

Collaborative Yisan

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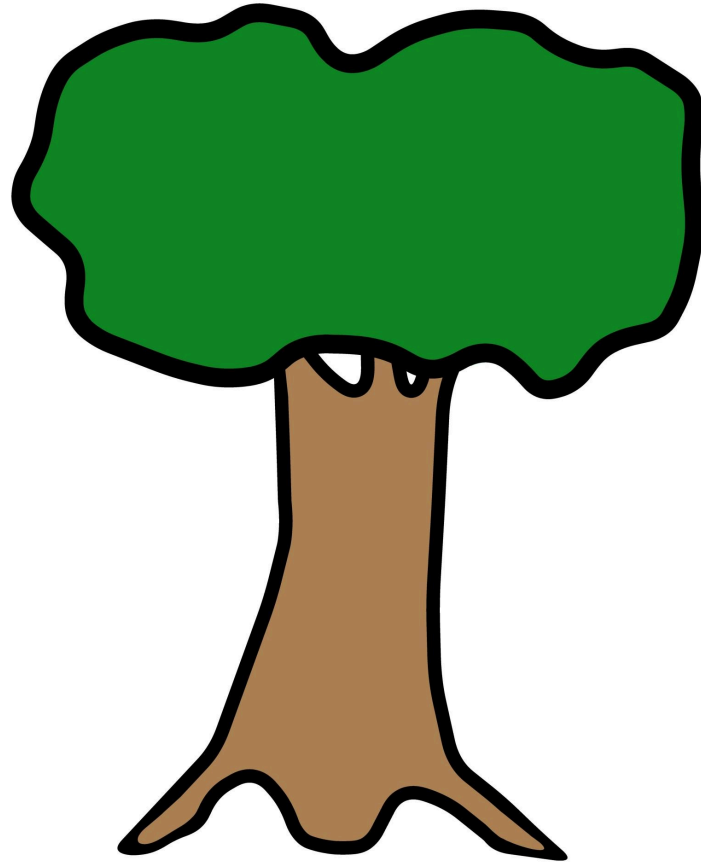
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Introduction

This is a primer for Yisan in 4 player Free-For-All Competitive EDH. This is a very different format from MTGO 1v1 or French. Yisan is also a good deck online in MTGO 1v1, but the format is incredibly different and Yisan as a deck functions much differently on MTGO 1v1. Unfortunately I'm not well-versed enough on MTGO 1v1 Commander to go into detail on the specific differences between decks, formats, and metas, but Yisan must be more reactive in multiplayer cEDH. You are not as fast as the faster decks of the meta, such as Storm, Food Chain, Flash Hulk, etc. and need to plan accordingly.

If you're unfamiliar with the multiplayer competitive EDH format / meta and want to learn more about it, check out the Discord server at <https://discord.gg/cedh> - feel free to come by and ask questions or just hang out and chat about Magic (or memes).

Edit: Since the big MTGO Banlist overhaul in July 2018, I no longer know if Yisan is still played in MTGO 1v1 Commander.

Yisan Gameplay Videos

I'm constantly working to record and upload more cEDH gameplay - check out my channel at youtube.com/c/maynardferguson_cEDH

Here's a few games from a session I played with him recently: Hopefully these can give you an idea of some of the strengths and weaknesses of the deck, and how some games play out.

[cEDH Webcam Game 14 - Tymna Kraum Midrange v Gitrog v Yisan v T&T Razahulk](#)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Zn55ur0htg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pRLOU4NS4A&t=722s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q6yLCHOYmqM&t=10s>

Deck Archetype

Creature-Reliant Midrange - resilient to hate and removal; consistent; has great answers for artifact reliant decks. As a midrange deck, you're not looking to be the fastest deck at the table - that's reserved for decks like Storm, Flash Hulk, Food Chain, among other things. Rather, you

try to slow down and answer the other decks as needed, build a board, and push for a win when the coast seems clear and you have the resources.

Deck Strengths

Strong against countermagic and stax due to ability to use Yisan to develop board and find powerful mana sources.

You generally don't need to worry about spheres, tangle wires, or orbs - that's why you run them. Static orb can be a pain, though you can easily destroy it if you need to or break parity on it with your untappers (quirion ranger, scribe ranger) + exploration effects, with Seedborn Muse, or with Gaea's Cradle. Playing out mana dorks and having big mana sources in Cradle, Priest of Titania, and Karametra's Acolyte mean you don't have to care about taxes.

Countermagic isn't too big a problem for Yisan. Even though you can't do anything about a counterspell - unless you have autumn's veil or another piece of tech - you can usually sneak in Yisan early underneath countermagic. Defensive combo decks that play countermagic usually only want to defend their own combos or stop opposing combos if necessary. More control-focused blue decks might decide to counter an early Yisan, but oftentimes they have to save their countermagic for faster combo decks at the table.

Deck Weaknesses

Yisan can be fairly reliant on other decks at the table to answer fast combo. Being monogreen, you often have little recourse to answering a turn 2-3 ad nauseum / flash hulk / etc. if you didn't draw an early stax piece. Even later in the game, the stax pieces you play to try and ward off Ad Nauseum or similar wins can simply get destroyed or bounced and you lose to the player untapping and winning as a result. This is why it is important to start pushing for a win once you've built a board - if you give combo players enough time, they'll be able to draw or tutor a win. Ultimately there will be games you lose to fast combo simply due to pod composition or other players not being able to answer the combo; this is just the nature of the format. Every deck has some games where it just isn't winning.

Cursed Totem and Linvala shut down your mana and Yisan, forcing you to find an answer without using Yisan - however you have plenty of creature tutors to find an answer as well as the ability to draw a removal spell naturally.

Aven Mindcensor, **Containment Priest**, **Stranglehold** and Grafdigger's Cage hurt you similarly, though they don't stop your mana at least. They take away your ability to use other creature tutors, though.

If Mindcensor, Linvala, or containment priest are particularly common in your meta, you may need to tech against them.

