

A game of power and influence in India

Control of India at the beginning 18th century is up for grabs. The 200 year-long rule of the Grand Moguls is collapsing, but they still have some power. Now is the time for the Maharishis and princes to take control of the Indian subcontinent. The players use strategy and cunning to win influence over northwestern India, province by province and city by city. The most successful player (and the winner) is the one who establishes the most magnificent palaces and has the most power in the end.

Overview

The board is divided into 12 Indian provinces. In the game, the players will visit each of the provinces just once. In each visit, the players compete, using their cards, for the influence available in the current province. Each visit consists of several rounds and in each round, the players, in turn order, can either play 1 or 2 cards or completely withdraw from the visit. When a player withdraws, he compares the cards he has played in the visit with those played by his opponents. The player wins influence in forces that he has more symbols for on his cards than any other player. There are two important targets for the players:

- Winning the right to rule the province, symbolized by the elephant, adds the economic power of the province to the player.
- Winning control over the prominent forces, like Vizier or Monk, gives the player rule of individual cities and their spheres of influence, which may extend beyond the borders of the province.

In both ways, players may score influence points in each province.

After all twelve provinces have been visited, the player with the most influence points, is the winner.

Contents

1 game board 2 gold rings (crowns)
100 palaces 12 octagonal province tiles
5 scoring markers 24 oval influence tiles
2 black figures 16 bonus tiles
100 cards (15 square & 1 Taj Mahal)

Note: Before the first game, carefully remove the individual tiles from their frames. Sort out the 4 special cards (with a different back from the other 96). Only one gold ring is used in the game; the second gold ring serves as a back-up.

Preparation

Unfold the board and place it on the table. It shows the northwestern area of the Indian subcontinent divided into 12 provinces. Each province has 4 cities except for the province with Agra (the site of the Taj Mahal), which has 5 cities. The cities are connected by a network of roads. 16 of the 49 cities are colored purple to indicate that they are fortresses. A scoring track runs around the board to enable the players to track their influence points.

Place the number 12 province tile on the province with Agra. Shuffle the remaining 11 octagonal province tiles face down and then place one, randomly and face up, in each of the 11 remaining provinces. Place them so that they do not cover the roads and cities. The provinces are visited in the order shown on the tiles, starting with 1 and ending with 12, in the province with Agra.

Place the Taj Mahal bonus tile face up on the fortress city of Agra.

Shuffle the 15 square bonus tiles face down and then place one, randomly and face up, on each fortress city.

Sort the 24 oval influence tiles by their pictures and place them face up in four stacks beside the upper right corner of the board (court of the Grand Moguls). Place one of each type on the corresponding space in the court of the Grand Moguls.

Place the gold ring (the crown) in the court of the Grand Moguls.

Place the 4 special cards face up beside the board.

Shuffle the 96 remaining cards. Players use these cards to compete for influence points in the game. There are 21 cards each in red, yellow, green, and violet (= the colored cards) and 12 plain cards (= white cards). The cards have combinations of six different symbols:

Vizier (for control of the political forces)

General (for control of the military forces)

Monk (for control of the religious forces)

Princess (for control of the social forces)

Grand Mogul (for control of the crown)

Elephant (for control of the province and its economic yield)

Deal 6 cards to each player face down. These are the players' starting hands and are kept secret from the other players.

Lay out the card supply for the first round. The number of players determines how many to draw and place face up to the left of the board.

"three players · 5 cards

"four players · 7 cards

"five players · 9 cards

Place the remaining cards face down in a stack on the left side of the board. This drawing deck will be used in later rounds. Used cards will be discarded to a face up discard pile next to the drawing deck.

Sort the palace and scoring markers by color. Each player selects a color, places all the palaces of that color before him on the table, and his scoring marker on the zero space of the scoring track.

Note: The number of palaces is unlimited. In the rare case that a player uses all of his palaces, he should continue the game with additional palaces of an unused color.

Set up the 2 black figures. Place one (current province figure) in the first province (with the number 1 province tile). Move the number 1 province tile to the space provided in court of the Grand Moguls. Choose a starting player by any method you prefer; the starting player places the other black figure (starting player figure) before himself on the table.

Playing the game

The starting player begins the first visit. Play continues in clockwise order around the table. On a

player's turn, he must:

- play 1 or 2 cards to influence forces in the current province

or

- withdraw from the competition and claim the rewards of his influence in the current province.

