

B a s i c   R o l e p l a y i n g

# WIND ON THE STEPPES



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GAMES



# WIND ON THE STEPPES

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## FOREWORD

Wind on the Steppes was first designed as an extension in the French language (“Vent des Steppes”) for an amateur set of *Basic Roleplaying* rules for medieval China, “Basic Chine Impériale”. Basic Chine Impériale itself was the source of the publication *The Celestial Empire* (by Gianni Vacca, Alephtar Games 2010). Adapting Vent des Steppes seemed a natural consequence. It was largely integrated, corrected, and eventually rewritten and translated as “Wind on the Steppes”.

However, it soon became clear that a game about the steppes should not be limited to northern China, as the nomads of Central Asia have played an important role from the Pacific Ocean to Central Europe for many centuries, not strictly as nomads, as many peoples have retained some of their nomadic nature, but have themselves become semi-nomadic or sedentary. Therefore Wind on the Steppes was written so that it can be easily adapted to any campaign in which Nomads play a part: Imperial China, of course, but also Rome, medieval Russia, Outremer and the Crusades, the Muslim Caliphate, Central Asia, Byzantium, Nippon and more... Of course, Wind on the Steppes can be used as a sourcebook for steppe Nomads.

Due to the multiplicity of tribes, their destinies, their evolution and the ephemeral nature of many empires, it is very difficult to present a comprehensive and accurate supplement. Wind on the Steppes therefore focuses on the tribes that remained nomadic in character, closer to

their origins. This lifestyle is not only what distinguishes them from other people, but is also what unites them, as it is the bridge among the peoples of the steppes across distances and centuries.

Wind on the Steppes refers to the *Basic Roleplaying* rules, trying to use the fewest possible optional rules. The specific rules of Wind on the Steppes are mainly aimed at simulating the peculiarities of the Nomads. Background elements are given to those people who have been influenced by neighbouring sedentary cultures: for example, it will mention Buddhism or Taoism, but rules related to these religions (magic, beliefs, etc...) already described in other supplements such as *The Celestial Empire*, are not included.

This book does not include the *Basic Roleplaying* rules, so the GM will need to possess them in order to play. This supplement can also be easily adapted to any percentile-based system, or used as inspiration for a generic shamanistic Nomad culture in any setting.

Wind on the Steppes aims at helping players imagine the world as Nomads, but does not claim to be 100% faithful to historical reality, and is naturally subjective. Historical sources are often incomplete, uncertain and sometimes too complex, which forced us to make arbitrary choices or to engage in questionable historical interpretations; this is a game, not a research paper.

Far from dark dungeons and teeming cities, Wind on the Steppes is an invitation to outdoor adventures, travelling the vast steppe, the terrible Gobi Desert or the Siberian forests.

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## PUBLISHER'S NOTE

This game supplement offers a realistic representation of nomad society and may put players in contact with practices that someone might find disturbing like slavery, human sacrifices, treatment of women as property and extreme physical abuse. Please keep in mind that all representations of nomad ethics given in this book do not represent the author's opinion on a given subject – like slavery or the role of women in society – but rather the historical nomads' attitude towards the matter.

Of course, if you or your players are not comfortable with how some subjects are presented in this book, the nomads in your campaign need not be exactly as they are presented here, particularly if you have nomad player characters. If you want them to be nicer people than they historically were or to characterise them with ethics more compatible with our modern views rather than what the harsh life of the steppe dictates, then go for it. It is your game, and its purpose is to have fun, not to teach history. For the same reasons we will use only the pronoun “he” to indicate a player character, as the default choice for a nomad PC is to be a male. However, this limitation may be circumvented, too, if the players wish so. The section about character gender and the character creation example suggest some good ways to justify the presence of a female hero in a society dominated by males, but nevertheless you are still free to just make your character female without any explanations at all.

# I. INTRODUCTION TO WIND ON THE STEPPES

*"In the Steppe, a man without friends is thinner than a finger; a man with friends is bigger than the Steppe itself"*



**W**ind on the Steppes allows you to roleplay the nomadic peoples who originate in Central Asia. Long before the Christian era, a unique civilization of nomadic horse-riding people developed in the vast Eurasian plan, which stretched from the Ukrainian steppes to Manchuria. On this gigantic field, different peoples gradually formed a coherent whole, sharing similar lifestyle and beliefs. Their culture differed from sedentary cultures. The customs of these peoples were unique and sometimes difficult to understand. They needed no city, no roads,

no borders, and were tough and elusive, travelling freely across the vast steppe.

Those people invented riding, the techniques of combat on horseback, and saddle and stirrups. What brought them together were not physical features, but their culture; there are no racial elements in their worldview. Genghis Khan was the king of "those who live in tents." It refers to a lifestyle, not an ethnicity.

The oldest known civilization of horse riders is believed to have started around the 9<sup>th</sup> century BC. Its remnants have been



#### NOTE ON TERMINOLOGY

*The choice of typically nomadic names or terms faces a multiplicity of tribes and languages, or dialects in which they were translated and disseminated. We kept the most common words, such as yurt to describe the felt tent, though the word of Turkish origin is more akin to "camp". However, we tried to maintain at least the original names of the tribes rather than the Chinese names by which they are more generally known: so Köktürk rather than Tūjué, Avar rather than Ruǎnrǎn (or Róurán), Tabgach rather than Tuòbá, and so on.*

*Throughout this book any mention of a language — like Turkish — refers to its old form — proto — Turkish in this case, and not to the modern one. However, since the authors are not specialists of Mongol or Turkish history and language, specialists or native speakers of these languages can possibly detect some errors. We apologize for this.*

found in southern Siberia around the Irtysh and Yenisei rivers, north-west of Mongolia. The horse rider lifestyle quickly expended all over the Eurasian Steppes, and was adopted by Indo-European peoples of the Kurgan culture (so called from the tombs richly endowed with gold which they left as their only trace) and later by Uralo-Altaic peoples.

Cimmerians, Scythians, Sakas, Sarmatians, Parthians, and Yuèzhī belonged to the Indo-European ethnicity. They were found from the Black Sea through to China, and were the first historically significant horse riding tribes during the first millennium BC. Siberian tribes belonging to the Altaic linguistic group and worshipping the Sky god Tengri, moved slowly southward between 700 and 300 BC, while assimilating the mostly Indo-European horse culture. Their first sensational historical outburst occurred in present Mongolia around 200 BC, with the founding of the first eastern nomadic empire, that of the proto-Turkish Xiōngnú (or Hsiung-nu), who pushed several Indo-European tribes westward during their expansion. This was the start of 18 centuries of successive waves of invasions that would deeply affect Europe and Asia.

Wind on the Steppes is about these Asian Altaic Tengriist horsemen. For the sake of simplicity we will call them "Nomads" or "Turco-Mongols" throughout this book.

Nomads were a constant threat to the neighbouring empires in China, Central Asia and Eastern Europe for centuries, as they suffered from numerous invasions, occupations or single raids. The history of these empires is inseparable from the history of their struggles against these terrible horsemen. All empires and kingdoms bordering the steppes (Persia, Byzantium ...) had trouble with these formidable neighbours. Modern Asia, from China to Istanbul, was profoundly and permanently shaped by the nomadic hordes.

To the east, even though the dominant tribes changed, relationships with the Chinese empire are surprisingly uniform; emergence of a new horde, payment of heavy tributes to the Khans, or weddings to ensure a precarious

peace, and finally invasion of North China by the nomadic tribes replacing those already sinicized. A constant struggle went on on the western border of China, for the control of the Tarim oases that led to the Persian world and the West: here lies the famous Silk Road.

In Central Asia, successive later waves weakened the kingdoms in a manner similar to what happened in Rome with the Germans; once enemies, some tribes became mercenaries, then became foederati buffers against the other nomads of the steppes, finally taking possession of all the Muslim kingdoms from Sogdiana to Asia Minor.

The successive waves of invasion of North China and Central Asia under Persian influence led to a rapid assimilation by the more developed sedentary cultures, softening the "savagery" of the original tribes. The Khan was also eager to take the title of emperor in China. Assimilation went on until the arrival of a new horde from central Mongolia, Manchuria or the High Altai. *Wind on the Steppes* focuses specifically on these peoples which remained the most purely "barbarian", either Nomads from the remote areas of Asia or too freshly arrived on the borders of the empires to be assimilated.

Many of these traditions remained however alive for centuries, hidden below the surface. In the thirteenth century, the Arab geographer Ibn Battuta described how a Turkish bey, despite being the ruler of many cities, still lives in his yurt. And, although converted to Islam, he continues to tribute special respect to heaven and nature like his animist ancestors. If the nobility adopted a more refined way of life, most of the horde continued to practice traditional nomadic pastoralism and to follow traditional beliefs.

Of course, Buddhist and Christians monks, merchants along the Silk Road, emissaries seeking alliances, and Taoist magicians testify that peaceful relations could sometimes be established between the sedentary and nomadic tribes, and often led to conversions of entire tribes to the imported religion. Still, the lifestyle of the Steppes is particularly constant across space and time.

## SPELLING OF TURKISH AND MONGOLIAN NAMES

Turkish language has been Romanicized and is written with the Latin alphabet. Modern Mongolian is written with the Cyrillic alphabet, while the old Uyghur alphabet is still in use, but no systematic Romanicization has been done. These are however the modern languages: in earlier times, other writing systems were used for several archaic but related languages, including Chinese ideograms or local “runic” alphabets. In order to simplify the reading of this book, we decided to use the simplified BGN/PCGN Romanization.

English Romanization	Notes and approximate European pronunciations
A (a)	Like in grand'ma
B (b)	
V (v)	
G (g)	Always hard, like in great
D (d)	
Ye (ye)	Like year
Yo (yo)	Like yacht
J (j)	Like joke
Z (z)	
I (i)	Like sick
I (i)	Id.
K (k)	
L (l)	
M (m)	
N (n)	
O (o)	Like in Orc
Ö (ö)	Like German ö or French eu. Close to bird
P (p)	
R (r)	
S (s)	Always smooth, like in smooth
T (t)	
U (u)	Like you
Ü (Ü)	Like the German ü or French u
F (f)	
Kh (kh), Q (q)	Close to the German ch or Spanish j. “Kh” will be preferred, but Mongolian names may be written with “Q” instead
Ts (ts)	
Ch (ch)	
Sh (sh)	
Shch (shch)	
Y (y)	Like i above with palatization of the former
I (i) / (')	Palatization
E (e)	Like in bear
Yu (yu)	Like you
Ya (ya)	

Spelling of already conventional names has been kept, like Genghis Khan instead of Chingis Khaan. Names known only through the Chinese writings are written with pinyin transcription of the Chinese characters.



### TURK AND MONGOL

*These terms designate both single tribes and linguistic groups, which may lead to some confusion. The linguistic groups have been named after the most historically significant tribes. The name “Turk” is used for all the tribes and nations belonging to the same linguistic family as the Türk (or Köktürk) tribe. The term “Mongol” designates the tribes and nations belonging to the same linguistic family as Genghis Khan’s Mongols.*

## 2. BACKGROUND

*"[They] exceed in ferocity and barbarism everything you could imagine. (...) They also live like animals. Wanderers, they have been tempered since their childhood from cold, hunger, thirst. (...) They spend their lives on horseback, sometimes astride, sometimes sitting sideways, like women. (...) In battle, they swoop on the enemy, shouting terrifyingly. If they find any resistance, they disperse, but only to come back with the same speed, pushing and throwing everything that stands in their way. (...) But nothing can match the skill with which they launched in prodigious distances their arrows armed with sharp bones, as hard and deadly as iron "*

*"A below-average height, is great when riding! "*

*(Ammianus Marcellinus about the Huns).*

**T**he permanence of their nomadic culture and lifestyle for centuries allows us to apply this description of the Huns to all nomadic peoples of the steppes of Eurasia, from the Indo-European Scythians of Russia in the seventh century BC to the seventeenth century Manchu Tungus.

*Wind on the Steppes* can therefore be used for different tribes at different times: Attila's Huns, Avars, Xiōngnú, Alans, Bulgarians, Köktürks, Khitan, Uyghur, Kyrgyz, Jurchen, Federated Mongols, Crimean Kipchaks, or even ancient Scythians (although Indo-Europeans, they are very similar to Turco-Mongols in lifestyle).

### **NOMAD ETHICS AND VALUES**

The nomadic ethic is quite different from what we usually understand in the modern days. Players must be ready to be confronted by behaviours which may be disturbing or even shocking: their taboos are not ours.

Living in a hostile world, having to manage scarcity in a quasi permanent state of war, Nomads had to develop an ethic somehow based on utility and efficiency. Utility because every mouth is hard to feed and nobody shall be a burden for his clan: the value of everything, including human life is therefore measured after its usefulness. Only a few clans can afford superfluous commodities, or losing a precious life.

Efficiency because the world is also full of dangers, be it from nature, from other human communities or from supernatural forces. Solidarity and mutual help is therefore necessary: nobody could survive a long time alone. And how you achieve a goal matters way less than the goal itself to nomads.

Beliefs and religion play as everywhere a role in the Nomadic ethic. Nomads are animist. They consider being a part of the nature and living from her and in her. They have to bargain and make compromises with the natural forces represented as spirits and avoid making them angry. They also believe in a life after death, which is



only a passage to the world of the dead where they will continue their terrestrial life while observing their descendants: death is not an end.

Having understood that helps to comprehend their apparently violent ethic. Therefore:

- Living long is not highly considered. An honourable death occurs while fighting on horseback. Old peoples are wasting resources and are a burden for their clan.
- Prisoners can be slain when there is no use of them: scarcity imposes selection. Note that killing them may be useful as well.
- Abducting a woman is not only allowed, but belongs to the tradition. Polygamy is normal. Marrying a widow mother-in-law or sister-in-law is a duty: in a violent world where many men die from sudden death, women require protection. Moreover, they are very precious, being the source of growth for a clan. For the same reasons, adoption is common: women are often taken with their children who will be raised as clan members.
- Human sacrifices are rare, but not taboo: they are sometime requested by the spirits. Sacrificing living forces balances the natural cycles. Victims are sometime voluntaries, like the warriors accompanying their leader into the grave.
- Fidelity is praised: to one's clan and to blood brothers of course, but also to one's leader, which can go as far as blind obedience and ultimate sacrifice.
- Hospitality is the rule: the foreigner is welcome and is proposed shelter, as long as he's peaceful and respects his hosts.
- Some places like woods, caves or mounts are taboo: nobody shall shout, sing, hunt, fight, run or in any way soil the ground. Throwing waste into a fire pit is taboo.
- Nature is highly respected. Water sources are neutral grounds.
- An ancestor burial site is the most sacred place, whose location can be jealously kept secret. For instance, no one knows where Genghis Khan was buried.

The Nomads consider themselves as the epitome of mankind, combining freedom, strength and resilience, taking the wolf as their model. Healthy true men live as nomads far from comfort and it would be a shame to abandon the ancestors' way of life for that of settled people who are weak, treacherous and deserve only despise: after all, they wouldn't survive more than a few days in the Steppe!

All other nomadic customs described throughout the book should be seen under the light of these ethic principles.

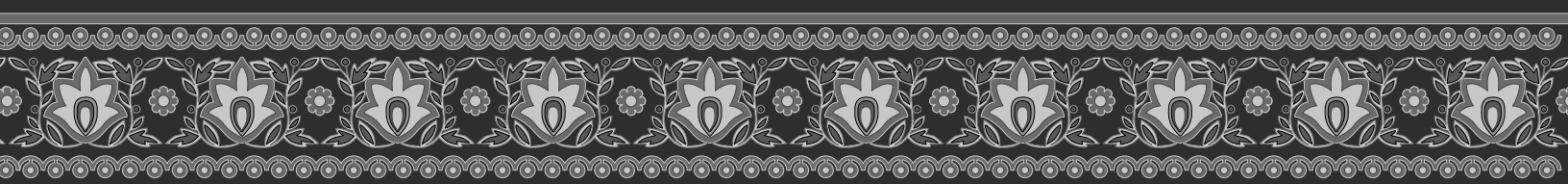
## NOMAD PEOPLE

The people from these regions are, with few exceptions, Asian or Eurasian, with a skin tanned by outdoor life. Their description by the sedentary folk is frightening; bloodthirsty, menacing attitude, dark skin, high cheekbones, a large, round head, shaggy and dirty. They are often compared to the wolves that they claim to descend from (the wolf head is the emblem of Köktürk and many other tribes). Some Chinese descriptions indicate, however, the presence of elements of European type with light skin and eyes and blond or red hair, especially among the westernmost Turkish tribes such as the Kyrgyz. The Nomads of Asia are defined as a culture and a common way of life rather than as a genetic community. The hordes incorporated all the subdued tribes, without regard to "racial" categories. Ethnic distinctions are essentially linguistic (see page 11). Genghis Khan was the king of "those who live in tents." It refers to a lifestyle, not an ethnicity. Their clothes are similar, suited to horse riding: trousers are systematically worn, as well as tunics or coats and hat.

## LIFESTYLE

The Turco-Mongol herders are nomadic horsemen organized in a clan and tribal structure. They move with their herds to find pasture. They sleep in circular felt tents called yurts, from the Turkish Yurt = camp. When moving, the yurts are quickly disassembled and carried on large 4-wheeled carts. Larger trucks carrying powerful Khans may require up to twenty animals. Except during migrations or events, clans and families are spread wide over the territory to allow extensive herding.





Some tribes, however, have developed a way of life combining semi-nomadic cattle breeding and embryonic agriculture with fixed or mobile homes. Those who live near sedentary empires or kingdoms build cities in contact with urban cultures. The Khans build palaces, but reside there only during winter, resuming their travels on the return of summer. The cities founded by these nomads are also often inhabited by deported or imported qualified people, such as Chinese and Sogdian craftsmen, priests or administrators.

The nomad tribes are in constant conflict with each other for grazing areas or for vengeance. They excel at the discipline of mounted archery. They invented many techniques of combat on horseback, saddle and stirrups. Having neither cities nor walls, and living in a hostile world, a Nomad must develop warlike virtues (courage, alertness, skill in handling weapons).

### **WHERE DO THEY LIVE?**

The birthplace of the nomad peoples is in an area centred roughly on Mongolia, extending east to Manchuria and the modern Sea of Japan and west to beyond the Altai Mountains and Lake Balkhash. To the north it extends into Siberia and to the south to the Gobi Desert.

Manchuria is the heart of the Tungus peoples. The Altai is the cradle of most Turkish tribes, while northern Mongolia and southern Siberia are the Mongolian birthplace. Modern Southern Mongolia has seen a succession of mostly Mongols and Turks. Further west, some Indo-European nomadic tribes came from Ukraine. Cultural boundaries are blurred, however, and mixtures between tribes are common.

The Steppe, the arid kingdom of herds and horse herders, stretches from northern China to Hungary. It is crossed by the mountain chains of Altai (Western Mongolia) and Tien Shen (Chinese-Kazakh border). However, continuity is ensured by the depression of Dzungaria between these two chains, and the forested plains of Siberia to the north: this features allowed intensive

exchanges all over the Steppe and explains the surprisingly numerous common traits among all Eurasian horse cultures.

The country of the Tungus, as most of Siberia, is covered by forest. In Siberia live the reindeer herders. Northern Mongolia is mountainous but does not reach the altitude of the Altai or Tien Shen.

Finally, several desert areas (in the Ordos loop of the Yellow River, the Tarim and its string of oases, and of course the terrible Gobi, one of the harshest deserts on the planet) have prompted the development of camel usage.

The area between the Gobi and the Yellow River was alternatively ruled by the Chinese or the Nomads. It was also a privileged raiding area for them. In the West, the main point of conflict with the sedentary civilisations was located south-west of Dzungaria around Sogdiana. Finally, Ukraine is the third important corridor for nomadic migration.

### **CLIMATE**

Climate is very continental, hot in summer (especially in the Gobi), and temperatures drop to an average of -30 °C in winter. The wettest season is summer, but the steppe generally has low rainfall. These extreme conditions have tempered the character of the nomads and their horses. They are able to endure the greatest hardship and can fast without losing their energy.

### **RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING SEDENTARY KINGDOMS**

The nomads' relationships with neighbouring nations are in general very bad. The policy of China, Persia or Byzantium against them is inspired to three principles:

1. Take advantage of disputes among nomads to eliminate the most threatening ones, with the frequent risk of seeing former allies become a new threat. Allied or vassal

tribes are installed between the nomadic “barbarians” and the sedentary empires.

2. Cajole the Nomads to stop their raids, usually temporarily, through weddings and the sending of “presents” in the form of hundreds of thousands of rolls of silk, sacks of grain, gold, or silver. The demands of the nomads steadily increase until they decide to directly invade the country.

3. Engage in campaigns into the interior of nomad territories to prevent attacks.

In general, the sedentary kingdoms are a source of wealth that Nomads love to loot. The raids are usually accompanied by massacres. In the permanently occupied areas, land becomes pasture, which is the mark of a valuable land for Nomads. Themselves pushed by the migration or expansion of other peoples, the Nomads carve out kingdoms in the outlying areas first and then settle in the heart of empires.

The tribes despise people from sedentary kingdoms, who are seen as poor warriors. One of the generals of Genghis Khan, after the conquest of northern China, found that indigenous people were not useful because they were unable to fight properly, and proposed to get rid of them by putting them all to the sword. This amounted to about 10 million people. Fortunately, a Khitan advisor was able to demonstrate to Genghis Khan that these people were a source of wealth for their great empire through taxation. The Chinese were spared.

These rich and brilliant neighbours, nevertheless, are a source of envy for Nomads. The nomad empires to the north of China are quickly sinicized, starting with adopting a Chinese religion like Buddhism, at least superficially. It is therefore an ambiguous feeling, a mixture of contempt and admiration. Turco-Mongol Khans are also eager to arrange marriages with women of Chinese imperial blood.

Conversely, the Turks and Mongols inspire holy terror in their neighbours. Moreover, reality resembles that image in many cases. There were dozens of Attilas. Nomads have always been a thorn in the side of their neighbours.

## NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES

### KOREA

Korea managed to stay independent from both Chinese and nomadic empires for centuries. The country became a vassal of the Mongol Empire in 1231 and of the Manchu Empire in 1637. Shamanism is well developed in Korea, where the role of shaman is held by women.

### SIBERIA

Southern Siberia belongs to the horse nomad area. But Siberia is also the very first cradle of the Turkic and Mongolian tribes, which slowly migrated from their forests southwards during the 1<sup>st</sup> millennium B.C.E. They entered in contact with the Indo-European horse Nomads and adopted their way of life. From Siberia, they brought their belief in the sky god and Animism.

Northern Siberian peoples kept similar beliefs, but were never invaded by their mounted cousins. There was nothing to plunder, and the climate was not suited to horses.

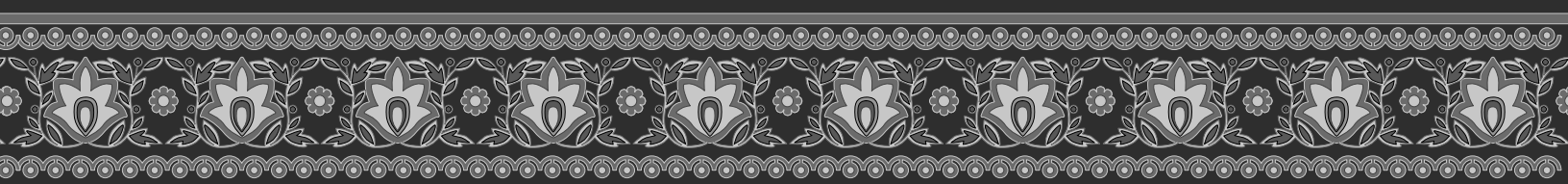
### CHINA

The Chinese empire was the first and most important neighbour of the nomadic tribes. Chinese struggled first against the Xiōngnú starting with 3<sup>rd</sup> century B.C.E. North China was ruled by successive Khans over several centuries, interrupted by periods of Chinese recovery. The whole of China as ruled by Mongols during the Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) and the Manchu during the Qing dynasty (1644-1911). Ordos and the Tarim basin were two typical zones of struggle.

China and the steppe nomads had a huge cultural, political and economic influence on each other. Nomads allowed Buddhist and Taoist monks in their empire. Nomad kingdoms in north China were quickly sinicized and adopted Chinese religions or writings, as did some neighbouring tribes. Qaghans used Chinese Engineers to build their towns and palaces. Chinese borrowed cavalry; both use and improved the composite bow, although it is still not clear who invented it first.







The Chinese tried to interfere in nomadic politics through alliances and creating dissension in order to distract them from their projects of invasion. Nomads in their turn, when not directly invading north China, tried to place their men on the Chinese throne and to marry Chinese princesses.

When not directly plundering China or extorting exorbitant ransoms for peace, in form of silk rolls, gold or food, Nomads traded horses, furs or felt against silk, grain and manufactured goods.

### **JAPAN**

Japan has been preserved from nomadic raids by the sea. The Mongol Kublai, first Emperor of the Yuan dynasty, tried twice to invade Japan without success.

### **TIBET**

Tibet had no real direct contact with Nomads until the 7th century AD, when the Tibetan empire of Tufan expanded. They struggled against Turkish kingdoms and China for control of the Tarim (the Silk Road). They fought for years against the Uyghur, who were allied with the Chinese after the dismemberment of their empire. The main and essential contribution of Tibet to Nomads is the Lamaist Buddhism, which spread over modern Mongolia from the 16<sup>th</sup> century on.

### **SOGDIANA**

Sogdiana, or Transoxiana, is the region between the Aral Sea to the West and the Tien Shen mountains to the East. Sogdians had a strong cultural influence on the western Turkic tribes, to whom they gave their writing, some nobility titles (like the Xiōngnú "Chanyu"), and introduced Manichaeism to the Nomads. Some Chinese chroniclers cite the Sogdians (Hu) as advisors to the Turks, who somehow thwarted the Chinese schemes. Sogdians sometimes called on the nomadic tribe for help against the powerful Persian or Iranian empires.

When Nomads started to expand to the West, Sogdiana was the main road to the Middle East and was invaded and occupied by numerous waves of invaders

from the steppe or the Altai, starting with the Hephtalite, then the Köktürks and all their followers over centuries (Karakhanides, Kara-Kithai, Mongols...). At first part of the rich Greco-Bactrian civilizations, the Sogdian area slowly declined and could never recover from centuries of wars, plundering and destruction.

### **BACTRIA**

#### **(MODERN AFGHANISTAN / IRAN)**

The Persian Empire was in contact at first with the Indo-European horse riders of Scythia. Themselves Indo-Europeans, Persians shared some cultural traits with the Parthians, in particular the horse-culture.

The first contacts with the Turkic nomads started with their expansion to the East in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century AD, then with the founding of the Hephtalite Empire. The later Köktürk Empire reached the edges of the Sassanid Empire, against which the Köktürks made an alliance with the Byzantium Empire.

Later on, Muslim kingdoms fought the different tribes or used them as allies against the Chinese or against other nomadic tribes. Their victory in 751 against China, with the help of the Karluk Nomads, decided the religious and cultural fate of the Turkish tribes. In the 9th Century, they started to penetrate the Muslim kingdoms as feoderati or invaders, until the Seldjuk Turks crossed all Central and Middle Asia up to Anatolia where they defeated the Byzantine Empire in 1071. Turks dominated Middle East from Sogdiana to Anatolia. Islam became their religion even beyond the Muslim Empire, like for the Uyghur, or around the Caspian and Russia, even if conversion of the bulk of nomads took centuries and often remained superficial. This conversion was shortly slowed down by the Mongol invasion.

A very important nomad gift to central Asian and Middle-East countries is mounted archery warfare with the composite bow.

As a consequence of the standing wars in Sogdiana and Bactria, the Silk Road lost its importance and was replaced by sea routes, accelerating the decline of the region.



## INDIA

When expanding toward Transoxiana and Bactria, nomadic peoples reached the edges of the Indian world. When the Hephtalite Empire was founded in Sogdiana and Bactria, it was stopped in its Westward expansion by the Sassanid Empire. Bactrian Hephtalites turned against the Gupta Kingdom of India at the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> century and definitively defeated it. Indians called the Hephtalites "Hunas" and kept a horrific memory of cruel invaders perpetrating huge massacres and persecutions.

The Delhi Sultanate was raided by Timur Lenk (Tamerlane) in 1398. In 1526, a Timuride prince called Babur, using fire arms, invaded again north India and founded the Mogul empire. The term Mogul comes from the Persian Mugul = Mongol.

## BYZANTIUM

The Eastern Roman Empire had to fight against the Parthian Empire in Middle East. Then, it had to suffer from the raids of Attila's Hunnic Empire on its northern border. Starting from this period, it has been continuously struggling or coping with successive waves of nomadic invaders from the steppe. The Empire had to restrain the expansion of the Bulgars for centuries and to repel the incoming tribes, often with the help of other nomadic tribes.

Byzantines made an alliance with the Köktürk against Sassanid Persia. They even imported iron from them. Constantine V (741-775) took a Khazar princess as a wife. In 1071, the Empire lost most of Minor Asia to the Seljuk Turks. The Turkish dynasty of the Ottoman eventually invaded the empire and seized Constantinople in 1453.

## EUROPE

The migration of Huns in the 4<sup>th</sup> Century is supposed to have triggered the Völkerwanderung of Germanic tribes which led to the fall of the Western Roman Empire. The first serious nomadic threat was the founding of Attila's Hunnic Empire. Huns, Avars and later Magyars raided up to the land of Gaul. Successive waves of steppe Nomads hit the European kingdoms as well

as the Byzantium Empire. These nomads founded more or less ephemeral kingdoms between the Caspian Sea and Hungary. Only Bulgars and Magyars finally settled and adopted Christianity and the European way of life, while the other tribes remained nomadic in the vast plains of Ukraine.

Mongols were the greatest threat for European Kingdoms until they interrupted their conquest. They created the Khanate of the Golden Horde which ruled Russia until the Russians gradually expanded and dominated them in the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

Because of the influence of Nestorian Christians in the Mongol court, negotiations with the Franks against the Muslims went on during the whole 13<sup>th</sup> century, with no concrete results.

The victory of the Kara-Khitan Gur-Khan against the Sultan of Persia Sanja and his Seljuk allies in 1141 is one of the possible origins of the legend of Prester John.

## LANGUAGE

The Turco-Mongol tribes bring together Turkish, Mongolian and Tungus tribes. Their customs and beliefs are similar, and most sedentary people will make virtually no distinction between them. They will also indiscriminately be called Turks, Tatars and so on. Even their languages are from the same Altaic branch.

In simple terms, we can consider that tribesmen will incur a penalty of -25% when speaking with members of the same language group (Turkish, Mongolian or Tungus) and -65% when speaking to someone of a different group. GM wanting a more accurate simulation of the languages can refer to the following chart:

Their culture is essentially oral, although some have developed or adopted writing systems. Bards can recite the epics of the tribes. Because of their nomadic life, the arts are expressed in the everyday objects they carry, especially jewellery with exquisite works in animal style of gold buckles, harnesses, weapons, which remain the signatory art of the steppes.



Nomads wrote little, although they felt the need to develop their own writing, like the runic alphabet, or to import some. Some findings suggest that writing may have spread within the empires, beyond the inscriptions on the tombstones, through diplomatic or official correspondence. This happened with the Köktürk with their runic writing, or the Uyghur whose conversion to Manichaeism and Buddhism had a significant civilizing effect. They invented an alphabet still used today in Mongolia, next to the Cyrillic alphabet most commonly used.

## SOCIAL STRUCTURE

Steppe nomads are organized into tribes. Tribes are subdivided into clans, and clans into families.

## CLANS

The patrilineal clan is the basic unit of nomad society. It is based on a relationship to a common ancestor, either mythic or real. Every clan has a *Tamga*, an *Uran*, a *Dustan* and a *Bunchuk*, all distinctive things that allow recognition of the clan. A *Tamga*, or mark, is a symbol that identifies a clan and is recognized by nearby clans or those who know Heraldry. An *Uran*, or battle-cry, is unique to a clan and is used to identify clan members in battle. Some *Uran* have magical properties and can stun certain kinds of enemies. A *Dustan* is the clan history and can be recited formally when meeting people from other clans. A *Bunchuk*, Tug or Kutas is a long piece of horse-hair or yak-hair, attached to a long pole, decorated with a ball, trident or crescent, and is used as a standard.

### LANGUAGE TABLE

Language	Group	Script	Penalties
Jurchen (Nǔzhēn)	Tungus	Jurchen characters (XIth-XIVth)	-65% for Khitan
Manchu	Tungus	Uyghur (from XVIIIth)	
Tabgach (Tuòbá)	Turkic	None	-65% for Xanbei; -25% for Kipchak and Köktürk
Xanbei	Mongolic	None	-65% for Tabgach; -65% for Kipchak and Köktürk
Khitan (Qidān)	Mongolic	Khitan	-65% for Jurchen
Mongolian	Mongolic	Uyghur (from XIIIth)	-15% for Western Mongolia
Western Mongolian	Mongolic	Uyghur (from XIIIth)	-15% for Mongolian
Köktürk (Tǔjué)	Turkic	Orkhon runes (VIth-VIIIth)	-15% for Kipchak, and -65% for Tabgac Yǔwén
Kipchak	Turkic	None	-15% for Köktürk, and -65% for Tabgach Yǔwén
Kazakh	Turkic	Arabic (from XIIIth)	-15% for Kyrgyz, 35% for Uyghur and Uzbek
Kyrgyz	Turkic	Orkhon runes (VIth-XIth), Arabic (from XIIIth)	-15% for Kazakh, -35% for Uyghur and Uzbek
Uyghur	Turkic	Uyghur (from VIIth), Uyghur Arabic (from XIth)	-25% for Uzbek, and Kazakh and 35% for Kyrgyz
Uzbek	Turkic	Arabic (from XIVth)	-25% for Uyghur, Kazakh and -35% for Kyrgyz

*Jurchen and Khitan characters are extremely complex and it is assumed that no PC has had the opportunity to learn them.*



Pastures and livestock are the common property of a clan and bear its Tamga as a brand. Some powerful families have their own Tamga and can own livestock themselves. Clans also have a sacred bird or animal that brings good luck to clan members when encountered. This is often a wolf or a bird, but clans could have any real or mythological creature as a sacred or totem animal.

There may be other forms of community between that of clan and tribe. All clans sharing dressing habits, nomadic area, dialect, religion, and customs, are likely to form a tribe under the authority of a Khan. Such bonds can also be based on sole interest or loyalty, and in any case they have no racial basis. In period of strong crisis, when even tribes may break up, clans remain the last form of permanent community.

The loyalty of an individual to his clan is his first duty, and not to follow this is taboo. However, a Mongol has the inalienable right to choose his own master and these two facts are a constant cause of turmoil.

## TRIBES

When several clans unite under the rule of a *Khan*, they form a tribe. Smaller tribes may merge as well. Tribes and clans become bound by ties of vassalage or allegiance, and are subject to the authority of the Khan. The loyalty of vassals is largely dependent on the Khan. He must have been recognized as such by all the tribes or clans in a *quriltai* (tribal assembly), or following a spontaneous or forced submission. Tribe is a nebulous concept; it may grow when further clans or tribes merge, be split into new smaller tribes which go their own ways, or even completely break up in periods of great crisis. In this changing process, it may even change its name. Hordes are even more fluid and changing. This often made it difficult for foreigners to understand whom they were facing.

Wars among tribes are common. They fight for territory (*ulus*), for livestock, or for plunder. As a rule, conflicts rarely end without a massacre of defeated armies. Survivors are usually enslaved and distributed among

the victorious tribes. Surviving men end up tending herds and horses, or are sometimes enlisted by their masters for other conflicts; women are taken as brides, and children are sometimes adopted. Sedentary neighbours often stir these conflicts in order to keep Nomads busy and protect themselves from their greed.

Alliances are often sealed by a marriage. They often last for no more than the duration of a military campaign, with changes of front from one year to the next remaining common.

Periodically, the Khan of a more energetic and powerful tribe unites the tribes to form a horde. He is then designated Qaghan or High Khan during a *quriltai*. Thus he forces other tribes to submit and form a powerful horde of up to several hundred thousand horsemen with which he starts conquering China or the world. Tengri invests the Qaghan as his representative on Earth. As Tengri is the sovereign of gods, his representative must rule the world. The greatest and most famous Qaghan was Genghis Khan. His successors sent emissaries to the rulers of western kingdoms like the King of France or the Pope to demand their submission. But at the slightest sign of weakness from the Qaghan, the fiercely independent tribes would try to break free and take part in the destruction of the empire. The history of Nomads is a constant sequence of empires, shattered by inter-tribal conflicts as quickly as they were formed.

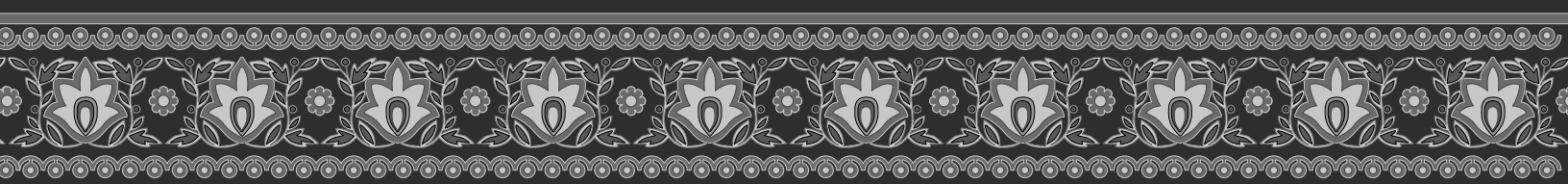
## SOCIAL HIERARCHY

Nomad society is led by a warrior aristocracy, who are responsible for leading the clan to pastures and for providing a sufficient number of slaves to look after the herds. They are warlords, but also Knights and Heroes. Having Bagadur or Batyr as an honorific marks a warrior out for specific respect.

This is a functional aristocracy, which hierarchy corresponds to the commanding rank in the army: chief of ten, of a hundred, of a thousand or of a myriad (ten thousand = *tümen*).

*Noyans* (Mongolic) / *Bek* (Turkic): nobles. They are usually at least chiefs of a hundred.





The bigger and more organized a tribe is, the more its aristocrats are important and numerous. Its various chiefs are bound together by links of personal fidelity. Foreigners are impressed by *noyans'* loyalty toward their chiefs and Khans, a blind obedience until death without expecting any reward or material gain. It is perfectly possible to become a *noyan* thanks to his own merits and to be appointed as chief of a troupe. Under the big empires, the *Qaghan's* clan and tribe are, of course, privileged: princes issued from the imperial family.

Nobles also make up the *quriltai* which chooses the Khan or *Qaghan*.

- *Nökud* (sing. *nökul*), or *Darquan* (Turkish *tarkhan*), form the class of free men who form the main body of the army. These ones are the typical nomads. Their duty is to protect their family, look for pasture, take their part in the clan's life and fight for the Khan. They must obey their *noyan* and their Khan above all.
- *Arad* are the commoners, servants and maids, who most of the time do not possess a mount and remain at the camp when their masters are hunting or marauding. They help in the everyday life and belong to the clan.
- *Bogul*, or slaves, are at the very bottom of the hierarchy. They may be unfortunate *nökud* of another vanquished tribe or more often foreigners kidnapped during a raid. They can be freed and thus return to their former status. Under the great empires, some of them could even acquire an important status comparable to a minister, using for example their knowledge of administration for the *Qaghan*.

Shamans play the role of wise men and healers, sometimes even kings. A shaman belonging to the court of a Khan, in particular of a *Qaghan*, is considered as a kind of chief shaman and can take the title of *Baki*. There is however no structured hierarchy or church among shamans, who are outsiders to the social order.

Succession is within the family, but the estate does not necessarily go to the firstborn. If the Khan did not appoint his successor during his lifetime, it is decided in a *quriltai* (assembly of free men). The territory is divided into *Yurt* (territorial lands) amongst the heirs. The *Yurt* and nomadic

tribes living in it constitute the *ulus*. The younger brother inherits the original heritage of the father, as an *ojigin*, keeper of the family hearth (e.g. after the death of Genghis Khan his youngest son Tulu received the *ulus* of Mongolia while his elder brothers inherited Russia or Persia ...).

## MARRIAGE

Marriage is usually with a woman from another clan, often the same as her future mother-in-law, thus reinforcing the ties between both clans. Nomads are polygamous but the first wife keeps a privileged status. At a wedding, the groom's family pays compensation to the bride's family for the loss of a worker. However it frequently happens that a wife is kidnapped during a raid or a war where the winners took women and cattle. Of course, this attracts the hatred of the raided tribe.

Often, the wife is promised at an early age to her future husband. When the groom is an adult (at 15 year age), he can come back and get her. Traditionally, the groom abducts his future bride from his father-in-law, while the bride's clan mates try to prevent it. The groom is allowed, after giving presents to the father and feasting for days, to find the right moment to abduct his wife. Once the abduction has taken place the couple is acknowledged and can return without fear to the bride's clan.

After the death of a man, his concubines often accompany him to the afterlife by being killed and buried with him. The first wife is however generally spared. Widows are taken charge of and are forced to marry a male of the family; the youngest son, as the guardian of the family hearth, marries his mother-in-law, but never his own mother. When no suitable son is available, it will be a brother of the deceased, if possible a younger one, or an uncle. This way, widows stay within the family and will go back to their former husband after their death.

## WOMEN

As stated before, women's role among the nomads comes as a necessity of the warlike lifestyle of the Steppes. They are considered as loot and treated rudely. Yet women play



an undeniable role in nomad society. This harsh treatment is the consequence of a harsh culture, rather than contempt for women. So when the husband is absent for a long time (at war for example), the tradition is that his wife refuses him on his return and flees. The injured husband must equip his *Urga* and catch his wife up before winning the right to share her bed again.

Khan's wives, the *khatun*, can play an important political role, either directly or through their influence. The widows of khans are often the ones who present their favourite son to the *quriltai* to appoint him as the new khan. They can become regents while waiting for the appointment of the new Khan, a process that sometimes takes several years. Some even lead armies to victory.

One's mother is respected and listened to. E'olun, mother of Genghis Khan, was indeed the only one able to criticize the Great Khan without risking death.

Not only do women with emphasized social skills and high status make interesting player characters in diplomatic flavoured games, but some favoured women can even become warriors if they can excel at riding and archery. A few even became Batyrs in their own right. Finally, women can become shamans.

## ANDA

*Anda* are "sworn allies" or blood brothers. This is an oath of loyalty between two close friends, sealed by the exchange of blood. The *anda* are supposed to be always ready to support each other.

## LAW

Nomad law is very tough.

Under Genghis Khan it was recorded in a legal code, the *yassak*, and applied strictly. In general, theft is punished by a compensation of nine times (6 times by the Köktürk) the value of the stolen property. If compensation cannot be paid, the thief is executed ("cut in two").

Murder, serious theft, adultery, conspiracy, evil spells, receiving stolen goods can lead to a death sentence for the author.

The blood of a noble must not be shed. They are executed by strangulation, suffocation or by a broken back.. When this is done, the noble is wrapped in a blanket, and then trampled by men on horseback until death.

Those who disobey the Khan are put to death because they also disobeyed Tengri, the supreme God. Those who do not submit to Tengri's will, by conspiring against and deposing the Qaghan, by refusing to go to war, by submitting to the enemy or by resisting the authority of the Khan and his people (therefore all foreigners who are still not subdued) are executed.

The clan structure of society implies a collective responsibility. The clan is responsible for the actions of its members and if he does not punish or does not prevent a member from committing a crime he may in turn be collectively punished.

Beyond these ideal statements, law enforcement is a matter of how rulers can impose their authority. Spread over thousands of kilometres, nomads live their lives in a relative freedom and autonomy. Revolts, plots and internal dissension are not rare, as well as internecine struggle for rulership.

## ECONOMY

Sources of wealth are mainly from livestock and plunder. Skins, furs, wool and horses, and occasionally iron, are traded for grain, silk, or manufactured objects. Control of the Silk Road, and the income that can be drawn from it is the cause of constant struggle with China.

The heavy tributes paid by China in its periods of weakness are another source of wealth. Every year, hundreds of thousands of pieces of silk and bags of money or grains are given to buy peace.

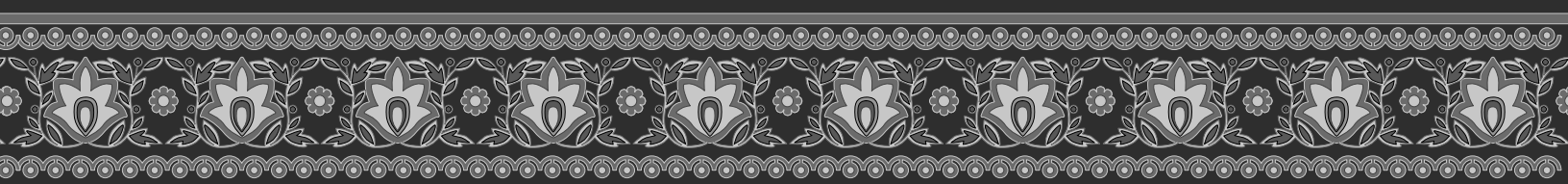
The other main source of wealth for nomad tribes is raiding.

## NOMADISM

Nomadism is a necessity. Yields are too low and the climate too severe for developing an agrarian economy. The long winter frost dries rivers and prevents irrigation. Uncertain springs and short summers do not allow for safe intensive agriculture. Livestock, however, feeds itself. The







mode of production is extensive. The land cannot feed large concentrations of animals and men for long periods. Central Asian nomadic pastoralism remains the method of production best suited to these conditions.

Nomadism is made necessary by the search for pastures. It follows an annual movement between defined areas which determine the territory of a clan or tribe. When food is exhausted, they try the next zone. This scarcity of food resources means that large numbers may not remain in an area for a long while. Clans are scattered over an area large enough to find forage in sufficient quantity, including storing winter reserves.

The type of livestock is also determined by these conditions. These animals must be able to move and be herbivores. Livestock should be neither too large nor too specialized to take advantage of all plants available. Nomads usually raise several of these five different types: sheep, cattle, goats, horses, and camels.

Isolated for long periods, the Nomads must be autonomous and develop many skills. Except for a Khan's entourage, and some professions like shamans, all nomads are versatile. Men should ensure the survival of their clan and be able to do this by evaluating the grazing for different animals, establishing winter reserves, managing a herd, but also setting a camp, hunting or fighting.

Within a few tribes, part of the population may consist of farmers, a trait surviving from the Neolithic period. These farmers have a lower status and remain subject to the nomads.

## CALENDAR

The nomadic calendar is influenced by the Chinese calendar. It is also a lunar calendar, each year is dedicated to one of 12 animals and one of the five elements (water, fire, air, earth, wood), which makes a 60-year cycle. The year is divided into 12 lunar months, supplemented by a 13<sup>th</sup> every 4 years. Some phases of the moon are favourable for some enterprises; the last night before the new moon for a funeral, the full moon to launch a campaign.

Unlike the Chinese calendar, the Nomad one begins with the Winter Equinox.

## TOWNS

Urbanization and the conversion of the nomads to more sedentary lifestyles is not discussed in detail here, since *Wind on the Steppes* initially and primarily focuses on the tribes that remained nomadic. In addition, urban settlements rarely survive the fall of the empires. We will therefore be content with those elements that allow playing historical campaigns and cannot be neglected. The GM can then mix the original nomadic characteristics with the traits of those neighbouring civilization which influence them. A brief description of towns controlled by Nomads can be found in Chapter Nine of this book.

Capital cities are surrounded by a wall and contain the fortified imperial palace. Here live artisans and bureaucrats, often from conquered countries. The Mongol capitol Karakorum is a very cosmopolitan city inhabited by deported prisoners. The GM may allow players to play professional artisans or foreign officials in the service of the Khan: this is an easy way to connect with other campaign settings. The surroundings are even cultivated. The peasants, however, stay under the rule of their horse riding masters.

## RELIGION

Nomads are Tengriist animists. They believe in spirits and in the powers of nature, the first of which is the sky god *Tengri*, the celestial deity who created the world and reigns over it.

Numerous deities or spirits live under Tengri's authority: superior spirits (fertility, thunder...), natural spirits (wood, sources, fire...) or evil spirits –the *üör*– (disease, insanity...). Some tribes worship Tengri in a quasi-monotheistic way, but even these never completely neglect spirits, since every event is reputed to be caused by them: a good hunt, disease, rainfall. A nomad respects or fears them. It is necessary to please them and to make them friendly: this is the shaman's duty.



There is no organized clergy or church; there is instead a class of more or less hereditary wise people known as shamans. Shamans are the mediators between humans and supernatural beings, and hold a special place in the human social order. They have no specific hierarchy beyond the authority bestowed by power, reputation, or social status. Their function is more practical than priestly, since they do not necessarily lead worship ceremonies. They are however central in the animist belief.

## **COSMOLOGY**

The cosmos is split into three worlds, or planes: the lower plane where malevolent spirits dwell, the middle plane where humans and natural spirits live, and the upper plane where the celestial spirits reign.

Further details about the denizens of the upper and lower world will be provided in Chapter Seven "Spirits".

Additionally, legends talk about a subterranean World where supernatural magical creatures live, like giants or ogres. This World is not to be mixed up with the lower plane where spirits live. It is separated from the surface World, but some gateways between both exist in profound cracks or deep caves.

## **THE UPPER WORLD**

It consists of a tiered mountain of seventeen levels where superior spirits dwell. Tengri resides in the highest level at the top. The ancestors who haven't been cursed and did not get lost in another plane continue their life on the lowest levels. The light is intense, the air cold and the snow covers the highest levels. This is the land of the Celestial Spirits *Aiyy* and the Great Ancestors. These spirits will be quickly assimilated to the gods of imported religions.

## **THE UNDERWORLD**

The Underworld is made of hills covered with strange vegetation, terraced on nine levels, at the foot of which lies a swamp "where even a spider mired." The souls that are lost in the

marshes sink in it forever. This is the land of *üör* and Great Disease Spirits. Erlik, deity of death, is their sovereign, and rules over the dead. He looks like an old man with a very long beard riding a big black horse.

## **THE MIDDLE WORLD**

The middle plane is the mundane world where the corporeal beings live. It is our world. It is also inhabited by the nature spirits bound to their material emanation, like the protecting spirit of a herd, of a place and so on. These spirits are invisible without shamanic magic, except when incarnating, for example as a celestial body or as a magical animal-spirit. The cosmic and natural clockwork, while taking place in the middle plane, is however ruled and caused by the great spirits and deities of the upper plane.

## **THE COSMIC TREE**


These three planes of the universe are bound together with a mythical birch tree, the axis mundi which roots are going deep in the lower plane and the branches high in the upper one. In the mundane plane, it is symbolically represented during ceremonies by stakes, high trees, the central poles of the yurt or even sacred mountains.

## **ANIMISM**

Animists believe that every place, every manifestation in the Universe, is caused by or related to a spirit, from life force to everyday objects or simple things like stones. The basic principle of Animism consists in the exchange with these spirits. Everything humans take from the spirits has to be compensated in an appropriate way. The compensation takes mostly the form of a living principle. Sacrifice is the most common way. This is also the reason why humans living off livestock, plants or hunting "pay" for the resources they exploit with their own life force and must suffer diseases, ageing and at last death.

Shamans deal with spirits. They are the intercessor between humans and the supernatural world. They are consulted to cure diseases, make cattle fertile or foresee the future. They are also feared because of these powers, and because of





relations with the evil spirits. Shamanism is both a mode of religious practice when addressing the gods above, and a more therapeutic technique or magic. "Shaman" comes from the Tungus "*cham*" (or Turkish "*kam*") meaning "sorcerer."

Nomads also practice Totemism, the belief in a link between individuals or clans and animal guardian spirits, according to their nature or their individual predispositions. Each clan has a totem animal guardian.

## TENGRISM

The cult of Tengri is practiced by the Khan, who is chosen by Tengri to ensure the link between heaven and mankind. A new Khan is ritually presented to Tengri ; he lies down on a felt blanket with his wife, and the shamans lift them up to the sky, to have him recognized and appointed by the supreme god. Among many tribes, the new Khan is strangulated until he falls unconscious.

The Khan ensures harmony on earth, and it is his holy duty to gather all peoples on the Earth under his authority, as Tengri commands. Thus, during the imperial period, the cult grows and may, for some people, tend towards monotheism. However, in case of failure or lack of central authority represented by the universal Qaghan, the worship of minor gods and spirits grows again. It's a safe bet that for populations away from the centre of power, such worship remains very much alive even under the rule of a Qaghan.

Tengriism excludes neither polytheism nor Animism, but is instead the worship of Tengri as the supreme god. Other deities are therefore worshipped as well, sometimes considered as emanations of Tengri. According to some traditions, there are up to 99 of them. The word "tengri" has even been used as a synonym for "deity" from times to times. Among them, 3 particular deities play a ruling role:

Umai is Tengri's wife and goddess of fertility and birth.

Jer-Süb, goddess of Waters and Earth, reigns over the middle world and the nature spirits.

Erlík, God of Death, reigns over the Underworld and the malevolent spirits.

Some places are sacred, especially certain mountains, as they are considered the axis of the world.: These are the places where sacrificial ceremonies to the sky (Tengri), to the Earth (Jer-Süb) or to the ancestors are performed. Amongst the Köktürks and their successors, the mountain of Ötüken (nowadays Khangai, west of the Baikal Lake) is a favourite place of the pantheon. The name Ötüken can be related to Ätügen, another name for Jer-Süb. These places are taboo, and nobody is allowed to hunt, fish, sing or behave disrespectfully in a sacred area.

## ANCESTORS

Ancestors are praised and worshipped as well. They provide the nobility a kind of legitimacy; Genghiskhanides khans claimed to belong to his family. But Ancestors are also the cement of the basic cell of society, the clan, which is defined as those of the same lineage. It is important for the Nomads to continue the heritage of their ancestors, and to behave in a way they will be proud of them. Every yurt has a shrine to the family ancestors. Every well educated Nomad is supposed to know his ancestors up to the 9<sup>th</sup> generation. Every clan has its own mythical ancestor who is worshipped by the whole clan, for his help is important and his anger may be harmful.

The clans of a tribe have also a common mythical hero ancestor who binds them together. His deeds are an example for the tribe mates and for the Khan, whom he protects. The effects of ancestor worship in play will be explained in the sections about shamans and heroes.

## SOULS

In game terms, we distinguish Souls from Spirits as two very different things. Spirits are either immaterial beings or the mental immaterial emanation of a living being, described with the non-body characteristics INT and POW. Souls are the life force of every living being, and are situated in its body. It is possible to capture or control a soul and thus induce negative effects in the body or the spirit, like a disease or a handicap. When a soul is destroyed, the being dies.

Souls are immaterial principles bringing life to a body. Their number depends on the tradition followed, most commonly six:

- *Tyn* is the life breath, common to any living being. It resides in the chest.
- *Kut* is the physical soul, common to animals and humans. It resides in the abdomen or in the liver. When dying, the *kut* stays a while around the body before departing to the underworld where it is devoured by spirits.
- *Sür* is the psychical soul. This is also what gives the shamans their powers. It resides in the head.

These three souls are common to all traditions. One finds also:

- *Suzy* brings longevity and health. This is the soul which is stolen by the disease spirits to bring illness. When it stays away from the body for a too long time, the *tyn* (life breath) perishes.
- *Tula* belongs only to humans and represents their force.
- *Süne* is the intellect soul. It remains after the death as the afterlife form of the dead.

Reducing the power points of an embodied being to zero does not destroy its souls but instead weakens its spirit which cannot hold them anymore, leaving them open to capture or consumption by evil disembodied spirits. Destroying the receptacle of the soul (the body) destroys the link between the physical world and the soul: the latter departs and death occurs.

## WORSHIP

Worship means trying to get the help of spirits and deities through gifts and sacrifices. Before any task (hunt, travel, war...), one gives Tengri and the six (or four) directions of the Earth a gift of *ayrag* (fermented mare milk) or prays to the relevant protector spirit for instance the steppe spirit before hunting deer. During exceptional events like wedding or funerals, many beasts are sacrificed. At regular intervals, three sacrifices are made: one for Tengri, one for the Earth-and-Water, one for the ancestors. These sacrifices must be held on sacred mountains

or in a mythic place sacred to the ancestors. The sacrifices are not made exclusively by shamans or priests, but instead by people with good reputation and high status, like elders, nobles or khans. In game terms, the one who makes the sacrifice has a good rating in the corresponding Allegiance (see "character generation") and higher status. He can - but need not - be a shaman. A part of the sacrificed beast is given to the spirits and to the deities; the rest is shared among the attendants during a banquet. It is also noticeable that while the nomads have sacred places, they don't have any temple.

Nomads are very respectful towards nature. Towns and cultures are considered to be wounds to the Earth. Rivers are kept clean. Genghis Khan forbade bathing in a river, which caused trouble with his Muslim subjects who performed their ablutions in rivers or lakes.

Amulets and luck-bringers are widely spread. Shamans are often consulted for their capabilities of foreseeing the future or interceding with spirits.

Ancestor worship holds an important place in the spiritual life of nomads, in both private and public life. Ancestor worship does not only remain a family matter but is also a duty of the tribal Khan who, supported by nobles, leads the appropriate ceremonies and prayers in a sacred place of the tribe related to its mythical origin. So the cave where the founder hero of the Köktürk was born is where the Khan or his envoy perform rituals and sacrifices.

## OBOS

A specific feature of the landscape is the *oboo*, which are mounds of stones on top of which a staff is stuck. The staff is decorated with blue pieces of cloth, which represent the sky. *Oboos* are built in passes. Guardian spirits are often bound to them. Any traveller crossing an *oboo* shall turn around it once or thrice from the left and make some offering (stone, hairs...), otherwise he will suffer the anger of the spirit. *Oboos* are also used as altars for religious ceremonies. See also Chapter Four "Shamans". In forested areas, stone mounds can be replaced by birch trees.





Some Oboos are far more sinister, being made from human skulls rather than from stones. These are created by black shamans and are gateways to the underworld. They are guarded by powerful *üör* spirits and bring ill to the surroundings.

## DEATH AND FUNERAL RITES

Life is contained in the soul which sits in the chest. At death, it flies away, carried to heaven where the dead enjoy a life similar to that on Earth. Through prayer, the shaman accompanies the soul to find the safe way, without risk of being lost and becoming an evil spirit. It is therefore necessary to equip the dead with all he will need in the afterlife: livestock, weapons and even servants and concubines – who are killed and buried with the deceased.

The funeral takes place according to certain common principles, each nation in each period bringing its own nuances. In cases of violent death, the body is left alone during the first seven days, leaving enough time for the *kut* soul to leave the place. Then the ritual begins.

The burial sites are carefully chosen for their special aura. One can find veritable necropolises consisting of hundreds of graves. These cemeteries become taboo. Far from being forgotten, the ancestors are venerated by their descendants.

These kinds of ceremonies are held for important *noyans* or Khans, with some variations. Other people have much simpler rites: the body is buried alone the day after the death after a night of mourning and the sacrifices may consist of drops of *ayrag*.

Some forest tribes hang coffins from trees. It is a custom used especially for shamans (see Chapter Four “Shamans”).

## OTHER BELIEFS

Neighbouring sedentary cultures influenced Nomads. Nestorian Christian, Buddhist, Manichaeism and Muslim missionaries tried to convert these barbarians, often converting whole clans or tribes when their khans converted (Manicheism and later Buddhist Uyghurs, Nestorian Naimans,

Lamaist Buddhist Khalkas...). With very few exceptions, the Turkic tribes progressively converted to Islam, until they all embraced this religion. The Mongolic tribes living in modern days Mongolia converted to Tibetan Buddhism in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. But they all renounced their shamanistic beliefs only after many generations, and this never completely. Both religious practices have cohabited until the present day. Much of the time, these conversions were motivated by politics rather than faith.

Nomads have always been quite open to other religions. Khans were keen to learn from foreign monks and showed a wide tolerance. A Köktürk Qaghan considered the five religions (Christianity, Buddhism, Taoism, Islam and Tengriism) as the “five finger of the same hand”. Manichaeism was the official religion of the Uyghur in the 9<sup>th</sup> century. Khazars embraced Judaism before they converted to Islam.

Anyway, apart from Nestorianism which penetrated deeply in the steppes, these foreign religions influenced tribes that had already started to become “civilized”, installed at or within the border of a sedentary empire, and that had already lost a part of their barbaric way of life. The priestly function among pure nomads is still the duty of the shaman.

## DAILY LIFE

Daily life is far from comfortable in this harsh environment, but even Khans continue to live in tents while the conquered towns offer them a thousand pleasures.

The harsh climate and poor soil prevent efficient agriculture, and this is why this region developed a lifestyle of hunter-herders. Nomads live with nature, taking advantage of its benefits by adapting to it and merging into it, as opposed to the settled nations which build cities, canals, ports, and alter their environment. A Nomad lives with domestic or wild animals, and walks the earth without scarring it with ploughs or disfiguring it with walls.

Conflicts for dominion over a territory are common in this context. War is a major activity of the Nomads, next to hunting and grazing.

## FAMILY

Nomads are polygamous. Marriage is used to build relationships of alliance or vassalage with another group (clan, tribe, kingdom, according to the spouse's importance). The groom's family pays the bride's family as compensation for the loss of one of its members. Every hand is useful in this hostile environment.

Relationships between people are rude and straightforward, and this remains true for relations between men and women. Women take care of the yurt when men make war or go hunting. They prepare food and make clothing. A good wife always has something to do and gets up before her husband to rekindle the fire and boil milk. During migration, they remain on their carts and continue their duties as if stationary.

A man assures the safety of his family. He hunts, takes care of horses, and goes to war at the call of his Khan to raid other tribes, or for long campaigns against rich sedentary people.

Children begin to ride foals at the age of 3. Babies are called by derogatory nicknames or formulas, as nomads believe that using their real names might attract evil spirits.

Heirlooms are shared by the eldest and the second eldest son, often before the father's death, except the original *ulus*, from whence the family came, which goes to the youngest. Others receive only what the father was willing to give before his death and that which seniors want to leave them. This division leads to fights and even wars in the case of the legacy of khans, to the advantage of their Chinese, Arabic, Russian and Persian enemies.

Most women do not own property as they are somehow treated as property themselves, and depend on their father's or husband's wealth. This custom can however be circumvented by influential women by having indirect ownership of wealth through their sons.

## HABITAT

The common habitat is the felt tent: the yurt. Nomads will sometimes refer to themselves as "those who live in felt tents." It is conical in the north woods, circular in the steppe.

The *ger* is built in half an hour. It is placed on the ground, out of respect for the earth. It consists of a framework of wood, a floor of wooden planks, wooden lattice circular walls in 3 to 6 parts depending on the size of the *ger* (and more for powerful khans), concentric shelves fixed to the walls and attached to a circular frame one meter in diameter. This frame is the top of the *ger* where smoke is evacuated. It rests on two pillars.

The total diameter of a *ger* is 3 to 6 metres.

During migrations, the *ger* is placed as is on a four-wheeled wagon drawn by horses, camels or yaks. They can also be taken apart and packed in smaller carts or carried on the back of animals. Women take shelter there and continue to go about their tasks while the truck moves.

The yurt is much more than a simple shelter; it is a microcosm representing the Universe, in which every object holds a precise and symbolic place. As such, it is a sacred place. The middle and the poles holding the structure represent the Axis of the World. The fire pit in the middle is sacred. At the top, the chimney, a simple opening in the felt, allows elevation of the soul and contact with Tengri. The entry faces south or east, looking at the rising sun. The opposite side is reserved for the altar to the ancestors. On the right and left sides of the yurt lie the beds.

## FOOD

The nomad diet consists mainly of meat and dairy products. Meat is boiled, as the smell of roast meat attracts wolves, or stewed with hot stones (Khorkhog), which is sometimes embellished with crushed millet and herbs, such as wild thyme. Meat comes from livestock (horses, sheep, yaks, goats) or hunting. Hunting is a very important activity, allowing the feeding of the tribe or the army. One usually hunts on horseback, sometimes with a falcon, and in some mountainous areas, with an eagle. Everything in the animal is eaten: head, guts, eyes, blood, fat. The exceptions are the bladder and bile. Almost every single animal is edible. Marmot meat is very common.

A Khwarezmite spy reported seeing a Mongol soften a dried gut in water, bleed his horse to fill the gut with blood, and then boil this type of sausage to eat.





Nomads eat hard sour cheese, yoghurt and boiled milk skin. Pork and sweets are deemed inedible.

The national drink is *ayrag* (*kumiss* in Turkish). It is low alcoholic (around 1%) fermented mare's milk, foaming as beer with a sour taste. Usually very sober, the Nomads engage in binge drinking during particular wild celebrations (weddings, religious holidays).

