(Last updated: 9th December 2021 - added Eironn and Framton to supports)

I'm Bok#8372 on Discord. This guide is meant to complement Phoenix's Beginner Guide in the official AFK Discord #questions channel (https://discord.gg/wFHwpaU3Tn). It is for the period where you're levelling 5 heroes up till Lv.160 (early game). When we say levels, we're always referring to hero levels and not player levels. Note that Daimon frontline only works for this early game period, he's used on the backline after this period.
If the lone Daimon carry isn't working as well for you, it's very likely that you're not following this guide properly. Factors like whether you put Daimon frontline, whether you put in only the supports I recommended in the list towards the end of this guide, whether you levelled heroes correctly depending on what you have, all these make a difference. If you're frustrated figuring it out, just stick to Mirael carry; **the most important part is that you level and ascend 5 fodder, and avoid ascending 4-skill heroes past E+**.

Daimon is the best carry (even if he's only Elite) early game (if you have access to Dura's Call, always put it on him) but not everyone is lucky enough to get him. The **5 fodder (heroes who have 3 skills, aka 3-skill heroes) you should level up and ascend to Legendary+ (L+) are Mirael, Hogan, Golus, Arden, Silvina**; this is the best method to bypass level cap problems until Lv.160 and you'll be using these fodder to ascend 4-skill heroes later on. When you **put useful 4-skill heroes that you're going to use in battle in your Resonating Crystal (RC) slots**, their levels will copy the lowest level of your 5 levelled heroes, so you should only have 5 levelled heroes at any point in time. You are supposed to **use a mix of fodder and 4-skill heroes in battle, you are not supposed to use all 5 fodder in battle**.

If you have Elite (E) Daimon, then use Daimon carry
If you have Elite+ (E+) Daimon, then he can be taken to Lv.120 instead of Lv.100 as stated below
If you have 3 copies of Daimon AND you haven't used the CH12 hero chest yet, then you can ascend him to Legendary (L) safely because in this case you're guaranteed to have 4 Daimons, so you can use that hero chest to get him to Legendary (L+). This means he can be taken to Lv.140 instead of Lv.100 as stated below. **WARNING: IF YOU CAN'T GUARANTEE 4 DAIMONS, DON'T ASCEND HIM TO L.**
Levelling steps to follow: Daimon till Lv.80 > Arden Hogan Golus Silvina till Lv.60 > Daimon till Lv.100 > Hogan Golus Arden Silvina till Lv.100 > Reset Daimon > Hogan (prioritise his ascensions instead of Mirael's) Mirael Golus Arden Silvina levelled evenly with Daimon carry in RC slots (so that his level isn't stuck at his ascension's level cap)

If you don't have Daimon, then use Wu Kong (the free Elite copy you get from sharing on Facebook, do not buy him from Lab store) carry (frontline) first and switch to Mirael carry (middle back) later
Levelling steps to follow: Wu Kong till Lv.80 > Arden Golus Mirael Silvina till Lv.60 > Wu Kong till Lv.100 > Mirael Golus Arden Silvina till Lv.100 > Reset Wu Kong > Mirael carry levelled to

the highest she can go (prioritise her ascensions!) > Hogan Golus Arden Silvina levelled up evenly

If you've already screwed something up, click the Rickety Cart (located in Ranhorn in the bottom tab, you'll see Rickety Cart in the bottom right corner after doing that) to **reset the heroes that you weren't supposed to level**. You'll get everything you spent on that hero back, 20 diamonds is cheap to fix each mistake.

DO NOT use 4-skill heroes as fodder for now, and stop ascending 4-skill heroes past Elite+. One exception is Daimon as explained 3 paragraphs above, and another is Rowan if you can guarantee 4 Rowans AND if you already have a L+ Lightbearer (LB) fodder. If Mirael is your main carry, then don't use her as fodder of course, you'll need a separate L+ LB fodder. **Your early game goal is to level and ascend 5 fodder till Legendary+ and Lv.160 each.**

Here are **some examples of what your team in battle will look like**, depending on whether you're using Wu Kong carry or have transitioned into Mirael carry, OR if you're lucky enough to get 1 copy of Daimon.

