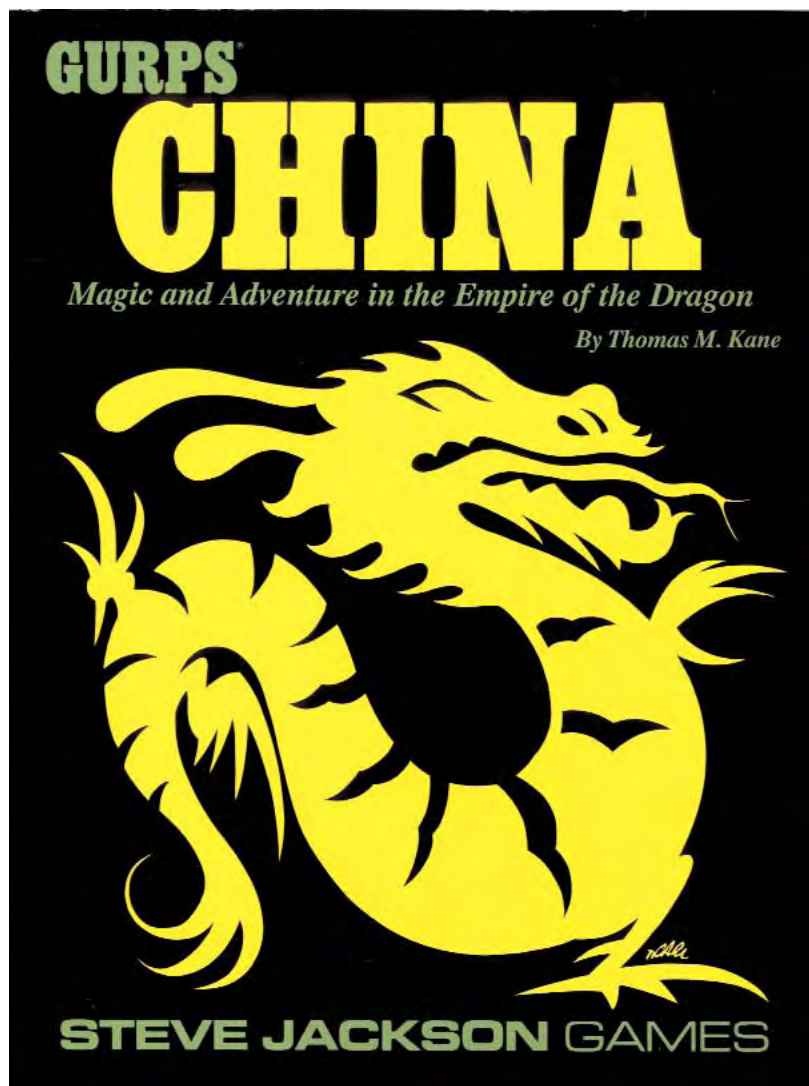


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**GURPS<sup>®</sup>**

# CHINA

*Magic and Adventure in the Empire of the Dragon*

*By Thomas M. Kane*



**STEVE JACKSON GAMES**



# GURPS<sup>®</sup>

# CHINA

*Magic and Adventure in the Empire of the Dragon*

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ISBN 1-55634-180-6

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

# STEVE JACKSON GAMES

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## About GURPS

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## Page References

Rules and statistics in this book are specifically for the *GURPS Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any page reference that begins with a B refers to a page in the *Basic Set* — e.g., p. B102 means p. 102 of the *Basic Set*, Third Edition. Any reference that begins with an M refers to *GURPS Magic*.

## About the Author

Tom Kane lives in the Maine woods, and at least one visitor who carried on a shouted conversation with him turned out to be talking with the bear. Needless to say, this environment provides plenty of inspiration for roleplaying adventures. Tom is also an active strategy gamer. He has published numerous magazine articles and gaming products in both genres, notably *Tales of the Loremasters* (volumes I and II), two complete adventure collections from I.C.E. As President of the University of Maine at Farmington Table Gaming Club, Tom invites all readers to its bi-annual UMF-CON convention.

Tom speaks a little Putonghua (Common Speech, or Mandarin) and recently discovered that the Chinese pronounce his name "Tangmu Kaien."

# INTRODUCTION

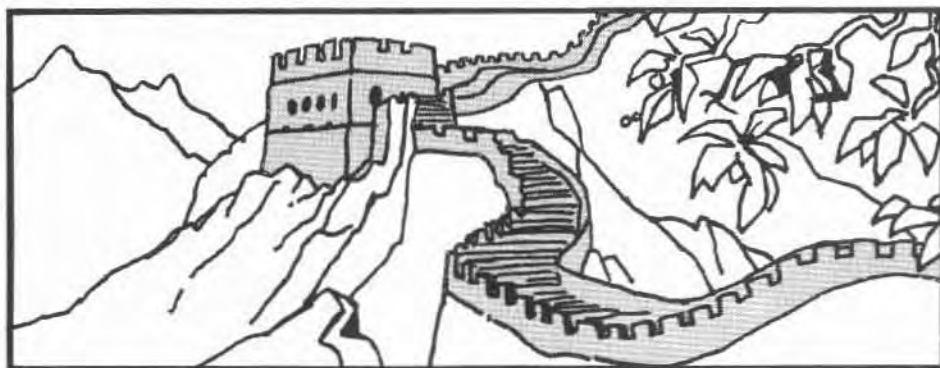
With one quarter of the world's people and 5,000 years of history, few settings contain as many opportunities for adventure as China. Those who want uncomplicated excitement will love *GURPS China*; adventuring for hire was an everyday job in China's Warring States (not that that made it any safer). Gamers who prefer mystery and subtle plotting will also be enthralled, because the politics of China's court easily surpassed the Caesars, Byzantines or Borgias in intrigue.

The typical Chinese campaign is an Eastern fantasy game, set in ancient times or the Middle Ages. China's magic, monsters, journeys and lavish Imperial courts provide an excellent setting for that. The Middle Kingdom also shatters some clichés; a Chinese warrior is more likely to kowtow before a dragon than slay it.

However, this book does not limit readers to any one milieu. It covers Chinese history from the Ice Age to the present. Victorian daredevils, modern spies and researchers of Things Man Was Not Meant To Know are also chief candidates for Chinese scenarios. The White Lotus Lodge certainly has connections with the Illuminati, and Chinese supers are sure to model their powers on Oriental legends. Perhaps there will never be an Oriental *Car Wars*, but the years after the disintegration of the Three Kingdoms (400-580 AD) certainly resemble a prehistoric Autoduel America. Like *GURPS* itself, China can accommodate any sort of campaign.

A project of this scope always generates coincidences. I finished the rough draft of this manuscript in the middle of Gorbachev's Summer 1989 visit to China. That visit paled, of course, next to the protest in Tianamen Square. As this book shows, the demonstrations and massacres there are neither new nor particularly vast by Chinese standards. They have direct roots in the Cultural Revolution. They have spiritual roots in the student protests against eunuch corruption under the Han Dynasty, 2,000 years ago. Campaigns are born from this sort of excitement. However, these events remind one that real adventures usually involve real blood and real tragedy. The Chinese sometimes say, "May you live in interesting times." They mean that as a curse.

— Thomas N. Kane



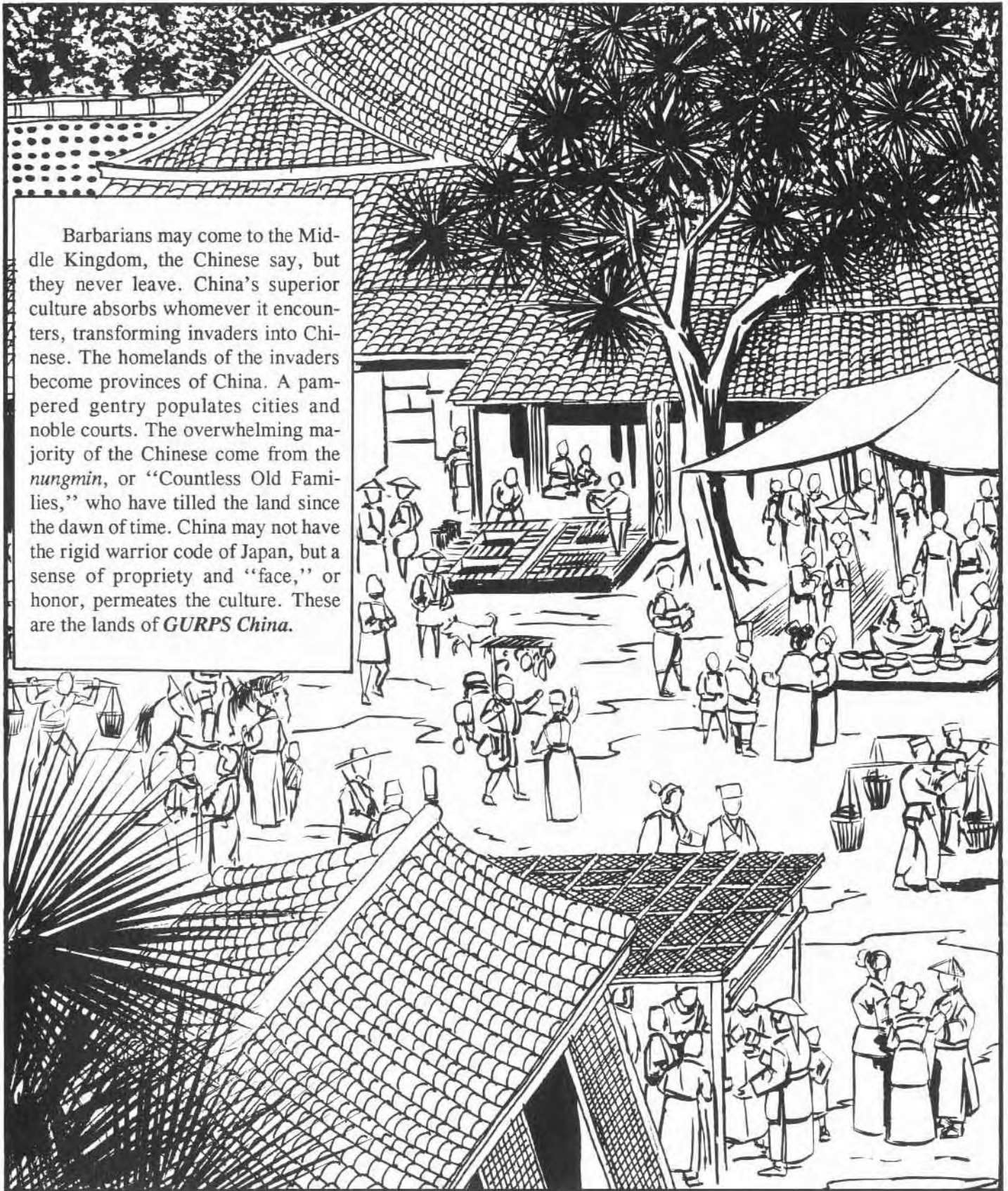
## Spelling

Arguments swirl eternally around the correct spellings of Chinese words in the Latin alphabet. *GURPS China* uses a simplified version of the Wade-Giles system. This should aid readers who wish to do their own research, since most reference books on ancient China use this method. Wade-Giles also provides an Oriental ambience. However, since China has officially switched to the Pinyin system, the Glossary provides a guide to conversions.



