



The news spread through the Imperial Palace like wildfire: the Emperor finally has an heir! And the speculations of concubines and courtiers of all dynasties are rife... Which of the four celestial spirits will become the newborn's divine protector?

Unfortunately, the imperial onmyōji quarreled over the best way to interpret omens and study augurs. The four guardians, Seiryū the Azure Dragon of the East, Byakko the White Tiger of the West, Genbu the Black Tortoise of the North, and Suzaku the Vermilion Bird of the South, can all claim to become the imperial Prince's tutelary guide.

Faced with this impasse, the ancient and honorable tradition of Shijin will make it possible to decide between them. Because it's more than just a game. The onmyōji will try to decipher the celestial oracles in this duel of ingenuity and wits, guiding the elements of the four deities, in order to determine who will watch over the world.

Rise to the glory of the next Emperor!

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GAME COMPONENTS

- This rulebook
- 1 game board
- 4 Guardian miniatures
- 4 Guardian cards
- 8 Seal tokens
(4 **WHITE** and 4 **BLACK**)
- 4 base rings
(2 **WHITE** and 2 **BLACK**)



GAME OBJECTIVE

Lock in the opposing guardian by placing four seals in spaces adjacent to their miniature.

SETUP

1. Place the game board in the center of the table.
2. Choose from one of eight scripted setups, detailed on the next page.
3. Randomly determine a first player. They play **WHITE**. They choose one of the four guardians, and place the associated miniature and card (Vigilance side up) in front of them. They place a **WHITE**-colored base ring on their Guardian miniature, and take the four **WHITE**-colored seals. Then the second player, who plays **BLACK**, follows the same sequence by choosing one of the remaining guardians.
4. Alternating, starting with the second player, the players place a seal of their color in an eligible free space on the game board. The spaces eligible for the placement of a seal are marked by a  on the chosen scripted setup diagram.
5. Once all the seals have been placed, the second player places their guardian in a free space on the game board. Then the first player places their guardian in the same way.

Setup example
(Crater):



*Guardian card
(Vigilance Side)*



Guardian card
(Vigilance Side)

PIECE

This term includes Guardian miniatures and Seal tokens.

ADJACENT SPACE

A space is adjacent to the spaces surrounding it to the sides and diagonally.

SPACE CAPACITY

A space can contain a maximum of one piece.

A space containing a piece is said to be 'occupied'.

A space containing neither a guardian nor a seal is said to be 'free'.



✓: Spaces adjacent to the guardian playing **BLACK**

SCRIPTED SETUPS

◻: Space eligible for placing a seal during setup.



Forest



Rocks



Island



Crater



Plain



Canyon



Sanctuary



River Junction

GAMEPLAY

Starting with the first player, players alternate turns until one of the players locks in the opposing guardian.

On their turn, a player must do one of the following:

- Move a guardian;
- Move a seal;
- Use a reinforced seal.



ACTIONS

MOVING A GUARDIAN

Move your guardian to an adjacent free space.

MOVING A SEAL

Move one of your seals (reinforced or not) to an adjacent free space.

USE A REINFORCED SEAL

A seal is '**reinforced**' if it's adjacent to its guardian.

When you use one of your reinforced seals, you can do one of the following:

- Swap your seal with any other piece adjacent to it;



*Example: The player playing **BLACK** can swap their seal (highlighted) with one of pieces marked by ✓.*

- Push any other adjacent piece by taking its place. The pushed piece is moved to an adjacent free space, following the direction of the move. You cannot push a piece off the game board.



*Example: The **BLACK** seal (highlighted) can take the place of one of the pieces marked by ✓ and push it towards the free space pointed to by the arrow ➡.*

IMPORTANT: On their turn, a player cannot undo their opponent's last move by reversing the move previously made.

TRANSCENDENCE

Each guardian has a Transcendence ability. Two of the guardians have a Move ability, while the other two have a Hold ability. To use their Transcendence ability, a guardian must have previously reached the state of Transcendence.

IMPORTANT: It is impossible to reach the state of Transcendence and then use your Transcendence ability during the same turn, and vice versa.