Tabernacle at Pendrell Vale is naturally a pain for a creature deck like this one. Thankfully, most decks don't play this card, as the best stax decks currently tend to rely on mana dorks, save for Teferi. Even then, you can pay for a good deal of your board with a priest of titania, cradle, or karametra's acolyte - you just have to slow down through tabernacle.

Yisan struggles against Humility more than any other hate piece. ETB effect will not work against it so you have to rely on naturally drawing into an answer if you do not leave one up. It is important to note if any deck runs humility in the meta you are playing in. Luckily, Humility is rather rare. The only decks that run Humility, off of the top of my head, are some Grand Arbiter Augustin IV builds and the Enduring Renewal brew.

Torpor Orb, although not as big a problem for the deck as other hate, is worth respecting as otherwise it can lead to misplays.

Can be hated out if enough creature removal and/or board wipes are thrown out to stop Yisan. If you're afraid of a board wipe, you may have to play more conservatively and just rely on Yisan rather than playing any creatures from hand.

Should I build Yisan or Selvala?

This is actually a fairly common question, given that both are budget-friendly mono-green creature combo decks.

What do Yisan and Selvala have in common?

- They are both mono-green creature-based decks, overlapping in a decent number of cards
- They both are quite good on budgets
- They both focus on mana production to fuel an engine

That's about where the similarities end.

What is Selvala, and how is it different from Yisan?

Selvala is a fast combo deck, focused solely on landing Selvala and comboing out from there. A typically win attempt from Selvala looks like:

t1 Dork, t2 Selvala, t3 (fatty like phyrexian soulgorger) + selvala activation to make a high amount of mana, untapper for extra mana, play a draw spell like Soul's Majesty, or tutor out Sabertooth combo.

The deck is gunning hard to win on turn 3 or 4, though it can pull off wins on later turns after being disrupted.

Unlike Yisan, it does not try to play its own disruption, except for some removal to take out cards like cursed totem. Yisan also spends its time trying to slow down opponents through stax pieces like spheres and winter orb. Selvala doesn't really have any interest in interacting with opponents except when absolutely necessary.

- Selvala's combo turns are explosive, and can often involve using multiple creature tutors, creating 10+ mana, using spells to draw 6+ cards. Unlike Yisan, having Selvala in play immediately threatens a win on the following turn.

Should I play Selvala or Yisan?

I personally love both decks. They share a large core of cards so it's actually not too bad to just build both.

Before deciding anything, take some time and try out both decks! Whether it be via cockatrice or proxies or whatever.

However, I'll outline some reasons you might go towards one or the other.

Play Yisan if:

- You like having a high amount of decision points
- You want to have decisions to make on opposing turns as well as your own
- You like grinding with value and being resilient to interaction
- You don't mind slower wins
- You like having powerful stax pieces that mess with opponents' game plans

Play Selvala if:

- You like focusing on your own game plan rather than having to think too much about opponents'
- You want to go for fast wins
- You like the flashy wins involving big mana, big card draw, and various routes to getting to a combo
- You don't mind being the target at the table whenever Selvala is in play. Maybe you like the feeling of constantly threatening a win.
- You don't mind struggling when your opponents leave up bounce spells and removal for you

Strategy / Gameplan

Maneuvering through a game of cEDH

Simplified Gameplan

Put simply, your initial game plan is to get Yisan up and running in a timely fashion. Typically, you want to get him into play ASAP. From there, you want to work up the Yisan chain, pushing towards your win while disrupting when you need to or when you can afford to by playing removal or stax.

To facilitate the Yisan engine, you want to get an untapper and a mana engine. An untapper lets you start using Yisan two or more times in a turn cycle, while mana engines help you support these activations. The big mana producers also set you up to infinite combo with Temur Sabertooth. Some examples follow below, but check the Verse Breakdowns for a more in-depth look:

Quirion Ranger, Scryb Ranger: These are untappers that return a forest to your hand. These are your go-to ones since it's easier to support returning forests to your hand.

Wirewood Symbiote: This is an untapper that requires you to return an elf to your hand. You probably won't be versing this out too early since it's harder to support returning elves to your hand.

Seedborn Muse: Serves as both an untapper, due to untapping Yisan every turn, and a mana engine, as it untaps all your lands every turn. This allows you to use Yisan every turn, even more when combined with other untappers.

Priest of Titania: Generates a great amount of mana letting you fuel out both Yisan activations and spells from your hand as needed.

Karametra's Acolyte: An even greater mana producer than Priest of Titania, but sits at verse 4.

Burgeoning or Sakura-Tribe Scout combine well with Scryb Ranger or Quirion Ranger to make using their untap abilities every turn much less painful. You can, for example, respond to a burgeoning trigger by activating Quirion Ranger (or activating Yisan, fetching Quirion Ranger, then using the untap ability).

Quirion Ranger > Priest of Titania is a very common start. Assuming you open with a t1 dork, your Priest is creating at least 3 mana before factoring in other players elves, or any additional verses (Rec Sage on 3, etc.)

Mulliganing

Generally speaking, you're looking to find a way to drop Yisan on turn 2. The deck is decidedly commander-reliant; it doesn't function without Yisan available, so getting him in play as early as possible is virtually never incorrect. The rare exceptions to not mulliganing to a t1 accelerant are fairly match-up specific: a turn 2 Sylvan Library in a very grindy game for example.

Depending on the table you may have to mulligan for a stax piece - t2 Yisan with nothing else to stop a fast t3 combo is an easy way to lose if you can't rely on other players at the table to interact with the combo.

The mindset of a Yisan player

1. Look at your table and identify the different threats you'll need to answer. If you find yourself against Food Chain and Storm, you might think about mulliganing for a stax piece, such as a thorn of amethyst, trinisphere, or root maze, then planning on tutoring a

Caustic Caterpillar or Phyrexian Revoker for food chain. Sometimes you'll be able to rely on other decks to answer fast combos by using their countermagic, stax, or other forms of interaction, in which case you're safer to jam a Yisan and focus more on developing your own board.