# LIFE IN CHINA 1

Barbarians may come to the Middle Kingdom, the Chinese say, but they never leave. China's superior culture absorbs whomever it encounters, transforming invaders into Chinese. The homelands of the invaders become provinces of China. A pampered gentry populates cities and noble courts. The overwhelming majority of the Chinese come from the *nungmin*, or "Countless Old Families," who have tilled the land since the dawn of time. China may not have the rigid warrior code of Japan, but a sense of propriety and "face," or honor, permeates the culture. These are the lands of *GURPS China*.



## Everyday Affairs

### Tech Level

Chinese history does not follow the standard sequence of Tech Levels. Therefore, most items include a date of invention instead of a TL rating. From antiquity to about 2,000 BC, all cultures, including China, were at about Tech Level 1. By 300 BC, China qualified for Tech Level 2, but in social organization it was closer to Tech Level 5 (assembly-line production, year-round mass armies, central government, etc.). Even the peasants used more efficient plows and animal harnesses than European farmers. As always, some fields of progress, notably weapons, surged far ahead of others. In the 1500s, China lost some of its superiority. Meanwhile, the West advanced. By the 19th century, one could consider China TL3, with TL5 and TL6 imports. Modern China possesses a space program and nuclear navy, but most of its people are at TL6. Of course, the peasants always lived primitively.



China's culture is what makes the Middle Kingdom unique, and the Chinese worship tradition. Society depends on youths' devotion to elders, siblings' mutual love and subjects' obedience to the State. One indicates respect with a bow. The most extreme bow, or *kowtow*, involves kneeling and touching one's head to the ground. After one bows, one's superior returns the gesture, but does not bend as low. Whether with lessers or greater, one must behave courteously, keep one's temper and avoid drawing attention to anyone else's flaws. One loses great "face" if humiliated in public, and a courteous person strives never to embarrass anyone . . . unintentionally.

Art is as important to the Chinese as manners. The Chinese consider music and dance as essential as air. Clapperless bronze bells and jade chimes are holy, while the music of flutes and drums inspire noble deeds. However, foreign stringed instruments lead to decadence.

### Food

China's diet changed as the Middle Kingdom absorbed new peoples. The ancient Chinese based their diet on millet, usually pressed into cakes. Wheat and barley were popular too, and everyone garnished meals with beans, turnips, melons, onions, dumplings, ginger and basil. Meat was expensive, and most people could only afford dried beef. Rich men could afford pork and chicken. When China amalgamated the southern lands, the Chinese discovered seafood and rice. By Han times, the latter engulfed all Chinese cooking and thought. Instead of saying "hello," a Chinese person inquires, "Have you eaten rice today?"

In the Tang dynasty (618-906 AD), bizarre foods became fashionable. These included spinach and pistachio nuts from the West, dill from Indonesia, almonds from Turkestan and an ice cream made of milk, rice and camphor. Eating wild mushrooms became a mark of status. Tea also appeared in the Tang dynasty. Its preparation became almost a religion, and fashionable Chinese practiced a tea ceremony like the one still performed in Japan.

The Chinese have been drinking alcohol throughout their history. They make beers and wines out of millet and rice. The elite enjoy grape wine. Northern exiles and colonists in the southern jungles drink heavily because of the heat and constant worry over malaria. Sojourners in the South like coconut milk and palm toddies.

### Dress

China's civilized dress sets it apart from the barbarians. Everyone, from scholars to street urchins, wears the same basic two-piece outfit — a sashed tunic and jacket. Women add dresses and aprons. Everyone wears round straw hats outdoors to ward off sun and rain. The length of the skirt and sleeves depends on how much physical work the wearer expects to do. A peasant or soldier wears loose, unencumbering garments. The necessities of warfare forced the Chinese to adopt the nomads' custom of wearing leather trousers and hard boots. These make both horseback riding and farming much easier. An Imperial Minister's formal robes might trail several feet behind him. Garments like this provide enough loose cloth to conceal almost anything, but cause a -2 penalty to DX rolls. Of course, a nobleman does not hesitate to wear more practical clothes if he needs to.

Ordinary Chinese make their clothes from hemp or softer nettle-fibers. People in cold regions imitate the nomads and wear wool. Not even the lowest peasants go barefoot, although the poor must make shoes of straw. Most people wear clogs or leather boots, while the idle rich have brocade slippers. Rich people can afford clothes of silk and damask, with geometric embroidery. People don consecrated smocks for magical and religious rites. Magistrates wear ritual capes.





The color of a person's clothing indicates his rank, with purple, vermilion, green and turquoise reserved for officials. Only the Emperor and his personal agents wear yellow. Commoners wear black. The Chinese consider white the color of mourning. Women use elaborate cosmetics, and the latest fashion in painted eyebrows is always the talk of the gynoeceum (women's quarters). The upper classes of both sexes grow fabulously long fingernails to prove that they need not do manual labor.

Both sexes wear their hair in topknots, but a woman's coiffure is longer and more elaborate. Parents shave children's heads except for a tuft in front. Men and women adorn their hair with jeweled pins, and everyone wears a cap or scarf, the color and shape of which indicates one's profession. Only Buddhist monks go outdoors bareheaded. Nobody wore pigtaails until the Manchus imposed them in 1644. During the early 1900s, Manchu supporters retained

## Chinese Proverbs

The Chinese love sayings, especially those which they can attribute to some ancient sage. Here is a selection of sayings which characters might quote.

### General

To disobey one's parents annuls one hundred good deeds.

Know thy enemy and thyself, and in one hundred battles you will not be defeated.

What moment in life is as happy as one before a full rice bowl?

A man thinks but a woman knows.

A clever man can build a city. A clever woman can lay one low.

No man on earth has power like a poor wretch ready to die.

A true hero knows how to duck punches.

### On Politics

When you find something useful, claim it as a profound truth.

Muddy water let stand will clear.

If you bow at all, bow low.

When tigers fight, mangy dogs make the most of it.

### Lao Tzu's Sayings

Taoist wisdom tends to be either impenetrable or dryly to the point. Lao Tzu wrote mystic passages. Chuang Tzu gave humorous advice on specific matters, but is less quotable except in the context of a specific episode. The following lines come from Lao Tzu's *Tao Te Ching*.

There is a thing confusedly formed,  
Born before Heaven and Earth.  
Silent and void.  
It stands alone and does not change.  
Goes round and does not weary.  
It is capable of being the mother of the world.

I know not its name.

So I style it the Tao.

I give it the makeshift name of "The Great."

A good walker leaves no trail.

It is the emptiness in a pot that makes the pot useful.

Than self-restraint there is nothing better.

Those responsible for executions perform executions. But those who perform executions for them are doing no more than carving wood for the greater carpenter. And those who carve wood for the greater carpenter can rarely fail to injure their own hands.

Victory in war should be observed with funeral rites.

*Continued on next page . . .*

queues, and everyone else cut them off. False pigtails became popular, since one could hide them while revolutionaries were in power and quickly put them on if the Manchus regained control.

## Chinese Proverbs (Continued)

### Confucian Sayings

Good iron is not used for nails, and good men are not used for soldiers.

The gentleman concerns himself with the Way; he does not worry about his salary.

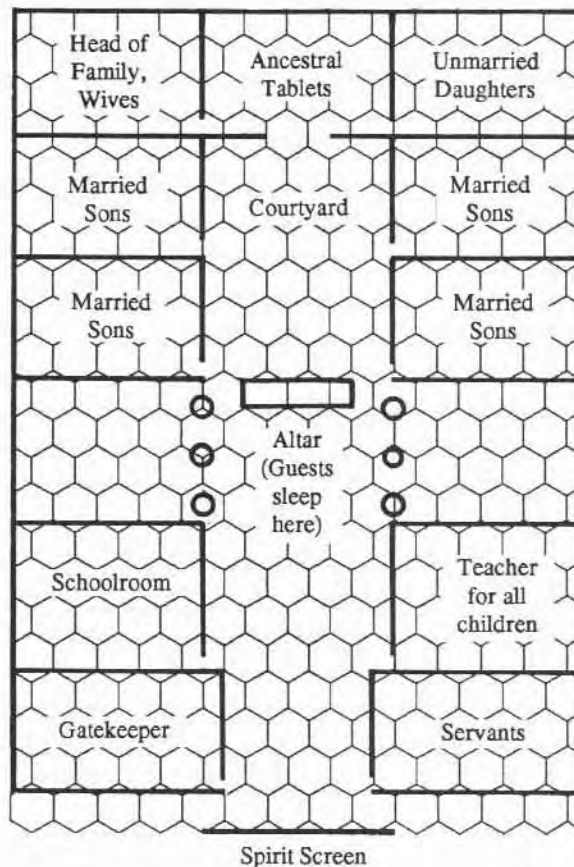
The gentleman reveres three things. He reveres the Mandate of Heaven; he reveres great people; and he reveres the words of sages.

A man of honeyed words and pious gestures is seldom a man of humanity.

The gentleman is exalted and not proud. The petty person is proud and not exalted.

The gentleman fears only that after his death his name will not be honored.

## Home of a Well-to-Do Chinese Family



## Houses

The Chinese base their architecture on geomancy (see p. 111). Their gates always face south and usually include a spirit screen to keep people from looking through open doorways. People place buildings on rammed-earth foundations and support them with wooden pillars. Roofs are made of tile, and builders plaster walls with earth. Wealthy people surround their estates with rammed-dirt walls. The State commissions moralistic paintings on the walls of public buildings. Elite gentlemen have ice pits under their house, with ventilation ducts to provide air conditioning. Fountains shaped like turtles or dragons fill their bathtubs, and automations perform devotions to Buddha.



## Religion

Taoists, Buddhists, Lamaists, Muslims, Catholics, Protestants and 36,000 native gods have established religions in China. Most Chinese people believe in all of them. In addition to religions, the Chinese revere pseudo-religious philosophies such as Confucianism, Legalism, Moism and, more recently, Maoist Communism. Each GM may decide which, if any, of these religions regularly perform miracles in his campaign.

Some religions may use magic but not miracles. The Taoists believe that many "gods" are actually ghosts masquerading as deities. A GM who does not wish to role-play a god can introduce this sort of religion. Its members worship a spirit which grants miracles but is not divine.

### Animism

China's pagan religion revolves around ways to please, or better, to control, the spirits. *Wu*, or shamans, act as emissaries to the Spirit Kingdoms. Each one receives consecration directly from the gods. These priests carry petitions to the gods and return bearing the commands of Heaven. Before the Chou dynasty, they held all China in awe. With the rise of secular emperors and other religions, the shamans faded. However, people did not forget the spirits. Priests preserved their sorcerous lore, often in secret. Rural villagers still respect local deities today.



### Chief Animist Gods

**Ti.** Ti, White Jade Ruler, Supreme Emperor of Heaven, rules the Chinese pantheon. He fosters life and also destroys it. Ti causes rain and drought, victory and defeat, the rise of kings and their fall. Therefore, one must do nothing without his consent. Ti's shamans controlled almost all China until the Chou dynasty. Then, Imperial philosophers proclaimed that Ti no longer deigned to rule men directly. Instead, he delegated his authority to the Emperor. Ti still received devoted worship, especially from farmers who need rain. The Emperor of the Heavens often seems heartless, but one can rely on him to reward upright behavior and filial respect. He appears either as a great dragon or an old man, sitting on a cloud.