### CLOTHES

Clothing is made from available raw materials: wool, felt, leather, and fabric and silk extorted from China. Dressing customs vary little from one people to another and pants are worn consistently; they're the ideal garment for riding. Nomads also wear a crossed long shirt, and a long tunic or coat, crossed over

the body and held by buttons or knots and a belt. To allow ease of riding while still covering the thighs, the lowest half is made broader, sometimes shortly split for the longest ones. These coats are called *Caftan*, or *Deel* in Mongolian. The belt is also a decorative element and a symbol of virility.

The *deel* is still in use today. The *deel* is the typical dress of the Mongols, as well as other neighbouring peoples. Nomads have a very typical and peculiar way of wearing coats; in order to move more easily, they put only the left arm on and leave the right arm and shoulder free. Sometimes, both arms are even uncovered. Among the most ancient peoples, the coat is even worn on the shoulders, the arms being too narrow to be put on and being only a decorative element. Some caftans even have an opening at the shoulder which enables to easily slip the arms out of the sleeve.

Jackets and coats of fur or sheepskin are worn over the tunics to protect from cold in Winter, in two layers when necessary. The coat is worn with the fur outside, but is more usually worn inside towards the body, according to the habits of the tribe. Against extreme cold, it is more efficient to have the fur against the skin.

In order of increasing scarcity (and price), one finds: sheepskin (commonly found); marmot and wolf fur (more expensive but more effective against cold); and sable and stoat fur, prestigious materials reserved for khans.

The head is covered with a fur cap extending over the ears, with the hair inwards.

Nomads have leather or felt boots to protect from cold, and stirrups. Some of them wear leather waders, a kind of elongated boots along the leg, which are fixed to the belt with straps.

Powerful Khans dress in silk and other precious fabrics extorted from or traded with their neighbours. For daily life, however, they prefer simple traditional clothes, just made of better materials and not worn out.

Mongol warriors wear silk shirts beneath their armour. This not only prevents armour from chafing, but also helps prevent infection when the warrior is shot with an arrow. The arrowhead does not penetrate the silk, and can be pulled out easily without polluting the open wound.



## POLITENESS

Strangers ignorant of local ways can commit serious blunders without knowing it.

### One shall:

Always accept the offering of food, even if it only symbolically touches the lips.

Take food with the right hand

Enter with the right foot in a *ger*

Go to the left when entering a *ger*

Leave weapons outside

Provide the first sip of *ayrag* to *Tengri* by throwing at the sky some drops from a cup.

### And avoid:

Arriving at a gallop at a *ger*: this is an aggressive attitude

Butting into the conversation of older people without permission

Walking on the threshold beam

Disposing of waste at home: home is sacred

Bathing directly into rivers

Stepping over the hearth

Taking off one's hat in the *ger* of a host: that means you want to sleep here.

Speaking of misfortunes. The words attract evil spirits (*uör*).

When a Nomad offers hospitality (which is likely if the visitor is not an enemy or a known criminal), he invites the visitor into his *ger*. He offers dairy products on the table. It is custom to symbolically share a small something. You do not have to eat, but you should at least bring food to your lips.

You can lick the yoghurt bowl when it is finished. It's delicious, and it is said to be good for your health.

If you are invited to eat, use your fingers. Using a knife or a spoon could be suspicious as not wanting to grease the fingers so they do not slip on the bowstring, thus betraying hostile intentions.

If you like somebody or something, show it by smelling it – this is the nomadic kiss.

## ENTERTAINMENT AND ARTS

Nomads consider three sports as the most important: archery, horse riding and wrestling. These disciplines must be mastered by the best warriors and nobles.

Archery is practised with the typical composite bow.

Wrestling consists of making the opponent touch the ground with anything else than his feet. Before engaging in the contest, the participants perform a ritual "eagle dance".

A horse race is based on riding up to several dozens of kilometres. Because children are lighter, it is they who ride horses during a race. Each participant also has it in his heart to demonstrate his value to his community by showing prowess in all these disciplines.

Hunting, besides its utility, is also a way to use the capabilities required for a good warrior; vigilance, horse riding, archery, stealth.

## KOXBURU

Also known as Buzkashi, this is a sport that perfectly suits the nomads, being fierce and difficult. Two teams, often the young warriors from two clans, compete to carry the headless torso of a calf around a pole to a circle of victory. The first team to do so wins the game. The calf is ritually slaughtered, beheaded and disembowelled, with its legs cut off at the knees, then it is soaked in cold water for a day and a night to toughen the skin. Sometimes the calf is stuffed with sand to make it stronger and easier to carry. A flag is placed at one end of the field of play and a circle drawn at the other. The calf must be carried around the flag and back into the circle. If the calf is lost to an opponent and regained then it must be carried around the flag again before being placed in the circle.

Participants wear soft leather or thick clothing, often with head protection, high-heeled boots. They each carry a whip, with which to beat off other riders. This sport has very few rules: riders may not strap the calf to themselves or their saddle; riders may not





deliberately knock another rider off his horse; riders may not deliberately whip other riders. However, in most games the rules are very seldom followed, especially where grudges are held. Teams are normally of about a dozen riders, but the numbers are not fixed and can vary with mismatched teams quite possible.

This sport requires high skills and teaches warriors Riding Acrobatics and the use of a whip in combat. Picking the calf up from the ground while at a gallop involves a Riding Acrobatics roll. Attacking other riders while carrying the calf at a gallop involves a *Difficult* Whip roll. Grabbing a calf from another rider at a gallop involves a Riding Acrobatics roll and a STR vs. STR contest. The horse whips do the standard 1D3-1 + Damage Bonus in damage but count as slashing weapons.

Winning a Kökbörü game gives boasting rights to the victorious clan. Actually being the rider who takes the calf into the Victory Circle is even more prestigious, and the Khan of the winning clan normally rewards the rider with a special horse.

## POLO

Another mounted sport, this is more genteel than Kökbörü, and can be played with a ball or even an enemy's head. Teams of many riders, perhaps 100 to a side, play with mallets and try to hit the ball through two posts. The team with the most scores at the end of the game, or at the end of the day, is the winner. Polo is the Sport of Kings and is played across Central Asia, from Persia to the Chinese border.

## MUSIC

Singing is performed with a throaty voice, making sounds a foreign ear finds strange. Music is performed with wind and string instruments. The harp was played before the appearance of the Morin Khuur, the Mongolian violin, in the 11<sup>th</sup> century. A harp is small and portable. Its sounding board is artistically engraved. The shaft is fixed to it at an angle and holds a few strings. Its extremity is shaped like a horse head.

The Morin Khuur appeared later on. Its shaft is shaped like a horse's head as well; the

strings are made of horsehair and make a sound recalling the neighing of a horse. The Morin Khuur was at first plucked. Since its invention, it has become the most typical nomadic instrument together with the flute, which is played with a particular technique of blowing continuously while breathing. When Winter is coldest and it is not possible to leave cramped yurts, the artists practice a dance on their knees, playing on the movements of the arms, torso, shoulders and head.

Finally, bards recite the myths and legends of the tribe, each adding a personal touch to the common thread. Thus true epics of oral tradition are woven by generations of bards over the centuries

## CRAFTING

Jewellery is a trademark of the culture of the steppes. Gold is the main precious metal; it is the only metal that accompanies the dead Khans to their graves. Motifs reflect the importance of animals in nomadic life, as Nomads entirely depend on them. A common example is the fight between animals whose bodies are intertwined. Fabulous animals are a widespread motif, especially the griffin, which holds a leading position in the artistic bestiary. Artists are influenced by the cultures with which they come into contact, which they incorporate into their nomadic art. Because of their lifestyle, their art uses transportable utilitarian objects, such as weapons, harness or belt buckles.

Blacksmiths and goldsmiths have a special status in society and mythology. They are deemed to have power and be the founders of lineages of kings: Genghis Khan, whose name "Temujin" means something like a blacksmith.

## LIVESTOCK

This is the main source of wealth for Nomads, which is actually measured in number of heads. The animals are usually common property of the whole clan. The Nomads herd 5 main species, called the "5 muzzles": sheep, cows / yaks, camels, horses,

and for some tribes goats. Others include reindeer. Animals are used for their strength and as a source of food or raw material. Most of the activity of the Nomad, when there is no war, consists in the maintenance of herds.

Herds move between pastures. A good herder knows the places where grass grows. This is the way nomadic lifestyle has developed. He usually remains for a season in one place. When the grass runs out, devoured by the beasts, or the climate is too harsh, he must move to new pastures. Cattle feed on its own, without the need for hay or grain, but must be moved constantly. This explains the absence of pig, rabbit, chicken and other animals that are usually found amongst sedentary people. This also gives nomadic armies their unparalleled strategic mobility.

In winter, the animals scrape the snow in search of frozen grass, preserved by cold. Reserves of fodder have been collected and stored in shelters, but they remain insufficient. During the harshest winters, many animals freeze to death. In spring, the herds are starving. They replenish themselves during Summer and Autumn to start the winter with sufficient reserves. It is also in Autumn that warlike activity is most intense; the horses are in their best form.

Horses, cattle and camels are used as pack animals. Horses and, among certain tribes of the desert, camels, are used for riding. The most northern tribes breed reindeer instead. The horse has a central place because it is also necessary for working, moving or making war; it is the most precious good. All beasts are eaten, camels less than others because they are rarer. In the autumn, when flocks are fat, beasts are slaughtered to build reserves of meat for the winter. This is a time of great feasting. Leather is used to make straps, clothing, protection and so on. Fur and wool are used to make warm clothing.

Animal hair is crushed and made into felt which will be used in the *ger*: the hair is grouped into a large cylinder of about 2 m long and 50 cm in diameter, which is then rolled on the ground, pulled by horses.

Bones are used by the most backward tribes as tools, including very durable arrowheads.

In the treeless steppe, dung is used for fires. It is harvested by women, and sometimes stored for winter. Consisting of the residues of grass, it burns very well.

Finally, the Nomads have some dogs, whose role is limited to guard the tent to keep away wolves.

## Horses

Horses are a central feature of nomadic way of life. No Nomad could survive without them, since all nomadic activities, tools, economy, in one word their culture, are based on horse riding. In the vast and arid steppe, where the next water source can be days away, taking care of one's horse is a matter of life or death. The last thing a Nomad would sacrifice is his horse. Horses are present in all aspects of nomadic life, should be it daily life, arts or religion.

Horses are used for herding, travelling, hunting, carrying, playing, eating... or as a source of raw material. Every clan maintains its own herd. Nomads use geldings for riding, while mares are kept for and husbandry, guarded by their stallions. Horses are selected for their skills and characteristics for different uses. Nomads don't eat much horse meat, preferring mutton or goat, since horses are more useful as beasts of burden. They still milk mares to make *ayrag* and use horsehair for felt and for making ropes.

Horses are present in all arts. Epics are full of famous wonderful horses accompanying heroes. In legends and tales, horses have magical skills, being able to change their form or size, fly or speak. They help their masters with their skills but also with their wise advice. The Mongolian violin, the Morin Khuur, is supposed to imitate their whinnying. Jewels and paintings are full of horses: since they are an unavoidable primary constituent of nomadic life, they are present in almost all pictorial representations.

Finally, horses have a central place in religious beliefs, since they are strongly related to celestial deities. Winged horses, the Tulpars, are Tengri's favoured offspring and carry the gods. They are also able to carry the souls of the dead to their resting place, as well as



### THE ORIGIN OF THE MORIN KHUUR, THE MONGOLIAN VIOLIN

*There are several versions of this legend, all sharing however within the same frame. A prince owned a fabulous winged horse, with which he was able to reach a star (or a remote kingdom) where his beloved princess lived. One day, enemies (or a jealous woman) cut the wings of the horse which died. The prince was so sad, because he was unable to reach his love anymore and because of the death of his beloved horse, that he started to cry. When the drops fell on the body of the dead horse, it metamorphosed into a violin. With this instrument, the prince was able to make the horse whinny again and to sing his lost love.*

bearing shamans during their mystical journeys. After a nomad's death, the favourite horse of the deceased is sacrificed to accompany him. The main religious function of horses in worship is their use as sacrificial beasts. Since they are the most suited to please the Celestial deities, they are as such preferred to any other beast for sacrifices to the *Aiyy* (deities).

Nomad ponies are relatively small (1.30 m to 1.40 m) but extremely resilient. They can survive one month without eating and two days without drinking. During winter, their fur becomes thicker to protect them from extreme cold.

They are bred in herds and are always kept in a semi-freedom in the open, without fences, where they eat grass. During winter, they know how to scratch snow to find grass which has been frozen by the sudden coming of cold. When travelling, they are hobbled overnight. Trees are scarce in the steppe. At the *ail* (camping place), horses that have to be kept ready for use are attached to a leather rope held between two poles. During raids, Nomads do not need additional supplies for their mounts, which gives them their unmatched mobility compared to sedentary armies, even when those are mounted as well.



There are several kinds of horses, depending on their function:

- Race horse: selected for speed, trained for the race, it is difficult to control in a fight, more so in meleé. A horse is at its best form when the veins are visible on his mouth.
- Warhorse: Trained to use short and sudden movements and to keep quiet in the fury of battle. It is also used for mounted archery.
- Workhorse: For herding cattle. Not very swift but with fast reactions. Used to guide the herd, and bring back fleeing beasts.
- Basic horse for everyday riding, as carthorses or food.

Finally, horses have no horseshoe and have no name, except for the best and most prestigious ones. They are very accurately described by their coat. Piebald horses with big white marks on their shoulders are considered as favourite of the celestial spirits. Statistics for steppe horses are given in the Chapter Eight "Bestiary".

### SADDLERY

The wooden saddle is believed to have been invented, or at least widely in use, around the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD, supposedly as a modification of the packsaddle. Before that, Nomads like the Xiōngnú just used a leather cushion. Stirrups appeared probably at the same time or shortly afterwards, since the wooden saddle made it more difficult to come onto the horse and to hold it. The first stirrups were simple loops of rope or leather. However, they allowed heavy armoured warriors to get on their horse: heavy metallic armour started to spread with stirrups. Therefore, until the 4<sup>th</sup> century, only leather armour suits are in use. Saddle and stirrups are believed to have been introduced in Europe by the Avars in the 5<sup>th</sup> century AD.

The saddle is narrow and tall, custom built of glued wood. It is covered with felt and richly decorated with silver or gold inlays. The shape is quite hollow with aommel (front) and cantle (rear) and flaps curving outwards: they allow the rider to work standing up, resting on the thighs while ensuring greater stability and a more efficient handling of the Uрга (hafted lasso). This saddle is quite uncomfortable, and it is not uncommon to see a horseman sitting

across the seat side-saddle or sitting on the cantle. It is held by two straps of hair or braided leather that prevent it from rotating. The stirrups became an even wider base, for stronger support and better stability. They are connected by a strap that goes under the horse's belly that allows the rider to lean to one side and pick up an object on the ground without dismounting. The saddle pad is reduced to layers of felt on the hollow of the back of the animal.

Saddles are the pride of their owner. It is not uncommon for a nomad to have at least two, a worn one for work and a decorated one for ceremonial purposes.

## WARFARE

War is one of the main activities of Nomads, together with herding and hunting. Any free man is expected to go to war when his Khan calls upon him. Nomads are a nation of warriors, able to raise armies numbering in the hundreds of thousands. Among some tribes, the quality of a man is measured by the number of slain enemies at the end of the year. Death in a fight is the sweetest one, and it is shameful to die from disease or from old age. This explains the courage of the nomadic warriors. The wildest and eldest Nomads of the steppes (Scythians and Huns) decorated saddles with dead enemies' scalps, made ornaments out of their tanned skins, and used their skulls to drink blood. The latter custom lasted for centuries under a more ceremonial form, and could have been a way to honour a defeated enemy.

The art of war cannot be dissociated from the art of riding. It was nomads who invented saddles and stirrups. A nomadic warrior is basically a mounted archer. Their whole strategy and tactics are based on horsemen's mobility and archery skill.

## STRATEGY

Nomads are able to carry raids over immense distances and several months' time. Logistics are a bare minimum. A warrior lives on the land, eating when necessary only the milk of his mare and what he has been able to hunt, or even the blood of his horse. Horses, used to eating grass instead of grain, graze on the grass they find on the way, and are able to fast for weeks at a time.

*"Moreover, they didn't need any transportation or bureaucrats or transport of supplies, since they travelled together with sheep, cows, horses .... Their mounts used to scratch the earth with their hooves and to eat roots, ignoring barley. They therefore didn't need to bring anything from another place"*

(Ibn al-Athir, contemporary of Genghis Khan)


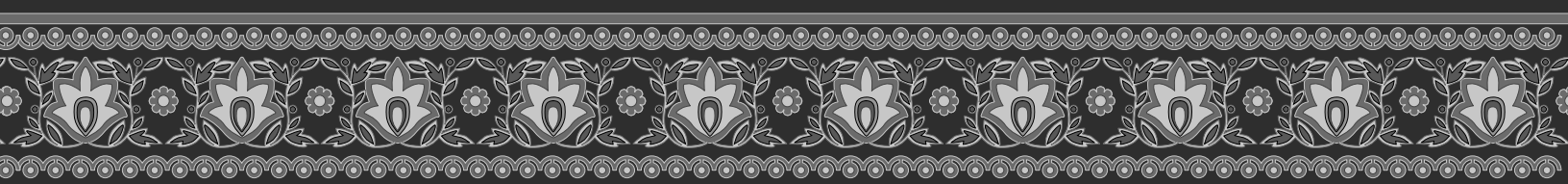
This unmatched mobility allows them to swoop on the enemy, capture sites, plunder them, and get away with little to no resistance.

*"And the Tatars came out from the borderlands of China and attacked the cities of Turkestan ... from where they moved to the cities of Transoxiana. Then part of them went to Khorashan overwhelming everything, destroying, massacring, plundering .... Then they moved on the towns of Azerbaijan and Arraniyya ... and all this within less than a year, which had never been seen before ... From there they moved toward the lands of the Lan and the Lakiz and the diverse nationalities living in this country .... They did all this in a very short time, staying at the same place only the time they needed for their progress, but no more."*

(Ibn al-Athir, contemporary of Genghis Khan)







In the same way, when confronted by an invading army, Nomads retreat to their wide country, leaving the enemy moving deep into the steppe, far away from its base, weakening him by attrition. Then, when the invaders are sufficiently weakened and demoralized, the nomads pounce on them to force them into a disastrous retreat. They have reached the epitome of the art of movement and dodging.

An army is split into 3 corps: the right one (west), the central one and the left one (east): directions are set regarding southward.

Troops are organized in 10,000-man units (*tümen*), led by nobles (*noyan* or *bagadur*). The *Tümen* are subdivided into Thousands, led by leaders of thousand (*noyan* of lesser rank), then into Hundreds and Tens. This decimal subdivision is a common trait of all the peoples of the steppe. The organization is therefore very hierarchical, which brings a surprising manoeuvrability, cohesion and discipline for reputedly cruel and savage barbarians. Genghis Khan will refine this discipline even more to almost reach perfection.

The Season of War begins in Autumn. This is a time when the horses are fit, having been well fed during summer. Nomads have a very high sense of strategy and operation. They prepare their invasions far in advance, sending scouts and spies to estimate the forces they will face, the best places for battle, or where they can find water and food.

Most Khans see the methodical extermination of inhabitants of a conquered city who try to resist, except for those who may be of some utility, as a normal war strategy.

*"The inhabitants of Merv were then divided among the soldiers and recruits and every man was ordered to execute three hundred or four hundred people..."*

(Juvaini, "History of the Conqueror of the World").

## TACTICS

Tactical principles are: observation of the enemy by scouts until the battle begins; weakening of the foes with arrow volleys; if the enemy is still too strong, sudden retreat to simulate panic, which will disorganize the enemy willing to pursue and split the most mobile element from the rest of the army; ambush of the pursuing forces (usually the

elite mounted troop) and finally counter charge on the disorganized elements. When the enemy at last flees, the massacre can start.

On the battlefield, troops are split into two corps. Light cavalry with bows takes its place at the first rank and on the flanks. Its task is to harass and to outflank the enemy. The heavier horsemen with leather or metal armour are placed in the centre. Their task is to charge with the sabre or the lance (but still keeping their bows ready, as the Nomads' preferred weapon). Most of the time, a small escape route is left for the enemy. Slaughtering disorganized fleeing troops is easier for these horsemen than trying to destroy a fully surrounded enemy who has no other choice than to fight to the death.

Sometimes, part of the troops manoeuvre away from the battlefield before the end to reach any enemies who managed to flee, and destroy then methodically. Such a pursuit can last for several days.

Nomads are patient. They are able to harass the enemy for hours until they strike, or even to go away and plunder the country for a couple of days until they find the best opportunity to attack. They are disciplined, and any breach of this discipline is punished with death. They are therefore able to finish a battle before starting to plunder, which is one of the main rewards of the warriors.

On the battlefield, orders are given with drums, horns or flags. The troops are able to take different formations identified by imaginative names like "advance in acacia bush" for small separated groups, "lake formation" when expanding the army on a big surface to give the impression of higher numbers of warriors, "dog battle" for skirmishing in small groups, or "burin formation" for wedge charge manoeuvre.

## FORTIFIED WAGONS

When the Horde moves with its wagons, or when a tribe seeks to protect its camp, the Nomads sometimes, instead of dodging, arrange their wagons in a circle, find shelter behind them against charging enemies, and shoot thousands of arrows in retaliation. They leave slanting passages to allow sallies and devastating counter-attacks. These ramparts of wagons, however, significantly lost their effectiveness after the onset of artillery.

## EQUIPMENT

The typical warrior is a mounted archer. Depending on the tribe and its living conditions, other kind of warriors can be found. Among a nomadic army, one can find:

- Light cavalry with composite bow (2 for each warrior as spare or with different settings), melee weapon (sabre, mace, axe, sword), lasso
- Heavy padded cavalry with 2 bows and lance or hooked lance, melee weapon, sometimes shield, lasso
- Mounted infantry (Köktürks on camels for example) with bow, sword, lance, shield
- Infantry (tribes from the Siberian or Tungus forests) with sword or axe and shield
- Other auxiliary troops, hordes of slaves, as per country

The basic weapon is the composite bow, made of horn, sinews and wood. Some tribes, like the Xiōngnú or the Magyars, use bone stiffeners to make the bow more powerful, instead. Nomad bows have a longer range than classical wooden

bows. Their “recurve” shape makes them smaller and more suitable for shooting from horseback without sacrificing power. However they are not waterproof, and have to be kept dry. Each bow is carried in a closed leather holster hanging from the belt. They lose a part of their force with time and must be dried up with a source of heat, like a fire pit. The making of such a bow is a long and complex process.

Cavalry often carries two bows: one with the standard setting to be fired from horseback, a second one for long range shooting on foot or as spare. Bowmen use many different kinds of arrows, like whistling arrows to send signals or short range heavy arrows, sometime marked with different coloured flights. The favourite feathers for flights are those of the eagle.

Steppe Nomads have a special way to pull the string of the bow, using the thumb, which they protect with a metal or stone broad ring. They like to send a deluge of arrows against their foes, using volley fire, but they are also able to shoot very accurately. They can increase their shooting speed by holding 2 arrows in their mouth for faster access.



# ALTERNATE RULES FOR BOWS

For groups wanting a more accurate simulation of the different kind of bows, we propose a rule inspired from discussions on the basicroleplaying.com forum. This simple rule allows the design of bows adapted to each character, which the standard rules do not permit. It allows characters with a small STR scores to still use a composite bow, which actually matches more the reality in which all Nomads used such bows.

Whatever the nature of a bow (self, composite...), it can be made more or less strong. Many Nomads have a bow for horse archery and a stronger one for foot archery. Children or women used less powerful bows. With this rule, it is not necessary to have a minimal STR to use a particular type of bow, but instead your STR will determine how strong your bow can be.

## Mechanics

Any bow belongs to a broad "Strength"-category. This category is a measure of its performance, i.e. of its damage and range. It is also a measure of the minimum STR required to use it properly.

The basic bow is the self bow. It has the basic performances of its STR. Other kind of bows, like composite, reflex, or long, can improve the basic performances. In game terms, every design may provide a bonus/penalty to the archer's STR.

For simplicity and playability, bows are classified in five STR categories:

- Weak, required STR 5, damage 1D4+1, range 40m
- Average, required STR 9, damage 1D6+1, range 80m
- Strong, required STR 13, damage 1D8+1, range 100m
- Colossal, required STR 17, damage 1D10+1, range 120m

## Bow design

As per the rules, we consider 3 designs: the self bow, the long bow (not in use in this supplement) and the composite bow. The latter one is supposed to be the nomadic reflex recurve composite bow. GMs can introduce more details in bow designs for more granularity, using the principles of these rules.

Composite bows increase the archer's effective STR by 3. For instance, a STR 10 archer will be able to use a "Strong" composite bow as though his STR was 13.

Long bows increase the archer's STR by 2.

Using a bow while mounted, on the other hand, decreases the archer's effective STR by 2, due to the disturbing position and movement. For instance, our STR 10 archer will be able to use an "Average" composite bow on horseback ( $10 + 3[\text{composite design}] - 2[\text{from horseback}] = 11$ ), but he will not be able to properly use an "Average" self bow while mounted ( $10 - 2 = 8$ ).

Damage bonus is not used anymore for bows: if you have a bow adapted to your STR, it will make more damage accordingly. "Foot" and "Horse" settings are not relevant anymore and are replaced by the -2 for mounted use.

## Using a bow below the STR limit

The performances of the bow are limited by the STR of the user, since a strong bow cannot be fully pulled by a weak archer. The STR category of the bow is then set by the STR of the archer, taking into account the design bonus. For example, if a STR 10 archer uses a STR 13 "strong" self bow, this one will be considered as an "average" STR 10 bow for performances and will be unable to do more than 1D6+1 damage with



a range of 80m, even if the bow can potentially do more. This archer will still be able to use a “strong” composite bow at full capacities, profiting from the STR bonus granted by the composite design (10+3=13), but again only an “average” composite if mounted (10+3-2=11).

In addition, using a bow with a STR that exceeds your effective STR makes all Archery rolls Difficult.

Exceeding STR does not provide any advantage.

*Example: a STR 14 warrior could use a STR 13 “strong” self bow. But as a steppe Nomad, he will certainly prefer a STR 17 “colossal” composite bow, since this one can be used with a minimal STR of  $17-3=14$ . If the warrior wants to use it on horseback, the bow is going to be too strong for him again, since the STR requirements are increased by 2. He must use a composite bow of the next lower STR category, the “strong” one: he will probably have one of each bow instead, as usual among Nomads.*

*A STR 6 young girl receives a bow to play with. She could use a STR 5 “weak” self bow with 1D4+1 damage, but her father gives her a STR 9 “average” composite bow with 1D6+1 damage and the +3 bonus to effective STR allows her to use it properly.*

In this example, it is clear that the same design can produce different bows. Each one is adapted to its owner.

#### Limitations

Because of practical reasons including properties of the material, vibrations, elasticity, etc, a self bow is never “colossal”, except for supernatural magical bows (think of Ulysses’ bow as the exception to this rule). For comparable reasons, but also because there is no true interest in spending time and worthy material for a toy, weak composite bows are very rarely manufactured.

#### Arrows

For short and long range arrows, decrease the dice category (e.g. 1D6 becomes 1D4, 1D8 becomes 1D6, etc.)

#### Minimum requested STR (summary)

Design/STR & damage	Weak 1d4+1	Average 1D6+1	Strong 1D8+1	Colossal 1D10+1
self	5	9	13	-
long	3	7	11	15
composite	-	6	10	14

Add 2 if mounted



The quiver changed its form in time. It was originally made of wood, bark, bones and sinews – sometime using imported bamboo as well. It is a rigid slightly splaying cylindrical container with an open cap. Arrows are kept with the point upward. The quiver contains up to 24 of them.

Around the 12<sup>th</sup> century, leather and fabric quivers appeared. Arrows were then kept with flights upward. These quivers became even bigger, holding up to 50 arrows in the 15<sup>th</sup> century. A special external compartment was sometimes made for a few special arrows, making them easier to reach and choose.

The bow is complemented with a melee weapon; straight sword for the Huns or the Köktürks, sabre for the Djurchets or the Mongols, mace, hatchet or lance, this one being used one or two-handed on horseback. Some warriors use hooked lances or lassos to unseat their foes.

Armour is usually only made of leather or fur (sheep skin for the poorest, wolf skin for the richest), or reinforced leather. Those who can afford it wear leather armour with metal pieces, or even ring mail, and padding for the horses. The favourite armour is lamellar, made of small metal or hard leather tiles bound together. Men with metal armour are gathered in the heavy troops for the final charge.

Nomads, however, lack siege technology, something which they compensate by employing foreigners, for example Persian and Arab engineers for the invasion of China.

## **HORSES AT WAR**

Warfare is obviously highly dependent on riding skills, and on the incredible ponies which carried their riders to every corner of the Eurasian continent. Every warrior travels with several horses, riding them successively, allowing him to travel an average of 100 km in one day.

## **HORSE ARCHERY**

Horse archery is obviously related to the art of war and the culture of people using this skill. For this reason, it has not been used in every country. Historically, it started in the Eurasian steppes and spread to Central Asia, Korea, Japan and with

some extent to northern China. Native Americans having adopted a mounted nomadic life used horse archery as well. In all other parts of the world, horse archery is not found as a standard skill.

Steppe Nomads live on their mount and find it much more efficient to hunt on horse in a terrain where mobility is paramount. They naturally use their skill at war as well.

Detailed rules for shooting from horseback are given in the Skills section.

## **FIREARMS**

During the invasion of the Kin kingdom in north China, the sinicized Jurchet used Chinese firearms against the Mongols. Genghis Khan immediately integrated these new weapons into his army. However, Chinese firearms, despite their early use, never reached nor revolutionized Asian warfare. For the Nomads, these weapons are good auxiliary weapons to break walls or to use in battles where they can't efficiently fight their traditional way, but they have not been completely adapted to their tactics based on movement.

Firearms skills are therefore reserved for foreign characters and rarely for those Nomad characters who have been taught by the Chinese.



## 3. CHARACTER CREATION



**W**ind on the Steppes is a supplement for *Basic Roleplaying*, which means that it uses the standard rules as described in the *Basic Roleplaying* Core Rulebook. However, all settings are slightly different and require amended or new rules: Wind on the Steppes makes no exception.

### STANDARD RULES OPTIONS USED

When playing Wind on the Steppes as a supplement to another setting, the same *Basic Roleplaying* options and specific options should be kept for consistence.

These options have been used in the rules and examples found in Wind on the Steppes:

- Allegiance
- Cultural modifiers
- Opposed skill rolls
- Powers – Magic, Sorcery, Super Powers and customized powers
- Complementary skills (p. 50 of *Basic Roleplaying*) – at least for the negotiation with a spirit

The following *Basic Roleplaying* options are highly recommended:


- Encumbrance (p. 180 of *Basic Roleplaying*)
- Skill Ratings Over 100% (p. 175 of *Basic Roleplaying*)

#### Optional:

- Literacy – in a limited fashion
- Increased Personal Skill Points (p. 24 of *Basic Roleplaying*)







## CHARACTER GENERATION EXAMPLE

*Thorough this section, we will follow the example of Gianna, Georges, Regis and Paul who will create and play characters. The GM wants to play a game in the middle of the 6<sup>th</sup> century, short before the Köktürk turn against the Avars. The characters will be members of Türk clans. They play a heroic campaign. EDU is not used but skill categories modifiers are.*

*Georges decides to play a more subtle character but still with fighting skills. He is leaning toward a spy.*

*Paul wants to play an exotic character: a shaman would fit his wishes. He prefers a black shaman with some gritty powers.*

*Regis will play a character proposed by the GM. He will be the son of a lower-rank bek.*

## CHARACTER GENDER

In the very hard world of steppe nomads, society follows rigid rules by which everybody knows his place. The roles of men and women are well defined. This does not mean that women have neither power nor influence, but their role is not the easiest to play in this setting, since they are the ones who keep the household. As a player character, a woman can still be either an artist or a shaman. Only under very exceptional circumstances did women carry weapons, for example Khan's widows who held power until their son could gain his place as the new Khan. Some tales tell the story of exceptionally strong or powerful virgin warrior women, which may indicate that women could exceptionally become warriors.

A character whose gender does not correspond to his profession (like a female warrior) can be played with the agreement of the GM. In an historical setting, motivations and background should be well developed and justify the exception.

**Note:** women warriors seem not to be a rarity in the old Indo-European cultures: ancients Greeks are horrified to see female warriors among the Scythians, which may be at the origin of the legend of the Amazons.

*Except Gianna's character, all are males  
Gianna wants to play a female warrior. The GM agrees if they can find together a credible reason for having a female warrior.*

## HOME REGION

Nomadic tribes moved a lot from place to place to get better land, to plunder rich neighbours, pushed away by another threatening tribe or just to build an empire. Still the region imposes a way of life and the herding of some specific beasts in specific areas like camels in the desert and reindeer in Siberia.

As a guideline, Turkish tribes originate from the Altai Mountains, Mongolic from the Baikal Lake in southern Siberia and Tungus from the east.

A PC originating from the Gobi desert will probably belong to the camel riders. He may ride horses as well as camels.

A PC originating from the North bordering the Siberian forests can be a reindeer rider.

A Siberian hunter won't ride.

Otherwise, PCs will be horse riders.

*The campaign will take place in the Altai Mountain, among Turkic tribes. Georges wants however to play a Mongol character. He's originating from Lake Baikal. Both Georges and the GM have to find a consistent story. We'll see how the process of character creation can help.*

## CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics are rolled as in the rules, with the exception of CON. Because of their hard life, only the most robust can survive and reach adulthood. Nomads are used to live in a harsh environment, which make them even tougher. Therefore, CON is rolled on 2D6+6.

Mongols and Asian Turks have a SIZ of 2D6+4. Tungus and "Caucasian-type" Turks have the standard 2D6+6 SIZ.


EDU, if used, of course concerns the nomadic world and is mostly based on experience.

## ROLE-PLAYING A NOMAD

This will help you give some flavour to a Nomad character and to summarize your “average nomad” way of thinking.

- *Blind loyalty toward a chief who deserves it. You can die for him. When called upon by your khan for war, do not ask for any salary, even as a noyan, but follow his orders without hesitation.*
- *Be efficient: you learn that all you do aims at the best efficiency. “Chivalrous” does not belong to your main vocabulary. If you have to flee, flee and come back later. If you have to die, die. If slaughtering people brings any advantage, do it. If skills from other people can be useful, use them. Heroic achievements are for duty, vengeance, ambition, to gain the favour of clan mates or spirits or for any other benefits, not for sport.*
- *Be patient, wait for optimal conditions when possible.*
- *Life is valuable when useful. Spare your tribe mates, but don't be overburdened with unnecessary prisoners: massacre them with cold blood when asked to or when useful.*
- *Be open to other religions, philosophies and knowledge. Foreign sages and hand workers can bring you what you're missing. Despise other settled people.*
- *Use slaves and despise them.*
- *Help your clan.*
- *Be fair to your anda, even if he is fighting on the opposite side.*
- *Fear spirits, avoid making them angry. Words can attract them.*
- *Do not boast about your own exploits, give credit for them to spirits who may become upset or jealous.*
- *Be thankful to good spirits.*
- *Observe taboos.*
- *Don't fear enemies. Don't fear death either. It is a shame not to die on horseback so that you can join your ancestors. But die usefully.*
- *Avenge your clan and tribe mates.*
- *Be proud of your clan.*
- *Travel with several horses.*
- *Be frugal, but get completely drunk on occasions. Eat whatever meat is edible. Eyes are delicious.*
- *Be welcoming to a friendly traveller. Don't hesitate to ask for shelter from friendly or neutral nomads encountered while travelling.*
- *Share your hunt with anybody coming until you have attached it to your saddle.*
- *Ask shamans for advices. Shamans are not holy but have scary powers and knowledge beyond your understanding. Fear them.*
- *Take care of your mount, as you can't survive without it.*
- *Don't bath in a river or a lake. In your country, this often means don't bath at all.*
- *Keep your bows dry.*
- *Be disciplined in battle. Do not plunder until the enemy is definitely destroyed.*
- *Plan your actions as you would prepare a hunt.*
- *Scout an unknown land instead of blindly getting there.*





*All the characters belong to the Mongoloid Nomads. The players roll 2D6+4 for SIZ, 2D6+6 for INT and CON, 3D6 for other characteristics. They can reallocate up to 3 points.*

*Gianna rolls STR 14, CON 12, SIZ 6, INT 9, POW 10, DEX 15, APP 8. She reallocates 2 points to eventually obtain STR 13, CON 12, SIZ 6, INT 10, POW 10, DEX 14, APP 8. Her high STR and low APP make her an exceptional woman, which may justify her choice: she scares her tribe mates! Gianna decides that her character praises the spirits and has a lot of respect for shamans.*

*Georges rolls the following characteristics: STR 12, CON 11, SIZ 13, INT 17, POW 13, DEX 16, APP 8. Quite a good average! Since he wants to be able to use a composite bow (minimal STR 13), he reallocates these scores as follows: STR 13, CON 12, SIZ 12, INT 16, POW 13, DEX 16, APP 8.*

*Paul rolls and reallocates 3 points for the following result: STR 9 CON 11 SIZ 8 POW 18 DEX 11 INT 16 APP 15. Paul's character has enough POW to start as a major shaman, if he fulfills the prerequisites.*

*Régis' character has the following characteristics: STR 13, CON 12, SIZ 13, INT 14, DEX 12, POW 14, APP 09.*

## CHARACTER'S STARTING AGE

A character's starting age is 1D6+17. For higher level campaigns, the GM may want to increase the starting age: 2D6+17 for heroic, 3d6+17 for epic, 4d6+17 for superhuman.

The GM may allow to play older, more experienced characters. For each year above the rolled age, the character gains further professional skill points, as explained below in the "Skills" section.

*For a heroic campaign, all players roll 2D6+17. Gianna rolls 22 years, Georges rolls 25 years, Paul rolls 27*

## DERIVED CHARACTERISTICS

These are computed and written on the character sheet as per p28 of *Basic Roleplaying*.

*For Gianna's character: no damage bonus, hit points 9, experience bonus 5%.*

*For Georges' character: damage +1D4, hit points 12, experience bonus 8%.*

*For Paul's character: no damage bonus, hit points 10, experience bonus 8%*

*For Régis' character: damage +1D4, hit points 13, experience bonus 7%*

## PERSONALITY

This step is optional but is recommended for high level campaigns ("epic" or "superhuman"). The list of increased skills must be slightly adapted:

Replace "Research" with either one knowledge skill or "Teach"

For shamans, replace "combat skill" with "Persuade" or "Soul escape" (see the Shamanism chapter).

When inappropriate, replace "Technical skill" with "Repair" or a "Craft" skill

*This option is not used in our example, since it is set in a mid-level "heroic" campaign.*

## CHARACTER NAME

Nomad names are very descriptive and are often compound. In the course of their life, individuals can gain a new nickname. The most famous example is Temüjin (Ironsmith) who became Genghis Khan (Cinggis Qaghan, the Ocean High King).

Children are never called by their true name in order to deceive evil spirits who may try to steal their soul. Instead they are given nick-names or named as animals, for example Little Mouse. Most of the names are composed and structured as *name + name* or *name + adjective* concerning an event, a positive influence (like long life), the ancestors or clan, animals, colours, numbers, weapons, metals and so on.

Many names can be found in Mongolian and Turkish tales. Some examples are given here. Simple names can be used as such or as a component of a composed name. Players are invited to use names in their own language and to find nicknames.

From "The Secret History of the Mongols":

*Examples from "the Adventures of Er-Töshtük the Steppes Giant"*

*The names are Kyrgyz, who are a Turkish nation. Some names have a Persian influence, due to the contacts with the*

*neighbouring Persian civilization: they are in italics. All these names can be used for any Turkish tribe, for they are the same with only minor variation. They are similar to some Mongolian names.*

*The parents of Gianna's character's named her Kül-Ayim (My-Moon-Flower): it does not really fit to their adult daughter!*

*Georges chooses Jebe-Tsenkher (Arrow-Blue) as name, which is a Mongolian name.*

*Paul chooses Temir*

*Régis's character is called Ayu-Kulak (Bear-Ear)*

Mongol name	English Translation	Mongol name	English Translation
Abaqa	Uncle (father side)	Oldaqar	Loot
Acıq-Sirün	Furious-Ferocious	Ong	Gerfalcon
Ajinai	Thoroughbred	Oqotur	Dumpy
Bar-Singqor-Dosqsın	Rich-Falcon-the-Terrible	Ökin	Girl
Borogul	Wolf	Qaci	Hard
Ceren	Great-Longevity	-Qaldun	-Divine
Ceceigen	Small-Flower (f)	Qaracar	Dark-skinned
Dei	—	Qasar	Watchdog
Digin	Prince	Qoga	Beautiful (f)
Dorbun	—	Qogai-Maral	Doe-Fwan
Ebügejin	The-Old	Qoluiqan	Nice-Voice
Ebegei (f)	—	Qubilai	Fortunate
Gügün-Qoga	Handsome-Man	Quduqa	Knife
Gücügür	Birch-Mouse	Quildar	Wished
Gürbesü (f)	Saurian	Quildar-Secen	Wished-the-Sagacious
Güyüd	Hot-Blooded	Qutuqtu	Blissful
Idug-Qut	Holy-Fortune	-Secen	-the-Sagacious
Inanca-Bilge	Loyal-the-Wise	Sem-Soci	Furtive-the-Shy
Jali-Buqa	Flame-the-Bull	Sorqan-Sira	Vigilant-the-Yellow
Jebe	Arrow	Sorqatu-Jürki	Vigilant-the-Brave
Jürcedei	Djurchet	Tai-Temür-Taiji	Colt-Iron
Ketei	Elegant	Teb-Tengerri	Very-Celestial
Labalqa	—	Togoril	Raven
Möngke	Eternal	Tolun-Cerbi	Stain-the-Chamberlain
-Naya	-Lark	—	—
Nacin-Bagatur	Rattle-the-Valiant	Tuqu	Standard
Noyagidai	-of-the-Lords	Ulagan	Red
Öbüge	Grandfather	Yedi-Tublud	Seven-Standards
Olar	—	Yeke-Ceren	Great-Longevity



## SOCIAL CLASS AND STATUS

Social class can be chosen with GM's approval or rolled on the following table. It indicates the social class of the family (father) the character is issued from. For heroic or epic games, the die roll may indicate the social class of the character himself with GM approval, and as such his status as well.

However, the GM is free to limit the Status of starting PCs for more consistency and realism. For example, the son of a chief of *tümen* is not automatically a chief of *tümen* himself, but may start as a chief of ten or even hundred. The GM can state that the status of the PC is 81, which is the minimum for a *noyan*.

Status can be increased by spending character skill points, up to the minimum requested for the chosen profession, and above it with GM approval. A player should not be allowed to increase Status up to the next upper social class when not necessary. Alternatively, a PC can start with a status score of 31 for a free man and spend skill points to increase it.

Slaves are considered as defeated enemies. Roll again on the table for the social origin of the character, with 100 indicating a foreigner. Genghis Khan himself started his career as a slave.

### STATUS AND SOCIAL CLASS TABLE

1D100

01-10	<i>bogul</i> (slave)
11-30	<i>arad</i> (lower class: servant)
31-74	<i>nökul</i> (middle class: Herder, warrior, hunter...)
75-80	<i>nökul</i> , chief of ten
81-98	<i>noyan/Bek/Bagadur</i> (upper class, noble, clan chief)
81-91	chief of hundred
92-96	chief of thousand
97-98	chief of <i>tümen</i> (ten thousand)
99	<i>khan</i> or chief of a very big clan
100	<i>Shaman</i> or <i>baki</i> : roll again and combine. The 2 <sup>nd</sup> roll gives the status level.

Sons and daughters of shamans are potentially shamans as well, and may receive the visit of spirits at a given time in their life. See the Chapter Four "Shamans."

*Gianna rolls 98!! With her penalty of -1, her status level is 97. Her father is a noyan/bek, chief of tümen, a general of the ruling Khan. This may explain why Kül-Ayim could follow her own way.*

*Georges rolls 06: a slave! With his bonus skill, it brings him to 14 = servant arad. Georges will have to spend enough skill points to increase his status up to (31) if he wants to play a free man. The PC may have been captured by enemies during a raid, or intercepted and kept as slave while bringing a message. Or maybe the tribe he was spying held him prisoner. Georges and the GM will use the character creation process to build a background consistent with the campaign.*

*Paul rolls 62 and adds his communication bonus to reach 75. Since Paul's character has POW 18, the GM states that he can play a major shaman. As a major shaman, Paul's PC gains 1d6 status to 79 (see Chapter Four "Shamans"), but cannot be a chief of ten. Shamans are not war leaders and are mostly outside of the social order. However, Temir has enough reputation and authority to be listened to and respected by others.*

*Régis rolls 32 for Ayu-Kulak: since he's supposed to be the son of a bek, Régis will have to increase Ayu-Kulak's status up to a minimum of 81. As a bek, he gains 1D3 Allegiance [Tengriism]. Régis rolls a 3.*

## ALLEGIANCE AND RELIGION

Once again, this setting concentrates on those Nomadic tribes which kept their specific culture. Half-"civilized" tribes living under the rule or influence of their highly civilized neighbours like China or Persia, or which moved to these empires, should be adapted. A GM is free to adapt the following information according to his setting or to depict peculiar tribes (e.g. Manichean Uyghur). Basically, characters may have allegiances to Tengriism, Animism, Ancestors and some foreign religions.

There are 3 common allegiances: Tengriism, Animism and Ancestors. Unless the tribe has

converted, Buddhism, Taoism, Manichaeism, Islam and Nestorianism are uncommon religions. Some variations are possible amongst tribes, for example Nestorianism as common allegiance for Naimans or Manichaeism for Western Köktürks.

Tengriism is the belief in and the submission to the higher spirits and deities with Tengri above all. Animism is concerned with minor spirits, and is more of a way to handle nature than a true religion. Animism survived the introduction of foreign religions while Tengriism did not. Characters start with an allegiance of 1d6-2 to both.

Ancestor allegiance designates the respect toward and the worship of clan and tribe ancestors' spirits. As a common belief, characters start with an allegiance of 1d6-2 as well.

Player Characters start with an allegiance of 1d6-4 with each uncommon religion.

It is possible to increase Allegiance at a cost of one Skill Point per point of Allegiance for a common religion, and 2 Skill Points per point of Allegiance for uncommon religions.

### **BENEFITS OF ALLEGIANCE:**

Under certain conditions, Allegiance grants some power and help from spirits. Being allied to a cult allows Heroes to call for Spirit Intervention, and shamans to deal with spirits, as explained in later chapters.

In high-magic campaigns, any character may gain the following advantages when allied with a cult:

**Tengriism:** the character receives some life force back from Tengri, providing extra hit points as per the rule p. 316 of *Basic Roleplaying* (1/5<sup>th</sup> of the allegiance score in extra hit points for a game session).

**Animism:** the character can draw extra magic power from the spirit world, providing extra Power Points as per the rule p. 316 of *Basic Roleplaying* (1/10<sup>th</sup> of the allegiance score in extra power points per game session).

**Ancestors:** ancestors help by providing extra skill points as per the rules on p. 317 of *Basic Roleplaying* (up to Allegiance in bonus for a skill roll, up to 3 times in a game session).

### **ACTS CONTRARY TO ALLEGIANCES:**

Please refer to the Chapter Four "Shamans"; for the definition of the difference between white and black shamans.

#### **All:**

Breaking a taboo (bathing in a river, urinating into a lake, omitting sacrifice to an oboo...): -1 to -3

Profanation (intentionally destroying an oboo or a grave, killing one's own khan...): -1 to -6 to the corresponding allegiance

#### **Acts contrary to Tengriism:**

Showing no respect for a white shaman: -1 ...and the distrust of the shaman

Showing no respect for a Khan: -2 ...and the distrust of the Khan

Showing no respect for Tengriist spirits (e.g. never making a gift to the Sky when drinking): -1 to -3

Missing the annual sacrifice to Tengri: -2

Spilling the blood of a noble (except during a war): -1 to -2 depending on the noble's rank

#### **Acts contrary to Animism:**

Showing no respect for a black shaman: -1 ...and the hatred of the shaman!

Showing no respect for animist spirits (e.g. never pray to animal spirits before a hunt): -1 to -3

Neglecting one's totem animal: -1

#### **Acts contrary to Ancestors:**

Missing the annual sacrifice to the clan or tribe ancestors: -2

Not worshiping family ancestors: -2 every year

Not fulfilling one's duties to the clan: -1 to -3


### **INCREASING ALLEGIANCE**

There are 3 main ways to voluntarily increase one's allegiance.

- Making an exceptional sacrifice: the GM decides if the sacrifice is enough







according to the circumstances or rolls on the Compensation Chart for the required sacrifice (see chapter “Shamans”): the character gains +1d6

- Making a propitiatory quest, +1 to +6, GM’s discretion
- Killing enemies: Allegiance to ancestors increases as follows:
  - Every 3 warriors: +1
  - Batyr or shaman: +3
  - Khan: +5

Succeeding in an Allegiance roll qualifies for an Allegiance experience check.

Shamans increase their Allegiance by POW/2 when being devoured by spirits (see Chapter Four “Shamans”). They also gain 1 point of Allegiance every time they seal a permanent alliance for a spirit.

The GM may grant allegiance points as a reward for exceptional deeds of the character or excellent role-playing. He may also remove some.

## APOTHEOSIS

A character who reaches 100 in an Allegiance, and is willing to commit to that force, reaches apotheosis. A shaman who reaches apotheosis becomes a Great Shaman and follows special rules (see Chapter Four “Shamans”). Other characters gain the following benefits:

**Tengriist apotheosis.** The Character becomes a hero. He can claim the qaghanate (Empire).

**Animist apotheosis.** The Character will never be harmed by a lesser spirit unless the spirit has been forced to by a shaman or ordered to by a Great Spirit. When he dies, he can decide to become an üör, or the protecting spirit of a given place.

**Ancestor apotheosis.** The character becomes a clan or tribe hero. He gains the permanent help of the mythical ancestor spirit until he dies, granting him +30% in the rating of 3 tribe skills. When he dies, he can choose to be bound into a standard.

## INFLUENCE OF OTHER RELIGIONS

At some time other religions tend to replace the old Tengriism, so starting allegiance shall be changed.

At first, the new religion becomes a common religion, with 1d6-2 as starting allegiance.

When the influence increases, Tengriism becomes an uncommon religion with allegiance starting at 1D6-4, while Animism stays a common “religion” (or belief). Depending on the importance of ancestors in the new religion (e.g. Buddhism), allegiance to Ancestors may stay common, otherwise it becomes uncommon as well.

After a while, Tengriism disappears, but Animism and Ancestors remain at least as uncommon religions.

Some examples can be found later in the description of the different peoples and tribes.

*In our sample campaign, Tengriism, Animism and Ancestors are common Allegiances. Mazdaism is an uncommon Allegiance.*

*Gianna rolls 3 times 1D6-2, gets 2, 0, 0 and affects 2 to the Ancestors.*

*Georges rolls and allocates as follows: Tengriism (4), Animism (2) and Ancestors (1).*

*Paul rolls and allocates as follows: Tengriism (2), Animism (2) and Ancestors (0).*

*Ayu-Kulak rolls 4 for Tengriism, which makes 7 with his bonus as a bek. He rolls and allocates Animism (0) and Ancestors (3)*

*All roll 0 for the uncommon Allegiance.*

## PROFESSION

The player chooses a profession for his character. He can then use his professional skill points and his personal skill points to increase his skill ratings. Professions and professional skills are described in the next chapter.

*Gianna wants to play a skilled mounted archer: she chooses the profession of “Arrow-Rider”.*

*Georges chooses the profession of “Spy”.*

*Paul chooses the profession of “Black Shaman”.*

*Régis plays a “Bek”.*

## POWERS

Smith characters may start with magic powers, with GM approval, as explained later in the "Profession and Professional Skills" section.

Shamans start with specific shamanic powers. They can buy other powers by spending Power Purchase Points, as described in the Chapter Four "Shamans". They will be able to buy even more or to increase ratings by spending skill points.

*Only Paul's character will have Powers as a shaman. Paul decides to purchase one permanently allied lesser spirit and 2 shamanic spells from his Power Purchase Points. The rest will be purchased from the skill point pool. See Chapter Four "Shamans".*

## SKILLS

It is time now to spend skill points to increase the skill ratings, and gain or increase powers. Status, skills and Allegiances may be increased with skill points. Powers can be purchased only if they belong to the profession, as well as skills with a base chance of 00%.

Skills and professional skills are described in the next sections.

Bonus for ageing: player characters can increase their starting age above the rolled age and gain further experience. They receive additional professional skill points in a rate depending on the campaign level:

- 2 points per additional year for a normal level campaign
- 3 points per additional year for a heroic campaign
- 4 points per additional year for an epic campaign
- 5 points per additional year for a superhuman campaign

*Gianna wants to play a female Arrow-Rider. Her character will be an expert in bow and riding. Gianna can spend 325 in her professional skills and 100 (INTx10) in any skill. She allocates the following:*

*Professional skill pool (325 points): Horse Archery +55, Missile Weapon (Composite Bow) +50, Melee Weapon (Scimitar) +15, Speed Shooting +55, First Aid +25, Knowledge [region] +20, Ride [Horse] +20, Riding Acrobatics +35, Spot +20, Track +30*

*Personal skill pool (100): Craft [Horse Herding] +15, Survival [Steppe] +19, Listen +13, Navigate +25, Hide +10, Allegiance [Ancestors] +18*

*Kül-Ayim will be a very skilled horse archer. She is still unsure about which spirits she will be devoted to: nature spirits or ancestor spirits.*

*Georges wants a flexible character. He spends his skill point as follows:*

*Professional skills (325 points) – grapple +15, Horse Archery +30, Melee Weapon [Scimitar] +25, Missile Weapon [Composite Bow] +35, Language [foreign] +40, Survival [Desert] +10, Repair +10, Knowledge [1<sup>st</sup> Foreign Country] +40, Knowledge [2<sup>nd</sup> Foreign Country] +20, Strategy +15, Insight +30, Navigate +15, Sense +10, Hide +30.*

*Personal skill pool (160 points) – Grapple +10, Missile Weapon [Composite Bow] +5, Disguise +30, Language [foreign] +5, Persuade +20, Status +17(\*), Survival [Desert] +10, Repair +10, First Aid +15, Strategy +5, Listen +10, Navigate +5, Sense +5, Spot +10, Track +15, Climb +5, Dodge +10, Hide +10, Jump +6, Riding Acrobatics +16, Swim +16.*

*(\*) requested by the GM who imposes Jebe-Tsenkher to be a free warrior.*

*Jebe-Tsenkher has a good level in many skills, although still far from being an expert in any of them.*

*Ayu-Kulak spends his 325 professional skills points as follows: Grapple +15, Horse Archery +40, Melee Weapon [Saber] +28, Mounted Lance +20, Missile Weapon [Composite Bow] +38, Speed Shooting +20, Command +25, Etiquette +15, Status +32, Knowledge [Heraldry] +15, Knowledge [Genealogy] +15, Craft [Herding – Horses] +15, Spot +15, Track +12 and Ride +20.*

*Personal skill points (140): Ayu-Kulak must increase his Status up to 81 and allocates 12 personal skill points for that: 32 (rolled Status) + 5 (Communication Skills Category bonus) + 32 (Professional Skill Points) + 12*



(Personal Skill Points) = 81. Régis allocates 25 points for a shield, 10 points for Knowledge [Religion]. The rest is used to optimise the professional skills.

Paul already gained some powers, including spells. He can increase his rating in spell casting. He must have a minimum rating in the shamanic skills. He owns 325 professional skill points and 160 personal skill points, with which he can increase his skills or buy new powers. How he does this will be described in details in the Chapter Four "Shamans".

## POSSESSIONS

Wealth does not have the same meaning for Nomads as for settled people. Housing and palaces are irrelevant. Many conquerors continue to live in their yurts outside of the walls of the rich cities they conquered. Cattle is the common property of the clan. In a land where private ground is ignored, landowning has no meaning. A wealthy Nomad has many yurts and women, numerous slaves and servants, rare clothes and weapons, a good reputation and a lot of followers and allied clans. His clan has a lot of livestock, which consists of sheep, yaks or cows and the like. Sheep is treated as just raw materials, while

yaks and cows are also used as beasts of burden or to pull the heavy carts carrying the yurts.

The following equipment is valid for a starting young character. The GM can adapt it according to the age and status of the character. Basic clothes are always available, since without them no one would survive. They are made of leather, felt, or wool and consist of a pair of boots, trousers, a tunic and a winter set of felt or sheepskin (jacket or coat, hat). It is also assumed that every character owns the tools required for his occupation. In particular, every travelling rider carries tools for spot repairing: needles, a file for sharpening arrows and blades, thread and straps, knife, rope, a small axe, leather bags and an iron cooking pot.

Every character is supposed to have the minimum required equipment to exercise his profession: tools for a craftsman, music instrument for a bard, drum and dress for a shaman, etc. Equipment for everyday life is always available in the clan, like urga, saddle – for those who have mounts-, blanket, harness.

*Kül-Ayim belongs to the very upper class: she can have whatever she likes for her profession. She has servants and slave maidens,*

Basic minimum equipment of a starting character -more experienced or wealthy characters may have more. Cattle are an indication of what would be the characters if the family was alone. They belong actually to the clan. It gives also an indication on what a family can sacrifice to the spirits without depleting too much its cattle.

**Bogul:** destitute to poor. Only what has been given to him or what he managed to steal. A *bogul* can be equipped as an auxiliary foot trooper. Basic clothes in bad condition, such as boots, trousers, tunic of leather, felt or bad tissue, winter jacket and hat made of sheep fur or felt.

**Arad:** poor to average. Basic clothes and *deel*. Knife. His family owns 2D6 – 2 cattle, 1D2 - 1 horses \*, 1D2 - 1 yurt.

**Nökul/Tarkhan:** average. 1D3 horses \*. Basic clothes and *deel*. 2 bows, 1D2 melee weapons. His family owns 2D100 heads of cattle, 3D6 horses \*, 1D3 yurts.

**Noyan/Bek:** affluent. 1D10 horses \*. 1 *bogul* (slave). Basic clothes and *deel*, expensive clothes or made from expensive wolf fur. Bows, melee weapon, lance, shield, Cuirboulli armour. His father owns 1D20 x 50 pieces of cattle, 2D20 x 5 horses \*, 1D6 + 2 yurts, slaves and servants.

**Khan:** affluent to wealthy for Qaghans. 2D10 horses \*. 1D6 *bogul* and *arad* (slaves and servants). Basic clothes and *deel*, silk clothes or very expensive furs (e.g. sable). Bows, melee weapon, lance, shield, leather & metal armour. His father owns thousands of heads of cattle and horses, *ger* for him and his women, numerous slaves and servants and enormous plunder.

**Shaman:** As per social class. No melee weapon.

(\*) or camels or reindeer. A part of these are always horses for rich people.

horses, a good armour and so forth. She may gain some followers if they are not scared or ashamed of serving a woman.

Jebe-Tsenkher, as an arad, would have had only minimal belongings. Georges had to spend points to sufficiently increase his status, so that Jebe-Tsenkher will be able to acquire at least the minimum for his profession. He may have been born as an arad but have managed through his intelligence and commitment to obtain the status of a free tarkhan man.

Temir belongs to the upper middle class. He has the necessary equipment for his profession, which is a shaman dress and a shaman drum, some quality clothes like wolf fur, several good horses and 2 yurts. His family takes care of many beasts and horses. If Paul wants, Temir can have a slave taking care of his belongings and his family while visiting the spirits. Temir can have a wife and children.

Ayu-Kulak can have all the weapons he chooses, as well as a leather lamellar armour. He owns several horses and has good quality clothes, including a wolf mantle. He's served by a few arads and slaves.

## TOTEM ANIMAL

A player can decide if his character has had a chance to find his totem-animal. Follow the procedure as explained in the Chapter Seven "Spirits". Shamans do not have totem animals.

*After having spent their skill points for Allegiance, the player characters can try to find their totem-animals.*

*Gianna and Régis think that their PCs are not ready to search for their totem animal. They want first to spend skill points for skills rather than for their Allegiance [Animism].*

*Even if Georges does not want to increase Jebe-Tsenkher's allegiance, he still wants him to try to find his totem-animal. The shaman explains him that he does not think he's ready, and that this may make the spirits unhappy. Jebe-Tsenkher still wants to try. May be he needs to find his roots again. Georges rolls 00: fumble! The spirits are upset and Jebe-Tsenkher will never be able to find a totem spirit. May be the spirits called by the shaman belonged to the totem spirits of the local Turkic tribes and*

*recognized Jebe-Tsenkher as a foreigner. He should have listened to his shaman.*

*Temir as a shaman cannot have any totem-animal.*

## PROFESSIONS AND PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

Professional skills are split into primary and secondary skills. In a normal and heroic level campaign, primary skills of a starting character may not go beyond 90%, secondary skill beyond 75% and any other skill beyond 50%.

This rule may be simply ignored by the GM who may not make any separation between primary and secondary skill, or adapt it as he or she wishes. However, the GM may want to limit the Allegiance level, at least for normal and heroic campaigns, where no starting character should have reached apotheosis. The skill noted as "melee weapon" includes shields.

The PCs must have the minimum required Status for each profession. The default Status is a free man, which is a minimum of 31, unless otherwise specified.

Some professions list Allegiances among the allowed skills. This means the player can use professional skill points to increase Allegiance. The GM may – and should – impose a limit to how much Allegiance can increase at character creation time.

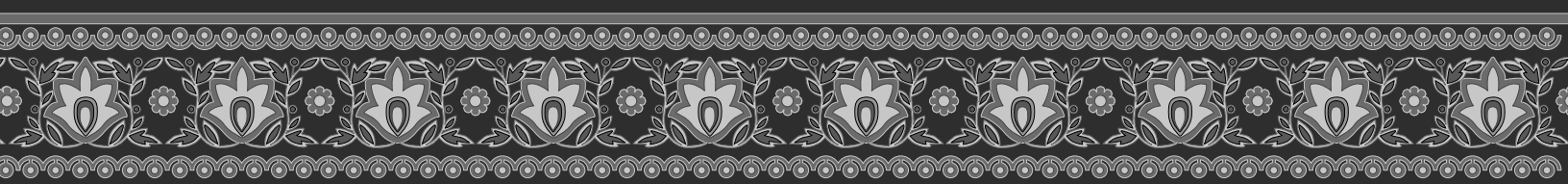
Skills in italics are described in this supplement and not in the *Basic Roleplaying* core rulebook.

## NOMADIC PROFESSIONS

### CATTLE HERDER

This is the main activity of Nomads when not at war. All of them are more or less herders. Herding allows the family to survive. Beasts are used to carry goods and men, pull wagons or as a raw material - including horses – to provide food (milk and meat), skin, leather or felt. Nomads can live in the wilderness,





and must know the skills for it. They usually keep horses, sheep, yaks, camels in arid countries or in the desert, reindeer in the Siberian north.

**Primary skills:** Craft [Herding, Horses / Camels / Reindeer], Craft [Herding, Cattle], Knowledge [natural history], Spot, Ride [Horse / Camel / Reindeer], Melee Weapon [*Urga*]

**Secondary skills:** Missile Weapon [Composite bow], Drive [cart], Craft [Butchery], First Aid, Listen, Repair, *Survival* [*climate*], Track, Melee Weapon [tribal].

Camel herding Nomads can also learn Horse Riding as a secondary skill.

### BLACKSMITH

Blacksmiths have the same ancestor as shamans, and are able to do some sorcery as well. Sons continue the lineage inherited from their fathers in order not to anger that ancestor. This profession includes goldsmiths, who are very skilled in representing animals and fantastic creatures. They take their inspiration from the legendary beasts of the steppes, like griffins. Old experienced Blacksmiths can use some magic. As soon as a Blacksmith reaches 90% skill rating in one of his Craft skills, he can try to seal an alliance with K'Dai, the ancestor of blacksmiths. See Chapter Six "Heroes".

**Primary skills:** three different Craft skills ([blacksmithing] [armouring] [weaponry]), Knowledge [legends], Repair

**Secondary skills:** Allegiance [Ancestors], Appraise, Bargain, Fine Manipulation, Craft [Goldsmithing], Teach, Sense, Status.

