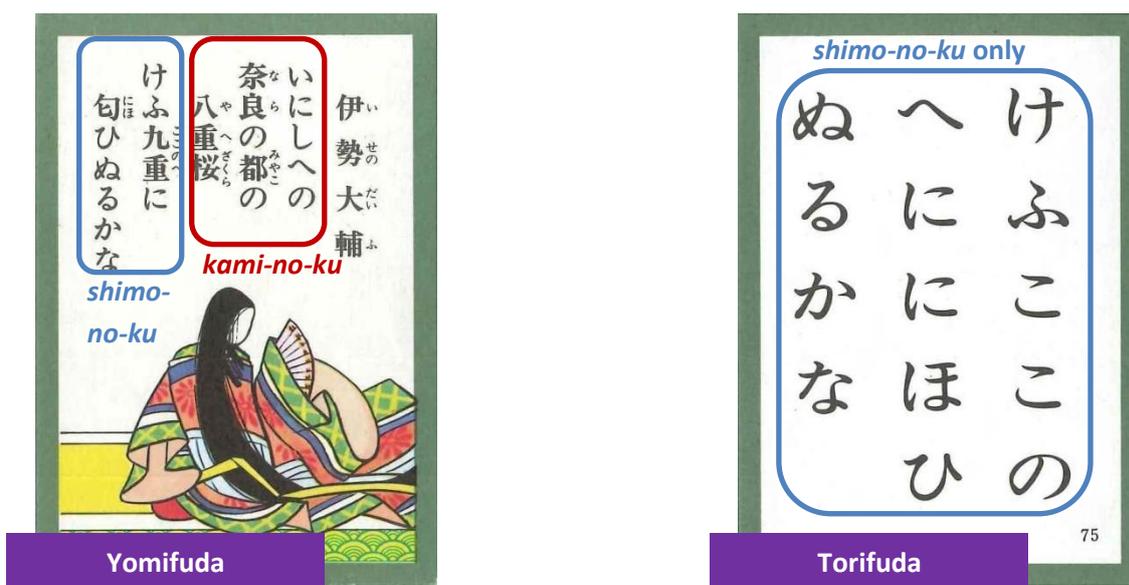


Hyakunin Isshu is an anthology of one hundred Japanese *waka* poems composed between the 7th and 13th centuries. The anthology was later adapted into a card game and played a culturally significant role in familiarising Japanese people, both young and old, with classic literature.

Waka is a traditional Japanese poetry form that consists of five units usually with the pattern of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables. The first 5-7-5 unit is referred as 上の句 (*kami-no-ku*; literally “Top Phrase”) and the last 7-7 unit is referred as 下の句 (*shimo-no-ku*; literally “Bottom Phrase”)

The cards (*Uta-garuta*):

The *Hyakunin Isshu* deck consists of two sets of a hundred cards each. The first hundred set is called *Yomifuda* (lit. “Reading Cards”) and these bear the poets’ portrait and a full verse of their poem. A second hundred set is called *Torifuda* (lit. “Capturing Cards”) that displays *shimo-no-ku* only.



Historical variant spelling is used in the cards. This means what you hear may be different from what you see on the cards. Here are principals.

- Sonant 「゛」 and consonant 「゜」 marks are omitted (on *torifuda* only).
- Ha-column hiragana is often pronounced with Wa-column sound instead: eg. 「ここへの」 on the card is pronounced as こそへのえ.
- Historical Wa-column hiragana is used and pronounced with A-column sound: 「ゐ」 character on the card is pronounced as い.

How to play “*Hyakunin isshu (Uta-garuta)*”

「爰」 character on the card is pronounced as え.

「を」 character on the card is pronounced as お and also used in non-particle words.

- 「けふ」 is pronounced as きょう.
- 「てふ」 is pronounced as ちょう.
- Some 「む」 character is pronounced as ん.

How to play *Chirashi*, the simplest *Hyakunin-isshu* game:

❖ Objective:

Listen to the recitation of a poem and capture the corresponding *torifuda* as quickly as possible. The player who collects the greatest number of *torifuda* by the end is the winner.

❖ Number of players:

3 or more, best 4 to 7. One person becomes the reader and doesn't participate in the game. The rest of the persons become players.

❖ Set up:

Mix up the deck of *torifuda*, and lay them out on the floor. Players sit around the *torifuda* cards. The reader shuffles the *yomifuda* deck to randomise poem order.

1. The reader draws a *yomifuda* and starts reading it, and players race to take the corresponding *torifuda* as fast as possible. They can take a card at any time while the poem is being read.
2. When a player has taken the corresponding *torifuda*, the reader moves on to the next *yomifuda*. The reader can repeat *shimo-no-ku* if no players can find the corresponding *torifuda*.
3. Taking the wrong *torifuda* is called *Otetsuki* (lit. “False touch”). *Otetsuki* players return the incorrect *torifuda* to the floor and cannot participate in the next poem recitation.
4. Repeat 1 to 3 until all the cards are taken. Optionally, participants can decide beforehand on a small number of cards to be left unread for increased unpredictability.