Ti's court includes several divine ministers. Wind and Rain are Ti's messengers. Moon, Sun, Cloud, Mother Earth, East, West, North, South, River and the Ten Mountains wait on him. Shamans sacrifice to all of them, offering wood-smoke, libations, animals and their own perspiration in dances which last until the dancers collapse. These gods devote more attention to Ti than to most of their worshipers, but shamans find uses for them. Mountains offer their bodies as fortresses to those who make pilgrimages to learn their hidden gorges. The Sun often helps warriors.

**Queen of the West.** Queen of the West is Ti's wife. She often appears with unkempt hair, a bird's beak and tigers' teeth, but assumes more attractive forms in Heaven. The Queen tends peaches of immortality and other celestial foods, which give the gods their vigor. She welcomes to heaven those who attain immortality.

**The Five Ancients.** These lords represent the Elements, as described under *The Supernatural* (see p. 108). They have features and powers to match their Element's properties. The Ancient of Water sent Confucius to the world. Lao Tzu, founder of Taoism, was a direct incarnation of the Ancient of Earth.

**Dschu Yung.** Dschu Yung brought fire to humanity. He keeps red crows as pets and controls the planet Mars. Dschu Yung sometimes appears in the form of a young woman, to warn people of impending fires.

### Other Animist Gods

**The Three Ruling Gods.** These three brothers devote themselves to arcane wisdom and always appear on a pedestal together, meditating. The eldest brother resents the others because he arrived late at their thrones, after they had reserved the best seats.

**Chao Kung Ming.** This bright-red warrior-god rides a great flying tiger. He is a patron of soldiers.

**Chih-Chiang Fyu-Ya.** Chih hunts down offenders against Heaven, particularly those who desecrate

### Immortal Humans

The Chinese also worship human saints and ancestors. Animism holds that the spirits of the dead are literally deities. Taoists distinguish between ghosts and gods, but also believe that saints can achieve immortality. Confucianists remain ambivalent about the actual existence of spirits, but sacrifice to them as a gesture of piety toward tradition.

**Ancestor Gods.** The Chinese pray and sacrifice frequently to the spirits of their ancestors. This shows respect, and occasionally wins a supernatural blessing or bit of advice. Most deceased ancestors exist as ghosts or *huns* and *p'os* (see pp. 119-120). The most enlightened become full gods.

**The Eight Immortals.** These saints rose to Heaven and became gods. They include: Dschung Li Kuan (Chou era), Dschang Go (Chou Era) (see p. 61), Lan Tsai Ho (Tung Era), Lu Yuan (Tang Era), Tsau Guo Gui (Tang Era), Hang Siang Dsi (Tang Era), Ho Sian Gu (Tang Era) (see p. 86) and Lin Tia Gui (Sung Era) (see p. 87).



## Taoist Monasteries

Taoists become monks out of determination to find the Way, or for more mundane reasons such as poverty. A few enter monasteries to hide from foes. However, most *tao-kuan* refuse to shelter criminals. The Fang Chang interviews new monks carefully before admitting them.

Monks live austerely, but not as ascetics. All must work in the monastery's fields. Novice monks receive menial positions such as gardener, latrine attendant or pig-keeper. The rules forbid raucous behavior. A specific clause in many monastery codes forbids practical jokes. The *tao-shih* wear simple vestments, consisting of a flat cap atop their top-knot, and a blue robe. A series of bell signals directs their daily routine. Married monks may not live in a *tao-kuan*. However, few Taoists are celibate.

One of the most solemn traditions of a Taoist monastery is the Airing of Books, where the monks sun their ancient manuscripts, flipping the pages back and forth with bamboo spatulas to protect them from finger oils.



temples. He flies on vast bat wings and has the head of a black, demonic elephant. Archers worship Chih, because his bolts never miss their target.

**Kuan Yin.** Kuan Yin, Goddess of Mercy, sends nothing but love to mankind. She brings children, forgiveness and soothing breezes. Anyone may receive her blessings, regardless of rank or wealth. Although this goddess comforts the victims of malice, she never avenges it. Kuan Yin appears as a slim young woman dressed in green silk. Indian Buddhists first worshipped this deity as a male god. The Chinese made Kuan Yin female and adapted her cult to admit non-Buddhists.

**Lei Kung.** Lei Kung, the Duke of Thunder, appears as a black giant, whose eyes sizzle with sparks. Smoke wafts from his body constantly. The Duke of Thunder loves to destroy delicate things. Ti sends him to punish disrespectful humans.

**Lu Yueh.** This three-headed six-armed god reeks of putrescence. He spreads the plague at Ti's command.

**Shan Hai Ching.** God of sailors, Shan appears as a vast eagle with the head of a man. The gust of his wings causes hurricanes. Water itself rises up and forms animated waves which do his bidding. One must donate money to Shan's temple before any sea voyage.

**Wen Chung.** Another of Ti's crueler minions, Wen Chung serves as Minister of Storms for the Duke of Thunder. He appears as a dark giant with three eyes.

**Yen-Wang-Yeh.** Yen-Wang-Yeh judges dead souls, after subjecting each one to a harrowing interrogation in his Three Offices. He looks like an exalted aristocrat with dark blue skin, dressed in costly robes. The Judge of the dead assigns each spirit its rank in the Nether World. He fervently disapproves of ghosts returning to haunt the living world. Yen-Wang-Yeh deploys teams of ghost-constables to capture them.

**Tian Fe Niang Niang.** Tian, Queen of Heaven, was once a mortal woman named Lin. She died at 17 in a shipwreck. Since rising to Heaven, she has shown special mercy to sailors, and most ships carry three portraits of her as talismans. In storms, they burn each one, calling on her name. She often answers their prayers by placing a red lantern in the sky, which guides them to a safe port.

## Taoism

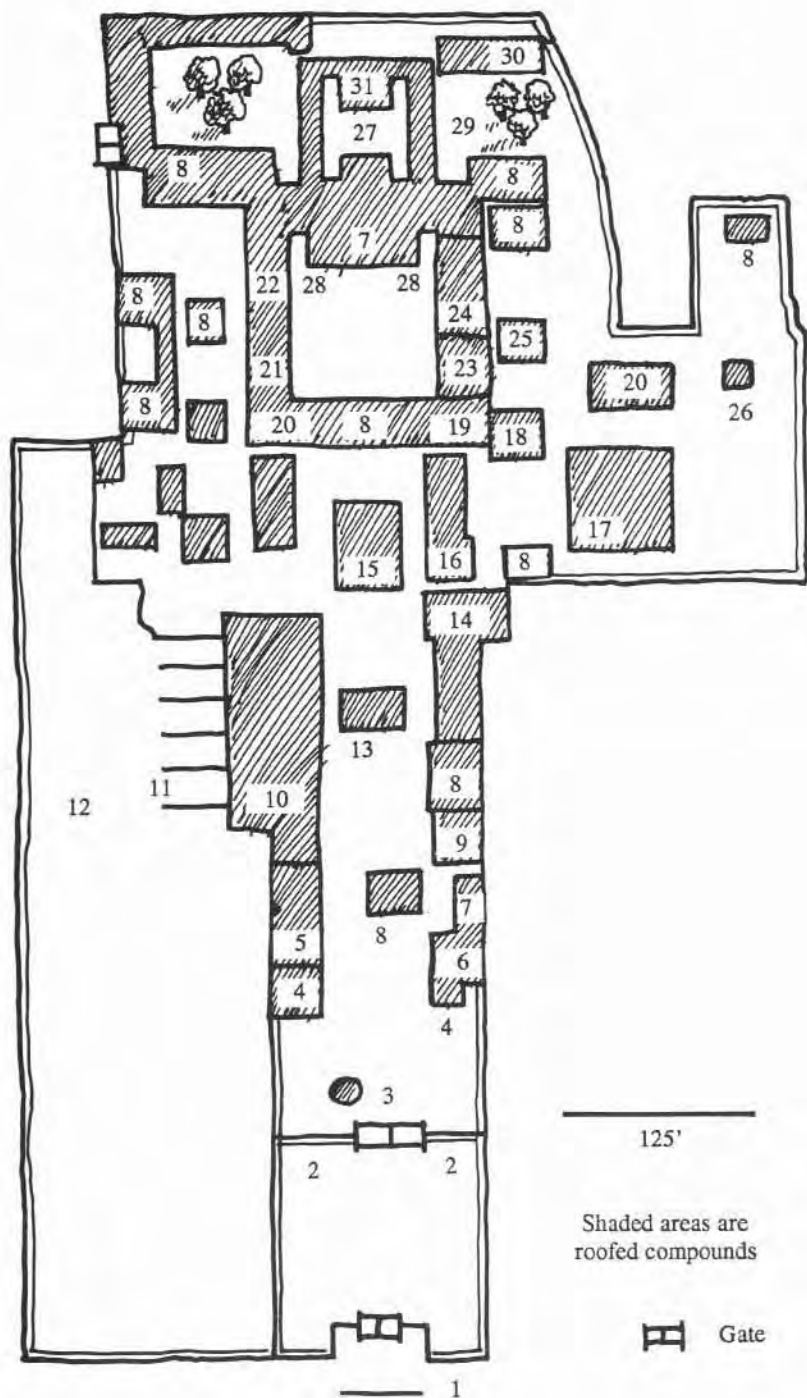
The Taoists seek Tao, or the Way which underlies reality. Tao is not a god but a state of being. It appears in the simple, the tranquil, the flexible and the spontaneous. Ultimately Tao stems from "Wu," or nothingness, and can only be attained by "wu-wei," or non-action. Lao Tzu, the Grand Elder who founded Taoism, compared the Tao to water, which is infinitely yielding but eventually wears away stone. Anyone who achieves Tao achieves excellence, whether in religion, craftsmanship, warfare, or something stranger.

Taoists come from the common classes, but they know secrets which make them welcome in Imperial courts. They study the ways of eternal life. Taoists called Feng Shui, or Masters of Prescription, advise kings in regimens of breath control, conserving bodily fluids and love rituals. They tell fortunes and practice a special geomancy which is also called "Feng Shui." Almost none actually discover eternal life, even in legends, but almost all of them know potent sorcery. Among other things, Taoist alchemists discovered gunpowder.

Taoists organize temples (*kuan*) and monasteries (*tao-kuan*) throughout China. Some of these open themselves to all *tao-shih*, or ordained Taoists, while others restrict membership to members of a particular order. The primary orders are *T'ien-shih Tao*, or Way of the Celestial Masters, and *Ch'uan-chen Chiao*, or Doctrine of Complete Perfection. Hundreds of sub-sects exist, each of which has its own sacred password, or *tzu-p'u*. All *ta-shih* enjoy equal rank, although a *Fang Chang*, or abbot, manages each monastery. The typical *Fang Chang* strives



## Typical Taoist Monastery (modeled on White Cloud, in Peking, 1946)



## Typical Taoist Monastery (Map Key)

1. Spirit Wall
2. Stone Lions
3. Fish Pool
4. Privy
5. Dormitory
6. Hostel. Itinerant monks sleep here.
7. Guest Room. For distinguished visitors.
8. Shrine. These honor assorted animist gods, ancestors of the monastery founders and Taoists who rose to Heaven.
9. Drum Tower. Signals from this building direct the monks' daily routine.
10. Shrine of the Confucian Immortals
11. Animal Pens. Monasteries usually keep sheep, pigs and poultry.
12. Garden
13. Shrine of Ti
14. Halls of Awakening, Cultivating and Fostering Perfection (Meditation)
15. Palaces of the Dipper and Earth (temples)
16. Hall for the Worship of Meritorious Ancestors
17. Refectory
18. Shrine of the Fire Patriarch
19. Tearoom
20. Kitchen
21. Hall of Scriptures
22. Secretaries
23. Hall of Purchasing
24. Warehouse
25. Treasury
26. Burial Pagoda of the Founder
27. Platform of Ordination
28. Flower Stand
29. Garden of One Thousand Mountains
30. Flower Cavern (Nursery)
31. Room of Mountains Where Many Monks Gather (meeting room)

to keep his abbey tidy, serene and industrious. Depending on the sect a monk chooses, he may pursue any imaginable study. As one saying goes, some have attained Tao by rolling in the mud.