**Powers:** In average magic campaigns, the Gamemaster may allow Blacksmiths to purchase the spells of Seal Metal and Resistance (against heat only) for 50 skill points each as primary skills, starting at INT%. In high magic campaigns, the GM may allow Dull, Fire and Sharpen as well. (see below in the "Magic Spells" section of the Chapter Five "Magic Powers" for the detailed procedure).

### HORSE MOUNTED WARRIOR

War is the second main activity of Nomads. Most warriors are skilled mounted fighters, with the exception of Siberian tribes and camel or reindeer riders. Every Nomad is potentially a warrior. This profession concerns those who decided to follow a leader and who emphasized war above herding.

Experienced warriors can become chiefs of ten. See also Chapter 27 "Warfare".

**Primary skills:** Ride [horse], Missile Weapon [Composite bow], *Horse Archery*, Grapple, Melee Weapon [any tribal], Spot.

**Secondary skills:** *Riding Acrobatics*, Strategy, Command, additional Weapon [any tribal], Brawl, First Aid, Craft [Horse Herding], Knowledge [home country], Status, *Speed Shooting*, Listen

### MOUNTED INFANTRY WARRIOR

Those are the members of camel and reindeer riding clans; neither of which is suitable for mounted combat. Reindeer are too small, and camels too costly to risk them in battle. These warriors prefer therefore to fight on foot. Although fighting on foot, camel Nomads prefer to hunt on horseback, and are skilled in horse riding and horse archery as well.

**Primary skills:** Ride [camel / reindeer], Missile Weapon [composite bow], Grapple, Melee Weapon [any tribal], Melee Weapon [any other tribal], Spot.

**Secondary skills:** Strategy, Command, Melee weapon [any third one], Brawl, First Aid, Craft [Camel/Reindeer Herding], Knowledge [home country], Status, *Speed Shooting*, Listen

### FAITHFUL-ONE

The "Faithful-ones" are elite warriors who serve as bodyguards for a Khan or a hero. They are ready to give their lives for him. They are specialized heavy warriors, masters in the *Bökh*, a wrestling technique. The *Bökh* is a martial art to be used in conjunction with the grapple skill. The *Bökh* skill rating cannot be higher than the Grapple skill rating. It is not just a fighting skill, but also a way to

justify one's status and to solve some disputes. The GM can impose a minimum level of 50% in Grapple. Faithful-Ones have a minimal Status of 75.

**Primary skills:** *Horse Archery*, Ride ([horse] [camel] [reindeer]), Missile Weapon [composite bow], Grapple, Melee Weapon [any tribal], Martial Arts [*Bökh*], additional Weapon [any tribal]

**Secondary skills:** *Riding Acrobatics*, Status, Strategy, Command, Melee Weapon [any other], Brawl, First Aid, Listen, Track, Spot, *Speed Shooting*.

### ARROW-RIDER

These elite warriors form the vanguard of Mongol armies. Even if the term appeared only after the 12<sup>th</sup> century, this profession is available in any period and designates specialized warriors.

These warriors are light mounted archers who explore the countries to be attacked. They ride far ahead of the main army and spread terror as they rampage across the lands. They are very mobile and very skilled in Horse Archery.

**Primary skills:** *Horse archery*, Ride [horse], Missile Weapon [composite bow], Melee Weapon [any tribal], *Riding Acrobatics*, *Speed shooting*

**Secondary skills:** Grapple, Navigate, 2<sup>nd</sup> Melee Weapon [any other tribal], First Aid, Craft [Horse Herding], Knowledge [region], Track, *Survival*, Spot

### MESSENGER

Messengers specialize in speed. They are in charge of carrying the Khan's orders, and as such, have an important function for the unity of an empire. Messengers carry the Khan's authority. Any insult to them is an insult to the Khan, which may be a disadvantage when carrying a message to an enemy. In the Mongol empire, this role has been partially overtaken by arrow-riders.

**Primary skills:** Ride [horse], Missile Weapon [composite bow], *Horse Archery*, Knowledge [region], Melee Weapon [any tribal], Track.

**Secondary skills:** *Riding Acrobatics*, Melee Weapon [any other tribal], First Aid, Craft [Horse Herding], Speak [foreign language], Knowledge [foreign region], Knowledge [Heraldry], Insight, Listen.

### SPY

Unlike what their image of savage barbarians suggests, Nomads have an acute sense of strategy. Their campaigns are very well prepared. Long before invading a foreign country, they send spies with the task of evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of the enemy. Not only do they prepare for operations, but they also carefully check for political or religious dissensions, strength of local authorities, and the possibility to find allies in the country. They sometimes use foreigners as a source of information, especially those unhappy with their monarch. The spy profession in *Wind on the Steppes* concerns only the Nomads, though.

Spies can be mere scouts going through the country, or messengers closely observing the country while bringing their message. They can also be hired as caravan guards, or use whatever good reason to travel through the targeted country. Weapon mastery is not the priority for this profession, but sense of observation, some knowledge of foreign countries, and being clever enough to discretely and quickly penetrate or escape a country when they are discovered. Spies are very faithful to their khan.

A GM can allow a well-skilled character to play a spy of lower social class (*arad*).

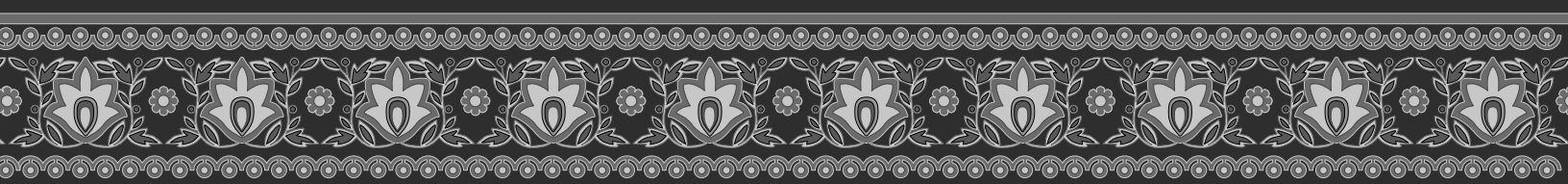
**Primary skills:** Knowledge [foreign country], Language [foreign language], Insight, Missile Weapon [composite bow], *Horse Archery*, Ride

**Secondary skills:** Strategy, Sense, Navigate, any one fighting skill, Melee Weapon [any tribal], Hide, Listen, *Survival* (climate), Repair, Knowledge [2<sup>nd</sup> foreign country]

### NOYAN / BEK (NOBLE)

A *noyan* is a warrior, in charge of leading his clansmen to war. He must ensure that his men are always ready to go to war at





the Khan's call. He can be a chief of 100 or 1,000. With experience, he can become a chief of 10,000, the equivalent of a general. A *noyan* must have the minimum required level in Status. He gains 1d3 Allegiance in the tribe's upper class Allegiance (Tengriism or imported religion).

A *noyan* is a war leader and must be a good fighter, but must not be a weapon expert like Faithfull-Ones or Arrow-Riders. He must show leadership, have understanding in hierarchy and social order, and be able to make the right decision at the right time. The GM may grant a *noyan* player character a INT% bonus in the language of the dominant tribe learned during his service to his Qaghan, if different from his mother language (ex. a turkic Bek with Mongolic under the Mongol Empire).

#### **NOYAN FROM A HORSE-RIDING TRIBE:**

**Primary skills:** Ride ([horse]), Missile Weapon [composite bow], Command, Grapple, Horse Archery, Melee Weapon [any tribal], Status

**Secondary skills:** Strategy, Melee Weapon [any other tribal], Brawl, Etiquette, Listen, Track, Spot, Speed Shooting, Knowledge [genealogy], Knowledge [heraldry], Craft [horse herding], Allegiance [Tengriism]

#### **NOYAN FROM A CAMEL**

##### **OR REINDEER RIDING TRIBE:**

These nobles still ride horses, even if they are not as specialized in horse fighting as other *noyan*. They have the basic training of mounted infantry.

**Primary skills:** Ride [horse], Missile Weapon [composite bow], Command, Grapple, Melee Weapon [any tribal], Melee Weapon [any other tribal], Status

**Secondary skills:** Ride ([camel] [reindeer]), *Horse Archery*, Strategy, Command, Listen, Track, Weapon [any tribal], Spot, Knowledge [genealogy], Knowledge [heraldry], Craft [camel/reindeer herding], Allegiance [Tengriism]

#### **SIBERIAN OR TUNGUS HUNTER**

Some tribes, particularly among the Mongols or Tungus, lived north of the steppe, in the Siberian forests. They share cultural traits with other Turco-Mongols, like beliefs, social organisation and language, but are not horse riders. The deep forests of Siberia are the country of foot hunters, not of cattle herders. They have very powerful shamans who know many forest spirits. Their belongings are limited to basic clothes, weapons (at least one javelin or one self bow) and camping gear. Siberians may use reindeer to carry their belongings.

**Primary skills:** Hide, Track, Missile Weapon [javelin, composite or self bow], Spot, Stealth

**Secondary skills:** Navigate, Climb, Dodge, Melee Weapon [any tribal], Knowledge [region], Knowledge [natural history], *Survival* (Taiga or Temperate Forest), Craft [butchery], Ride [horse or reindeer for Siberians], First Aid.

#### **SHAMAN**

(See also Chapter Five "Shamans")

Shamans are sorcerers, healers, soothsayers and priests. Black shamans, who deal with malevolent spirits of the dead, and white shamans who worship celestial spirits, have slightly different skills.

##### **Black shaman skills**

**Primary skills:** *Soul Escape*, Knowledge [spirit world], Perform [sing], Allegiance [Animism], Persuade

**Secondary skills:** Knowledge [religion], Knowledge [natural history], Knowledge [genealogy], Medicine, Status, Allegiance [Ancestors], First Aid, *Osteomancy*.

##### **White shaman skills**

**Primary skills:** *Soul Escape*, Knowledge [spirit world], Perform [sing], Allegiance [Tengriism], Persuade

**Secondary skills:** Knowledge [natural history], Knowledge [genealogy], Knowledge [religion], *Osteomancy*, Status, Insight, Allegiance [Ancestors] and when available Literacy [own language].

If you loved the movie  
"Dersu Uzala", the Siberian  
Hunter profession represents  
exactly that kind of character.



**Powers (for all shamans):** Described in the section “Shamans”. These are the shamanic abilities, the shamanic spells and the allied spirits. The two latter can be bought with professional or personal skill points.

These shamans are adapted to fantasy campaigns with spirits and supernatural powers. For a non-magical historical setting, remove “Soul Escape”. Knowledge [spirit world] can be used to cure diseases by performing the proper rituals or be simply replaced with “Medicine”. This will simulate knowledge based on experience and animist interpretation of natural phenomena.

### **ENTERTAINER**

These can be poets, musicians, dancers, perhaps with a bit of each art at the same time. Poets tell the legendary deeds of their mythic ancestors, and play an important role in building a community feeling among the clans. Entertainers are able to please spirits with their chants or poetry and bring luck before any enterprise. It is common to have them tell an epic during the night before a hunt. Some believe entertainers have magical powers – this is left to the GM.

**Primary skills:** Knowledge [Legend], Perform [story telling/instrument/sing/acting], Perform [another of the above], Persuade.

**Secondary skills:** Insight, Knowledge [genealogy], Knowledge [heraldry], Listen, Fast Talk, Perform [another one of the above]

### **NON-NOMADIC PROFESSIONS**

These professions are available to foreign characters living among the nomads. They can be missionaries, diplomats or exiles working for a Qaghan. For campaigns set in foreign empires, some of these occupations may be available to nomad characters. Refer to the appropriate setting or to the core rules for these professions. Use the skill lists in *Basic Roleplaying* for the following professions.

### **MISSIONARY (PRIEST)**

Taoist, Nestorian or Buddhist missionaries try to convert Nomads to their faith, with uneven success. Missionaries are usually under the protection of a Khan.

### **DIPLOMAT**

Can be a monk (like Guillaume de Broeke, emissary of King Louis IX of France), a merchant (Marco Polo), a scholar (Ibn Battûta), or a noble travelling to learn, open markets, seal an alliance, or spy, or maybe a magician looking for rare components for his sorcery.

### **CRAFTSMAN**

Nomads use the resources they cannot find among themselves; architects, masons, engineers (for siege engines), scribes, bookkeepers, carpenters, or even a Chinese pyrotechnic specialist. These professions are mostly for city-dwellers who have a good reason for leaving (fleeing, being sent as a present, or trying to go back to their homeland).

## **SKILLS**

Not all the skills from *Basic Roleplaying* are available in *Wind on the Steppes*. Some skills are new and specific to Nomads. Other standard skills from the rules are slightly modified and adapted to this setting.

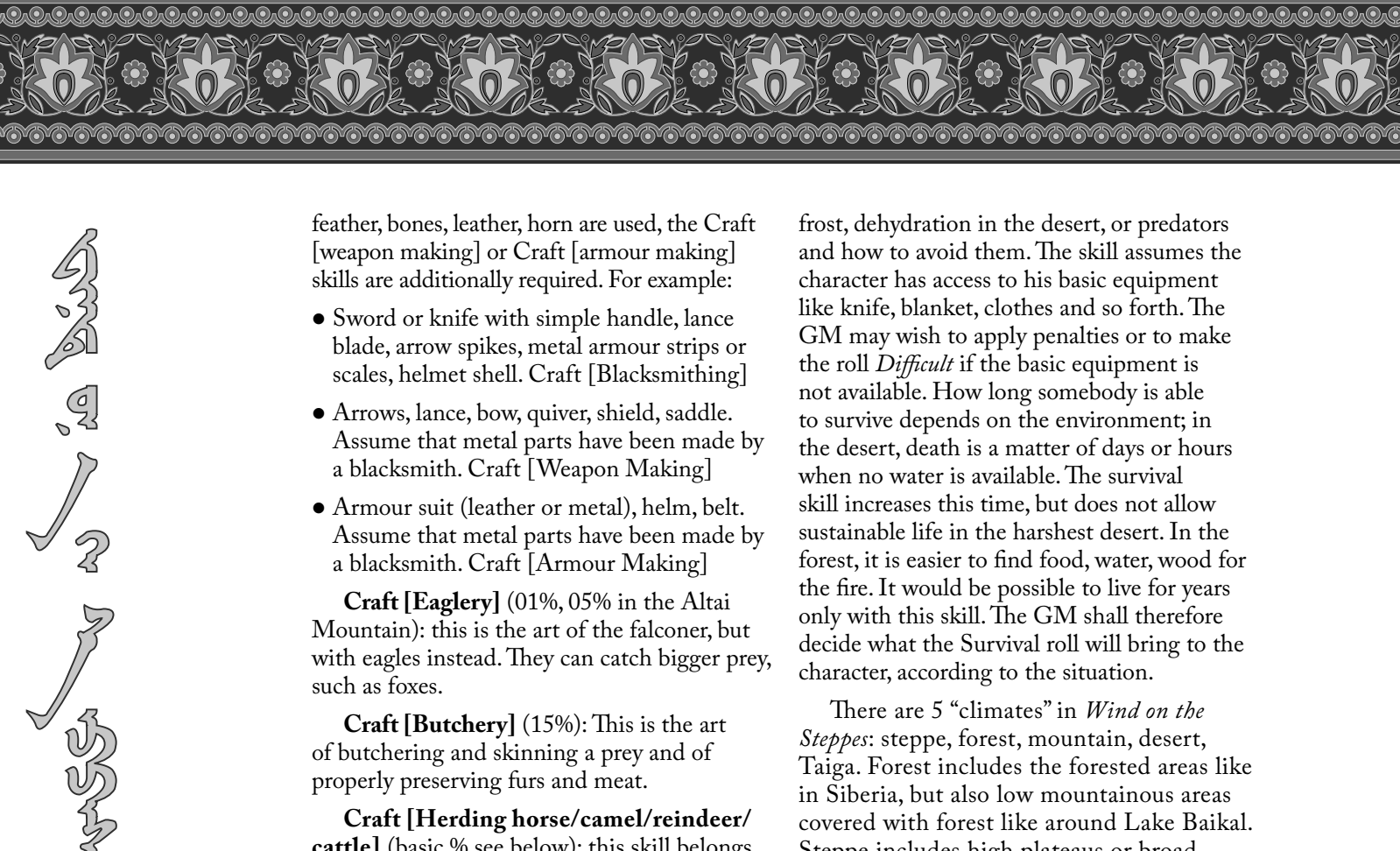
Skills starting at 00% are reserved to specific professions; Skill points can be spent only if they belong to the professional skill list (primary or secondary). For other professions, they stay at 00% despite any category bonus.

### **NEW SKILLS**

**Craft [amour/weapon making], Craft [blacksmithing] 00%**

Blacksmithing includes the making of blades, spikes, metallic pieces for weapons, armours and tools. It can be used as such to make weapons or tools mainly of steel, like swords, but when other materials like wood,





feather, bones, leather, horn are used, the Craft [weapon making] or Craft [armour making] skills are additionally required. For example:

- Sword or knife with simple handle, lance blade, arrow spikes, metal armour strips or scales, helmet shell. Craft [Blacksmithing]
- Arrows, lance, bow, quiver, shield, saddle. Assume that metal parts have been made by a blacksmith. Craft [Weapon Making]
- Armour suit (leather or metal), helm, belt. Assume that metal parts have been made by a blacksmith. Craft [Armour Making]

**Craft [Eaglerey]** (01%, 05% in the Altai Mountain): this is the art of the falconer, but with eagles instead. They can catch bigger prey, such as foxes.

**Craft [Butchery]** (15%): This is the art of butchering and skinning a prey and of properly preserving furs and meat.

**Craft [Herding horse/camel/reindeer/cattle]** (basic % see below): this skill belongs to the cultural background of Nomads. Every character knows how to herd his tribe mounting beasts (horse, camel or reindeer) at a basic skill rating of 15%, while other mounts are known at a basic 05% only. Camel herders know both camel and horse herding at 15%. Other livestock (sheep, goats, cows/yaks) are gathered under one single skill: Craft [Cattle Herding], with a basic skill rating of 15%. These skills include healing and feeding the beasts, raising foals, finding the best grazing, and evaluating a mount.

**Knowledge [Spirit World]** (00%). Only shamans can learn about how to travel in the spirit world and where the spirits dwell. Although this skill is a knowledge skill, its increase relies heavily on the experience, the shaman becoming more familiar with the spirit world when travelling through it. This skill can therefore and as exception to the rule increase through experience.

**Survival (climate)** (15% own / 00% others): this is the art to survive in a given environment when the standard conditions of life like housing, cattle, food reserves and the like, are not available. With this skill, a character knows how to find shelter, food, water, make fire, evaluate the dangers like

frost, dehydration in the desert, or predators and how to avoid them. The skill assumes the character has access to his basic equipment like knife, blanket, clothes and so forth. The GM may wish to apply penalties or to make the roll *Difficult* if the basic equipment is not available. How long somebody is able to survive depends on the environment; in the desert, death is a matter of days or hours when no water is available. The survival skill increases this time, but does not allow sustainable life in the harshest desert. In the forest, it is easier to find food, water, wood for the fire. It would be possible to live for years only with this skill. The GM shall therefore decide what the Survival roll will bring to the character, according to the situation.

There are 5 "climates" in *Wind on the Steppes*: steppe, forest, mountain, desert, Taiga. Forest includes the forested areas like in Siberia, but also low mountainous areas covered with forest like around Lake Baikal. Steppe includes high plateaus or broad valleys above the forest zone, as well of course as the Steppe itself and any semi-arid flatland. Mountain is used for high alpine-like environments. Taiga refers to the frozen woods of the far North, an environment quite different from a normal deciduous forest, and is used only for Siberian peoples and reindeer herders.

Characters start with a base skill rating of 15% for their home climate, and 01% for others. Some skills may be useful in several environments, like Survival [forest] in the Taiga, or when dangers are similar, like how to get protection from frost or how to make a fire. In these cases the GM may allow a *Difficult* skill roll.

**Osteomancy** (00%). This is a divinatory skill. The shaman can ask a question to the spirits who write the answer on the shoulder blade of a sacrificial animal. The shaman performs the sacrifice, and tries to find the response on the bone. The animal is often cooked and consumed. The shaman has INTx5% chances to find the answer and understand it, with an accuracy depending on the level of success (GM's decision). He receives either kind of limited information:

- Information about the nature of places, events or peoples (chose one) tied in any way to the sacrificed beast. A sheep can deliver information about his owner, or the area it was living in, or a deer about what happened in her steppe. Answers are not very detailed.
- Reply to a closed question, with “yes/positive”, “may be/neutral” or “no/negative”. It is mostly used to ask about the chances of an endeavour, like “will I get a good hunt?”, but it is possible to ask “did Mongke steal the horses?” The spell won’t unveil the future, but instead give hints about the odds.
- Give a vague and obscure answer to an open question. The shaman can get a hint from the GM but no clear answer. For example, to the question “who stole the horses”, the answer may be the totem-animal of the thief.

The GM is free to choose either kind of information to be unveiled. Since this skill involves lower spirits only, he shall apply penalties to the skill roll for very accurate or difficult questions (e.g. where is the nearest source of water: no penalty. At which time does the 3<sup>rd</sup> wife of the Chinese “Qaghan” usually wakes up: difficult).

**Soul Escape** (00%). This is a shamanic skill explained in details in the Chapter Four “Shamans”. It allows the shaman to flee from a Spirit Combat.

**Speed Shooting** (05%). This skill allows volley shooting of up to 3 arrows. The archer puts 2 arrows in his mouth to get faster access to them. When rolling under his bow skill, if the dice roll is under his speed shooting skill as well, whether he succeeds in his Bow or Horse Archery skill roll or not, he can shoot the next arrow after 5 DEX ranks until he does not have any DEX rank or arrows left. The first arrow is rolled at the normal bow rating, the further arrows are rolled as a volley shooting (1/2 bow skill). Preparing the arrows takes a full combat round.

*Example: Er-Töshük the Khirgiz has a DEX of 15. He suddenly sees two Hephtalite Hun enemies. Since he must go on, he decides to try to discourage them by shooting a volley of arrows. He prepares his 3 arrows (one round) and his bow. The Hephtalites come*

*closer. Er-Töshük shoots his first arrow at rank 15 while galloping. The die roll is under both his horse archery skill and his speed shooting skill; he hits and can start a volley shooting. At DEX rank 10, he shoots his second arrow. The die roll is above his 1/2 horse archery skill but still under his “speed shooting”; he misses this shot, but can try to shoot a third arrow at rank 5. If he hadn’t rolled under his speed shooting skill, he would have had to stop his volley for this round.*

**Note:** when using an optional rule allowing several bow shots in a combat round, the Speed Shooting skill simply reduces the time between two shots. Ex: with the Strike Rank optional rule the time to prepare the 3 arrows takes 3 SR and to shoot the next arrow takes 2 SR instead of 3)

**Riding Acrobatics** (05%) This is the ability to perform acrobatics on a galloping mount without falling and maintaining control the mount. For example standing on horseback, riding while not seated, take an object from the ground while galloping, stay hidden on the flank of the mount, jump from a mount to another, dodge are all examples of feats this skill covers as well as other deeds



# SHOOTING FROM HORSEBACK

Horse archery is more than simply putting an archer onto a horse. It is about efficiently shooting at targets while galloping and controlling the mount. This requires adapted weapons and proper training of horse and rider. The problem for the rider is handling the movement and body of the mount without hands, and for the horse to get used to the noise and sight of the bow. As such, it is a skill in itself, although completely related to bow and ride skills.

Assuming that the horse has been properly trained, like a cavalry horse, the prerequisites for horse archery are:

- Be an experienced archer
- Be an experienced rider
- Use a suitable bow: short, recurve composite or asymmetrical

Shooting from horseback without one of these prerequisites is possible but makes it even more difficult.

A mounted archer can shoot either while stationary or while galloping. Other paces are too unstable to accurately shoot. The shooting angle goes from about -30° to 180°, which means for a right-hander from just to the right of the horse's head, to a backwards shot.

The riding skill rating is always the upper limit of a character's Horse Archery skill. Even if the horse is stationary, the Riding skill simulates the capacity to hold the horse in the optimal position (perpendicular to the shooting direction). Unless the archer knows the Horse Archery skill, when galloping, the rules for shooting while moving and ride apply as in the *Basic Roleplaying* rulebook, with the exception that a forward shoot is also *Difficult*, since the head of the horse as well as the twisted position of the archer are disturbing. As such, shooting while galloping is simply a *difficult* action. Shooting rearward (the Parthian shot) is even more difficult, making it a *very difficult* action, or ¼ of the bow skill. Without stirrups, rearward shooting is impossible without the Horse Archery skill.

Shooting while galloping is a kind of instinctive shooting; aimed shots are not allowed.

Hence, a 100% archer with a 60% ride skill using a long bow would have  $60 \text{ (limit from riding)} \times \frac{1}{2} \text{ (shooting from horseback)} \times \frac{1}{2} \text{ (unsuited bow)} = 15\%$ . If trying a Parthian shot, the resulting chance of success will be  $15\% \times \frac{1}{2} = 8\%$  (rounding up).

Shooting from an untrained horse is possible for the first arrow only. After shooting the first arrow, the rider must spend the next round using his hands trying to control the horse until he makes his riding roll. The sight of the bow, the noise of the string or of the arrow hitting the target, and the fact that the rider released the reins, makes the untrained horse (e.g. a mere riding horse) suddenly accelerate or jump sideways. If the ride roll is a fumble, the rider falls, or the horse flees in panics.

In order to use their bow more efficiently on horseback, the steppe Nomads developed a specific skill which cancels some negative effects of shooting from horseback.

not normally feasible on horseback, with GM approval. "Riding Acrobatics" is limited by the Riding skill.

**Horse Archery** (01% or 10%) This skill is taught to those who hunt or make war, that is almost all the free Nomads. It allows the use of a bow while galloping, without the penalty for a *difficult* action. Simply roll under your *Horse Archery* instead of a *Difficult* Bow roll.

Horse riding Nomads know the skill at 10%. Others will start at 01%. Horse Archery can be improved only by characters with a 50% or more rating in Missile Weapon (bow) AND ride. It cannot exceed the character's rating in Ride or Bow, whichever is the lowest.

Successful Horse Archery use allows experience check rolls for both bow and ride as well.

This skill has to be used with a proper bow. Nomads used to have a stronger bow (>90lbs) for shooting on foot, or while stationary. The composite bow used for horse archery is set at a maximum of about 80lbs, reducing its range to 100m instead of 120m

Rearward shooting (Parthian shot) is possible without penalties when using Horse Archery. Without stirrups, the Parthian shot is a *difficult* action. Aimed blows are impossible except when the mount is stationary

If the rider manages to make a *Riding Acrobatics* roll, he may shoot at trot under the same condition as gallop, shoot at otherwise impossible angles as a *Difficult* action or shoot aimed shots.

**Note:** the chance of hitting to be considered is the higher between the chances with or without the Horse Archery skill. The chance of shooting an arrow from horseback can be higher without this skill, as long as the bow and ride skill ratings are more than twice the Horse Archery skill rating. In this case, if the die roll is above the Horse Archery skill but below the halved Bow skill, the arrow hits but the PC gains a skill check in Bow and Riding only. If the roll is below the Horse Archery skill, too, the arrow hits and the PC gains a chance for skill checks in Bow, Riding and Horse Archery.

## AMENDED SKILLS

These skills are already present in *Basic Roleplaying* but differ from the description given in the core rules.

**Medicine** (00%). This skill allows to heal any health problem which has not been caused by a spirit, including wounds or poison. Most of these troubles may be healable by either the Medicine skill or with the help of a Great Spirit like Urüng-Aiyy or Ieiekhsit, but this help is very expensive, and only white shamans can get it.

**Perform [Sing].** Shamans have a specific use of this skill, see the Chapter Four "Shamans".

**Perform [Story Telling].** This is the art to tell a lively and exciting tale, possibly by embellishing it. A critical roll captivates the

audience so that they forget time. This skill can also help calm a situation or convince a listener by appealing to his cultural values. When facing a foreigner, depending on his cultural sensibilities, the GM may apply a penalty (e.g. for a Kyrgyz facing a non-Kyrgyz Turk, this is a *Difficult* action, but faced with a Mongol, a special roll might be necessary and faced with a Sogdian, a critical roll is required).

**Artillery** (0%). The base chance for this skill is zero.

**Firearms:** Not allowed for Nomads PCs before the Manchu period.

**Gaming** (05%): this skill has a different starting score.

**Knowledge:** genealogy, region, natural history, nomadic religion (Animism and Tengriism): 10%. This kind of knowledge is based on what the character has learned during his life and education. There are no schools in the steppes. Knowledge [genealogy] includes the genealogy of important people who may claim to become Khan, but also one's own clan ancestors. Knowledge [Religion] is available for any religion usually found among a tribe, be it common or uncommon.

**Literacy[Language]** (00%): Specific, Sogdian, Arabian or Chinese writing.

"Specific" includes the different runic writings as well as those inspired from foreign scripts (Chinese, Sogdian) like the runic scripts, or the Uyghur script after the founding of their Empire. The Uyghur script has been used to write most of the subsequent Mongolic (e.g. Mongol) or Tungusic (e.g. Manchu) languages in eastern Asia, while Turkish languages in the Muslim area mostly used the Arabic script. Every script is a single skill. See page 11 "Languages" for languages and their scripts.

Chinese remains a foreign script, even for tribes installed in China and in their way toward sinicization (Tabgach, Jurchet). In other tribes living in Central Asia, a few people may have had the chance to learn the local language and writing (Sogdian, Persian).

### Why should a character learn the Horse Archery skill?

*Obviously, the chances for hitting without the skill are very limited. A character with 100% in Bow and Ride (a pretty high level character) would have only 50% chances to hit on horseback, and 25% to make a Parthian shot. The Horse Archery skill is not limited as much. The same Bowman could have up to 100% chances to hit from horseback, including Parthian shot. Moreover, increasing the Horse Archery skill is much easier and faster than increasing both Bow and Ride.*



*Main period of use of the different specific writings:*

Runic Script: from 6<sup>th</sup> to 8<sup>th</sup> Century.  
Kyrgyz and Köktürk runic writings are similar. One who can read one runic script can read the other one at -20%

Uyghur Script: from 8<sup>th</sup> Century to nowadays

Khitan Script: 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> Century

Jurchet Script: from 12<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> Century

**Knowledge [Heraldry]** (10%): The knowledge of the identification signs of the clans, or Tamga. It also helps recognizing an uran (clan war cry), a Duran (clan epic) or any distinctive sign of a tribe, like hairstyle or pieces of clothes. For geographically or timely remote clans, the action becomes *Difficult*.

**Navigate:** (10%) in the steppe, mountains or desert. Not applicable for boats.

**Ride:** Horse riding nomads start at 50% with horse and 5% with others. Camel and reindeer riders start with 25% at riding their tribe animal, 25% at horse riding, and others at 5%.

**Swim** (05%): this skill has a different starting score.

**Track** (15%): this skill has a different starting score.

**Weapon skills:** the tribal weapons skill rates start at the standard basic rates +10%. The GM determines which the tribal weapons are. The most common are the composite bow; a first melee weapon like the long sword, the broad sword, the sabre (scimitar); the mace, more rarely the axe; and a second melee weapon like the lance, the hooked lance or the lasso. Shields are considered a tribal weapon, although quite rarely used.

## UNAVAILABLE SKILLS

Some skills from the *Basic Roleplaying* rules are not available in *Wind on the Steppes*: Demolition, Energy weapons, Heavy Machine, Heavy weapon, Pilot, Psychotherapy, Research, Science, Technical Skill.

## SKILL IMPROVEMENT

Skills can increase through experience checks after an adventure. Additionally, characters may have a chance to train.

In the steppe, there is no school or any academy where scholars and students may learn. Education is mainly imparted by the elder and experienced clan mates. Most of it is made during everyday life, learning from daily work, like horse riding and horse archery during a hunt. Some skills, like fighting skills, are taught during dedicated times, when there is less work with cattle. Skill improvement is therefore based on a mixture of experience and training.

Specialized professionals like blacksmiths or artists may have apprentices, helping them while learning their art. In organized empires, activities become more specialized, creating more opportunities to have organized training. For example, in a regular army, warriors spend more of their off-duty time training instead of taking care of their cattle.

The GM decides what the possibilities are for training for player characters. Teachers can be a *noyan*, a clan elder, an experienced clan mate, a master, or for a shaman, spirits. Since everyday life is a chance to learn, one can say that a part of one's life time is spent learning while doing. In games terms, between every adventure, 20 hours every week can be spent as learning. These 20 hours can be divided among different skills, with following limitations:

12 hours per week for primary skills

8 hours per week for secondary skills

4 hours per week for any other skill

At the end of the minimum required training time (number of hours = starting skill rating, see *Basic Roleplaying* p. 184), since there is no real academic training, instead of rolling under the teaching skill, the character simply gets the opportunity to make an experience roll.

For craftsmen, artists, professional warriors under Empires or any well organised profession, the GM may state that a more formal teaching is available for primary and secondary skills, which can be resolved with a "Teach" roll as in the *Basic Roleplaying* rules, p. 184. The Teach skill rating has to be decided, but since teacher is not

a profession among Nomads, 50% is probably the most one can expect. Foreigners like Chinese prisoners may have a better rating.

(Note: a 50% teach skill provides a better skill improvement chance than experience rolls for skill ratings above 65%).

Whatever the method chosen for training, either experience or teach roll, the same limits as standard training apply ("limits of skill training", *Basic Roleplaying* p. 184).

*Ex: Er-Töshuk the warrior knows Herding at 40%. In order to increase his skill through training, he would have to spend 40 hours. Since this skill is a secondary skill for warriors, he is able to train 8 hours a week in his clan, taking care of the cattle. After 5 weeks, he will have trained for 40 hours and can make an experience roll.*

Depending on the situation and the campaign, the GM may allow more or less training time for player characters.

## EQUIPMENT

This list is limited to the equipment commonly found in any nomadic tribe. All tribes, whatever their origin, use more or less the same kind of weapons, the first of which being of course the composite bow. There may be some differences among tribes, like those using long swords and those using curved sabres, or the Kipchak full helm.

During their expansion, Nomads may have adopted or stolen equipment from conquered countries, like Chinese fire arms. It is up to the GM to allow further equipment otherwise rarely found among other Nomads, according to his game campaign.

## MISSILE WEAPONS

**Bow, composite:** damage 1D8+1 + ½ db; Range 120 m. Point blank range is DEX meters. This rule replaces the *Basic Roleplaying* rule of DEX /3 meters for bows only.

**Foot setting (90+lbs).** Standard composite bow, and it can be used on a standing horse, shooting sideways (left for right-handed archers) using the Horse Archery skill. Otherwise, the force of the bow is unusable for true horse archery at gallop. When used as such, treat as a self bow.

**Horse archery setting** (<80lbs). Range 100m. Otherwise like the composite bow.

### Arrows

The stats for arrows assume usage of a composite bow.

**Standard arrow:** no change

**Long range arrow:** range + 20m, damage 1d6+1 + ½ db

**Heavy arrow:** these have a broad point aimed at inflicting bleeding injuries. They are used at short range. ½ range, 1D8+1 + ½ db, bleeding special effect in addition to impale.

**Short range light arrow:** especially designed for accurate shots, they are efficient at short range only. ½ range, damage 1d6+1+ ½ db, doubles the effect of aiming (see *Basic Roleplaying* rules p. 212)

**Whistle arrow:** emits a sound audible at several km. When shot at a target, treat as short range without any of the beneficial characteristics

**Quiver:** 24 arrows for a wood quiver (until 12<sup>th</sup> century), up to 50 arrows for a leather quiver (after the 12<sup>th</sup> century).

**Bow, self:** for children, women or isolated Siberian hunters

**Javelin:** as per normal *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

**Lasso:** as per normal *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

## MELEE WEAPONS:

**Battle axe:** as per normal *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

**Hammer, great** (Only for Blacksmiths): as per normal *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

**Knife:** as per normal *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

**Lance:** as per normal *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

**Hooked lance** (15 %) 1D8+1+db (1D6). Like the lance, except that the user may chose to unseat his foe instead of stabbing him. If the die roll is a success, the foe suffers 1D6 damage only and the attacker can try to unseat him with a (STR + DEX) Vs. (SIZ + DEX) die roll. If the foe falls, he takes 1D6 or 2D6 damage, depending on his mount's pace. For unseating a foe, the lance is used two-handed.

**Mace, light:** as per normal *Basic Roleplaying* rules.







**Mace, Heavy:** as per normal *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

**Sabre.** This is the curved sabre, with a single cutting edge. Use stats for scimitar.

**Sword, broad:** as per normal *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

**Sword, long.** This weapon can have one or two cutting edges.

**Urga.** The lasso can be an *urga*, consisting of a >3m-pole with a necklace, used to catch cattle. Used as a weapon, the *urga* belongs to the 2-handed melee weapons. However, this encumbering tool is normally used for cattle herding rather than for war. It therefore does not belong to the list of tribal weapons, but could be used to entangle opponents.

**Urga, skill:** spear, base 15% (for Horse Nomads only, otherwise 05%), damage: special (as per lasso), atk 1, special (entangle), range long, 2H, hp 10, STR/DEX 9/8, ENC 3.5, cheap, SR 0.

**Spear, 1H:** as per normal *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

**Spear, 2H.** Nomads are able to use the 2H-spear from horseback. Use the standard rules for mounted combat.

**Firearms** (starting from 12th Century)

Yuán Firearms are used by enlisted Chinese soldiers. They are absolutely not fit for mounted warfare.

**Fire tube:** Yuán Firearm, base 05%, damage 1D6+3, atk 1/7, special (impaling), range 15, 2H, hp 12, STR/DEX (9/7), malfunction 95-00 Ammo 1, size 2.0, SR 1/7CR

**Fire lance:** Yuán Firearm base 05%, damage 1D6+3, atk 1/7, special (impaling), range 15, 2H, hp 20, STR/DEX (10/14), malfunction 95-00 Ammo 1, size 3.0, SR 1/7CR Individual firearms, once fired, may be used as 2H spears.

## ARMOUR AND SHIELDS

Many warriors wear no other armour than animal fur. These are considered as Heavy Clothing. The hairs act as extra padding for the skin. In winter, the two layers of fur are considered as thick Padded/Quilted armour and cannot be worn under any other armour. Hard leather armour is

available, as well as metal armour, although both are rather expensive. The favourite armour of nomads is lamellar, either of metal or hard leather, which is more comfortable on horseback than western plate armour. Nomads rely on speed and dexterity rather than sheer force and weight.

## AVAILABLE ARMOUR:

**Leather, soft,** AP 1, cheap, common

**Clothing, Heavy,** AP 1, cheap, common.

**Silk undershirt:** gives a bonus of 20% to the first aid roll when hit by a thrusting weapon, expensive, average

**Padded/Quilted,** thick (winter fur clothes), AP 2, inexpensive, common

**Leather lamellar** (equivalent to cuirbouilli), AP 3, average, common.

**Ring,** AP 5, expensive, rare

**Scale,** AP 6, expensive, uncommon

**Lamellar,** AP 6, expensive, common

**Chain,** AP 7, priceless, rare

**Horse padding,** AP 2-5

Chain and ring armours are likely to have been purchased or plundered from a foreign kingdom. During invasions, other local armours may be acquired and worn.

## HELMETS

Nomads do not wear full closed helmets, which prevent from efficiently using one's bow and perception skills. Kipchaks, a Turkic tribe spreading into Ukraine during the XI century are an exception and wear typical conical full helmets. The helm is either a fur hat or a true war helmet of hardened leather or metallic top "shell" with a leather or lamellar neck and side protection. The metallic "shell" is made of 4 different pieces sealed together. The helmets leave the face open.

## AVAILABLE HELMS

**Hide** (fur hat): as per *Basic Roleplaying* light helmet, but no penalty to skills,

**Light** (cuirbouilli or metal) : as per *Basic Roleplaying* light helmet, but no penalty to skills,

**Heavy** (for Kipchaks). Assume a penalty of -25% to bow and perception skills.

## SHIELDS

Shields are usually not widely used in the Steppe. They are more likely to be found among heavy warriors, mounted infantry or infantry. Available types of shields include: Primitive, Buckler, Target, Half shield.

Infantry, mounted or not, may use full shields.

## FINISHING THE EXAMPLE

*Kül-Ayim's, Ayu-Kulak's and Jebe-Tsenkher's stats are now ready – Temir will be completed in the next chapter. The players and the GM can now work on their background, providing characters with consistency, motivation and goals.*

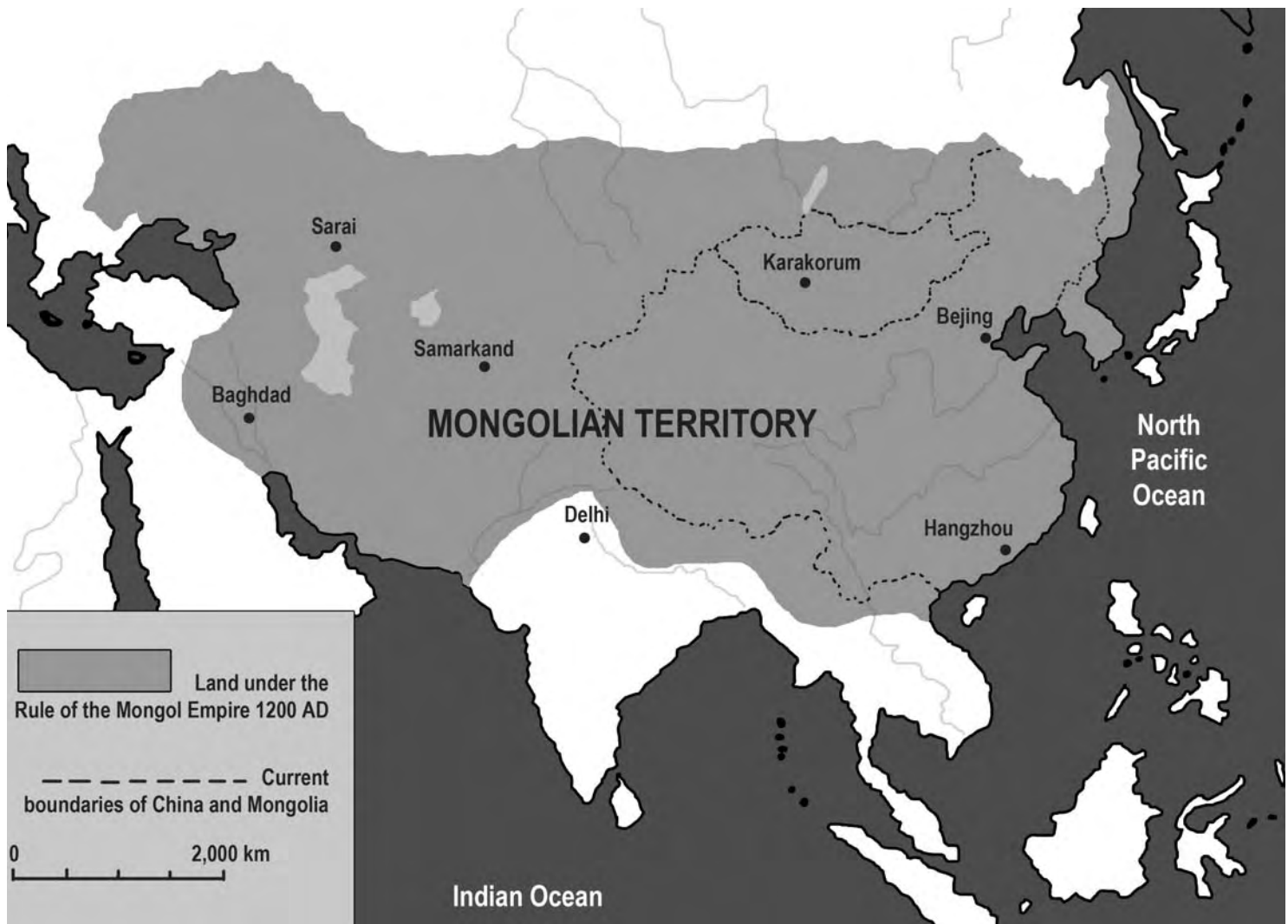
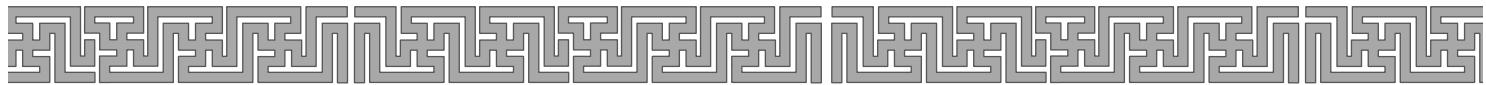
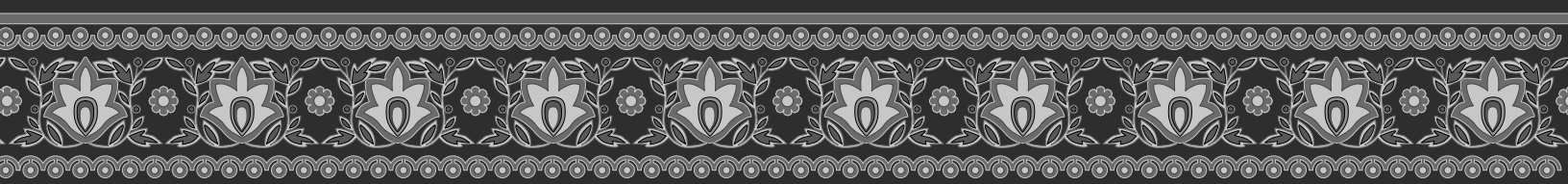
*Kül-Ayim was the bride of a bek who died before she could marry him. A shaman (Kül-Ayim belongs to the very upper class, it is not surprising that she can become help from a powerful shaman) asked then the spirits for her destiny, who revealed that she shall be devoted to the spirits: this is the reason why they prevented the marriage by having him die. Whatever this means, she decided that she will marry only a spirit and must for this become a Batyr. The men of the tribe accepted this and very few would even think about marrying her. As the daughter of an important bek, this character can be uneasy to integrate into a group. The GM decides that Kül-Ayim left her clan or even her tribe to be freed from any social pressure or critics from her family. She joined another clan or tribe or moves from the one to the other,*

*travelling and adventuring until she sees a sign or meets the spirit she will serve.*

*The history of Jebe-Tsenkher is a bit complex: it has to fit to the wishes of the player, the stats of the PC and the campaign. We are in the 6<sup>th</sup> century under the rule of the Avars. Jebe-Tsenkher was an arad, a servant whose clan has been raided by the Tabgach, an independent Turkic tribes allied with the Chinese. The warriors have been killed and the few survivors have been sold as slaves to the Chinese (first Status die roll of 06). Jebe-Tsenkher learned to speak Chinese during his captivity. A few years later, as he was accompanying his master on the Silk Road in the Tarim basin, the caravan has been raided by other Turkic tribes of the Avar Empire. Jebe-Tsenkher managed not to be kept as slave and claimed he used to be a free man (his clan dwelled far away and has been decimated, nobody can check it), but became again a servant of the Turkic bek (his bonus in Communication increased his Status roll to 14). After a couple of years of loyal and efficient service to the bek's son, Jebe-Tsenkher was accepted in the clan as a free warrior "again" (Status brought to 31). But his new status is still very fragile, and only a strong commitment and an indefectible loyalty – or brilliant tricks – will help him keeping this status, and may be even growing in the social order.*

*Ayu-Kulak is a character proposed by the GM. He's the typical son of a low/middle rank bek, but the campaign may offer him the chance to grow high in the social rank. This Régis will discover during play.*





## 4. SHAMANS

**S**hamans are those who deal with spirits. Any event, whether it looks natural or not, is caused by a spirit acting for some reason, often for anger. The shaman finds the spirit who causes trouble, to bargain with it and to find a way to satisfy it. This is normally done with sacrifices, but it could also be a quest. There is a limitless source of adventures for the GM. Under some circumstances, the shaman will try to force the spirit to obey. Beyond these curative activities, the shaman can ask spirits for help, which they normally give only in exchange for payment.

Shamanism is hence more a technique than a true religion, which explains why it still exists among people of different religions. The word "Shaman" comes from Tungusic "Sham" which means sorcerer. Their ability to contact spirits confers them supernatural powers. In *Wind on the Steppes*, shamans are the magic-users.

Shamans are the only people who can travel the other planes of existence that exist beyond the material world. The peculiar characteristics of these other planes of existence will be explained later in this and the following chapters.

There are three families of spirits: the celestial spirit "Aiyy" from the upper plane, mostly benevolent; the "üör", malevolent spirits from the lower plane, responsible for diseases and other misfortunes; the neutral natural spirits living in things in the middle plane. In addition to these spirits, the tribe ancestors' spirits can be contacted, too.

### BLACK AND WHITE SHAMANISM

There are respectively two types of shamanism: **White Shamanism**, dealing with celestial spirits; and **Black Shamanism**, dealing with malevolent spirits. Nature spirits and ancestors can be contacted more or less easily by both kinds of shamans. Please note that the adjectives "black" and "white" do not imply an evil or good nature of the magic practiced, as it would in a Western European context.

A **White Shaman** is in contact with celestial spirits, the Aiyy. These are powerful and benevolent spirits and deities, but who can cause a lot of trouble if they are neglected. White shamans are found with princes and khans, calling the blessing of the Aiyy upon cattle and men. They are priest-like, and specialize in beneficial incantations like fertility rites, benediction of Tengri, and similar rites. Since the Aiyy are the source of these fertility powers, a white shaman shall have a strong **alliance with Tengriism**.

A **Black (or Dark) Shaman** is in contact with the lower spirits, the üör. Only black shamans are able to deal with these malevolent spirits and their masters, and to cure the trouble they cause. Black shamans are therefore more useful, and more often consulted for daily misfortunes. Since they are able to cure the diseases caused by the üör, they are very popular and survived until the present day, despite the influence of major religions. A black shaman has a strong **alliance with Animism**.





## BEING RAISED AS A SHAMAN

Being a shaman is a hereditary vocation. At a given moment in his life, the soul of the shaman-to-be is taken away by the spirits, which educate it. If the shaman has been contacted by celestial spirits, his soul will be kept by the Raven Spirit in a nest on the cosmic tree (a larch tree binding all three planes). The higher the nest, the mightier the shaman. If contacted by lower spirits, the soul will be kept in a wooden cradle near the marsh of the lower plane, where the souls of the dead sink. During this time, in the middle plane, the future shaman suffers psychic disturbances like forgetting reality, insanity, seeming to be somewhere else, and being interested in invisible things. This “shamanic disease” lasts for several years.

### THE ANIMAL-MOTHER

The gift of the shaman is recognized by an animal-spirit which brings his soul to the spirit plane to be raised when the spirits estimate the candidate is ready. Most of times, the animal-spirit takes the form of a female animal from the clan or tribe totem.

This “Animal-Mother” spirit is the symbolic incarnation of the shaman’s powers. She protects his soul as long as it is raised on the cosmic tree. When she estimates that the soul is ready to become a shaman, she calls the spirits upon him or her. The animal-mother is the link between the shaman and the spirit world, which allows him or her to enter a trance. She grants the shaman with the gift of shamanic powers, but in return, ensures adherence to the rules of shamanism, and that the shaman does not violate taboos. If at any time, the shaman is not able to maintain his alliance, the animal-spirit leaves the shaman, who loses all shamanic powers.

The animal-mother provides the shaman with up to Allegiance/10 extra power points, as per the “benefit of allegiance” rule on p. 316 of *Basic Roleplaying*.

A shaman sees his animal-mother only thrice during his life: once when she takes his soul, once before he dies, and once to save him from another shaman or spirit. Otherwise, she

stays far away from the shaman and has an independent life. When the shaman goes on a shamanic journey, she takes possession of his body to hold it. Those who observe the shaman will see him behave like an animal, moving as four-legged and lowing. Of course, during this time, no true contact is possible, unless somebody has the power to speak with animals.

Once during the life of the shaman, the animal-mother will come to help him on the spirit plane during Spirit Combat. She has a power of 3d6+6, INT2d6+6 and knows Soul Escape at INTx5%. Should she be destroyed or leave the shaman, the shaman loses all shamanic gifts and cannot enter a trance any more. The player may decide when his character will enjoy this help.

### THE DISMEMBERING

After a few years of the shamanic disease, the shaman-to-be is contacted by spirits who then dismember him. This process is necessary to seal a pact with the spirits and become a full shaman.

At first, the candidate’s shaman predecessors call him. He or she goes into a yurt and falls into a coma for 3 days or 9 days for any subsequent dismembering. From then on, everything happens in the spirit plane. The spirits remove the shaman’s head and place it on a shelf to better witness the dismembering.

Then the flesh is removed from the bones and the participating spirits share it and eat it. The shaman will be able to contact the spirits who got a share of his flesh, and only cure the diseases of these spirits.

Then the spirits count the bones. There are 9 main bones. For every bone that falls, a family member of the shaman dies.

At last, the spirits put the bones back in place, sew the skin after having stuffed it and fix the head again. The shaman loses all his power points, and wakes up when he gets them back. He has lost 1D10 hit points. If he dies during the dismembering, he becomes an üör himself. When he wakes up, he is covered with blood.

The new shaman must then find another shaman who will teach him how to find his way in the spirit world. This mentor can be an elder shaman who has already noticed the new

shaman's gift or the shamanic disease, and will take the new shaman on as an apprentice. It is also often the spirit of a shaman ancestor who will guide the new shaman in the spirit world. The spirit will bring the new shaman to the other planes, show the new shaman the mountain where celestial spirits gather, and the paths leading to the hilltops where disease spirits live. The new shaman will, in this way, be able to find the spirits sought.

## MINOR, MAJOR AND GREAT SHAMANS

After the first dismembering and initiation, the new shaman can start a new life as a full shaman. A shaman will be a Minor Shaman until experiencing the second dismembering to become a Major Shaman. If a third dismembering occurs, he or she will be a very powerful Great Shaman.

A Minor Shaman has a POW below 18 and primary skills at INT% minimum. He or she must have an Alliance with either Tengriism or Animism. When the requirements to be a Major Shaman are met (see below), the candidate experiences his or her second dismembering. When ready to become a Great Shaman, he or she undergoes the third dismembering.

A Major Shaman has a POW of 18 or more, both a Knowledge (spirit world) and an Allegiance of 65% or more. After the second dismembering, the shaman gains POW/2 Allegiance and 1d6 Status.

A Great Shaman has a minimum POW of 21, Knowledge [Spirit World] at 90% and an Allegiance of 100. After the third dismembering, the shaman gains POW/2 Allegiance (bringing him above 100%) and 1d8 Status, and achieves Apotheosis.

The first dismembering lasts for 3 days. The second and the third ones last for 9 days. Starting shaman player characters are supposed to already have undergone the first dismembering.

All DEX-based skills which are not shamanic skills are now limited to DEXx5%, except for those skills that were already above DEXx5%, which cannot increase any further.

All shamans gain the power of Trance.

## CREATING A SHAMAN PLAYER-CHARACTER

Minimum requirements: POW 13 or more, primary skills at INT%, sufficient Allegiance to make an alliance with Animism or Tengriism.

Starting as a shaman assumes the player character has already been dismembered and initiated.

## PURCHASING POWERS

Every shaman starts with the power of Trance, and enjoys the protection of an animal-mother. He can then purchase his extra powers, spending both "power purchase points" and "skill points".

## USING POWER PURCHASE POINTS

The character starts with some spells and spirits, depending on the campaign level, as in page 88 of the *Basic Roleplaying Rules*. A character receives a given amount of "power purchase points" which he can spend to buy powers or to increase his POW.

### Points to spend:

- Normal level campaign: 5 points
- Heroic level campaign: 11 points
- Epic level campaign: 18 points
- Superhuman level campaign: 25 points

### Available powers:

- 2 points: shamanic spell with starting level (INT% + mental skills category bonus) or one use of a temporary allied lower spirit or  $\ddot{u}or$  or 1<sup>st</sup> +1POW.
- 3 points: temporary alliance with a Great Spirit or 2<sup>nd</sup> +1POW
- 5 points: temporary alliance with a celestial spirit Aiyy or 3<sup>rd</sup> +1POW
- 7 points: permanent alliance with an  $\ddot{u}or$  or lower spirit or 4<sup>th</sup> +1POW
- 10 points: permanent alliance with a Great Spirit
- 15 points: permanent alliance with a celestial spirit Aiyy



### USING SKILL POINTS:

**Allegiance:** the character receives POW/2 (rounded up) points in the Allegiance he or she wants to ally with. The shaman can spend skill points to increase this Allegiance score at the cost of 1 skill point for 1 allegiance point (\*). He or she must at least be able to make an alliance.

(\*) cost is doubled if the Allegiance is "rare" for the campaign period or tribe.

**Increasing POW:** the cost depends on the targeted POW. Multiply each point above 10 by 10: this is the number of skill points to spend for each +1 POW. Therefore, a character starting at POW 13 and wanting to increase his POW to 16 will spend:

$60 [(16-10) \times 10] \times 3 [(16-13)] = 180$  skill points

*Note: if the player character reaches a POW of 18 and the GM allows it, he or she can start as a Major Shaman if he fulfils the other requirements. He or she receives POW/2 supplementary allegiance points and 1D6 supplementary Status points as described above when becoming a Major Shaman.*

**Shamanic magic:** spells can be bought for 50 skill points each. Alternately, the player character can sacrifice characteristic point instead, as described in the section "Magic Spells". Spell level starts at INT% + mental skills category bonus, and can be increased by spending skill points.

**Alliances with spirits:** first roll the POW of the spirit.

- Each single temporary alliance with a spirit costs the spirit's POW $\times$ 3 skill points, or 100 skill points for an Aiyy. It is possible to sacrifice for multiple summoning of a single spirit, with each summoning having to be paid for separately.
- Permanently allied spirit costs the spirit's POW $\times$ 10 skill points, or 320 skill points for an Aiyy. Alternately, the shaman can sacrifice POW points, with each point sacrificed replacing 80 skill points.

No shaman shall have more than APP/2 permanent alliances, rounded up. No shaman may have more than APP alliances, including temporary alliances.

*Note: for game balance, the GM should forbid the player to start with too many permanently allied spirits. As a rule of thumb, the shaman cannot have more "permanently allied spirit" than other powers among "shamanic spell" or "temporary alliance".*

**Skills:** as per the rules.

*Example: Temir is a very gifted young shaman with a starting power of 18, playing a heroic campaign. With this POW, he can try to start as a Major Shaman. In a heroic campaign, a shaman PC gets 11 power purchase points to purchase shamanic powers. Paul, who plays Temir, decides to purchase one permanently allied lesser spirit (7 points) and 2 shamanic spells (2 points each). The rest will be purchased from the skill points pool. The allied spirit is an üör with the power of Fear, POW 16 and INT 9 (spirits are detailed in chapter 7). Temir learns the spell of Heal and Become Animal, which he knows at INT% + mental skills category bonus = 26%. He must now spend his skill points.*

*Skill points: in a heroic campaign, Paul can spend 325 professional skill points and INT $\times$ 10 = 160 personal skill points. Temir must first have a minimum of INT% in all his shamanic primary skills. He spends 6 points in Knowledge [Spirit World], and Soul Escape, and 3 points for each Persuade and Perform [sing], which brings all these skills to 16 (=INT) with his mental and communication skills category bonuses of 10.*

*He must also be able to have an alliance with the Allegiance to Animism and have a score of at least 22, which is 20 more than any other allegiance (Temir has 2 in Tengriism and 2 in Animism). His Allegiance increases by POW/2=9 as a shaman and again by 11 from his skill points up to 22.*

*Now, Temir has the minimum requirement to be a shaman. He allocated 29 from his professional skill points and can spend further skill points to increase his skills and become a Major Shaman.*

*Professional points: first, Paul increases his Allegiance [Animism] and Knowledge [Spirit World] up to 65, which are the minimum required to be a Major Shaman,*



for a total of 98 points. As a Major Shaman, the Allegiance increases by  $POW/2 = 9$  again, bringing it up to 74.

Now Paul can spend his 198 remaining professional skill points and his 160 personal skill points to increase his skills or buy other powers.

Temir wants to have two temporary alliances with an *üör* with the power of Muddle. Paul rolls 17 for the POW and 10 for the INT. A single alliance costs  $17 \times 3 = 51$  skill points: Paul must therefore spend 102 points for his two temporary alliances. There are 96 professional skill points left, to be spent in primary and secondary skills, and still 160 personal skill points to be spent as Paul wants.

## DRESS AND DRUM

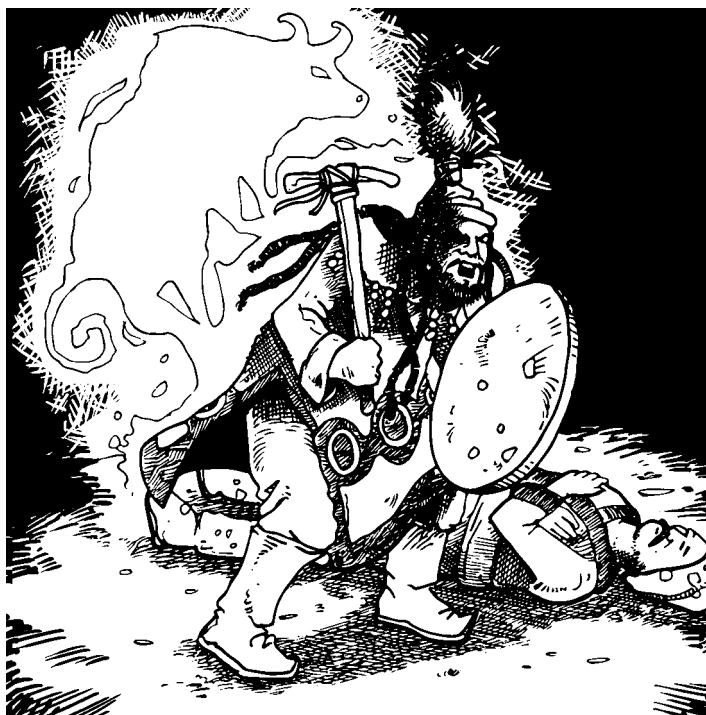
For everyday life, shamans wear the same clothes as every other Nomad. When incanting or during ceremonies, though, they wear their “priestly” clothes. They consist of a dress decorated with numerous shamanic symbols, mainly of animal origin; bones, legs, feathers, and so on. The dress itself is a microcosm, and wearing it awakens the shaman’s non-mundane self.

The construction of the dress differs from tribe to tribe, even from shaman to shaman. Everyone makes his own dress. Some elements are common. Feathers are found in quantities to represent celestial forces, not only because the bird is the symbol of celestial spirits and sky, but also because they represent souls and shamanic flight. Ribbons represent snakes and the telluric forces, just like the Big Snake lurking at the foot of the Cosmic Tree. When hanging from the arms, ribbons can also represent wings. Metallic accessories represent the shaman’s bones, recalling his dismemberment or his shamanic skills like his spirit flying while incanting figured as a metallic bird. Bones of different animals recall the spiritual link with nature spirits and the animal kingdom. Amulets protect the shaman from the dangers of the Spirit World. All these accessories act also as receptacles or “antennas” for spirits.

For ceremonies, shamans always use a drum and song to induce a trance state. The drum is also decorated with magical signs and symbols, and is a shaman’s main tool with which he opens the gate to other worlds. Without a proper drum, contact is difficult to establish.

In game terms, incanting without a drum makes any Knowledge [Spirit World] roll *Difficult*. Without the dress, the negotiation roll for incantation is *Difficult* as well. In addition, the drum can be used as a reserve of magic points, just like a wizard’s staff (see *Basic Roleplaying* p. 91), with the difference that the shaman must make the drum himself, or inherit it from a mentor shaman. The drum does not refuel MP lost during a Spirit Combat, but fuels magic spells or temporary alliances.

If the Drum or Dress is lost the shaman must make a new one. However, finding the right accessories may be difficult for the dress, and the GM may ask the shaman PC to make a Luck roll every week or month, or to go on a series of adventures, to be able to find all of them.





## BECOMING A SHAMAN

A character may start with another profession and become a shaman later. If he or she is the offspring of a shaman, he or she may catch the shamanic disease if a POW of 13 is reached and if only POW/2 points of allegiance are missing to have an alliance with one kind of shamanism. Every year the shaman's player rolls under this Allegiance. With a special success, he or she catches the shamanic disease. After a second success, the shaman will undergo dismemberment.

The character becomes a shaman without any skills or allied spirits. The new shaman needs to find another, more experienced Shaman to teach the basics of Shamanism, including trance. If no shaman mentor is available, the shaman's ancestors can also instruct in the art of shamanism, at least up to the basic skill levels + knowledge category bonus.

