

1-4 players aged 10 and up. 45-60 minutes.

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The Japanese term “koi” refers to multicolored carp, also known as “swimming flowers.” Considered living jewels and symbols of perseverance and virtue, they are raised in ornamental ponds and revered as bringers of luck and success. The players are koi breeders competing to expand their own ponds.

The winner is whoever creates the best environment for their koi.

This game is freely inspired by various Asian cultures, in particular Japanese and Chinese ones, without any claim of historical accuracy.

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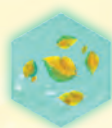
Before your first game, carefully punch out the tiles from the punchboards.

170 POND TILES

in 5 types (80× water, 30× foliage, 30× water-lily, 15× shore, 15× lantern).



Water



Foliage



Water-lily



Shore



Lantern
(to be assembled)



Small



Medium



Large

21 KOI TILES

in 3 different sizes (8× small, 7× medium, 6× large)

Note: Koi tiles are covered with a protective film that can be removed.

48 PLAYING CARDS



10 GOAL CARDS



4 SUMMARY CARDS



26 GOAL TILES

Some tiles need to be assembled as shown. The letters correspond to those on the punchboards and are designed to make assembly easier.

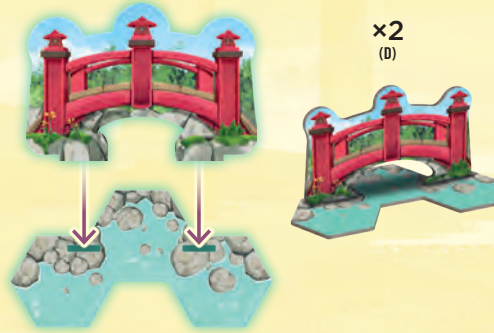
Branches



Weeping Willow



Bridge



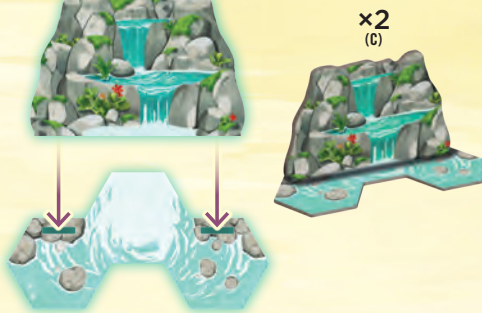
Shishi Odoshi



Turtle



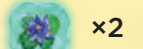
Waterfall



Statue



Purple Water-Lily



Path



Centennial Carp



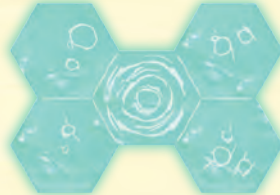
30 COINS



12 LUCK TOKENS



4 SPRING TILES



6 STORAGE EXPANSION TILES



1 SCORE PAD




4 SENSEI BOARDS










1 MAIN BOARD



SETUP

- 1 Place the main board in the middle of the table.
- 2 Place all the pond tiles (water, foliage, water-lily, shore, and lantern), the storage expansion tiles, the koi tiles, coins, and luck tokens in an area which is within reach of all players. This is the common **supply**.
For **4 players**: All koi are used.
For **3 players**: Put 1 small, 1 medium, and 2 large koi back in the box.
For **2 players**: Put 1 small, 2 medium, and 2 large koi back in the box.
- 3 Each player receives a sensei board, 1 spring tile, 2 coins, and 1 luck token, which they place in front of them.
Put unassigned sensei boards and spring tiles back in the box.
- 4 Divide the cards by type (playing cards, goal, summary).
For **4 players**: all playing cards are used.
For **3 players**: remove the cards marked "4+" from the deck.
For **2 players**: also remove the cards marked "3+".
For a **solo game**, see the section on page 14.
Put the removed cards back in the box.
Shuffle the remaining playing cards and place the deck face down to the left of the main board.
Reveal the top 5 cards and place them face up in the designated spaces of the main board.
- 5 The player who most recently admired a pond becomes the first player and takes the Summary card with the symbol  5.1; alternatively, you can assign the card randomly. Each of the other players receives one of the other Summary cards (return any unused cards to the box). Starting with the first player and proceeding clockwise, each player takes from the supply the water tiles and the koi shown in the following table and places them in empty storage spaces on their sensei board.