### Confucianism

The learned classes revere K'ung Fu Tzu, the Sage, who is known in the west as Confucius. Most of his teachings emphasize the virtues of respect and obedience to authority, which accounts for his popularity among rulers. Confu-

### Nei Tan

Aside from Elixirs of Life (see p. 79), the chief Taoist immortality ritual is *Nei Tan*. It works on the principle that breath, saliva and other natural fluids nourish one's body and should be preserved. A believer in *Nei Tan* never spits casually. He uses breathing exercises to minimize exhaling. *Nei Tan* also involves drugs distilled from bodily fluids, many of which actually contain concentrated hormones. These rituals can make interesting Quirks, or components of a magical ritual. The *Nei Tan* skill is described on p. 33.

cius based his philosophy on the concept that humanity (Jen) is naturally good, and evil occurs when people are corrupted by an evil environment. Jen is expressed in the respect children show parents and in the way subjects obey the State. Mencius, one of Confucius' disciples, elaborated on the theory, emphasizing that rulers should promote virtue by example, not punishment. Another Confucian, Hsun Tzu, reversed the principle of Jen. He claimed that people were naturally evil, but rigid laws could keep their wickedness suppressed.

### Moism

The Moists (pronounced moe-ists) disagree with Confucius about Jen. They hold that virtue comes from Heaven, and man is neither wholly good nor evil. Moists preach a doctrine of universal love which forbids them to kill even insects. They devote themselves to labor for society and despise all religious rites and festivals as wasteful. This cult supports "the greatest good for the greatest number," no matter what that means for individual people. Mo Tzu, who founded Moism, lived from 468 to 376 BC.

### Legalism (Fa-chia)

Mercy, the Legalists say, is the principle which encourages lazy men to shirk, thieves to steal and cowards to run. They call for vicious punishment and absolute law, administered by one all-powerful Emperor. The Emperor must purge all obstacles to his authority. He must make "names coincide with things," so that his lackeys cannot delude him with euphemisms. Therefore Legalists seek to unify weights and measures. The State must purposefully squander the nation's harvests, to keep the peasants concerned with food, not politics. Finally, the Emperor must codify his decrees in writing, leaving no doubt about what the law demands. Then his citizens no longer need to think. They can either obey or meet horrible death. Once the laws are written, even the Emperor is superfluous. He becomes a "mirror of the people," with no function except to reflect their transgressions with punishment.

The 4th-century BC philosopher Shang Yang founded Legalism. Another philosopher of this time, Shen Pu-hai, developed a more benevolent version, intended to end corruption and injustice by applying the same written laws to everyone.





However, Shang Yang's school dominated the other. It guided the rise of Shih-Huang's first Empire.

## Buddhism

According to legend, Emperor Ming of the Han Dynasty learned about Buddha in a dream. He sent messengers West to bring him the word of Guatama, the original Buddha. These explorers crossed the mountains, leaving the known Chinese world. Eventually, they descended into India. There the travelers learned that Guatama had lived centuries before, but Buddhism was flourishing. They brought Buddhist missionaries back to China and established its teachings there. Archaeologists now say that Buddhism reached China by 100 BC at the latest, with Indian merchants who visited the south coast. Guatama's religion still gained most of its Chinese followers under Mongol influence, and from Ming.

Chinese Buddhism follows the same principles as Buddhism everywhere. A Buddhist aims to free his soul from the three sins of Ignorance, Greed and Passion. Thereby, he can escape the delusions which bind one's soul to the world. They are Anger, Joy, Hatred and Grief. By subduing these emotions, one can stop being reincarnated into the world of sorrow and enter Nirvana. China itself never developed as complex a Buddhism as Japan, India or Tibet.

## Religious Tolerance

China's different religions generally complement each other. Shamans say that Lao Tzu, founder of Taoism, was merely an incarnation of the Earth Ancient. Taoists accommodate the gods equally easily, as immortals who have attained the Way. As the shamans faded, Taoist priests kept spirit-worship alive. In Chinese myths, when Ti despairs of solving a problem, he calls Buddha. Confucius and the other philosophers seldom mentioned the supernatural. A Chinese person can believe them all without hypocrisy. Scholars debate their differing philosophies vigorously, but this is seldom enough for a holy war.

Religious persecution occurred primarily for pragmatic reasons. The Empire closed over 44,000 Buddhist monasteries in 845 AD, to make their monks available for farmwork, conscription and taxation. Taoists and Moists railed against certain spirit cults, not for heathenism, but because they bankrupted the superstitious by demanding sacrifices. They suspected that ghosts bewitched shamans and used them to defraud men. The fact that assassins disguised their cabals as religious societies led to other persecutions.

## Government and Justice

The Chinese Emperor rules by Mandate of Heaven, as Ti's agent on Earth. He enjoys divine authority, but must assume godlike duties. Ancient Wu charged the State with bringing good weather and rich harvests. Confucius added a responsibility to provide a model of virtue for the people to emulate. The Chinese expect the wisest and ablest men in the Empire to rule them. Emperors must not disappoint them.

Heaven gave the Emperor its Mandate, and Heaven can withdraw it. If floods and earthquakes become frequent, people know that Ti's dragons no longer obey the Emperor. When the nobles give themselves to tyranny and jaded luxury, they have left the gods' service. Then, people have every right to rebel.

Ordinary people simply hope the government will leave them alone. Even when Heaven's Mandate is strongest, people conceive of the state as a mass of corrupt bureaucrats, meddling "experts" and cruel judges. They may revere the Son of Heaven, but they dread his ministers' decrees and circumvent them when possible. "Heaven is high," the peasants say, "and the Emperor is far, far away."



### *Censors*

The Imperial Censor may be the Emperor's most powerful Minister. He commands the secret police. Furthermore, a Censor not only burns books, he is a moral guardian who forces ethics and seemliness on the entire State. The Emperor himself must submit his correspondence to censorship.

Only the Emperor's conscience prevents him from condemning a nagging Censor to some hideous death. However, this protection is usually sufficient. Honest Emperors respect their Censors. They feel ashamed if one threatens to resign and utterly mortified if he commits suicide. Most Emperors would overrule any other Minister for the Censor. If the Emperor rejects a moralist's advice, he may lose the Mandate of Heaven — and face revolution.

An interesting intrigue could be designed around a corrupt Censor. One who refuses the PCs' bribes might be equally exciting. Or perhaps the adventurers belong to a unit of the Censorate's Secret Police, looking for government corruption. They will find it.

## Civil Service

A hierarchy of civil servants administers the Empire. Their power depends on the philosophies of the Emperor. Confucius said that a wise ruler would "no more tell his ministers how to govern than his lapidary how to cut jade." The Legalists firmly disagreed and generally purged the Civil Service. No matter who rules, the Civil Service wields enormous power simply because it is the Emperor's source of information.

The Civil Service consists of the following posts, in order of rank.

1. Imperial Ministers (see p. 55)
2. Provinces, headed by Governors
3. Circuits, headed by Intendants
4. Prefectures, headed by Prefects
5. Commanderies, headed by Grand Administrators
6. Counties, headed by Magistrates.

## Chinese Laws

A complete account of Chinese laws would fill volumes, and change with each Emperor. In general, the laws are strict. Legislators word them loosely enough to encompass any breach of peace. The following list shows how judges view the crimes most likely to occur during adventures.

**Violent Crimes.** Judges prosecute these vigorously. They may make exceptions for self-defense or gentry who kill commoners, but it is not safe to depend on it. Murderers must usually die. Anyone who kills a parent or government official suffers the hideous "lingering death" (see p. 91).

**Outlawry.** The penalty for banditry is beheading. Chinese custom does not distinguish between military and civil law and the army regularly helps magistrates round up brigands. However, outlaws are heroes of many tales.

**Theft.** Strictly illegal. Once again, the law reserves special penalties for those who prey on gentry.

**Weapons.** Chinese law prohibits commoners from carrying weapons. Only gentry, soldiers and police may have them. One question on the magistrate's examination invites prospective judges to devise a punishment for peasants found with crossbows.

**Lese Majeste.** Magistrates, lords and especially Emperors can punish anyone merely for displeasing them. The State does not bother to try people who offend it.

**Lawsuits.** The traditions of filial piety demand that a judge never support a younger over an elder, particularly within the same family. Many magistrates overrode this custom. However, anyone with the Age disadvantage gains a +1 on Reaction Rolls from judges, in addition to other modifiers. The same applies when comparing the testimony of witnesses.

## The Examination System

Anyone in China may rise to the Civil Service by passing written examinations. The Empire administers these tests each year and grants the highest scorers Imperial office. Lower officials can become Prefects by impressing their superiors and, from there, rise to any rank in the Empire.

In practice, the examinations naturally involve corruption. Rich people bought the right to compete directly in the higher examinations, without taking the screening tests. Many provincial officials accepted a quota from the sons and daughters of high officials, even if commoners scored higher. These aberrations were usually, but not always, legal. The party could have an interesting adventure trying to rig, or prevent the rigging of, a test.





If a PC takes the examinations, he must make skill rolls in Writing, Law, Literature and Musical Instrument. A GM may also make up questions and have the players answer them, if he feels inspired. The skill rolls should certainly involve penalties, depending on the GM's assessment of the competing scholars. In a typical examination, competitors suffer a -5 penalty on each skill. The GM never needs to let PCs pass if he thinks it would impede the campaign. The examination most likely to concern adventurers leads to the rank of magistrate.



### Chinese Magistrates

A Civil Service magistrate rules each village. He serves a three-year term and then must move. This prevents judges from becoming involved in local intrigues. The Intendants, Grand Administrators and Prefects overwork the magistrate with all the administrative chores they prefer to avoid. He must manage his town and bring it prosperity. He also solves its crimes.

A magistrate may maintain three trustees at State expense. These thugs investigate vice and capture outlaws. Large towns may have constables too, but judges still rely on their personal agents. Like their master, these trustees must come from a distant part of the Empire.

Magistrates personally try the criminals they catch. They conduct civil trials too. Any citizen may present a lawsuit, but Chinese courts are intentionally terrifying, to prevent unnecessary litigation. Most trials are open to the public and held outdoors. The judge sits on a dais covered by red cloth. Both plaintiff and defendant must kneel on flagstones before him, between two rows of constables. They cannot straighten their backs until the trial ends. Neither may call witnesses, although the judge can compel anyone he wishes to testify. The judge freely orders plaintiffs, defendants, witnesses and onlookers whipped to obtain information or maintain order. Many judges carry staves and beat litigants themselves.