## PLAYING A SHAMAN

### THE POWERS OF A SHAMAN

The following powers are available to all shamans, and only to them.

#### TRANCE

In order to interact with spirits, a shaman has to move to their world. Under a human or animal form, the shaman's sends a spiritual projection into the spirit world which acts similarly to physical beings in the material world. This process of travelling in the spirit world and interacting with spirits is called Incantation, and remains a practice reserved to shamans who have been initiated. In order to perform an incantation, a shaman must go into a specific state and leave his spirit disincorporate outside of his body: this is the Trance.

#### ANIMAL-MOTHER

Every shaman has an animal-mother as explained above. Each tribe has its animal, some of them sharing the same. It is however generally a horned animal like a moose, a deer. These animals are widely represented in nomadic arts and in ancient kurgans.

#### POW INCREASE

The shaman can increase his or her Power under the terms of the standard *Basic Roleplaying* Rules (resistance to an equal or higher POW). However, the chances of increasing Power will be calculated on a basis of  $[25-POW] \times 5\%$ . There is no limit to a shaman's POW. Whatever the POW rating, there is always a minimum of 5% chances to increase it.

#### MAGIC SPELLS

Shamans can perform two types of shamanic magic: Incantation and the casting of magic spells. Where incantation is the art of having spirits use their power for the shaman, magic spells are powers acquired from certain spirits but cast by the shaman himself, in a way similar to the magic spells described in the *Basic Roleplaying* rulebook.

#### HIDE SOUL

A shaman can remove the *tyn* soul from his chest and hide it in some secret receptacle, which can be either a bird (the guardian spirit of the birds is also the guardian of the souls of shamans), or a metallic object manufactured by certain tribes. The process is the same as getting a Familiar (see *Basic Roleplaying* p. 90) or a magic wand (see *Basic Roleplaying* p. 91). The receptacle is not necessarily a metallic rod, but can have any shape or function (a box, a file). If the Familiar is killed or the item is destroyed, the *tyn* is also destroyed and the shaman dies.

**Benefits:** If the shaman is physically "killed", he can restore his body to the point that he is able to live (minimum 1HP). He can magically heal himself with a spell or with the help of someone else, like a healing spirit if he can find one and ally or force it. If the body is irreparably damaged or the shaman cannot be healed or heal himself within 6 days, his *kut* soul departs and he becomes a spirit. In addition, if he is not properly buried, it becomes an *üör*.

#### FEEL THE PRESENCE OF A SPIRIT

When a spirit is manifesting (as a disease or a strange behaviour), a shaman can feel it if the player makes an appropriate Perception or Knowledge roll (Sense, Spot, Insight, Medicine,

as seen fit by the GM), unless the situation is obvious. The shaman can then determine the nature of the spirits by using the Knowledge [Spirit World] skill.

When entering a trance, the shaman can feel the presence of all the spirits bound or manifesting on the mundane plane within a distance of POW metres, including the spirits of living beings. The shaman cannot locate these spirits.

### APOTHEOSIS

A Great Shaman has achieved Apotheosis. He or she no longer ages. If he or she dies, or simply decides to, he or she becomes a spirit himself. A Great Shaman can have multiple souls. Duplicate the soul - With an allegiance above 100%, the shaman can try to duplicate his *tyn* soul. He must make a critical roll of his Allegiance and spend a point of permanent POW. He gains an extra soul. He cannot try this again until his Allegiance has increased. There is no limit to the amount of additional souls. If the shaman is killed, that is to say that his *tyn* soul is destroyed, he can simply replace it with one of his extra souls. His physical body, however, must be cured within 6 days, as if it is irreparably damaged the shaman becomes a spirit. If in addition he had no proper burial, he becomes an evil *üör* spirit. When a Great Shaman feels that his or her time among mortals has come to an end, he or she may decide to join the spirit world and, in turn, become a spirit.

### INCANTATION

Incantation is the process of travelling in the spirit world and interacting with spirits.

#### PRINCIPLES

When performing an incantation, the shaman must:

- Enter a trance
- Find the desired spirit
- Interact with it

Incantation requires the shaman to first enter a trance state in order to move to the spirit world to interact with spirits. A trance

lasts 1D10 hours for each spirit the shaman tries to contact, during which the shaman neither eats nor drinks. A shaman can deal only with a spirit that he knows, that is, one who received its share part of his body during the dismemberment. During a trance, the shaman's animal-mother takes the place of his spirit in his body.

Once in a trance, the shaman can either try to contact a spirit that has manifested its presence in the physical world (bound spirit, spells, disease...), or look for a spirit in order to use it. He can also contact a physical being through the Spirit Plane in order to possess that person. Once met, the shaman can try to negotiate a deal, or confront the spirit to achieve the following results:

**Ally with a spirit:** The shaman searches for a spirit with a given power in order to be able to get its help by putting its powers or its knowledge to the service of the shaman for one task, immediately or later. Once he has found the spirit, the shaman negotiates with it according to the rules described below. If he fails, he may try to force the spirit to obey him through Spirit Combat. If successful, he can ally the spirit, permanently or temporarily, as explained later. The reaction of the spirit may depend on its attitude towards the shaman.

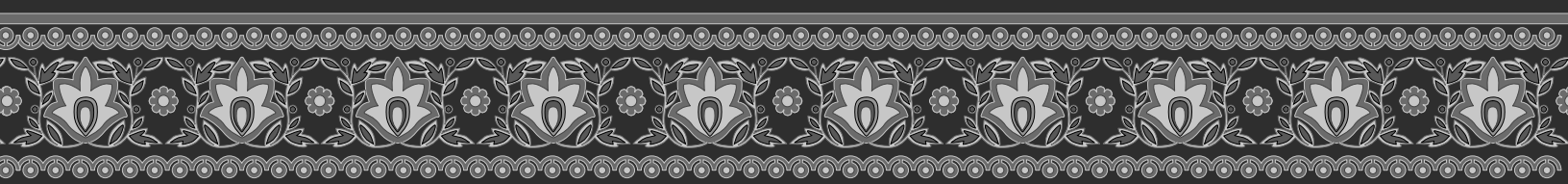
**Free a soul:** the shaman can attempt to negotiate with the spirit that stole somebody's soul (e.g. to cause disease), or start a Spirit Combat in case of failure of the negotiation. In the physical world, the shaman should be at a maximum of POWx10 metres from the spirit's victim. It works in any other way like allying a spirit.

**Bind a spirit:** the spirit can be permanently bound into a physical object called a fetish, through Spirit Combat.

**Free a bound spirit** (*bound by a shaman into an item, a standard or an oboo*): this can be achieved only through Spirit Combat. No negotiation is possible. In the physical world, the shaman must be up to POWx10 metres from the item the spirit is bound into.

**Learn a spell:** This is a special case that requires no negotiation or combat, but only the sacrifice of characteristic points. See Chapter Five "Magic Powers".





**Attack a physical being:** in this particular case, the shaman interacts with the spirit of a physical living being through the spirit World, as if he was himself a spirit. The range is POWx10 metres. There is no negotiation, only Spirit Combat, the goal of which is to possess the victim.

A physical being without shamanic powers, even if successfully resisting a spirit, cannot do any of these, since the Trance power is a prerequisite. He can only discourage a spirit with his resistance.

### TRANCE

**Spirits react to words:** the shaman starts an improvised poetic song that will enable him to make contact with them. He or she accompanies the singing with a drum. The song always has something to do with the problem addressed.

The shaman gradually changes into a trance state in using his power of Trance, at the cost of one power point. It can also be achieved by a successful Perform [Sing] roll, which would avoid spending Power Points (see below). People observing the shaman see him or her performing weird dancing and singing strange songs, moving and behaving like an animal.

Once in a trance, the shaman must seek the spirit using a roll of Knowledge [Spirit World]. This roll determines if the shaman knows the spirit and is able to find the path that leads there. He or she cannot begin interacting with the spirit until he or she has found it. A failure means that the shaman does not know the way. He or she can try to contact this one spirit again only when his or her score in Knowledge [Spirit World] has increased. A critical success means that the shaman found the spirit immediately and that the trance will last only for one hour. A shaman may remain in the trance state longer and look for several spirits, increasing the duration of the trance.

In order to contact a spirit manifesting on the physical plane (e.g. disease caused by an üör) or tied to it (e.g. nature spirits), the shaman must be at less than POWx10 metres from the location where the spirit acts: the victim of the üör, the place a nature spirit is protecting, etc. Aiyy and Great Ancestors can be contacted

everywhere. In the case of üör, only the healing must take place at range. An alliance, on the contrary, can be made anywhere.

A successful use of these skills qualifies for skill increase rolls at the end of the adventure.

### CHANT

A successful use of the Perform [Sing] skill can make a shaman enter a trance without spending Power Points. On a critical roll, the shaman is particularly open to the energies and his or her song pleased the spirits. He or she gains a bonus of +10% to all rolls during the incantation.

### NEGOTIATION

When the spirit is found, the shaman usually tries to negotiate with it. A negotiation is never mandatory, but it is less dangerous than direct Spirit Combat. Negotiating is the only way to deal with a deity.

The negotiation is attempted when a shaman wants to ally with a spirit (remember, freeing a soul – i.e. healing – is an alliance process):

Practically, according to the fundamental animist principle of exchange, he must offer a sacrifice as compensation for the soul or for the spirit's help. The shaman first negotiates with the spirit to have him accept an exchange. When the negotiation is a success, the price must be rolled on the Compensation Chart. This is only an indication and the GM can choose a price as he sees fit. Still, the compensation is usually a living being or a part of it (e.g. characteristic points). But it can also be a quest (e.g. repair a shaman's tomb). If the price is agreed on and paid, the spirit does whatever the shaman wanted from it, within its power range.

### RESOLUTION

The negotiation is resolved by an opposed roll between Allegiance corresponding to the spirit and the spirit's INTx5%. The shaman gets a bonus of 1/5<sup>th</sup> of his "Persuade" skill (see the rules for complementary skills at p. 50 of *Basic Roleplaying*). In case of a tie, roll again until one of the opponents wins the contest.



For the spirits outside of the shaman's Allegiance, the negotiation is a *Difficult* task (e.g.: a black shaman with a Great Ancestor Spirit).

Clan Ancestors belong to the Ancestor Allegiance but are supposed to be friendly to the shaman. The result of the negotiation is shifted by one level of success, as per friendly spirits, as explained below.

For game purpose, Great Spirits and Deities are considered to have an INT of 24.

If successful, the price or compensation asked for by the spirit is then rolled on the Compensation Chart.

If the shaman gets three levels of success less than the spirit (ex: shaman failure, spirit critical success), the spirit attacks the shaman (see Spirit Combat). Since the contact has already been established, the shaman cannot avoid Spirit Combat except by using his "Soul Escape" skill. An *üör* will try to steal his soul. Great Spirits and Deities will either use their powers in a negative way toward the shaman, or give him as prey to a lesser spirit, to be determined by the GM.

If the shaman has three degrees of success more than the spirit, the latter obeys without requiring compensation.

The GM may allow the shaman to pay a higher price (e.g. characteristic points when no bull is available).

If the negotiation fails, or if the shaman does not want to pay the price (a quite likely event if the spirit requires a human sacrifice), he must force the spirit to obey him through Spirit Combat or simply give up.

*Example: Temir the shaman is called to free a woman from an üör, evil spirit of disease. Temir is a Major Shaman, POW 18, Knowledge [spirit world] 65% Allegiance [Animism] 75% (Temir is a black shaman), Persuade 65%, and APP 15. He enters a trance by making his Perform [sing] roll.*

*He then attempts to find the spirit (Knowledge [Spirit World]) and rolls 49: success. Temir tries to negotiate with the üör. He has a negotiation chance of 75 (Allegiance + 13 (Persuade / 5) = 88%. The player rolls 1D100 and rolls 52. The üör has an INT of*

*12, giving it a score of 60%, and a POW of 19. The GM rolls the dice: 31. Temir successfully wins the opposed roll, as he rolled higher, and the üör agrees to negotiate. The player rolls 1D100 again to determine the price desired by the üör and rolls 98.  $98 + 19$  (üör's POW)  $-15$  (Temir's APP) = 102! The üör demands that he sacrifices a human being! We bet that faced with this exorbitant price, Temir will rather try to force the üör to release its victim in a Spirit Combat.*

### **ALLYING WITH A SPIRIT**

Allying with a spirit consists of making a pact with it, in which the spirit will aid the shaman in exchange for the negotiated payment. This can take any form suitable to the nature of the spirit, but is typically a power from it.

### **FORGING AN ALLIANCE**

There are two modes of alliance with a spirit: temporary and permanent. Both involve a gift of Power Points or POW. The alliance is effective as soon as the sacrifice is completed.

#### **Temporary Alliance**

The shaman *immediately* spends power points equal to one fifth of the spirit's POW (rounded up). The spirit accepts this gift, and can be summoned by the shaman once. A shaman can arrange for multiple summoning of the same spirit, which is called a multiple alliance, if a multiple of the Power Points required can be spent. The Power Points must however be spent at once, at the end of the negotiation. If the shaman does not have enough Power Points, he or she cannot temporarily ally the spirit.

The additional sacrifice for the compensation must not be made immediately after the negotiation, but the alliance will be effective only when this is completed.

To summon the spirit, the shaman calls the spirit as a combat action. The spirit then immediately descends into the body of the shaman and obeys one order. If, at the end of the round, the shaman has not given any task to the spirit, it leaves, its pact considered fulfilled. Summoning is detailed later in this chapter.



## NEGOTIATION MATRIX

SHAMAN	SPIRIT				
	Critical success	Special success	Success	Failure	Fumble
Critical success	higher roll succeeds	negotiation succeeds	negotiation succeeds	negotiation succeeds without compensation	negotiation succeeds without compensation
Special success	negotiation fails	Higher roll succeeds	negotiation succeeds	negotiation succeeds	negotiation succeeds without compensation
Success	negotiation fails	negotiation fails	higher roll succeeds	negotiation succeeds	negotiation succeeds
Failure	negotiation fails, spirit attacks	negotiation fails	negotiation fails	higher roll succeeds	negotiation succeeds
Fumble	negotiation fails, spirit attacks	negotiation fails, spirit attacks	negotiation fails,	negotiation fails	higher roll succeeds

## COMPENSATION CHART

Add the Spirit's POW (or +25 for Aiyy/deities) to the roll and subtract the shaman's APP.

1D100	ANIMIST SPIRIT	OTHER SPIRIT
01-05	Favoured by the spirit - no compensation	—
06-11	Any animal	—
12-16	Any female piece of cattle	—
17-28	A heifer	A mare
29-43	A black bull	A stallion
44-55	1D6 pieces of cattle including one heifer	1D6 cattle, including a mare
56-66	1D6 cows including one heifer	1D6 horses, including a mare
67-74	1D6 bulls	1D6 winged horses <sup>(1)</sup>
75-79	2D6 bovines including one bull	2D6 horses including one white and one winged <sup>(1)</sup>
80-85	3D6 bovines, including a black bull and a piebald	3D6 horses, including a winged stallion <sup>(1)</sup>
86-91	2D6 black bulls	2D6 winged stallions <sup>(1)</sup>
92-95	1 characteristic point from a human being <sup>(2)</sup>	—
96-97	1 characteristic point from the victim or the shaman <sup>(2)</sup>	—
98-99	1D3 characteristic points from a human being <sup>(2)</sup>	—
100	1D3 characteristic points from any involved human (e.g. the victim of an üör) or the shaman <sup>(2)</sup>	
101-104	A human being	
105-107	A human relative of any involved human (e.g. the victim of an üör) or of the shaman	
108-109	The shaman or any involved human (e.g. the victim of an üör)	
110+	roll twice and combine <sup>(3)</sup> , or GM choice	

(1) These are not truly Tulpur winged horses, but normal horses with marks on their shoulders

(2) Choose or roll 1d8: 1-SIZ 2-CON 3-STR 4-DEX 5-INT 6-APP 7-POW 8-HP

(3) Roll again once without POW/APP modifiers and once with POW/APP modifiers.

*Example: Bronze the shaman has a power of 18. A warrior going at war with his two sons asks him to prepare for healing them. Bronze tries to ally a spirit of healing. He makes his Knowledge [Spirit World], finds a healing spell spirit with a POW of 16 and manages to negotiate with it. He rolls a price of 4 bulls on the compensation chart. A temporary alliance costs 4 Power Points (16/5 rounded up). Bronze offers the spirit 16 Power Points to be able to summon it 4 times. When coming back from his trance, the warrior provides the 4 bulls to sacrifice. Bronze can now call the healing spirit 4 times.*

### Permanent Alliance

At the end of the negotiation or of the Spirit Combat, the shaman seals an alliance with the spirit by donating one point of permanent POW per each 10 points of POW the spirit has (rounded up). The shaman may sacrifice only 1 POW and the rest later without attempting a new negotiation. He or she must sacrifice at least 1 POW immediately. The alliance becomes effective only when the entire requested POW has been sacrificed and the compensation paid.

The shaman may summon the spirit at any later time, as often as desired. The shaman may sacrifice further POW or Power Points for a multiple alliance, neither requiring a new negotiation. See later in this chapter for the details of summoning.

*Example: When Temir was younger but already gifted with a POW of 18, he decided to permanently ally with an üör, a spirit of Fear. He found one and successfully negotiated*

*with it. Temir was lucky enough to roll a small compensation of one heifer. The spirit had a POW 16: a permanent alliance costs Temir 2 POW. Temir immediately offered 1 characteristic POW which dropped to 17. When waking up from his trance, he immediately caught a heifer from his own herd and sacrificed it to the spirit. Several months later, Temir had increased his POW to 18 again. He decided to sacrifice the second point of POW to the spirit, in order complete the alliance and be able to summon it. Temir had a POW of 17 again but had a permanently allied üör.*

*Several years later, Temir is a major shaman with a POW of 20. He decides to sacrifice 2 of his POW to the Fear spirit again for a second alliance. He doesn't need any new negotiation, but only a POW sacrifice. His POW drops to 18 again, but Temir can now call the spirit twice in a row or give it two successive tasks (see the rules for summoning).*

### ALLYING DEITIES

Deities (Aiyy) have an infinite power. However, allying with them costs only 4 POW for a permanent alliance, or 7 Power Points for a temporary alliance.

### ATTITUDE OF A SPIRIT


In order to introduce some more spice and variety in the negotiation process, the GM may want to have the spirits react according to their relations to the shaman or to their mood. Spirits, just like humans, are capable of affection, dislike, mistrust or hatred. This rule is given as an option.

### SPIRIT ATTITUDE

LUCK ROLL	SPIRIT ATTITUDE
<b>Critical success</b>	Seeking alliance: the spirit is looking for an alliance and is eager to take its chance with the shaman. Shift the result of the negotiation roll by 2 levels of success (2 rows upward in the negotiation matrix).
<b>Special success</b>	Friendly: shift the result of the negotiation roll of one level of success (one row upward on the negotiation matrix). A friendly spirit will therefore almost never declare Spirit Combat.
<b>Success</b>	<i>Neutral</i> : no change.
<b>Failure</b>	<i>Hostile</i> : shift the result of the negotiation of one level of failure (one row downward on the negotiation matrix). The shaman can renounce to negotiate before starting.
<b>Fumble</b>	<i>Enemy</i> : shift the result of the negotiation by three levels of failure (3 rows downward in the negotiation matrix).







Before starting the negotiation, the shaman must first determine the spirit's attitude toward him with a Luck roll. Depending on the result, he may decide to negotiate or not. If the result has to be unveiled to the player before the negotiation starts is left to the GM.

### ***FREED A SOUL (HEALING)***

An evil spirit descends or ascends to the middle world for a reason: it was insulted, it was sent by a shaman, it is simply evil and willing to cause harm, or has been sent by its Great Spirit master. It captures the soul of the victim and takes its place. The victim is then struck with an illness or a curse appropriate to the spirit. The victim is said to be covertly possessed. To free a soul (healing), the shaman must bring back the soul into the victim, and drive away the possessing spirit. If the negotiation is successful, the spirit gives the soul back as soon as the compensation is paid and its victim recovers from the disease.

This is actually a special case of alliance. The difference is that the shaman must be at a maximal distance of POWx10 metres of the victim to contact the spirit, and to ask it to release the soul. If the shaman makes the incantation too far away from the victim, he or she may be able to contact an *üör* causing the same disease, but not that particular one which stole the soul.

If the negotiation fails, the shaman can try to force the spirit to release the soul through Spirit Combat.

### ***ALLEGIANCE CHECK***

A successful Allegiance roll qualifies for an allegiance increase roll (*Basic Roleplaying* p. 317) at the end of an adventure, whatever the result of the negotiation.

## ***SPIRIT COMBAT***

### ***PRINCIPLES***

Spirit Combat is an alternate form of dealing with spirits by forcing them. It is generally used when negotiation has failed, or to force a spirit to perform some task not

available through negotiation. A shaman can engage a spirit in Spirit Combat without having even tried to negotiate.

### **Shamans can use Spirit Combat to:**

- Ally with a spirit
- Command a spirit
- Bind a spirit
- Release a bound spirit
- Temporarily possess a physical being

### **Spirits can use Spirit Combat to:**

- Capture a soul to inflict a disease or a handicap
- Temporarily possess a physical being

Spirit Combat takes place on the Spirit Plane and can only be initiated by a Spirit (*üör*, *ichchi*, spirit bound by a shaman or in an *oboo*), or a shaman in a trance. It takes place before any other combat in a combat round.

It can be targeted against any spirit, should it be a disincorporate or bound spirit, a shaman in trance or a physical being with a soul (human, animal). Unless it has the power of Trance, a physical being can only resist, but can neither exploit a victory nor use shamanic skills.

Many spirits, like *üör* do not perceive the space in the physical world, and can attack anyone anywhere. They appear, however, at a particular point (the victim or where their influence is manifesting). A spirit in relation with the physical world (shaman's spirit, bound spirit, nature spirit) cannot attack a victim that is physically located farther than its POWx10 in metres from its material location (shaman's body, fetish, piece of landscape or herd).

If a shaman is attacked by a spirit while not in trance, he or she can enter a trance immediately by using the Trance power. He or she has no time to use the Perform [Sing] skill, and must therefore spend 1 Power Point to do so. He or she can then use shamanic powers and skills to exploit a possible victory.

A shaman engaging in Spirit Combat during a trance is transformed into his or her animal self in the spirit world, which

is a black bull for black shamans, a stallion for white shamans. The *üör* generally take the symbolic form of bulls, the *Aiyy* that of stallions. In a fight between shamans, they can take other forms. The guardian spirits of animals take the form of the animal. A shaman can always take the form of the totem animal of his clan. Spirit Combat is symbolically represented as a physical battle between the animals, but in the spirit plane.

A combat involving more than two spirits is only possible in the spirit world. A physical being may therefore be attacked by only one spirit at a time.

Within the same combat round, only one action is allowed: therefore any attacking participant cannot do any other action like summoning, negotiating or spell casting. If for example he summons or negotiates with a spirit, he cannot retaliate if simultaneously attacked by another spirit.

## RESOLUTION

Spirit Combat is then resolved as psychic combat in the Basic Roleplaying rules, p. 114: each combatant matches its Power Points against the opponent's. Whoever succeeds (and both can simultaneously) causes losses equal to  $1D3 + \text{damage bonus}$  Power Points. Both *SIZ* and *STR* of the animal self represent and are equal to the *POW* of the shaman or spirit. The damage bonus applied to the Spirit Combat is computed after the strength (*POW*) and size (*POW*) of the symbol-animals, as for physical combat, but remains psychic.

For a critical success, the damage is  $2D3+db$ .

## WINNER AND LOSER

At the end of a combat round, any one of the opponents having lost Power Points in this round and having at least 10 Power Points less than the opponent is defeated. If the loser still has at least 1 Power Point left, he has a last chance to escape, using his Soul Escape skill. If not successful in his attempt to flee, the Spirit Combat is over and the loser is

definitely defeated, without requiring a new combat round.

Any one of the opponents whose Power Points are reduced to 0 is immediately defeated.

If both are reduced to 0 Power Points during the same round of combat, the fight is over and there is no winner.

*Example: Temir has a POW of 18 and 18 Power Points. He turns into a black bull with STR 18, and SIZ 18. The üör has a POW of 19 and 19 Power Points, and the appearance of a blue bull. Temir, as a bull, has a bonus damage of 1d6 (STR + SIZ = 36). The üör, as a bull, has 1d6 bonus as well (STR+SIZ=38).*

*Round 1: 18 Power Points against 19 Power Points. The player rolls 33 for Temir (for 45%) and the GM 14 for the üör (for 55%): both succeed. Temir inflicts  $1d3 + 1d6$  damage to the üör. The player rolls 1 and 1 = 2 Power Points less for the üör. The üör inflicts  $1d3 + 1d6$  (the GM rolls 3 + 2) = 5 Power Points lost for Temir. Temir has now 13 Power Points and the üör 17.*

*Round 2: Temir misses his attack, but the üör does not. It achieves a critical success. It inflicts  $2 \times 1d3 + 1d6$  damage to Temir, who loses another 5 Power Points. Temir has only 8 Power Points left, which is 9 less than the üör: Temir is in a critical situation, but is still not defeated.*

*If Temir loses again more Power Points than the üör, which is very highly probable, he will have 10 or more Power Points less than the üör left. He will then have only one last chance to flee before a complete defeat. If he does not succeed, his soul will be captured by the üör.*


## PHYSICAL BEINGS IN SPIRIT COMBAT

Any source of *POW* resists Spirit Combat, that is to say, obliges a spirit to make Power Points vs. Power Points rolls, even an unconscious target or someone busy doing something else. However, a target of an attacking spirit can only retaliate if it stops all other activities and focuses on the fight. Only shamans are actually really aware of the presence of a spirit. Others feel strange,



## SPIRIT COMBAT OPTION

*For computing the damage bonus, one can consider that the STR of the symbol-animal is equal to its power points instead of its POW. Losing power points makes a contestant even weaker. This option speeds up the combat when one of the opponents gains an advantage over the other one.*



have visions, nausea, cannot concentrate, are befuddled... trying to recover from this uncomfortable state is the way they unconsciously fight the spirit.

The target can ignore these troubles and try to continue its activity as long as it has Power Points left. In this case, it inflicts no loss to the opponent's Power Points. During sleep, an attacked target dreams nightmares, which is the way the soul tries to resist. Since a sleeping being still does not retaliate, the *üör* like to commit their forfeit during the sleep of their victims. A sleeping shaman immediately recognizes a spirit and can enter a trance in his sleep.

Anyway, unless he has the power of trance, such a victim cannot turn into an animal: it won't therefore have the benefit of the damage bonus, making it very difficult to resist to a spirit.

### **DISENGAGING FROM SPIRIT COMBAT: THE SOUL ESCAPE SKILL**

Only a disincorporate spirit (*üör*, *ichchi*, or shaman in trance) can disengage from a Spirit Combat. Any opponent can try a Soul Escape rather than a Power Point vs. Power Point roll during a round. The roll is made before any attack roll. If successful, the opponent can either let him go and stop the combat or engage in a pursuit.

If during a round one succeeds in his attack with at least three levels of success more than his opponent (e.g. critical vs. failure, or special success vs. fumble), he may give up doing damage and instead disengage the next round, under the same conditions as above but without having to roll under his Soul Escape skill.

**Pursuit:** a pursuit is determined by an opposed roll of "soul escape" skills. If the pursuer wins, he catches the fugitive, and imposes a new round of combat, without possible escape for this round. Otherwise, the fugitive has shaken off his pursuer. An *üör* fleeing or pursuing releases the soul he holds.

*Example: Temir decides to flee. He has 56% skill rating in Soul Escape. The player rolls 44: success. The *üör* decides to pursue this appetizing prey. It has an INT of 10, giving it a skill rate of 50% in Soul Escape. The GM rolls 49: the *üör* wins the contest, catches up with Temir and can*

*impose a new Spirit Combat round. Temir has to fight this round, his player rolls a 01 (critical), while the GM rolls a 96 (failure) for the *üör*: Temir is lucky and can flee again. The *üör* tries to catch Temir again and starts a pursuit anew. Both roll under their Soul escape skill. If Temir wins this contest, he will be safe. Otherwise he will have to fight one more round. Whatever happens, the soul the *üör* captured is now free, and Temir's patient is healthy again.*

Since a bound spirit (e.g. in an *Oboo*) may attack only if the victim is within POWx10 metres, a physical being can break a combat by going far enough from the point of attachment of the spirit. While fleeing, he can't retaliate or attack back in Spirit Combat.

### **COMBAT INVOLVING MORE THAN 2 SPIRITS**

Spirit Combat among more than two opponents can only occur between spirits who are all in the spirit world. A physical victim not in a trance can therefore be attacked only by a single spirit, while this one can be simultaneously attacked by other spirits. During the fight, no other spirit can contact the physical being.

In a single round, each opponent can make a single roll of Power Points vs. Power Points against a target of its choice. All can focus on the same target. An allied spirit or another shaman can help a shaman in Spirit Combat.

Multiple pursuers in a Soul Escape attempt:

- A Soul Escape contest (pursuit) is necessary only if the target successfully used its own Soul Escape skill.
- Several contestants may pursue the same target, but each contestant can pursue only one single target. The target has to be stated before rolling dice. Pursuing one target de facto releases any other spirits the pursuer is holding or engaging.
- Soul Escape is rolled only once per round, the same result being used for any further required opposed roll in the same round, even against multiple pursuers.
- If necessary, statements of intent will be announced starting from the lowest INT upward to the highest before any die roll is made.

## RESULTS OF SPIRIT COMBAT:

The winner of a Spirit Combat can choose to make *one* of the following actions.

### ALLYING WITH A SPIRIT

This works the same way as after a negotiation. The spirits recognize the shaman's power and submit to him, without asking for any compensation. The alliance can be either temporary (spending Power Points) or permanent (sacrificing POW).

### COMMAND

A spirit or a physical being is forced to obey an order immediately, i.e. in the next round. The command can be "release a captured soul", "use the power against a target", "engage in Spirit Combat", etc.

However, the obedience of the commanded spirit lasts for only a single round. This can be extended at a cost of 1PP per round, even for additional tasks. When the shaman has no Power Points left, he falls unconscious and the being or spirit is freed. The spirit which obeys uses its own Power Points and POW.

### POSSESSION

A physical being forced to obey is considered as actively possessed. It still uses its own POW and Power Points when required to. Spirits do not normally have any interest in active possession unless forced by a shaman. They prefer either to use a power (e.g. spell) or to capture a soul (covert possession). An active possession will be attempted only if required by a shaman, as allied or after a Spirit Combat. Possession works exactly like commanding a spirit, but on physical beings. Since it requires spending Power Points, a full possession is never permanent.

#### Capture a soul (spirits only)

Someone defeated by a spirit falls prey to it, which captures the soul. The spirit will keep the soul until a shaman tries to free the soul or the spirit gets bored with it. A shaman cannot keep the soul of a physical being, because he or she is not permanently

in the spirit world, but particularly nasty dark shamans can, just like a very evil *üör*, throw the captured soul in the "marshes of the dead souls". The unfortunate victim then rolls under his POWx1%. If he succeeds, the soul luckily finds a way to return to its body. A failure means that the soul is cast forever in the marshes of the dead souls. The victims eventually die and become an *üör* in turn, unless a shaman comes to release him within 6 days (see "Resurrection").

Throwing a soul into the marshes of the dead souls causes a loss of 2 points in all allegiances except Animism.

When the soul is captured, the victim endures a curse, that is, the spirit uses its power or influence on the Middle World to cause him trouble, at the GM's discretion. An *üör* will cause a disease, a natural spirit the hostility of its animals, etc. This is called covert possession.

### Bind

Instead of sealing a permanent alliance, the spirit can be bound to an object which becomes a fetish. Binding a spirit requires a Spirit Combat, even if the spirit is friendly, because it breaks natural rules. It costs the same POW sacrifice as for a permanent alliance. The sacrifice of POW points must be done immediately. Not all spirits can be bound.

The spirit acts at a distance of POWx10 metres from the fetish, under conditions determined by the shaman. This is the case for instance for *Oboo* or a tribal standard holding a protecting spirit. This binding can also be a way to create magic items and artefacts. Any holder of the fetish can use the spirit as if having sealed the alliance himself.

A bound spirit can only be released through Spirit Combat. It stays bound even after the death of the shaman who bound it.

### RELEASE

Spirit Combat can be used to release a bound spirit by simply reducing its Power Points to 0. The shaman can then decide to free the spirit and send it back to the spirit world.





## ALLIED AND BOUND SPIRITS

### GENERAL FEATURES

Spirits summoned or bound on the physical plane can detect any source of POW and its order of magnitude (<20 or more) at a distance of POWx10 metres. They can determine neither the direction nor the exact distance. The only exception is the spirit of an *oboo*, who knows if someone went along the proper side and walked around it. At POW metres, a spirit knows the nature of the source but not necessarily its powers.

A spirit cannot move beyond a distance of POWx10 metres from the point it manifests itself in the physical plane; the shaman's body, the fetish, a diseased victim, and so on.

### SUMMONING

Allied spirits continue their "life" freely. They will however immediately obey when summoned by the shaman.

The shaman can call upon one allied spirit every round just by calling it, without needing to start an incantation (nor a trance). He must immediately give a task to the spirit. The spirit comes into the shaman's body at the end of the round, ready to act the next round. It will perform a single task for the shaman, then it will depart for the spirit plane. If the shaman has a multiple alliance, he can assign the spirit multiple tasks, taking one round to assign each of it.

For instance, a temporary alliance with a spirit with POW 17 costs 4 Power Points. If during the negotiation the shaman offers 8 Power Points (and paid the requested compensation), he will be able to summon the spirit twice, or to summon it once and ask for 2 tasks.

The spirit and the shaman share a telepathic link, as long as they stay at [POW spirit + POW shaman] x10 m distance from each other. The shaman can therefore see power sources through the spirit. The spirit can perceive the physical world through the senses of the shaman.

A summoned spirit can be asked to do the following:

- Help the shaman in Spirit Combat against other spirits, as long as its POW is at least 10, *or* not less than the POW of the opponent minus nine (i.e. at least 05% chance to the Power Points vs. Power Points roll).
- Ask for some information the spirit may know: knowledge in a domain close to the spirit, ancient knowledge from ancestors, and so on.
- Most frequently, the shaman asks the spirit to use one of its power, like capturing a soul to induce a disability, illness, madness, or using a power similar to a spell (call animal, cure diseases, give courage, breath, hit points. see "Spirits"). Powers or spells known by the spirit are not included in the limit of spells a shaman can remember. Allied spirits use their own POW and Power Points, unless otherwise specified in the spirit description. Nature spirits can be simply asked to use their influence on the mundane plane for the shaman's benefit.

A spirit may have alliances with several shamans but will give precedence to the first one calling him.

The GM is given freedom to choose from the lists of spirits provided or invent new ones. A shaman who controls many spirits can use their powers simultaneously, in addition to its own.

### LIMITATIONS

The spirit helps the shaman for a maximum of one action per alliance, after which it returns to its plane.

Temporarily allied spirits will help again, as long as the shaman has temporary alliances left. Otherwise, he or she must start the alliance procedure again.

Permanently allied spirits will help once per alliance and then depart. The shaman must visit them again to remind them of their alliance. He or she can therefore no longer call the spirits until he or she visits them during an incantation to remind them of their duties. The shaman does not need to start the alliance process again, or to sacrifice new POW. In

game terms, he or she only has to be in the trance state for the time of an incantation (1d10 hours).

The shaman may have sacrificed enough POW for a multiple permanent alliance, in which case he or she can ask the spirit to help for as many tasks, or summon it again as many time without visiting it. Reminder: this sacrifice need not be done at once. During his life, the shaman can sacrifice further POW to a spirit he already has a permanent alliance with, without starting the full alliance process again.

A shaman cannot have more than APP / 2 (rounded up) permanent alliances simultaneously. He cannot have more than APP alliances overall, permanent or not.

*Temir's mates are bothered by hostile warriors led by Big-Ear. Swords are drawn, warriors are angry and ready to fight. The enemies outnumber Temir's mates. Temir decides to call his allied fear spirit.*

*1<sup>st</sup> round: Temir summons the spirit and gives it a task: attack Big-Ear, the leader of the enemies, and make him afraid of shamans before the warriors start to fight.*

*2<sup>nd</sup> round: The fear spirit attacks Big-Ear while the mêlée starts. Spirit Combat is considered as a Power and is resolved before the mêlée. The spirit has POW 16 and Big-Ear has a POW 12. Since Big Ear is fighting, he does not concentrate on the spirit and cannot retaliate. The spirit has 70% (16 vs. 12) chances to reduce Big-Ear's Power Points by 1d3+1d4 (1d3 + damage bonus for his POW of 16). The spirit reduces Big-Ear's Power Points by 4 to 8 Power Points. This is less than 10 points difference with the spirit's Power Points: Big-Ear did not contract the disease, but the Spirit Combat goes ahead. During this time, Temir tries to get out of range of the warriors. He and his spirit act now independently from each other.*

*3<sup>rd</sup> round: the spirit continues to attack, reducing Big Ear's Power Points to 2: this is more than 10 points difference with the spirit's Power Points of 16. It can steal Big-ear's soul. Big-Ear feels the fear tighten his heart. Will he find enough courage to continue the mêlée, while Temir and his clan mates continue to fight?*

## BOUND SPIRITS

Bound spirits are permanently fixed to an object which becomes a fetish. They need not be summoned, since they are bound to the physical world. They cannot use their Soul Escape skill.

The way a bound spirit acts depends on the task the shaman assigned to it. It can attack any source of POW coming close or holding the fetish, or not observing a given ritual like for *oboos*, etc.


Most of the time, the spirit simply obeys any holder of the fetish by using its power when directed to do so.

## BALBAL SPIRITS

Balbals are raw stones standing at a burial place, and represent the enemies killed during the deceased's life. The souls of these dead enemies can be bound to a balbal to guard the tomb. Since they are normally not belonging to the clan of the shaman, any negotiation will be *Difficult* and the spirits will be *Hostile*. A Spirit Combat is likely to occur.

Permanently binding spirits into balbals costs permanent POW, and will therefore be very rarely used, and anyway not for all the enemies. Only powerful Khans will probably be protected by bound balbal spirits. However, Erlik and other Aiyy allow shamans to temporarily bind the spirits of the dead enemies, as per temporary alliances. First, a sacrifice has to be made to Erlik and the Aiyy to pay for releasing the dead souls. Roll on the Compensation Chart. Since the burial of important Khans or *noyans* involves huge sacrifices, this prerequisite is mostly fulfilled anyway. Then the binding is resolved like an "Alliance" with the spirits. To bind any spirit, the shaman tries a negotiation (usually *Difficult* –not own ancestor, *Hostile* spirit –it was an enemy). If successful, he or she spends the requested Power Points for a number of alliances (one fifth of the spirit's POW, rounded up, for every alliance). No compensation is required. If unsuccessful, he can try a Spirit Combat and ally with the spirit as described above. Note that this temporary alliance can only be made once during the burial ceremony. Afterwards it is too late.





The spirits do not reside in the balbal, but will appear in them under certain conditions, like if somebody tries to plunder the tomb. The number of times a temporary bound spirit will defend the tomb is set by the number of alliances made with it. Afterward, the spirit is free. This means that older tombs are less likely to be guarded by balbal spirits.

### **NOTE ON SPIRIT COMBAT AND NEGOTIATION**

Spirit Combat is, in many cases, not as efficient as a negotiation, since the spirit and the shaman will have lost power points during the combat phase. They both have fewer Power Points to spend, often even no more at all, for the spirit to use its power or for the shaman to seal a temporary alliance. With Spirit Combat, the shaman is also exposed to a possible defeat by the spirit and may become one of its victims. Moreover, negotiation corresponds better to the philosophy of shamanism.

However, Spirit Combat does not require any sacrifice, allows more actions than negotiation, and may allow a POW gain roll.

### **COOPERATION AMONG SHAMANS**

Several shamans can join on the same shamanic journey. When encountering a spirit, they can either try in turn to negotiate or engage with it, or combine their efforts in a negotiation using the cooperative skill rules (*Basic Roleplaying* p. 172) or in a Spirit Combat as described above ("Combat involving more than two spirits").

### **NOTES ON SHAMANISM IN THE GAME**

These rules are written to simulate the complexity of a shaman's function. They also allow players to better understand what shamanism is. It is not a power that is set with a couple of die rolls, but is a

real mastery of specific skills and powers, beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. They demonstrate what animists believe in, that the universe is composed of several worlds inhabited by diverse spirits, with very human motivations (hatred, envy, fear...).

The shamanic journey is truly a dangerous quest, in a parallel world. An incantation can be seen as a mini-episode in a scenario. It is long, dangerous, complex, and certainly not trivial.

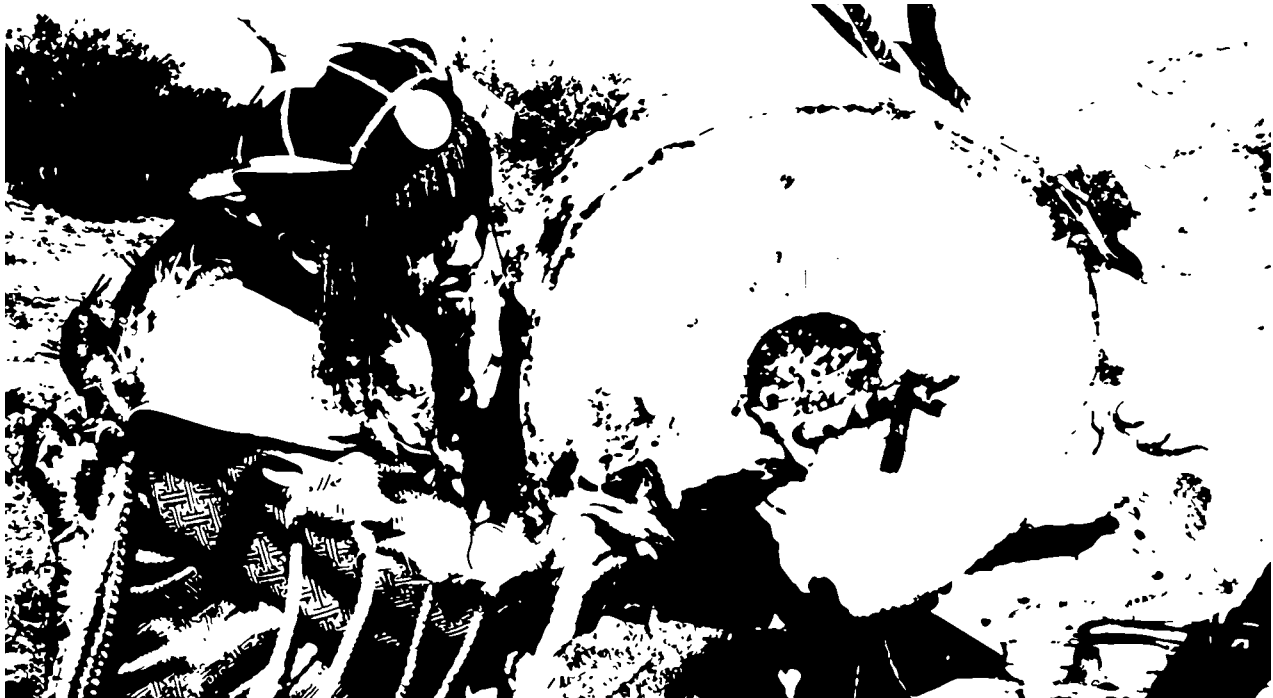
Beyond rule mechanics, the player of a shaman and the GM can and should describe their actions other than just rolling dice. A negotiation can be roleplayed, a spirit battle described as a struggle between two great bulls, with descriptions of fulminating animals with huge black smoking horns, their red shoes throwing sparks, bellowing which shake the mountains, etc. A character present during an incantation and with the power of clairvoyance can see the bulls.

A pursuit can be described as a terrible chase among mountains and marshes. The spirit catches up with the shaman, not because of a better die roll but because the shaman was mired in the swamp, while the spirit has turned into a giant eagle to swoop down on him. Or conversely, the shaman made it through a forest, while the *üör* had his horns caught in the branches. Perhaps it is because the shaman has in the past helped the spirits of the forest. Or the shaman meets the spirit of his ancestors who hides and deceives the enemy, or conversely a hostile *üör* which makes him trip or shows a shortcut to the pursuer.

As a rule, do not hesitate to make up stories, even implausible ones. In general, these descriptions should be very "physical", everything happens in the spirit world as in a tangible but wonderful world, where metamorphoses and mysterious powers are common place.



## 5. MAGIC POWERS



**S**hamans have two ways of doing magic:

- By summoning a spirit, as described above (see “Allied and Bound Spirits”, p. 72). Each spirit has a range of powers which it can use on behalf of the shaman. This chapter provides the full list of powers available, while Chapter 7 “Spirits” explains which spirits provide which powers.
- By learning a limited range of available powers from lesser spell spirits. In this case the shaman him- or herself uses the power without requiring a summoning. These powers use the mechanics described in the “Magic” Chapter of the *Basic Roleplaying* rules and are listed here as “Spells”. Smiths can learn this kind of magic, too.

Magic spells are generally less powerful than powers granted by Great Spirits and Aiyy.

### SPIRIT POWERS

#### POWERS FOR BLACK SHAMANS

##### COMMAND ÜÖR

**Granted by:** Great Disease Master

**Range:** 250m

**Duration:** until task is fulfilled

**Power Points per level:** 3

The granting Great Disease Master commands one of its *üör* on behalf of the shaman. The *üör* immediately obeys its Master, either to release a soul or to capture one, or to use any other power it may have. One *üör* per level can be commanded simultaneously for a single action each. Critical success allows asking 2 tasks from each *üör*.



### IMMUNITY

**Granted by:** Great Disease Masters.

**Range:** self, touch

**Duration:** one moon cycle

**Power Points per level:** 3

This power immunizes against all *üör* belonging to the granting Disease Master. Every level allows one more being to be immunized. Critical success doubles the duration.

### SUMMON DEAD SOUL

**Granted by:** Erlik.

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** 15mn or Spirit Combat

**Power cost per level:** 3

Summons a dead soul with a POW of 3d6, no INT. This soul attacks whichever target within range is designated by the shaman in Spirit Combat to reduce its power points. If the target reaches 0 power points, it collapses and stays unconscious. Each extra level gives 1 more POW point to the dead soul (max 24).

### DISEASE

**Granted by:** Üör

Various, see *üör* description (page 94).

## POWERS FOR WHITE SHAMANS

### BATTLE RAGE

**Granted by:** Ilbis-Khan

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** POW min

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

Brings warriors into a superior state of concentration for a battle. This power doubles one combat related skill per level, - any one skill directly related to a current combat is relevant (ex: ride when fighting from horseback). Skill increase can be spread over different warriors. Ex: a level 4 spell can increase 2 skills of 2 warriors or 3 skills of one warrior + 1 skill on a second one or any combination.

### BLESS SOIL

**Granted by:** Ätügen

**Range:** 1 hectare per level

**Duration:** 1 year

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

Makes a mixed land of earth and water (e.g. a land watered by streams) very fertile. The yield is doubled, the plants do not have disease, grass is more nutritious for the cattle.

### BLESSING

**Granted by:** any Aiyy

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** until started, then one action (see description)

**Power Point Cost per level:** 4

When called upon, the Aiyy granting the spell can Bless an endeavour by supporting it. In game terms, the beneficiary can use their Allegiance to Tengriism as a complementary skill (*Basic Roleplaying* p. 50), giving a bonus of Allegiance/5% to all skills, or Allegiance/20 to all characteristics during one single action, such a pursuit, a combat against one opponent, or the manufacture of a weapon. The action as well as the skill must be strongly related to the Aiyy. For example, Umai, the fertility goddess, will not help in a fighting action, while Ilbiss-Khan, Spirit of war, will help shooting arrows during a battle but not during a hunt. The duration of the Power has to be determined by the GM, according to the situation, but should be limited to the minimum required die rolls for the given action.

Each level allows the Blessing of one person at a time.

### CONTROL WEATHER

**Granted by:** Suul-Bylyt-Tiodiugher

**Range:** 1000m

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

For each level, precipitation, wind and rain are shifted by one level (see *Basic Roleplaying* p. 235) on an area of 1 square km.

## COURAGE

**Granted by:** Ilbis-Khan

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** POW hours

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

This power can be used to give courage to demoralized or panicked warriors. For each level, the shaman can affect APP warriors at the same time for POW hours. The shaman rolls his APP vs. targets' POW. All those who do not resist recover courage. When used in advance, this power immunizes against any source of demoralization.

## DIVINATION

**Granted by:** Ürüing-Aiyy-Tojon

**Range:** self

**Duration:** sleep (2d4 hours)

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

Ai Tojon comes down the Cosmic Tree in a dream to answer a question about someone or something existing or having existed. The formulation should have only one question per level. The shaman can alternately simply ask for an inspiring vision about a given topic. The GM must be careful that his answers do not spoil the suspense of a scenario. The answer is often incomprehensible, and the shaman must make an Idea roll (INTx5%) to understand it. A facetious GM can give double-meaning answers if the question allows it. Any extra level increases the chance to understand the divination by 5% (see also Psychic Ability p. 116 in the *Basic Roleplaying* rulebook, replacing the "Divination" roll with the Idea roll). Ai Tojon cannot reveal the future but may give hints about existing obstacles.

If the shaman is woken up by any external cause, he or she can make a Luck roll to check if he or she got the vision before waking up.

## DREAM

**Granted by:** Ürüing-Aiyy-Tojon

**Range:** NA

**Duration:** until the target's next sleep period

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

Ai Tojon can send a message from the shaman to another person in the form of a dream. The dreamer has INTx5% chances to recognize it

as a vision and to understand it. The degree of success of the Idea roll determines the precision of the understanding. Each level allows to simultaneously send another message to another person, or several messages to the same. The target must be known to the shaman, directly or not.

## FANGS & CLAWS

**Granted by:** Hinkon

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

Grows fangs (damage 1d8 +db, bleeding) and claws (damage 1d8, bleeding), used at the same skill level as "brawl" and allowing 2 attacks per round. One target can be affected per level.

## FAVOURABLE DESTINY

**Granted by:** Djulga-Khan

**Range:** touch

**Duration:** until used

**Power Point cost per level:** 4

This power protects one person per level against a potentially harmful decision of Destiny, such as a deadly blow during a battle. The player can cancel one twist of fate per level when directly resulting from a die roll. This spell cannot be stacked.



### **FERTILITY BLESSING**

**Granted by:** Umai

**Range:** touch

**Duration:** 1 year

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

One couple can be blessed for each level. The couple will likely have a healthy child in the year if the player can roll a (CON of the man + CON of the woman) x5%. Twins will be born if the roll is a special success.

### **HEALING**

**Granted by:** Ürüing-Aiyy-Tojon

**Range:** touch

**Duration:** instantaneous, permanent

**Power Point cost per level:** 4

Completely heals all natural injuries or weaknesses of one single being per level, bringing back the total Hit Points or CON points lost, up to the maximum. The power does not work on diseases caused by *üör*. It cannot be used to bring the dead back to life.

### **LIGHT**

**Granted by:** Ürüing-Aiyy-Tojon

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** 15mn

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

The power creates a volume of POWxPOWxPOW cubic metres either fixed or centered on the shaman, in which the light is as bright as in daylight. Everything in this volume is seen from far away in the night. Each level increases either the volume or the duration.

### **PROPHECY**

**Granted by:** Djulga-Khan

**Range:** touch

**Duration:** instantaneous

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

Triggers a vision about the fate of a person, clan, or empire. In practice, the shaman will know of any threats to the subject of the request. This is not an insurance for the future, since Djulga-Khan could change his mind. The shaman must make an INTx5% roll to understand the message, each level providing a bonus of 5%.

### **PSYCHOPOMP**

**Granted by:** Mayin

**Range:** POW metres

**Duration:** permanent

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

The shaman can entrust the soul of one dead per level to Mayin. The dead will reach the upper world safely, and won't lose his way or be captured by an enemy spirit. This power is always used for khans and Batyrs.

### **REPEL DISEASE**

**Granted by:** Sulden

**Range:** touch

**Duration:** 1 year

**Power Point cost per level:** 2

Throughout the year, a person or domestic animal protected by this power increases its chance to resist any *üör*. During the ritual, the white shaman can affect one being per level. The animals gain a bonus to their Resistance roll to disease or to any *üör*'s POW equal to their POWx5%.

This protection is valid only once in the year and against diseases caused by *üör*. Each extra level extends the number of people or animals to be protected or the number of time they will be protected by +1. Example: with 3 levels, one can protect 1 being three times, 2 beings twice or 3 beings once.

### **RESURRECTION**

**Granted by:** Mayin

**Range:** touch

**Duration:** instantaneous

**Power Point cost per level:** 10

The shaman can try to get back one soul which left the body following a death by natural causes (injury, poisoning, but not old age or disease caused by an *üör*). The shaman has 24 hours to achieve this by negotiating with Mayin. The body of the victim must be healed and fit to receive the soul. Every level allows for trying once more if the negotiation failed.

### **STRENGTHEN BLADE**

**Granted by:** Boshintoï

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** 15mn

**Power Point cost per level:** 2

Each level adds 2 Armour/Hit Points and 1 to the damage dealt by a metallic weapon for the duration of the spell. When cast on an armour suit, it adds 2 Armour Points per level. When the weapon takes damage, the magical Hit Points are lost last. If the weapon received too much damage, it may break when the spell stops.

Fully metallic weapons like swords benefit from the full spell. Hafted weapons like arrows, spears, axes or other weapons only get the benefit of greater damage. The blade may not break, but the haft might.

### **SUMMON ELEMENTAL**

**Granted by:** Ätügen

**Range:** sight

**Duration:** 15mn

**Power Point cost per level:** 4

Summons one Earth or Water elemental (see *Basic Roleplaying* Rules p. 352).

### **WILD BEAST EMPATHY**

**Granted by:** Hinkon

**Range:** sense

**Duration:** 15 min

**Power cost per level:** 1

With this power, the shaman is able to make a wild animal friendly to him. He must succeed in a single POW vs. POW roll against the targeted animals. The animals which did not resist will behave toward the shaman like with a herd or family member, which will insure at least their neutrality. It is not to say that they will obey, act as a pet or in any way contrary to their instinct, but they may help as they would do for another member of their species. Each level allows increasing the duration of 15mn or adding one animal.

### **WINTER COLD**

**Granted by:** Tcholibonty-Tyon

**Range:** see description

**Duration:** see description

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

For each level, the temperature drops by 3°C for 1 day over 10 square km. Every extra level extends either the magnitude of the temperature drop or its duration or the area affected. Example: for a temperature drop of 6°C (+1 level) during 2 days (+1 level) over 10km<sup>2</sup>, 3 levels are required.

## **POWERS FOR ALL SHAMANS**

### **CLAWS**

**Granted by:** Great Tiger

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Power Point cost per level:** 2

Tiger claws grow on the hands of one target per level, with an attack skill equal to the target's Brawl. Damage is 1d8 + db (bleeding). The recipient can make 2 attacks per round (the 2<sup>nd</sup> attack being at ½ skill rating). No weapon can be held while this power is in effect.

### **CONTROL [ANIMAL]**

**Granted by:** Great Animal Ancestors

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

A Great Animal Ancestor can control 1 animal per level for the shaman. Great Animal Ancestors can only control their own beasts.

### **FANGS**

**Granted by:** Great Tiger

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** 1 hour

**Power Point cost per level:** 2

Tiger fangs grow in the mouth of one target per level, with a Bite attack skill equal to the target's Brawl. Damage is 1d10 + ½db (impale). When holding a foe after a successful use of grappling in the preceding round, the Bite attack becomes *Easy*.





### *FLAIR*

**Granted by:** Blue Wolf  
**Range :** 100m  
**Duration:** 1 hour per level  
**Power point cost per level:** 1

Provides the flair of a wolf.

### *FLY*

**Granted by:** Alp-Kara-Kush  
**Range:** touch  
**Duration:** POW minutes per level  
**Power Point cost per level:** 1

For each level, Alp-Kara-Kush can lift up to 20 Size (1 SIZ = 6kg) at flying speed. All is lifted at once and brought together to wherever the shaman asked, excepted to the Underworld or underground.

### *GALLOP*

**Granted by:** Djuseghei  
**Range:** 100m  
**Duration:** 1 hour per level  
**Power Point cost per level:** 1

Allows running at the speed of a galloping horse for 1 hour per level.

### *HEAL*

**Granted by:** Alp-Kara-Kush  
**Range:** touch  
**Duration:** instantaneous, permanent  
**Power Point cost per level:** 10

By swallowing a creature and throwing it up again, Alp-Kara-Kush can cure any wound just like Urüng-Aiyy's power of healing. The effect is however limited to only one being at a time.

### *LEAP*

**Granted by:** Doe Fawn  
**Range:** 100m  
**Duration:** POW minutes per level  
**Power Point cost per level:** 1

Allows jumping 2m/level in length and 1m/level in height with a maximum charge of STR kg.

### *OPEN GATE*

**Granted by:** Jez-Kempir  
**Range:** touch  
**Power Point cost per level:** 1

The Jez-Kempir opens a crack in the earth through which it is possible to go to the Underworld where giants, ogres and other fantastic and powerful creatures live. This gate cannot be opened anywhere, but only in a few locations where cracks or holes go deep into the Earth.

They can also open a gate close to an *oboo* made of human skulls. The intensity depends on the number of skulls and the total amount of power of their former owners. For each 100 POW (about 10 skulls), each level allows a Size of 1 and a duration of 1 second.

When the gate closes behind those who entered the Underworld, they have either to find another open gate, or to have one open again to go back to the human world. There is also a level% chance that an inhabitant of the Underworld takes advantage of the opportunity to visit the surface world.

### *RECOGNIZE SHAMAN*

**Granted by:** Raven spirit  
**Range:** sight  
**Duration:** instantaneous  
**Power Point cost:** 1

Shows whether someone is or will become a shaman and what kind of shaman he is or will be.

### *SLEEP*

**Granted by:** Jez-Kempir  
**Range:** 100m  
**Duration:** special  
**Power Point cost per level:** 1

If the spirit's POW overcomes the target's, the latter falls into a deep sleep for 20-CON hours with a minimum of one hour. Every level extends the number of targets which can be affected at once. The Spirit rolls only once for all the targets, although the same roll can overcome only some of them according to their POW.

### **SUMMON [ANIMAL] SPIRIT**

**Granted by:** Great Animal Ancestors

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** max POW minutes per level

**Power Point cost point:** 3

Great Animal Ancestors can also send a lesser spirit to help the shaman. It can either be an animal spirit *ichchi* (see page 109), which will either come to the aid of the shaman and act as a disembodied spirit, or incarnate into the corresponding animal. When required, roll the characteristics of the animal and add 10% (ex: SIZ 25 becomes SIZ 28). The spirit can be given a task per level and then it will leave.

### **TRANSFORM INTO GIANT HARE**

**Granted by:** K'dai

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** POW min per level

**Power Point cost:** 3

The shaman turns into a giant hare and enjoys the speed of the animal during the spell duration. During Spirit Combat, this transformation allows a shaman to multiply his Soul Escape skill rating by two, as well as allow a non-shaman victim of a spirit to acquire the Soul Escape skill at INTx5% (the escape in this case actually occurs in the middle world and is an exception to the rules of Spirit Combat).

### **TRAVEL TO THE SUBTERRANEAN WORLD**

**Granted by:** Alp-Kara-Kush

**Duration:** 2 months

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

If given 80 cows or deer or any other big game to feed her during the journey, Alp-Kara-Kush will carry up to a total SIZ of 20 per level into the subterranean world, or bring them back to the surface world.

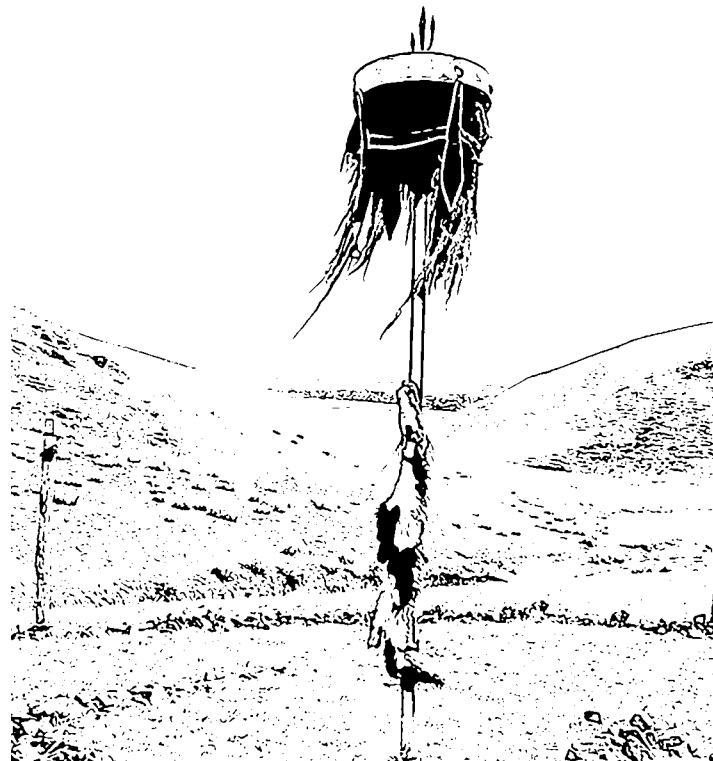
### **SPELLS FOR SHAMANS**

During his or her travels in the spirit world, a shaman can acquire some powers while encountering weak spirits whose power he or she will share. These spirits will be linked to the shaman, and will allow him or her to use their powers. However, these weak spirits cannot provide the necessary power to fuel the

spells. In game terms, in order to learn a spell, the shaman must first find the spirit during an incantation (by entering a trance and rolling Knowledge [Spirit World]), then make a permanent sacrifice of characteristic points of his choice at a ratio of 1 point per spell and per "power cost per level". This sacrifice can be spread over several incantations without rolling one's Knowledge [Spirit World] again. If the shaman does not find the appropriate spirit, he or she can try again only when his or her score in Knowledge [Spirit World] has increased.

The starting skill level for casting a spell is (INT)% + mental skill category bonus. Unlike spells cast by allied spirits, these are fuelled by the shaman's Power Points.

A shaman cannot memorize more than INT/2 spells simultaneously (as per the *Basic Roleplaying* rules, p. 91). A shaman has no spell book, but instead knows the spirit world. While a magician must read a book to remember a forgotten spell, a shaman must perform an incantation - lasting 1d10 hours - to recall one of his or her spells. No further characteristic sacrifice is required.







## ***SPILLS FROM THE CORE*** ***BASIC ROLEPLAYING RULES***

### ***AURA DETECTION***

**Range:** sight

**Duration:** 15mn

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

As per the psychic ability (*Basic Roleplaying* p. 112). Allows seeing the aura of one living being per level. The caster can detect any missing soul and therefore tell if somebody is the victim of an üör. This spell does not detect the presence of bound spirits.

### ***BIRD'S VISION***

**Range:** sight

**Duration:** 10 combat rounds

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

Each level increases the duration of 10 combat rounds. Otherwise as per sorcery spell (*Basic Roleplaying* p. 128).

### ***LIFT***

**Range:** 100 metres

**Duration:** 15mn

**Power Point cost per level:** 1 on self, 3 on others. Otherwise as per magic spell (*Basic Roleplaying* p. 99).

### ***MUDDLE***

**Range:** sight

**Duration:** 10 combat rounds

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

Each level increases the duration by 10 combat rounds.

### ***RAT'S VISION***

**Range:** 100 metres

**Duration:** 10 combat rounds

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

Each level increases the duration by 10 combat rounds. Otherwise as per the sorcery spell (*Basic Roleplaying* p. 132)

### ***COUNTERMAGIC***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***ENHANCE***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***FROST***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***HEAL***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***ILLUSION***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***INVISIBILITY***

Works on living beings only, otherwise as per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***RESISTANCE***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***SPEAK TO SPIRIT***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***TRANSFER***

**Range:** touch

**Duration:** as long as contact is maintained and Power Points spent.

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

Each spell allows transferring only one single kind of vital resource at once in any direction (from or to the caster). Otherwise as per the super power (*Basic Roleplaying* p. 166). White shamans using this spell to tap resources from the target lose 1d6 Allegiance to Tengriism.