2. Okay, you have Yisan in play, you've untapped and it's turn 3. Faster decks at the table are pushing towards a win or assembling a line towards a win. Now you need to decide between pushing your own board or disrupting theirs. Generally you want to work on pushing your own board if you can afford it - in which case you want to tutor untappers (quirion ranger or scryb ranger), land engines (sakura tribe-scout or azusa), mana engines (priest of titania or karametra's acolyte), and perhaps protection (sylvan safekeeper). Remember you have access to the cards in your hand as well as Yisan - you may need to play out a stax piece to answer an opposing combo. In the case where you need to tutor disruption - (caustic caterpillar, scavenging ooze, or phyrexian revoker for example) from Yisan then hopefully you have cards in hand that can make up for the lost speed, such as naturally playing or tutoring a priest / untapper / etc. Remember that the burden of interacting with combo decks isn't solely on you, so try to be as greedy as you can afford to be.
3. So you've made it through the early game by now, combo decks have been disrupted probably but are looking to rebuild towards a win. At this point you are cautiously looking to push for your own win - likely through craterhoof, but also possibly through temur sabertooth combo (see the "Winning the Game" section). Depending on what you're up against, people may have tried to disrupt you, either through removal, board wipes, or hate pieces (cursed totem, linvala, etc - see "Deck Weaknesses"), in which case you need to adapt. Find removal for the hate pieces, or work on rebuilding against the removal. Remember that you don't need Yisan to win - you can find Sabertooth combo / Craterhoof without Yisan

Yisan Verse Breakdowns

Double Versing

If you activate Yisan, hold priority, untap Yisan and activate again, you get two tutors for creatures of the latest verse. For example, your Yisan is at 2 counters. You activate Yisan, hold priority, untap Yisan with a Quirion Ranger, then activate Yisan again. Yisan is now at 4 verse counters (since they are put on as an activation cost) and you can search for two 4-cmc creatures. This is important because sometimes you want multiple creatures at the same CMC, such as Karametra's Acolyte + Temur Sabertooth at 4 cmc, or don't really need anything from a certain CMC and can afford to "skip" it for a higher cmc option. With enough mana, and multiple untappers, you can triple verse, but this is often not particularly relevant.

Verse 1 - targets semi-ordered by importance

Quirion Ranger - An untapper for Yisan and your Priest of Titania, as well as an elf. Preferred early, especially with an exploration / burgeoning effect. Having an untapper is great for helping you work up the Yisan chain more quickly, as well as being able to double verse (see Miscellaneous Advice for explanation on Double Versing).

Wirewood Symbiote - Another untapper and part of Temur Sabertooth combos. Also acts as protection for your elves, as you can return one to your hand in response to a board wipe or spot removal. Harder to turn online early, as returning a dork to your hand removes your access to the mana that the dork would produce, as well as having to re-cast the dork.

Sylvan Safekeeper - Protection. Constantly active way of protecting your Yisan / other creatures from targeted removal. Players are rarely going to want to trade a card and the mana investment just for one of your lands, so having this in play is great deterrent on its own.

Sakura-Tribe Scout - Helps keep lands in play after bouncing wce per turn, you can return a tapped forest with Ranger to untap Sakura-Tribe Scout, then with Quirion Ranger / Scryb Ranger. One notable interaction is that, ontap Sakura-Tribe Scout to put that land into play untapped. Essentially just lets you untap a land on each of your opponents' turns if you're not using the untappers for anything else.

Caustic Caterpillar - Sometimes you really just need access to the ability to interact with an artifact or enchantment in play. For example, against a food chain deck you might fetch this out early and leave it in play as a deterrent, keeping them from ever casting their food chain.

Arbor Elf - gets a special mention among the mana dorks due to its ability to generate 2 mana from forests enchanted with wild growth / utopia sprawl.

Other mana dorks - usually the other targets are better but occasionally you just want more mana or need to up your elf count later in the game when you've lost the better 1 drop targets. However you can always double-verse and skip verse 1 to get two 2-drops in later points of the game.

Verse 2 - semi-ordered by importance

Priest of Titania - Huge mana engine, especially when combined with untappers. Part of temur sabertooth combos. Notably, this card counts all elves in play, which is hugely relevant since many decks will play some number of elves.

Scryb Ranger - Fills the same function as Quirion Ranger, but is not an elf.

Phyrexian Revoker - Answers problematic permanents such as Food Chain, Lion's Eye Diamond, or just mana rocks like Mana Crypt. Additional targets include Isochron Scepter, Aetherflux Reservoir, Hermit Druid, Nomads En-Kor, Selvala, Sisay.

Scavenging Ooze - Instant speed targeted grave hate. The potentially big power/toughness can be relevant too.

Wall of Roots - while limited in the amount of mana it can produce, it can make mana immediately and on each turn. Can be useful as it refunds a mana immediately, sometimes getting you to verse three when you otherwise couldn't.

Verse 3 - unordered

Azusa - a double exploration effect, great for mana generation and compensating for the Quirion Ranger / Scryb Ranger bounces.

Manglehorn - artifact removal and great at slowing down artifacts. Mana rocks come into play tapped which makes Grim Monolith, Mana Vault much worse and doesn't allow your opponents to generate mana from drawn fast mana rocks. Also puts things like isochron scepter into play tapped. Asymmetric unlike root maze, so your own artifacts are unaffected.

Reclamation Sage - more versatile removal than Manglehorn and is an elf.

Eternal Witness - can recur a lost important card.

Verse 4 - unordered

Karametra's Acolyte - generates an incredible amount of mana. Useful in Temur Sabertooth combos, or just for the resources.

Temur Sabertooth - Useful in combos, but has many other uses as well. Can return creatures to your hand in response to board wipes or removal. Can return untappers to your hand on your turn to reuse them, circumventing the once-per-turn activation restriction.