A judge cannot reach a conviction until the accused person confesses. A judge may torture the defendant to obtain this admission. Treat the search for a confession as a Contest of Skill between the judge's Interrogation and the victim's HT, modified by Strong Will, High Pain Threshold or their opposites. If the victim wins, he does not succumb that day. On a critical success by the victim or critical failure by the torturer, the victim may choose between laughing in the torturer's face or dying without talking.

Traditional tortures include clamps and whipping. Torturers with a taste for their work also nailed victims to boards, stabbed them with red-hot spikes, forced them to spend weeks kneeling on chains, pressed their feet in iron boots full of boiling oil and suspended them from bars by their fingers and toes. The inventor of one instrument of torture named it for his wife, who was called Beauty. This device bent a victim's legs backward until they lay against the small of the victim's back. A judge may invent whatever tortures he can imagine, but if his treatment maims or kills the victim without getting a confession, the magistrate is punished with the full weight of law. In popular detective stories, the hero gets confessions with wily questioning, not torment.

### Sentencing

In the Warring States period, laws regularly imposed flogging, amputation, branding, kneecapping, tendon-cutting, back-breaking, the bastinado, pickling in brine and the Death of One Thousand and One Cuts. The August Emperor was far less lenient (see *Tortures*, p. 91). In a 20th-century campaign, the more imaginative punishments disappear, but the Chinese still shoot criminals (and inconvenient politicians) without compunction. PCs should scrape before Chinese law.

The GM can threaten these punishments to make the party attempt escapes or perform favors (adventures) for magistrates. Actually brutalizing PCs may not be useful in the game. If prison adventures are desired, the judge can deport convicts for corvee labor. During the August Emperor's time, they might work on the Great Wall. In Red China, they would go to a re-education camp. Confucian judges firmly believe that criminals can reform. They often exact Solomon-like poetic justice or therapeutic labor (in a game, quests) instead of maimings.

Chinese judges favor collective punishment, to keep anyone from harboring a criminal. They condemn entire families or even villages for a single crime. If one PC breaks laws, all his companions might face punishment. This can be convenient in adventures, since it keeps the party together.

## Visiting a Ruler

*From the Record of Ritual, an etiquette manual of the Chou Dynasty.*

When one has an interview with the ruler, one does not assume dignified carriage, but hurries along both in advancing and retreating. Gentlemen and officials lay down a present and kowtow twice. To this, the ruler responds with a single bow.

In speaking to an official, one begins by looking him in the face; toward the middle of the interview one looks at his breast; and at the end of the interview, one's eyes are again directed to his face.

When one is attending a great man, should he yawn, stretch himself, ask time of day, order his dinner or change his position, then one must ask permission to retire.

*Continued on next page . . .*



## The Family

To the Chinese, no virtue is higher than filial respect, and no joy is greater than a house full of children. In *GURPS*, the family offers an obvious source of unfulfilled quests, Unusual Backgrounds, Duties, Patrons and Dependents. It can also provide the most dangerous Enemies. Remember that if a father asks the magistrate to banish or even execute his children, the judge must comply.

### The Clan

The Chinese colloquialism for "family" is "those who eat from the same pot." That definition encompasses the *entire* family, both literally and figuratively. Three generations usually live in the same house, including children, parents, siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents and inlaws. Parents, children and sons' households own property in common. A family acts as a sort of corporation, in which parents can increase their workforce by reproducing. Each child has a Duty to his parents, and cannot leave home without his father's permission. Traditionally, children who earn money outside the clan may keep what they need to spend, but return their savings to common ownership. The father manages clan funds. Tragic stories tell of sons whose father squanders the clan property. Therefore, ethical Confucians never buy land without consulting the seller's entire family.

### Inheritance

When a father dies, his favorite wife assumes his authority. The Chinese revere dowagers (+1 reaction), especially those who show devotion by refusing to remarry. Emperors often establish trusts to build monuments for faithful widows. Most dowagers remarry, though, to embellish family property and get the clan a fresh leader.

Ideally, the clan estate would remain intact forever. In practice, children usually divide it up after their parents die. Avaricious sons sometimes split the property while their mother is alive, but the law forbids this unless she consents. Bitter feuds develop when a clan tries to stay together, but members cannot agree on the next patriarch. All sons, whether of wives or concubines, receive an equal share. Girls can only claim their dowries. However, any woman who owns jewelry can bestow it as she chooses, and mothers often use gems as female heirlooms to compensate daughters for their lack of inheritance.

### Clan Lines

Generally, a wife joins her husband's parents' clan and takes its family name. However, when a rich family has no male heir, they may take in a son-in-law and give him their title. Men view this as slightly degrading. If a husband dishonors his wife before the wedding or wrongfully sues for divorce and then remarries, the girl's family may force him to take her name as punishment. It is a -5 point Social Stigma (-1 on Reaction rolls) for a man to take his wife's name.

### Marriage

Parents arrange marriages, with the help of fortunetellers and matchmakers. Adult bachelors and widows may also consult matchmakers on their own initiative. Spouses are often of widely varying ages, and if a husband dies during the engagement, his bride marries the corpse. She then enters her husband's family as a widow and may adopt children in his name. In any campaign set before the 20th century, the Chinese practice polygamy. However, only the very rich can afford more than one spouse.



The Chinese despise divorce but permit it if the husband agrees. However, a man cannot dismiss his wife if she has no place to go or has helped him pay for a great expense. A couple also may not divorce if the husband marries a woman when poor, becomes wealthy and decides he wants a more sophisticated woman. Furthermore, divorcing a wife infuriates her family. Blood vendettas seldom appear in civilized provinces, but a wealthy clan can usually find some way to punish its enemies. Concubines, however, have no such right.

Peasant wives work in the fields and quickly become both as tough and respected as their husbands. The consorts of rich men live quite different lives. Wives, concubines and slave-girls have their own gynoeceums, furnished with as many silks and luxuries as their husbands can afford. They all vie in their collections of jewelry, perfumes and cosmetics. Female quarters buzz incessantly with talk of fashions in hair combs and eyebrow styles, or with whispered gossip about the husband. Jealousies sizzle in every conversation, and the favorite concubine taunts the others shamelessly. An aging governess usually supervises the women's quarters. She tries to give her charges a sense of seamliness. Most can only cluck in despair though, since typical gynoeceum members think of little but seducing their masters. A concubine knows she can expect neither privileges nor honor until she bears her husband a son.

## The Middle Kingdom

A bizarre assortment of mountainous jungles, gentle farmlands and frigid deserts coalesced into the Middle Kingdom. The following overview shows what adventurers can expect in various parts of the Empire. It is keyed to the *Regions of China* map (p. 20).

The Weather entry for each region shows a typical winter low and summer high, with commentary on rainfall and unusual weather. Mountains are always 30° to 50° colder. The data is based on mean annual figures from prominent cities. Meteorologists have little information about the wildernesses of Tibet and Sinkiang, but it is safe to assume that weather is more extreme there than these numbers show.

### 1. The Yellow River (Huang He) Basin

The Yellow River, China's Sorrow, scourges its basin with floods and plague. Nevertheless, it renders this region habitable. The river's headwaters rush through gorges and eventually converge to form a wide, slow current. Only rafts and boats with less than three feet of draft can negotiate its upper reaches, but the Chinese often float timber down it. Few people but nomads live in this northern region, although the brine lakes attract a few salt-merchants.

Around the western border of Shensi province, a plain of powdery yellow clay called the *loess* begins. Precipitous cliffs and ravines score the area. The soil cleaves cleanly and compacts into firm walls. Peasants carve themselves caves in it for housing. Earthquakes, droughts, hail and torrential thunderstorms pummel this region, but the soil is fertile. Farther east, one comes to the wide farmlands of the North China Plain. China's civilization began in these fields, and most of the Chinese live here today.

**Common Animals.** Bears, leopards, hawks, deer, pheasant.

**Farm Products.** Wheat, millet, mulberry, limes, jujubes, chestnuts, pears, barley, persimmon, licorice, hemp.

**Manufactures.** Mirrors, horn bows, wine, ink, paint, chiffon, knives, lacquer, horses' tack, linen, silk, flour.

**Weather.** 20° to 86°. Rains are sufficient (about 35" annual) but come in irregular torrents. Dust storms are common during dry seasons in the loess.

### Visiting a Ruler (Continued)

In speaking of himself to a ruler, a gentleman or official calls himself "your servant." A speaker residing at home within the capital calls himself "Your servant of the market-place well"; and if in the country, "Your servant of the grass and fields." A commoner calls himself, "Your servant the grasscutter." A man from another state calls himself, "Your servant from outside."

When he is leaving, the guest takes his shoes, goes quietly to one side, and puts them on. If the ruler rises on his account, the gentleman says, "There is no reason why you, Ruler, should get up, but your servant does not dare decline the honor." If, by any chance, the ruler should escort him to the gate, he does not dare to look at him, but goes away immediately after taking his leave.

### Ancestor Worship

Duty to one's elders does not end when they die. Each Chinese home has a shrine containing tablets devoted to the family forefathers. Survivors pray to them on holidays, making offerings of food and incense. Educated Chinese do not believe in spirits, but revere this tradition as homage to the family. In popular legend, the spirits of ancestors reward faithful worshipers and punish ungrateful descendants. See Hun and P'o, pp. 119 and 120, for more details.

### Disease

The Chinese, who tend toward hypochondria anyway, loathe the fever-ridden south. Whenever adventurers from northern areas enter the Yangtze headwaters area, Southern Coast or Southwestern Mountains (not Tibet) they must check for infection. Treat this like the contagions described on p. 133 of the *Basic Set*. Visitors must make another check each week. The water contains parasites, and reduces these HT rolls by -1 unless boiled. Anyone who fails a roll suffers a standard disease, as described on p. B133. The GM should also roll a die to determine the nature of the disease. On a roll of 1-3, it is merely intestinal flu. On 4-6, it is a tropical fever, and the victim loses 2 points of ST for each point of HT lost. This heals at the same 2:1 rate as HT recovers. If ST drops to zero, the victim is completely helpless.



## China's Mineral Resources

### *The Lands Beyond*

Chinese maps (before the 20th century) show Asia at the center, covering most of the world. The other continents appear as wizened islands. Only two foreign countries mattered. India was the center of Buddhism, and explorers would occasionally go there for divine sutras. They told of dangerous journeys, plagued by man-eating dragons.

Isles of the gods lay across the Eastern Sea. Few people dared sail to them, because the sun supposedly grew hotter the farther one went, until it roasted people alive. Furthermore, terrible storms sank ships. Emperor Shih-Huang once tried to build a bridge East, but had to abandon the project. Still, anyone who sailed far enough East would supposedly find the island of the Pong, or giant eagles, strewn with treasure (see p. 120). Beyond it lay Peng Lai, the isle of Immortality. Its *ling-chih* mushrooms worked like the strongest Elixirs of Life.

Porcelain, feathers, shell jewelry, kudzu cloth, damask brocade, paper, writing brushes, wax candles.

*Common Animals (Wilderness Northwest).* Yaks, horses, foxes, pigs, deer, goats, antelope.

*Farm Products (Wilderness Northwest).* Citrus fruits, tea, sugarcane, lotus, ginger.

*Manufactures (Wilderness Northwest).* Dried milk, musk, satin brocade, lacquer, tortoise-shell divining instruments, millstones.

*Weather (Both).* 38° to 85°. Szechuan has fewer extremes than the coast. Very humid and rainy (40"-60" annually). There is an evening breeze in the chilly winter, but not in the summer. Cyclones are common inland, and an occasional hurricane moves up the coast.