| PLAYER | FIRST | SECOND | THIRD | FOURTH |
|----------------|---|---|---|---|
| Starting tiles | 2 water | 2 water | 2 water | 2 water |
| |  |  |  |  |
| | | 1 small koi | 1 medium koi | 1 large koi |
| | |  |  |  |

- 6 If this is your first game, we recommend leaving all the Goal cards and tiles in the box. Add them to the game once you are familiar with the rules.

Randomly choose 3 Goal cards and place them face up near the board. Then take the Goal tiles shown on those cards and place them next to them.

In a **2-player**, game, use only 1 copy of the chosen Goal tiles (example: **a single Centennial Carp**, **a single Statue**, etc.), as the icon on the cards reminds us.

Exception: Always use all tiles for the Path and Branches Goals.

Return the unused Goal cards and tiles to the box.



Example setup for 3 players

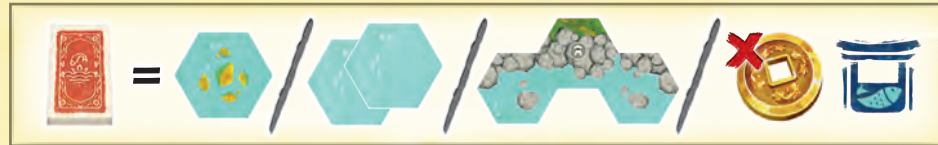


THE GAME

Players take turns choosing cards and placing tiles in order to expand their own pond and populate it with koi carp. Surrounding the koi with water and water-lilies increases their well-being and thus their Victory Points (VP). In addition, players can compete for Goals, which provide extra Victory Points and bonuses for those who manage to claim them. At the end of the game, the player with the most points wins!

The game is played in turns in clockwise order, starting with the first player. On your turn, you must choose whether to **A) MEDITATE** or **B) WORK**.

Regardless of your choice, at any point during your turn, you may spend a luck token to gain pond tiles of your choice: either 1 foliage, 2 water, or 1 shore, or to acquire 1 koi at an increased cost of 1 extra coin. There is no limit to the number of luck tokens you can spend on your turn.



After meditating or working, you can **claim a Goal**, provided that the conditions have been met. Finally, **the turn passes** to the next player.

A) MEDITATE

Choose 1 of the face-up cards on the board and take it, along with any reward shown below the chosen card (see image), then carry out the effects of that card. If there is a fee, you must pay it before taking the card. If there is a reward, you can take it before or after taking the card and performing its effect. Some cards have an immediate effect, while others allow you to carry out additional actions throughout the game, see *The Cards*, page 8.



After you have meditated, slide all face-up cards on the board to the right to fill the just-vacated space, then draw the top card from the deck to refill the empty space on the left.

STORAGE AND CAPACITY LIMIT

You have a storage area on your sensei board made up of brown hexes. Your storage is used to contain the water, foliage, shore and koi tiles you get during the game.

Your initial capacity limit is **5 hexes**, but you can expand it thanks to the storage expansion tiles, which are obtained via Storage cards, see *The Cards*, page 8. The capacity limit is only checked at the **end of your turn**: if your tiles occupy more hexes than you have available, you must discard tiles of your choice, placing them back in the supply, until your tiles occupy only a valid number of spaces. The tiles in your storage can be rearranged at any time, as long as they respect your space limit.

Water and foliage tiles occupy 1 hex each. Shore tiles are made up of 3 hexes, and in fact occupy 3 storage hexes. Koi also take up space: a small koi takes 1 hex, medium takes 2, and large takes 3.

In the rare cases where it's not possible to neatly fit tiles into your storage, compare the total number of hexes on your tiles with the available space in your storage to ensure your capacity limit is still respected.