Thought-Knot Seer - A great way to interact with combo decks. TKS can be put into play instant-speed off of Yisan. This lets you take actions such as tutoring TKS in an opponent's draw step after they draw a card they tutored with vampiric tutor. Notably, if the card they tutor is an instant such as ad nauseam, they can just cast it in response if they have the mana. However, this lets you hit tutored combo pieces or other important cards. You can also use TKS if you think an opponent is sandbagging an important spell or a board wipe. In a temur sabertooth combo, TKS can be bounced infinitely with infinite mana - this lets you draw your opponent's decks out - but be careful, as they may draw into an interactive spell. Generally, you might loop beast within and eternal witness first, let mana pools empty by moving to second main, then looping thought-knot seer. Notably, you need infinite green mana and infinite colorless mana, which can be tricky to achieve. If you have a boreal druid tapping for mana in your combo turn, then you can just use that. You can additionally do something like looping a removal spell on your own sol ring, returning the sol ring to your hand, and recasting it to effectively untap it and turn infinite green into infinite colorless as well.

Oracle of Mul-daya - is an elf, gives you land drops, helps you hit lands. Generally is lower priority than the other four drops, as acolyte will provide all the mana you need and beat out priest in going for an infinite mana combo.

Verse 5

As Verse 5 is somewhat sparse - versing out seedborn muse isn't always good, nor is versing out somberwald stag. You may prefer to go for a double verse 6, instead.

Seedborn Muse - the most important 5 drop in any Yisan deck, this makes it easy to activate Yisan on each opponent's turn while even having mana for other actions. However, be aware that by the time you're on verse 5, you only need to activate Yisan a few more times to get to verse 8 for craterhoof behemoth. **Seedborn is especially powerful if fetched out with a non-Yisan tutor, when your Yisan is at lower verse counts.** You may even want to skip

seedborn and get a double 6, because using muse to get through the later verses can be very unnecessary - you may instead want to have access to it if you get your board wiped and need to rebuild.

Somberwald Stag - a necessary tutorable answer to cards such as Linvala. However, you won't be able to Yisan out Stag to kill a Linvala. More likely, you're just tutoring and casting the Stag. You can Yisan for Somberwald Stag if there's another problematic creature in play that needs to be answered, such as an opposing combo piece, or a threatening Zur.

Verse 6

Woodland Bellow - Can find a missing part of temur sabertooth combo, or just get an interactive creature. Remember that you can't tutor Revoker off of it, nor can you tutor Azusa.

Bane of Progress - A giant board wipe that rarely affects you too greatly.

Duplicant - Another answer to Linvala as well as Elesh Norn. Can stop a lot of decks that are looking to use their commander to win, buying you time to untap and Craterhoof - eg. Gitrog, Zur. Having a hard answer to a creature post-seedborn muse as well as answers to any artifacts/enchantments in Bane of Progress helps keep you safe after playing Muse and passing

Verse 7

Regal Force - We don't have many options for good 7 drops but Regal Force can be great at breaking a stall, especially with a cursed totem in play, and giving you a bunch of cards to play with.

Hornet Queen - Can put a lot of blockers in play in combat-focused metas, and puts a lot of attackers into play to fuel a big Craterhoof behemoth, if for some reason your board is too small when you've reached craterhoof.

Verse 8

Craterhoof Behemoth - The easiest and most important win condition of the deck. To calculate damage, first count the number of creatures you have in play when craterhoof enters. Multiply that by the number of creatures you have that can attack (untapped, not summoning sick). This is the amount of pump damage. Then add the normal power of your attackers. Remember that all your creatures gain trample, so it is usually simple enough to subtract the toughness of opposing blockers.

For example, I get Craterhoof, making for 10 creatures in my control. Only 7 of these creatures can attack, giving $7 \times 10 = 70$ pump damage. The 7 creatures have combined base power of 13. Thus, I have 83 trample damage.

As you can see, Craterhoof isn't always enough to kill a whole table. Usually, however, people are losing life in combat and from their own card draw effects, so you may only need to deal 80 damage to kill 3 opposing players. This is why getting in safe attacks, even early on with your Wirewood Symbiote and Phyrexian Revoker, can really add up over time.

How do I deal with _____ ?

Food Chain:

Phyrexian Revoker can name Food Chain and stop its usage. A sphere of resistance can keep food chain from generating mana. Reclamation Sage can be fetched at instant speed (and your nature's claim / beast within can just be cast from hand). Thought-knot Seer can be fetched to exile the Food Chain after your opponent tutors for it, provided they aren't able to cast it immediately. You can also proactively respond to Food Chain; verse one Caustic Caterpillar can force FC decks to find a response before going off.

Wraths:

Play off Yisan, keep your hand stocked so you can quickly recover a board state. If you suspect a wrath, you can verse 4 for Thought-Knot Seer. You can also build your deck in such a way to hedge against the consequences as much as possible; now on 5, or specific inclusions such as Wrap in Vigor.

Spot Removal:

Place higher value on openers that contain Safekeeper, engines such as Sylvan Library, and effects that allow you to hedge against command tax: Command Beacon, Regrowth, and Noxious Revival readily come to mind.

Storm:

Stax and hate pieces are important here for shutting down their mana production. You're somewhat reliant on other blue players stopping some of the big spells, like ad nauseum, from resolving. Revoker / null rod can stop reservoir or an LED or other various pieces but usually if a storm player can get to Ad Naus then they can answer these.

Hulk:

Against breakfast hulk, you can name Nomads En-Kor with phyrexian revoker. Hopefully you have sylvan safekeeper to then protect the revoker, as they may be able to get removal in their hulk pile. Against walking ballista hulk variants, you can name the walking ballista with revoker, but that's risky as they often have lines to hulk multiple times. You can name the sac outlet instead, often viscera seer or Varolz, especially if it is already in play.

Miscellaneous Advice

Rarely need to tap out on your own turn, one of Yisan's greatest strengths is the ability to play from the deck and play at the end of someone's turn. It was stated in the section to play against wraths, but to be honest discouraging against just dumping your hand in general really is worth mentioning more than once. Its one of the most obvious signs of a bad yisan player. Double versing is an important tool that should be remembered, it can help created accelerated lines of play

Don't play too "slow" - Even if people are stuck under stax and you have a Sylvan Safekeeper and a lot of mana, you need to push for the win. Giving your opponents too much time opens you up to losing to an overloaded Cyclonic Rift, a Toxic Deluge or other wipe, or someone finding their way around your stax.