### *3. The Southern Coast*

Broad, low mountain ranges separate the torrid South from the Yangtze region. The earliest Chinese considered this barbarian land. Later, it became the center of ocean trade. China's best sailors come from Fukien, and its worst pirate raids occur along this coast. Hookworm and malaria ravage the area. Rain forests once covered this region, but farmers cleared them. Since the soil is poor, farmers migrate, leaving wastelands behind them. The farther south one goes, the denser the jungle and the fiercer the natives. Vietnamese tribes frustrated every Chinese advance with their hit-and-run tactics.

### *2. The Yangtze Basin*

Yangtze, the Long River, begins in malarial jungles, where it carves valleys over 4,000' deep. This is a deep river, and water often covers the entire valley floor. The river proceeds through the mountains, where meltwater swells its flow. Only a few tribes live around its headwaters. In Kweichow and Szechuan, the river cuts through limestone cliffs, forming amazing canyons.

This is lush land, with nearly constant rain. A saying goes that anything which can grow in China grows in Szechuan. Deep forests cover the wilderness, and each town keeps a small grove to honor the spirits. Farms grow closer as one goes east. The Yangtze delta is one of the most populated areas of the world. A myriad waterways crisscross it, and most people travel by boat.

*Common Animals (Populated East).* Wildcats, bears, bees, pheasant, tortoises, rhinoceros (in South).

*Farm Products (Populated East).* Melons, tea, taro root, ginger, oranges, gardenias, orchids, wheat, bamboo, ramie, lotus, sugarcane, yams, ginger, miscellaneous citrus fruit, rice (lots).

*Manufactures (Populated East).*



**Common Animals.** Deer, beetles, parrots, peacocks, elephants, water buffalo, kingfishers, sharks, oysters, yellow oxen, tigers.

**Farm Products.** Camphor, cinnamon, bamboo, hemp, palm, banana, orchids, rice tea.

**Manufactures.** Banana cloth, aromatics, drugs, shark skins, silver jewelry, rattan goods, deerskin boots, bamboo cloth, mats, arrows, fans, shoes.

**Weather.** 56° to 90°. Extremely humid and rainy, with up to 80" of precipitation per year. Winter provides drier, more comfortable weather. Typhoons often strike the coast.

#### 4. South of the Clouds — The Western Mountains

Snowy mountains tower over Yunnan and Kweichow, many over 15,000' high. Narrow valleys up to one mile deep and as little as 1/4 mile wide divide the peaks, with rapid rivers at the bottom. Rope bridges span these valleys at random intervals. Jungles fill the lowlands. Kublai Khan lost half his army to malaria in this treacherous region. The limestone in this region forms caves and bizarre formations of twisted rock. Despite the wild landscape, this region enjoys temperate, dependable weather.

The Empire considers this area pacified, but local commanders know that renegade tribes still hide amid the peaks. These primitives worship the "lucky

#### Guide to the Capitol

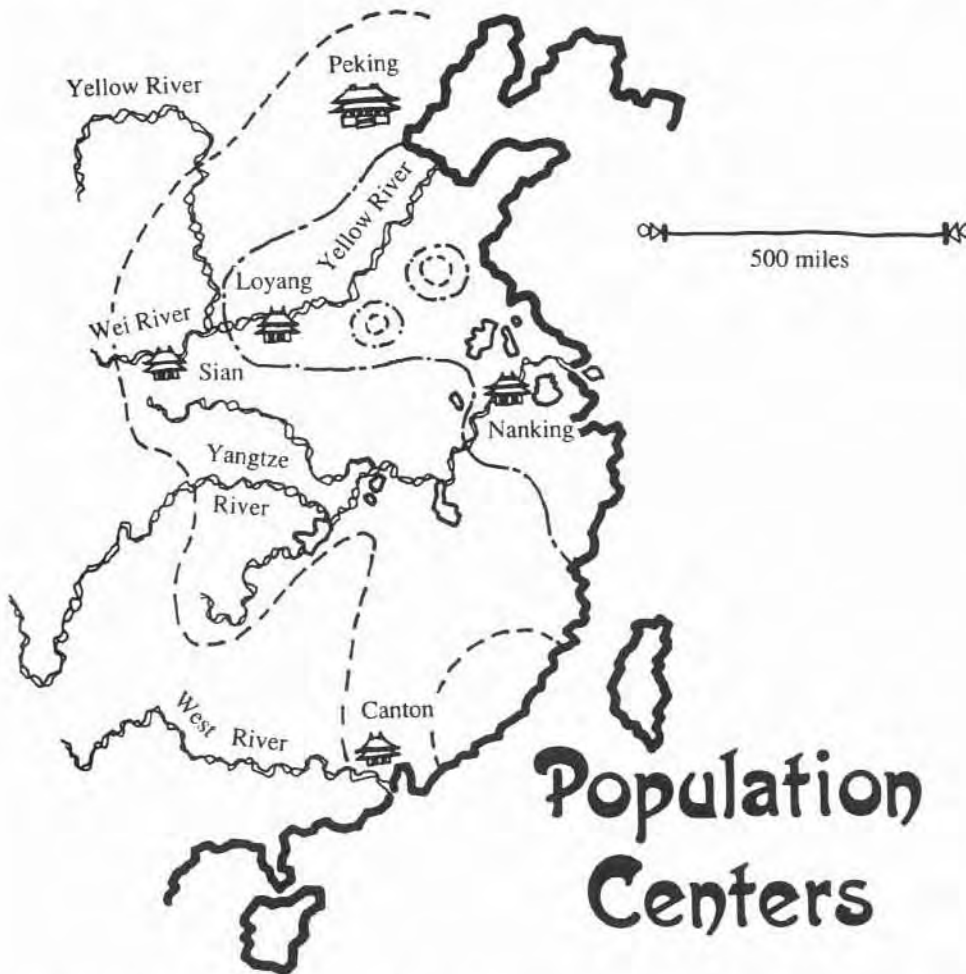
The following is a condensation of prominent businesses in Hang-chou during the 1200s. It is typical of any Chinese metropolis, from ancient times to this century. In a port, floating businesses and homes extend into the harbor. Often, prostitution and gambling dens are only legal in boats.

The markets of Heavenly-View Gate, River Market Place, Central Square, Pa Creek, Superior Lane, Tent Place and Universal Peace Bridge stay open twenty-four hours a day. Specialized warehouses deal in bronze, leather, silk, wood and other commodities. The most popular products are millet and rice. Vendors sell cakes, sweets and sticks of skewered mutton. The markets become so crowded during festivals the streets are jammed with solid walls of carriages.

Outside the markets, one can visit indoor shops. They include fortunetellers, florists, fruit merchants, dried-fish merchants and bathhouses. Craftsmen are extremely specialized. Separate workshops sell combs, belts, caps, used paper and gold-plated objects. Different catering offices perform different services, such as providing lanterns, vegetables or drinks for private parties. Music schools perform operas. They often offer disguised political messages. Temples have tranquil gardens open to the public, and tiles or city squares offer juggling acts.

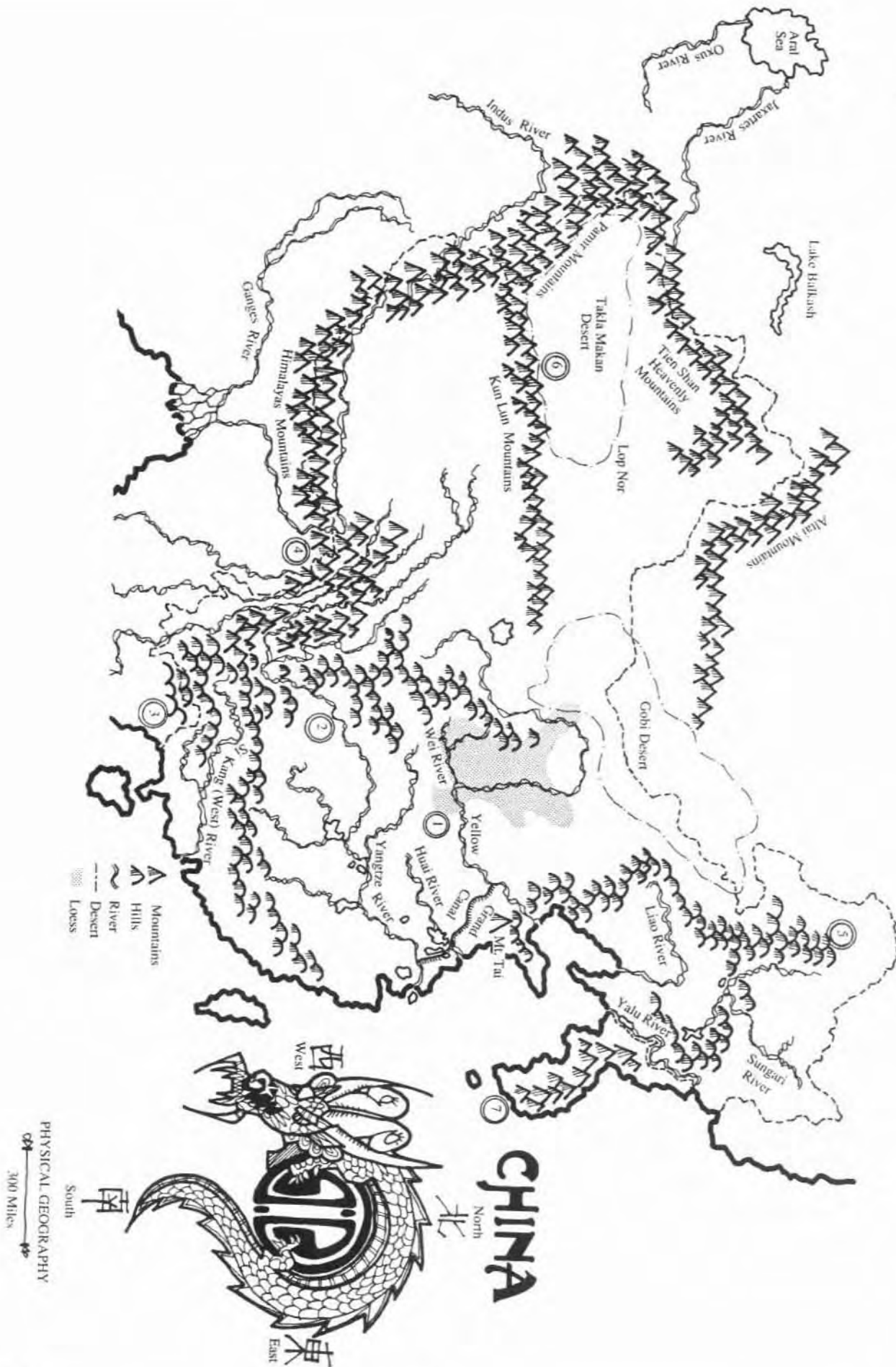
A vast assortment of restaurants, inns and wine shops fill the city. Most are disreputable. Some specialize in one dish, such as the Kuang clan's thick broth or the Chang family's sticky rice pastry. Wine shops advertise with placards displaying a branching twig. They sell tea and appetizers as well as wine, but upper-class diners prefer to eat at inns with full menus. These establishments are built to resemble rich men's mansions. Some of them offer courtesans. They indicate this by placing bamboo rain-covers on their outdoor lanterns, even in clear weather. Other inns do not permit actual prostitution, but still rent hostesses. Some of these women will take men to their homes for a fee. If one eats with a hostess, she orders the meal and, as an employee of the inn, always picks the most expensive dish on the menu.