For example, in the basic storage, you can keep up to 1 shore and 2 water tiles, or 1 shore and 1 medium koi, and so on.



ACQUIRE KOI

There are 3 ways to acquire a koi:

- 1. When you **meditate**, if you choose the fourth space on the main board, you may purchase 1 koi for the normal price, instead of taking a coin and 2 water tiles.
- 2. When you **meditate**, if you take a Market card, you may purchase 1 koi with a discount of 1 coin, see *The Cards*, page 8.
- 3. By discarding 1 luck token you own, you may purchase 1 koi for 1 coin more than the normal price.

The base price of a koi depends on its size:

| SIZE | | | |
|---------------|--|--|--|
| COST IN COINS | | | |

B) WORK

You may perform **1** of the Sensei actions described below (these actions are summarized on your sensei board).

In addition, if you have one or more Helper cards, see *The Cards*, page 8, you may choose to activate them in any order, before and/or after performing your Sensei action. You may activate all of the Helper cards you own, but each card can only be activated **once per turn**.

***Note:** Each player always acts only in their own pond and from their own storage. You cannot interact with the other players' ponds or storage!*

SENSEI ACTIONS

| | | | |
|--|---|--|---|
| | <p>Place up to 2 water tiles in your pond, taken from your storage.</p> | | <p>Place 1 foliage tile in your pond, taken from your storage. <i>Or,</i> Upgrade 1 foliage tile by adding 1 water-lily. Take 1 water-lily from the supply and place it on the foliage tile.</p> |
| | <p>Place 1 shore tile in your pond, taken from your storage. <i>Or,</i> Upgrade 1 shore tile by adding 1 lantern. Take the lantern from the supply and place it on the shore tile. This second action also grants you 1 luck token (from the supply).</p> | | <p>Place 1 koi of any size in your pond, taken from your storage. Depending on its size (small, medium, or large), the koi must overlap 1, 2, or 3 empty water hexes. <i>Or,</i> Move 1 already placed koi in your pond from one spot to another, following the normal placement rules.</p> |

THE CARDS

There is no limit to the number and types of cards you can take during the game. The **Helper cards** (Breeder, Builder, Gardener, Porter) provide you with additional actions when you choose the **work** option. The other cards (Storage, Market, Parchment, Rain, Well) provide **immediate bonuses** or **end-of-game bonuses**.

Helper cards

When you take a Helper card, place it next to your sensei board, face up. You can have multiple copies of the same card. When you choose the **work** option, you may choose to activate 1 or more of your Helper cards to carry out additional actions. You may freely choose when and how to carry out each of these additional actions, before or after your Sensei action, in any order. Each Helper card can be activated **only once per turn**.



BREEDER

Place 1 koi in your pond, taken from your storage.

Or,

Move 1 already placed koi in your pond from one spot to another. Always follow the normal placement rules.



BUILDER

Place 1 shore tile in your pond, taken from your storage.

Or,

Upgrade 1 already placed shore tile by adding 1 lantern to it, taken **from the supply**. In this case, you also get 1 luck token.



GARDENER

Place 1 foliage tile in your pond, taken from your storage.

Or,

Upgrade 1 already placed foliage tile by adding 1 water-lily to it, taken **from the supply**.



PORTER

Place up to 2 water tiles in your pond, taken from your storage.

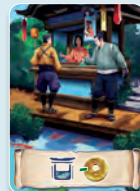
Other cards

When you take a non-Helper card, activate its effect **immediately** (exception: Parchment cards do not have an immediate effect). Then, keep it **face-down** in front of you. You will no longer be able to use it for the rest of the game, but it may be worth Victory Points at the end of the game.



STORAGE

Take a storage expansion tile **from the supply** and add it to your storage to expand it by 2 hexes. The tile must be placed adjacent to at least 1 hex of your starting storage or a previously placed storage expansion tile. Your storage expansion tiles can be rearranged to your liking at any time.



