

How to play “*Bōzu mekuri*”

Hyakunin Isshu is an anthology of one hundred Japanese *waka*¹ 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.

The *Hyakunin Isshu* deck consists of two sets of a hundred cards each. The first hundred bear the poets’ portrait and a full verse of their poem. A second hundred set of cards display only the last half of a verse. In order to play *Hyakunin Isshu* competitively, you need to memorise the all poems - with the added difficulty that they are written in historical Japanese.

Bōzu-mekuri is a simple yet exciting party game using the portrait cards from *Hyakunin Isshu*. Anyone can play without needing to memorise poetry or to read Japanese.

❖ Objective:

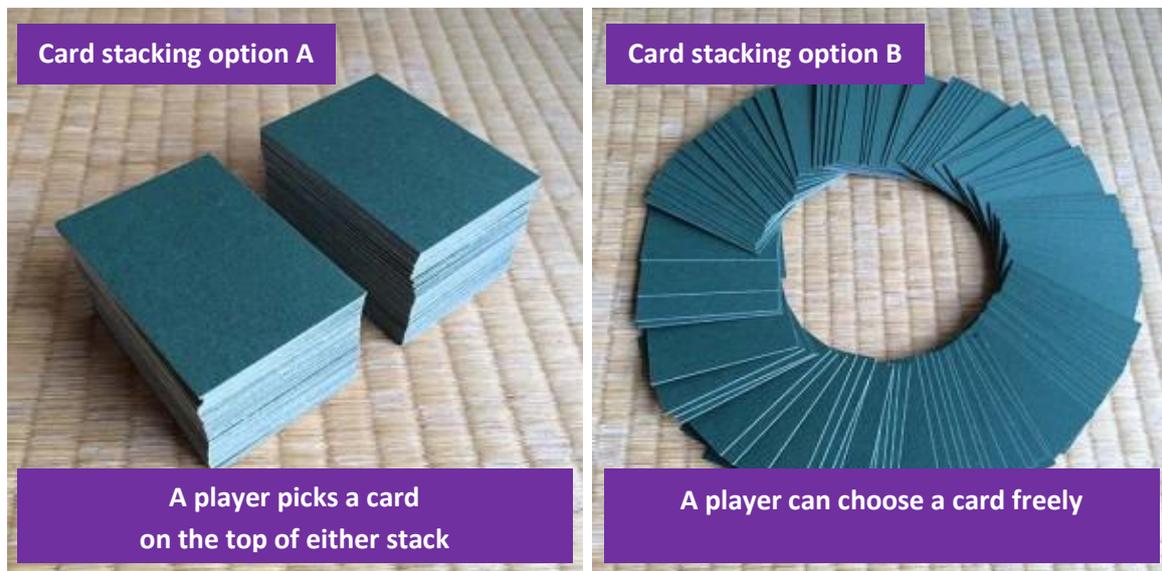
Be the player with the most cards at the end of the game.

❖ Number of players:

2 or more. Any ages. Most enjoyable with 3 to 6 players.

❖ Set up:

Use only a portrait deck (100 cards). Shuffle and pile them into stacks face down.



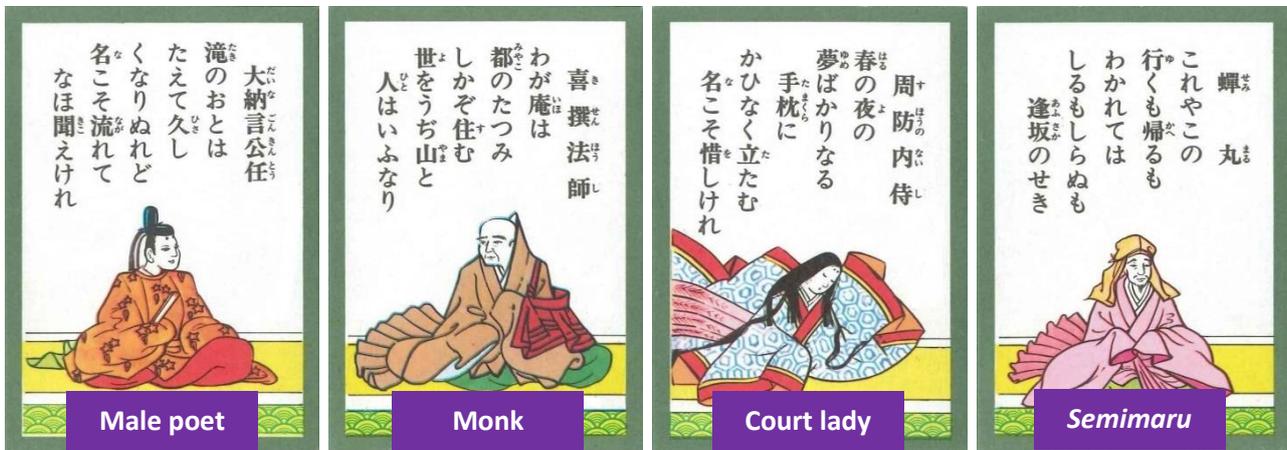
❖ How to play:

➤ Choose a player to start and the other players take turns clockwise.

¹ waka – a traditional Japanese poetry form that consists of five units usually with the pattern of 5-7-5-7-7 syllables.

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- The starting player draws a card from a stack and shows the character on the card to the other players. There are four types of characters possible and depending on which is drawn, one of the following actions must be taken.



- **Male poet, 67 cards total: common cards.**
Player keeps the card. It becomes the next player's turn.
 - **Monk (坊主 bōzu), 11 cards total: penalty cards.**
Player discards all of the cards collected, including the Monk card, into a communal deposit area, face up. It becomes the next player's turn.
 - **Court lady (姫 hime), 21 cards total: lucky chance cards.**
 - If there are any cards in the deposit area → Player claims all the cards in the deposit area. It becomes the next player's turn.
 - If there are no cards in the deposit area → Player keeps the Court Lady card, and draws another card from a stack.
 - **Semimaru (蟬丸 Semimaru, the blind lute priest), 1 card only: The Joker**
Semimaru wears a religious head piece. He is a legendary hermit who is believed to be the originator of the blind lute priest.
 - All players, except the one who drew Semimaru, discard all their cards into the communal deposit area. It becomes the next player's turn.
 - If this card is drawn on the very last turn → The player who drew Semimaru loses the game automatically no matter how many cards they collected.
- Keep drawing cards until the face down stacks are exhausted. When this happens, players count up the number of cards they have collected (character types are irrelevant). The player with the most cards is the winner.