Burgeoning is a Triggered Ability - You can activate Quirion Ranger in response to a burgeoning trigger, then put the land you bounced into play

Versing in response to Tangle Wire trigger

Staxing is typically your strongest play in most early board states. Yisan is not a fast deck by conventional cEDH metrics; you will rarely win flat races.

Noxious Revival has strong utility outside of the obvious graveyard recursion; you can interfere with graveyard-oriented combos such as Hulk, Karmic lines, etc. with it

If you can comfortably skip Seedborn on 5 (or you see something like mtutor for a held deluge), it's probably fine to do so. If you lose Yisan or get wrathed, she's the strongest single card to rebuild your board.

Winning the Game

(Lines to Victory and their Setups)

Craterhoof Behemoth

See - Verse Breakdowns, Verse 8. This is your primary win that you work towards, and it sits right at the end of the Yisan chain. Of course it's certainly possible to hardcast Craterhoof. Just

make sure to calculate the math, and be wary of running into countermagic. Sometimes it's sufficient to not kill the entire table, but just the players who are the biggest threats to you. With absurd amounts of mana from your mana engines you can bounce Craterhoof with Temur Sabertooth and replay him for even more damage.

Temur Sabertooth Combos

Temur Sabertooth + creature tapping for 5 or more mana + Wirewood Symbiote + Elf (1 cmc hopefully)

Typically the creature is Karametra's Acolyte or Priest of Titania. Tap the Priest for 5 mana, return the elf to your hand with Wirewood to untap her, return Wirewood to your hand with Sabertooth (-2 mana), replay wirewood and the elf (-2 mana, -4 mana total). This generates infinite mana and allows you to abuse Sabertooth and an ETB, often Eternal Witness

A direct line to get you to Temur Sabertooth combo is something like:

T1 Dork > T2 Yisan > T3 Verse1 for Quirion Ranger > T4 Verse 2 for Priest of Titania > T5 double 4 for Karametra's Acolyte and Temur Sabertooth > T6 untap and go through verse 5 getting anything, get Woodland Bellow on Verse 6 to find wirewood symbiote, and combo off there. At this point you generate infinite mana, infinite untaps, and can use infinite ETBs. You can bounce and replay Woodland Bellow to get any green creatures with cmc 3 or less out of your deck, including Eternal Witness. You can Yisan on 7 to get Regal Force and draw your deck by bouncing and replaying that. You can Yisan on 8 for Craterhoof and create infinite power/toughness by bouncing and replaying that.

As you play the deck and goldfish it you'll learn to adapt these sort of lines to fit the board state and your hand. With enough elves in play, from yourself and other players, you might not need Karametra's acolyte at all. With creature tutors in hand, or from drawing naturally, you may be able to go faster by having more untappers or use verses on utility cards instead.

Temur Sabertooth + Great Oak Guardian + creatures tapping for a combined 8+ mana.

At 8 mana you get to make your creatures infinitely big and have to win with combat. If your creatures tap for 9 or more then you generate infinite mana. If you generate infinite mana you can, for example, then use Yisan as much as you can (likely only 7 and 8 drop if you Yisan'ed into GoG). Additionally with infinite mana you can loop Temur Sabertooth and another ETB effect, such as Eternal Witness, and attempt a win that way. To reach creatures that tap for enough mana you're likely going to need Priest of Titania and/or Karametra's acolyte. To get Karametra's Acolyte while also having Temur Sabertooth, you can use an untapper to double activate Yisan to get two 4 drops instead of a 3 and a 4 drop.

Temur Sabertooth + Great Oak Guardian + Selvala, Heart of the Wilds

Similarly generates infinite mana and infinite P/T but doesn't necessarily need creatures tapping for 8+ to start. Since Great Oak Guardian grows your creatures, Selvala will likely be

tapping for more and more mana. With a bit of starting mana this line can be fairly compact. It also lets you neatly Yisan for 3 to get Selvala, then for 4 to get Temur Sabertooth. Note that this combo does not draw your deck using %Selvala; even though you can bounce creatures to reset their power/toughness, since your Sabertooth is getting infinitely big, it will keep you from drawing cards off of Selvala unless you can kill or bounce your Sabertooth (beast within, song of the dryads, duplicant). However since you likely have Yisan in play and infinite mana / untaps, you can then Yisan for Regal force to draw your deck or Craterhoof for infinite trampling damage.

Umbral Mantle

With a creature tapping for 4+ mana, this nets infinite mana. You can use this mana to make creatures that can tap themselves infinitely big (Power/Toughness) using umbral mantle, provided they aren't summoning sick. Eg. Generate infinite mana with Mantle+Priest of Titania, then make your Elvish Mystic, Birds of Paradise, Sakura Tribe Scout, etc. infinitely big and win through combat. Additionally, with infinite mana, Umbral Mantle can be used cleanly with Yisan. You can even use the Umbral Mantle untap in response to Yisan activations to get multiple creatures of a single verse.

One fringe win, if you have Umbral Mantle + Staff of Domination in play: If you can't win simply by drawing your deck (eg there is a notion thief-style effect in play) then once you've made infinite mana, you can use Staff of Domination to tap down your own creature then untap them with Umbral Mantle to make any one of your creatures infinite power/toughness. Staff of Domination can tap down blockers as well.

Umbral Mantle is also specifically good at going off with Selvala.

Staff of Domination + Creature tapping for 5+ mana

Makes infinite mana, draws infinite cards, gains infinite life. Makes for compact wins, but like umbral mantle, is disabled by your own Null Rod and can't be tutored for. Once you've drawn your deck you can loop Temur Sabertooth and Eternal Witness (+ Beast Within), Thought-Knot Seer + Temur Sabertooth draw your opponents' decks out.

