

Mottainai Rules Reference & Teaching Guide

v1 (Feb 4, 2024)

This guide is based on the official, printed Mottainai rules, but it does not include every detail. It works best when the player teaching the game is already fully familiar with the rules.

Use this guide with the original temple mats (plus Turn Reference card) or the Utix Press temple mats.

SETUP

- Give each player a template mat. Shuffle 1 deck (2-3 players) or 2 decks together (4-5 players).
 - *For new players, the game designers recommend playing two parallel games of 2-3 players each.*
- Deal a 5-card hand to each player and 1 card face-down in their Task slot.
- Each player turns over one card from the top of the deck to start the Floor. The player whose card name comes first in alphabetical order will be the starting player.
- Turns proceed clockwise.

Game by Carl Chudyk & Asmadi Games. Unofficial guide by Utix Press. utixpress.com/games

REMINDERS & ERRATA

- You may not skip or pass on **actions**.
 - *Exception ([Mask errata](#)): If an opponent has **Mask**, you may "Pass".*
- For **effects** of completed works:
 - All effects are **optional**.
 - If multiple effects would be triggered at the same time, you choose the order. However, effects which **return** the work must be used last.
 - [Converting effects](#): When an effect gives you an action (e.g. **Pin**, **Doll**), you may convert it to Craft or Prayer.
 - [Dice errata](#): Cards in your waiting area count toward your "hand size".
 - The printed rules contain additional effect descriptions and FAQs.
- [Tiebreaker](#): The current player, or else "the next tying player that would have a turn", wins the tie.

TEACHING MOTTAINAI

1. Read aloud the introduction in the printed rules.

“Each player is an acolyte in a Buddhist temple...”

2. Acknowledge that the game has a lot of concepts. Assure players that they will learn the concepts in due time, and the game will move quickly after the first few rounds.
3. Explain the card structure, the areas of the temple and their functions, the turn structure, and scoring.

CARDS

Summarize how each card has multiple functions by pointing out its parts.

- **Task** and **Helper** type
- **Material** type
- **Value** (1, 2, or 3)
- **Work of art** (name, picture, and effect)

Explain how each work of art is unique, but the types and values always match. Review the five types and their values (which players can find on their Temple Mats).

TEMPLES

Orient players to the temple mat, including the 6 areas of the temple and the rules reminders on both sides. Explain and demonstrate an example of each aspect of the game by placing/tucking cards throughout the temple areas.

- **Task:** You'll choose a new task each turn. This determines what action you will be able to take on your turn (other players will also perform your task on their turn). These five tasks, described on the temple mat, are the main way in which cards move around to different locations in the game.
- **Helpers:** These give you bonus actions. Any time you perform a task of a given type, you get bonus actions for each helper of the same type. You collect helpers from the floor by using the **Monk** action.
- **Craft Bench** and **Sales:** You collect materials from the floor using the Potter action. As long as they're in your Craft Bench, they provide **support** for you to **Craft** works of art. Finally, you move them from your Craft Bench to your Sales using the **Clerk** action. (Sales will be explained in a minute.)
- **Gallery** and **Gift Shop:** This is where you put completed works of art. When you complete a work of art, you choose which wing to place it in.
 - **Effects:** Once the work of art is completed, it has an effect (written in the middle of the card) that becomes active going forward.

- **5 works in one wing:** You can accumulate works of art in both wings, but as soon as any player has 5 works of art on one side of their temple, the game ends immediately, and we tally the scores.
- **Scoring:** The values of your completed works give you points. Sometimes a card **effect** will give you extra points. And you also get points for sales as long as they are “covered” by works of art (**covered sales**). This is probably the trickiest part:
- **Covered sales:** A completed work of art in the Gift Shop “covers” sales of the same type. *Demonstrate with examples:* One stone work of art will cover up to 2 stone sales. One metal work of art will cover up to 3 metal sales. But it’s all or nothing: if you have 4 metal sales and only one metal work of art, none of those metal sales are covered.

Another way of saying this is: if the total point value of works of a given type in your Gift Shop is greater than or equal to the number of Sales of that type, then those sales are covered.

- **Covered helpers:** Similarly, works of art in the Gallery cover Helpers. These don’t give you points, but they give you additional bonus actions during the game. This is also all-or-nothing. *Give an example:* If you perform a Monk task and you have two covered Monk helpers, you get 5 actions.
- **Waiting area** (not shown on the original temple mat): Any time you would draw a card, you put it face down in your “waiting area” off to the side. It won’t go to your hand until the end of the turn.
- **Floor:** This area is shared by all players. These cards are spread out, face up.

TURN STRUCTURE

Orient players to the reference card showing the steps for Morning, Noon, and Night of each turn. Explain how tasks are completed.

Morning: *Explain “Morning” (return cards, “In the morning effects”, current task to floor, and optionally choose a new task). Along the way, define “Return”.*

Noon: At noon, you’ll complete each player’s task (if they have one), going clockwise, then your own.

- **Before starting a task, count the number of actions you’ll get:** By default, each task gives you one action of that type (Clerk, Monk, etc.) However, if you have Helpers of the same type:
 - Each matching Helper gives you **one** bonus action. But if all of those Helpers are covered, each helper gives you **two** bonus actions instead. *Demonstrate with an example.*
- **Taking actions and converting actions:** For each action, you have a choice of three things:
 - Complete the written task (Clerk, Monk, Tailor, Potter, or Smith).
 - Convert it to **Craft** a work of art of the same type (Paper, etc.).
 - Convert it to **Prayer**. “Pray” means to draw a card to your waiting area. If you have more actions than you can use, you’ll always use the extras to Pray. (Normally, you can’t skip an action.)

- **Crafting and Support:** If you convert an action to Craft, you'll complete a work of art from your hand *of the same type* as the original action. For example, you can convert a Clerk action to Craft a paper work of art. However, if it has a point value of 2 or 3, it needs support from your Craft Bench. *Demonstrate an example. Support cards remain in the Craft Bench afterward; they are not "spent".*
- **To summarize:** You'll start with the player to your left. Count the number of actions. Take those actions. Move to the next player. Count. And so on.
- **Empty task slots:** If another player doesn't have a task, you'll skip them. If your task slot is empty, you'll Pray instead.

Night: *Explain "Night" (perform "At night" effects, draw waiting area to hand).*

GAME END AND SCORING

The game ends when a player completes a 5th work in the same wing (Gallery or Gift Shop) **OR** the last card from the deck is drawn.

- This happens immediately. No further actions are taken, and no further effects trigger.
- The player with the most points wins.
- For an extended game, change the requirement to 6 works in one wing.

Point out the scoring reference on the back of the temple mat. Your score is the total of four things:

1. Point values of complete works
2. Points from card effects
3. Point values of **covered** sales
4. **Backorders:** For each material type, if you have more sales of that type than any other player (covered or uncovered), **look at your hand** for any cards of that type, and score their point values

For first-time players, it's easier to ignore Backorders and learn how they work at the end of the game.