When a player withdraws, the visit is over for him and he may take no further turns in the current province. When all players have withdrawn, the visit ends and the next begins.

- play 1 or 2 cards

When a player chooses to play 1 or 2 cards, he must first play exactly one colored card from his hand face up on the table. On his first turn in a visit, a player may play a card of any color (red, yellow, green or violet). In all subsequent turns during a visit, the colored cards a player plays must be the same color as the first card he played in the visit. (exception: special change color card, see below).

Note: in the next visit, a player may again choose any color on his first turn and then must use that color for the rest of that visit.

In addition to the one colored card, a player may also play either one white card or one special card. White cards and special cards may never be played without a colored card (see also the rules below for the special cards.)

A player should play his cards so that they overlap each other, but should make sure that all players see the symbols on all the cards played. This is important so that the players can easily see how much influence each player wields over each of the forces.

When a card has been played, it may not be taken back into the player's hand. Player's may attempt to influence others in their card play, however, players must keep the cards in their hands secret from the other players.

·withdraw

When a player withdraws, he may play no more cards during this visit, but compares the cards he has played during this visit with those of his opponents:

” Vizier, General, Monk or Princess: When a withdrawing player has more symbols of one of these four types than any other single player, he takes the corresponding influence tile from the court of the Grand Moguls and places it face up on the table before himself. Then he places one of his palaces on an empty city space of his choice in the current province.

When a player places a palace on a fortress, he takes the bonus tile on it and scores it immediately (see points of influence below).

If a player has the majority with several of these four symbols, he takes all corresponding influence tiles from the court, places a palace for each, and takes and scores any bonus tiles he earns.

”Grand Mogul: When a withdrawing player has more Grand Mogul symbols than any other single player, he takes the crown from the court of the Grand Moguls, puts it on one of his palaces, and places this "crown palace" on any city in the current province. Unlike the above four symbols, he may place it on a city that already has a palace. In this case, he puts the crown palace next to the other palace. If the crown palace is placed on an empty city, one normal palace may be placed there later in the visit by another player.

Note: A crown palace may be placed on a fortress, but the placing player may not take a bonus tile still there. In this case, he leaves the tile for the next player to place a normal palace there.

”Elephant: When a withdrawing player has more Elephant symbols than any other single player, he wins power over the province and over its economic yield (represented by the four basic Indian goods: rice, tea, spices and jewels). The player takes the province tile from the court of the Grand Moguls, puts it face up on the table before himself.

After the withdrawing player has taken the tiles and/or crown he has earned from the court and scored any appropriate influence points (see below), he discards the cards he has played during this visit.

Note: Once a tile or the crown has been won and taken from the court, of course no other player may win that same tile or crown on this visit.

Influence points

After withdrawing and comparing his cards with the other players' cards, a player determines how many influence points he has earned and advances his scoring marker on the scoring track

accordingly. Scoring should proceed in the following order:

1) Bonus tiles: when a player takes a bonus tile, he receives:

... 4 influence points. He then sets the tile aside; it is out of the game.

... 2 influence points and advances his scoring marker on the scoring track two spaces. He then sets the tile aside; it is out of the game.

... the topmost card from the drawing deck and puts it in his hand. He then sets the tile aside; it is out of the game.

... 1 influence point for the commodity on this bonus tile and 1 influence point for each occurrence of same commodity which he has on other bonus tiles and province tiles. He puts the bonus tile face up on the table before himself as it can earn him even more points later in the game.

If a player wins several bonus tiles in a visit, he scores each individually and sequentially.

$1 + 1 + 1 = 3$ points

$1 + 1 + 1 + 1 = 4$ points

total = 7 points

2) Province tiles:

When a player wins the current province tile, he puts it face up on the table before himself and receives 1 point for each commodity on it (the number 1 province tile has 1 commodity and is, thus, worth 1 point, all other province tiles are worth 2 points). In addition, he receives 1 point for each occurrence of the same commodities on province tiles and bonus tiles that the player has before himself on the table.