Deck Core

Lands (34)

(Snow-covered) Forests

Nykthos

Dryad Arbor

Gaea's Cradle

Ancient Tomb

Artifacts

Fast Mana - Chrome Mox, Mana Crypt, Mox Diamond, Sol Ring

Stax - Null Rod, Trinisphere, Winter Orb

Win Conditions - Staff of Domination, Umbral Mantle

Creatures

1 cmc Mana Dorks - Arbor Elf, Boreal Druid, Birds of Paradise, Elvish Mystic, Fyndhorn Elves, Llanowar Elves

Big Mana Producers - Priest of Titania, Karametra's Acolyte

Untappers - Seedborn Muse, Scryb Ranger, Quirion Ranger, Wirewood Symbiote

Answers - Collector Ouphe, Caustic Caterpillar, Reclamation Sage, Manglehorn, Phyrexian Revoker, Scavenging Ooze

Win Conditions - Craterhoof Behemoth, Temur Sabertooth

- **Misc:** Sakura Tribe Scout, TN Eternal Witness, Sylvan Safekeeper, Woodland Bellower

Enchantments

1 cmc Ramp - Wild Growth, Utopia Sprawl, Carpet of Flowers

Land Drop effects - Exploration, Burgeoning

Misc - Sylvan Library, Kenrith's Transformation, Root Maze, Survival of the Fittest

Instants and Sorceries

Tutors - Crop Rotation, Sylvan Scrying, Natural Order, Green Sun's Zenith, Chord of Calling, Worldly tutor, Finale of Devastation

Removal - Nature's Claim, Beast Within

This is the core for a nonbudget Yisan deck, making for 84 slots, not including Yisan. Therefore you have about 15 slots left to work with. Many of these should be various creatures (at least 5 of these 15 slots) and the remaining stax pieces (3), unless they're notably bad in your meta.

Options for Flex Slots, Card Discussion, Experimental Options, and Tech Cards

Creatures

Kraul Harpooner - 2 Mana creature that kills an Aven Mindcensor while also quickly getting in range to kill Linvala and Zur, among other cards. Great removal option that is stapled to a creature, making it tutable.

Elvish Visionary - 2 mana elf that draws a card. Helps your elf count for Priest of Titania and can be nice advantage when bounced with Wirewood Symbiote / Temur Sabertooth. Gives some decent grind power. Generally though, it is more or less air. It's a card slot which doesn't really do anything.

Krogma - Creature Removal Option at 6 CMC that also turns into a repeatable artifact/enchantment removal

Wood Elves - Adds to elf count, increases the number of lands you have in play, and refunds a mana making some lines to verse 4 possible.

Ravenous Slime - Nice hate card against hulk decks. Makes creatures go to exile instead of dying so Hulk won't trigger with this in play. Not particularly useful against non-hulk decks.

Tendershoot Dryad - a cool addition that makes a huge amount of board power on its own, turning on its own ascend. Another 5 drop to get when you don't actually want or can't get seedborn muse. Winning with raw beats may sound silly but this card will quickly put lethal amounts of power on your board.

Shaman of Forgotten Ways - ramp that serves as an alternative win condition. Comes down rather late, doesn't produce more mana than Fyndhorn elder which is an elf, and doesn't contribute to activating Yisan.

Elvish Archdruid - nice if you find that you can't afford tutor Priest of Titania on 2 very often and need to hit disruption on verse 4 rather than karametra's. Only counting elves you control does make this produce a noticeably lower amount of mana, and thus can be harder to turn on for sabertooth combo.

Elvish Spirit Guide - for increased turn 2 Yisan draws. I'm generally not a fan of ESG or lotus petal in the deck, particularly because Yisan relies on having continuous mana sources in play in order to use Yisan multiple times. A hand that has turn 1 Forest, Turn 2 Forest > ESG > Yisan but no 3rd forest can't even activate Yisan

Oracle of Mul Daya: A fat, but powerful engine for games that go long

Unlike other mana engines, Oracle is great at creating a lasting mana advantage after a board wipe. Oracle is additionally an elf. Oracle is perhaps a card that is better when drawn and played, rather than Yisan'ed for, as it often helps pay for itself immediately through land drops.

Tireless Tracker - for grindy card advantage in conjunction with land drop effects. Can help you dig towards an answer when you're stuck under a hate piece.

Runic Armasaur - another card advantage engine at 3 cmc that can be triggered off of fetchlands and opposing creatures

Ramunap Excavator - if you want to assemble strip mine "locks", also to re-use fetchlands, sac and replay cradle/nykthos with safekeeper as a functional untap

Hornet Queen - Makes your Craterhoof almost assuredly lethal when chaining up Yisan. Also creates flying deathtouch blockers / attackers which may be useful in certain metas.

Avenger unnecessary but in more casual metas, it's a possible choice, especially on a budget

Marwyn, the Nurturer - Gives a fast-ish line to a turn 5 win that doesn't rely on opponents having elves, but does rely on turn 1 dork and hitting land drops on the first four turns. The line is T1 dork t2 Yisan T3 verse 1 for Wirewood t4 Verse 2 for Wall of Roots, untap bouncing dork, Verse 3 for Marwyn, t5 untap, play dork, yisan for timur sabertooth, and use sabertooth + marwyn + dork to get to infinite mana and infinite untaps for the win. Comparable to selvala or elvish archdruid of Zendikar - Generally worse than hornet queen, due to being all ground creatures and not having a consistent guaranteed number of tokens. However, in really grindy metas the landfall beats can be relevant.

Whisperwood Elemental - Anti-board wipe tech that doesn't actually save your board and is specifically bad against Anger of the Gods, or cyclonic rift. It's rather

Selvala/GOG line - The inclusion of the Selvala and Great Oak Guardian is somewhat controversial. They are considered unnecessary towards winning and as cards are somewhat weaker than surrounding cards, but both Selvala and Great Oak Guardian can be useful on their own. It also gives you a faster line for winning with Selvala on 3, Sabertooth on 4, then Great Oak Guardian on 6. Having the option of a mana producer on Verse 3 in addition to verse 4 can be useful too. Great Oak Guardian on its own can also serve as a smaller overrun or protection from a pyroclasm. With enough resources, you can instant speed play / bounce / replay GoG several times and have your board be immune to damage based board wipes / toxic deluge. will often not play around Great Oak Guardian when Deluging, unless they have already seen you play Selvala.