*Continued on next page . . .*



- Medium Population Border
- - - High Population Border

*Obviously, this is only a general overview. Population is highest on the eastern ends of the Yellow and Yangtze Rivers. It is nearly zero in Tibet and Sinkiang. Note the two low population pockets in the wasteland regions along the Yellow River.*





spirits" of powerful men. Mountain chieftains greet wealthy or powerful strangers reverently and offer them lodging. They fawn on their guests as if they were Emperors. Then they murder them. According to superstition, this gives the killer his victim's supply of good luck.

The icy peaks and windswept ravines of the Himalayas cover Tibet. Salt lakes and brackish swamps stand in the few lowlands. The Po area around Lhasa harbors forests or farms. Only nomads live anywhere else in Tibet. The climate allows these travelers to store raw meat for over one year, and keep grains edible for up to six decades.

*Common Animals.* Wild sheep, wild asses, wild goats, wild pigs, deer, yaks.

*Farm Products.* Tiny amounts of barley and timber.

*Manufactures.* Musk, lacquer. Practically none in Tibet.

*Weather.* 45° to 70° (up to 60° cooler in mountains). Rain is negligible in Tibet. The Yunnan-Kweichow region receives 35" to 40" a year but is not humid.



## 5. Manchuria

Siberian winds blow across Manchuria. Lonely plains cover the lowlands; pine forests grow in the mountains. The Liao river is large, but too silty for boats. However, the Sungari carries heavy traffic. This is the threshold of the lands of the Horse Barbarians. The Hsiung-nu, Khitan, Jurchen and, of course, Manchus all come from here.

*Animals.* Bears, wolves, wolverines, ermine, sable, hawks.

*Farm Products.* Millet, cotton, hemp, sorghum and rice.

*Manufactures.* Metal goods, resin. Undeveloped until late 19th century.

*Weather.* -2° to 75°. Adequate, but not heavy, rain of 25"-30" per year. An occasional tornado sweeps the plain.

## 6. The Northern Waste

Mountains stretch to Tibet from Western Sinkiang, often reaching 20,000'. Between the Kunlun and T'ien Shan ranges lies the Takla Makan desert. Nothing grows here. Gray stones and dust cover the ground. Farther northwest lies Lop Nor, a bleached wilderness of brine pools and salt flats. The modern Chinese build nuclear installations here. In rainy periods, nomads manage to traverse this region, but when the oases dry up, it is desolate.

Oases become more common in the northeast. Steppe grass grows, reaching eight feet high. Mongols, Hsiung-nu and related nomads roam these regions. These tribes obtain nearly everything they need from their sheep, goats and horses. They eat meat from all three animals and ferment mares' milk as a beverage. In desperation, they can sustain themselves on the blood from living horses. Wool covers their tents, and dung serves as fuel. Women perform all everyday work, leaving the men free for hunting, falconry and war.

The barbarians seize whatever else they need. Due to strict incest laws combined with a tradition of polygamy, they frequently steal brides. These tribes move with the seasons, seeking lush pastures. Other tribes shun campaigns in the deserts. They cling to one oasis, and many members have never traveled farther than ten miles from that well in their lives.

*Animals.* Few.

*Farm Products.* Few (mainly tea).

*Manufactures.* Horses, jade, wool, fur, slave markets. Some silk.

*Weather.* 5° to 73°. Negligible rain in the West, about 5" annually in Mongolia.

## Guide to the Capitol (Continued)

Experienced restaurant-goers learn a variety of customs. In multi-story buildings the drinks become progressively more numerous and intoxicating on each floor. The waiters call these floors "mountains." It is extremely rude to get drunk on the first mountain, or to refuse a drink on the highest one. Another *faux pas* involves samples. The waiter traditionally brings a tray of samples with the menu, to help diners choose. Peasants on their first visit to the city often think that it is the meal. The restaurant staff notices inexperienced guests. They then betray them to pickpockets.

Rendezvous and deals take place at the city's teahouses, private clubs and gambling dens. Hangchow has a Luminous Society for Buddhists, an Occult Club, an Exotic Food Lovers' Club, and a Physical Fitness Club. Its teahouses serve more as art galleries and meetingplaces than restaurants. The proprietors expect large tips since nobody buys much tea. Hustlers frequent all these places, eager for work as errand-runners, guides or lackeys. They constantly wheedle for more money, and once one gives in to their demands, one cannot get rid of them.



# CHINA



### Prominent Chinese Cities

1. Harbin
2. Changchun
3. Mukden (Shenyang)
4. Pyongyang
5. Seoul
6. Pusan
7. Peking (now Beijing)
8. Tientsin
9. Suchow
10. Huhehot
11. Chengchow
12. Loyang
13. Tsinan
14. Taiyuan
15. Yenan
16. Sian (formerly Changan)
17. Wudu
18. Lanchow
19. Urumchi
20. Lhasa
21. Chungking
22. Hofei
23. Nanking
24. Shanghai
25. Wuhan
26. Hangchow
27. Foochow
28. Amoy
29. Kanchow
30. Hengyang
31. Kweiyang
32. Kweilin
33. Canton
34. Hong Kong
35. Kunming
36. Nanning

## 7. Korea

The Everlasting White Mountain Range runs the length of the peninsula, and its rough terrain renders the Eastern coast unsuitable for harbors. Several ports dot the west. Deciduous forests cover the southern coast, and pine woods grow everywhere else. The Koreans are a unique racial group with their own language.

**Common Animals.** Deer, antelopes, bears, tigers, leopards, panthers, herons, cranes.

**Farm Products.** Rice, barley, wheat, beans, pigs and poultry.

**Manufactures.** Cloth.

**Weather.** -5° to 80°. Adequate rainfall of 40"-55" per year. Most of this comes in the summer monsoons.

## Calendar

The Chinese divide each day into 100 equal *k'e* of 14.4 minutes each, or 12 *shih*, each lasting two Western hours. Shih correspond to the Twelve Significant Animals. Thus, there is the Rat (11 p.m. to 1 a.m.), Ox (1 to 3 a.m.) Tiger (3 to 5 a.m.), Hare (5 to 7 a.m.), Dragon (7 to 9 a.m.), Snake (9 to 11 a.m.), Horse (11 a.m. to 1 p.m.) Ram (or Goat) (1 to 3 p.m.) Monkey (3 to 5 p.m.), Cock (5 to 7 p.m.), Dog (7 to 9 p.m. and Boar (9 to 11 p.m.). Since the hours Dragon to Monkey always fall after sunset in most of China, people call them the *wu keng*, or "five night watches." Midwinter daylight lasts from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. in most of China, or 6:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. in the far south. For game purposes, assume that the Si Kiang river forms a northern border for this area. Midsummer daylight is 5 a.m. to 7 p.m., or 5:30 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the south. The ancient Chinese usually measured time with water clocks.

China uses a 365.25 day year, of 12 months. Odd months have 29 days, even months 30 days. The full moon always comes on the fifteenth. To keep the calendar calibrated, the Chinese add extra months in the 3rd, 6th, 9th, 12th, 15th, 17th and 19th years. Chinese Emperors divide their reigns into "epochs," with names like *K'ai Yuan* (Genesis Epoch) and *T'ien Pao* (Heavenly Treasure). By this system, the first year of each epoch is year one, the second year two, etc. Most Chinese use an independent calendar which numbers years by 60-year cycles. Each cycle consists of five repetitions of the 12 *ti chih*, or "earthly branches," one for each of the five elements (see sidebars, pp. 108-109). The *ti chih* are named for the Twelve Animals (Rat, Ox, Tiger, Hare, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Ram, Monkey, Cock, Dog and Boar, in that order). 1991 is the Year of the Ram, of the element Metal.

The Chinese year begins the first new moon after the sun enters Pisces. This is roughly mid-February, one month before the vernal equinox. China's calendar includes myriads of holidays, which may be the occasions of festival intrigues or supernatural events. The prominent events of the Chinese year include:

**First Month, All.** Farmers transplant trees, sweep leaves and manure fields. The trees include lacquer, oil-trees, bamboo, pine and oak. Few crops can be planted, but farmers sow melons, onions, garlic and gourds. Since the farmwork is light, rich farmers can send their sons to school.

**First Month, First Day.** Festival of Heaven, Date of Deliverance. New Year begins, and celebrations last for three days, including dragon-dances, lantern and paper dragon displays and visiting of distant acquaintances. People also pay tribute to patrons. Fathers bestow caps upon sons who have come of age.

**First Month, Fifth Day.** Great Festival.

**First Month, Fifteenth Day.** Yuan of Heaven, Date of Deliverance, Lantern Festival, marked by hanging of lanterns and eating sweet dumplings.

**Second Month (whole month).** Worship of the Earth Ancient. Farmers plow their fields and plant most crops. Archers practice shooting and their training continues into the third month.

## Cities

The first Chinese cities began as fortresses and expanded as the owners brought in craftsmen to make their strongholds self-sufficient. They quickly became centers of trade too. Some estimates say that by the 1st century BC, one third of China's people lived in towns. Almost all cities have walls of rammed earth, often plated with stone. The maps show several classical city plans.

Both power and commerce focus on the capitol. Emperors control the whole make-up of their court by choosing their main city. Some attempt to maintain two centers of government, while others suddenly move the capitol to break palace cliques. The main city inevitably developed the most shops and attractions, too.

## Chinese Astrology

Chinese tradition holds that the birth-sign affects personality strongly. Furthermore, actions taken in your "own year" are most likely to be fortunate; actions taken in "opposed" years are less fortunate, and people of "opposed" signs may be bad luck. A ruler may favor one minister — or one adventurer — over others because of favorable astrological coincidences.

The list below is very simplified, of course. A Chinese astrologer will look not just at the year of birth, but also the month and day, and a seemingly bad influence might become good, or vice versa. The basic attributes for each animal sign — the ones that any educated person or village elder would know — are:

**Rat:** The Rat is gregarious, intelligent, crafty and charming. He can also be opportunistic and untrustworthy. Dragon and Ox are well-omened. Horse and Ram are less friendly.

**Ox:** The Ox is reliable, sensible and steadfast. He hates to move quickly; he prefers to conform. Good fortune comes from Rat and Snake. Tiger and Dog are unlucky.

**Tiger:** The Tiger is a leader and fighter; he is competitive, rash and aggressive. Tiger women are unlikely to "know their place." Horse and Dog are good omens. Ox and Snake are especially unfavorable, though Tiger "fights" with many signs.

**Hare:** The Hare loves friends and conversation, and tends to be quiet and submissive. Many Hares become physicians. They are perceptive and detect lies easily. Sheep and Dog are well-omened. Bad luck can come from Tiger and Horse.

*Continued on next page . . .*



### Chinese Astrology (Continued)

**Dragon:** The Dragon is elegant and extroverted, always wildly imaginative. Those born under this sign love mystery and the occult. They crave attention. Monkey and Rat are natural allies. Dog and Hare are less fortunate; a Dragon's luck, in particular, can vanish due to the influence of Hare!

**Snake:** The Snake is subtle, intellectual and restrained, but powerfully sensual. Snakes love secrets, but never tell everything they know. Rooster and Ox are very compatible. Boar and Tiger will clash with Snake.