1. Daimon carry OR Wu Kong carry + 1 tank frontline, 3 supports backline
2. 2 tanks frontline, 1 support backline, Mirael carry in middle back spot, Rosaline following Mirael
Contrary to what people might say in #questions or #lineup-help, do not use 2 carries in your team as a starting point.

Follow Phoenix's beginner guide's wishlist (everyone in the wishlist is supposed to stay on there until you have 8 copies of each of them, except for slot 5 which the guide gives instructions for), **don't change it just to use the heroes listed below if you don't see them in the beginner guide's wishlist**. Here are some supports early game that you can consider using (depending on what level they are and which skills they've unlocked, these are not rankings).

1. Silas and/or Desira (healers)
2. Rowan (usually goes in the middle back spot unless you're using Mirael carry. once he reaches Lv.121 he unlocks infinite potions, but he *might* be able to heal enough before that to help deal with enemy burst damage)
3. Nara and/or Athalia and/or Framton (use them to deal a particularly troublesome enemy, e.g any high DPS)
4. Oden (teleports an enemy and stunning in an AOE, drains enemy energy)

5. Lyca (Haste is very good, she will provide team Haste in the first few seconds of the fight and it won't matter if she dies shortly after. use her on the frontline in front of Daimon if you're using her for your current stage, otherwise Daimon is frontline as usual)
6. Morrow (charms enemy's highest DPS for 6 seconds, prevents 1 enemy from moving/casting abilities for 4~6 seconds)
7. Mishka (ult = big AOE stun)
8. Eironn (only if you have Daimon. put Eironn in the middle back spot, Daimon backline + Lyca frontline; Daimon will ult really quickly due to hitting multiple enemies. use Grace on Daimon in this case. this strat works well for CH13 and below. credits to AyayaClap#1220 for introducing me to this)
9. Tasi (banishes one enemy for 4~6 seconds, puts enemies to sleep with her ult, can teleport away from getting hit)
10. Arden (disables 2~3 enemies quite often, very strong cc)
11. Ferael (from Lv.121 onwards, stuns 3 enemies which can be situationally useful to interrupt enemy's abilities)
12. Rosaline (to follow Mirael for double Mirael ults wiping enemy team. can also follow Daimon if you're using Daimon carry instead)
13. Nemora (charms one enemy so it attacks their own team for a while, one use is to place her opposite enemy Ferael before he casts Terrorize)
14. Pippa (chance to disable enemy for 5 seconds, teleports an enemy and stuns in an AOE at Lv.141 if in middle back position)
15. Fawkes (banishes one enemy at the start for 7~9 seconds)

As for tanks, consider using the following fodder temporarily as tanks if you don't have the suggested tanks (Thoran and Brutus) in Phoenix's Beginner Guide

1. Golus
2. Hogan

This game is all about experimenting, so try a bunch of different supports/tanks and switch their positions around, for example a minority of stages will need you to put Daimon backline instead of frontline. You need to read skill descriptions of both your heroes and enemy heroes, pick different supports and position them differently, then observe the fight and retry a couple of times to see how it's going before deciding to change who and where you use them. If nothing still works, afk and wait for more resources to level your heroes up.

Your heroes should be taking on enemies that have higher levels and power than your heroes. Something is wrong if you find yourself close to the enemy's power in campaign.
For CH1 to maybe CH15 or so, you can expect your team to be around 50~70% of the enemy's power rating, you can see the enemy's power rating at the top in the battle preparation screen of the stage you're on.

70% probably means there's a solution that you haven't found (or maybe you don't have access to heroes that provide good support for that stage), if you get to 60% I'd say it's good enough for a beginner.