MARKET

Acquire a koi with a discount of 1 coin.

| SIZE | | | |
|---------------|------|--|--|
| COST IN COINS | FREE | | |



PARCHMENT

The Parchment cards award Victory Points at the end of the game, according to the criteria shown on them. In the image, in order from left to right and top to bottom:

- 2 VP for each water-lily in your pond.
- 2 VP for each small koi in your pond.
- 3 VP for each medium koi in your pond.
- 4 VP for each large koi in your pond.
- 2 VP for each lantern in your pond.
- 2 VP for each Well card you have.
- 3 VP for each Market card you have.
- 3 VP for each Storage card you have.



RAIN

Take the tiles shown **from the supply**, then **immediately** place them in your pond.



WELL


Take the tiles and/or coins shown **from the supply**.

If there is a slash ("/"), you must choose 1 of the 2 alternatives.

Note: Unlike Rain cards, the tiles taken with the Well are not immediately placed in your pond.

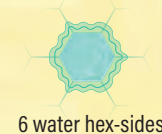
PLACEMENT RULES

Both the Sensei actions and certain cards allow you to place tiles in your pond (in some cases even directly from the supply). The Placement Rules shown in the table below must be followed any time you add tiles to your pond.

Remember that tiles may consist of 1 or more hexes, and each hex can show water—marked in **blue**—on one or more hex-sides .

This is important for both placement and end-game scoring, see *End of the Game*, page 11.

For example, the points granted by a koi vary depending on whether it is surrounded by other tiles that have water hex-sides.






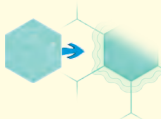
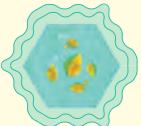
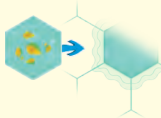
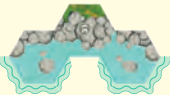
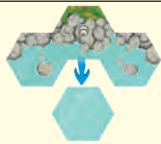








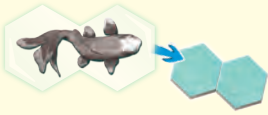


6 water hex-sides



6 water hex-sides



3 water hex-sides

| NAME | | SIZE | FEATURES | |
|------------|---|------|--|---|
| SPRING |  | 5 | Starting pond. It is made up of 5 water hexes. A water hex is said to be "empty" if it has no other tiles on it. Can hold koi and/or Goals. It can also be used to surround koi. |  |
| WATER |  | 1 | Must be placed adjacent to at least 1 water hex-side of another tile. A water hex is said to be "empty" if it has no other tiles on it. Can hold koi and/or Goals. |  |
| FOLIAGE |  | 1 | Must be placed adjacent to at least 1 water hex-side of another tile. Cannot hold koi or Goals except for a water-lily. It can be used to surround koi. |  |
| SHORE |  | 3 | Must be placed so that the water hex-side at the center of the shore tile is adjacent to a water hex-side of another tile. Cannot hold koi or Goals except for a lantern. The water hex-sides count for surrounding koi. |  |
| WATER-LILY |  | - | Upgrade for the foliage tile. Thanks to a Sensei action or a Helper, you may take 1 water-lily tile from the supply and place it on a foliage tile. Each foliage tile can be upgraded with a water-lily only once. |  |
| LANTERN |  | - | Upgrade for the shore tile. Thanks to a Sensei action or a Helper, you may take 1 lantern tile from the supply and place it on the  symbol of a shore tile. Each shore tile can be upgraded with a lantern only once. |  |
| SMALL KOI |  | 1 | Must be placed on top of an empty water hex. |  |
| MEDIUM KOI |  | 2 | Must be placed on top of 2 adjacent empty water hexes. |  |
| LARGE KOI |  | 3 | Must be placed on top of 3 adjacent empty water hexes. |  |

Example Turn: Working

William has 1 luck token and, in his storage, 3 water tiles and 1 medium koi.

Among the Helper cards at his disposal, he decides to use the Porter card **A** to place 2 water tiles.

Then, he decides to use his Sensei action **B** to place the medium koi, using 1 of the 2 water tiles just placed (see below).



