Meister Makatsu

A game by Reiner Knizia with illustrations by Sonja Müller

8 and up | 2–6 players | about 30 minutes

Idea of the Game

Meister Makatsu is the most famous ninja mentor in the land. To be trained by him is considered a great honor.

Every year, different schools, so-called dojos, present their best ninjas. Over three days, these ninjas take a number of tests to impress Meister Makatsu with their talent. However, he's on the lookout for even the slightest mishap!

Play your ninjas at the right moment to avoid taking tokens worth penalty points. Whoever has the fewest points at the end of the three phases wins the game!

Components

144 cards (6 dojo decks with 24 cards each)

Each dojo deck consists of 24 cards with values from 1 to 8 in yellow, blue, and purple.

44 tokens (with 1, 2, or 3 penalty points)

24x

12x

8x

Meister Makatsu

Setup

Place the tokens in a common pool within easy reach of all players.

Each player picks a dojo deck and shuffles their cards. Place it in front of you as your personal draw pile. Draw **four cards** from your pile. Return any unused dojo decks to the box.

The player who last meditated takes Meister Makatsu.

How to Play

It's time! Your ninjas must prove themselves in various tests.

The game is played in three phases, each consisting of several rounds. Whoever has Master Makatsu starts the round. In each round, you all play **two cards** in front of you and then distribute tokens.

Playing your cards

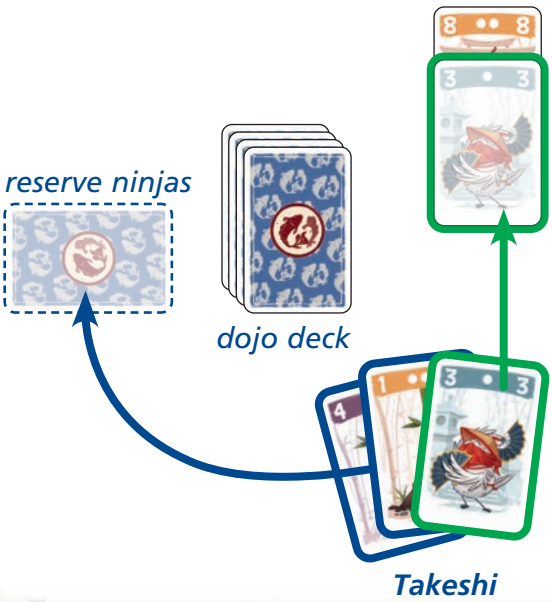
On your turn, place any **one** card from your hand face up in front of you. The player to your left then takes their turn.

Once everyone has played their first card, you each play a **second** card in the same order. Place it **slightly below** your first card so that the numbers on both cards are visible.

Reserve ninjas

You now have two cards left in your hand. Put them both face down beside your dojo deck as shown below. These are your reserve ninjas. You will play the next phase with these cards.

You are not allowed to look through your reserve ninjas.



After Takeshi plays the blue 3 as his second card, he puts the two cards remaining in his hand aside as reserve ninjas.

Distribute tokens

Meister Makatsu casts a critical eye over the apprentices ...

Now, find the **highest-value card** played in each color in the following order: blue, yellow, then purple. Whoever played the **highest card** of that color receives:

Blue: 1 token

Yellow: 2 tokens

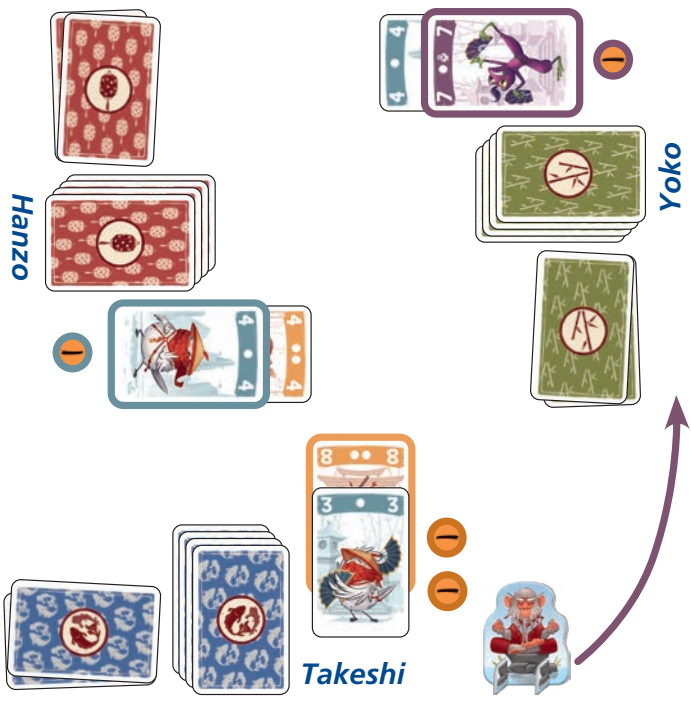
Purple: 1 token and Meister Makatsu

If **several** of you played the highest card in a color, only the person who played their card **last** takes the tokens.

If you played the highest value in purple and already have Meister Makatsu, you keep him. The same holds true if nobody played purple this round.

In the first phase, you receive tokens worth 1 point, in the second phase, tokens worth 2 points, and in the third phase, tokens worth 3 points.

Note: Do **not** exchange your tokens with other tokens from the pool.



Takeshi, Hanzo, and Yoko compare their cards once they have each played two. Hanzo receives 1 token for his blue 4 because he played it after Yoko's blue 4. Takeshi receives 2 tokens for his yellow 8. Lastly, Yoko receives 1 token and Meister Makatsu because her 7 has the highest value among the purple cards.

Set all the cards played in this round aside, keeping them face down. They are now out of the game. Then everyone draws four cards from their dojo decks again.

The player with Meister Makatsu starts the next round. You keep playing until the end of round six, when you can no longer draw any cards because your dojo decks are empty.

The next phase

The next two days aren't going to be easy! But as we all know, the best ninjas are saved for last!

Take your reserve ninjas and shuffle them. These cards become your new dojo deck. Place them face down as a draw pile in front of you and draw four cards. You play the **second phase** like the first one until you can no longer draw any cards.

Because your dojo deck now consists of 12 cards, you only play three rounds. In this phase, you distribute the **tokens worth 2 points.**

The third phase starts like the second. However, you only have six cards in your dojo deck and therefore play two rounds. In this phase, you distribute the **tokens worth 3 points.**

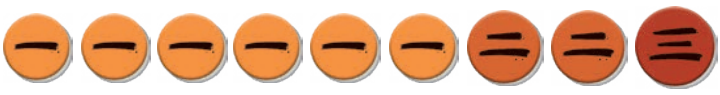
After the first round, **keep** the remaining two cards in your hand and draw the last two cards from your dojo deck. Then play the last round, in which you will play two cards and distribute tokens as usual. Put your two remaining cards aside. **Do not take them into account when distributing the tokens.**

End of the Game

Despite some mishaps, one of the dojos was able to impress Meister Makatsu. Which one is it?

Add up all the points on your tokens. Whoever has the **fewest points** wins the game!

If several of you tie for the fewest points, you ignore the points and the player with Meister Makatsu wins.



*Takeshi adds up his points: He has **6** tokens worth 1 point each, **2** tokens each worth 2 points, and **1** token worth 3 points. Thus, he has **13 penalty points** in total.*

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