Example: just won already scored from earlier visits

8 points = $1+1 + 1 + 1 + 1+1 + 1 + 1$

3) Palaces:

When a player places at least one palace in the current province, he receives 1 influence point. Note: even if he places several palaces, he receives only 1 influence point for the current province! In addition, he scores 1 influence point for each additional province (not city!) where he has a palace that is connected through an uninterrupted line of roads and his palaces to his own palaces in the current province. Each city with no palace or another player's palace, is considered an interruption. Except that, a city with two palaces counts as a connection for both players.

Finishing a withdrawal

After the withdrawing player has scored all his influence points, he discards the cards he used this turn, except for special cards, face up on the discard pile. Discarded cards have no further influence on the province, thus, deadlocks are often resolved in favor of the remaining players!

As his last action for the visit, the withdrawing player takes two cards of his choice from the face up card supply next to the board. These he adds to his hand. Note: the last player to withdraw takes only one card as that is all that remains! Such is the disadvantage for finishing last.

The visit continues in clockwise order around the table with players playing cards or withdrawing. When only one player remains, he plays as many turns as he wants (using the normal rules for playing cards) and then withdraws to score his influence points.

A player may choose to withdraw in the first round of a visit without playing any cards. Of course, the player will place no palaces in this province and score no points for this visit. However, such a player draws the topmost card from the drawing deck and then takes two cards from the card supply. Thus, players may occasionally find it advisable to withdraw without playing cards.

Ending a visit and starting the next visit

When the last player in a visit has withdrawn and scored his influence points, discarded the cards he played to the discard pile, and taken the last card from the card supply, the visit ends. Each player, who has two identical oval influence tiles, returns them to the supply near the upper right of the board and takes the appropriate special card (see special cards below).

The next visit begins with the following:

”Move the starting player figure to the next player to the left. He is the starting player for the new visit.

”Move the current province figure to the next province in number sequence (from 1 to 12).

”Move the next province tile from the new province to the space provided in court of the Grand Moguls.

”Replace any influence tiles that were taken from the court of the Grand Moguls. Take them from the

supply next to the board.

”Return the crown to the court of the Grand Moguls if it is not still there.

”Draw cards from the drawing deck to lay out a new card supply. Draw the same number of cards as in preparation.

When the drawing deck is exhausted, shuffle the discard pile and place it face down as the new drawing deck.

The special cards

At the beginning of the game, the 4 special cards are placed face up beside the board. Players can win control of a special card by winning two of the Vizier, the General, the Monk, or the Princess influence tiles. At the end of a visit, after all players have withdrawn, players who have two identical oval influence tiles trade those tiles for the corresponding special card. The player takes the card from the table if it is still there or from the player who is holding it. The player adds the card to his hand.

Special cards are played just like the white cards. That is, they must be played with a colored card. Only one special card may be played by a player in a turn. They have the advantage that they return to the player's hand instead of being discarded when the player withdraws. Of course, when another player has the two influence tiles corresponding to the special card, that player will take the card for himself at the end of the visit.

The special cards give a player, when they are played (they have no effect if they stay in the player's hand), the following advantages:

+1 Elephant · Just like the white Elephant cards.

+1 Grand Mogul · Just like the white Grand Mogul card.

+2 influence points · The player receives 2 influence points, immediately, when he plays this special card.

Free color change · The colored card, which the player plays with this special card, need not match the color required for this visit.

Note: This special card applies only to the turn it is played. In the player's subsequent turns of this visit, he must use cards of the color he started the visit with.

Game end

The game ends after the twelfth visit is complete. Each player receives additional influence points for the cards remaining in his hand, including the cards he took from the card supply when he withdrew on the last visit. He receives 1 point for:

”each special card,

”each white card, and

”each card of the color he has the most cards of (if two or more colors tie for most, the player gets just points for one color).

The player with the highest total score is the winner.

Game tactics

”A player’s strength comes from his cards and cards are scarce. It is less important to win many influence points in one specific visit, but rather to win some influence points in as many visits as possible. Remember that you also score by connecting to palaces in already visited provinces and by matching previously gathered commodities.

”Carefully consider when to play more cards and when to withdraw. Try to avoid long conflicts as they cost a lot of cards. Also, a player holding a lot of cards in his hand may encourage, just by this fact, other players to withdraw quickly so that he may win points with a small card expenditure.

”Plan ahead. Decide where and what you want to collect and score in the next provinces with the cards you have. Also, carefully choose cards from the card supply to give you the cards you need to accomplish what you have planned.

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