Next, he spends his luck token **C** to take 1 foliage tile **D**, which he immediately places using the Gardener card **E**.

Finally, he uses the Builder card **F** to upgrade his shore with a lantern (taken from the supply), thus obtaining a new luck token.

Satisfied with the turn, he passes without using the second Porter card **G**, keeping 1 water tile in storage and without spending the newly gained luck token.



CLAIMING A GOAL

At the end of your turn, if you have fulfilled the requirements of a Goal card that is still in the middle of the table, you can claim the corresponding Goal tile, see *Goals*, page 13. When you claim a Goal, take the matching tile and immediately place it in your pond following the directions on the card. You cannot claim the same Goal more than once (exception: Path).

If you take the last available tile for a Goal, no player will be able to claim that Goal again.



Example: Having **upgraded** his second foliage tile with a water-lily **A**, William has fulfilled the Purple Water-Lily Goal card's requirements (having an empty water hex and 2 adjacent water-lilies in his pond). At the end of his turn, he takes the purple water-lily Goal tile and places it in the pond **B** as indicated on the Goal card (the purple water-lily must be placed on an empty water hex.)

END OF THE GAME

When there are no more cards in the deck or the last koi is taken from the supply, the game nears its end: continue playing until the end of the last player's turn (the one seated to the right of the first player), then **everyone** takes one final turn. After that, the game ends and points are tallied.

Scoring

Each player scores Victory Points (VP) in these ways (*use the score pad*):



- Koi award points according to their size—Each small koi: 2 VP; Each medium koi: 4 VP; Each large koi: 6 VP. In addition to points for size, each koi increases its value by 1 VP for each water-lily adjacent to it. Finally, the total value of the koi is doubled if the koi is completely surrounded by water (blue hex-sides).
- Each lantern awards 1 VP for every hex (occupied or empty) in a straight line in front of it.
- Each Parchment awards VP as indicated on the card, see *The Cards*, page 8.
- Each Goal tile awards VP as indicated on the relevant card, see *Goals*, page 13.
- Each unused luck token is worth 1VP.

The pond tiles and leftover koi in storage are not worth any points. The player with the most Victory Points is the winner!

In case of a tie, the one who has the most coins wins. If the tie remains, the winner among tied players is the one farther away from the first player, in clockwise order.

Final Scoring Example




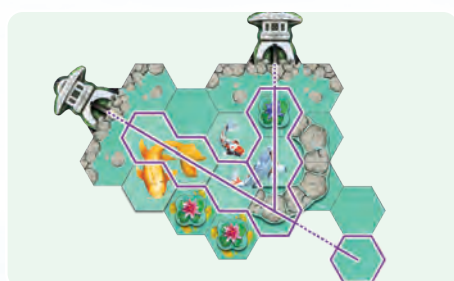
A is a **SMALL KOI**, which is worth 2 VP plus 2 VP for the purple water-lily ($2+2=4$). This koi is completely surrounded by water hex-sides, so its score is doubled.
Total for koi A: $4 \times 2 = 8$ VP.



B is a **MEDIUM KOI**, which is worth 4 VP plus 2 VP for the 2 adjacent water-lilies ($4+1+1+2=8$). This koi is completely surrounded by water hex-sides, so its score is doubled.
Total for koi B: $8 \times 2 = 16$ VP.



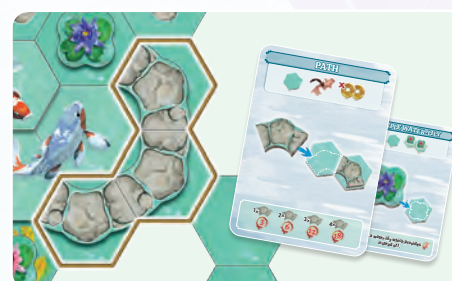
C is a **LARGE KOI**, which is worth 6 VP plus 1 VP for the adjacent water-lily ($6+1=7$). Unfortunately, this koi is not completely surrounded by water hex-sides (see the 2 sides with the ) , so its score is not doubled.
Total for koi C: 7 VP.