Runic Armasaur - A card draw engine, notably drawing you cards off of fetches and even digging you towards a nature's claim or beast within when someone tries to go off with Iso-Rev or bomberman. Aside from combos though, there aren't many non-mana-abilities that are used on artifacts, aside from Sensei's Divining Top On average though, it's not clear how many cards this dinosaur will draw, but it's worth trying.

Wayward Swordtooth - A 3 mana explore stapled to a creature. Significantly worse than Azusa due to the single land play restriction, which is much weaker than the double land play. Being a 5 dollar rare makes it less enticing for budget builds too.

Generous Patron - Essentially a divination stapled to a green creature, even abusable with Temur Sabertooth and adds to your elf count. Solid option if looking for more card draw.

Meteor Golem - Catch-all removal at 7 cmc. Hitting the 7 mana slot to get removal is noticeably more inaccessible than the 5 and 6 cmc slots, however.

Loaming Shaman - Usually used as a form of recursion, though that effect is generally not that necessary and is covered by Eternal Witness. Not exiling the cards from the graveyard makes it notably weaker as grave hate. Loaming Shaman can notably stop someone using a thassa's oracle + demonic consultation/tainted pact line by putting their graveyard back into their deck in response to the thassa etb. Unfortunately, this requires Yisan to be at a very specific verse count, and Loaming Shaman is mostly a dead draw as it doesn't have flash.

Deathgorge Scavenger - Slow and targeted grave hate. Can be useful against decks that use their graveyard for incremental utility, such as Meren. Very easy to play around though.

Treefolk Harbinger - Tutors Great Oak Guardian if you play it, or Lignify. The deck actually doesn't have many ways of drawing the top card of the deck, however.

Ulvenwald Tracker - if you really need creature removal for smaller creatures. Potential inclusion in a Tymna meta, or another meta relying on its smaller commanders sitting in play. Another example of a commander it can fight is Edric (can fight Eladamri if they tutor it as protection). Notably doesn't deal with Linvala due to being an activated ability.

Skyshroud Ranger - An elf, that is also a sorcery speed sakura-tribe scout. Being sorcery speed makes it way worse as you can't use it with quiron/scryb ranger. However, a fine budget option to ramp you to t2 Yisan.

Budoka Gardener - A 2 mana sakura tribe scout. Not really necessary since you rarely need a second sakura-tribe scout, and it doesn't ramp you to t2 Yisan.

Viridian Zealot - A 2 mana caustic caterpillar and an elf. Usually not worth a card slot, partly due to the density of good 2 drops and partly due to the density of various naturalize effects.

Ohran Viper - neat option for card advantage in a grindy meta. Essentially a phyrexian arena on a stick.

Scorned Villager - a mana dork that can tap for two. Doesn't synergize with t2 Yisan unfortunately

Enchantments

Kenrith's Transformation - cantripping lignify

Lignify - non-cantripping kenrith's transformation

Song of the Dryads - catch-all removal at 3 cmc

Titania's Song - Turns off all activated abilities of artifacts. It's essentially a 4 mana null rod that also disincentivizes creature wipes.

Concordant Crossroads - While haste can do some powerful things in Yisan, being a global effect is very dangerous, your opponents can abuse it too. If you're in a meta with nothing but Kess and Teferi this is mitigated but aside from that it's an unnecessary risk, especially because you won't be able to stop your opponents from abusing the haste as removing creatures isn't Yisan's strong suit. Playing your things at instant speed with Yisan verses helps mitigate issues of summoning sickness, anyways.

Ground Seal - cantripping light grave hate doesn't shut off a lot of important cards, unfortunately.

Choke - For very heavy blue metas. However, this can lock blue decks out of their ability to interact. As Yisan often relies on blue decks interacting with the things that he cannot answer easily, this can prove fatal.

Hall of Gemstone - Shuts off your own lands on opposing turns, though you may be able to use dorks. The greater problem is similar to choke - locking out other people of interaction. You play Hall and then the storm player names black, casts doomsday / ad nauseum, and other players are locked out of casting counterspells

Quest for Renewal - according to Shaper, useful in a "mana-denial-stax meta"

Curse of Bounty- a difficult card to assess given its political nature. Against tymna players, you can enchant another player and due to the way tymna works, they'll inevitably attack them for the sake of drawing their own cards. However, can be counterproductive with your own stax pieces. Additionally, they can kill / revoke / etc your Yisan, then abuse the untaps for themselves while you're locked out of using Yisan.

Instants and Sorceries

Eldritch Evolution - can turn an early Reclamation Sage into a Seedborn Muse. Fairly flexible to-board tutor, though sometimes you're stuck without a big enough sac target - turning a 1 into a 3 is often not great.

Veil of Summer - Protection that can cantrip. General better than autumn's veil (see below).

Autumn's Veil - Protection from Bounce Spells, Reality Shift, Pongify, Abrupt Decay, and occasionally black removal spells out of Gitrog or perhaps some less common options. I like this because it can help you force a Chord, Natural Order, or even a normal hardcast Seedborn Muse, with a relatively low cost to hold up.

Regrowth - more or less efficient recursion that can help buyback tutors, dead combo pieces, even a strip mine'd cradle. A fine versatile piece but can often be lacking in overall usefulness, especially as you look to draw an answer to a hate piece in your hand.

Noxious Revival - Instant speed recursion that can be used as disruption. Is card advantage which sometimes isn't too big a deal anyways. Being able to noxious revival somebody's Protean Hulk can be nice.

Pounce - instant speed removal for creatures. Can be difficult to get a 4 power creature to eat a Linvala, though.

Natural State - solid removal that misses Chain Veil, Aetherflux Reservoir

Naturalize - traditionally you've seen people run deglamer/unravel over naturalize when they can. However, naturalize might be better in some contexts. Putting something in the graveyard leaves it to be permanently exiled with something like scavenging ooze, too. For example, Food Chain Tazri has an easier time tutoring out its food chain again than returning it from the graveyard. Godo is way better with its helm of the host shuffled into the deck. Teferi would probably rather re-tutor out chain veil than try to get it back from the graveyard. On the other hand, storm decks will be able to yawg will back their naturalized paradox engine.

