

Each card shows a Recruiting cost that must be paid using the gold coins visible on your revealed cards. Any unused coins on your cards by the end of the turn are simply ignored. You can also discard silver coins from your supply, returning them to the common pool, to cover part of the cost of any cards you wish to Recruit.

Each time you Recruit a card, it **replaces** one of the cards you revealed this round. Return the replaced card to the box—it will not be used again. Note that any bonuses shown on the Recruited card are not activated at this point.

Once you declare that you have Recruited all the cards you wish to, and only at the end of your turn, reveal new cards from the main board decks to refill the corresponding Ages. Now is the turn of the next player to carry out their Recruit phase (as long as they didn't fall victim to Yōkai Mischief and have already played their Action phase).



The violet player wants to Recruit this card from Age 2 with a cost of 4 and this one from Age 1 with a cost of 3. Their revealed cards add up to 6 coins, so they must spend 1 of their silver coins in order to Recruit these 2 cards.

END OF THE ROUND

After all players have finished their turns, each player discards all their revealed and Recruited cards into a discard pile next to their deck.

The first player marker passes to the next player in turn order.



END OF THE GAME

The game ends when one of these conditions is met:



A player reaches **15 VP** on the score track.



A player builds their **third Prefecture**.



A player reaches **Age 5**.

As soon as this happens, the players keep taking turns until the end of the round (so that all of them have played the same number of turns). Then, proceed to the **final scoring**, adding together each player's VP as follows (use the scoring pad for this purpose):



Score track VP.



VP shown on all their cards.



Development tokens.



Prefecture tokens.



Prefecture (based on player board bonuses).



Rightmost empty space for each Community type.



5-VP token.



Golden Milestone card bonus, if unlocked.



Leftover resources: Pilgrim tokens, silver coins, and the values of your Compass, Hammer, and Book tracks → 1 VP for every 5 leftover resources.



Then, subtract any **negative VP** still visible on your map and cards.

The player with the **most VP wins**!

In case of a tie, the tied player with the most Yōkai icons on all their cards wins. If there is still a tie, the tied player with the most VP on the score track wins. If there is still a tie, the victory is shared.

MILESTONE BONUSES



You may replace 1 Farmstead with 1 City when founding a Prefecture.



Place 3 Farmsteads on empty Terrain tiles on your map.



At the end of the game, you do not lose VP for visible negative icons on your map and cards.



When Exploring, you may skip over 1 space when determining if a space is adjacent to a Terrain tile.



Replace 1 Farmstead with 1 Village.



At the end of the game, gain 2 VP for each card you have worth 0 VP.



Cards with 3 Yōkai icons count as if they had only 2 Yōkai icons for you.



Immediately gain 1 VP and take 1 silver coin from the common pool.



At the end of the game, gain 2 VP for each Village you have built.



When you are affected by Yōkai Mischief, take 1 Pilgrim token from the common pool.



Advance 4 spaces on 1 of the 3 resource tracks of your choice.



At the end of the game, gain 3 VP for each Development token you have taken.



Exploring Mountains costs you 2 Compasses instead of 3.



Recruit 1 card for free. You must still respect the Age requirements.



At the end of the game, gain VP based on the number of Milestone icons you have covered on your map.

SPECIAL BONUSES



Immediately gain 2 VP for each Prefecture you have founded.



Immediately gain 1 Pilgrim token for each set of 3 different Community tokens on your map.



Immediately gain 1 VP for each set of 3 different Community tokens on your map.



Immediately gain 1 VP for each City on your map.



Immediately gain 1 VP for every 2 Villages on your map.



Immediately gain 1 VP for every 3 Farmsteads on your map.



Immediately gain 1 VP for every 4 cards you revealed this round.



Immediately gain 1 silver coin for every 3 Farmsteads on your map.



Immediately gain 1 silver coin for every 2 Villages on your map.



Immediately gain 1 silver coin for each City on your map.



Immediately advance 1 space on 1 resource track of your choice for every 4 Forest Terrain tiles on your map.



Immediately gain 1 VP for every 3 Hills Terrain tiles on your map.



Immediately gain 1 VP for every 2 Mountains Terrain tiles on your map.

ICONS


Gain 1 gold coin that can only be used before the end of the current round. This coin cannot be saved for the next round.


Take 1 silver coin from the common pool.


Take 1 Pilgrim token from the common pool.


Advance 1 space on the Compass track.


Advance 1 space on the Hammer track.


Advance 1 space on the Book track.


Advance 1 space on 1 of the 3 resource tracks of your choice.


Gain X VP at the end of the game.


Gain X VP immediately. Move your score marker accordingly.


Activate your ivory Milestone card bonus.


Activate your iron Milestone card bonus.


Activate your gold Milestone card bonus.

DEVIR

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