STATE OF TRANSCENDENCE

If your four seals are adjacent to your guardian (and you have not used their Transcendence ability during this turn), your guardian reaches the state

of Transcendence. Then flip your Guardian card over to show its Transcendence side.

Your guardian may only reach the state of Transcendence on your turn. This state cannot be reached during setup.

MOVE ABILITIES

The Bird and the Tiger have **Move** abilities. During their turn, if their guardian is in a state of Transcendence, a player controlling one of these two guardians has a **new action possibility**. They can perform this instead of their turn action.

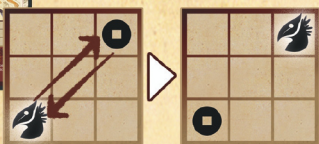
Guardian card
(Vigilance Side)



Guardian card
(Transcendence Side)



BIRD - Celestial Fire: Your guardian and one of your seals swap positions.



TIGER - Predator's Leap: Your guardian moves two spaces. They can change direction and cross an occupied space.



HOLD ABILITIES

The Dragon and the Tortoise have **Hold** abilities. During their turn, if their guardian is in a state of Transcendence, a player controlling one of these two guardians can use their ability, **in addition to their turn action** (before or after). Using a Hold ability is not considered an action.

DRAGON - Root Grip: During the next turn, the opposing guardian cannot be moved under any circumstances.



TORTOISE - Ice Shell: During the next turn, your guardian and your seals cannot be moved under any circumstances.



END OF THE STATE OF TRANSCENDENCE

When you use your guardian's Transcendence ability, flip their card over to show the Vigilance side. You can no longer use your guardian's Transcendence ability until they reached the state of Transcendence again.



GAME END

A player wins immediately and ends the game as soon as the **opposing guardian is locked in**.

To lock in an opponent's guardian, **your four seals must be adjacent** to your opponent's guardian.

If the two guardians are simultaneously locked in, the player who performed the action which caused of this double lock-in wins.

Note: In rare cases, a succession of multiple moves can create an impossible loop to break without one of the players losing the game. The game then ends in a draw.



*Example: The **WHITE** guardian is locked in by their opponent's four seals.*

FREE PLAY SETUP

Rather than opting for a scripted setup, you can choose to set up your pieces freely on the game board.

During setup, all spaces on the game board are considered eligible for placement of a piece. The other rules of the game remain unchanged.

THREE AND FOUR-PLAYER GAMES

You can also play *Shijin* with three or four players, with some rule tweaks.

FOUR PLAYERS

Two teams of two players compete against each other. Teammates should be seated in a way that allows them to alternate team turns.

Randomly determine a first player. Their team play **WHITE**. They choose one of the four guardians, and place the associated miniature and card (Vigilance side up) in front of them. Then the player seated to their left does the same thing with the color **BLACK**, until all the players have chosen their guardian.

Note: Guardians on the same team must have the same color base rings.

The last player to choose their guardian places a seal of their team's color in an eligible free space, then the player sitting to their right does the same, until all the players have placed all of their team's seals. Then continue around the table until all players have placed their guardian in a free space on the game board.

◆ GAMEPLAY

Starting with the first player, players alternate turns until one of the players locks in **one** of the opposing guardians. The player who achieves this wins the victory for their team.

◆ ADDITIONAL RULES

- Each player on a team embodies and controls their own guardian. A player can therefore neither move their teammate's guardian by performing a movement action, nor use the Transcendence ability of their teammate's guardian.
- Your guardian may only reach the state of Transcendence on your turn or on your teammate's turn.
- The team's seals are shared by the two players. However, a player on a team can only perform the Use a reinforced seal action with seals adjacent to their own guardian.

THREE PLAYERS

Two players form one team and face a single player.

The single player is the first player. They play **WHITE** and play only one guardian.

Use the rules of the four-player game, taking care to alternate the turn of the single player and the turn of the team, for the setup as well as for the sequence of game play.

Example: Single player turn, then team turn (Player A), then single player turn, then team turn (Player B)...

Setup example (Crater):

Three players



Four players





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