The **LANTERNS** give 5 VP (left lantern) and 3 VP (right lantern).
Total for lanterns: 8 VP.



The **PARCHMENT CARDS** provide 4 VP each.
Total for Parchments: 8 VP.



The **PATH** Goal provides **12 VP**. The **PURPLE WATER-LILY** Goal has already been counted in the scoring of the koi.

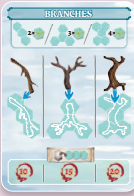
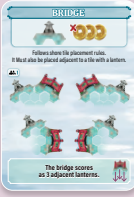




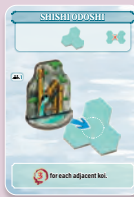
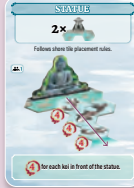

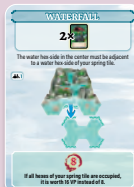

The remaining **LUCK** token: **1 VP.**



The player's final score: 60 VP!

Goals

The Goal cards indicate the **minimum** requirements. For example, if the requirement is to have 1 empty water hex, it's enough to have **at least** 1. Tiles gained from Goals must be placed in your pond **immediately**; they cannot be kept aside to be placed later.

| | |
|--|---|
|  | <p>BRANCHES</p> <p>REQUIREMENT SMALL BRANCH: Have 3 adjacent empty water hexes in your pond, arranged as shown, and 2 foliage tiles. MEDIUM BRANCH: Have 4 adjacent empty water tiles in your pond, arranged as shown, and 3 foliage tiles. LARGE BRANCH: Have 5 adjacent empty water tiles in your pond, arranged as shown, and 4 foliage tiles.</p> <p><i>Note: Shapes can be rotated or mirrored; the foliage tiles may be present anywhere in your pond, no matter their location.</i></p> <p>PLACEMENT Each branch must be placed on top of the water hexes that match the requirement. Additionally, you can take up to 3 water tiles from the supply and place them in your pond immediately.</p> <p>SCORE SMALL BRANCH: 10 VP. MEDIUM BRANCH: 15 VP. LARGE BRANCH: 20 VP.</p> |
|  | <p>BRIDGE</p> <p>REQUIREMENT Have 1 lantern and pay 3 coins to the supply.</p> <p>PLACEMENT Follows the rules for placing shore tiles. It must also be placed adjacent to a tile with a lantern.</p> <p>SCORE 1 VP for each hex (empty or occupied) in a straight line in front of the bridge's 3 hexes, as though there were 3 lanterns there.</p>  |
|  | <p>CENTENNIAL CARP</p> <p>REQUIREMENT Have 4 empty water hexes in your pond, arranged as shown (the shape can be rotated or mirrored), and pay 5 coins to the supply.</p> <p>PLACEMENT On top of all 4 of those water hexes.</p> <p>SCORE Its base value is 8 VP, which can be increased as for a regular koi.</p> |
|  | <p>PATH</p> <p><i>Note: This Goal can be claimed during your turn, not at the end. Furthermore, it can be claimed multiple times by the same player, even in the same turn.</i></p> <p>REQUIREMENT Have an empty water hex. When you place a koi in your pond, you may pay 2 coins to also take and place 1 path tile.</p> <p>PLACEMENT Each path tile must be placed on top of an empty water hex. The first path tile can be placed anywhere in your pond; any following path tiles must continue the path.</p> <p>SCORE 3/6/12/18 VP if you have 1/2/3/4+ path tiles.</p> |
|  | <p>PURPLE WATER-LILY</p> <p>REQUIREMENT Have an empty water hex and 2 water-lilies adjacent to each other in your pond.</p> <p>PLACEMENT On top of any empty water hex.</p> <p>SCORE The purple water-lily counts as a water-lily which increases the value of each koi adjacent to it by 2 VP instead of 1. These points are doubled as usual for surrounded koi.</p> |
|  | <p>SHISHI ODOSHI</p> <p>REQUIREMENT Have 3 adjacent empty water tiles in your pond, arranged as shown. The water hexes of your spring tile cannot be used to fulfill this requirement.</p> <p>PLACEMENT In the center of the 3 empty water tiles.</p> <p>SCORE 3 VP for each koi adjacent to any of the 3 water tiles that host the Shishi Odoshi.</p> |
|  | <p>STATUE</p> <p>REQUIREMENT Have 2 lanterns.</p> <p>PLACEMENT Follows the rules for placing shore tiles.</p> <p>SCORE 4 VP for each koi present (even partially) on the tiles in a straight line in front of the Statue (similar to a lantern).</p> |
|  | <p>TURTLE</p> <p>REQUIREMENT Have 1 empty water hex in your pond and 3 Parchment cards (<i>show them to the other players</i>).</p> <p>PLACEMENT On top of an empty water hex.</p> <p>SCORE 1/2/4/8/12/16 VP at the end of the game if there are 1/2/3/4/5/6 empty water tiles adjacent to the turtle.</p> |
|  | <p>WATERFALL</p> <p>REQUIREMENT Have 2 Well cards (<i>show them to the other players</i>).</p> <p>PLACEMENT The water hex-side in the center must be adjacent to a water hex-side of your spring tile.</p> <p>SCORE 8 VP. If the spring tile is completely occupied, it is worth 16 VP instead of 8.</p> |
|  | <p>WEeping WILLOW</p> <p>REQUIREMENT Have 5 koi in your pond.</p> <p>PLACEMENT One of the water hex-sides of the weeping willow tile must be placed adjacent to any water hex-side of another tile.</p> <p>SCORE 8 VP.</p> |