Memorising the poems and *Kimariji* (lit. “poem-identifying character”):

It is of great advantage if you know the entire verse of each poem because it enables you to begin searching for a *torifuda* without waiting for the *shimo-no-ku* to be read. You may orthodoxically want to memorise the full verses with modern Japanese or English translations, which is not wrong at all.

However, using *kimariji* is a more pragmatic approach to remembering the poems for gameplay and competitive players actively use this strategy. What is *kimariji*? *Kimariji* is the first syllable(s) of *kami-no-ku* in which you can identify the poem being read. It can be thought of as the shortest string of syllables needed for a poem to be uniquely differentiated. Thus, if you remember *kimariji*, you do not have to remember the rest of the poem to play. Please find a sample below:

むらさめの / つゆもまだひぬ / まきのはに // きりたちのほる / あきのゆふぐれ

Murasame no / tsuyu mo mada hinu / maki no ha ni // Kiri tachinoboru / aki no yūgure

Because only one poem in *Hyakunin isshu* starts with the “む (*mu*)” syllable, you can immediately grab the *torifuda* “きりたちのほる / あきのゆふぐれ” if the reader begins a poem recitation with the “む (*mu*)” sound without even listening to the rest of the *kami-no-ku*.

In total, there are 7 poems with a *kimariji* located on the first syllable of the *kami-no-ku*. It is also good to know that the longest syllable in *kimariji* is 6.

The first 20 poems to memorise:

These 20 poems have a *kimariji* located on a shorter syllable and are relatively easy to remember. *Kimariji* on each poem is indicated with red characters in *kami-no-ku*. Blue characters in *shimo-noku* are a kind of *kimariji* to identify a *torifuda*. Thus, combining the two corresponding *kimarijis* makes up the shortest phrase to memorise the poems for gaming purposes. Many starting players use a pun to memorise poems:

eg: poem # 77: 「せ」+「われ」=「せわれ」→「背割れ」→ split back?

#	<i>Kami-no-ku</i> (in modern spelling)	<i>Shimo-no-ku</i> (spelling as shown on torifuda) Phonetic romanization
087	むらさめの つゆもまだひぬ まきのはに	きりたちのほる あきのゆふぐれ Kiri tachinoboru aki no yūgure
018	すみのえの きしによるなみ よるさえや	ゆめのかよひち ひとめよくらむ Yume no kayoiji hitome yokuran

How to play “Hyakunin isshu (Uta-garuta)”

057	めぐりあいて みしやそれとも わかぬまに	くもかくれにし よはのつきかな Kumogakurenishi yowa no tsuki kana
022	ふくからに あきのくさきの しおるれば	むへやまかせを あらしといふらむ Mube yamakaze o arashi to yūran
070	さびしさに やどをたちいでて ながむれば	いつこもおなし あきのゆふくれ Izuko mo onaji aki no yūgure
081	ほととぎす なきつるかたを ながむれば	たたありあけの つきそのこれる Tada ariake no tsuki zo nokoreru
077	せをはやみ いわにせかるる たきがわの	われてもすゑに あはむとそおもふ Warete mo sue ni awan to zo omou
074	うかりける ひとをはつせの やまおろし	はげしかれとは いのらぬものを Hageshikare to wa inoranu mono o
065	うらみわび ほさぬそでだに あるものを	こひにくちなむ なこそをしけれ Koi ni kuchinan na koso oshikere
023	つきみれば ちぢにものこそ かなしけれ	わかみひとつの あきにはあらねと Waga mi hitotsu no aki ni wa arane do
013	つくばねの みねよりおつる みなのがわ	こひそつもりて ふちとなりぬる Koi zo tsumori te fuchi to narinuru
040	しのぶれど いろにいでにけり わがこいは	ものやおもふと ひとのとふまで Mono ya omou to hito no tou made
037	しらつゆに かぜのふきしく あきののは	つらぬきとめぬ たまそちりける Tsuranuki tomenu tama zo chirikeru
100	ももしきや ふるきのきばの しのぶにも	なほあまりある むかしなりけり Nao amariaru mukashinarikeri
066	もろともに あわれとおもえ やまざくら	はなよりほかに しるひともし Hana yori hoka ni shiru hito mo nashi
071	ゆうされば かどたのいなば おとずれて	あしのまろやに あきかせそふく Ashi no maro ya ni akikaze zo fuku
046	ゆらのとを わたるふなびと かじをたえ	ゆくへもしらぬ こひのみちかな Yukue mo shiranu koi no michi kana
061	いにしへの ならのみやこの やえざくら	けふこのへに にほひぬるかな Kyō kokonoe ni nioinuru kana
021	いまこんと いいしばかりに ながつきの	ありあけのつきを まちいてつるかな Ariake no tsuki o machiidetsuru kana
063	いまはただ おもいたえなん とばかりを	ひとつてならて いふよしもかな Hitozute nara de yū yoshi mo gana