### ***VISION***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***WARD***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

## ***SPELLS SPECIFIC TO WIND ON THE STEPPES***

### ***ALTER FORM***

**Range :** self

**Duration:** 15 min

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

The shaman's body becomes malleable. Each level allows altering 2 SIZ. Volume does not increase, so a very long arm will become very thin and therefore more fragile. The head can never be affected.

When using the hit location option, each level allows altering one hit location

### ***BECOME ANIMAL***

**Range:** self

**Duration:** 15 min

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

Each level affects 3 SIZ points of the shaman. Hence a SIZ 8 shaman will need 3 levels (8/3+) to become an animal of equivalent SIZ. Additionally, any difference of up to 3 SIZ points requires an additional level. If the same shaman wants to transform into a SIZ 1 crow, which is a difference of 7 with his SIZ, he will require 3 more levels (7/3) for a total of 6. Become Animal works otherwise like the spell "Change", except that it cannot be cast on another target.

A shaman can always change into the animal ancestor of his tribe (Mongolian wolf or deer, Tsataan Reindeer, Kyrgyz dog.), into a crow, or into his animal-mother. Black shamans can also become a bull. White shamans can also become a stallion. This transformation is different from the transformation during Spirit Combat. The shaman is in the physical plane and acts physically like an animal.

### ***BIRCH ROD***

**Range :** 100 metres

**Duration:** 15 min

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

A minimum 1 meter long rod of birch with the bark removed in a spiral shape can be extended by 2 m / level. The diameter remains

constant. An Agility roll is required to obtain a correct spiral when removing the bark. If the Agility roll was a critical success, the effect is doubled (up to 4 m per level).

### ***CLAIRVOYANCE***

**Range:** POWx10 metres

**Duration:** 15 min

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

This spell allows detecting and seeing supernatural emanations otherwise invisible through human senses, like the presence of a spirit or the true nature of supernatural beings. It also helps to determine the number of spirits summoned by a shaman or present in an *oboo* or in a fetish without requiring a trance. A special success of the spell allows feeling the magnitude of the POW detected (human 3-18 or superhuman > 18). A critical success tells the exact power of the most powerful of them.

### ***DANGER SENSE***

**Range:** POW metres

**Duration:** 1 combat round / level

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

The shaman asks spirits to warn him about a danger in range. Otherwise it works as per the Psychic Ability.

### ***ENLIGHTEN***

**Range:** self

**Duration:** instantaneous

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

With this spell a shaman increases his or her chance to correctly interpret a divination or a prophecy by 5% per level, should it be by using the Osteomancy skill or one of the powers Divination or Prophecy.

### ***FERTILITY***

**Range:** 100m

**Duration:** 1 year

**Power Point cost per level:** 3

The female animals from one of the "five muzzles" per level, within range and which did not resist the shaman's POW, will flock down in the next year.



### IGNORE PAIN

**Range :** 100 metres

**Duration:** 2 min / level

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

Ignore pain, but not damage or their effects of a major wound, except for shock which is ignored.

*Note: if your campaign uses the optional hit location system, this spell allows you to be Heroic after a serious injury without the need of a CONx1 roll.*

### IGNORE FATIGUE

**Range:** 100 metres

**Duration:** 1 hour/level

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

Allows prolonged activity (combat, racing, etc.) for 1 hour / level, without feeling tired (*or spend a point of fatigue if this option is used*), or to stay awake for 20 hours + 5 hours per level.

### SENSITIVITY

**Range:** 100 metres

**Duration:** 15 min

**Power Point cost per level:** 2

Increases the sensitivity of the 5 senses, and helps to detect hidden things. A kind of 6<sup>th</sup> sense, which can detect the slightest change in the environment, energy flows even of magical origin, small details, or the slightest emotional change. This spell provides a bonus to perception rolls (Sense, Spot, Listen, Track, Insight) by 5% per level.

### SKY ROPE

*Restricted (White shamans only)*

**Range:** 30 metres

**Duration:** 15 min

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

The rope must be braided with white and black horse hair, with a length of 3 m. The rope can extend by 3 m per level. It can be extended to the sky where the spirits hold it, and support a weight of 3 SIZ / level.

### SPIRIT SHIELD

**Range:** 100 metres

**Duration:** 15 min

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

Each level blocks 2 Power Points from an opponent attacking in Spirit Combat. The latter suffers a 10% penalty per level on his POW vs. POW attack rolls. This spell must be cast before the start of a Spirit Combat.

### WALK ON WATER

**Range:** 100 metres

**Duration:** 15 min

**Power Point cost per level:** 1

The target can walk on fluids as if on the ground, and carry objects up to SIZx3 in kg. Each level affects 3 SIZ points.

## SPELLS FOR SMITHS

Smiths share the same ancestors of shamans. In a magic campaign, the GM may allow smiths to use certain magic: Seal Metal, Resistance (against heat only), and for high magic campaign, Dull (see sidebar), Fire and Sharpen. The smith needs the help of a shaman who will call K'Dai, their common ancestor. The Smith must then negotiate himself with K'Dai.

- The shaman makes an incantation (Knowledge [Spirit World]) to incarnate K'Dai.
- The smith negotiates, using his Allegiance to Ancestors. K'Dai is friendly.
- If the negotiation is a success, the smith must pay for the compensation (roll on the compensation chart).
- The smith sacrifices characteristic points to acquire the spell, just like shamans do for their magic.
- As soon as all the sacrifices are done (compensation + characteristic), the smith can start to use the spell at INT% + mental skills category bonus level.



*Every casting of the Dull spell incurs a loss of 1 point in Allegiance to Ancestors. A Blacksmith is supposed to make good blades.*



## 6. HEROES



**B**atyr are heroes who have proven their value by means of some exceptional heroic deeds, or for behaviour for the benefit of the clan, tribe, ancestors, deities or spirits. Batyr gain special status, and become clan or tribe leaders. *Noyan* (noble leaders) are not necessarily Batyr. Competence or belonging to a noble family may be enough to be respected and highly considered, but Batyrs have a heroic aura, because they did something remarkable for the tribe. The title of Batyr is normally honorific, so anyone can become a Batyr simply by being heroic and earning a name for themselves. An exceptionally gifted woman may become a Batyr despite her gender, although nomad heroes are usually male and will be referred to with a male pronoun.

Rescuing a Sogdian princess to marry her may not count as a heroic deed, but defending the graves of the ancestors, heroically saving

the day in a battle or protecting sacred ground against destructive forces does.

A hero becomes a Batyr when his deeds are exceptional enough to attract the attention of supernatural entities, whether a spirit, an *Aiyy*, a *peri* (faerie), and he agrees to tie strong bonds with the entity. This pact can take the form of a worship (e.g. for Great Spirits or ancestors) or any other form like marrying a female spirit or taming a winged horse.

As such, the Batyr may also have a religious function, incarnating the entity on the mundane plane in a similar way as the Khan represents Tengri. However, the shamans remain those who communicate and intercede with these forces.

The new Batyr gets support from the entity he's devoted to, but must in turn be a living example of it. In game terms, he will receive powers, special features and taboos.



## REQUIREMENTS

When the GM sees a character exhibit sufficiently heroic behaviour, she grants that character a chance to ask for support from the spirits. The character receives obvious or obscure signs, which may be interpreted by a shaman. If he recognizes these signs and accepts to tie himself to the spirit, he looks for a shaman of his tribe and tries to convince him to call upon the spirits with a Status roll.

The candidate must be able to seal an alliance with the Allegiance corresponding to the entity, either Animism, Tengriism or the Ancestors. The support will be limited to the spirits belonging to the Allegiance with which he is aligned.

## BECOMING A BATYR

The process to gain the support of the spirits works in a way similar to that for totem spirits. The candidate may seek the support of any spirit, whether *Aiyy*, Great Spirits or lesser spirits, and not only totem animals, as long as he meets the requirements. The spirit shall also be somehow connected with the character's deeds, e.g. it must be a spirit whom the character helped or pleased. Several spirits may be eligible, depending on the character's exploits and on the allegiance involved:

- Tengriism for the support of an *Aiyy* or a Great Animal Ancestor
- Animism for the support of an animal or nature spirit, or even an *üör* or *Erlík*
- Ancestors for the support of an ancestral hero or tribal ancestor

When the spirit has been called upon by the shaman using the usual rules for incantation (Trance, Knowledge [Spirit World]), the candidate himself must negotiate with the spirit to definitely convince it that he deserves a reward for his deeds. The negotiation follows the same rule as for shamanism. Consider the spirit as neutral. However no compensation is required, since the support is supposed to have been earned by means of the candidate's deeds.

If the negotiation is a simple failure, the meeting with the spirit was not convincing enough. The latter may consider that the candidate is not ready to commit himself, for whatever reason. The candidate will be able to try again when his Allegiance increases or after a new exploit. This can be quickly achieved with a proper sacrifice, as explained in the Allegiance section of the Chapter Three "Characters".

If Spirit Combat occurs, the shaman can help the candidate, but he will never again be able to get support from this single spirit. If

## CAMPAIGN FLAIR

These variant rules have been written for a low magic campaign, where magical power is restricted to shamans and true heroes. GMs may adapt them according to the magic level of their campaigns.

Historical campaign: Batyr is obviously an honorific title. No supernatural powers are available in this kind of campaign. The social skill bonuses, like Command or Status, are kept. The belief in the powers of Batyr gives them a special authority. GM may even keep bonuses in physical skills as a mark of their interest and involvement in the spirit's domain.

High magic campaign: in settings where magic is more usual, the status of Batyr can be made easier to achieve. GMs have different solutions:

- Decrease the criteria for an exploit
- Instead of exploits, require only a minimum level in a number of skills (at least 3) among status and primary skills. The GM shall decide which skills are best suited to each spirit.
- Allow to seal a pact with supplementary spirits of other allegiances as a difficult task (spirits can be jealous). The less restrictive version would be to simply ignore the necessity to make an alliance (no need for one Allegiance rating at least 20 above the other ones)

defeated, he may get a detrimental trait from the spirit (GM's choice). This makes it difficult to try to get the support of an Aiyy.

If the negotiation is a success, the candidate makes a pact with the spirit and becomes a Batyr, a tribal hero, thus gaining the support of the spirit. He must accept a taboo appropriate to the entity chosen, behave heroically, and his status rises by 1d8. In addition, if he sacrifices permanent POW as per the shamanic Permanent Alliance, he will be able to summon the spirit once.

There are actually many ways to become a Batyr and make a pact with a spirit; the above rules are guidelines. The GM is free to introduce some variations, according to the story, as long as the prerequisites are fulfilled (be heroic and able to seal an alliance), and a negotiation roll is made. For example, some lesser spirits may propose their support to the character after aid is rendered, as soon as the character meets the requirements for an alliance. In this case, the GM secretly rolls a negotiation, and, if successful, the character receives a dream or signs which a shaman can interpret. The character must not negotiate, again but must accept the support of the spirit by meeting it, probably with the help of a shaman and allying to the proper allegiance.

*Example: Strong-Voice is a famous warrior. During an adventure, he forces an evil shaman to free a water spirit which he had forced to perform deeds against the interest of the lake. The water spirit, like many water spirits, is a female spirit manifesting as a human-shaped elemental. She's impressed by Strong-Voice and eventually falls in love with him. As soon as Strong-Voice gets enough allegiance to Animism, she may propose him to marry her. Strong-Voice is totally unaware of this, but receives signs suggesting that he increase his allegiance to Animism (the GM could also state that the marriage itself may increase Strong-Voice's allegiance enough and propose it directly). After a while, Strong-Voice has increased his Allegiance enough to be able to make an alliance. The GM rolls secretly a negotiation between Strong-Voice and the water spirit. If successful, the water spirit will try to call Strong-Voice and propose to him. Strong-Voice only has to accept. In case*

*of a failure, the GM can try again later when Strong-Voice's allegiance to Animism has increased.*

Benefits and obligations of becoming a Batyr

- **Spirit Intervention:** the Batyr can summon the spirit by rolling under his Allegiance. This costs him permanent POW points. The form of the spirit intervention is described below.
- **Affinities:** he gains affinities, related bonuses and heroic powers. Heroic powers are similar to super powers in the *Basic Roleplaying* rules (see below for details).
- **He must never do acts contrary to the spirit or break the alliance.** Consequences for acts contrary to the involved allegiance will be doubled. If the spirit or the Batyr breaks the pact, the Batyr loses his heroic powers and all his advantages become detriments. This may be only temporary.
- Since he made an alliance, he can enjoy the benefit of his alliance as described in the allegiance rules.

The exact kind of benefits granted by a spirit and the Heroic Powers it supplies are described in Chapter Seven "Spirits".

## HEROIC POWERS


Heroic powers use the same system as the Super Powers described in the *Basic Roleplaying* rulebook. However, those Super Powers have been tailored for super hero settings with extremely powerful characters. For the sake of game balance, some mechanics and powers have been adapted for Batyrs, who should not be supermen. Some powers are specific to this supplement.

Super Powers in *Basic Roleplaying* are bought with Character Points. Since not all characters have them in *Wind on the Steppes*, Character Points have been renamed Hero Points.

## BUYING HEROIC POWERS

The new Batyr receives a number of available Hero Points to spend to purchase powers: Allegiance/5 for Aiyy, Allegiance/8 for Great Spirits, allegiance/15 for lesser spirits, rounded down.





The Batyr can spend these points to purchase heroic powers at the cost indicated. He must spend as many points as possible for the chosen powers. If some points are left, he keeps them for a future improvement.

Unlike Super Powers, every Heroic Power always comes with an associated taboo which shall inspire the Batyr to live as an example and a good servant of the spirit. Taboos are not variable, and stay the same whatever the power level. Breaking a taboo induces a loss of the power, temporary or not depending on severity and circumstances. This may even lead to a definitive break of the pact with detrimental consequences.

“Character failings” other than taboos and “power modifiers” are not used in *Wind on the Steppes*.

### IMPROVING HEROIC POWERS

The mechanism differs from the *Basic Roleplaying* rules. The only way to increase heroic powers is by increasing one's Allegiance.

When the related Allegiance increases, the number of available Hero Points increases accordingly. When the increase in Allegiance and the possible remaining points make it possible to buy a new level or a new power, the Batyr can spend them. When a spirit offers several traits, the Batyr can choose a new one. He must accept the new taboo, too. Players keep track of their available Hero Points.

*Example: Old-the-Wise fulfilled the condition to become a Batyr. He makes a pact with Tcholbonty-Tyon, the Master of Winter. Old-the-Wise has an allegiance to Tengriism of 44. He can spend 44/5 rounded down = 8 Hero Points. The Power “Weather Control” costs 3 points per level: Old-the-Wise can only purchase 2 levels for 6 points. He has 2 points left. Shortly after making his pact, he makes an exceptional sacrifice to Tcholbonty-Tyon and gains 2 Allegiance points more, bringing it to 46. This makes 1 hero point more to spend, which added to the 2 remaining are 3. Old-The-Wise can purchase one more level of Weather Control, bringing it to 3. He can now decrease the temperature by 18°C*

## HEROIC POWERS USED IN WIND ON THE STEPPES

This list provides a wide range of Heroic Powers available for the spirits described in the rules. For simplicity, we tried to stay as close as possible to the powers described in the *Basic Roleplaying* rulebook. However, some of them have been slightly modified, mainly in the purchase cost, and some are only specific for *Wind on the Steppes*. Some spirits may share the same Heroic Power, but with different taboos and limitations, or different specialities. Details are given in the description of each spirit.

### ADAPTATION

**Base range:** self

**Duration:** 1 full turn

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point Cost:** 1 Power Point per 3 SIZ to activate, then 1 Power Point per full turn

As per the *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

Environment depends on the spirit. Normally only 1 level is available.

### ARMOUR

**Base Range:** Self

**Duration:** 10 combat rounds or permanent

**Hero Point Cost:** 1 per level when temporary, 3 per level when permanent

**Power Point Cost:** 1 per level when temporary

Armour is only active against kinetic energy (e.g. weapons). The form it takes depends on the spirit (e.g. metallic scale for Boshintoi, the Master of Metal).

### BARRIER

**Base Range:** 15 meters

**Duration:** 15 min

**Hero Point Cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point Cost:** 3 per level

Otherwise as in the *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### CONTROL (KIND OF DISEASE)

**Base Range:** self

**Duration:** at will

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point Cost:** none



The character may suffer one of the diseases of the Disease Master at a severity equal to the level. If he caught the disease unwillingly, he can change its severity by 1 degree per level in either direction. In this way, the hero becomes protected from the most severe forms of the disease by accepting the mildest form.

### **CONTROL (SPECIFIC DISEASE)**

**Base Range:** self

**Duration:** at will

**Hero Point cost:** 2 per level

**Power Point Cost:** none

As per Control (Kind of Disease) but for a single disease.

### **DENSITY CONTROL**

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### **DRAIN**

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### **ENERGY CONTROL**

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### **ENERGY PROJECTION**

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules, except that no Projection skill is required. The spirit aims the power itself. Some conditions may however apply, depending on the spirit's nature.

### **ENHANCE CHARACTERISTIC**

**Hero points cost:** 3

Otherwise as Diminish/Enhance in the *Basic Roleplaying* rules

### **EXTRA HIT POINTS**

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### **FLIGHT**

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### **GROW LIMB**

**Base Range:** Self

**Duration:** as needed to regrow the limb

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point cost:** 1 per level

For each level, one severed limb or part of the body grows slowly again. The character needs to rest till next Winter, at which point the limb will be fully functional again. This power is granted by tree spirits.

### **GROW PLANT**

**Base Range:** touch

**Duration:** definitive

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point cost:** 1 per level

Multiplies the growing speed of a plant by (level) x100. This power is gained from plant spirits.

### **INFLUENCE ANIMAL**

**Base Range:** Senses

**Duration:** 1 full turn

**Heroic Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point cost:** 1 per level

As per the spirit power, POW vs. POW roll necessary, 1 animal per level. The POW vs. POW roll is made only once, those who did not resist are under the influence of the Batyr. It is usable on any animal of the same species as the spirit, even a foreign one. For animals belonging to the spirit's herd, no POW roll is necessary.

### **IRON FIST**

**Base Range:** Self

**Duration:** 1 full turn

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point cost:** 1 per level

Transforms a hand into a hammer of steel. The hand clenches into a fist, and becomes harder and insensitive. It can be used as a weapon and parried with, in which case it works as protection against kinetic and heat energies. Intensity depends on the level:

Level 1, damage 1D4+db, protection 1

Level 2, damage 1D6+db, protection 2

Level 3, damage 1D8+db, protection 3

Level 4, damage 1D10+db, protection 4

Level 5, damage 2d6+db, protection 5

Level 6, damage 2D8+db, protection 6



### *LISTEN TO GRASS*

**Base Range:** Self

**Duration:** 15mn

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point cost:** 1 per level

The grass carries news from what moves in the steppe to the character, with a range of 5km per level. The Batyr must lie on the ground and feel the grass talking to him.

### *PEROMONE (LUST)*

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### *PROTECTION (POW)*

**Base Range:** Self

**Duration:** 1 full turn

**Hero Point cost:** 2 per level

**Power Point cost:** 1 per level

Blocks 2 power points from any opponent, either for spellcasting or Spirit Combat. Can be triggered at any time, even after a Spirit Combat has started.

### *PROTECTION (KIND OF DISEASE)*

**Base Range:** Self

**Duration:** permanent

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point cost:** —

Works only on a family of disease of one single Disease Master. It reduces the severity of the disease by 1 per level.

### *PROTECTION (SPECIFIC DISEASE)*

**Base Range:** Self

**Duration:** permanent

**Hero Point cost:** 2 per level

**Power Point cost:** —

Works only on one single disease from one kind of *üör*. It reduces the severity of the disease by 1 per level.

### *PURIFY WATER*

**Base Range:** Touch

**Duration:** permanent

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point cost:** 1 per level

Removes 1d6 poison potency per level from one dose of toxic liquid, working like an antidote. Works on fluids consisting mainly in water (ex: quicksilver cannot be "purified").

### *REGENERATION*

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### *RESISTANCE (DISEASE)*

**Base Range:** Self

**Duration:** permanent

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point cost:** —

Blocks 1 POW from any attacking *üör* per level. Power points and damage bonus are affected together with POW.

### *RETAIN SPIRIT*

**Base Range:** Self

**Duration:** Variable

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point cost:** all remaining power points



When the Batyr dies because of an injury or wound (not from *üör* disease, or aging), his soul and spirit wait one hour per level for the body to be healed and be fit again to receive them. In game terms, the Batyr must be healed to at last 3 Hit Points. He's in coma and wakes up when he recovers his power points.

### ROCK SLIDE

**Base Range:** 100m

**Duration:** permanent

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point cost:** 1

The Batyr can move a rock or unseal a piece of cliff of a Size of 1d6 per level by hitting the ground with his fist, creating a wave which will loosen the rock.

### SEAL METAL

**Base range:** touch

**Duration:** 15mn

**Hero Point cost:** 3 per level

**Power Point cost:** 1 per level

This power is reserved to Blacksmiths and is nothing more than a way to learn the Seal spell for metallic objects only. The starting skill rate is INT%.

### SIDEKICK (ANIMAL)

**Range:** n/a

**Duration:** permanent

**Hero Point cost:** see description

**Power Point cost:** n/a.

**Cost of a sidekick:** add all the average characteristic level, except fixed INT (*Basic Roleplaying* p.332). Divide the amount per 10, rounded down: this is the cost of the sidekick. The Batyr can choose to have an intelligent sidekick: INT 2D6+6 and APP 3D6, add 23 to the total average characteristics.

*Example: steppe horse*  
 $(26+15+24+10+10)/10 = 8.5$ . The sidekick Steppe Horse costs 8 Hero Points. An intelligent steppe horse costs  $(85+23)/10 = 10.8 \Rightarrow 10$  Hero Points.

The kind of available sidekick depends on the allied spirit. The Batyr can buy extra powers for his sidekick:

- Speak, Hero Point cost 3
- Mind link with the Batyr, Hero Point cost 3
- Diminish/Enhance SIZ, as per super power
- Super movement, as per super power
- Wings (make it fly), Hero Point cost 5, only for Aiyy-related creatures, like Tulpar.
- Other, with GM approval

### SIDEKICK (GHOST)

**Range:** n/a

**Duration:** permanent

**Hero Point cost:** 9 (exception to the rule).

**Power Point cost:** n/a

A ghost has a POW and INT of 2d6+6 and is invisible. He is in telepathic link with the Batyr and can engage in Spirit Combat for him at a range of POWx10 metres.

### SPEAK WITH ANIMALS

**Range:** voice

**Duration:** 10 min

**Hero Point cost:** 3

**Power Point cost:** 1 per level

Works only on the kind of animal the Batyr has a pact with. Each level allows speaking with and understanding one extra animal at the same time. Speaking with an animal is limited to very basic feelings. For example, one can tell if the animal has seen humans today, but not who and how many they were.

### STONE ARMOUR

As per the armour super power, but with the same drawbacks as Density Control (loss of MOV).

### STUNNING URAN

**Range:** POW metres

**Duration:** 1 combat round

**Hero Point cost:** 3

**Power Point cost:** 1 per level

While using this power, the Batyr can shout his *uran* with such a force that he can stun those hearing it. Anybody within range must make a POW vs. POW roll or be stunned until the end of the round. Each



level increases the range by 5m and gives a 5% penalty to the POW resistance roll of the targets. While stunned, only reactive actions are possible, and these are *Difficult*. The effect is cumulative with any other penalties, but works only on people staying within range and able to hear it. In a big combat, the noise reduces the effective range by 50%. Clan mates of the Batyr in range can ignore any demoralizing effects for the round.

This power can be used at any time during melee, in parallel to any action, without delaying it.

### ***SUPER CHANCE***

Like super skill, but for Luck rolls only.

### ***SUPER CHARACTERISTIC***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***SUPER MOVEMENT (WATER WALKING)***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***SUPER RUN***

Like Super Characteristic, but add +1 to MOV per level. Maximum, depends on spirit.

### ***SUPER SENSE***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***SUPER SKILL***

As per standard *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### ***WEATHER CONTROL***

As in the *Basic Roleplaying* rule, except that it is usually limited to one or a few meteorological aspects, such as rain, wind, or temperature.



## 7. SPIRITS



**S**pirits are invisible immaterial beings monitoring the mysterious forces of nature. They can also be ancestors who joined the spirit world after their death. Spirits live in the upper and lower worlds, except for some natural spirits associated with the natural world of the environment and accessible to all shamans. Spirits are invisible, and can only be detected by their influence on the real middle world. Some of them, mostly natural spirits, can embody at will into a physical form. Many Spirit types exist, but they can be roughly classified in 3 power classes:

- Deities or Celestial Spirits (*Aiyy*) have unlimited POW and very high INT
- Great Spirits have very high POW and INT
- Lesser spirits have a POW comparable to humans, although higher on average

Celestial Spirits are deities ruling the world, each one being assigned to a cosmic

force. Great Spirits are dedicated to more mundane aspects of the World. They are the masters of diseases, elements, natural phenomena, or animal species, and control lesser spirits or living beings. INT and POW of *Aiyy* and Great Spirits are more symbolic and used for game mechanics. They are a measure of how difficult they are to handle (INT), and of the range within which they may help individuals (POW). One can consider that A Celestial Spirit's wisdom is actually infinite, although their knowledge is more specialized in their own domains.

Lesser spirits are less powerful and are often responsible for common hassles. Their INT and POW is the true scaling of their actual characteristics.

Beside their role in running the world, spirits in *Wind on the Steppes* have two natural ways to intervene when called upon:

*This description is not exhaustive. The GM is free to develop other spirits from the same model, either based on historical sources, or from the imagination. In Wind on the Steppes, spirits have an historical base. Although the name of each spirit, as well as its symbolic aspect and function may vary with the sources, period, location or influences, it remains in principle very similar among all the tribes. The descriptions may provide several versions of the names, mostly a Turkic one and a Mongolic (*Buryat*) one. Shamans may also know local spirits unknown to foreign shamans.*

- Through covert possession: this is the most common way among *üör*. Covert possession occurs when a spirit steals the soul of a being after Spirit Combat. The spirit imprisons the soul, and can inflict torments on its body or mind (illness, madness).
- By using magic: the spirit may have a special power that does not require possession. The mechanisms are variable, but in general are similar to standard usage of magic. This kind of magic is more widely spread among natural spirits, deities and Great Spirits, and rarely used unless asked for or forced by a shaman.

## GENERAL SPIRIT FEATURES

Spirits are defined by two characteristic: POW and INT. When manifesting in the physical world, they fly with a speed of 12 but remain invisible, unless they corporate. In the spirit plane, speeds and distances are symbolic.

All spirits know the skills Soul Escape and Knowledge [Spirit World]" at INTx5%. Their powers are intrinsic features, which they can use at 100%, unless otherwise specified. They have some specific knowledge related to their nature.

Lesser Spirits (*üör*, natural spirits) have POW up to 24 and INT up to 18. When using their powers for a shaman, they fuel it with their own Power Points. If casting a spell, the maximum spell level will be their INT/2.

Great Spirits have POW 25 and INT 24 (and therefore skills of 120% or 125%). When using one of their powers for a shaman, they fuel it with their own Power Points up to the shaman's APP. Great Spirits cannot be bound. Their freedom is necessary for Nature to function, and even Tengri won't allow a Great Spirit to be bound.

Deities have infinite POW and INT 24. When using one of their powers for a shaman, they fuel it with their own Power Points up to the shaman's Allegiance/5 (rounded down). Considering their infinite power, deities cannot be forced through Spirit Combat. Only negotiation is possible.

## UNDERWORLD SPIRITS

*Only black shamans travel to the Underworld, and only to contact the spirits dwelling there.*

Batyr can seek the support of these spirits, too, but as positive heroes they rarely do it. A Batyr supported by an Underworld spirit loses 1d8 Status but has access to some powers like immunity to diseases. He must accept the taboo of never seeking the help of a black shaman.

The symbolic animal of these spirits is commonly the bull. Except for some exceptions, all spirits from the underworld have Allegiance to Animism, and can be contacted by black shamans only.

## UÖR

*Üör* are lesser spirits causing diseases and torment to single humans. They usually depend on a Great Spirit. They are mostly malevolent and are often seen as "evil" by humans. Shamans know that *üör* are the necessary vectors of the constant exchange between mankind and nature. They are those who tap life force from living beings.

### Characteristics

POW	3D6+6	16-17
INT	2D6+6	13

**Allegiance:** Animism

Soul Escape INTx5%

Knowledge [Spirit World] INTx5%

**Powers (100%):** Steal a soul, Disease

### BENEFITS FOR SHAMANS

*Üör* are "standard" lesser spirits and follow the shamanic rules without exception.

### BENEFITS FOR BATYRS

**Affinities:** *üör* protect against their own disease only. In case of an epidemic, if ordered by their Disease Master, they will infect the Batyr, but with a much reduced strength. This is what the powers are for.

Spirit Intervention summons one single *üör* and costs 2 POW.

## HEROIC POWERS

**Control (Disease).** Taboo: Sacrifice animals (or human beings) every year for a total amount of SIZ = 10xlevel, or lose the protection for the next year.

**Resistance (single disease).** Taboo: Never ask the help from *üör* not contingent on the same Disease Master

### CONTRACTING A DISEASE FROM AN *ÜÖR*

When someone is attacked by an *üör*, he or she is exposed to the disease. If the *üör* captures its target's soul through Spirit Combat, the target contracts at least the mild form of the disease. To determine the actual severity of the disease, the victim must make CON Resistance rolls against the spirit's POW until success. For every failed roll, the severity increases by one degree. For mental diseases, replace CON with POW.

Whatever the frequency of the disease symptoms, it starts at immediately after the end of Spirit Combat. The disease is then handled as any other disease. Eventually, when the *üör* has tormented the soul enough or finds it too resistant (successful CON or POW rolls), the *üör* lets the soul go back to the body. This is natural healing, as per standard recovering rules. Otherwise, a shaman can try to bring it back.

Given the variety of possible diseases, strictly applying the *Basic Roleplaying* rules may not be always suitable. As a guideline, we suggest to handle the severity of diseases in two ways: either by varying their frequency, as in the rules, or by adapting the magnitude of the effects. The two can be combined. Examples of diseases are given later in this chapter.

### DEVISING OTHER *ÜÖR*

The *üör* are varied and have many different powers and modes of action. They may be supernatural spirits, or the spirit of dead human beings who did not receive proper burial and have not found their way to Heaven. Players and GMs are encouraged to devise their own *üör*. They can draw from different powers described in the *Basic Roleplaying* rules (sorcery,

super powers, etc.) or from the list of magic spell of this book, keeping these few rules in mind:

- Powers usually affect the victim's body or spirit, not the surroundings.
- They work by capturing a soul instead of casting a spell whenever it makes sense.
- They are detrimental in essence. For instance, allow "Diminish" instead of "Enhance". Of course, a detrimental effect may, according to the circumstances, exceptionally become beneficial. An enhanced SIZ can increase damage bonus but make armour too small or weight too big for a rotten bridge, while a diminished SIZ would have the opposite effects.
- *Üör* are spirits of the underworld and of disease, therefore they should not have powers of air, sky, light, protecting or recovering, which are the domain of celestial spirits, nor have natural powers like animal control, element control or elemental which are the domain of nature spirits.
- Powers and spells ranged as "self" are still used on other targets through possession. When the soul is captured, the *üör* can take the soul's place, and can use powers on the possessed body.
- Duration and level, when relevant, follow the rule for disease, as described above. The duration is as long as the *üör* holds the soul, and level is as many as the failed CON (or POW) vs. POW roll suggests.

Some powers taken from the *Basic Roleplaying* rulebook are listed hereunder as suggestions: they can be taken as they are or be adapted. Instead of spell casting, they should be used by stealing the soul.

**Super Powers:** Drain, Alternate Form, Enhance/Diminish

**Mutations:** detrimental mutations like Allergy, Metabolic Weakness, Pain Sensitivity; uncontrolled mutations like Pheromone, which can bring the victim in uncomfortable situations.

**Psychic Powers:** Emotion Control, Psychometry.







**Sorcery:** all Sorcerer's(Characteristic) spells, but with a loss of characteristic equal to the severity of the disease until the target is healed; Curse of *Üör* (like Curse of Sorcery, but only as long as the possession lasts), Muddle, Pox (decreases the maximum power points of 1d6 until the soul is freed, or only for 15mn with a frequency equal to the severity), Unbreakable Bonds.

## ***SPIRITS OF BLACK SHAMANS***

Some shamans persist after death, as *üör*. They were either Great Shamans having a reason to haunt the middle world, or shamans who died in some unusual circumstances, while feeling hate and wrath, or who went without a proper burial. They harass humans for various reasons: revenge, pleasure, love, hate, or to force someone to accomplish a task. They may still know the magic spells they had while living, but after some time they forget most of them and focus only on one of those powers which can bring pain and torment, or they may develop a new one. They are treated like other *üör*, but they can inflict various extra tortures to their victims according to their old powers or to the imagination of the GM and players.

### ***Characteristics***

POW	3D6+6	16-17
INT	2D6+6	13

**Allegiance:** Animism

Soul Escape INTx5%

**Powers (POWx5%):** vary

## ***GREAT SPIRITS FROM THE UNDERWORLD***

These are the masters of diseases, called also Great Disease Spirits or Disease Masters. They send their *üör* spirits to steal the souls of their victims. The Disease Masters gallop through the World in the form of blue bulls, leading their *üör* and spreading diseases during epidemics. A powerful shaman can try to defy a Great Spirit itself in Spirit Combat in order to force it to further stop spreading the epidemic. Alternatively, a shaman can negotiate immunity to the disease.

### ***Characteristics:***

POW 25

INT 24

**Allegiance:** Animism

Soul Escape 120%

Knowledge [Spirit World] 120%

**Powers (125%):** Immunity, Command *üör*

## ***BENEFITS FOR SHAMANS***

Great Disease Spirits have all the features of Great Spirits as described above. They can therefore be allied or forced, but not be bound, and provide the following powers:

**Shamanic Powers:** Command *üör* , Immunity.

**Limitations:** like any other Great Spirit, Great Disease Spirits will provide Power Points up to the shaman's APP, and cannot be bound.

*For example, a Great Disease Spirit allied with a shaman with APP 12 to 14 will use its "Command *üör*" power up to 4<sup>th</sup> level (3 points per level, 3x4=12). With an APP of 15, the shaman could ask for a 5<sup>th</sup> level power usage.*

Among the reasons a shaman might negotiate with a Great Disease Spirit, is to stop an epidemic. The Great Spirit Master goes back to the Underworld and its *üör* no longer seek new victims. They however do not release the souls they have already captured. This help can also be achieved by commanding (after Spirit Combat) the Great Disease Master. Given a Great Disease Master's high power and skills, only very powerful shamans will attempt this. They could also ask the Disease Master to start an epidemic, but they cannot decide who the victims will be. Such an evil request may decimate the shaman's own clan and is therefore rarely asked for.

If a Great Disease Master wins a Spirit Combat, he will give the shaman's soul to one of its *üör*. Treat this as if the shaman had contracted the corresponding disease.

## ***BENEFITS FOR BATYRS***

**Affinities and bonuses:** They protect from all the diseases carried by their *üör*. They normally won't contaminate the Batyr, but in case of epidemic, the *üör* may attack the

Batyr, in which case the powers will work. Spirit Intervention takes the form of sending 1D6 *üör*s with different powers and cost the Batyr 3 POW.

## HEROIC POWERS

**Control (kind of disease).** Taboo: Sacrifice animals (or human beings) every moon for a total amount of  $SIZ = 5 \times \text{level}$ , or lose the protection for 6 moons (cumulative)

**Resistance (kind of disease).** Taboo: Never be healed by another shaman

## PHYSICAL DISEASES: THE NINE DISEASE MASTERS

Some traditions may depict them as Erlik's sons with other powers. We decided to retain them as the masters of body diseases:

- **Bowel diseases:** (gastrointestinal, infection, salmonella)
- **General weakness and other diseases:** fever, anaemia
- **Skin diseases:** smallpox (very active), chickenpox, scarlet fever, mumps, herpes
- **Muscle diseases:** muscle aches and cramps, polio
- **Breathe diseases:** tuberculosis, asthma
- **Sense diseases:** cataract, conjunctivitis, deafness, sinusitis, blindness
- **Fluid diseases:** haemophilia, gout
- **Bones diseases:** arthritis, joint rot
- **Veneral diseases**

The diseases described in the *Basic Roleplaying* rulebook (p. 221) are caused by *üör* belonging to these Nine Disease Masters, except the Malaise. Other diseases can be devised by the GM and players. Diseases do not always affect a characteristic, but may have some other disturbing effects.

Examples of diseases:

*Epilepsy. The victim has epileptic crisis, making it impossible for him to fulfil any task during 10 combat rounds. The great Kublai-Khan was epileptic.*

*Sneeze. The victims has sneezing crisis*

*during a full combat round, making him unable to do anything. While sneezing, the eyes cannot be held open.*

*Suffocation: the victim cannot breathe properly for 10 combat rounds. When involved in a physical action, he must roll under his or her  $CON \times 1\%$  every round or lose 1 Hit Point. Otherwise treat this as unsurprised drowning, with 1 Hit Point damage when the rolls are missed. During suffocation, all actions are Difficult.*

*Itching: the victim itches all over for 10 combat rounds. He must make a CON roll not to stop whatever he was doing and scratch himself. If the CON roll is a fumble, he must remove his clothes or armour.*

*Haemophilia: severity does not determine the frequency of the crisis, but rather the intensity of the blood loss. Every time the victim is wounded, apply the bleeding rule on p. 194 of Basic Roleplaying, with the following modifications to the stamina roll: mild  $CON \times 4\%$ , acute  $CON \times 3\%$ , severe  $CON \times 2\%$ , terminal  $CON \times 1\%$ . This effect is cumulative with a bleeding effect from a cutting weapon. It doubles (mild) up to quintuples (terminal) the amount of magical healing required.*

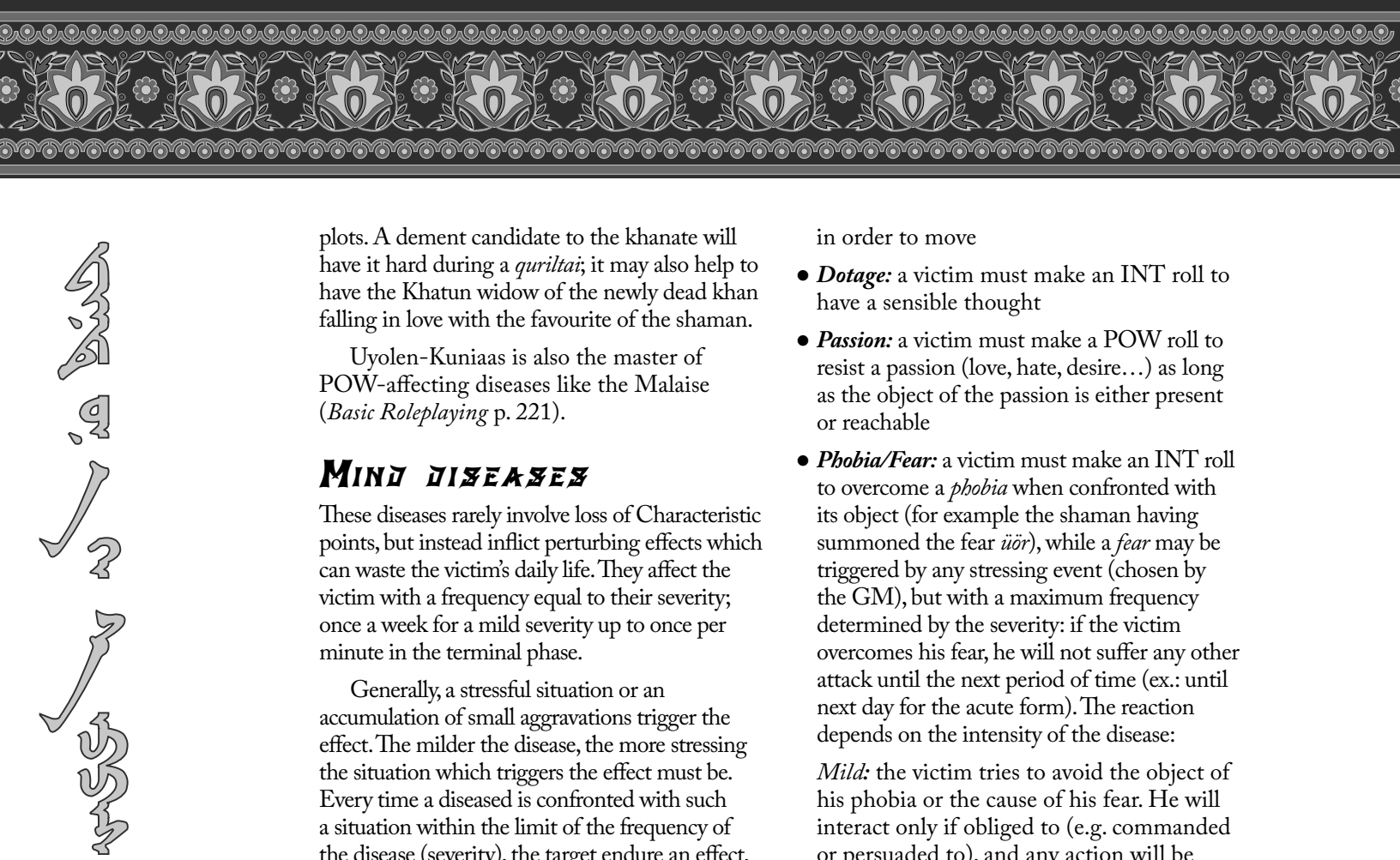
*Bleeding: same as above, except that the standard bleeding rule applies with a  $CON \times 5\%$  like in the Basic Roleplaying rules, but the number of lost Hit Points increases: 1 Hit Point for mild, to 4 Hit Point for terminal. The number of rounds the wounded has to hold the wound closed increases by 1 round per severity.*

**Fatigue:** the character gets exhausted 2 to 5 times faster and recovers 2 to 5 times slower as usual, depending on the severity.

## PSYCHIC DISEASES: UYOLEN-KUNIAAS AND THE NINE CELESTIAL VIRGINS

A former powerful shaman, Uyolen-Kuniaas is the Great Spirit of Brain Diseases which affect the mind like craziness. He is the master of the Nine Celestial Virgins, Great Spirits of mental troubles, and sometime said to be Erlik's daughters. They send their *üör* to spread all sorts of madness in the hearts of men and women. Particularly tricky shamans use these spirits to change the behaviour of their victims in a way which advantages their





plots. A dement candidate to the khanate will have it hard during a *quriltai*; it may also help to have the Khatun widow of the newly dead khan falling in love with the favourite of the shaman.

Uyolen-Kuniaas is also the master of POW-affecting diseases like the Malaise (*Basic Roleplaying* p. 221).

## MIND DISEASES

These diseases rarely involve loss of Characteristic points, but instead inflict perturbing effects which can waste the victim's daily life. They affect the victim with a frequency equal to their severity; once a week for a mild severity up to once per minute in the terminal phase.

Generally, a stressful situation or an accumulation of small aggravations trigger the effect. The milder the disease, the more stressing the situation which triggers the effect must be. Every time a diseased is confronted with such a situation within the limit of the frequency of the disease (severity), the target endure an effect, unless the targets makes a proper Characteristic roll. The effect lasts for the duration of a scene, unless otherwise specified.

The GM might not consider the frequency of the effect, but instead modify the characteristic roll to be done at Characteristic x (5-severity)%, and roll every time it may be relevant for the story.

Some diseases may have only one degree of severity.

Examples of diseases from the Nine Virgins:

- **Dementia:** a victim must make a POW roll not to completely go mad. The kind of madness depends on the *üör* (killing frenzy, laughing, thinking oneself to be the Emperor of China)
- **Amnesia:** a victim must make an INT roll to remember something important until the disease is cured
- **Hallucinations:** a victim must make an INT roll to recognize and dissipate a hallucination
- **Autism:** a victim must make an INT roll to be mentally present in a stressing situation
- **Catalepsy:** a victim must make a CON roll

in order to move

- **Dotage:** a victim must make an INT roll to have a sensible thought
  - **Passion:** a victim must make a POW roll to resist a passion (love, hate, desire...) as long as the object of the passion is either present or reachable
  - **Phobia/Fear:** a victim must make an INT roll to overcome a *phobia* when confronted with its object (for example the shaman having summoned the fear *üör*), while a *fear* may be triggered by any stressing event (chosen by the GM), but with a maximum frequency determined by the severity: if the victim overcomes his fear, he will not suffer any other attack until the next period of time (ex.: until next day for the acute form). The reaction depends on the intensity of the disease:
    - Mild:* the victim tries to avoid the object of his phobia or the cause of his fear. He will interact only if obliged to (e.g. commanded or persuaded to), and any action will be *difficult*
    - Acute:* the victim flees in panic. Nothing can oblige him to fight, unless there is no way to flee. The victim will attack even his own friends to make the way free. "Fight" has to be understood in a broad way and can involve social skills instead of martial ones.
    - Severe:* the victim flees in total panic and attacks everything in his way in frenzy: all offensive skills are multiplied by 1,5 and he forgets all defensive actions
    - Terminal:* the victim collapses for 20-CON minutes and must make a stamina test (CONx5%). If he fumbles, he dies.
- In general, the more restricted the object of the phobia, the more intense its effect
- **Nightmares:** the victim is demoralized by his nightmares. He does not dare to sleep and loses 1 hp for fatigue for every night (or every week for the mild form). He does not undertake freely any dangerous task, and when required or forced to, it will be a *Difficult* action for him. He can temporarily cancel one of these effect if he succeeds in a POW roll.
  - **Depression:** the victim does not want to do

anything more. He must make a POW roll to undertake any action beyond mere basic survival like eating or drinking...

The *Basic Role Playing* rulebook gives a list of insanities which can be used for mind disease spirits. See the "Insanity" section on p. 321.

*We left Temir and his mates fighting enemies. We are in the 3<sup>rd</sup> round, Temir's fear spirit managed to inflict a shaman phobia on Big Ear, the enemies' leader, by reducing his Power Points to 10 less than its own and stealing his soul. In order to determine the intensity of the phobia, the target must roll his POW (12) vs. the spirit's POW (16) until he succeeds. The GM rolls 06! It is only a mild form of the disease. Big-Ear will have to roll under his INTx4% to overcome his fear. The GM rolls 06 again. The fight goes ahead; Big-Ear can control his phobia.*

*In the next round (4<sup>th</sup>), Big-Ear's player must roll again under his INTx4%. 79: a miss! Big-Ear starts being scared by the presence of the shaman and afraid of being injured. He decides to stop the fight and orders his men to withdraw. They obey without really understanding why. As long as the fear spirit keeps Big Ear's soul, he will have to roll under his INTx4% every time he faces a shaman or try to avoid the shaman. After a while, his men may start to believe he is a coward.*

*If Temir had managed to inflict the phobia before the melee started, Big-Ear would never have dared attacking a party including a shaman and would have certainly withdrawn at once.*

## ERLIK, THE MASTER OF DEATH

**Allegiance:** Tengriism

Erlik is the deity who reigns over the Underworld. He can intercede to release the soul of a dead, but only the victim of an *üör*. Only black shamans, who know the Underworld, can access him. Treat him as an Aiiyy under all other aspects.

**Shamanic Powers:** *Summon Dead Soul.*

## HEROIC POWERS

**Drain (Hit Points).** Works on any living being. Range: touch. Taboo: drain one sentient being to death per year.

**Sidekick (ghost).** Taboo: never eat dead meat

## RESURRECTION

Only a very powerful shaman can attempt a resurrection when a spirit is responsible for the death of a creature. He or she must first negotiate with Erlik the right to bring the soul back to its owner. He or she must then defeat or deceive the *üör* that stole the soul to free it through Spirit Combat. No negotiation is possible. Since the negotiation with Erlik involves allegiance to Tengriism, which is mostly low for black shamans, the outcome of the process is uncertain.

Spirit Combat must therefore be used in combination with negotiation to bring back the soul of a dead victim of a spirit (e.g. disease). This does not work for natural death like that caused by an injury or aging.

The resurrection must take place within 6 days after death. Then the spirit gets tired of playing with the soul and throws it in the Marshes where it disappears forever.

Of course, the body of the dead needs to be able to receive the soul again, which means that Hit Points and Characteristics must be at least at 3.

## CELESTIAL SPIRITS (Aiiyy)

Celestial Spirits, or *Aiiyy*, are powerful deities. Each of them has a specific task and domain of action. They rule the world and must be obeyed. They are still spirits who can be contacted by white shamans to seal alliances. Their support is won by sacrifices only. No Spirit Combat is possible against deities, who have an infinite POW.

Unless noted exception, Aiiyy belong to the Allegiance to Tengriism.

### Resolution of the Resurrection Attempt

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Start an incantation and roll Knowledge [Spirit World] to contact Erlik.          |
| 2 | Negotiate with Erlik to be allowed to bring back the soul (and pay compensation). |
| 3 | Force or deceive the <i>üör</i> responsible for the death through Spirit Combat.  |





### Characteristics

POW        infinite  
INT        infinite (treat as 24 for game mechanisms)  
**Allegiance:** Tengriism  
Soul Escape 120%  
Knowledge [Spirit World] 120%  
**Powers (100%):** *Miscellaneous powers, Blessing*

### BENEFITS FOR SHAMANS

*Only white shamans can interact with an Aiyy.*  
Temporarily allying with an *Aiyy* costs 7 Power Points for each summoning, plus the negotiated sacrifice. Permanently allying an *Aiyy* costs 4 points of characteristic POW, plus the negotiated compensation. A shaman with a permanent alliance is blessed by the *Aiyy*. He or she gains 1d6 Status points and should be particularly respectful to the spirit and its taboos if he or she does not want to be severely punished.

When called upon, *Aiyy* are not actually summoned insofar that they neither descend on the middle World, nor into the body of the shaman. Instead, they use their powers for him or her, using the shaman to channel them. *Aiyy* may provide several powers. The shaman can choose any power every time he or she calls the allied *Aiyy*.

If POW rolls are requested for using the power, use the POW of the shaman. The *Aiyy* fuels the spell with its own power points, up to a maximum Power Points of Allegiance/5. Ranges are measured from the shaman.

*Aiyy* intervene through their power but not directly in Spirit Combat, because the world order should not be disturbed, and the deities rarely intervene directly in the middle world.

Interaction with *Aiyy* is closer to a more traditional religious worship of gods. The incantation, excepting any combat, looks more like a ritual in which the trance seems not to be as deep as for a standard incantation. For this reason, white shamans dealing with deities can be seen as a kind of priests and advisors instead of mere sorcerers, even if they do not automatically lead worship ceremonies.

The symbolic animal of Celestial Spirits is most of the time a horse (especially the winged horse, which has a large spot on each shoulder). Tengri is most often represented as a white eagle.

### BENEFITS FOR BATYRS

**Affinities and bonus:** the Batyr is blessed by the celestial deities. His Status rises by further 10% or up to 75%, whichever the highest.

### HEROIC POWERS

The new Batyr may employ a Heroic Power of his choice from the *Aiyy*. He has allegiance (Tengriism)/5- Hero Points to spend.

Spirit Intervention is very powerful, comparable to a miracle but costs 4 POW. The intervention is more protective to the Batyr rather than aggressive toward his enemies. The way it helps shall anyway refer to the function of the *aiyy* in the pantheon.

**Obligations:** The Batyr shall always take part to the annual sacrifice to Tengri.

A pact with an *Aiyy* is powerful but hard to make.

### THE MAIN AIYY

Here a list of the main *Aiyy* is given, including the powers the shamans and Batyr can enjoy from them. The names of the *Aiyy* vary from people to people. We give a generic name, followed by one or several other names.

They all provide the power of Blessing to shamans, plus the powers listed for each specific *Aiyy*.

A GM wanting to have a more open game system may adapt the powers or even the modality of the help according to the situation. In any case, these powers are not "stackable". Any power can be used only once at a time on any target. For example, it is not possible to stack two "Battle Rage" powers in order to double the effects.

### THE WHITE CREATOR, MASTER OF LIGHT. URUNG-AIYY-TOJON (BURYATS), BEY-ULGAN (TURLS)

Second god in importance after Tengri, he's the demiurge god, who created the earth, the sky and the living being. He also controls the stars. Urung-Aiyy-Tojon is able to heal natural wounds, caused by weapons, poisons, fall... He's also the creator and master of light and the one who sends divinatory dreams.

Ürüng-Aiyy-Tojon is represented as a double-headed eagle or as the cosmic birch tree. He is Erlik's enemy.

**Shamanic Powers:** Blessing, Divination, Dream, Healing, Light.

### HEROIC POWERS

**Regeneration.** Taboo: never kill without a good reason (being an enemy of the clan or of the Khan is a good reason)

**Energy Control (Light).** Taboo: protect to death all friends lighted up by the Heroic power

**Sidekick (Eagle).** Taboo: always tell the truth

### **MISTRESS OF HUMAN FERTILITY (UMAI, AIYYSYT)**

As Tengri's wife, Umai is a prominent deity in the pantheon. She is a young beautiful woman who brings fertility to mankind. As such, she is the protectress of women and children and is depicted with a child accompanying her. The Khatun is representing Umai on earth, like the Khan represents Tengri.

**Shamanic Powers:** Blessing, Fertility Blessing.

### HEROIC POWERS

**Pheromone (Lust)** Taboo: never sleep twice in a row with the same partner

### **MISTRESS OF WATERS AND EARTH. ÄTÜGEN (JER-SUB FOR THE KONTURK, TSAGAN EBÜGEN FOR THE BURYATS)**

Ätügen is a female deity, almost as important as Tengri. Every year, the khan and the white shamans sacrifice to her, as for Tengri. She is a female counterpart and mirror of the supreme god on Earth. She brings fertility to the Earth, which is only possible with good soil and water.

**Shamanic Powers:** Blessing, Bless Soil, Summon Elemental

### HEROIC POWERS

The Batyr shall never miss the annual sacrifice to Ätügen instead of Tengri. For spirit intervention, Ätügen may send an elemental.

**Super Movement (Water Walking).** Taboo: drink only water

**Adaptation (Underwater).** Taboo: always avenge the pollution of natural waters

**Barrier (stone, earth, water).** Taboo: never flee from an enemy while in the nature

### **MASTER OF LIVESTOCK FERTILITY. IEIEKHSIT**

Ieiekhsit is the pendant of Umai for domestic herd beasts. He cares for the growth of the herds, first source of wealth for the Nomads.

**Shamanic Powers:** Blessing, Fertility.

### HEROIC POWERS

**Extra Hit Points.** Taboo: never leave an unnecessary cattle killing unavenged

**Sidekick (one female of the "five muzzles": horse, yak/cow, reindeer, goats, sheep and camel).** Taboo: mate the sidekick every year and raise the offspring

**Super Skill (Craft [Animal Herding ])**

Taboo: always help a herder when asked for

### **SPIRIT OF WAR. ILBIS-KHAN, SULDE (MONGOLS)**

This powerful spirit is obviously the one who gives courage and force to the warriors and protects them from their enemies. He is represented as an armoured mounted warrior. Having Ilbis-Khan at one's side increases the chance of victory.

**Shamanic Powers:** Battle Rage, Blessing, Courage


### HEROIC POWERS

**Super Skill (combat skill – including mounted archery and riding).** Taboo: never show mercy

### **SPIRIT OF WAR. ILBIS-KHAN, SULDE (MONGOLS)**

This powerful spirit is obviously the one who gives courage and force to the warriors and protects them from their enemies. He is represented as an





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**Shamanic Powers:** Battle Rage, Blessing, Courage

### HEROIC POWERS

**Super Skill (combat skill – including mounted archery and riding).** Taboo: never show mercy

**Defence.** Taboo: never surrender

**Stunning Uran.** Taboo: always at first rank in a fight

### GUIDE OF THE DEAD. MAYIN

Mayin is a psycho-pomp, who brings the spirit of the dead to the upper world. He can also bring a spirit into a body or cause birth when the foetus is ready. A dead guided by Mayin cannot become an *üör*.

**Shamanic Powers:** Blessing, Psycho-Pomp, Resurrection

### HEROIC POWERS

**Retain Spirit.** Taboo: never leave a dead without a proper burial

**Sidekick (ghost).** Taboo: never eat dead meat

### MASTER OF DESTINY. DJULGA-KHAN

He knows the future and designates the ones for whom a special destiny has been prepared (he's a future *qaghan*, a woman or a peri shall fall in love with him, etc.). The fact remains that it is necessary to deserve one's own destiny. Everything does not fall as though. Djulga-Khan can also be consulted for advice on a decision.

**Shamanic Powers:** Blessing, Prophecy, Favourable Destiny.

### HEROIC POWERS

**Super Chance.** Taboo: never give up until incapacitated

### MASTER OF THUNDER AND RAIN. SUUL-BYLYT-TIÖJUGHEN

This Celestial Spirit is very often called upon before a battle to disturb the enemies.

**Shamanic Powers:** Blessing, Control Weather, Lightning.

### HEROIC POWERS

**Energy Projection [Electricity].** Same effect and range as the Energy Projection [electricity] in the *Basic Roleplaying* rules, except that the Spirit projects the lightning which automatically hits the target from a cloud above it. At least one cloud has to be above the target. Taboo: always at first rank in a battle

**Weather Control (Rain):** can only control clouds, rain and thunder. Taboo: never enter a house (yurts are acceptable)

### THE CELESTIAL BLACKSMITH, BOSHINTOI (BURYATS)

Boshintoi sent his 9 sons to men to teach them metallurgy. They learned the Power of Seal (Metal) from him.

**Shamanic Powers:** Blessing, Seal (Metal), Strengthen Blade.

### HEROIC POWERS

**Iron Fist.** Taboo: never drink pure water

**Armour** (The skin becomes as hard as steel and cannot support any rigid armour.). Taboo: never use non-metallic armour

### GUARDIAN OF CATTLE. SULDEN

Sulden protects the flocks against disease and evil spirits. When worshipping Sulden, one raises flags and banners to represent him where the sacrifices are made.

**Shamanic Powers :** Blessing, Repel Disease.

### HEROIC POWERS

**Resistance (Disease).** Taboo: never help or accept the help of a black shaman

**Sidekick (one of the "five muzzles").** Taboo: always defend one's sidekick and one's own cattle to death.

**Super Skill (Craft [Animal Herding]).** Taboo: always help a herder when asked for



### **LORD WINTER, TCHOLBONTY-TYON**

Tcholbonty-Tyon is the master of winter cold. He appears in the sky as the planet Venus. He sends his frost spirits Tcholgong on earth and brings winter cold. He is feared by living beings, since when he's angry and stays active too long, livestock die in mass and humans starve.

**Shamanic Powers:** Blessing, Winter Cold

### **HEROIC POWERS**

**Weather Control (Temperature and cold wind only).** Taboo: never eat warm food

**Adaptation (extreme cold - central Asian winter).** The duration is 1 hour per level. The Batyr can survive without any protection until -40°C of "felt temperature" (e.g. -30°C with strong wind). Taboo: never light or feed a fire

### **MASTER OF PREDATORS AND HUNTING, HINKON**

Hinkon is the master of wild animals as well as the hunting god. As such, he's the guardian of predators as well as of their preys. He represents the wild life and as hunting god, its blessing helps mankind to exploit one of its main life resources. Hinkon has no influence on domestic animals.

**Shamanic Powers:** Blessing, Fangs & Claws, Wild Beast Empathy.

### **HEROIC POWERS**

**Super Skill (Brawl).** Taboo: never give up a hunt

**Sidekick (predator, except tigers and wolves).** Taboo: never kill or help killing the same animal. Protect one's sidekick.

**Super Skill (Survival).** Taboo: eat the meat from hunted wild preys only

### **TENGRI, POSSESSOR OF HEAVEN, GOD ABOVE ALL**

Tengri is too powerful to be summoned. He can only be prayed to and worshipped. As the depository of Tengri's authority, only the Qaghan can receive direct support from him. A Qaghan can ask anything from one of his subjects. To refuse an order, a character must succeed in

an opposed roll of INTx5% vs. the Qaghan's Status (100%). If the character succeeds, he must anyway roll under his Allegiance to Tengriism. If the roll succeeds, he obeys with devotion, whatever the consequences. If he still can and wants to disobey, he will be executed without delay, unless he manages to flee.

Tengri can grant his blessing to a Khan. The endeavour shall however be of importance for the tribe, the empire or its ruler.

### **HEROIC POWERS**

**Sidekick (Tulpar).** Hero point cost: 11. A Tulpar is an intelligent powerful winged horse, see description in the creature chapter. For 3 more points, it will also speak. The Batyr can purchase further powers. Taboo: never ride any other mount

**Super Skill (Status).** Taboo: must claim the title of Qaghan and try to become it.

## **SPIRITS INTERACTING WITH ALL SHAMANS**

### **THE GREAT ANCESTORS**

These are the Great Spirits, founders of a family of creatures, to whom the spirits give protection. Some, like Blue Wolf, can have both an animal and a human offspring.: they are considered as tribal ancestors as well. All shamans can ally Great Ancestors, and even fight with them if the shaman feels powerful enough. Great Ancestors cannot be bound, since their absence would destabilize the World. This would displease Tengri.

Great Ancestors have all the features of Great Spirits.

#### **Characteristichs**

POW	25
INT	24

**Allegiance:** Despite their name, Great Ancestors belong to Tengriism.


Soul escape 120%

Power 125%

See description

They cannot be bound, and will fuel their powers up to the shaman's APP in Power Points. They can be allied, or forced to descend





into the shaman's body and use their powers with their own POW and Power Points.

If they win a Spirit Combat, they will either use their power against the shaman, or give his soul to one of their lesser spirits, who will torment it. Great Animal Ancestors usually make all their beasts hostile to the shaman, either for a while or until the latter succeeds in a new negotiation with the Great Spirit. If they have been seriously insulted, they may even throw his soul into the underworld, where it will be devoured by a random *üör*.

### **GREAT ANIMAL ANCESTORS**

**Allegiance:** Tengriism / ancestors for their descendants

#### **BENEFITS FOR SHAMANS**

They give access to Control Animal, Summon Animal Spirit and other powers. Great Animal Ancestors can also give the shaman some peculiarities and traits of the animals they represent.

#### **BENEFITS FOR BATYRS**

The character gets Allegiance/8- Hero Points to spend.

Affinities and bonus: the Batyr has deep connections to the corresponding animals which are always friendly to him. If the animal can be mounted, he gets +10% in his ride skill.

Spirit Intervention consists either in sending or controlling animals to help (e.g. the Protector of Horses can take control of the character's enemy's horses) or summoning an incarnated animal spirit (see spirit description), at the cost of 3 POW.

**Obligation:** must never allow the harming of this kind of animal unnecessarily.

### **RAVEN SPIRIT. KARA SUORUN**

This Great Spirit raises white shamans in nests. It is also the master of birds. It is used to control birds, but also to recognize a shaman-to-be whose soul is high in the nests of the Cosmic Tree.

**Shamanic Powers:** Control [Bird], Summon [Bird] Spirit, Recognize Shaman

### **HEROIC POWERS**

**Super Characteristic (POW).** Taboo: never surrender to a shaman

**Sidekick (raven).** Taboo: defend one's sidekick to the death

### **BLUE WOLF (TÜRK HÖH-BÖRU), BLUE MANE (TÜRK HÖH-JAL)**

Great Spirit protector of wolves and predators (except tigers). Male ancestor of the Mongols and Türks. Blue Wolf may also be allied as Ancestor by all males from the tribes claiming to come from him, which are almost all the Nomads. Unlike the Ancestral Hero (see below), Blue Wolf is neutral toward his descendants.

**Shamanic Powers:** Control [wolves and other canines], Summon [Wolf] Spirit

### **HEROIC POWERS**

**Super Characteristic (CON).** Taboo: never give up a hunt

**Sidekick (Wolf).** Taboo: One must defend one's sidekick to the death

### **DOE FAWN**

Great Spirit protector of wild herds (excluding horses). Female ancestor of the Mongols. Doe Fawn may also be allied as Ancestor by all Mongol females from the tribes claiming to come from her, which are almost all the Mongols. Unlike the Hero Ancestor (see below), Doe Fawn is neutral toward her descendants.

**Shamanic Powers:** Control [wild herd beasts, except horses], Summon [Herd Beast] Spirit, Leap

### **HEROIC POWERS**

**Leap.** Taboo: avoid fighting when possible

**Sidekick (Fawn).** Taboo: defend one's sidekick to death

## **УЈУСЕГХЕИ**

Great Spirit protector of horses, Pura-Khan is one of the 9 sons of Ürüng-Aiyy-Tojon (Bey-Ülgän)

**Shamanic Powers:** Control [Horse], Summon [Horse] Spirit, Gallop.

## **HEROIC POWERS**

**Super Skill (Ride).** Taboo: only ride horses

**Super Movement (Run).** Taboo: never eat meat except horse meat

**Sidekick (Horse or Tulpari).** Taboo: One Must defend one's sidekick to death

## **THE GREAT TIGER. BAR, BARY**

Bar is the spirit protector of Siberian tigers. He is often embodied in a huge tiger, running through the forest on its own business.