Solo game

The setup and rules for a 2-player game apply, with the following changes.

Each time you meditate, you must discard the card to the left of the one you take into a discard pile. If you take the leftmost card, reveal and discard the top card from the deck.

Each time you work, you must discard the rightmost card on the board, i.e., the one farthest from the deck.

Each time you acquire

- **A small koi:**
Remove 1 medium koi from the supply.
- **A medium koi:**
Remove 1 large koi from the supply.
- **A large koi:**
Remove 1 small koi from the supply.

If a certain type of koi is unavailable, remove any available koi of your choice instead. The koi removed in this way can no longer be acquired.

At the end of each turn, if there are 1 or more empty spaces on the main board, slide the cards to the right (if possible) so as to leave the spaces on the left empty. Fill the empty spaces with cards drawn from the deck.

You can claim multiple Goals at the end of your turn (or during it in the case of Path), if you meet their requirements.

END OF THE GAME

When you reveal or add the last card from the deck to the main board, play 1 last turn, then the game ends. Now check whether you won: you must have claimed all Goals and have a score matching or exceeding your chosen difficulty level. Then compare your score with the table to see how you did!

| SCORE | 60 - 79 | 80 - 99 | 100+ |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Title | Gakusei (student) | Senmon (expert) | Sensei (master) |

SOLO SCENARIOS AND SPECIAL RULES

TORRID SUMMER

Setup changes

None.

Rule changes

A koi not completely surrounded by water hex-sides does not score any points.

Goal changes

None.



| SCORE | 50 - 69 | 70 - 89 | 90+ |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Title | Gakusei (student) | Senmon (expert) | Sensei (master) |

ILLUMINATED PATH

Setup changes

Use these 3 Goals: Statue, Path, and Purple Water-Lily.

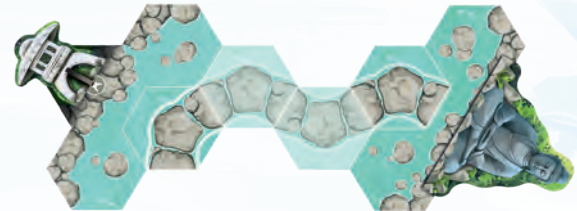
Rule changes

None.

Goal changes

In addition to claiming each Goal at least once, you must create a path of 3 or more path tiles that connects the central spaces of any one lantern and the statue. The orientation of the path tiles on these central spaces is not important.