Krosan Grip - 3 cmc removal for only enchantments and artifacts, but split second can be quite useful. The biggest reason to run it is that it is uncounterable removal for a cursed totem. There aren't too many cursed totem decks running around but Baral is on the rise, and uncounterability is great against that deck. You don't particularly need it against other things because of the tutorability of reclamation sage / caterpillar.

Deglammer / Unravel the Aether- another naturalize. Shuffling into deck is usually better than destroying due to presence of cards like yawgmoth's will, but notably worse than exiling

Take Down - some of the most efficient removal for Linvala as well as Zur and Kess, and can actually kill multiple Aven Mindcensors, with Birds of Paradise or Scryb Ranger dying as collateral damage.

Plummet - Also removal for Linvala, Zur, Mindcensors, Kess

- mass artifact removal. Can be backbreaking when played early, and unlike null rod will keep the artifacts off the table. Great against metas that rely heavily on mana artifacts and not on creatures. However, unlike something such as null rod or manglehorn, this does not stop, for example, a player from casting Ad Nauseum, drawing into several fast mana rocks and using them to combo off that turn. Yisan also already has good tools for dealing with artifacts, between manglehorn and bane of progress.

Heroic Intervention, **Wrap in Vigor**, **Warping Wail**, etc. - These can counter some board wipes, in particular - anger of the gods / pyroclasm / rolling earthquake. None of these are catch-all, but Heroic Intervention is the best of them with the upside of beating targeted spells. The most common wipe in the format is Deluge, and heroic intervention doesn't deal with that, either, nor does wrap in vigor. Warping Wail has some utility and can counter deluge but is often uncastable. In general I would only play heroic intervention if red board wipes, or perhaps even wrath of god / supreme verdict, are common in your meta. The rest are too weak although in more casual metas that play more wraths they may be justifiable.

Crushing Vines - Some players include cards like Crushing Vines against decks with strong creature tutoring. Destroying flying creatures is very narrow, but given that two of the three biggest creature-specific answers (Linvala, Mindcensor, CPriest) are dead to them, these inclusions are not meritless.

Artifacts

Jeweled Amulet - gets you a turn 2 Yisan but after that needs to be recharged every so often. Not bad but in a budgetless build you can do without it. Recharging can be awkward as it might not produce mana when you need it to, and mana can be very tight in early turns when you need to stretch to get to versing more than once, or playing spells alongside versing.

Lotus Petal - for faster Yisan, see the Elvish Spirit Guide discussion

Mana Vault - Enables t2 Yisan, perhaps even with mana leftover to play a two-drop. Somewhat Christmas landy, but you can do stuff like T1 vault T2 Yisan + Sphere.

Lightning Greaves - haste enabler for your dorks on your turn, as well as Yisan, and can protect Yisan. It can also be used as a combo piece by combining a creature that can tap for lots of mana + temur sabertooth

Tormod's Crypt - Grave hate on demand, it can be low impact especially targeting one person and even hulk decks can win through this

Damping Sphere - While this shuts down many opposing combos, it also shuts down your own Cradle and Nykthos as well as stopping you from doing Sabertooth Loops

Lands

Don't forget that, while utility lands are nice, Yisan does want to run as many forests as possible for consistency and for Quirion/Scryb Ranger

Ghost Quarter, Wasteland - if you really need targeted land removal, want to abuse hard with ramunap + azusa

Gemstone Caverns - Helps turbo out a t2 Yisan but is a sad colorless land if drawn outside of opening hand. The cost isn't too high of running it, since Yisan can usually afford to exile a card from hand, and the additional turn 1 null rod / sphere / priest / etc value is really good.

Homeward Path - As more people are playing Gilded Drake, this is a nice little tutorable answer

Command Beacon - if your games go long and yisan is killed frequently

Yavimaya Hollow - To protect from damage or destruction effects. Protection access through crop rotation can be useful in certain metas

Wirewood Lodge - in an elf heavy meta where you priest of titania generates a lot of mana, this could be worth including. Unfortunately she's basically the only elf you want to untap with this land, unless you're also running selvala.

Scavenger Grounds - grave hate that can be tutored with crop rotation. Decent utility land to have in a graveyard meta.

Blasting Zone - Potential Sweeper

Nesting Grounds - Wonky card that can let you manipulate counters

Building on a Budget

ShaperSavant has a great article on playing Yisan on a budget:

https://www.reddit.com/r/CompetitiveEDH/comments/4akekw/primer_building_budget_yisan_200/

However people often don't have hardline budgets or perhaps already own some cards. So here's how you should prioritize different cards that are pricey (15 dollars or so, and over). The creature tutors, aside from natural order, aren't quite pricey enough to fit in this range. However their costs add up, and can be cut for budget constraints.

Importance here is weighted partly by the money cost of the card. Eg Gaea's Cradle is insanely good and quite important but so cost-restrictive that it shouldn't be prioritized over other cards.

Most Important:

Craterhoof Behemoth
Seedborn Muse

High Importance:

Staff of Domination
Exploration
Natural Order

Mid Importance:

Sylvan Library
Mana Crypt
Null Rod

Low-Mid Importance (due to highly prohibitive cost):

Gaea's Cradle
Mox Diamond

Unnecessary:

Fetchlands
Mirri's Guile
Oracle of Mul-Daya
Sensei's Divining Top

Decklists (Links)

Non-Budget

[Wanderer's Song \(Commander / EDH MTG Deck\)](#)

ShaperSavant's Yisan list

Budget

[\\$100 Yisan \(Commander / EDH MTG Deck\)](#)

A dirty \$100 take on Yisan.

[Yisan \(Ultra Budget - \\$50\) \(Commander / EDH MTG Deck\)](#)

Ultrabudget build by Noobzaurs

[Competitive Yisan - Budget \(Commander / EDH MTG Deck\)](#)

MaynardFerguson's higher budget list, clocks in at \$750.

[\[Primer\] Building Budget Yisan \(\\$200\) : CompetitiveEDH](#)

Shaper's Budget Series

<https://tappedout.net/mtg-decks/yeetsan-350-budget-build/?cb=1538373684>

\$350 build from Kamui