Since tigers are lonely creatures, they have no protecting *ichchi* (lesser nature spirit) like herd beasts do. Instead, they all depend on the Great Tiger. There is no other spirit to summon, Bar is the only one. "Killing" the embodied Great Tiger may be an alternative to negotiating with it, for a shaman to make an alliance or for a Batyr to seal a pact. The Great Tiger will then be unable to embody again for a week.

**Shamanic Powers:** Control [Tiger], Claws, Fangs, Summon [Tiger] Spirit.

## **HEROIC POWERS**

**Super Skill (Brawl).** Taboo: show no mercy

**Super Characteristic (STR).** Taboo: never eat cooked meat

## **OTHER GREAT ANCESTORS**

### **K'DAI / KUDAI-ÖHTU / TAARVA**

Demon of fire, ancestor of blacksmiths to whom he taught the magic of fire. Blacksmiths can contact him to gain their powers. He is also the ancestor of shamans to whom he transmitted the power of trance. K'dai is shaped like a hare.

**Allegiance:** Tengriism, Ancestors for shamans and blacksmiths (friendly)

**Shamanic Powers:** Transform into Giant Hare.

## **HEROIC POWERS**

This Great Spirit is an exception: since K'dai is the ancestor of blacksmiths and shamans, he's friendly only to these and can be allied as a friendly Ancestor (Allegiance to Ancestors) only by them. Blacksmiths reaching 90% in one of their craft skill can try to seal an alliance with K'Dai. For all other characters, the negotiation involves the allegiance to Tengriism.

As a Deity, K'dai grants Allegiance/5- hero points to spend for heroic powers.

Affinities and bonus: craft [Blacksmithing] +10% for Blacksmiths, Knowledge [Spirit World] +10% for shamans

## **POWERS FOR BLACKSMITHS**

**Ironfist.** Taboo: never give or sell a metallic weapon (sabre, mace, etc.) without having killed a living being with it before.

**Energy Control (heat).** Taboo: never put out a fire

**Seal (metal).** Taboo: never break a manufactured metallic object intentionally, except to use the metal for making a new one.

## **POWERS FOR SHAMANS**

**Super Sense (Listen).** The shaman gets the hearing sense of a hare. In addition, he can ear spirits acting on the physical world (e.g. bound spirits) at a distance of POWx10 metres- the GM may want him to make a "Listen" skill roll. Taboo: always try to avoid a physical fight

**Protection (POW).** Taboo: always accept the price of a negotiation

### **ALP-KARA-KUSH (GREAT BLACK BIRD), THE BLACK EAGLE**

**Allegiance:** Tengriism

Alp-Kara-Kush is the guardian of the upper part of the cosmic tree. She's in permanent struggle against the Snake living under the



roots of the tree, preventing it from climbing the tree and stealing the souls of white shamans or to eat her offspring. She's so big that she can hold 40 cows in her talons.

Alpa Kara Kush lives 7 days in the surface world and 7 days in the subterranean world, hunting deer for her offspring. She is therefore only available half of the time, since she can only help in the world she's currently hunting in. If she is not lucky the first time, a shaman must wait 1d6 days until Alp-Kara-Kush comes back to the same world.

**Shamanic Powers:** Fly, Heal, Travel to the Subterranean World

### HEROIC POWERS

**Flight.** Taboo: always challenge a black shaman.

**Sidekick (bird of prey).** Taboo: One must defend one's sidekick to the death

### NATURE GREAT SPIRITS (Ezi)

These Great Spirits are the guardians of huge areas of landscape. These can be the steppe, a big mountain, a big river and all its affluent rivers and lakes, a wide forest, including any beings living in it to some extent. Some tribes call them "Lords", some other "Hosts". The powers they provide vary widely but are strongly related to their nature.

Since they are already bound to the physical world, they can't be bound.

#### Characteristics

POW 25

INT 24

**Allegiance:** Tengriism.

Soul escape 120%

Power 125%

See description

### BENEFITS FOR SHAMANS

Shamans can ask for the help of the Ezi and enjoy some of its powers, as per standard Great Spirit, with the sole exception that the spirit exerts its influence on its territory only.

### BENEFITS FOR BATYR

The character gets Allegiance/8- Hero Points to spend. The Batyr has a special affinity to a region and its landscape. Full help from the spirit is limited to the region. However, this affinity will warrant the Batyr at least the neutrality of spirits from similar landscape. In addition, the Batyr gets Heroic Powers from the spirit. These powers are usable anywhere. Examples of powers appropriate to the locale are given for each type of nature spirit.

Spirit Intervention cost 3 POW. Great Natural spirits will use their control over elements or landscape to actively help the Batyr. These may be as powerful, like an avalanche, a huge wave, able to destroy a pursuing troop. The Batyr must in return help protect the spirit's domain.

The suggested powers are given as guidelines. The GM may devise other powers. Similar powers from lesser nature spirits may also become available, at higher level (see below). Taboos may be picked up from these spirits as well.

Some areas, mostly mountains, hold a special place for the tribes. These are where ancestors are buried. These areas have to be protected, and the ancestors may be included into the "dwellers" for the "Influence" Heroic Power. Forests are common places for burying shamans.

### WATER SPIRIT (YENISSEL, ORKHON...)

**Example of shamanic powers:** Summon Water Elemental, Influence fish, Float.

**Examples of heroic powers:** Super Movement (Water Walking), Super Skill (Swim), Adaptation (underwater).

**Examples of taboos:** drink only water, never wash with water, eat only cooked meals, eat fish once per moon...

### MOUNTAIN SPIRIT

**Example of shamanic powers:** Create Rock Eater (Size 1d6 per level, cost 3 per level, permanent), Speak with [mountain dweller], Unseal Rock.

**Examples of Heroic Powers:** Super Skill (Climb), Density, Rock Slide.

**Examples of Taboos:** Stay at the same place one day per week, Stay mute one day per week, never dig a hole or stick something in the ground.

### **STEPPE SPIRIT**

**Example of shamanic powers:** Speak with Grass, Wind, Gallop (as per Djuseghei), Influence [steppe dweller].

**Examples of Heroic Powers:** Speak with Grass, Super Run, Diminish Size (to be able to hide in marmot hides), Influence [steppe dweller].

**Examples of taboos:** go on foot once a week, always lost in a forest, always offer a full ration of every meal to the 6 directions, never burn grass or dung...

### **FOREST SPIRIT**

**Example of shamanic powers:** Plant barrier, Camouflage, Speak with Trees, Influence [forest dweller].

**Examples of Heroic Powers:** Super Skill (Hide) [in forest], Super Skill (Stealth) [in forests], Speak to Trees, Influence [forest dweller].

**Examples of taboos:** never burn wood (grass and dung are ok), never cut a tree, stay at least one hour facing the wind during a storm (quite uneasy in winter).

## **TRIBAL ANCESTORS**

Tribal ancestors are the dead clan mates. They can be called upon by the shaman, either black or white, and incarnate either in the shaman's body or in the body of any voluntarily attending descendant. When incarnated, they can use their skills as when living. They belong to the Allegiance to Ancestors.

When trying to call an ancestor upon, the shaman must be at a range of POWx10 in meters from anything bound to the Ancestors in the mundane plane, like a living descendant, a grave, a sacred place for ancestors worship, or an altar to the ancestors.

Ancestors rarely act physically. They are mostly contacted for their knowledge and wisdom, but they can otherwise be used like any other summoned spirit. They are considered to know at least one tribal skill at 90%. In order to find the right ancestor with the right skill, the shaman must make a roll of Knowledge [Genealogy] in addition to Knowledge [Spirit World]. If the requested skill is more exotic (like swimming, knowledge of a foreign country), the Knowledge



[Genealogy] is a *Difficult* task and the GM may state that the skill is known by the ancestor at a lower rating. As soon as the ancestor is incarnated, the descendant or the shaman can let it control the body at will for the duration of an action (a fight, a contest) or simply take advantage of its knowledge on one single topic.

When attempting to negotiate an alliance with an ancestor of his own tribe, the attitude of the spirit is always friendly.

#### Characteristics

POW	3D6+3	13-14
INT	2D6+6	13

**Allegiance:** Ancestors

At least one tribal skill at 90%

**Power (100%):** incarnate into descendant

#### BENEFITS FOR BATYRS

The GM can decide that a Batyr belongs to the clan ancestors. A Batyr ancestor can help his descendants with his Heroic Powers as well. The GM can choose a Heroic Power or pick it randomly. The Batyr will have a corresponding Allegiance of 3d20+40. The GM may ask the shaman to make an *Easy Knowledge* [Genealogy] roll to find the Batyr ancestor.

Ancestors are lesser spirits. The character gets Allegiance/15- Hero Points to spend. The Batyr is protected by all his ancestors. For the negotiation, ancestors are *Friendly*.

**Affinities and bonus:** When involved in a Spirit Combat, one random ancestor will help.

When asking for a "spirit intervention", 1d6 ancestors assist by attacking his foes in Spirit Combat and trying to actively possess them, or by helping the Batyr with their knowledge, skills or whatever sees fit. This costs the Batyr 2 POW.

**Obligations:** The Batyr must participate to the annual ancestors sacrifice.

#### HEROIC POWERS

**Super Skill**, as per Ancestral Hero. If the character (or the shaman helping him) makes a Knowledge [Genealogy] roll, the Batyr can choose a skill among all the *noyan*, warrior or herder professional skills, whether primary or secondary. Taboo: One must defend one's clan mates to the death.

## ANCESTRAL HEROES

Ancestral Heroes are the mythical heroes that founded a clan or a tribe. They have powers related to the myth of foundation. These myths often include a human mating with or being raised by animals, which explains why Ancestral Heroes sometimes provide special relations to an animal. Their summoning also doubles a shaman's skills of persuasion, but only towards members of his own tribe.

#### Characteristics

POW	21
INT	2D6+6

**Allegiance:** Ancestors

**Power (100%):** Various, according to the myths

A hero is most often bound to the tribe standard in which he resides, and must continuously provide protection to the Khan by fighting any evil spirits that attack him, or by using a power. If the Khan forgets his duties and neglects worship of his ancestors, he loses the protection of his ancestral hero. Holding a standard with a bound Ancestral Hero gives a bonus of 20% to Status and Command ratings.

Some ancestral heroes are detailed in the Chapter Nine "Peoples and Tribes".

#### BENEFITS FOR BATYRS

The Batyr gains either a power the Hero used to have, or super tribal skills among the best skills of the Ancestral Hero. Every tribe has his own specific hero. However, most of them have comparable powers and skill masteries like weapons or riding. Power should be devised after the founding myth, or invented by the GM when the myth is unknown. For the negotiation, the ancestral hero is *Friendly*.

**Affinities and bonus:** the Batyr is protected by the Ancestral Hero. He gains +10% in Command with his tribe mates.

Spirit Intervention will summon the Hero, who will incarnate in the Batyr's body, which costs 3 POW. The hero will be helped by 1D6 ancestors' spirits.

**Obligations:** The Batyr shall not miss the annual sacrifice to the Ancestors.

**Typical Ancestral Hero:** from the *noyan* profession, pick 3 primary skills at 120%, the rest at 90%. Pick 3 secondary skills at 90%, the rest at 75%. Roll characteristics with +3 bonus and POW 21.

## HEROIC POWERS

**Super Skill (Tribal specialty):** pick one of the 3 highest skills of the hero –can be randomly rolled from the *noyan* primary skills. Taboo: various, according to the heroic power

**Stunning Uran.** Taboo: always defend one's clan to the death

**Mythical Power.** Taboo: various, for example: hunt to death a clan betrayer, never leave its clan, capture at least 20 new “muzzles” every year, always challenge other Batyrs.

## OTHER LESSER SPIRITS OF NATURE (ICHCHI)

The *ichchi* are innumerable lesser spirits which do not belong to the *üör*. *Ichchi* are neutral spirits which can be contacted by all shamans. They are mostly natural spirits in permanent contact with the middle world. Some of them may rely more on their instinct than on their intelligence. They can be bound, but since they exert their influence in their area only, there is no true benefit in doing this.

### Characteristics

POW	3D6+6	16-17
INT	2D6+6	13
	unless otherwise specified	

**Allegiance:** Animism

**Powers (100%):** see description

A Batyr receives Allegiance/15- Hero Points to spend. *Ichchi* are less powerful than Aiyy or Great Spirits, but can still provide the same kind of powers, even though at lower levels

## ANIMAL SPIRITS

Every Animal Spirit is loyal to a Great Animal Ancestor. These spirits are protectors of the animals belonging to a herd, a family, a hunting ground, comparable to what an Ancestral Hero represents for a clan. Hunters sacrifice to them before a hunt. Shamans can ally or force them like any other spirit.

Lonely animals like tigers may have no animal spirit, even if they always have a Great Animal Ancestor.

## BENEFITS FOR SHAMANS

Animal Spirits can influence an animal without changing its natural behaviour (e.g. a deer will not flee a hunter as it will not feel attacked, but will flee if the hunter starts to be menacing or very noisy).

A shaman can also negotiate with an Animal Spirit to take advantage of some of its traits or features, in a way comparable to animal totems. The GM can use the list of animal totems (see below), or devise other benefits. The shaman or any willing person in range, can exploit the power of the spirit. Unaware or unwilling targets resist with their POW against the spirit's POW. The advantage derived from an Animal Spirit is ruled as an Enhance spell for characteristics and similarly to the Sharpen spell for skills. Each level increases a characteristic by 1, or a skill rating by 5% and, when it makes sense, increases damage or another suitable effect by +1 – or whatever the GM sees fit. Other rules for spells (duration, maximal level, etc) are like those for a standard Magic Spell. The spirit uses its own POW.

## BENEFITS FOR BATYRS

The spirit's animals are always friendly to a Batyr and will help him as they would do for one of them. The Batyr gains a special affinity to the species. Other members of the same species will be friendly to him, or at least neutral, even if they wouldn't help. The Batyr gains a 10% bonus in riding the animal.

Spirit Intervention cost 2 POW. It takes the form of summoning one animal or a full herd to help the Batyr. Of course, if the Batyr is far away from the animals, they will have to travel up to him, which may take a while and be dangerous.

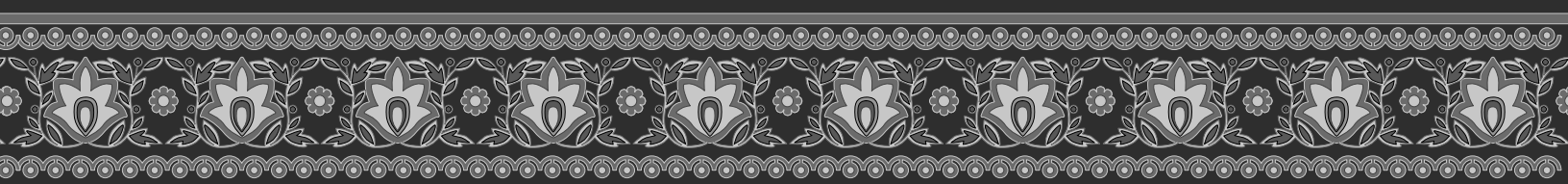
Batyr shall always be friendly to the species and help the herd in case of a danger.

All animals can provide the following heroic powers:

Select between **Enhance (characteristic)** or **Super Skill**. Taboo: according to the species







*Ex: a taboo for a wolf spirit could be to never abandon a hunt –whatever the prey– as long as there is a chance to succeed. A taboo for a deer spirit could be to avoid fighting when possible; for a snake to always try to steal eggs when a nest is found.*

**Influence [animal]. Taboo:** never have another animal as pet

**Speak with [animal]. Taboo:** do not speak one day per week – only make the noise of the animal.

**Sidekick (One kind of the animal species). Taboo:** protect the sidekick and avenge its death

Herd beasts (one of the “five muzzles”) provide the following Heroic Powers:

**Horse:** Super Run

**Yack/cow:** Enhance [SIZ]

**Reindeer:** Resistance (cold)

**Camel:** Resistance (thirst)

## NATURE SPIRIT

(STREAM, LAKE, MOUNTAIN ...)

### Characteristics

POW	3D6 + 6	16-17
INT	1D6 to 2D6+6	3-4 to 13

Almost all elements of Nature, either static or moveable, have their own protecting *ichchi*, which should not be neglected. Even if they are sleeping spirits, they do not demand less respect. Nature Spirits belong to the Middle World and have powers related to their element. A river can slow down its flow or trigger a flood, a forest disturb pursuers with trees and branches, a mountain leave its rocks fall downhill, a glacier guide his side to dazzle or open cracks, a bush extend an ivy bush out of a hole or along a smooth cliff to help climbing, a plain call the breeze to bring the smell of hunters to their prey and help it fleeing, and so on.

### BENEFITS FOR SHAMANS

Shamans can ask for the help of the spirit as described in the previous paragraph.

### BENEFITS FOR BATYRS

The Batyr has a special affinity to a piece of landscape.

The help of the spirit is limited to a given place. The support of a lake is only valid at the lake, the support of a wood spirit only in the wood it is protecting. For example, the Batyr won't drown in *his* river, he will move faster in *his* forest, etc. In addition, the Batyr gets Heroic Powers from the spirit, which are usable anywhere.

Spirit Intervention cost 2 POW. Natural spirits will use their control over elements or landscape to actively help the Batyr. Obviously, this can only occur for the herd or in the area the spirit is dwelling. It will take a smaller form as with Great Nature Spirit.

The Batyr must in return help to protect the spirit's domain.



## HEROIC POWERS

### PLANT AND TREE SPIRITS

**Enhance** [CON, STR or SIZ]. Taboo: eat only vegetables (hard for a Nomad)

**Grow limb** (As granted by tree spirits.). Taboo: always walk barefoot on grass (hard in winter, unless the Batyr rides something or somebody, walks on a carpet, or the grass is covered by snow or leaves)

**Grow plant** (Multiplies the growing speed of a plant by (level) x100. This power is gained from plant spirits.) Taboo: reduce activity in winter. Only the necessary activities to survive are acceptable (no war, no sex).

**Drain** (Drains Hit Points from ground. The Batyr must have both bare feet on the earth to drain Hit Points. This does not work on an artificial ground.) Taboo: never heal magically, except by using this power

### WATER SPIRITS

**Super Skill (swim)**. Taboo: eat fish once per moon

**Adaptation (underwater)**. Taboo: must swim while naked.

**Purify Water**. Taboo: never bath willingly

### EARTH/ROCK SPIRITS

**Density Control** Taboo: try to resist a physical attack at least once before flying

**Stone Armour**. Taboo: only train in melee weapon (missile weapons don't progress any longer)

### PLAIN/STEPPE SPIRITS

**Listen to grass**. Taboo: Never sleep in a house

### OTHER SPIRITS

Unless otherwise specified, these spirits can be contacted by both types of shamans, and have a POW of 3D6+6 and an INT of 2D6+6.

## DOG SPIRITS

Any shaman can ally with up to two Dog Spirits. The spirits appear while the shaman travels in the spirit world to defend their master's helpless body. In case of threat and as long as the shaman is allied with them, the same spirits reappear each time, up to a distance of the shaman's POWx10 in metres. When attempting an alliance with dog-spirits, they are always friendly.

Dog-spirits belong to the Allegiance to Animism. Kyrgyz can contact them as Ancestors as well.

These spirits materialize in the form of a dog with a POW of 3D6+6, and Hit Points equal to their POW. Their bite attacks physically, and drains Power Points. At 0 Power Points, the soul of the victim is carried away by the dogs which eat it. This is fatal. If the Dog Spirit's Hit Points or Power Points are reduced to 0, the dogs disappear until they recover all of their Points.

### Characteristics

POW	3D6+6	17-18
INT	3D6	10-11
SIZ	POW	17-18
DEX	INT	10-11
STR	Power points	17-18

**Hit points:** Power points (avg. 17-18)

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
Bite	DEX x 5%	1D3 +db	power points

**Armour:** 2 (fur)

## TCHOLEGON

These frost spirits are Lord Winter's servants. They have the power of Frost. They can lower temperature under the same conditions as the Super Power "Weather Control". Tcholgons belong to the allegiance to Tengriism.

### Characteristics

INT	3D6	10-11
POW	3D6 + 6	16-17

## HEROIC POWERS

**Adaptation** (extreme cold - central Asian winter). The duration is 1 hour per level. Taboo: never light or feed a fire



### ◆BOO SPIRITS

Each *oboo* has a 30% chance of containing a guardian spirit. On a roll of 01-05, it will be an *üör* ... As long as a traveller follows the proper ritual, the spirit remains dormant. If the traveller does not follow the ritual, he exposes himself to the wrath of the spirit and will have trouble on the way. Landslides, wolf attacks, enduring heavy rains, and so, until he comes back to sacrifice to the spirit, etc.. An *üör* will always try to steal the trespasser's soul instead, inflicting a disease or insanity.

*Oboo* spirits belong to the Allegiance to Tengriism, except for *üör* which belong to Animism.

#### Characteristics

INT	2D6+6
POW	3D6 +6

### JEZ-KEMPIR, THE COPPER-OLD-WOMN

#### Characteristics

INT	2D6+6
POW	3D6 +6

Jez-Kempir are earth spirits, able to open gates in the Earth to the Underworld. They also have the power of sleep by throwing sleeping sand in the eyes. If bound to an *oboo* made out of a skull, they can open a gate to the Underworld. Jez-Kempir always appear as an old woman when summoned.

Jez-Kempir belong to the Allegiance to Animism.

**Shamanic Powers:** Open Gate, Sleep

### SPELL SPIRITS

For every shamanic spell listed in the "Spell for Shamans" sections of Chapter Five, it is possible to find a spirit and to ally it like any other spirit. When called upon, the spirit will go into the shaman's body and use its power as a spell (no Spirit Combat) once for the shaman. Use standard stats for lower spirits.

#### Characteristics

POW	3d6+6	10-11
INT	2D6+6	13

The shaman can choose to send the spirit to a target instead. The spirit possesses the

target instead of using the shaman's body. No Spirit Combat is required for this possession, unless the target is unaware or unwilling, but the target must be at range of POWx10 metres and detectable to the shaman. The spirit casts its spell from the target's body and departs. This procedure allows a shaman to use a self-targeted spell on somebody else, or to increase the range of a ranged spell.

For the sake of simplicity, consider such spirits as being found among both Animists and Tengriist spirits, except Sky Rope, which belongs to Tengriism only.

### SAKA STONES

Saka means actually knucklebones. They can be stones found in the guts of animals or true knucklebones. They have powers which facilitate the use of magic or the incantation process. They are very rare and are mostly found in exceptional or magical animals, like incarnated animal spirits.

A *saka* has a potential referred to as Potency (POT). To use a *saka*, a successful Power Points vs. POT resistance roll is needed. Failure means the shaman loses Hit Points equal to the *saka*'s POT. If successful, the shaman can discover the power of the *saka* and definitely use it as often as he or she wants.

A *saka* can, according to the nature of the stone:

- strengthen the POW of the shaman in Spirit Combat with POT points
- serve as focus points of POT
- increase the chance of contacting a particular spirit by POT x 5% (bonus to the Knowledge [Spirit world] roll)
- increase the chance of negotiating with a spirit or family of spirits by POT x 5% (bonus to the negotiation roll)
- reduce the die roll for the price of compensation roll by POT x5 when negotiating with a particular spirit or family of spirits
- increase the power points for a particular spell by POT points

...or anything that GM decides. The effects may, on rare occurrences, be negative or confer a particular power, but come at a heavy cost (e.g. block 10 POW from a hostile spirit, but at the cost of 1 or 2 points of permanent POW loss to be able to use it).

These stones are very rare. Some may even be evil or particularly powerful if they are found in the body of a wonderful beast (e.g. in an embodied animal spirit or in a supernatural creature). They generally have a POT of 1D8, but some can be much more powerful.

## TOTEM ANIMAL

Everybody has a chance to find his totem animal. This animal reflects a person's prominent personality traits, and is revealed in a waking dream. When a character feels ready to find his totem animal, he or she must first seek the help of a shaman. The shaman evaluates the character and then enters a trance to find the animal spirit. Totem animals are often, but not necessarily, birds.

A totem animal offers assistance but requires the acceptance of a taboo. If the character does not respect the taboo, the totem animal leaves forever. It cannot be found again unless the offending character performs a heroic act or quest, at the discretion of the GM. The Allegiance roll must be repeated.

**Mechanism:** The shaman prepares the applicant to communicate with spirits by singing, dancing, possibly administering drugs. When the applicant is receptive, the shaman enters a trance and summons the spirit. Then he introduces the candidate. This requires the candidate to make an Allegiance [Animism] roll.

Shamans are neutral and do not have totem animals. They have an animal-mother instead, as explained before. He can still call any of these spirits and enjoy temporarily their help. For this purpose, a totem animal has a POW of 3d6+6. Rules for allying spirits are explained in the "Shamans" chapter.

Of course, the PC must show a special respect to the mundane equivalents of his totem-animal.

### TABOOS (ROLL 1D20)

- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 1  | Only accept orders from a person of higher rank (in case of equal rank, attempt an opposed status roll) |
| 2  | Never kill a bird   |
| 3  | Never lie   |
| 4  | Never touch the water of a lake   |
| 5  | Never climb a tree  |
| 6  | Never make enemy prisoners  |
| 7  | Never surrender to an enemy   |
| 8  | Accept all challenges (to first blood)  |
| 9  | Pay double price to the spirits   |
| 10 | Never use a shield  |
| 11 | Always obey your Khan   |
| 12 | Never eat meat during the new moon  |
| 13 | Fast during the new moon  |
| 14 | Never get drunk   |
| 15 | Never have sex on two consecutive days  |
| 16 | Always let a storyteller finish his tale  |
| 17 | Never say your real name  |
| 18 | Sleep under the stars on the nights of an equinox   |
| 19 | Eat a bird every ten days   |
| 20 | Favoured by the spirits: no taboo   |

<b>Critical Success</b>	The candidate has attracted the interest of other animal spirits. He can choose a different totem animal or accept the clan totem without a taboo. If the character sets up a new clan, the totem animal will become the new clan totem.
<b>Success</b>	The spirit-animal of the candidate's clan agrees to become his totem. If the campaign has not determined a totem animal, it can be rolled on the table below or determined by a common agreement with the GM.
<b>Failure</b>	No spirit is met. The character can try again when his Allegiance (Animism) score has increased.
<b>Fumble</b>	Something about the character has offended the spirits and he will never have a totem animal.



## HEROIC POWERS

A Batyr can have a special affinity to a Totem Animal. Making a pact with a Totem Animal does not impose choosing it as totem, but allows it. If the character makes a pact with his own Totem Animal, the benefits of the pact come in addition to the benefits of the Totem Animal.

### TOTEM ANIMAL (ROLL 1D20)

- 1 Eagle + 10% Command. The eagle, as the most powerful sky-animal, represents the authority of Tengri, the sky-god. The eagle imparts a natural ability to give orders.
- 2 White Eagle + 1D8 Status. The white color symbolizes the upper World, close to the celestial spirits and deities. Having the white eagle as totem bestows prestige.
- 3 Falcon + 1 Movement
- 4 Owl + 10% Spot, including during night-time
- 5 Kite + 10% bow
- 6 Swan + 1 APP
- 7 Raven + 1 POW. The raven is related to shamanism and the spirit world. Having the raven as totem makes one more aware of the spiritual flows in the universe.
- 8 Vulture + 10% resistance to poisons and spoiled food
- 9 Merlin + 10% insight
- 10 Nightingale + 15% Performance [sing]
- 11 Wolf + 1 CON. The wolf is seen as the epitome of the wild beasts. Most of the steppe peoples claim to descend from him. The wolf is admired for his capacity to survive and its resistance in the very harsh environment is praised. It is an efficient predator which hunting tactics are observed by the nomads.
- 12 Dog + 10% Track
- 13 Lion + 10% Brawl
- 14 Bear + 10% Grapple
- 15 Rat + 1 INT
- 16 Marten + 1 DEX
- 17 Antelope + 10% Sense
- 18 Stoat + 10% Dodge
- 19 Deer + 1 STR
- 20 Other (Yak + 1 SIZ, Boar + 10% Knockback chance, Quail +10% Hide, Horse + 10% Ride)

In the other case, the character may choose to try to change his totem-animal to the new animal-spirit he made the pact with. He immediately loses the benefits from the former totem before trying to get the new one as totem. As soon as he succeeds, the benefits of the new totem are added to those of being a Batyr.

Heroic Powers work on the same bonus as the totem-animal, either as Enhance (Characteristic) for those bringing a characteristic bonus, or as Super Skill for those bringing a skill bonus.

*Ex: the wolf, which as totem-animal gives a +1 CON, will provide the power of Enhance CON.*



# B. BESTIARY

## DOMESTIC BEASTS

### STEPPE HORSE

There have been many different races of horses throughout history and the world, from the small ponies up to the heavy Percheron or the Shire horse. The average mounted horse weighs about 500kg. The steppe pony is smaller.

Warhorses are selected for their ruggedness: add+2 to STR, CON and SIZ. After the conquest of central Asia by Genghis Khan, Iranian and Arabian breeds tended to replace the steppe horse among the noble families who settled in the new conquered lands. However, the pony remained the main horse in the steppe of the origins. The stats below are given for a steppe horse.

#### Characteristics

STR	3D6+16	(26-27)
CON	2D6+8	(15)
SIZ	4D6+10	(24)
INT	4	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 20

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
Bite	25%,	1D3+½db	bleeding
Kick	25%	1D8+db	crushing
Rear and Plunge	25%	2D8+db	crushing
Trample	25%	2D6+db	crushing; warhorses only

**Damage bonus:** +2D6

**Armour:** 1 point muscle and hide

**Skills:** Dodge 45%, Hide 25%, Sense 50.

*Fitness of horses living outside and grazing is highly depending on the season. Apply the following modifications for the Steppe horse: during the year, a horse will change its characteristics if it lives in among the Nomads: -2 Hit Points in winter (November, December, January, February), May and June; -4 Hit Points in March, April; otherwise normal Hit Points This is true for any horse under the same conditions. A horse raised on grain eating only grass loses 1D3 Hit Points per month. In addition, it must roll Hit Points x 5% at the end of each month. If the failure is critical, it dies. The reverse is true for nomad horses eating grain.*

*In addition, steppe horses are more resistant to cold, hunger and thirst.*

### BACTRIAN CAMEL

This camel is widely used by the nomadic tribes living in the desert, but not only by them. Camels provide wool and milk (the most nutritive one among the five muzzles), and are used to transport heavy charges as well as mounted infantry.

#### Characteristics

STR	3D6 +24	(34-35)
CON	2D6 +6	(13)
SIZ	3D6 +24	(34-35)
INT	4	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)

**Move:** 10

**Hit Points:** 24

Attack	Skills	Damage	Speciale
Bite	25%	1D3 + ½db	(bleeding)
Kick	45%	2D6	

**Damage bonus:** +3D6

**Armour:** 2-point skin and fur

**Skills:** Sense 40%

### DOMESTIC YAK

A domesticated yak is much smaller than a wild yak, which is found exclusively in Tibet. At lower altitudes, it is most commonly crossbreed with cows.

#### Characteristics

STR	3D6 +18	(28-29)
CON	2D6 +6	(13)
SIZ	4D6 +12	(26)
INT	4	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	2D6	(7)

**Move:** 10

**Hit Points:** 21

Attack	Skills	Damage	Special
Butt (charge)	45%	2D10 +db	impaling
Butt 45%	1D6 +db		impaling
Trample	25%	4D6 to downed foe (crush)	

**Damage bonus:** +2D6

**Armour:** 1-point skin in summer, 2-point skin + fur in winter

**Skills:** Dodge 15%



## REINDEER

These are the mounts of the reindeer herders from southern Siberia. They are too small to really be used for war but they can carry mounted infantry. They are particularly well suited to extreme cold, where even horses would die. Mounted warriors use horses when possible, though.

### Characteristics

STR	4D6 +6	(20)
CON	2D6 +6	(13)
SIZ	4D6 +6	(20)
INT	4	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 15

Attack	Skills	Damage	Special
Bite	25%	1D3 +½ db	bleeding
Butt	45%	1D6 +db	crush

**Damage bonus:** +1D6

**Armour:** 1-point skin in summer, 2-point skin + fur in winter

**Skills:** Dodge 45%, Hide 25%, Sense 50%

## PREDATORS

### SIBERIAN TIGER

These tigers are bigger than their south Asian counterparts. They have a black and white striped fur.

### Characteristics

STR	3D6+15	(25-26)
CON	3D6	(10-11)
SIZ	3D6+9	(19-20)
INT	5	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	2D6+12	(19)

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 15

Attack	Skills	Damage	Special
Bite	45%	1D10+½db	impaling
Claw	70%	1D8+db	bleeding
Ripping	80%	2D8+db	bleeding

A tiger gets two simultaneous claws and one bite each combat round. The bite comes 5 DEX ranks after the claw attacks. If both claws successfully strike the target, the tiger will hang on and rip with its hind claws on the next round while continuing to bite.

**Armour:** 2-point skin

**Damage Bonus:** +2D6

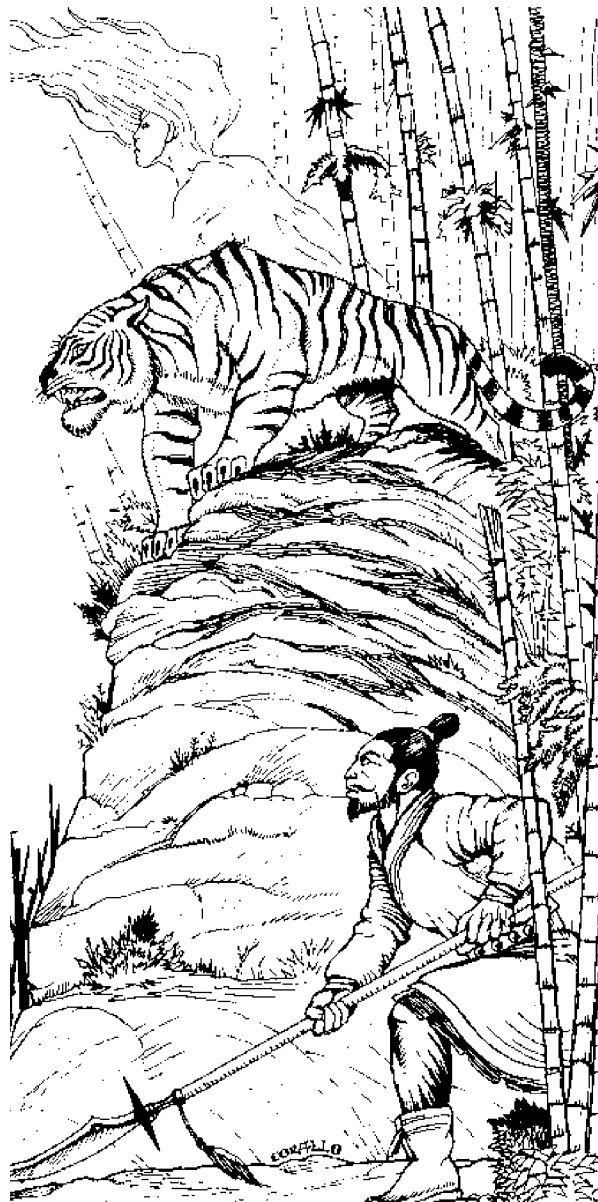
**Skills:** Dodge 45%, Hide 80%, Jump 55%, Stealth 75%, Track 50%

### WOLF

The wolf is a very praised creature, almost all of the Nomads claiming to descend from him. Wolves are found almost everywhere, except on high mountains. Use the statistics on page 340 of *Basic Roleplaying*.

### BEAR

Use statistics of black bears from page 334 of *Basic Roleplaying*.





## Fox

Unlike wolves, foxes do not live in packs. When encountered, a fox is either a single hunting fox or a family.

Use the statistics of small dogs from page 335 of *Basic Roleplaying*.

## Snow Leopard

Snow leopards live on high mountains between 2500m and 5500m, rarely going further down to 1000m. They have a thick light-coloured fur with dark spots, which is very valuable to hunters. Their weight rarely goes beyond 55kg.

### Characteristics

STR	3D6	(10-11)
CON	3D6	(10-11)
SIZ	2D6+3	(10)
INT	5	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	2D6+12	(19)

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 10-11

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
Bite	45%	1D8+½db	impaling
Claw	70%	1D6+db	bleeding
Ripping	80%	2D6+db	bleeding

A snow leopard gets two simultaneous claws and one bite each combat round. The bite comes 5 DEX ranks after the claw attacks. If both claws successfully strike the target, the leopard will hang on and rip with its hind claws on the next round while continuing to bite.

**Damage Bonus:** none

**Armour:** 1-point skin

**Skills:** Dodge 45%, Hide 80%, Jump 65%, Stealth 75%, Track 50%

## Game

Nomads eat every edible meat. Big game is the favourite prey, it can be hunted during beats which can involve hundreds or hunters. Beside wild animals, one can find wild versions of some herd beasts.

## Saiga Antelope

The Saiga Antelope lives in herds in the cold and arid steppes. It is rather small (36kg to 63kg) and has a typical long nose. Females have no antlers.

### Characteristics

STR	2D6+3	(10-11)
CON	3D6	(10-11)
SIZ	2D6	(7)
INT	4	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	3D6+6	(16-17)

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 9

Attack	Skills	Damage	Special
Butt	30%	1d6 +db	
kick	25%	1d4 +db	

**Damage Bonus:** None

**Armour:** 1-point skin

**Skills:** Hide 65%, Jump 90%, Listen 50%, Stealth 65%, Swim 65%.

## Onager (Wild Ass)

### Characteristics

STR	4d6 +6	(20)
CON	2D6 +6	(13)
SIZ	4D6 +6	(20)
INT	4	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 17

Attacks	Skill	Damage	Special
Bite	25%	1D3 +½db	bleeding
Kick	25%	1D6 +db	crushing
Rear and Plunge	25%	2D6 +db	crushing

**Armour:** 1-point skin

**Damage bonus:** +1D6

**Skills:** Hide 25%, Sense 50%.

## Deer

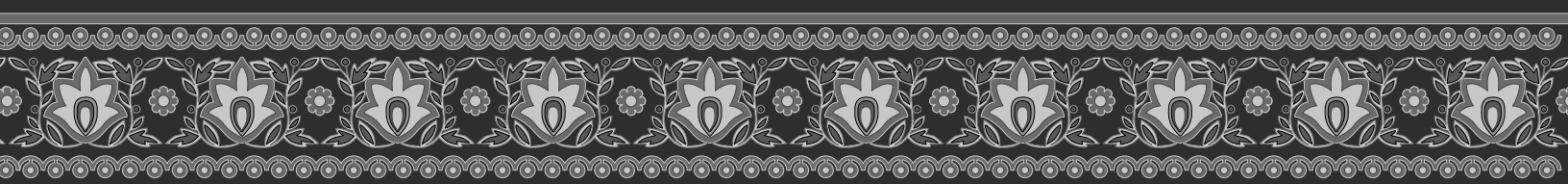
In Asia, deers are found in all milieus; forests, plains, mountains, and marshes. Deers are easily frightened, and flee rather than fight. Asian deers are smaller than their European counterpart. Males often do not have any antlers.

### Characteristics

STR	2D6+6	(13)
CON	3D6	(10-11)
SIZ	2D6+8	(15)
INT	4	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	3D6+6	(16-17)

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 13



Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
Kick	25%	1D4+db	crushing
Butt	30%	1D6+db	crushing

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

**Armour:** 1-point skin

**Skills:** Hide 65%, Jump 90%, Listen 50%, Stealth 65%, Swim 65%.

### BOARS

Boars live in forests. They are vindictive and are likely to charge when they feel menaced, especially when protecting their offspring.

#### Characteristics

STR	2D6+6 (13)
CON	3D6 (10-11)
SIZ	2D6+4 (11)
INT	4
POW	3D6 (10-11)
DEX	2D6 (7)

**Move:** 10

**Hit Points:** 11

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
Tusk	30%	1D6 +db	bleeding

*When charging, add the knockback-effect to the damage (Basic Roleplaying p. 197).*

**Damage Bonus:** None

**Armour:** 2-point skin

### IBEX

Ibex are ovine mammals with huge curved horns. They are mountain dwellers. They climb and jump from rock to rock, in ways unreachable for horses. While shy and trying at first to fly dangers, the dominant goat can attack to defend its stock. When attacking with its horns, the ibex jumps forward with all his strength and weight, possibly knock-backing its foe. They are hunted by wolves, snow leopards or brown bears. Their horns are also very appreciated by bow makers.

#### Characteristics

STR	2D6+6	(13)
CON	3D6	(10-11)
SIZ	2D+6	(13)
INT	4	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	3d6	(10-11)

**Move:** 10

**Hit points:** 12

**Damage Bonus:** +1D4

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
Head butt	30%	1D6 +db	crush + knockback

**Armour:** 1-point skin

**Skills:** Climb 80%, Jump 90%, Hide 25%, Listen 50%, Spot 50%, Dodge 45%

### TAKHI (MONGOLIAN) OR HINTAG (KYRGYZ)

#### WILD HORSE

The wild horse, nowadays known as Przewalski horse, differs from the domestic horse. It has short legs and a height of about 1m30, but with beige coat. Its dark brown mane stands erect, like the zebra's. Use the same stats as the Steppe Horse.

### OTHER SMALL MAMMALS

Stoats and Sables are hunted for their fur, but the Nomads eat any meat. Marmots are hunted mainly for their flesh.

### BIG BIRDS

A wide variety of birds can be found in the steppes. Frequently encountered big birds are Eagles, Vultures, Falcons and Herons. Kites often fly above a bivouac, ready to steal everything which may have been left by humans.

## SUPERNATURAL

## ANIMALS

### GRIFFIN

The griffin is one of the preferred motifs of Scythian and other steppe artists. It is in all ways identical to the classical griffin, as described in the *Basic Roleplaying* rules.

### THE GREAT TIGER (BAR, BARY)

The Great Tiger is the embodiment of the Great Ancestor of tigers into a huge and powerful tiger haunting the Siberian forest. It is in all ways like a Siberian tiger but with all the maximal characteristics, an INT of 24 and a POW of 25. Its Fighting skills are all at 120%, its damage bonus is +3D6 and it has some powers, as described in the spirit chapter.

The Great Tiger rarely interacts with humans, following its own mysterious way. If its

embodiment is killed, its spirit will recover for a week until it can embody again. "Killing" the Great Tiger can confer powers, as explained in the "Spirits" and "Heroes" chapters.

### WINGED HORSE (TULPAR)

They are mythical animals, favoured of Tengri. They have wings on their shoulders and can take a rider into the air or a shaman into the upper world.

**Features:** Same as steppe horses, but with no seasonal penalties, INT 3D6, POW 3D6+6

**Power:** Can take anyone to the Aiyy (20% bonus to Knowledge [Spirit World], no Power Point cost for the journey: the winged horse can take a non-shaman to the spirit world).

**Note:** regular horses with marks on the shoulders are called winged horses as well, but are standard horses and in no way Tulpar.

### HORNED SNAKE (DRAGON)

The Horned Snakes are the enemies of the giant eagles. They look like huge snakes armed with horns and with a whetted appetite. They attack like a constrictor snake (see Basic Roleplaying p. 338) plus head butt.

#### Characteristics

STR	18D6	(63)
CON	6D6	(21)
SIZ	18D6	(63)
INT	7	(7)
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)

**Move:** 6

**Hit Points:** 42

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
Head butt	65%	1D6 +db	impale)
Constrict	40%	1d6+db	crushing See Basic Roleplaying p. 338

**Damage bonus:** +7D6

**Armour:** 10 (Scale)

### GIANT EAGLE

They are offspring of Alp-Kara-Kush, the Black Eagle, which lives at the top of the Cosmic Tree. They have powers of regeneration.

#### Characteristics

STR	6-20D6	(21-70)
CON	3-6D6	(10-21)
SIZ	6-20D6	(14-70)
INT	8	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	3D6	

**Move:** 7 (12 flying)

**Hit Points:** 11-46

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
Claws*	50%	2 x 1D6 +db	bleeding
Beak	40%	1D6 +½	dbcrush

\*A giant eagle attacks with 2 claws simultaneously and hits with its beak 5 DEX rank later.

**Damage bonus:** +1-8D6

**Armour:** 6 (feathers)

*They may have up to two powers: Heal (100%, max level 4), Regeneration (as per Super Power, level INT/2)*

*Note: Black Eagle itself is far more powerful than all other creatures and will not be detailed. It is capable of carrying 40 cows in each leg! See the "Spirits" section.*



## ROCK EATER

Rock eaters look like normal rocks and are found in rocky landscape, mostly in the mountains. They can open a wide mouth anywhere on their surface and bite anyone sitting on them. The first attack is a total surprise. Big rock eaters can even swallow their prey at once.

### Characteristics

STR	3D6+12	(23-24)
CON	3D6+6	(16-17)
SIZ	4D6+18	(very dense) (32)
INT	2	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	1D6	(3-4)

**Move:** 0

**Hit Points:** 25

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
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Bite 100% 1d10 +1/2db crush

*If the size of the prey is less than 1/3 of the SIZ of the rock eater and the bite attack roll is a special success, the prey is completely swallowed at once. A swallowed victim suffers damage equal to the Rock eater's full damage modifier each turn, with no armour protection, until either the victim or the Eater is dead.*

**Damage bonus:** +2D6

**Armour:** 8 (rock)

## OLEOI-KHORRHOI

("LARGE-INTESTINE-WORM", OR "DEATH WORM")

The Mongolian death worm is a vicious predator that lives in the deserts between Mongolia and China proper. The Steppe nomads, whose economy

is extremely dependent on animal husbandry, rightly fear this creature because of its fondness for the meat of oxen, goats, and horses.

Despite its name, the Mongolian death worm looks more like a dark red snake, 50- to 150-cm long. Its head and its tail are difficult to tell from each other because the Mongolian death worm has no visible eyes, nostrils or mouth.

The Mongolian death worm moves undetected under the sand of the desert and springs out to attack its victim, by either spraying a deadly poison or acid at the victim or by emitting electrical charges. The range and the effect of these attacks is as per below.

### Characteristics

STR	2D6+6	(13)
CON	2D6+6	(13)
SIZ	1D6+1	(4-5)
INT	3	
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	2D6+3	(10)

**Move:** 8

**Hit Points:** 9

Attacks	Skill	Damage	Special
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Poison spit	75%	Poison <sup>1</sup>	—
Acid spray	75%	Acid <sup>2</sup>	—
Electrical charge	60%	Electricity <sup>3</sup>	—

**Effects:**

**1 Poison:** Range: 4m

The POT of the poison is equal to the CON of the Mongolian death worm.

**2 Acid:** Range: 6m

This is a very strong acid (see p211 of BASIC ROLEPLAYING) that corrodes anything it touches.

**3 Electricity:** Range: 6m

This causes 3D6 of damage if the target is at less than 2m; 2D6 less than 4m; 1D6 less than 6m.

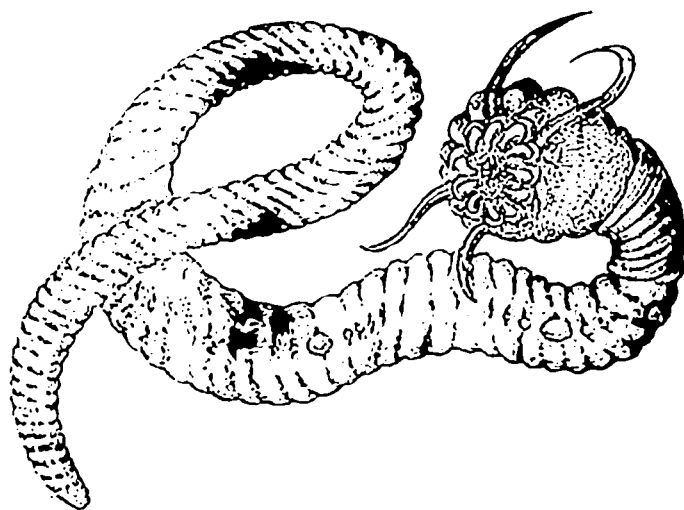
**Damage bonus:** N/A (only ranged attacks)

**Armour:** Skin 2 points

**Skills:** Stealth 75%

## GWAIWU

The Gwaiwu is a big creature believed to live in the lake Kanas in Southern Altai. Nobody has spotted it directly. Is it a giant carnivore 10-meter fish, or a giant snake, or an incarnated local lake spirit? Is it unique, or is there a full family or herd? And do they have relatives in other lakes? Or may it be simply a water elemental trying to scare visitors to protect the lake? The GM is free to invent his own story.



## Wonderful Humanoids

Their powers are more like natural abilities than learned magic. If not otherwise specified, these creatures can use their magical powers at a basic chance of 100%.

### Creatures from the Subterranean World

#### Giants

Giants are the cannibalistic lords of the underworld. Their skill ranges are widely varying, from low experienced giants to kings, warriors or heroes who may have superhuman skill ranges above 100%. Giants rarely use magic.

##### Characteristics

STR	10d6 +18	(53)
CON	6D6+18	(39)
SIZ	10D6 +18	(53)
INT	2D6+6	(13)
3D6	POW	(10-11)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)
APP	3D6	(10-11)

Move: 12

Hit Points: 46



Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
Heavy club (trunk) crushing	50%	3D6 +db*+ knockback	
Brawl	60%	1D6 +db*+ knockback	—
Throw huge rock crushing	35%	2D6 + ½db*	
*Average			
<b>Damage bonus:</b> +6D6			
<b>Armour:</b> (skin) 8 to 15 (see BASIC ROLEPLAYINGS p. 344) plus whatever armour they managed to have made.			
<b>Skills (average):</b> Sense 60%, Spot 40%, Throw 35%			

#### Jelmoghouz

They are human ogres of various shapes, some with 7 heads, one eye, three arms. The GM is free to improvise, but Jelmoghouz basically remain humanoids. They also have telluric powers (earth magic, sleep magic) and a superhuman strength. They are very fast.

##### Characteristics

STR	4D6 +12	(26)
CON	1D6+12	(15-16)
SIZ	3D6 +6	(16-17)
INT	2D6+6	(13)
POW	4D6	(14)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)
APP	2D6	(7)

Move: 10

Hit Points: 16

huge rock1D4 Powers (suggested):

**Sorcery:** Conjure elemental (gnome), Gift of the Earth, Sorcerer's armour

**Magic INTx5%:** Wall (stone or earth), Sleep (the target sleeps for 10 rounds if a POW vs. POW roll is successful)

**Super Powers (level INT/2):** Barrier (of stone or earth)

#### Cyclopes

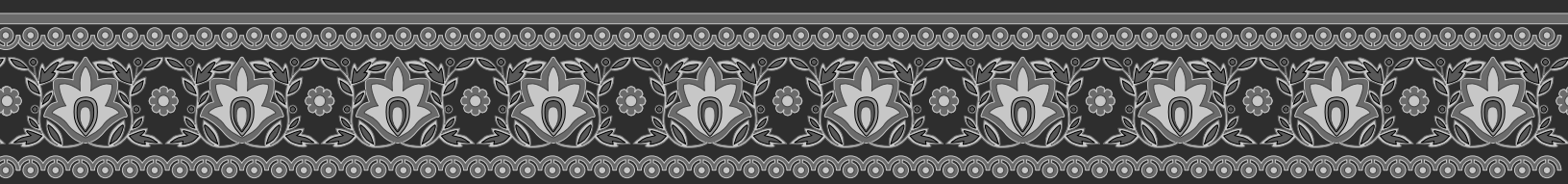
Sub-race of one-eyed giants, they form troops for the giant lords.

##### Characteristics

STR	4D6 +12	(26)
CON	1D6+12	(15-16)
SIZ	4D6 +12	(26)
INT	2D6	(7)
3D6	POW	(10-11)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)
APP	2D6	(7)

Move: 9

Hit Points: 21



Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
2-handed war maul	40%	1D10+2 +db	crush + knockback
Heavy club	50%	1D8+ db	crush
Large round shield	40%	hp/ap 22	
<b>Damage bonus:</b> +2D6			
<b>Armour:</b> 1 point skin plus any armour			

### **MASITIS**

A kind of human-sized pixies, each with a special ability at a superhuman level: sight, speed, light, sound. These abilities are usually related to a sense or a human ability. Mastitis are enemies of the giants, whose yoke they wish to be freed from. They are friendly to people who help them.

#### **Characteristics**

STR	3D6	(10-11)
CON	3D6	(10-11)
SIZ	2D6+3	(10)
INT	2D6+6	(13)
POW	2D6+6	(13)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)
APP	3D6	(10-11)

**Move:** 8

**Hit Points:** 11

**Attacks:** usually not armed

**Damage bonus:** None

**Armour:** None

**Powers:** an average Mastitis has a power chosen from the super power list at a level equal to half its INT (round up). Suggested powers: Enhance STR, Energy Control (light, sonic), Sidekick, Super Movement, Super Sense (various), Super Skill (Spot, Listen, Sense, various -usually neither a fighting nor a Knowledge Skill),

## **CREATURES OF THE SURFACE WORLD**

### **PERI (FAERIES)**

Peri are female magical creatures with many great powers like invisibility, charm, teleportation, divination, or passion control. They look like very beautiful women and can be very romantic. And vindictive.

#### **Characteristics**

STR	2D6+3	(10)
CON	3D6	(10-11)
SIZ	2D6+3	(10)
INT	4D6	(14)
POW	3D6+6	(16-17)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)
APP	3D6+6	(16-17)

**Move:** 8

**Hit Points:** 11

**Attacks:** no weapons

**Damage bonus:** None

**Armour:** None

**Skills (suggested):** First Aid, Fast Talk, Insight, Knowledge [various], Medicine, Perform [sing] 40%, Persuade, Sense.

**3D3 powers (suggested):**

**Sorcery:** Sorcerer's Beauty, Sorcerer's Armor, Liken Shape, Muddle, Unbreakable Bonds, Ward, Undo Sorcery, Heal  
**Psychic Abilities:** Dead Calm, Emotion Control, Empathy, Telepathy

**Magic (INTx5%):** Countermagic, Control, Dispel, Enhance (APP), Heal, Illusion, Invisibility, Protection, Resistance, Teleport, Ward

**Allegiance:** Animism 3D20, Tengriism 1D10

### **PITSEN**

The Pitsen are Wood Spirit from Siberia. They can take different animal or human shapes, although their true aspect is an ugly humanoid with long nails, fur and a horn on its forehead. When trying to lure humans and marry then, they adopt the form of a beautiful young woman, but must impose a taboo to its victim. If the man discovers the true nature of his wife or if the taboo is broken, so does the Liken Shape spell.

#### **Characteristics**

Use the stats of a human with a POW of 3D6+6

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
Head butt	25%	1d6 +db	impale
<b>Skills:</b> Knowledge (Natural History –woods and forests) 60%, Knowledge (region –woods) 75%, Stealth 50%, Hide 50%. <b>Sorcery spell:</b> Liken Shape, with expended spell duration of <b>POW days; Magic spell:</b> Illusion <b>Allegiance:</b> Animism 3D20, Tengriism 1D6-2			

### **SHURALE**

Forest Goblins found in the vast taiga that stretches to the north of the Steppe, Shurale can be encountered at the fringes of the forests, either in the taiga itself or on the steppe nearby.

They are small, long-fingered women who lurk in the forest looking for foolish young men who fall asleep alone. They creep to the young man's sleeping blanket and ride him, tickling him with their long fingers until he can take no more and dies.

They also love to sneak into nomad camps beside the forest and to ride horses in their sleep, riding them to exhaustion until they wake covered in sweat. To non-magical eyes, the horses seem to be shivering during this ride as the Shurale hides amongst its hair. In the cold

nights, such a horse may find itself covered in ice, as the sweat freezes, possibly proving fatal.

A Shurale can blend in to the forests without being seen and can move through the forests without being heard.

Those people who know the forests and know the ways of the Shurale will know that they can defeat her by beating her with a whip or a knotted rope.

### Characteristics

STR	3D6	(10-11)
CON	2D6+6	(10-11)
SIZ	1D6+6	(9-10)
INT	2D6+6	(13)
POW	2D6+6	(13)
DEX	2D6+6	(13)
APP	4D6	(14)

**Move:** 8

**Hit Points:** 10



**Attacks:** Not armed, but can tickle a man to death. Every round the Shurale tickles a man, he needs to make a Luck Roll. If he succeeds, he may act normally. If he fails he is incapacitated by the tickling and the Shurale can use its Drain power on him. If he fumbles, he can't resist the tickle anymore and the Shurale can drain his Hit Points to death.

A Shurale can charm a man into not attacking her by matching her APP versus his INT.

**Damage bonus:** None

**Armour:** None

**Skills:** Knowledge (natural history –woods and forests) 60%, Knowledge (region –woods) 75%, Ride 50%, Stealth 95%, Hide 95%.

**Magic spell:** Invisibility. 90%.

**Powers:** Drain hit points, 1st level (see Basic Roleplaying p.152).

**Allegiance:** Animism 10D6, Tengriism 1D6-2

### OTHER SPECIES

#### ALMAS (« WILD MAN »)

Almas are shy humanoid creatures living in the Altai and Tien Shen mountains, but are said to live in Caucasus as well. They avoid contact with humans. They look like small yetis. They use rudimentary tools and clothes and are related to the Chuchuna (see below).

### Characteristics

STR	3D6	(10-11)
CON	3D6	(10-11)
SIZ	2D6+6	(13)
INT	3D6	(10-11)
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)
APP	2D6	(7)

**Move:** 8

**Hit Points:** 12

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
Heavy club	25%	1D8+db	crushing

**Damage Bonus:** None

**Armour:** Shaggy fur 1 point + may wear stolen armour

**Skills:** Craft (crude implements) 25%, Dodge 30%, Grapple 30%, Hide 25%, Knowledge (own region) 75%, Science (Natural History) 65%, Spot 40%, Stealth 60%, Throw 45%, Track 45%.

**Power:** Whatever spell an Almas knows will have been taught him by some "master" it serves/worships. Chose among the shaman magic spells or among powers from natural spirits.

**Allegiance:** Roll 1d100: 1-60, Animism 10D6. 61-90 Ancestors 5D6, 90-00 Tengriism 3D6





## CHUCHUNA

Chuchunas are the Siberian equivalent of the Yeti. They live in Eastern Siberia and are rather peaceful while scary. They are 2m tall, have a dark skin under a dark fur and may wear animal furs and skins as clothes. They use rudimentary tools and weapons to hunt reindeer. Like their smaller cousins from the mountains, they tend to avoid contact with humans.

### Characteristics

STR	3D6	(10-11)
CON	3D6	(10-11)
SIZ	1D6+13	(16-17)
INT	3D6	(10-11)
POW	3D6	(10-11)
DEX	3D6	(10-11)
APP	2D6	(7)

**Move:** 8

**Hit Points:** 12

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
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Heavy club	25%	1D8+db	crushing
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Self bow	35%	1D6+1 +1/2db	impale
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**Damage Bonus:** None

**Armour:** Shaggy fur 1 point + may wear stolen armour

**Skills:** Craft (crude implements) 25%, Dodge 30%, Grapple 40%, Hide 25%, Knowledge (own region) 75%, Knowledge (Natural History) 65%, Spot 40%, Stealth 50%, Throw 45%, Track 45%.

**Allegiance:** Animism 10D6



## 9. PEOPLES AND TRIBES



**T**his chapter presents some of the most significant peoples and tribes belonging to the steppe nomads, until the decline of the Mongol Empire. These nations are generally composed of a federation of Turkic, Mongolian, Tungus and sometimes European tribes, united by force or alliances under the domination of one tribe. The subject tribes usually revolted when the empires showed signs of weakness, which contributed to their collapse.

Almost all the empires contained subdued sedentary kingdoms, where the

population was much denser than in the steppe. As a consequence, the ruling nomads were a minority in their own domain, often representing only a tiny part of the whole population. This explains why, at least in those parts of their empires, the nomads quickly adopted many aspects of the local cultures.

This chapter is by no means a comprehensive study of nomadic peoples, but of general features. A GM willing to further develop a tribe should make his own researches.

## 3<sup>RD</sup> CENTURY BC - 4<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AD

### HSIUNG-NU (XIONGNUM) EMPIRE (-209 TO 48)

The Hsiung-nu is a federation of Turkish tribes from the region of the Ötüken in the Altai, which became an empire under Mindu Chanyu (Mòdú Chányú) in -209 BCE. They organized their Empire into two wings headed "Sage King of the Left," in the East, heir to the empire, and "Sage King of the Right" to the west, both remaining under the authority of the Chányú (king). In 201 BC, they settled in the Ordos. Their expansion led to the development of a network of defensive fortifications in northern China, a forerunner of the future Great Wall.

In 44BC, the two kingdoms split. The Westerners invaded Sogdiana.

In 48, the Eastern Hsiung-nu split up again between the Northerners and Southerners (8 tribes), with the Southerners eventually being absorbed by China and the Northerners by the Xiānběi. Between 308 and 350 AD, the Hsiung-nu founded a succession of small states that came and went, sometime strong enough to impose a nomad king in North China.

**Culture:** Tengriist nomads with Greco-Bactrian influence over Sogdiana. They have an engraved runic writing of Sogdian inspiration. They bear a tuft or a braid of long hair.

**Allegiances :** Tengriism common, Animism, Ancestors, Mazdeism, Taoism uncommon

**Skills:** Literacy [Chinese] 0% for diplomatic activities or administration.

**Equipment:** no stirrups, no saddle, only leather armour.

## 5<sup>TH</sup>-10<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY AD

### WESTERN HUNS (370-469 AD)

The Huns, probably of Turkic origin, appeared in the 4<sup>th</sup> century AD north of the Black Sea, having come from the vast steppe after the fall of the **Hsiung-nu** Empire. They conquered the Alans and fought with the Ostrogoths and Visigoths and raided the Eastern Roman Empire. Under the rule of Attila and his brother Bleda, they often raided deep into the Eastern Roman Empire and, after Bleda's death, conquered Thrace. When Honoria, sister of Valentinian III, Western Roman Emperor, sent him a ring and asked him to rescue her from betrothal to an aged senator, Attila invaded the Western Roman Empire, conquering Germania and part of Gaul, but turned back instead of sacking Rome. He died in 453 of a nosebleed on his wedding night. His empire was broken into parts, the western portion was defeated by the Gepids, whilst the Balkans became the Western Bulgars and the eastern portion became Great Bulgaria.

The Huns preferred the bow, javelin and spear. It is also reported that they used lassoes to entangle their opponents. They had fine and straight swords and knives and used no shields. They bore a tuft or a braid of long hair.

**Ancestral Heroes:** Chúnwéi

**Allegiances:** Tengriism common, Animism and Ancestors uncommon

**Skills:** Speak [Gothic]

150 BC



### **TABGACH (214-534 AD)**

Originally Turkic nomads living in the present-day Shānxī province under the domination of the Xiōngnú and the Xiānbēi, they became independent in 386 AD, founded the Wèi Kingdom in North China under their ruler Tuǒbá Kouei and adopted Chinese civilization. Their relations with the Chinese were friendly and they formed a buffer between China and the Avar Empire and slowly became sinicised. In 534 AD they split into an Eastern and a Western kingdom which were dismissed in 550 resp. 557.

**Culture:** Tengriist nomads, slowly becoming sinicised.

**Skills:** standard.

Literacy [Chinese] becomes increasingly important.

### **AVARS (RUANRUAN, ROURAN) (277-552 AD).**

The Avars built a nomadic kingdom in northern China in 402. They were nomads of the steppes belonging to the Mongolic tribes. Their expansion toward China faced the Tabgach, nomadic horsemen like them, from whom they underwent preventive devastating raids. Their Empire would eventually be destroyed in 552 by the Köktürk.