Example of a valid path with 4 tiles.



| SCORE | 50 - 69 | 70 - 89 | 90+ |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Title | Gakusei (student) | Senmon (expert) | Sensei (master) |

IMPERIAL LAKE

Setup changes

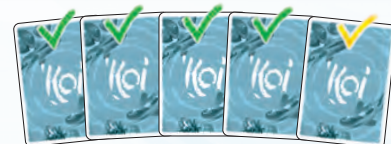
Use these 5 Goals: Centennial Carp, Waterfall, Shishi Odoshi, Weeping Willow, and Turtle. Alternatively, use 5 randomly chosen goals.

Rule changes

None.

Goal changes

You must claim at least 4 Goals (Gakusei level) or 5 Goals (Senmon or Sensei level). Remember: you can claim more than 1 Goal at the end of your turn in solo play.



| SCORE | 50 - 69 | 70 - 89 | 90+ |
|-------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| Goals | 4 | 5 | 5 |
| Title | Gakusei (student) | Senmon (expert) | Sensei (master) |

Origins and history of Koi carp

A brief curiosity about the term *Koi*: of Japanese origin, it simply means “carp”.

The term *Koi* has spread widely thanks to its simplicity, and is now used almost everywhere in the world to refer to the beautiful multicolored carp that inspired this game, regardless of the specific variety.

Historically, at least until the early 19th Century, carp were bred and fished almost exclusively for food.

According to ancient accounts—both Chinese (4th Century) and Japanese (10th Century)—carp in those regions already differed from their common grey-colored counterparts, displaying brightly colored scales (red, blue, yellow, black, white) and, at times, unique spotted patterns.

In 19th Century Japan, farmers in the Niigata prefecture bred these colorful carp in flooded rice fields or adjacent areas. Over time, they noticed unique color variations arising from crossbreeding different types of carp. This led to selective breeding for beauty, giving rise to a market for multicolored ornamental carp, seen as symbolic and precious creatures.

Thanks in part to the legend that a carp who manages to swim upstream and leap over a waterfall transforms into a dragon, these fish have long

been associated with inner strength and success.

In 1914, during an exhibition in Tokyo held for Emperor Taishō shortly after his accession to the throne, a collective was formed to gather the best carp breeders in Japan. On that occasion, eight magnificent specimens were gifted to Crown Prince Shōwa, and from that moment on, they became a national phenomenon.

In 1917, the term *Nishikigoi* (brocaded carp) was coined, replacing more generic names such as *Madaragoi* (spotted carp), *Kawarigoi* (different carp), *Irogoi* (colored carp), and *Moyōgoi* (patterned carp).

Meanwhile, the ornamental ponds that housed these carp became an integral part of Japanese gardens—lush, peaceful havens designed with utmost care to evoke serenity and contemplation. In these gardens, where visitors are invited to stroll quietly along paths and little bridges, admiring ancient ceremonial lanterns and Buddha statues, what seem like living jewels or colorful flowers swim peacefully just beneath the clear water.

It wouldn't be long before Koi carp began to captivate millions of people around the world.

In the game you can admire six varieties of *Koi* carp:



Kohaku

Often used to represent Japan due to its colors, it is considered by some to be the first variety of carp to have been selectively bred.



Asagi

Despite the name meaning “light aqua green,” the pattern on its back resembles the mesh of metal armor.



Showa Sanshoku

The first hybridization occurred at the dawn of the Showa era, in 1927, but it took 50 years of crossbreeding to achieve the intense colors seen today.



Ogon

It exists in gold, platinum, and orange colors. Through careful hybridization, breeders have managed to make the color extremely metallic and iridescent.



Shiro Utsuri

Although it may not seem like it, the Shiro Utsuri carp has black skin with white markings, not the other way around. It is a variety of the *Utsurimono* carp.



Onagagoi

Also known as the Butterfly Carp or Dragon Carp, this variety was created in 1980 at the request of Prince Akihito of Japan. Its descendants live in a pond in the East Gardens of the Imperial Palace.

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