OMNITSU

The game of Japanese medieval spies, intrigue, hidden messages, and not killing the messenger... you hope.

For 2-4 players, game time 30 minutes.

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SYNOPSIS

Players are spies and messengers (*Omnitsu*), transporting valuable messages from their Lord to the Daimyo, the Liege Lord. They get paid on successful delivery. The **real** message gets the most points for success - so everyone is trying to deliver the real message, and stop the others from doing the same. Players use a system of simple card play, bluffing, and strategy to move the "real" scroll to their own hand so when the endgame is triggered, they have it. They are also trying to keep away the Poisoned scroll, the one that secretly tells the Daimyo to "kill this messenger".

SETUP

Take the scroll cards, removing all **Daimyo** scrolls and one **Poison** scroll card. Shuffle the remaining Poison and Decoy scroll cards. Take one Daimyo scroll, one Poison scroll, and add enough random Poison and Decoy Scroll cards to form a new pile equal to the number of players. Shuffle this pile, then give one scroll from this pile to each player, face down. Do not look at your card!

Take all the remaining scroll cards (including the extra Daimyo card) and place them in the middle of the table, face up—this is the **Scroll Pile**.

Shuffle the remaining non-scroll cards to form a **Main Deck** and deal one card to each player's hand (you may look at cards in your hand). Draw one card per player in the game from the main deck and place them face up next to the Main deck to make a **Discard Pile**. Play begins.

PLAY SEQUENCE

Play is conducted in Turns, with a turn split into an **Action** phase and a **Draw/Discard** phase. A turn starts with an Action Phase involving a simultaneous choice by all players: either **Play a Card Action**, or **Cracking Your Scroll** (picking up your Scroll card and adding it to your hand where you can see it). Players Playing a Card Action throw down their card of choice from their hand. Players cracking their scroll pick up their scroll. Both of these happen at the time same time.

Cracking Your Scroll: this is resolved first. Once you've looked at your scroll (i.e. "broke the seal" or "Cracked" it) it can no longer be turned in to the Daimyo, and is in effect a "Poisoned" Scroll (presenting it will get you killed and score zero points.) Open scrolls stay in your hand.

Play a Card Action: After this, the cards are played, resolving in numerical order from lowest to highest based on the number in the upper left. Note that some cards can play "AT ANY TIME". A card playable at any time that is Played as a Card Action (ie thrown down) plays in its numerical order; a card playable AT ANY TIME pulled from the hand in response to another card action or situation plays at **any** time. If more then one AT ANY TIME card is played together, you resolve them in their numerical order.

There are several kinds of cards in the game:

Scrolls: The game comes with seven scroll cards (supporting play up to 4 players). The cards are two Daimyo's scrolls, two Poisoned scrolls, and three Decoy scrolls.

Locations: Each Location card details a specific place players travel to, get aid from, etc. Locations once played stay in the game (center of play) and can only be removed with a specific card combination. Locations will list an **Action** (which takes effect when the card is played and are handled like any action), and ongoing **Effects** which influence game play for all players.

Locations also serve as a game timer: once the **Daimyo's Castle** card is played, the game enters a **game ending phase.**

Person/Actions: Each Person card details the spy paying for the services of a specific person to do one of two Actions. Each card also has an arrow on the top: If an Action needs a **Target**, slap down the card pointing at the Target player. Each Person card has two possible Actions listed. You can only use one of the Actions on the card when played. You choose the Action when you resolve the card.

Unless specifically mentioned, when you play an Action card you **Discard** it after resolving it. Discards and Draws due to the action are considered separate from the end turn draw and discards.

Some cards use some terminology/rules in common worth going over:

REVERSIBLE: Any action either with a Target or specifically labeled REVERSIBLE can be reversed. Actions with a Target simply reverse the effects (treat it like the Target played the card against the person who played it against them). Other cards may have a specific REVERSIBLE effect instead.

TARGET: Some cards say TARGET a player. You pick this Target player when you

throw down the card by angling the card so the arrow on the top points at your target. TARGET cards can be REVERSED. However, some cards also say to do things to a player, or any player, or your choice of player etc but don't specifically say TARGET. In those cases, the card isn't REVERSIBLE unless it specifically says it is.

DESTROY: Some cards when played DESTROY other cards (or themselves). These are removed from the game. Other cards can possibly bring them back.

BLOCKED: Some cards BLOCK a location. Leave the Action card on the Location. From now on the Location is considered as if it as in the deck (not in play). Cards that require it can't be used, its Effects are not played, and it doesn't count as a Location in Play to bring in the Daimyo's Castle.

Keywords: Some cards say "Cancels Combat" or "Stops Peasants", etc. In that case you need to read the cards which will indicate if the person is a peasant or engaging in combat.

If a card **specifies a discard of a specific type**, and you don't have that type, you cannot play the card. In that case you can choose the alternate action or your card does nothing.

If a card **uses a Discard as a way to do something** ("Discard up to 2 cards and get two cards per Discard"), you do not count the Action card you just played and discarded unless it specifically says so.

If a **card lets you play another card,** that card is played when you play the "triggering" card, not in numerical order. For example, if you played "8: Geisha", then play "26: Disguise Master" and replace the Geisha with "27: Fortune Teller", the Fortune teller goes at 8th in order, not 27th. Cards will specify this.

If a card says to **replace it with one from your hand,** the original card is discarded unless specified otherwise.

A card played ANY TIME can be played from your hand even if your regular card has been played. You can play any number of ANY TIME cards during a turn. An ANY TIME card played as a regular card can be 'held' and played out of order until another action has gone in order to use it if the player wants (but can't be played BEFORE it's number).

Draw/Discard: After Actions are resolved, all players may take or discard additional cards. At the start of the game each player takes **one** card during this phase. Players also start with a **Hand Limit of 5 cards**; if they have more than 5 cards IN HAND, they have to discard down to this hand limit now. This does not count the face-down scrolls on the Table.

Other than going over the Hand Limit, the only time you can discard a card is in response to a card action; or due to the Temple Clearing effect.

If you discard a Scroll card, it goes face up to the Scroll pile. If a player draws one from the Deck during a game that a player put there accidentally, put it in the Scroll pile and draw two new cards to replace it.

Certain cards may add to the cards taken at the end of the turn, to the hand limit, and to force a mandatory discard every turn. Players draw cards in any order (it doesn't matter).

When the main deck is depleted, reshuffle the discards to make a new deck. After everyone has resolved their Draw/Discards, a new turn is started.

GAME END AND SCORING

When someone plays the **Daimyo's Castle** Location, the **Game Ending Phase** starts immediately.

Everyone turns over all of their cards (the thrown out regular actions no longer apply). Everyone can then play any remaining "ANY TIME" cards in numerical order to resolve any last actions. After that you can resolve the scrolls and calculate score.

Any player with more then one scroll, a poison scroll, or **any** cracked scrolls is **killed = 0 points**. If you are the only one with an uncracked Daimyo's scroll add +10 Points; if you have one uncracked Decoy scroll add+5 points; and each other card in your hand is worth +1 points. Of course getting killed is a score of zero regardless of extra cards.

When more than one player has an uncracked Daimyo's scroll at the end game the Daimyo scrolls are considered **CONTESTED**. Unless a player plays another Action card that resolves this, BOTH Daimyo Scrolls are considered POISONED and **both** players are killed. Two players with Daimyo's scrolls where one is cracked and one is uncracked is not CONTESTED - the cracked one is considered Poisoned and the uncracked one is legitimate.