**Ancestral heroes:** Yujiulü Mokolü

**Allegiances:** Tengriism, Animism, Ancestors common

### **HEPHTALITE HUNS (2<sup>ND</sup>-8<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES AD)**

Very little is known about the Hephthalite, also known as the White Huns: it is even disputed whether they were Indo-European or Altaic. Originating north of the Great Wall, the Hephthalites founded a kingdom between the Himalayas and Persia. Their empire lasted from the 479 to the 8<sup>th</sup> Century AD, but varied widely in size. They displaced the Scythians, conquered parts of Persia and entered India. The Hephthalites were Buddhists and their cities had many monasteries. They perpetrated however

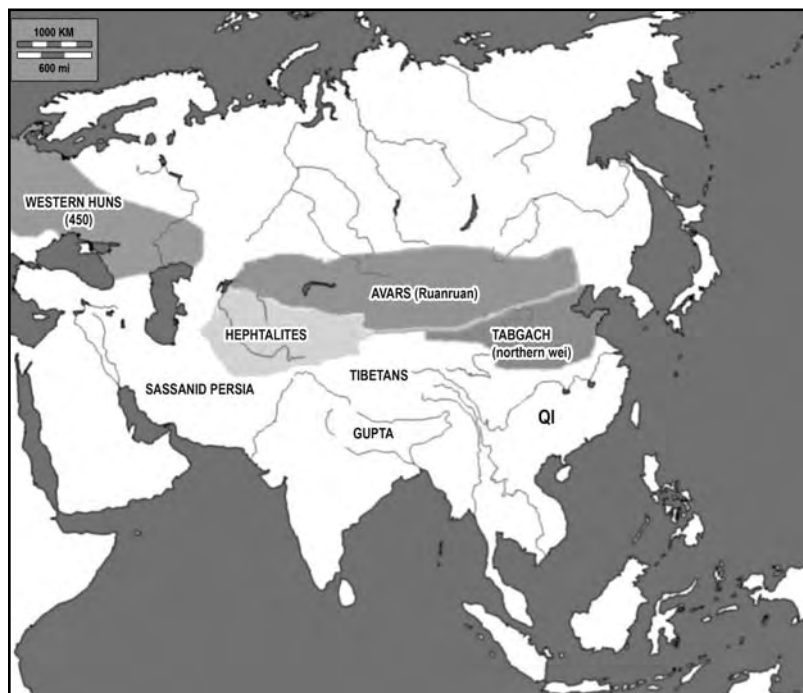
huge massacres in North India despite their claimed religious beliefs. They had good relations with the neighbouring Avars.

### **KÖKTÜRK (BLUE TURKS, TUJUE) (5<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TO 740 AD)**

The Köktürk (also written Göktürk), or “Blue Turks”, originating from the Altai, were former vassals of the Avars who used their blacksmithing skills. In 546 AD, Bumin Qaghan led a strike against the Uyghur and Töläch (or Tiele) tribes which were planning to rise against the Avars and in return he expected an Avar princess as a bride, but the Avar Qaghan Anagui replied “You are my blacksmith, slave, how dare you utter such words?”. He rebelled and defeated the Avars in 552 AD, becoming Illig Qaghan, but died a year later. Their empire reached the Byzantine Empire and together they allied against the Persian Sassanids.

Like the Hsiung-nu they organized their empire into two wings: the left (East) wing directly ruled by the Qaghan and the right (West) one, ruled by a *Yabghu*. The two wings quickly became hostile. The eastern kingdom faced internal dissension and the threat of the Khitan on its eastern border and fell under the thumb of the newly raised Chinese

450-500 AD



T'ang dynasty between 630 and 680. The eastern wing later revolted against the Chinese and re-established the empire for a brief period, until the Uyghur and Basmyl alliance destroyed it in 740.

**Mythical ancestors:** long ago, a clan was massacred by enemies who left only one child alive. This child was raised by the she-wolf Asema, sent by Tengri. Once adult, he mated with the she-wolf which gave birth to 10 sons. These are the ancestors of the Türks. One of them, named Ashina, founded the clan the Khans issue from.

**Culture:** nomadic horsemen (horses and camels). They wear their hair long and free. The Golden Wolf serves as a golden emblem on the tug.

**Allegiance:** Tengriism, Animism, Ancestors common, Zoroastrianism, Mazdaism and Nestorianism (in the west) uncommon, Buddhism, Taoism (in the east) uncommon

**Skills:** The blacksmith profession gets INT bonus skill points to affect any primary skills or Allegiance [Ancestors]. Blacksmiths can make a metal object as a receptacle of a soul (see Chapter Four "Shamans").

Warriors include infantry mounted on camels.

Language [Sogdian] and limited Litteracy [Sogdian] as lingua Franca and later Chinese in the Eastern Empire

**Preferred weapons:** bow, sword, spear, metal armour.

## UYGHUR (587- 10<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY).

Like most of the Turkic tribes, the Uyghur hailed from the Altai. Originating from the Töläch (Tiele) tribes, they gathered around the Khan Tarbagatai and revolted against the Köktürk. They migrated to Mongolia to build an empire in 744 under the rule of Iltimis Kutluq Bilge-Kül. They ruled from the city of Ordu-Baliq (or Qara-Balgassum) for nearly a hundred years before being overrun by the Kyrgyz in 840 after a civil war which had weakened them. They split into three states, all of which eventually submitted to the Mongols of Genghis Khan.

They were enemies of the Köktürks whom they fought alongside China, as mercenaries or as allies.

**Culture:** nomadic horsemen and camel riders. They progressively absorbed the Central Asian cultures. Ordu Balik was built on the site of the Köktürk capital. It covered 25 square kilometres and had 10 metre walls with 12 and 14 metre towers and twelve iron gates, so it was highly fortified. On the top of a hill was the 30 metre high Golden Yurt, where the Khagan lived and held court.

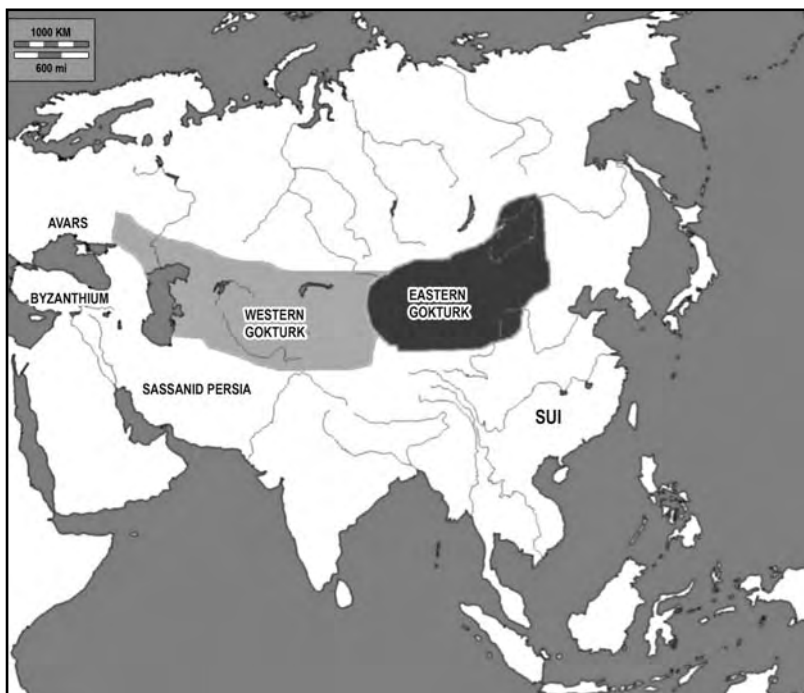
After their settlement in the west of China in 842, the Karakhoja Uyghur developed a brilliant culture famous for its literature and medicine. They changed their religion several times before permanently converting to Islam in the end.

**Allegiance:** Before 762, Tengriism, Animism, Ancestors common, Buddhism and Nestorianism uncommon.

After 762, Animism, Ancestors, Buddhism and Manichaeism common, Tengriism and Nestorianism uncommon

After 1000, Islam common, Animism, Manichaeism, Nestorianism and Buddhism uncommon, Tengriism has disappeared.

600 AD



**Skills:** Before settling down - standard; After settling down - language, literature and Literacy [Uyghur] [Arabic] [Persian] [Chinese].

**Professions:** access to clerical professions of religions.

### KYRGYZ (8<sup>TH</sup> - 16<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)

The Kyrgyz were originally a clan whose leader, Manas, was able to unify various Turkish tribes along the upper Yenisei valley. The Kyrgyz are a union of forty tribes. The Chinese describe them as having red hair and blue eyes, suggesting an Indo-European ethnic origin, but they might have referred to slaves. They were the major players in the fall of the Uyghur in Mongolia whom they replaced in the top-Orkhon in 840, before being expelled by the Khitai in 924. They then returned to their places of origin. The Kyrgyz kept a fierce desire for independence: they rebelled several times against the Mongols under Genghis Khan to be finally pacified in 1399. In the 16th Century, they migrated to current Kyrgyzstan, where they still live. Those who remained in Siberia are called Khakas.

**Mythical ancestors:** 40 girls impregnated by 40 dogs

**Culture:** Nomadic and Sedentary. The Kyrgyz also build houses and forts from the 8th century. They include nomadic riders, reindeer herders and hunters of the Taiga, and even farmers. They have a variant of the runic script. They remain true to their traditional beliefs, despite outside influences, and maintain their mythology by epics (called *manas* -named after the founder), narrated by storytellers, or *Manasha*.

**Preferred weapons:** bow, curved sword, curved dagger.

**Allegiance:** Tengriism, Animism and ancestors common. Buddhism and Islam rare. After their migration, Islam common, Animism and ancestors uncommon. The Khakas remain Tengriist Animists.

**Features:** a player can choose to play a "Caucasian"-looking Kyrgyz, in which case his

SIZ is 2d6 +6, but will be very recognisable among the other Asian nomads.

The Kyrgyz are impregnated with shamanism. With dogs as ancestors, their shamans may enter into an alliance with a spirit dog as an ancestor, not just as a guardian spirit.

**Skills:** Knowledge [Manas]. The *Manas* is a corpus of over 200 000 verses telling Kyrgyz epics, recited by *Manasha* bards, but they embellish and add to the telling, permanently altering its form. Can help to find inspiring examples in the epic to convince an audience.

Craft [Agriculture]

**Professions:** Siberian hunter and reindeer herder are available for Kyrgyz living in their original territory.

**New Profession:** Manashi (Bard).

**Primary Skills:** Perform [Storytelling], Knowledge [Manas], Perform [Instrument], Perform [Chant], Perform [Acting].

**Secondary Skills:** Insight, Listen, Persuade, Fast Talk.



800 AD





### **AVARS - EUROPEAN (6<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY TO 803 CE)**

The Avars were a confederation of European and Turkic tribes in the south of the Aral Sea who migrated westwards, following the Huns. They are unrelated to the Asian Avars. In the sixth century, the Avars expanded again and Qaghan Bayan founded a khanate.

They ruled an area from present day Austria to the shores of the Black Sea. They were eventually defeated by the Köktürks, the Franks, the Magyars and the Bulgars. They are said to have introduced the stirrups in Europe.

### **KHAZARS (6<sup>TH</sup> - 10<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)**

Rulers of a powerful empire between the Black and Caspian Seas from the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries AD, the Khazars had been under the control of the Huns, but broke away after that empire fell apart. The Khazars were Tengriist Animists, with some Chinese influences. Their nobility converted to Judaism in the 9<sup>th</sup> Century.

The Khazars were ruled by a Qaghan being a spiritual or titular head and the Bek

being the military and administrative head. The Empire was eventually destroyed by the Kievan Rus in the 10<sup>th</sup> Century.

### **10<sup>TH</sup> - 13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES AD**

### **KHITAT (LIAO) KINGDOM (9<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY-1125)**

Khitat or Khitan (Qidān) are Mongolic tribes from the north-east of modern China (Jehol). Originally they included eight tribes whose leaders led the federation in turn. They were in conflicts with the Köktürk and China in the 8<sup>th</sup> century. In 907, Yelü Abaoji, of the tribe of Yelü, became Khan of the empire and founded the Liáo dynasty in North China. The empire was split into a Southern Chancellery and a Northern Chancellery. The Southern Chancellery was ruled in Chinese style and had a capital at modern-day Beijing. The Northern Chancellery was ruled in steppe-nomad style. They built a capital at Shàngjīngin, in modern-day eastern Inner Mongolia and about thirty cities. They were defeated by the Jurchen.

Allegiance: Before the foundation of the empire – Animism, Ancestors and Tengriism common, Buddhism as well after the conversion. Then:

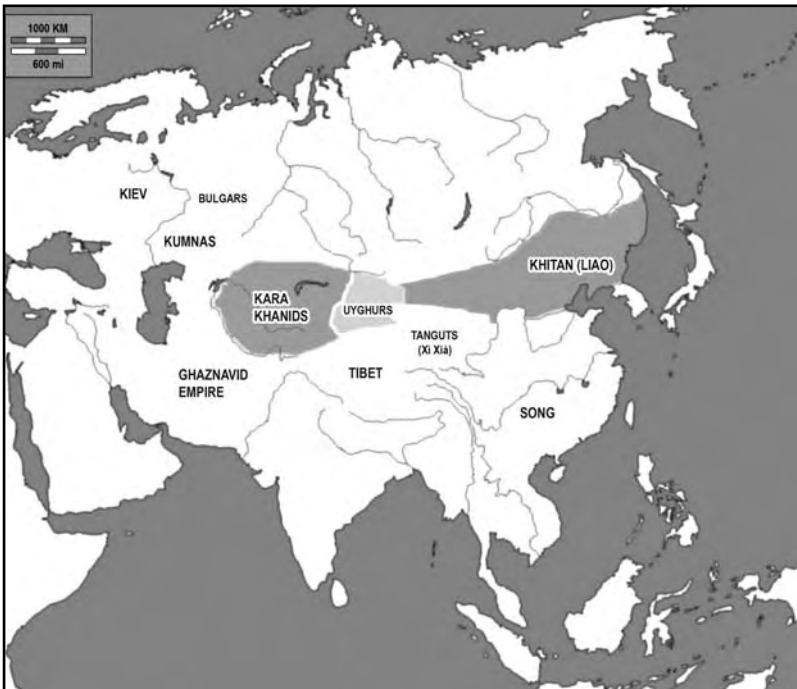
- Northern Khitat: Buddhism, Ancestors and Animism common, uncommon Tengriism
- Southern Khitat: use *The Celestial Empire* instead.

### **KARA KHANID (840 - 1212)**

They are Turks that issued from an alliance between the remaining tribes from the former Uyghur federation and the Karluks. They subdued western Turks and finally conquered Transoxiana.

### **KIMAKS (5<sup>TH</sup> - 10<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY)**

Nomads living along the Irtysh River in Siberia, they established after the collapse of the Uyghur in 840AD an empire stretching from east of the Urals to the Altai over the northern Silk Road.



1025 AD



## **KARAKHITAI**

The Khitai fled the Jurchen invasion and set up a new empire in 1124 in Central Asia and Transoxiana where they resumed a nomadic lifestyle. The Mongols conquered them in 1221.

## **OGHUZ**

By the 10<sup>th</sup> Century, the Oghuz, or Western Turks ruled lands stretching from Lake Balkhash to the Ural river. They slowly converted to Islam in and after the 11<sup>th</sup> Century AD.

## **SELJUKS**

An offshoot of the Oghuz under Seljuk Bey converted to Islam and formed in the 11<sup>th</sup> century a powerful empire that bordered on the Byzantines in the West to China in the East. The Empire was split amongst four brothers, forming four Sultanates., which were eventually defeated by the Mongols.

## **JURCHEN (JURCHET) (5<sup>TH</sup> -12<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES)**

The Jurchen are Tungus from northern Manchuria. They were originally Tengriist Animists, but also worshipped a supreme Sky Goddess called Abka Hehe and adopted Buddhism in 1109. They founded the Jin Dynasty in 1115 and invaded the Liáo (Khitai) kingdom until 1125 and northern China in 1126. They were quickly Sinicized, at least the ruling class and despite some traditionalist reactions. They fell under the blows of the Mongols of Ögödei after 29 years of war. Their descendants are the Manchus. The Jurchen like to shave their heads.

**Culture:** nomadic horsemen and sinicisation under the Jin dynasty (1125-1206).

**Allegiance:** before their conversion to Buddhism, Tengriism (in the form of the local sky-goddess), Ancestors and Animism common. Then Buddhism becomes uncommon.

**Armament:** curved sabre, other standard weapons

**Time period 1125-1234:** The sinicisation is quick and the late Jurchen are out of the scope of this book.

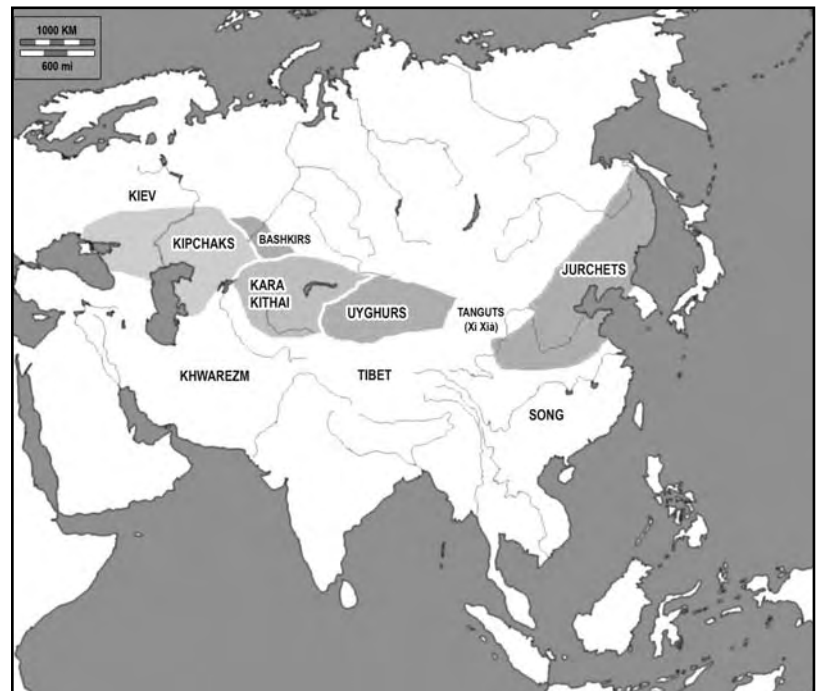
## **THE MONGOL EMPIRE (1206-1368) AND MONGOL KHANATES**

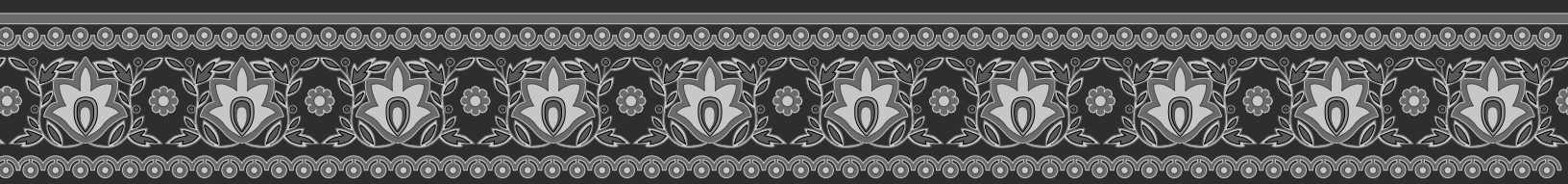
### **MONGOLS**

The Mongols are composed of a group of nomad clans from north-eastern China and northern Mongolia: Bordjigin, Qonggirat, Jujirat, Jalair, Barlas... They were united by Qaidu Khan, in the eleventh century. The Mongols are related to a collection of Mongolian and Turkic tribes, including the Tatars, Kerait, Naiman, Merck and Öngüt, with the final four having been partially Christianized. All these tribes are finally united under the banner of the Mongol Temujin, a descendant of Qaidu. He is proclaimed Qaghan and is called Genghis Khan during a *Quriltai* (assembly) in 1206 and begins the conquest of the world on behalf of Tengri.

Genghis Khan began the conquest of the kingdom run by the Jin Jurchen, then launched his horsemen into Central Asia to conquer the various tribes (Kyrgyz, Tumen, Karakitai) and invade the Muslim empires of the Middle East, and into Eastern Europe where he conquered those nomadic tribes

1200 AD





already installed there. Genghis Khan unified all the people “who lived under the tents” under the rule of the Mongols to build a vast continental empire, reaching Eastern Europe. His successor Ögödei expanded the empire to the largest one ever seen on Earth. He founded the capital Karakorum. Mongols conquered south China and founded the Yuan dynasty. At the very end of the century, the empire split into four khanates: **Chagatai, Il, Golden Horde, Yuán.** The Yuán dynasty eventually fell in 1368.

The “Genghiskhanide” Mongols gathered almost all the nomadic tribes of Asia together. The members of the Mongol tribe itself played a dominant role.

The Mongol empire was well organised but politically fragile. Genghis Khan formed a magnificent and disciplined fighting machine, strengthened the law and systematised it. The conquests were managed efficiently and without scruple: prisoners were often killed out of hand, for example, but administrators were valued for their skills and craftsmen exiled en masse to the capital Karakorum, a real cosmopolitan city. Capital of the Mongols, Karakorum was a great city of Mongolia. Built by Ögödei Khan, it had great walls and had a silver tree in the centre, which housed its totem spirit.

The empire was connected by an efficient postal relay system. It is said it was possible for a rider to safely carry gold across all the great empire of Kublai Khan. The Mongols were able to quickly absorb the contributions of the kingdoms they conquered by finding the skills they lacked among the conquered populations.

**Ancestors:** Blue Wolf and Doe Fawn

**Allegiance:** Tengriism, Animism and Ancestors common. After the expansion, Nestorianism, Taoism and Buddhism uncommon.

**For Merck and Merkit:** Tengriism Animism and Ancestors common, Nestorianism uncommon.

**For Öngüts and Naiman:** Nestorianism, Animism and Ancestors common, Tengriism uncommon. Naiman were known for being led by shamans.

## ***THE GOLDEN HORDE*** ***(ALTIN URDA)***

The Golden Horde was actually the north-western part of the Mongol Empire and was ruled by descendants of Genghis Khan. After its defeat against Tamerlane in 1396, the Golden Horde disintegrated slowly during the 15<sup>th</sup> century, its components (Kipchaks, Tatars...) returning to an independent life or being assimilated by their conquerors.

The Golden Horde converted to Islam with Öz-Beg Khan in 1313.

## ***KIPCHAKS AND CUMANS*** ***(FROM 2ND CENTURY)***

The Kipchaks originate from the Dingling tribe on the Yrtish River. They wandered westward and founded the Kipchak Khanate in the 10<sup>th</sup> century CE. Their empire stretched from Lake Balkhash to the Black Sea. They were defeated by the Mongols and were absorbed into their Empire, forming the main component of the Golden Horde. Many Kipchaks retained their Tengriist beliefs, but many converted to Christianity and many to Islam. The Kipchaks were allied with the Cumans.

Occupying the steppes north of the Black Sea, the Cumans moved into Crimea and into Hungary, being seen as enemies of Byzantine and Rus. They moved to present-day Moldavia and Wallachia and defended those countries from the invading Pechenegs. With the Mongol threat, the Cumans themselves moved into Hungary and Bulgaria, having been progressively defeated in the Mongol advance. Many Cumans converted to Christianity when they moved to Hungary, Wallachia and Bulgaria. Those that remained on the steppe retained their Tengriist beliefs or converted to Islam.

Cuman men usually had long moustaches and often shaved the tops of their heads. Both men and women braided their hair into long plaits. They wore long hats made from felt.

Kipchaks and Cuman warriors wore full-face helmets, formed into terrifying visages.

## **TATARS** **(FROM 13<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY IN EUROPE)**

The Tatars set up their own Khanates following the destruction of the Golden Horde, forming the Crimean Khanate, the Kazan Khanate, Astrakhan Khanate and the Khanate of Sibir. The Tatars of Sibir were shamanic Tengriists, those of the Crimea and Volga had converted to Islam, but retained distinct animist traditions.

## **TIMURID EMPIRE (1370-1405)**

Timur-Lenk (Tamerlane), a Turkic-Mongolian Khan from the Barlas tribe in Transoxania, sought to restore the Mongolian empire. He fought the Golden Horde for almost 20 years and died before marching against China.

The Timurid Empire belongs to the Islamic Kingdoms, including some nomadic minorities.

## **THE SILK ROAD**

Established by Chinese merchants and the Han Dynasty of China, the Silk Road was the most important trade route of Central Asia, linking China with India, Persia, the Roman and Byzantine Empires and the kingdoms of Christendom.

Rather than being an actual road, the Silk Road was more a collection of routes by which merchants could travel. They went from oasis to oasis, from caravanserai to caravanserai, braving the deserts, steppes and mountains along the way. Very few merchants travelled the whole of the Silk Road, instead they passed their goods along to other merchants who travelled their own stretch, constantly increasing the cost of the goods carried.

Chinese armies regularly travelled the Silk Road and built forts to control the trade route. Chinese governors ruled these cities and controlled access to the Silk Road itself. Not every oasis town has a fort, but those which do have a well-managed, well-supplied fort staffed with professional soldiers.

The nomad empires realised very early on that control of the Silk Road meant control of an abundance of taxes, from the merchants and the oases and caravanserais, as well as controlling the passage of armies through their territory, for they could ride freely on the steppes but their foes had to hop across the well-defined routes.

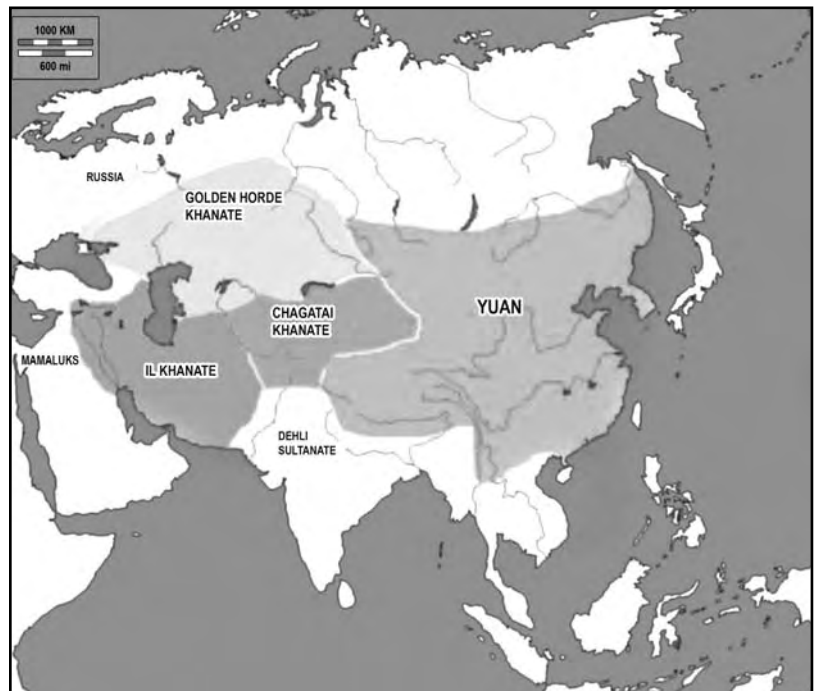
Also, the Silk Road provided many opportunities for enterprising nomads. Many nomads raided the caravans for their trade goods. Nomads could be hired as caravan guards, or as cavalry units to keep bandits in check. Many role-playing scenarios can focus on young naïve nomads arriving in an oasis or trade town on the Silk Road and playing on their sense of wonder at the things they can see.

## **CARAVANS**

Travelling the Silk Road, and other overland trade routes, could be dangerous. So, the best way to travel was in a caravan, along with other merchants.

Rich merchants could make a caravan themselves. Others, though, might only have a couple of camels, horses and a few guards and would have made easy pickings for a

1300 AD



small nomad band. Many small groups would join together to form a large caravan, others joined larger caravans, at a price negotiated with the merchant.

Caravans consisted of groups of horses, mules and camels with their attendants and guards. Some of the camels and horses carried the trade goods while others carried water and food, especially where there were no Caravanserai for many days as the route crossed deserts.

A large caravan could have as many as 500 camels or horses, but these were relatively rare. Caravans normally consisted of between 50 and 100 camels or horses, with their attendants and guards, but even those could have 30 or 40 people.

### **CARAVANSERAI**

Dotted regularly along the Silk Road, each a day's journey from the last, are a series of Caravanserai, or Caravan Houses. These normally took the form of a large building with a single gate and an internal courtyard, surrounding the courtyard are small stables for housing animals and surrounding those are lodging quarters for the merchants and their employees.

Merchants could buy supplies, feed and water their animals, trade with the locals and hire new guards, so the Caravanserai was a centre of trade and local knowledge.

Some Caravanserai had animal pens on the outside, especially when times were busy, but these provided little protection from raiding nomads, so were used by the very late or the very desperate. Within the fortified walls, the caravans would be safe from nomad attacks, at least until the food and water held out. Normally, besieged merchants only had to wait for a day for other caravans to arrive and for their guards to drive off the nomads.

### **OBSTACLES TO THE SILK ROAD**

The Silk Road faced many obstacles. It passed through or past many types of terrain, from steppes to deserts to mountain ranges. Sometimes it had to be diverted to avoid the most difficult conditions. At other times, merchants preferred to use a longer safer journey rather than risk a long desert route with few stops.

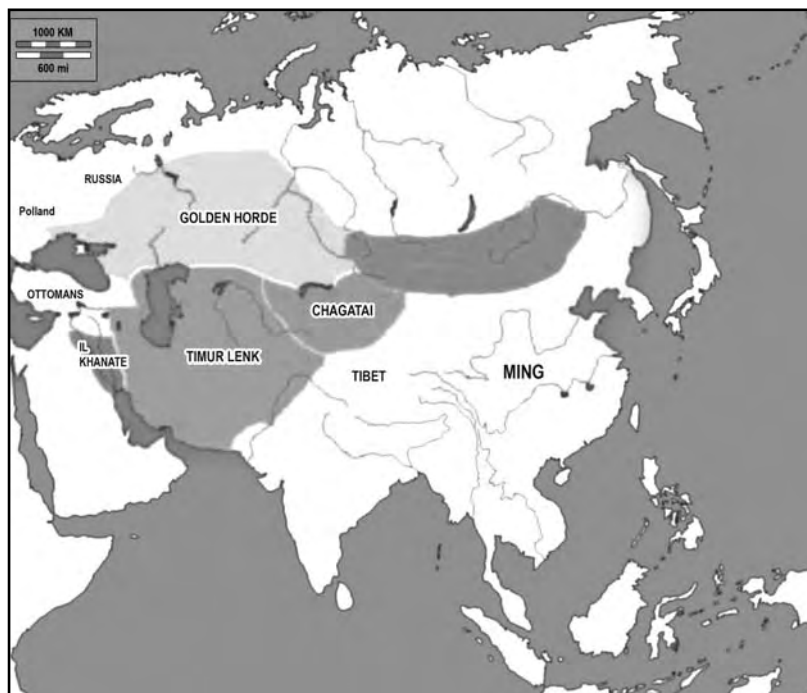
### **THE GOBI DESERT**

The Gobi Desert is a rocky desert, with few sandy areas, but with vast expanses of bare rock, making travel difficult. It is also a desert of extremes, with winter temperatures reaching  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  and summer temperatures of  $+50^{\circ}\text{C}$ , sometimes with a daily shift of up to  $35^{\circ}\text{C}$  between the scorching day and freezing night.

Despite this, the Gobi is inhabited by nomads riding camels and horses and has numerous oases that allow the Silk Road to cross it majestically.

### **TARIM BASIN**

Lying to the north-west of China, the Tarim Basin is bordered to the north by the Tian Shan mountain range, to the south by the Kunlun mountains of the Tibetan Plateau and to the east by the Pamir Mountains. Between these mountain ranges lie the Taklamakan Desert, Kuruktagh Desert and Lop Desert, together with a vast salt lake and surrounding marshes, the Lop Nur.



1400 AD

Because of the mountainous terrain and harsh deserts, the Silk Road took two routes, one to the north and one to the south. However, for hardy travellers, there was a third route that went through the deserts, to Lop Nur and then on to the Pamir Mountains.

### **DZUNGARIA**

The Dzungarian Gate forms the only major break in the series of mountain ranges in this area of Central Asia. In fact Dzungaria and the Dzungarian Gate are the best way for nomads to cross between the steppes of Central Asia to the rich lands of China.

The northern branch of the Silk Road travels through Dzungaria via a series of oases through the Gurbantünggüt Desert and out through the Dzungarian Gate. The grasslands of Dzungaria provide enough food for the horses of steppe nomads who love to raid caravans, making this a risky route to take.

### **THE KYZYLKUM DESERT**

Lying across Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan, the Kyzylkum Desert, or Red Sands, provides a barrier to the Silk Road, which must pass to its south. Fortunately for the nomads, there are enough oases in the Kyzylkum Desert for them to feed and water their animals, providing an excellent centre for raiding the caravans of the Silk Road.

### **KARAKUM DESERT**

Lying to the southwest of the Kyzylkum Desert, the Karakum, or Black Sands, covers the rest of Turkmenistan and reaches the Aral Sea to the north and the Caspian Sea to the west. As with the Kyzylkum Desert, the Silk Road sensibly travels to the south but is attacked by nomads.

### **MOUNT IMEON**

Not strictly a mountain, this was the name of several mountain ranges, especially where they met. These mountain ranges are the Hindu Kush Pamir, Tian Shan, Zagros Mountains and the Alay Mountains. A mine producing Lapis Lazuli, a much sought after semi-precious stone, can be found on the slopes

of Mount Imeon and this was traded along the length of the Silk Road. The Silk Road crossed Mount Imeon through the Pamirs and another route through the Alay Mountains.

## **ROUTES OF THE SILK ROAD**

The Silk Road has several major routes. So, from Chang'an in the far east, the road moves westwards over the Great Wall until it reaches Yümen City, then splits into a northern and southern route. The Northern Route travels north of the Tarim Basin, while the southern route continues south of the Tarim Basin until it joins the northern route as Kashgar. A third route travels further north, through Turpan, Talgar and Almaty, skirting the Aral Sea at Jankent and reaching the lands of the Golden Horde and the Rus. However, this third route travels through dangerous nomad territory and is for seasoned and well-armed caravans only. Following Kashgar, the Silk Road splits again, with one branch heading southwards to the shores of the Red Sea, the other route heading further westwards through Tashkent up to Constantinople.

## **CITIES ALONG THE SILK ROAD**

### **KHARA KOTO**

The Black city was founded by the Tanguts and then taken by the Mongols, Khara Koto lies on the intersection of roads from Karakorum, Xanadu (Kublai Khan's summer capital) and Kumul.

### **KUMUL**

Founded by the Xiōngnú, Kumul was a beautiful city famous for its melons, raisins and wine and for its grains, hemp and mulberry trees. It lies in a plain where it keeps herd of horses.

### **TURPAN**

An oasis city on the Silk Road, this was the centre of a small kingdom, ruled by successive Turkic tribes.



### **KASHGAR**

The end of the Northern Route of the Silk Road, Kashgar was ruled by successive tribes of nomads for centuries, although rule was split between nomads and Han Chinese.

### **TASHKENT**

Founded in the 5th Century BCE, Tashkent became an important trade centre between Sogdians and nomads.

### **YASI**

An important Sogdian city along the Silk Road, founded at least in the 4th century.

### **SAURAN**

Close to yasi, it is mentioned as early as the 9th century as being surrounded by 7 oval walls.

### **SAMARKAND**

Founded in 700BCE by the Sogdians, for much of its history Samarkand was ruled by non-nomadic people. However, the Mongols conquered it and Tamerlane made it his capital.

### **BUKHARA**

Founded in 500BCE, Bukhara was an important city of the Persian and Sassanid Empires and one of the main cities on the Silk Road.

### **URGENCH**

The most beautiful city in the world, Urgench was the capital of Khwarezm and one of the largest cities along the Silk Road. It was destroyed by Ghenghis Khan, who massacred all its inhabitants in 1221, from which it never properly recovered. The oldest ruins of the city date from the Achaemenid Period (6th-4th century BCE).

### **SARAIKHIH**

Located on the Ural (Yayik) River, this sits on a branch of the Silk Road and was one of the largest cities of the Golden Horde.

### **AK-HERMAN**

The White Fortress, this was established by the Khazars as one of the important cities along the Silk Road, as it reached the Black Sea. The origin of the city goes back to the 6th century BCE.



# APPENDICES

## MAGIC ITEMS

Magic items beyond saka stones or fetishes are common in nomadic tales. Their origin is not always known; but most of them were made by powerful spirits in forgotten times. They are guarded by the biggest heroes or the most terrifying monsters, or hidden in remote places.

### THE COAT

This silk blue coat is decorated with obscure shimmering motives of changing colours. It provides 6 AP against any form of concussive or shock damage, and 4 against heat or cold. It can be worn from -30°C up to 40°C, preserving the right temperature of the body. The Coat can be worn above another armour suit as long as the wearer's SIZ is equal to or lower than 13.

### THE FEEDING SADDLE-MAT

This mat has been webbed with special herbs for horses. A single handful of these herbs can feed a horse for a week, or restore him up to half its CON or Hit Points. When applied on a wound, it cures it within a day. The herbs however work only on horses. A full mat has 365 portions.

### THE BOILING BONE

Makes a soup for one person if put into boiling water, giving the drinker enough energy for one day.

### ATTILA'S WEAPONS

These weapons were wielded by Attila when he was Qaghan of the Hunic Empire. One is the golden bow, not usable as a weapon. The second one is the Qaghan's sword, an ancestral sword held by Khans. After Attila's death, they disappeared as the remaining Huns went away from their lost empire.

*Attila's golden bow.* This is the bow held by Attila as a symbol of his power. The one who possesses it can claim the support of Attila's spirit and get a bonus equal to his APP as a percentile to his or her social

skills and status among European Nomads. Any shaman holding it, even not a Hun, can contact Attila's Spirit and summon it as if it was a tribal ancestor.

*Attila's Qaghan Sword.* This sword was forged long before Attila's time and contains the spirit of his clan's founder. The possessor of the sword can claim khanate over the Huns.

### ANIMAL SPIRIT'S HAIR/FEATHER

When a human helps animals or an animal spirit, those can reward him with a part of their spirit, usually hairs or a feather but also a leg for an ant spirit. When the gift is burned, the animal spirit is immediately summoned and helps the summoner in the same way as it would help shamans.

### THE SMALL TENT

This is a magical yurt which, when folded, can be squeezed into a small bag. When unfolded, it can be as big as desired, up to a 6-meter diameter.





## LIVING ITEMS

Some spirits or evil creatures like Jelmogouz can take the form of harmless items. They are intelligent, can move and most of the time use some magic. They can be controlled by a shaman, as per spirits. Unlike spirits, they are material beings and die if severely broken. An example of such a living item is the 40-Handle-Cauldron

## THE 40-HANDLE-CAULDRON.

It is actually a living intelligent Jelmoghous in the form of a cauldron with 40 handles. It can swallow huge things, up to SIZ 15. As it can breathe under water, it spends most of the time at the bottom of a lake. It is an evil being which likes to cause trouble and to hoard treasure. It is very fast and can use earth-shaking magic. Its roar brings awe to all who hear it.

### Characteristics

SIZ	30
CON	8
STR	30
INT	13
POW	24
DEX	10
APP	05

## Encounter Charts

	Steppe	Mountain	Forest	Desert
Big Predator	01-03	01-03	01-06	—
Small Predator	04-07	04-08	07-17	01-15
Valuable Prey	08-13	09-15	18-27	17-27
Wolves	14-21	16-21	28-37	—
Wild Horses	22-29	22-28	38-41	—
Big Birds	30-39	29-38	42-45	28-48
Herd Beasts	40-48	39-54	46-55	—
Small prey	49-60	55-64	56-68	49-67
Small Nomad Camp	61-71	65-72	69-74	68-73
Hunting Party	72-79	73-80	75-87	74-76
Middle Size Camp	80-86	81-85	88-91	77-79
Major Camp	87-91	86-89	92	—
Raiding Nomads	92-95	90-93	93-96	80-88
Foreign Merchants	96-98	94-95	97	89-91
Special encounter	99-00	96-00	98-00	92-00

**Move:** 12

**Hit Points:** 22

**Armour:** 12

**Damage Bonus:** +3D6

**Attack Skill Damage Special**

Bite 80% 1d10 + 3D3 crush

If the size of the prey is less than 1/2 of the SIZ of the Cauldron and the bite attack roll is a special, the prey is completely swallowed at once and starts dying from suffocation and being slowly crushed (3d3 damage per round + suffocation).

Knockback: 80% 1d6 + 3D6 (crush + knockback)

**Powers:**

*Roar*, works like the Batyr power of Stunning Uran but with the same effect as the Fear spell

*Sleep*

*Gallop*

## ENCOUNTER CHARTS

When wandering through the vast Steppe or through the surrounding taiga and deserts, various things and people might be encountered. No journey is ever the same.

Chose the terrain and roll 1d100 to see if an encounter occurs. If it occurs, roll 1d100 and look at the result on the chart.

**Steppe:** this includes broad valleys in mountainous areas, where Nomads are supposed to live. In some areas, like the dry steppe of today's Kazakhstan, one can travel for days without meeting any human being. 35% of an encounter every 12 hours.

**Mountain:** the Altai, the Tian Shan or any mountainous area with an alternation of crests and narrow valleys, but still accessible on horseback. This terrain is mostly above the wooded altitude. 20% chances of an encounter every 6 hours.

**Forest:** depending on the area, it can be the Siberian birch forest or the Altai conifer woods. In our area of interest forests are not very dense and are interrupted by vast clearings or lakes. They are usually traversable on horseback, although not as easy to cross as open ground. In some deeper parts of a forest, horse riding becomes almost impossible. 30% chances of an encounter every 6 hours.

**Desert:** like the Gobi or the Tarim basin away from oases. Nomads and travellers found there use Bactrian camels. 15% chances of an encounter every 12 hours.

**Big predator:** a snow leopard, a bear or a tiger. It is alone, or a mother with 1d3 cubs.

**Small predator:** fox (alone or in family), sable, weasel. Fur is usually valuable. In the desert, it could be a poisonous snake.

**Valuable Prey:** single beast or small family. Boar, deer, doe, or ibex in the mountains.

**Wolves:** a pack of 3d6 animals. They rarely attack unless injured or starving, and only if they are at least as many as the humans. If they can isolate their prey (e.g. scare a horse), they focus on it and continue their attack. They are very patient and may follow a party for days.

#### Wolf pack attitude table

##### 1d6 Attitude

1-2 flee

3-5 observe from a distance and try to get relief from meal.

6. attack

*If the wolves are twice as many as the party, add 1 to the die roll. If three times as many, add 2 to the die roll. Add 1 in winter.*

**Wild horses.** 2D20 animals with a dominant male. There is a 01% chance that an incarnated *ichchi* spirit is among them.

**Big birds:** eagles, vultures, cranes, owls, falcons, kite.

**Herd beasts:** like wild horses. Saiga antelope in the steppe, deer in the forest.

There is a 01% chance that an incarnated *ichchi* spirit is among them.

**Small prey:** marmot, small bird, hare, quail. Enough to provide a meal.

**Small Nomad camp:** A Nomad family camping or travelling. 2D6 people, 2D100 cattle, 3D6 mounted animals (at least one guard), 1D3 *ger*. 05% chance that there is a *noyan* among them. Roll their reaction on 1D100 on the reaction chart:

#### Raiding Nomads attitude table

##### 1d100 Attitude

1-15 Friendly. If they know the PCs, they suggest the PCs join their raid.

16-40 Neutral. They just follow the laws of hospitality. They are not going to attack any clan friendly to the PCs.

41-95 Hostile. They ride to attack a clan allied with or friendly to the PCs.

96-00 Enemy. The PCs are among their targets.

*In friendly Ulus (territory), subtract 20. 100 still remains a result of "enemy". In enemy Ulus (territory), add 20.*

**Hunting party:** 1D10 Nomads hunting. They wear no armour but they have bows and hunting knives. Roll their reaction as above.

If the hunters have got some prey but did have not yet packed it on their horses as the PCs come, according to the custom, the PCs can claim a share of the hunt.

**Middle size camp:** A Nomad clan, camping or travelling. 2D10 families (as above) with 1D2-1 *noyan* (probably with his family) to lead them.

**Major camp:** Big clan, *Irge* or a small tribe camping, rarely on the move, for an average of 800 people plus slaves and servants. The clans are gathering for some reason, e.g. sacrificing to ancestors, burying a dead *noyan*, or preparing for a raid. 3D6 clans (as above) and 2d4 *noyan*.

**Raiding Nomads:** These are only small parties raiding the country for any reason, like vengeance, plunder, etc. 2d6+6 Nomads ready and fully equipped for war. 1D2-1 *noyan* are among them.

#### Nomad camp attitude table

##### 1D100 Attitude

1-15 Friendly. They offer the PCs to join them

16-80 Neutral. They are content with the laws of hospitality

81-95 Hostile. They try to avoid contact if they are outnumbered. If not, they chase the PCs away or prevent them from continuing their journey.

96-00 Enemy. They attack to take prisoners or to kill if necessary, unless they are outnumbered.

**Foreign merchants:** A caravan comes to trade with a tribe. The caravan is composed of pack animals, a palanquin or carriage for the merchants, guards on foot and mounted, and probably an escort of nomads from the visited tribe or at least one guide. There are 3D10 pack animals, carrying goods and supplies. For every 10 animals consider about 3 guards, at least half of them mounted, 1 merchant and 1 attendant. The caravan will be escorted by 1D10 fully equipped Nomad warriors. An attack on the caravan would anger the Khan awaiting it.



**Special:** Roll on the Special Encounter chart

**Qaghan / Khan:** A Khan or a Qaghan and his horde are migrating: there are thousands of people and animals. They may be looking for a better place, having been chased away by bad weather conditions, epidemics or another tribe.

They may also be mainly warriors, launching a raid or starting a large scale campaign. The PCs will probably see their tracks first or meet / be spotted by scouting warriors.

Roll the Qaghan's attitude as for hunters on the reaction chart.

**Big caravan:** Same as "foreign merchants" but roll 3d100 for the number of pack animals. In the desert, the caravan has probably lost its way, maybe after a strong sand storm. The mounted guards could include some Nomads.

**Quriltai:** A major Qaghan or Khan died. Tribes and clans gather to choose the new Qaghan. This meeting can also be played as a clan going to the Quriltai and giving the news to the PCs.

**Fleeing prisoners:** 1d6 prisoners (*bogul*) flee their masters who are probably on their heels. Depending on the relationship with the PCs (Roll on the Hunters Attitude Table), they hide or seek help. One of them is perhaps a *noyan*.

Chinese, Sogdian or other foreign slaves will attempt to return home. If the PCs catch them, the

slaves promise them a good reward for their help. But the owners as well may give a reward for the capture of their fleeing slaves.

**Fleeing lovers:** A young warrior kidnapped his bride, but this one was promised to another important character, like a noyan, a foreign prince or a shaman. The bride may love the young warrior and consent to the abduction, or may be upset to miss a promising wedding because of this impertinent cattle herder.

**A foreign missionary:** A Taoist, Buddhist, Nestorian or Muslim adept accompanied by 1D4-1 disciples and 1D6-2 nomad guides, maybe converts. He seeks a Khan to bring him the good word.

**A shaman:** Alone, with a disciple or family. She is on a quest and could ask the PCs for help.

**Raiding foreigners:** A punitive expedition from a neighbouring empire, China, Persia, Tibet, Byzantium, a city of the Tarim, etc., wanting to punish reckless tribes, make a preventive strike, recover loot or what the GM decides. The troop consists of 3D6+12 riders. Their attitude is the same as Raiding Nomads. Alternately, the GM may decide that a whole army is moving, with hundreds or thousands of soldiers.

**Oboo:** The *Oboo* has collapsed. Its spirit is grieved. Those who rebuild it will be protected by the spirit. they can reroll one test in the 9 following days. Otherwise, the spirit attacks one of them, and steals his soul to give him a disease. He will only be released when the *Oboo* is restored.

**Spirit:** An *üör* in search of a victim, or a natural spirit seeking for help or wanting to punish the PCs for their disrespectful behaviour. POW 3D6 +6, INT 3D6, or chose one from the Spirit section.

**Decorated Box in a tree:** A copse of birch and larch trees decorated with blue ribbons and boxes hanging from the branches. A nomad shaman would recognise this as a cemetery. There is a 20% chance that a box has fallen and broken, exposing the bones. The shaman's spirit is here. She contacts one of the PCs and asks to repair her coffin and hang it from the tree. You have to find the coffin (Search) and repair it (Craft). If not, the spirit will punish the party. A black shaman spirit (hanging from a larch) will steal the soul to cause an illness or harm. She has a POW of 4D6+3. A white shaman spirit (hanging from a birch) will send trouble to PCs (small animals eat their food, wolves attack, the rain prevents them from continuing ...).

### Special Encounter Charts

	Steppe	Mountain	Forest	Desert
Qaghan / Khan	01-03	01-03	01-05	01-03
Big caravan	04-08	04	06-07	04-07
Quriltai	09-10	05-07	08-13	08-10
Fleeing prisoners	11-20	08-156	14-25	11-17
Fleeing lovers	21-33	17-21	26-33	18-21
Foreign missionary	34-46	22-27	34-37	22-24
Shaman	47-56	28-36	38-47	25-37
Raiding foreigners	57-64	37-47	48-55	38-41
Spirit	65-69	48-54	56-62	42-49
A box in a tree	70-74	55-57	63-69	--
A mound	75-82	58-64	70-74	50-51
A supernatural creature	83-84	65-71	75-79	52-61
A crack in the ground	85-87	72-83	80-85	62-68
A dead body	88-92	84-93	86-92	69-83
A messenger	93-00	93-00	93-00	94-00

**A mound:** This is a kurgan, but only the GM knows whose, or maybe it is the grave of an old shaman. Maybe it holds ancient treasures? Who knows which spirits may guard it.

**A crack in the ground:** A small crack or one big enough to walk through. Small cracks may contain a small animal or an object concealed there. It may also be the mouth of a Rock-Eater.

Big predators may hide in big cracks, or an ancient grave, or hostile warriors. It may be deep enough to be explored. One could find a saka stone, a metallic object containing the soul of a shaman, and may be an opening to the Subterranean World. And what about a giant Rock-Eater?

**A dead body:** The PCs see some vultures flying in circles. On the ground before them lies a dead body:

A human body. It has been killed with arrows and nobody buried him. Maybe some *üör* have been drawn there and are eating his *Kut* soul. These may like to steal the souls of the PCs as well. His enemies may lurk somewhere to prevent burial, or his clan mates have been searching him and believe the PCs are the murders. Does the body still have his belongings? Was it a messenger holding a strange object of foreign confection, may be even a text? May be he simply died from falling from horseback while hunting.

An animal body. There is nothing of worth on this body, except the meat if it has been freshly killed. Some hunters may claim him. Perhaps there is a saka stone in the body? If the spirits have put it on the road of the PCs, there may be an important message written on its shoulder blade.

**A supernatural creature:** Select from the list of the Chapter Eight "Bestiary".

## ENCOUNTERS IN THE SPIRIT WORLD

When in Trance, a shaman may get lost in the spirit plane and encounter wandering spirits. This section provides rules for such encounters.

If the Knowledge [Spirit World] roll is a fumble, the shaman lost her way. She must stay 1d6 more hours in the spirit plane, and may encounter another spirit. For every hour, add 10% to the chance of an encounter (ex: if the shaman is lost for 4 hours, she'll have a 40% chance to encounter a random spirit) and roll 1D100. If the result is a "fumble", an encounter occurs which is automatically enemy and tries to attack the shaman.

If the 1D100 roll is a critical, the encounter will be friendly. If an encounter occurs, roll on the spirit plane encounter chart.

The spirits will rarely have anything to do with the shaman, and will pass their way without bothering her, except enemy spirits. If the shaman wants to contact it, and unless otherwise specified, treat as when allying a spirit. Roll 1D100 for the attitude of the spirit toward the shaman before this one contacts the spirit. Apply the rules for allying a spirit (negotiation, Spirit Combat).

In case the shaman did something before the encounter which may have displeased the spirit, it may want to punish her even if the shaman does not seek any contact. Allow the shaman first to negotiate a compensation for the offense, just like for allying a spirit. Consider a neutral, hostile or enemy spirit according to what the shaman did and the nature of the spirit. If the negotiation fails, the spirit will likely attack.

**Spirit plane encounter chart**

Spirit	1D100
Üör	01-17
Dead spirit	18-29
Shaman	30-40
Ichchi	41-57
Ezi	58-63
Great Ancestor	64-69
Aiyy	70
Ancestor	71-82
Ancestral Hero	83-87
Trap	88-93
Foreign Spirit	94-98
Spell spirit	99-100

**Üör:** INT 3D6, POW 3D6+6. Because the shaman failed her Knowledge [Spirit World] roll, the encountered *üör* are unknown to the shaman—they did not get their share of the shaman's flesh— and are *hostile*. They will probably try to attack the shaman if any negotiation fails. Chose a random disease or power.

**Dead spirit:** This is the spirit of a dead person who did not find the way to the sky. It has gone mad but does not always attack. If not attacked, the shaman can try to persuade it to follow her and show it the way to the gods, using the "Persuade" skill. The soul as quite insane or desperate. These spirits can be forced





to accomplish a task through Spirit Combat, but are too insane to be allied: most of the time, the shaman will simply send it on the right way to the sky.

**Shaman:** Shamans are very jealous of their area of influence. They don't like to meet other shamans during their incantation. An encountered shaman will probably try to chase the intruder away. Treat as *hostile*. Minor shamans have a POW of 1d6+12, Major shamans of 1d6+17, great shamans of 1d6+20.

**Ichchi (nature spirit):** The encountered *Ichchi* will be probably one from the area the shaman is currently staying in: for example, if the shaman is incanting in a clearing, the spirit may be a forest spirit, a tree spirit, a forest animal spirit, or a close creek spirit. These spirits are *neutral*.

**Ezi (nature Great Spirit):** Same as above. The Ezi won't probably have any interest in having contact with the shaman. If the shaman contacts the Ezi, consider it as *neutral*.

**Great Ancestor:** Same as above.

**Aiyy (deity):** Same as above.

**Ancestor:** The ancestor is wandering on the spirit plane. It may have been called by a shaman and is on its way to him or back to the sky. Roll 1d6: 1-2 = tribal ancestor. 3-6 = other ancestor. Tribal ancestors are *friendly*.

**Ancestral Hero:** Same as above. However, the ancestral hero will help for the good sake of his clan or tribe.

**Trap:** Some evil shamans set "mechanical traps" in the spirit plane to harm or kill the wandering soul of other shamans. They have the form of true physical traps, like a self-triggered bow, but are not present in the mundane plane. The victim must make a "Soul Escape" roll or lose 3d6 Hit Points.

**Foreign spirit:** These spirits are unknown and come from foreign places. It can be a spirit from another species, like an Almas shaman or ancestor, or even a foreign deity. Low power spirits are either shy, aggressive or uncertain since they don't know the shaman. Treat these as *hostile*. Foreign spirits probably belong to an unknown Allegiance. In this case, since the shaman will probably have a 00 rate in that allegiance, he can only use his Persuade bonus (see page 64) to negotiate.

### Spell Spirit

The game master chooses a spirit, randomly or not, which acts like any other spell spirit from which the shaman can gain a spell by sacrificing the right amount of characteristic point.

## SAMPLE CHARACTERS

These are pre-rolled characters for a heroic campaign. The skill category option has been used, while EDU has not. Starting status has been randomly rolled.

The characteristics of bows are given for the standard rules and in italic for the optional rule.

### STANDARD MOUNTED WARRIOR

He likes to charge with his sabre and to protect his Noyan. He would like to become a Faithful-one, like his father. He's interested in the art of war and tries to learn strategy by listening to his khan. He is already leading 10 warriors. He hopes the khan will appoint him as chief of hundreds.

#### Characteristics

STR	14
CON	13
SIZ	12
INT	14
DEX	10
POW	11
APP	11

**Hit Points:** 13

**Damage bonus:** +1D4

**Allegiance:** Ancestors 2, Tengriism 4

**Armour :** Leather lamellar 3

Attack	Skill	Damage
Composite Bow	60%	1D8+1+1D2 (1d10+1)
foot setting ( <i>colossal</i> )		
Composite Bow	60%	1D8+1+1D2 (1d8+1)
mounted setting ( <i>strong</i> )		
Sabre	55%	1D8 + 1D4
Mounted Lance	50%	

**Skills:** Brawl 44%, Command 35%, Craft [horse herding] 30%, Dodge 45%, First Aid 45%, Grapple 30%, Horse Archery 60%, Knowledge [Region], 44%, Listen 50%, Ride 70%, Riding Acrobatics 40%, Speed Shooting 45%, Spot 50%, Status 80%, Strategy 34%, Survival [Steppe] 40%, Track 50%

**Equipment:** 2 horses, 2 bows, hand weapons

### ARROW-RIDER

He is small and ugly, which makes him feel angry. He had to fight hard to leave his inferior status of *arad* and to be accepted as a free *nokül* warrior. He likes to fight and to spread blood and desolation far away from his clan mates.

## Characteristics

STR	13
CON	12
SIZ	6
INT	10
DEX	14
POW	09
APP	08

**Hit Points:** 9

**Allegiances:** Ancestors 18

**Armour:** Heavy clothes (1), heavy winter clothes in winter (2)

Attack	Skill	Damage
Composite Bow ( <i>strong</i> )	71%	1D8+1 (1D8+1)
Sabre	46%	1D8

**Skills:** Craft [Horse Herding] 36%, Dodge 38%, First Aid 35%, Hide 31%, Horse Archery 60%, Jump 40%, Knowledge [Region] 40%, Listen 39%, Navigate 35%, Ride 80%, Riding Acrobatics 40%, Speed Shooting 66%, Status 31%, Spot 46%, Survival [Steppe] 40%, Track 46%

**Equipment:** 2 horses, 2 identical bows, 1 hand weapon.

## HERDER (BASIC NOMAD)

This herder is the elder son of a poor nomad family. He owns only one small *ger* to live in with his wife and child. He's happy when among his beasts and is a competent herder. His noyan appreciate his skills. When at war, he either takes care of the horses and cattle, or serves in the light cavalry units skirmishing the enemy's flanks. His family owns 8 horses and takes care of 78 pieces of cattle (sheep, yak), almost all of them belonging to the clan. In winter, when all gather in the warm of a yurt, he likes to tell old legends.

## Characteristics

STR	10
CON	10
SIZ	8
INT	14
POW	14
DEX	09
APP	12

**Hit Points:** 9

**Allegiances:** Ancestors 4

**Armour:** Heavy clothes and cap (1), heavy winter clothes in winter (2)

Attack	Skill	Damage
Bow	40%	1D6+1
( <i>composite normal strong</i> )		
Saber	36%	1D8
Urga	41%	special

**Skills:** Appraise 31%, Craft [Butchery] 46%, Craft [Cattle Herding] 66%, Craft [Horse Herding] 66%, 30%, First Aid 45%, Horse Archery 25%, Knowledge [Legends] 21%, Knowledge [Natural History] 41%, Knowledge [Region] 41%, Listen 41%, Repair 47%, Survival [Steppe] 45%, Repair 45%, Ride 75%, Spot 41%, Status 31%, Track 36%

**Equipment:** 1-3 horse, basic weapons and tools.

## NOYAN, HEAVY CAVALRY, CHIEF OF 100

This character belongs to a noble family. After serving his Khan during several campaigns, he recently managed to be promoted to chief of 100 and leads now his clan mates at war or during the hunt. During several campaigns, gathered enough richness to purchase a metal armour from the armour smith.

## Characteristics

STR	13
CON	12
SIZ	13
DEX	14
INT	12
POW	14
APP	9

**Hit Points:** 13

**Damage bonus:** +1D4

**Armour:** Lamellar (6)

**Horse padding:** hard leather (2)

**Allegiances:** Tengriism 19, Ancestors 3

Attack	Skill	Damage
Composite Bow	65%	1D8+1+1D2 (1D8+1)
( <i>strong</i> )		
Sabre	64%	1d8 +1D4
Half shield	50%	
Lance	53%	

**Skills:** Grapple 58%, Martial Art [Bökh] 34%, Horse Archery 65%, Command 45%, Craft [Horse Herding] 41%, Etiquette 25%, Status 82%, Knowledge [Heraldry] 30%, Knowledge [Genealogy] 30%, Insight 21%, Listen 45%, Sense 31%, Speed Shooting 32%, Spot 46%, Strategy 20%, Track 56%, Ride [horse] 79%

**Equipment:** weapons (incl. 2 bows), lamellar armour, helmet, silk skirt, horse light padding, slaves, up to 5 horses in campaign.

Chiefs of a Thousand or of Tümen have metal armour for 6 to 7 APs: lamellar or chain with an appropriate helm, plus a silk skirt. Their horses can be heavily padded (AP 2-5).



## MOUNTED INFANTRY MAN ON CAMEL

This character is an experienced camel warrior. He lives in the arid country close to the Gobi desert and must be able to defend his clan against Chinese raids, or to raid rich caravans himself. He likes to go close to his target, dismount and shoot arrows before charging. He received a lamellar leather armour from his Bek as reward for a courageous charge against enemies.

### Characteristics

STR	14
CON	13
SIZ	12
DEX	14
INT	10
POU	11
APP	11

**Hit Points:** 13

**Damage bonus:** +1D4

**Armour:** Leather lamellar (3)

**Allegiances:** Tengriism 2, Ancestors 4

Attack	Skill	Damage
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Sabre	65%	1D8+1D4
Full Shield	60%	
Composite Bow	50%	1D8+1+1D2 (1D10+1) foot setting ( <i>colossal</i> )
Lance 50%	1D10+1+1D4	

**Skills:** Brawl 44%, Command 35%, Status 47%, Craft [Camel Herding] 49%, First Aid 45%, Knowledge [Gobi] 44%, Listen 50%, Horse Archery 40%, %, Ride [Camel] 55%, Ride [Horse] 40%, Speed Shooting 35%, Spot 50%, Status 80, Strategy 29%, Survival [desert] 34%, Track 50%

## BLACKSMITH

This character learned blacksmithing from his father, from whom he inherited the family lamellar armour. He's very proud to continue his family tradition and shows a very high respect for his ancestors. He is not happy seeing his tribe forced to follow a khan from another tribe, but the Empire needs a lot of iron and weapons, and his business is flourishing.

### Characteristics

STR	14
CON	12
SIZ	8
INT	14
POW	14
DEX	13
APP	10

**Hit Points:** 11

**Armour:** 7, (lamellar (6), light helm (+1))

**Allegiances:** Ancestors 38, Animism 4, Nestorianism 1

Attack	Skill	Damage
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Blacksmith Hammer	44%	1d8+2 (bashing) ( <i>id. Heavy Mace</i> )
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**Skills:** Brawl 40%, Bargain 39%, Craft [Blacksmithing] 60%, Craft [Weapon Making] 65%, Craft [Armour Making] 65%, Craft [Goldsmithing] 25%, Repair 46%, Appraise 37%, First Aid 31%, Knowledge [legends] 42%, Sense 33%, Spot 43%, Status 58%, Teach 39%

**Magic:** Heat resistance 38%

## BRONZE, SHAMAN

Bronze is a black shaman trying to improve his rank in society. He likes to manipulate people, using his allied spirit when necessary. However he is not a very gifted shaman and must increase his power if he wants to become a major shaman. Bronze has no divinatory skills.

### Characteristics

STR	09
CON	11
SIZ	10
INT	13
POW	15
DEX	12
APP	13

**Hit Points:** 10

**Armour:** none. Fur in winter (1)

**Allegiance:** Animism 60, Ancestors 15

**Skills:** Knowledge [Genealogy] 36%, Knowledge [Natural History] 40%, Knowledge [Spirit World] 60%, First Aid 44%, Insight 21%, Knowledge [Tengriism-Animism] 35%, Medicine 40%, Perform [sing] 34%, Persuade 50%, Soul Escape 56%

**Powers:** Trance

**Spells:** Spirit Shield 59%, Heal 59%

**Temporarily allied spirit:** 1x spirit of invisibility POW 15 INT 08

**Permanently allied spirit:** 1x spirit of Fear POW 18 INT 11

**Equipment:** drum, basic clothes and deel, dagger, 2 horses, amulets, yurt.



## SCENARIO IDEAS

### LET THE DEAD LIE

- When a shaman dies, she is dismembered (by fire or with a blade) and her bones are placed in an urn of wood attached to the topmost branch of a tree. When the coffin rots and falls, it must be repaired and hung again. This is “The Elevation”. The shaman will be buried only when the coffin has fallen three times. A tree is then planted above the grave (a birch for a white shaman, a larch for a black shaman), where the soul of the shaman will dwell. For the most powerful, an *Oboo* is built where ceremonies will be held. Woe betides who cuts the tree or goes around the *Oboo* the wrong way. The spirit of the shaman awaits
- Here is a small wood of larch and birch trees on top of a hill. The branches are decorated with blue and white linen. In its centre is a small clearing with an *Oboo*. There is a larch at the foot of which lay scattered human bones, mixed with bits of rotten wood. This is the grave of a shaman who was hanging from the tree. The spirit of the shaman attacks any PC who approaches in order to possess him: any possessed PC will have no choice but to quest to find another shaman to perform the “elevation”.
- A pile of rocks of several meters in diameter may mark the location of a forgotten Khan’s ancient grave. This burial mound is actually a *Kurgan*. Princes were buried with their decorated horses and herd animals adorned with gold trappings for the sacrifice. Weapons and jewellery accompany the prince in death, together with his servants. Many *Kurgan* were looted, but some remain untouched. Is it because they have not been discovered? Because the tribes that made them are still there? Or some powerful spirit prohibits the desecration? In any case, it will take several days with pickaxes to break through the frozen earth even in summer: over the centuries, a huge “ice lens” has grown under the mound.

### HUNTING

Hunting offers a lot of opportunities to use skills such as Spot, Listen, Track, Hide, Ride, or Horse Archery. The hunter can be alone or with small groups, or even with the whole tribe, looking to bring back hundreds of animals. Don’t forget to propitiate the spirits.

### Guidelines for the hunt could be:

- Make prayers to the spirits. Forgetting this incurs penalties thereafter.
- Search for prey (may last 2-3 days) using tracking skills, assisted by rolls of Knowledge [Natural History] Knowledge [Region], or Perception.
- A group remains on the lookout (Hide skill), the other goes around the herd.
- Beaters bring the herd (Riding roll): 1D6 beasts for every successful roll.
- Archers close the trap and shoot their arrows (Archery). Then they pursue any fleeing beast (Riding and Horse Archery).
- Roll Craft [Butchery] to obtain useable or sellable skins. Scrape off the hair to make felt. Try the meat. Everybody drinks too much Ayrag at night.

But who knows what is found during a hunt?

- A stream blocks the way, or worse, a ravine (Riding Acrobatics skill to climb the ravine).
- A pack of wolves or an old tiger competes with the hunters for the prey. Or is it a Jelmoghouz?
- A guardian spirit of the herds is hiding in the flock, and is determined to protect it. Perhaps it even has a saka stone in its belly?
- Members of a rival clan have also spotted the herd. Do they want to share the prey, or do they want it all for themselves?
- And why not hunt wolves, a bear, or a Siberian tiger for their valuable fur? What a present for the Khan!

### TAKING A WIFE

The Clan of a coveted woman does not seem very inclined to accept a marriage proposal. The suitor has to visit his beloved’s parents and bring gifts (for example, a tiger skin from a tiger killed by the suitor – an episode of hunting to do). Eloquence and charm can help being welcome in the clan. Friends and companions can accompany him, to show his status. Who knows, the suitor may have been able to get help from a shaman, probably against payment (but pay attention to what the shaman might ask in return).

But now a rival pops up, having the favour of the parents. A verbal contest as well as in the three warrior disciplines (Riding, Horse Archery, Grapple) may make the parents change their mind in favour of the suitor. Then he must kidnap his bride. This will



be even easier if the parents have been convinced. Friends will make diversion. The reaction of the clan will depend on the behaviour of the characters before the kidnapping. If the suitor was able to charm or impress they accept with good grace. The bride's brothers pursue the couple until the young woman intercedes or the characters join their own clan.

## PLUNDER OF CARAVANS TO TARIM

Caravans trade goods in Transoxiana along the Silk Road, through the desert of the Tarim valley, from oasis to oasis, from town to town. These towns are all small kingdoms more or less dependants of the Chinese or Persian or Turkish empires. Caravans leaving China carry silks (raw, velvet), tea, porcelain, ginger, rice wine, rice or wheat to feed the garrisons, iron from China, cotton from South China. They come loaded with glass beads, precious stones from India, Greek medicines, Mediterranean coral, Tibetan musk, cinnamon. And when it comes to embassies, the loot is even richer (great Persian horses, gold, wonderful objects, slaves, singers, rarities such as healing elixirs).

Player Character raiders can make attacks to weaken and harass, until they deal the coup de grace, but must take the caravan before it reaches the next garrison.

Player Character caravan guards can defend the caravan or go out on counter-attacks, to raid the nomad camps and drive them into the harsh desert.

Player Character nomads can also simply trade and buy and sell some of these wonders (but also salt, manufactured goods) for horses, rare furs, felt, and skins.

## HEROISM

Rid the country of a griffin: it has to feed its young, and attacks the herds. Maybe there is a peaceful way to calm the monster?

Go steal a famous Saka from a giant to help a shaman perform a task (e.g. free the country from a monster).

A friend of the adventurers (or one of them) is possessed by a spirit. The shaman is not powerful enough, or does not want to risk a Spirit Combat. However, the spirit can be calmed with the life of one of its enemies: a powerful shaman, a monster raised from the underworld, or with any task of importance for it.

Thieves raided a clan friendly to the characters (the family of one of their wives?). The thieves stole horses, and the grandfather was mistreated and died. PCs must find the thieves and punish them. Follow a trail, surprise attack, skirmishing. For spice, you can have the robbers aided by a shaman. The horses were the price to pay to save a possessed girl. The Thief had no horses available (especially if he had to pay winged horses). Do the characters have the heart to let the girl die?

## OTHER IDEAS

Steal cattle, negotiate alliances with the tribes, or escape from a camp where you are enslaved.

Kidnap the child of a Chinese governor.

Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of a hostile tribe or a neighbouring kingdom before invading it.

"Further complementary materials can be found at [www.alephtargames.com](http://www.alephtargames.com) or on the author's blog <http://windonthesteppes.blogspot.de/>"



# WHEN THE WOLVES WAKE UP

*An introductory scenario for Nomad player characters.*

## INTRODUCTION

The Bek Bek-Toro, chief of the Ashite clan, the second most powerful Türkic clan, died during a hunt, and his only son is only 13 year old and too young to reign. Clans are gathering for the first funerals. Among the attendants is a young son of a noble clan, to whom the Bek promised his daughter Kenjeke. It is the chance for him to claim her hand.

This scenario is split in 4 parts: the first part is more about role-playing interaction between PCs and NPCs, involving mostly social skills. The second part brings the PCs into a pursuit, requiring knowledge as well as hunting skills. The third part is static again, with more fighting skills and tactics. The fourth part is optional if the PCs have a shaman among them. It is however aimed at introducing players to the world of the steppes, including shamanism and the powers of shamans. In a single scenario, they can experience tribal social relationships, some politics, an important rite, a pursuit in a typical nomadic fashion and a first contact with the mysterious forces of the nature spirits and shamanism.

The scenario has been tailored for beginning characters of a heroic campaign. It is recommended to have a shaman among players, or else the task may prove too hard for them. The game master can alternately reinforce the party with some sidekicks. The scenario provides a mysterious and powerful aid, an old shaman acting secretly: his interaction with the PCs will depend on their needs. If they do well, forget him. If they have difficulties but are missing only a bit of strength, have the shaman covertly use some of his powers. The players may find things weird but not automatically understand that they are getting help. If the party is too weak, you can involve the shaman openly.

## BACKGROUND

The scenario takes place among the Türk tribe at the end of the Avar Empire, just before the founding of the Köktürk Empire in 552: the cultural and political backgrounds of the Türk differ therefore slightly from the description of the Köktürks in the rules.

## SUMMARY

April 549 in the Altai among the Türks. See the rules chapter "People and tribes" for more details about the different nations at this time and their current situation. A couple of years before, Bumin decided to rebel, but he has to convince all the clans of the Türk first as well as other tribes to join him. The clan the PCs belong to has not yet joined the rebellion and is still faithful to the Avars.


- Alternately, the action can take place around the end of any nomadic empire with minor adjustments, like:
- Around 46 BC under the Hsiung-Nu as members of a northern tribe of the eastern Empire before they split. Replace the Hephthalites with Chinese.
- Century later, before the founding of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Köktürk Empire, when the eastern Türks are a client state of the T'ang Chinese and try to recover their ancient glory. Replace the Avars with the ruling dynasty and Bumin's Türk with the traditionalist clans trying to restore the former way of life and Empire's glory.
- Centuries later: player characters are Uyghur or Kirgiz trying to smash down the Köktürk Empire short before 740 AD.
- Centuries later: player characters are Kirgiz (or another non-Uyghur tribe) plotting against the Uyghurs around 840 AD.

Actually, the scenario is easily adaptable to any tribe at any time.

## THE AVAR EMPIRE

About 150 years ago, the Avar tribe expanded from the North and founded an Empire, subjugating most of the clans and tribes of the steppe, including the Türk. To the south-east of the Empire, they bumped against the Wei, the originally Turkic tribe of the Tabgach, now profoundly sinicised. Not only did the Wei stop the Avar expansion, but they constantly raided them and even re-conquered some of the southern parts of the Avar Empire. Well protected behind the Wei Kingdom, the Chinese can imagine schemes to decrease the frightening power of the Avars.





To the south west, in Sogdiana and up to the Persian Sassanid Empire, are the Hephtalite, a nomadic confederation as well. They have good relations with the Avar. They recently increased their power and expanded toward the Tarim region, where the local kingdoms pay tribute.

A few decades ago, the Avar Empire suffered a dynastic dispute and was close to civil war. Some tribes, especially the Töläch (or Tiele) and the Uyghur, tried to exploit the situation but were crushed down with the aid of the Türk.

Today, the Avars have a single Qaghan again, Anaguei Qaghan, also called Chilian tubingdufa Khan, but his prestige and strength are not as high as 50 years ago.

## THE TÜRK

Türk means “the Strong Ones”. They are a confederation of clans living in the Altai Mountains. They used to live further east, but the Wei drove them away more than 100 years ago (439), when the Wei armies forced the Turkic Ashina clan to withdraw from its land and to seek refuge further west in the Avar Empire, in the Altai Mountains.

The Türk speak a Turkic language, while the Avar speak a Mongolic one. They control many iron mines and are reputed for their blacksmiths. They claim to descend from the prestigious Hsiung-nu, a mostly Turkic tribe as well, which Empire ruled the steppe centuries ago.

The rulers of the Türk tribe all come from the Ashina clan. The current ruler is Bumin Khan. He joined a rebellion a couple of years ago after having been humiliated by the Avar Qaghan Anaguei: Bumin informed Anaguei Qaghan about a rebellion of the Töläch in preparation and helped him crush it before it started. As a reward, Bumin Khan asked to marry a daughter of Anaguei Qaghan. Anaguei replied that the Türk were the slaves of the Avar and have no right to marry an Avar princess.

Bumin is still quite alone, since the Türk clans are hesitating to defy the still powerful Avars. He needs the support of at least the most powerful among the clans.

## CULTURAL BACKGROUND

The legend says that after the dispersion of the Hsiung-nu Empire, one of their clan was massacred after a lost battle. Only one boy was spared: the warriors cut only his feet and left him in a marsh, to be devoured by wolves. But a she-wolf sent by Tengri raised the boy as her offspring. As he became an adult, he mated with the she-wolf. She sired 10 sons who are the ancestors of the

current 10 clans of the Türk. One of the sons took the name of Ashina and all the Türk rulers issued from his clan. The Ashina clan consists now of several hundreds of families dwelling in the region south of the Altai and known nowadays as the Dzungaria, controlling the route to Sogdiana and taking advantage of it. The wolf is the emblem of all the Türk.

The Türk are the typical central Asian Nomads. They are very like their description in the rules, shaming themselves when dying young, drinking in the skulls of the enemy chiefs to honour them... They are tengriists animists, worshipping Sky and Earth but also Fire. Being not far away from the Sogdians, they have been slightly influenced by them: when using an international language, they would use Sogdian, which is the trading language of Central Asia. Their particular worship of fire may come from Mazdaism. However, these influences remain light.

Türks intensively use camels in desert areas. Their armies include infantry mounted on camels. They have been faithful to the Avars and even helped them quelling a few rebellions, in particular those of the Töläch. When they conquer the Avar Empire in 552, they will call themselves “Köktürk” or “the Blue/Celestial Strong Ones”: blue is the colour of Tengri and of the Qaghan.

## CHARACTER GENERATION

### LANGUAGES

Türk gave their name to the Turkic language. Allow the Avar language as a foreign language (a Mongolic one) and in rare cases the Sogdian language.

Language [Avar] = basic skill rating = Own Language -65%

Language [Sogdian] = basic skill rating 00%, limit to Status%

### SPECIFIC NAMES

The nobles are called *bek*.

The highest ranking generals are the *Shad*.

Princes are called *Yabghu*, later equivalent of Khans under the authority of the *Qaghan*. After the founding of the Köktürk Empire, this will become the title of the ruler of the western Empire.

### ALLEGIANCES

**Common:** animism, tengriism, ancestors

**Uncommon:** Mazdaism —other religions will be introduced later.

## SPECIAL SKILLS

Craft [Herding - Camel]: especially for the clans living in desertic areas.

Knowledge [Religion - Mazdaism]

Not available: craft [Herding - Reindeer]

## PROFESSIONS

All except Siberian Hunter and Reindeer Herder.

Blacksmiths receive INT extra skill points to allocate among their primary skills and Allegiance [Ancestors]

Equipment: standard. They use a straight sabre as favorite 1H melee weapon.

## POWERS

Shamans can contact and summon the she-wolf as an ancestral spirit. Treat as a wolf Animal Spirit (see Chapter Seven: "Spirits"). They can transform into a wolf.

## ANCESTRAL HERO: ASHINA

### Characteristics

POW 21

INT 13

**Allegiance:** Ancestors 80%, Tengri 100%

**Powers:** Ashina, as a Batyr, had a pact with Ilbis-Khan, the War Spirit. In addition, he was able to call his wolf-spirit mother. When incarnating into a descendant, he can use the following powers:

- Summon Wolf Spirit
- Super Skill (Saber), level 4
- Super Skill (Missile Weapon) [Composite Bow]. Level 1
- Stunning Uran, level 2

**Skills:** Saber 180%, Composite Bow 120%

All other primary skills of bek and Command 100%

All secondary skill of bek 75%

**Heroic power for Batyrs having a pact with Ashina:**

- Super Skill (Saber)
- Stunning Uran
- Sidekick (Wolf)

## NAMES

These names are taken from the list of Köktürk Qaghan who came decades after the period of this campaign: for campaigns taking place later, be careful not using a name being or having been born by a former Qaghan or historical character.

Muqan, Tatpar, Ishbara, Bagha, Tulan, Apa, Tardush, Niri, Heshana, Yukuk, Baya, Jami, Jankan, Töles, Shibi, Cholo, Illig, Qilibi, Chebi, Ilterish, Inel, Bilge, Yiran, Yandu, Anluo, Shetu, Chuluohu, Yongyülü, Shidianmi, Daman, Böri.

## CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS

The PCs belong to a small clan or a big family depending on the Ashite clan, one of the most powerful among the Türk. The bek of the Ashite is Bek-Toro (Powerful-Obstacle) Yabghu. He is aided in his task by the white shaman Ak-Tchenem (White-Equal). Bek-Toro has a son: Gara-Gan (Black-Blood), a 13 year old boy, and a daughter, Kenjeke (Young-Girl), who is now 15 year old and as such has reached adulthood. Bek-Toro's wife Ay-Salkin (Fresh-Moon) is issued from the Ashina clan, and is a cousin of Bumin Khan.

Under the leadership of Bek-Toro, Yiran leads the PCs' families. When at war, Yiran commands the warriors of all the families under his authority, which makes him at least a chief of 100. Because of his courage and skills, he managed to lead more warriors and to become chief of 1000 during the last campaign, so that he has started increasing his authority and status. Before that, he had been appointed as bodyguard by Bek-Toro. Yiran has a good reputation among the clans as a faithful bek who killed many enemies and will have a lot of balbal stones around his grave.

The scenario starts with the news of Bek-Toro's death.

## Cast of Characters:

Bek-Toro's *ulus*:

**Bek-Toro**, recently dead leader of the Ashite clan, Türk yabghu

**Tchoyun**, Bek-Toro's brother, candidate to the succession

**Ak-Tchenem**, white shaman, former advisor of Bek-Toro and now advisor of Tchoyun. Pro-Avar

**Ay-Salkin**, Bek-Toro's widow, mother of Kenjeke and Gara-Gan, will marry Tchoyun

**Kenjeke**, Bek-Toro's and Ay-Salkin's daughter. Bek-Toro engaged her with Ayu-Kulak and Tchoyun engaged her secretly with a Hephtalite foreigner

**Gara-Gan**, Kenjeke's young brother, still too young to follow his father Bek-Toro





## Yiran's ulus:

**Yiran**, Ayu-Kulak's father

**Temir**, black shaman serving Yiran, possible player character

**Ayu-Kulak**, Yiran's son, Kenjeke's fiancé. Possible player character.

Note: if the players chose to play either Temir or Ayu-Kulak, let them choose their names if they wish, and simply change the names in the scenario accordingly.

## Others:

**Anaguei**, Qaghan of the Avar Empire

**Bumin**, khan of the Türks, rebelling against Anaguei

**Kökötöy** (Gray-Haired-Elder), white shaman, former prime shaman of the Ashite, currently living among the Ashina

## YIRAN'S AIL (CAMP)

The families under Yiran's authority are spread over a territory stretching north-west of Bek-Toro's. His *ail* is much smaller, with only a maximum of a dozen of yurts. Only 8 warriors are permanently living there, including the PCs. Temir the traditionalist black shaman helps Yiran dealing with spirits. The other families are at a maximum distance of 1 day riding. Yiran can rapidly gather about 30 warriors from his vassals, and more than 100 when calling all his allied families.

Yiran is faithful to his bek and to his khan. He's still hesitating to join Bumin in his rebellion and has not taken party yet. He's very proud that the late Bek Bek-Toro promised his only girl to his son Ayu-Kulak: even if marriages are rare within a clan, the families are far enough from each other to allow this—at least Yiran wants to believe this.

Fast-the-Aimer, who has two sons, is Yiran's elder brother and lives at the other edge of the family's ulus.

## BEK-TORO'S AIL

It is located in a valley in summer. There can be as much as 200 yurts spread along the river. The Bek's closest family lives here, as well as the sons and daughters of the families directly depending of Bek-Toro. Elite warrior of the yabghu's personal guard stay all year long at the *ail*, some of them with their family. Dozens of servants and slaves help maintaining the camp and the herds.

The Bek is aided in his task by a white shaman, Ak-Tchenem, who lives in the *ail* with his wife and children.

In the nearby mountains, the clan exploits some of the iron mines belonging to the Türk. Slaves extract the mineral from the heart of the mountain. It is directly melted on site and sent as bars to the smiths. The slave mine workers and the smiths live in barracks, while their guards live in their yurts. Camels bring wood and dry excrements to be burned in the furnace, and bring back the iron bars. There is of course a forge at the Bek's *ail*, where the master black smith and his fellow armour makers make the weapons for the clan. A big part of them are re-exported to the Avar Qaghan as tribute, or to the Hephtalite or to the Sogdian merchants. Avar envoys are always present to control the trade.

During winter, the *ail* moves to the mountain slopes, where air is warmer than at the bottom of valleys. It is also farther from the mines and not bigger than 100 yurts: the poor soil cannot feed so much people and herds, despite the reserves accumulated in wooden barns during summer. Even personal guards are not so many.

Bek-Toro's brother Tchoyun lives in another *ail* further East, but often comes to visit. He received authority over many iron mines from their father. After the Bek-Toro's death, he came to his *ail* with his family and his "faithful ones" and stays there longer than expected.

In summer, about 500 people live here, half of them being slaves and servants. Among the free men, about 50 are children (less than 15 year old), about 100 are men. 80 are warriors; others are smiths, elders or other non-combatants. When necessary, servants and slaves are given weapons, yielding 80 more low-level soldiers. Among the 80 free warriors, 20 are elite guards. In wintertime, only half of the warriors are available, and 2/3<sup>rd</sup> of the servants and slaves.

**Tchoyun**: he is Bek-Toro's elder brother. His only desire is to lead the clan: he has always been jealous of his younger brother. He's under the influence of the shaman Ak-Tchenem but his desire of becoming Bek is so strong, that he wouldn't hesitate to eliminate the shaman if the latter tried to prevent him from reaching his goal. However he never disobeyed his brother or his Qaghan and has always proven as a good warrior and a respected leader. Tchoyun has a 20-year old son and two daughters who left the *ail* to join their husbands in other clans.

**Ak-Tchenem**: he was Bek-Toro's advisor. He is a powerful white shaman, although not yet a Great One. He replaced his master shaman Kökötöy 15 years ago, when the latter was chased away by Bek-Toro, nobody knows why. Ak-Tchenem possesses many herds and is very favorable to the Avar, from whom he gets his

authority and power. He saw through divinations that Kenjeke could jeopardize his position as prime shaman, but does not know why. He also had a vision of Tchoyun being impaired in his ambition by the Kenjeke herself.

**Ay-Salkin:** Bek-Toro's widow. She wants to push her offspring but knows it will be difficult. Her son Gara-Gan is still a child. She hopes she can still have him chosen as clan leader by the Beks, even if under the regency of Tchoyun or better herself, until Gara-Gar reaches his 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary. She is very ambitious for Kenjeke as well, and wants a high ranking Bek (chief of ten thousand), a Yabghu, a Khan or an Alp (hero) as husband for her.

**Gara-Gan:** a 13-year old boy, he is Bek-Toro's only son and as such is a potential candidate to replace his father, but his age prevents him reaching this goal. He is an ambitious child, with a good mood, but somehow independent and finds it hard to obey, except to his sister Kenjeke, whom he loves.

**Boar-Leg:** Kenjeke's old nanny, she loves the girl and would die for her. Kenjeke consider her as a kind of second mother.

**White-Skin:** Kenjeke's personal maid. She is faithful and knows how to stay at her right place. Kenjeke likes her for her obedience and her discretion.

## THE PLOT

### INTRODUCTION

*Where the PCs prepare to go to the first funerals of the dead Bek.*

The PCs belong to a Turkic clan under the domination of the ruling Avars. Their small clan is depending on the Ashite, but any other clan is acceptable if the Game Master wishes. A couple of days ago, they learnt that their bek Bek-Toro died during a hunt, leaving Kenjeke and her brother, still too young to take his father's place. The body is ready for the first ritual: the PCs will be representing their families at the funerals.

They will be more people for the second ritual in a few months, which will end with a quriltai to design the next Khan.

**Ayu-Kulak** is the son of the noble **Yiran**, an old mate of the bek for whom he was a bodyguard for a while. 15 years ago, a girl was born to the bek **Bek-Toro**. A few weeks later, **Yiran** was surprised when **Bek-Toro** called him to announce that he will give

the girl to his son Ayu-Kulak, at that time 5 year old. For this reason, Ayu-Kulak did not marry any other woman, since **Kenjeke** shall be his first wife. Today is a chance to remind the Bek's family of his words. Ayu-Kulak would like to take this chance to "kidnap" his wife. "Be patient my son. You're going there for the funeral first, which may not be the best time for abducting the dead Bek's daughter. Be sure she and her uncle are ready for this first, and chose the right moment, as when hunting the deer. You have a chance to enter the Bek's family, do not waste it by being too impatient. But make it sure that the girl stays your bride."

Yiran taught Ayu-Kulak that the dominating Avars are powerful but consider the Türk as slaves. He doesn't like them, but their Qaghan is there by Tengri's will. He believes that the dead Bek could have joined Bumin's rebellion, should it have succeeded, but Tengri still protects the Qaghan. This is the reason why the white shaman **Ak-Tchenem**, supporting the Bek, has always been reluctant to do anything against the Qaghan and recommended to obey him.

### POSSIBLE PCs.

Ayu-Kulak can be of course played as a PC: this is even recommended, since this would give a player strong motivations and more involvement in the scenario.

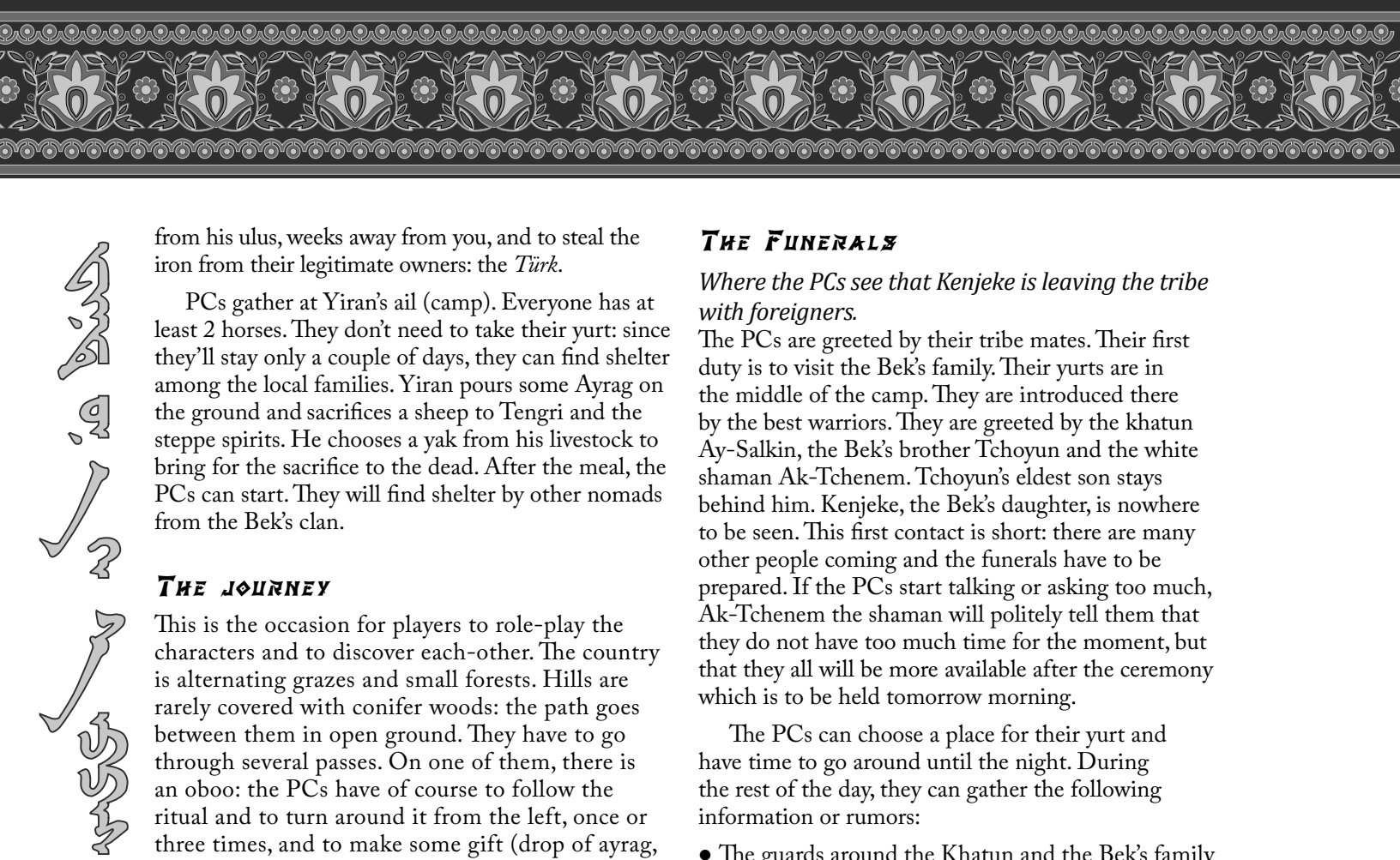
Members of Yiran's ulus: experienced warriors as bodyguards, cousins or members of Ayu-Kulak's family, friends, a bard, a shaman, a servant or whatever character the players want to play.

A member of another clan could also join: a cousin of Ayu-Kulak, son of a brother of Ayu-Kulak's mother. He's been chosen to represent his clan and will accompany Ayu-Kulak. It is important to stay a friend of Ayu-Kulak, who may marry the daughter of the dead bek. His father told him "Be faithful to your cousin, my son, for he may enter the Bek's family. He's a good guy and if you see he deserves it, be his faithful servant: if he's honest, he will pay you back with honors and position". You saddle your horses and prepare to join Ayu-Kulak in his clan before going to the place where the first funeral will take place.

Temir the black shaman as PC: Temir is very unhappy with the domination of the Avar. Their Qaghan promote Tengriism, neglecting the black shamans whose power is shrinking. Moreover, the Türk do not deserve to be under the rule of these nasty Avars, whose Khan demands to control an empire







from his ulus, weeks away from you, and to steal the iron from their legitimate owners: the *Türk*.

PCs gather at Yiran's ail (camp). Everyone has at least 2 horses. They don't need to take their yurt: since they'll stay only a couple of days, they can find shelter among the local families. Yiran pours some Ayrag on the ground and sacrifices a sheep to Tengri and the steppe spirits. He chooses a yak from his livestock to bring for the sacrifice to the dead. After the meal, the PCs can start. They will find shelter by other nomads from the Bek's clan.

### THE JOURNEY

This is the occasion for players to role-play the characters and to discover each-other. The country is alternating grazes and small forests. Hills are rarely covered with conifer woods: the path goes between them in open ground. They have to go through several passes. On one of them, there is an oboo: the PCs have of course to follow the ritual and to turn around it from the left, once or three times, and to make some gift (drop of ayrag, stone...). From there, they can have a look at the distant high peaks of the Altai.

When going downhill, they can see the next valley. Valleys are of different broadness, no more than 1km, but can be quite long. They are covered with grass, like a sea with all the nuances of green. In the middle of some of them runs a river, like a silvery giant snake. Flowers leave their yellow pollen on the boots. Hills are surrounding them.

The journey lasts one and a half days: the PCs have to sleep somewhere on the way. Kites flight above the bivouac to try and get some leftovers of their meal. At night, one can hear some wolves howling far away. It is up to the GM to have them close to the PCs, but wolves rarely attack a strong party of humans.

On the next day, the PCs reach the plain where the tribe is gathering. From uphill, they can see dozens of white points spread over the plain, close to a river, each of them being a yurt. Some groups are travelling like them and prepare to join the gathering. For the burying in a few months, there will be much more people.

On the other side of the valley starts a more mountainous landscape. A trail goes through these mountains to the iron mines.

### THE FUNERALS

*Where the PCs see that Kenjeke is leaving the tribe with foreigners.*

The PCs are greeted by their tribe mates. Their first duty is to visit the Bek's family. Their yurts are in the middle of the camp. They are introduced there by the best warriors. They are greeted by the khatun Ay-Salkin, the Bek's brother Tchoyun and the white shaman Ak-Tchenem. Tchoyun's eldest son stays behind him. Kenjeke, the Bek's daughter, is nowhere to be seen. This first contact is short: there are many other people coming and the funerals have to be prepared. If the PCs start talking or asking too much, Ak-Tchenem the shaman will politely tell them that they do not have too much time for the moment, but that they all will be more available after the ceremony which is to be held tomorrow morning.

The PCs can choose a place for their yurt and have time to go around until the night. During the rest of the day, they can gather the following information or rumors:

- The guards around the Khatun and the Bek's family are not the favorite warriors of the dead Bek.
- If Ayu-Kulak asks about Kenjeke, the shaman will answer a bit upset that she is mourning and that it is not the right time to speak about marriage when the dead Bek still lies in his yurt.
- See the Bek: it is possible to see him if a "status" roll is made. The yurt is guarded by two experienced warriors of his guard. He lies in his yurt on a bed, covered with a felt blanket. His weapons, armours, jewels and clothes are on benches.
- Meet Kenjeke: she is nowhere to be seen. She stays in her guarded yurt. The guards are mates of Tchoyun, the Bek's brother. It is forbidden to see her.
- Oddity: there are 2 tents and a cart of foreign facture (Sogdiana). They are said to be envoys of a khan from the south (a nomad will call a governor or a king a "khan") who came here for some reason. They will apparently stay for the ceremony. Hephtalite Huns warriors camp nearby. If the PCs try to know what they want, they will only hear rumors: they want to ally against the Avar, they are looking for mercenaries, they want to buy iron and horses, they want to find a bride for their khan, they are treacherous spies of the Chinese, or of the Avar, or of the Hephtalite Huns who accompany them...

- A yurt with Avar soldiers is also there: they are recognizable if asked or if the Tamga on their horses is identified (Knowledge[heraldry]). They are here to check the production of metal.
- The Khatun is friendly to the PCs, but won't say much about her daughter. Anyway, either Ak-Tchenem or her brother-in-law Tchoyun, her future husband, is always with her. If the PCs manage to be shortly alone with her, Ak-Tchenem or Tchoyun will quickly interrupt their discussion. The GM can decide to give away some hints about Kenjeke's fate, but not much: the players shall not have any certitude
- Obviously, Tchoyun and Ak-Tchenem are leading the tribe until the next quriltai, which is scheduled for after the funerals in the next autumn.
- The old nurse who raised Kenjeke does not want to talk, but if the PCs manage to make her confident, especially Ayu-Kulak, she may give some allusive information about what is awaiting Kenjeke and about her childhood: "The poor girl, her father does not decide for her now", or "She's very sad and shocked, she loved her father even if she's never really paid her back for it". Nothing more can be learned from her

*The plot: Tchoyun is under the influence of Ak-Tchenem. He wants to become Bek during the next quriltai and hopes the shaman can help. Ak-Tchenem wants it as well, since he thinks he will be able to control Tchoyun better than Bek-Toro, the late bek. Bek-Toro was less and less tolerating of the domination of the Avar. On the contrary Ak-Tchenem is pleased with the empire, which gives him more power and from which he profits. Bek-Toro had no male son in age of reigning, since his only son Gara-Gan is only 13-year old: it shall therefore be easy for Tchoyun to be chosen as Bek. But there is Kenjeke.*

*Tchoyun and Ak-Tchenem fear that she might marry a noble man who may disturb them in their plans: Kenjeke is not only the daughter of Bek-Toro, but also a cousin of Bumin Khan, the rebel Türk Khan. Clans and Beks are split between pro and against the rebellion: Ak-Tchenem is afraid that most beks may want to join Bumin in his foolish rebellion. Until now he has managed to convince Bek-Toro to stay faithful to his Avar rulers. Now if Kenjeke marries a man with a high enough status, this one may push the anti-Avar party or even have a future son being candidate for leading the Ashite, with the support of the partisans of the rebellion. Moreover, sending Kenjeke far away*

*as a kind of hostage would help having control over her mother Ay-Salkin, in order to prevent her from pushing her own son Gara-Gar too much.*

*But the main reason for Ak-Tchenem to exile Kenjeke is another: divinations revealed that Kenjeke could jeopardize Ak-Tchenem's position as leading shaman. He does not know the reason for this, but he wants Kenjeke to stay far away from the clan. He is not as evil as to want her to die, but he would not regret her death.*

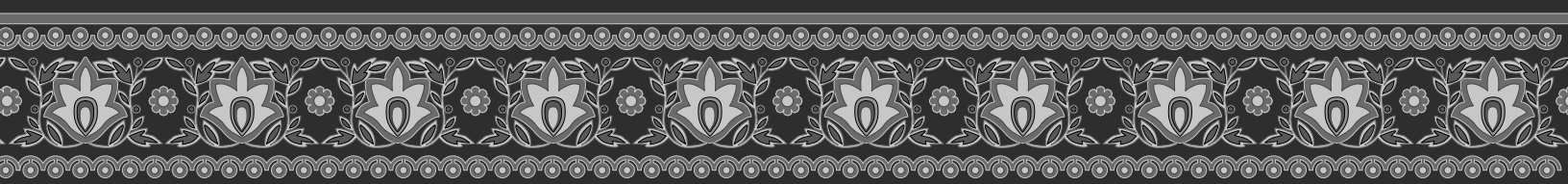
*Then the chance arises: Ak-Tchenem started tying stronger links with the neighbouring Hephtalite Empire in order to develop direct exchanges with it. He started convincing Bek-Toro to send his daughter as bride to the governor he is in contact with. Bek-Toro did not make any decision but he is now dead and emissaries from the Hephtalites are here, for diplomacy and trade – and Tchoyun offered them to take Kenjeke with them: she will be sent to the Hephtalite governor right after the ceremony, while Tchoyun will marry her mother, as usual. Having her daughter far away from her, almost being hold as a hostage, Kenjeke's mother will not push her young son nor claim the regency until he is old enough.*

Ayu-Kulak may try to abduct Kenjeke during the night, but she is well guarded and warriors are watching all around the Ulus. Assume that Kenjeke sleeps in the yurt with her mother and is guarded by 2 guards + one dog.

On the next day, Tchoyun will lead the ceremony with the support of Ak-Tchenem.

Everybody prepares: members of the Bek's family shave their head. The body has been dressed. Tchoyun invokes the souls of the ancestors while Ak-Tchenem prays the Aiyy for the deceased's soul to be brought and accepted in heaven. He presents the *ayrag* to the Aiyy and the six directions and pours it on the ground. The nobles, the envoys of the clans and the warriors turn around the yurt seven times, crying and cutting their faces. Then the sacrificial beasts are brought to Tchoyun and Ak-Tchenem: there are 5 oxen, 1 bull, 5 horses and 1 stallion. During this time, the women prepare many fire pits to grill the meat. Some clans sent other beasts: oxen, sheep... But the big sacrifices will be made during the next and final ceremony, in autumn. Tchoyun and the shaman Ay-Tchenem kill the beasts properly. The PCs can either give a beast or proceed to the sacrifice themselves. The beasts are butchered and grilled on several fires. The flasks of *ayrag* are open and the meal starts.





The ceremony lasts until the afternoon. Kenjeke is all the time sad, which is understandable when losing a father, and avoids speaking with anyone. She is always accompanied by a cousin and another warrior. An Insight roll reveals that apparently something is bothering her besides her father's death. If a PC leaves the ceremony, he can notice that the Sogdians are preparing to leave and that a yurt is being installed on a cart: this is Kenjeke's yurt.

Kenjeke eats a bit of meat before she promptly returns to her yurt under the guard of 2 warriors. If Ayu-Kulak tried – or managed – to contact her, she glazes very briefly toward him and disappears behind the door. Another Insight roll shows that the glaze looked more like asking for help than anything else. Early that afternoon she goes away with the Sogdians and their Hephtalites warriors. A few Türk warriors accompany them, but it is easy to learn that they will come back after a couple of hours.

If Ayu-Kulak protests, it is made clear to him with disdainful words that he has nothing to complain about and that this is the business of important people, not of insignificant young warriors.

The caravan is made of:

- A cart for a rich and obviously important Sogdian, may be a merchant, driven by 2 horses
- A rider as interpret
- A cart with 4 oxen for Kenjeke's yurt.
- Kenjeke, a servant maid and the ox driver
- 10 camels with packs
- A camel driver
- 4 Sogdian foot guards with lances (adapt this number to the number of PCs)
- 1 Hephtalite armoured mounted guard with sword and lance
- 6 Hephtalite warriors with bows and swords, comparable to Türk warriors (adapt this number to the number of PCs)

If the PCs have been friendly to the khatun, she will tell them that Kenjeke is sent to a foreign khan to be his wife. Ak-Tchenem will confirm this: Kenjeke is a princess; it is her duty to be married for the good sake of the clan. If they insist, they can learn that she will be sent beyond the mountains to the south. This is unfair and a courageous young noble like Ayu-Kulak cannot accept this. He must attempt something, but he has to be clever since the opposing party is stronger.

The PCs should decide to help Ayu-Kulak to gain his bride back. With their carts, the Hephtalites and Sogdians will be easy to reach. The problem will be to find a way to abduct Kenjeke without being caught by Tchoyun's men.

### **THE PURSUIT**

*Where a young son of a bek has to show courage and fight for his right.*

In this mountainous area, the terrain is varying a lot. The caravan will go East around the mountains and then South through a low pass until it reaches the steppe. It is getting less hilly after a few days, ending in a dry steppe, where sneaking is almost impossible. There are however only a few practicable ways, and only one is really easy with carts: the caravan will choose this one, since its members have no reason to fear any attack. Before reaching the steppe, some places are more suitable for an ambush: the PCs can use them to slowly weaken the caravan, or to make a swift action.

### **AMBUSHING THE CARAVAN**

Have the PCs make a Knowledge [Region] roll. If they succeed, they will know the last "ambush spot". With a special success, they will know two of them. With a critical, they will know all of them and remember details. With a successful Strategy roll the GM may give away some hints for the best tactic to use. If no one succeeds in his Knowledge [region] roll, the PCs will have to track the caravan without a chance to prepare an ambush.

Ambush spots:

- 2<sup>nd</sup> day, a narrow pass. Useable for arrow attack from above (difficult) or straight frontal or rear attack with no possibility to move or flee on the flanks.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> day, a forest. The path goes along the forest. It is possible to hide dismounted at the edge of the forest, at normal bow range. Let the NPCs have tiny a chance to spot the PCs. It is otherwise possible to wait deeper in the forest and to skirmish from the rear.
- 5<sup>th</sup> day, a camp in a forest. This is the most interesting place for a night action: The path goes through the forest. The caravan will stop at a clearing, near a small lake. At this spot, the PCs can sneak without preparing an ambush before – see next section "The Camp".

In order to reach these places unnoticed through a side way, the PCs need a Navigate roll for each place they know. This allows them to reach the first spot in 1d2 days, the 2<sup>nd</sup> spot in 1d3 days, the last spot in 1d4+1 day. If all of them fail the navigate roll, they have to go back along the standard path: they lose 1d3 days. With horses, the PCs can easily go twice as fast as the caravan, and up to 3 times as fast when using several horses, but the horses will be exhausted and may not be able to run for a long time if pursued.

If the Navigate roll is a critical, they reach the spots in the minimum time.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> day, the caravan will still be in the forest in the morning, but in open ground at noon, and this will last for days.

Except for the very last one, the details of the ambush spots are left to the GM: these two spots are not there to be the main episode of this scene, but only to give the players a taste of hunting like a Nomad, and a chance to prepare for an easier action at the end. The episodes can be run quickly as skirmishes. Whatever happens, the PCs can join the caravan on the last day at the last ambush spot in the forest.

### **FOLLOWING THE TRACKS OF THE CARAVAN**

The GM shall keep track of the time spent. If the PCs go straight forward behind the caravan, they have to take care that they are not seen by Tchoyun and Ak-Tchenem, who will send twice as much warriors as the PCs to discourage them and a messenger to warn the caravan. PCs can feign to go first at pace speed, waiting for the occasion to accelerate: consider them losing one day. The GM has to think how tribe leaders will react, depending on how the PCs behave and how they behaved before. Tchoyun may for instance send a warrior to spy them for at least one day, especially if Ayu-Kulak claimed Kenjeke to be his bride. Leave a chance for the PCs to notice this (Spot roll if they are vigilant).

The PCs may also feign to go back to their clan, which is not the same way as the caravan. They will not in anyway be followed beyond the first night. They can decide to go back to the caravan's path at one of the ambush spots (same procedure as above). If they don't find the way, they will have to go back close to the starting point (beyond sight from the camp, though) and try to find the tracks with a Track roll. However they can guess the way even if they fail the roll, since it is well known. During the night, if they are less than one day behind the caravan, they will hear wolves howling.

Anyway, the PCs will find the caravan at last on the last evening, while they are all preparing the bivouac. It is in a clearing close to a small lake in a big wood, which makes it a good place to camp. A few boulders are spread here and there, not enough to come close to the camp without being noticed, but big enough to provide cover if prone.

The Hephtalites spot around: if the PCs are not hidden, they will be spotted in daylight. If the PCs have not attacked the caravan before, some warriors will go to them with the Türk interpreter for translation. They want to be sure that the PCs are not dangerous, but will not do anything since they do not know about their intentions and they belong to their allied Turkic tribe. If they have been attacked, adjust their reaction to what happened before.

The Yurt is placed between both carts. The Sogdian merchant sleeps in his cart, his servants on the ground under it. The camels lay between both carts in 2 lines, as well as their package, forming a kind of square protected area with the Yurt in the middle. The horses are attached to the carts for easy access when required. There are always one Sogdian guard and one Hephtalite warrior awake during the night, with arms and armour, or twice as much if they have been ambushed before.

### **THE CAMP**

*Where the PCs try to abduct Kenjeke.*

Is this part of the scenario, an aid will be introduced if needed. This one is a powerful white shaman wanting to discreetly help the PCs rescuing Kenjeke. The GM shall use him only as a help if the PCs are at some point in difficulties. Considering the forces present, they should be, but if they can manage to rescue Kenjeke alone, the shaman will be introduced in a future scenario.

**Outcome 1:** the PCs act before dawn. Leave the PC'S think about a tactic and attack if they like. If they manage to abduct Kenjeke, that is all right: a pursuit will follow. They can find shelter in the woods or run like the hell, but they will be hunted by the surviving Hephtalites. If it seems they cannot save Kenjeke, send in the wolves as reinforcement.

**Outcome 2:** If the PCs do not want to attack before the caravan moves again, have the wolf pack attack sometime during the night. They suddenly run out of the woods toward the camp, all from a side opposite to the PCs. They seem to avoid coming too close but attract almost all the warriors to them. The





PCs may try to take advantage of the situation: if they do, let them try. The wolves have been summoned by the shaman to help the PCs. If they manage to abduct Kenjeke, do as above. If not, see below.

**Outcome 3:** if the PCs seem not to be able or willing to abduct Kenjeke, it is time to involve the shaman a bit further. As the fight seems hopeless - or if the PCs did not try anything despite the wolves - Kenjeke will literally fly out of her yurt, as if riding an invisible mount. Before the guards can do much, she flies out of the camp towards the woods and disappears in the night. She's indeed riding her she-wolf ancestor, a wolf spirit summoned by the shaman who cast an invisibility spell at it.

After the disappearing of Kenjeke, the Hephtalites decide to hunt her, but tracking a wolf in the woods at night is almost impossible, especially if enemies are lurking. They will therefore wait until dawn to jump on their horses and ride into the woods. They leave only the Sogdian guards and one Hephtalite warrior and start the hunt. If they have been engaged by the PCs before, they'll leave two warriors to help the Sogdian guards.

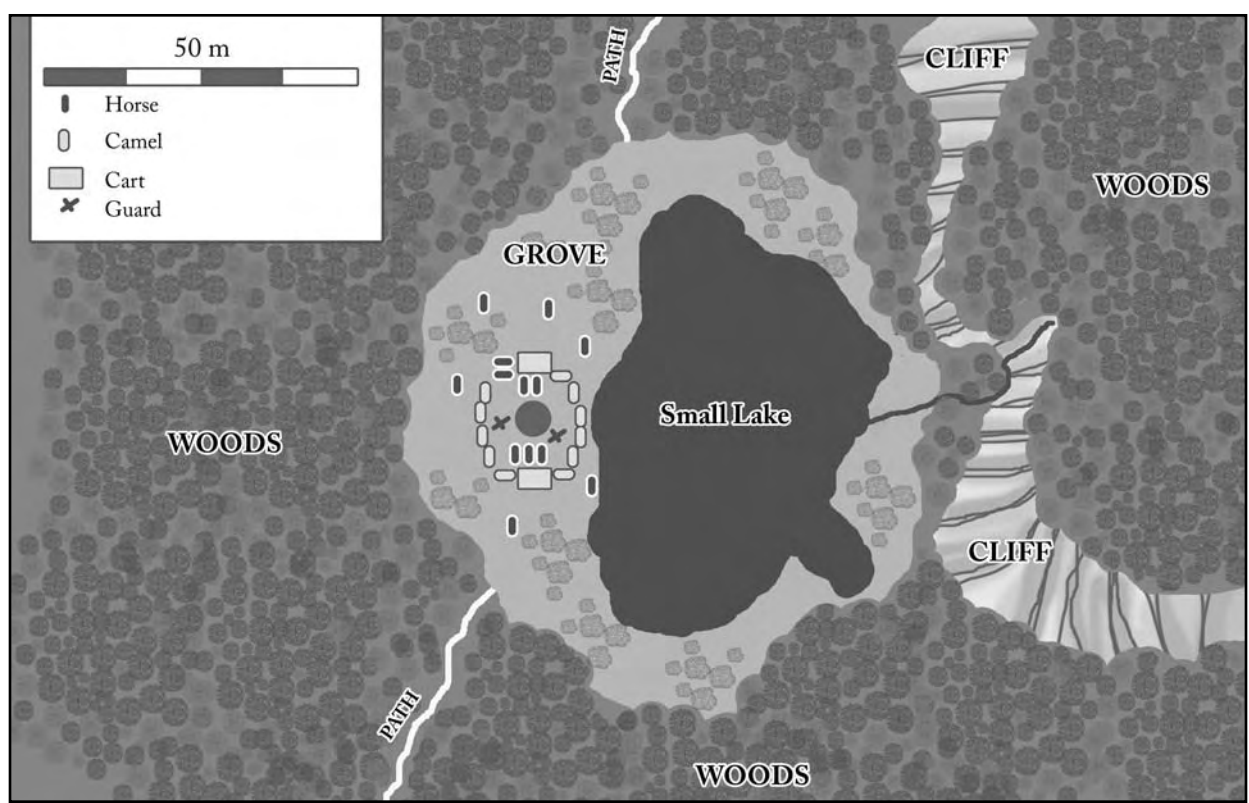
If the PC's prefer to wait for daylight and do not spot the caravan, they will miss all the scene and notice that the Hephtalites are gone, except one. They may

have heard the noise. The caravan is guarded by foot soldiers and only one mounted archer, whom they shall be able to defeat. Kenjeke is not here anymore, but if they did not kill the interpreter, he can tell whatever they want to know. Anyway, tracks of horses are easy to follow: they lead deep into the forest.

### IN THE WOODS (OPTIONAL SCENE)

The Hephtalites' tracks are easy to follow: in daylight, the Track roll is easy. But they are powerful and up to twice as much as the PCs. In the woods, horse riding and bow fire are difficult, which will make skirmishing uneasy. Bow range is limited to 50m. Moreover, while some of the Hephtalites follow the tracks, the other ones scan around: allow a spot roll for half of them when the PCs come closer, at least at bow range. As soon as the PCs can see the Hephtalites, they can be seen by them, unless they are using stealth.

The Hephtalites eventually find the track of the wolf, which leads to a small hill. They first go uphill, but come soon later down: they have found the entrance of a cave but did not come in on horseback. Unless one of them managed to sneak close to the warriors while staying unseen, the PCs do not see this. The Hephtalites then dismount downhill. One of them guards the horses. At least half of them will



Kökötöy used to be the clan's leading shaman of the Ashite, but about 15 years ago, Bek-Toro started to mistrust him until he decided to exile him. Nobody knows the reason for it and nobody dared to ask.

Kökötöy left the clan and after wandering a lot, took refuge among the Ashina, who appreciated his wisdom. He always followed what happened at the Ashite, using spies, messengers or divination. He knew roughly about Ak-Tchenem's intention to marry Kenjeke and decided to rescue her. Now Kökötöy wants to help Kenjeke to find a good position among the Türk, since he swore to her mother to always protect her.

This is what he can explain if asked.

sneak up to the cave with their swords. The rest stay behind with the bows. They are concentrating on the hill, not watching rearward. The PCs can exploit the surprise and attack from behind. The shaman will help them as much as he can. The PCs shall have a good chance to win the battle. Once the Hephtalites have lost half of their men through death or incapacitation, they flee, trying to get back to their horses first.

After the battle, the PCs meet the shaman at last. He is able to heal wounds and is very grateful. He asks them who they are and why they wanted to rescue Kenjeke. He will then explain:

"I am Kökötöy" The PCs heard about this name. Some may know that he was the shaman of the ruling family a long time ago and was replaced by Ak-Tchenem as Bek-Toro banned him from the clan. "I don't want Kenjeke to be sent to the foreigners. She needs support from courageous men. She's the daughter of a Bek, her mother belongs to the Ashina: she can play an important role in the tribe" he looks at Ayu-Kulak "as well as to her husband and children".

The only thing Kenjeke knows about Kökötöy is what her mother recently told her: if at any time she is in trouble, she can seek the shaman's help. But what she also knows is that all the Hephtalite and Sogdian must die and their body disappear. She does not want to be tracked, captured and sent to the foreigners again. She is angry and wants to claim her rights in the clan, but knows she must first secretly prepare for it. She asks for the support of the PCs.

**Note:** this episode with the shaman is optional. If the PCs have a shaman among them and the GM wants to shorten the scenario, it is possible to skip it. Ambushing a caravan is however quite a challenge, and only a strong party of PCs shall manage to do it without some magical help: even if they may rescue Kenjeke, it is highly improbable that they defeat the whole caravan. They will meet anyway the shaman later during the campaign.

## ÉPILOGUE

Kenjeke must hide herself from her enemies who will at some time learn about her escape. Ayu-Kulak can easily convince her to stay by him. However, if grateful toward the PCs, Kenjeke will require more from Ayu-Kulak to accept becoming his wife: such an attitude will be unacceptable from a normal woman, but Kenjeke is the daughter of a high ranking Bek, cousin of the Khan and is a chance for Ayu-Kulak to grow in the social hierarchy. Whatever, the shaman will keep an eye on her. Kenjeke can be kept as a female player character: in this case, Kenjeke will stay along with the other PCs and share their adventures.

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

### HEPHTALITE WARRIORS

#### Characteristics

STR	12
CON	10
SIZ	13
INT	13
DEX	12
POW	10
APP	11

**Hit Points:** 12

Attack	Skills	Damage	Special
Composite Bow ( <i>strong</i> )	50%	1d8+1+1d2 (1d8+1)	
Sabre	55%	1D8 + 1d4	
Half Shield	55%		
Grapple	50%		

**Damage Bonus:** —

**Armour:** AP 3 (leather lamellar)

**Skills:** Dodge 43%, Healing Lore 35%, Horse Archery 40%, Jump 40%, Knowledge [region] 40%, Listen 45%, Navigate 35%, Riding Acrobatics 35%, Spot 45%, Status 50%, Strategy 20%, Track 50%



## HEPHTALITE LEADER

### Characteristics

STR	12
CON	13
SIZ	13
INT	13
POW	14
DEX	12

Hit Points 13

Attack	Skills	Damage
--------	--------	--------

Composite Bow ( <i>strong</i> )	66%	1d8+1+1d2 (1d8+1)
Sabre	66%	1d8 +1d4,
Half shield	66%	
Lance	46%	

**Damage Bonus:** 1d4

**Armour:** AP 6 (lamellar)

**Skills:** Command 50%, Dodge 50%, Healing Lore 45%, Horse Archery 40%, Jump 40%, Listen 55%, Navigate 35%, Riding Acrobatics 35%, Spot 55%, Status 80%, Strategy 35%, Track 50%

## SOEDIAN CARAVAN GUARDS

### Characteristics

STR	11
CON	12
SIZ	13
INT	12
POW	10
DEX	11
APP	11

Hit Points: 12

Attack	Skill	Damage
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Long Spear	55%	1D10+1
Long Sword	55%	1d8
Grapple	50%	

**Armour:** AP 4 (leather lamellar, light helmet (+1))

**Damage Bonus:** —

**Skills:** Dodge 40%, First Aid 30%, jump 40%, listen 45%, spot 45%, status 40%, track 30%

## WOLVES

### Characteristics

STR	8
CON	11
SIZ	9
INT	5
POW	11
DEX	13

**Move:** 10

**Hit Points:** 10

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
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Bite	30%	1d8	bleeding
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**Damage Bonus:** —

**Armour:** 2-point fur

**Skills:** Dodge 35%, Listen 75%, Sense 90%, Spot 60%, Track 80%.

## WOLF SPIRIT

### Characteristics

STR	18
CON	18
SIZ	13
INT	13
POW	18
DEX	18

**Move:** 10

**Hit Points:** 18

**Damage Bonus:** 1d4

**Armor:** 2-point fur

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
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Bite	90%	1D8+1D2	bleeding
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**Skills:** Dodge 58%, Listen 75%, Sense 90%, Spot 60%, Track 80%.

**Power:** Control Wolf, Enhance CON

## HOKOTOY, WHITE SHAMAN

### Characteristics

STR	8
CON	9
SIZ	11
INT	17
POW	18
DEX	9
APP	11

**Hit Points:** 10

Attack	Skill	Damage	Special
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Knife	33%		
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**Damage bonus:** —

**Armour:** —

**Allegiances:** Ancestors: 50%, Tengriism: 86%

**Skills:** Knowledge [spirit World] 85%, Soul Escape 78%, Persuade 75%, Sing 75%, Osteomancy 70%, First Aid 21%

**Spells:** Enlighten 75%, Heal 62%

**Temporarily allied spirits:** 1x lower spirit (GM choice), 3x Kök-Böru (Blue Wolf), 1x Djulga-Khan. Kökötöy ordered an Invisibility Spell Spirit to help him.

**Permanently allied Aiyy:** Ürüng-Aiyy-Tojon



# GLOSSARY

## GEOGRAPHY

**Altai:** mountain N-W of Mongolia, cradle of many Turkic tribes

**Bactria:** region including modern Afghanistan and partially Iran

**Baikal:** Siberian lake, the deepest in the World, North of Mongolia

**Balkhash:** large lake in the Kazakh Steppe

**Dzungaria:** semi-desert depression between the Altai and the Tien-Shen Mountains

**Irtys:** river flowing through the north-eastern Kazakh steppe before turning northward and flowing into the Ob River.

**Karakorum:** capital of the Mongol Empire, located in the Orkhon valley

**Khangai:** mountains north of Mongolia.

**Ordos:** desert and steppe area encircled by the Yellow River in the North-West of China

**Ordu-Balik:** capital of the Uyghur Empire, located in the Orkhon Valley

**Orkhon:** North-Mongolian river flowing into the Selenge river and lake Baikal. The capital cities of Uyghurs and of Mongols were built along it

**Ötüken:** sacred mountain for many Turkic tribes, located in the Khangai Mountains

**Tarim bassin:** desert depression, East of the Tien-Shen, main passage for the Silk Road

**Tien-Shen:** mountains, West of modern China

**Selenge:** North-Mongolian river flowing into Lake Baikal

**Sogdiana:** see Transoxiana

**Transoxiana:** The land "across the Oxus river", also known as Sogdiana, this encompasses modern-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, southern Kyrgyzstan and southwest Kazakhstan.

**Yenissei:** Siberian river flowing into the Arctic Ocean

## PEOPLES AND CUSTOMS

**Ail:** Camping place.

**Alp:** see Batyr.

**Anda:** Blood Brothers, sworn allies with ties stronger than those to clan, khan or kin.

**Arad:** Commoners, servants and maids, who normally do not possess a mount and remain at the camp.

**Ätügen:** Earth goddess (see Jer-Süb).

**Ayrag:** A low alcoholic drink made from fermented mare's milk, foaming as beer with a sour taste, this can be drunk by Muslims as it does not come from fermented grain.

**Aiyy:** Deities, spirits of the Sky World, White spirits, good spirits.

**Baki:** Shamans who become Kings.

**Balbal:** Sacred stones surrounding a grave, representing the slain enemies.

**Bogul:** Slaves, often captured nököd from a vanquished tribe, they can be freed and then return to their former status.

**Batyr:** hero.

**Bek:** Turkic leader, see *Noyan*.

**Bökh:** Wrestling, a very important sport amongst nomads.

**Bunchuk:** A long piece of horse-hair or yak-hair, attached to a long pole, decorated with a ball, trident or crescent, used as a standard.

**Darquan:** see *Nökud*.

**Dustan:** A Clan history.

**Erlük:** god of the Underworld, master of üör.

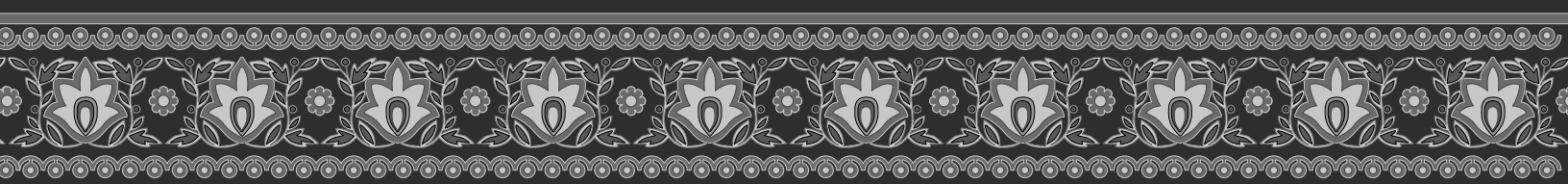
**Ezi:** Nature Great Spirit, host of a piece of landscape.

**Five Muzzles:** the five main herded species: sheep, cow/yak, camel, horse and goat.

**Ger:** portable felt home in Mongolia, See *yurt*.

**Ichchi:** nature spirit.





**Indo-European:** Group of Languages including most of the European languages, as well as several Asian languages. Older Indo-European peoples share some cultural traits (e.g. “tri-functionality”).

**Irgens:** A unit between a clan and a tribe, sometimes refers to a large clan or a very small tribe.

**Jer-Süb:** Earth goddess (see Ätügen).

**Khan:** The king of a clan or a tribe.

**Khatun:** Queen.

**Kökbörü (Buzkashi):** A fierce sport played by mounted teams, this is almost a national sport.

**Kumiss:** see Ayrag.

**Kurgan:** ancient royal tomb of the Eurasian Horse nomads.

**Manashi:** Kyrgyz bard.

**Nökud (sing. nökul) or Darquan (Turkish tarkhan):** The class of free men and warriors who form the main body of the army.

**Noyan (Bagadur or Batyr):** The Knights, heroes and leaders of a clan or tribe, Bagadur and Batyr are often used as honorific title by famous warriors and heroes.

**Oboo:** Mounds of stones, normally with a staff stuck at the top, used as altars or sites for ceremonies.

**Ojigin:** Keeper of the family hearth, the ranking son of a Khan.

**Polo:** A more genteel sport than Kökbörü, this is often played with the severed head of an enemy.

**Qaghan:** High Khan, normally of a Tribe, sometimes of a confederation of tribes or an Empire.

**Quriltai:** A tribal assembly, normally used to elect a Khan or to make major decisions.

**Recurve bow:** bow which extremities are curved forward

**Reflex bow:** bow curved forward when the string is loose

**Saka:** Magical stones found in the guts of animals.

**Shaman:** Priest, wizard, healer and soothsayer, intermediary between the mundane world and the spirit world.

**Tamga:** Clan symbol or mark, sign of heraldry, allows the clan to mark its livestock and identify enemies.

**Tarkhan:** see *nökud*.

**Tengri:** master of Heaven, the High God of the steppe Nomads.

**Tulpar:** Magical winged horse, beloved of Tengri and ridden by mighty Batyrs.

**Tümen:** Military units 10,000 strong.

**Turco-Mongol:** central Asian Uralo-Altaic nomadic and semi-nomadic peoples, including Turkic, Mongolian and Tungusic tribes.

**Ulus:** Territory, later a division of an empire.

**Umai:** fertility goddess.

**Uralo-Altaic:** Group of Asian languages including Turkish, Mongolian and Korean.

**Uran:** A battle-cry unique to a clan, sometimes with magical powers.

**Urga:** A kind of lasso with a pole, used to catch cattle and horses.

**Üör:** Spirits of the Underworld, Dark spirits, Evil spirits.

**Yurt:** Home, especially the portable homes of the steppe, known as ger amongst the Mongols. Originally people of a camp or of an ulus.





## Basic Roleplaying

# WIND ON THE STEPPES

For longer than two millennia they raided and subjugated their civilized neighbours of the West and the East. Europe, Russia, China and the Islamic Caliphate feared them and sometimes revered them as their masters. For no matter which tribe led them, whether Huns, Turks or Mongols, the Steppe Nomads ruled over Central Asia and dared to wage war against anyone in the world, believing that their god Tengri had granted them power over all inferior mortals. And in truth the gods of war often smiled upon their armies, blessing them with victory over countless enemies.

Wind on the Steppes is a supplement for Basic Roleplaying describing the features common to all nomad tribes and the peculiarities of each nomad ethnicity or empire. Within it you will find inspiration for fleshing out powerful enemies for your historical campaigns based on other Alephtar Games supplements. But its use is not limited to providing you with more detailed “bad guys”: Nomads can be fascinating player characters, too. The harsh life of the steppe and the unique flavour of their shamanistic approach to the supernatural world will give you plenty of great roleplaying opportunities.

*This game supplement offers a realistic representation of nomad society and may put players in contact with practices that someone might find disturbing like slavery, human sacrifices, mistreatment of women and extreme physical abuse. It is therefore recommended for a mature audience.*

This book requires the Basic Roleplaying Core Rulebook, available from Chaosium Inc.



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