**Horse:** The Horse is aggressive and competitive, but prefers team efforts to individual endeavor. He is sociable and talkative. According to Chinese believe, no Horse can ever truly understand the opposite sex. Tiger and Sheep are lucky signs. Rat and Hare are opposed to Horse.

**Ram:** The Ram is loving, artistic and selfless — this house, which can also be translated "sheep," is considered the most female of the Chinese signs. Rams tend to be both fastidious and lazy, and prefer diplomacy to confrontation. Hare and Horse are good omens. Rat and Ox signs are to be avoided.

**Monkey:** The Monkey is versatile and imaginative, and often unscrupulous as well. Quick of wit and quick of tongue, he is liked by everyone, whether he deserves it or not. Dragon and Rat are compatible. Tiger and Ox may be opposed.

**Rooster:** The Rooster is proud and confident, and intolerant of those who don't meet his standards. He is aggressive and does well in war or business. Good luck comes from Ox and Snake. Ill fortune attends the signs of Hare and Rat.

**Dog:** The Dog is honest and faithful; he is also very resistant to change. He is hard-working and puts his family above all else — an important Chinese virtue! Hare and Tiger are favorable signs. Dragon and Ox are unlucky.

**Boar:** The Boar is jolly and indolent; like the Dog, he loves home and family. They tend to be generous, hospitable, and often naive, giving trust when they shouldn't. They are skilled at handicrafts. Ram and Tiger are lucky. Snake and Boar can bring ill fortune; two Boars often argue.

When creating characters, players can pick a birth-time appropriate to the personality they want! Someone creating a false identity would choose a horoscope appropriate for the impression they mean to create.

**Third Month, Third Day.** Island tribes arrange marriages.

**Third Month, 15th-20th Days.** Third Moon Fair. People of Yunnan and surrounding provinces hold horse races and archery competitions to honor Kuan Yin.

**Fifth Month, Whole Month.** Hay is cut, despite heavy rains. Alchemists gather herbs. Disease and sorcery spread wildly, for Yin and Yang are locked in combat. Therefore, men and women shun each other.

**Fifth Month, Fifth Day.** Festival of Earth, Date of Deliverance. People eat rice dumplings and race dragon boats for the Dragon Boat Festival, honoring drowned poet Chu Yuan.

**Sixth Month, Whole Month.** Fields are hoed. Women weave cloth.

**Sixth Month, 24th Day.** Torch Festival. Native peoples in Yunnan and Szechuan dance about their fields with torches.

**Seventh Month, Seventh Day.** Festival of Tao, Great Festival, Date of Deliverance.

**Seventh Month, Fifteenth Day.** Yuan of Earth, Date of Deliverance.

**Eighth Month, Whole Month.** Worship of the Earth Ancient. Hay is cut.

**Eighth Month, First Day.** Date of Deliverance.

**Eighth Month, Fifth Day.** Great Festival.

**Eighth Month, Fifteenth Day.** Yuan of Water, Date of Deliverance. People celebrate the Autumn Moon with round "Moon Cakes."

**Ninth Month, Whole Month.** Farmers tend buildings and implements. They fatten oxen for the next year's work. People give alms, thinking of the upcoming cold, and clean weapons against winter marauders.

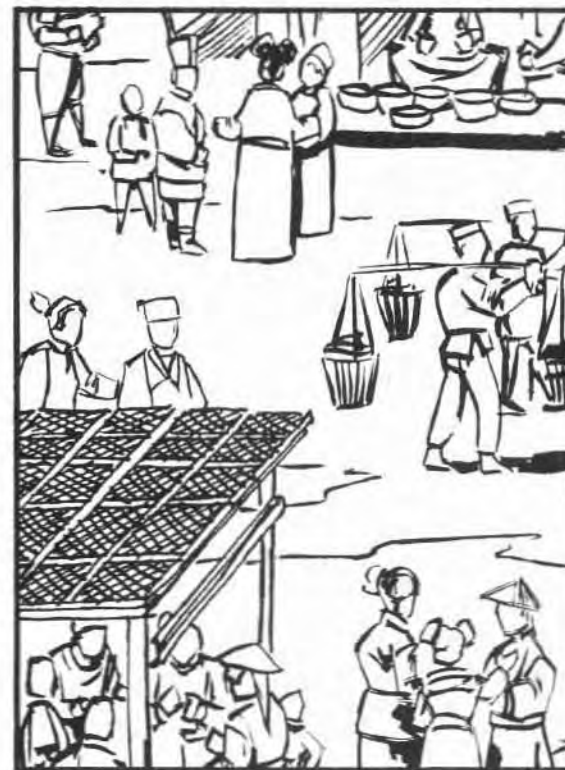
**Twelfth Month, Eighth Day.** Festival of Kings and Nobles, Date of Deliverance. People eat steamed rice pudding in a festival called Laba. Laba was originally intended to honor the

Sakyamuni Buddha, but the holiday became secularized.

**Varying Dates.** The Mongols and nearby barbarians hold Sport Fairs at varying times, to practice wrestling, horse racing, archery, singing and dancing.

**Birthdays (Shengji).** People celebrate birthdays with a meal of noodles, which symbolize long life. The older a person gets, the more festivities surround his birthday.

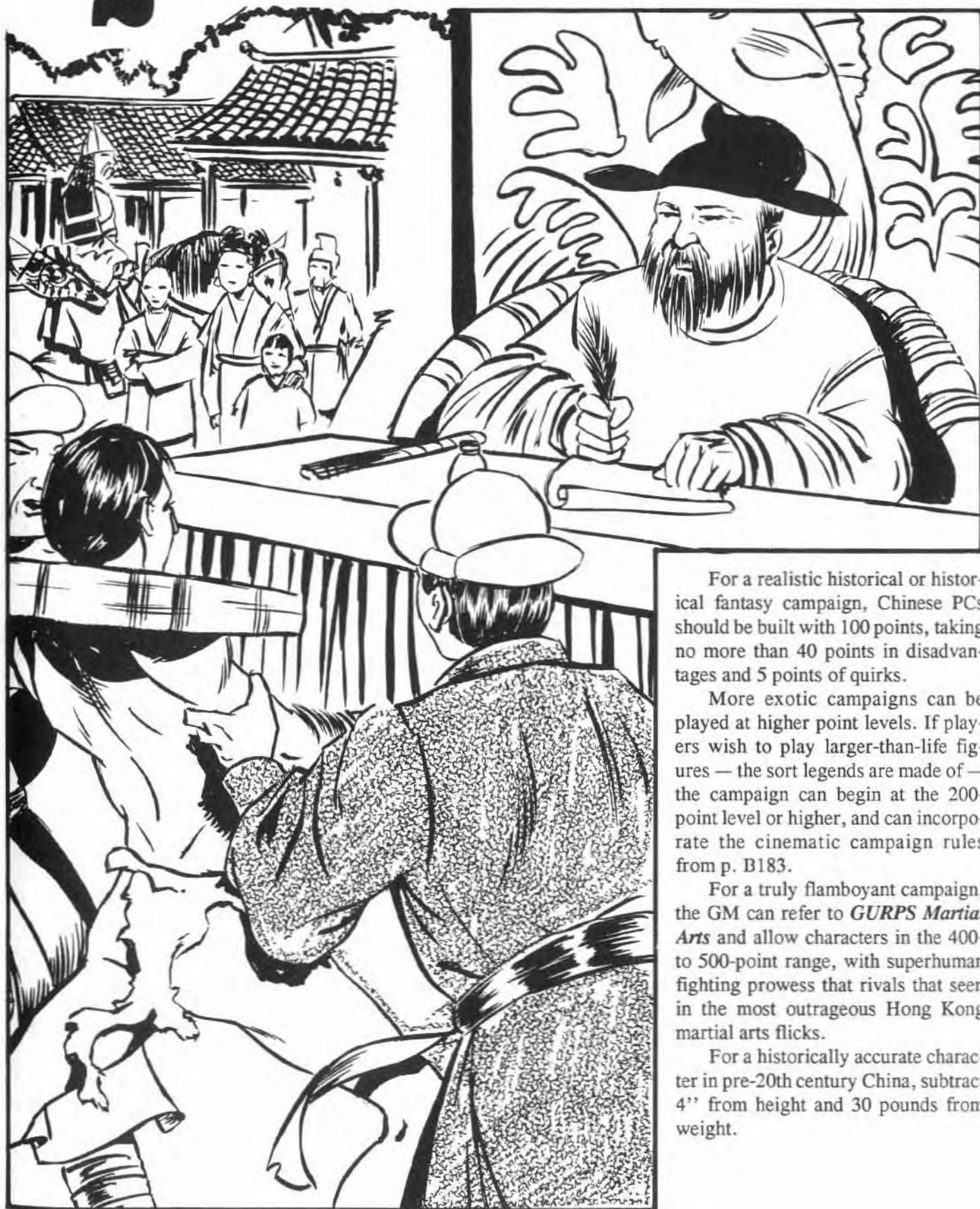
**Several Festivals, Yuan,** and **Days of Deliverance** appear in the calendar. Festivals celebrate the dates when the immortal Five Emperors supposedly hold reunions. People sacrifice to their ancestors on all of them. Great Festivals



are, as the name implies, bigger festivals. Yuan honor the ministers of the Three Offices who judge the dead. Dates of Deliverance are the days when Taoists may pray to nature spirits and other animist deities. The Chinese celebrate all of these events with feasts and merriment, except for those who consider it more pious to fast. The Earth Ancient represents the Kitchen, and his festivals always include banquets of meat and wine.

## 2

## CHARACTERS



For a realistic historical or historical fantasy campaign, Chinese PCs should be built with 100 points, taking no more than 40 points in disadvantages and 5 points of quirks.

More exotic campaigns can be played at higher point levels. If players wish to play larger-than-life figures — the sort legends are made of — the campaign can begin at the 200-point level or higher, and can incorporate the cinematic campaign rules from p. B183.

For a truly flamboyant campaign, the GM can refer to *GURPS Martial Arts* and allow characters in the 400- to 500-point range, with superhuman fighting prowess that rivals that seen in the most outrageous Hong Kong martial arts flicks.

For a historically accurate character in pre-20th century China, subtract 4" from height and 30 pounds from weight.



# Character Types

## Adventurers

In many eras of Chinese history, the adventurers can be just . . . adventurers. Young heroes travel about seeking their fortunes, often in small bands. Peasants may become adventurers when they lose their lands. Well-born rakes may simply want excitement, or could be seeking a new identity after angering some powerful figure. Some adventurers accept work as mercenaries or assassins. Others champion the commoners and defend them from feuding warlords.

Professional adventurers are actually respectable in the Warring States, Three Kingdoms, T'ang dynasty and late 1920s. They exist during any chaotic period, but people usually consider them scum. One could run an interesting campaign at the end of one of these romantic eras — the former swashbucklers find themselves outlaws in an empire with no place for heroes.

## Artists

Poets, painters, dancers and musicians wander China. They were most common in the T'ang and Sung dynasties, but appear even in the turbulence of the Warring States. Art makes a romantic cover for adventurers. Most artists are failed State officials, with old enemies in the court. "Poetic license" allows them to get away with saying a few subversive things, but politics are usually as dangerous for artists as anyone. Even Li Po, one of the least provocative poets, was once sentenced to death by an enemy clique at court. Most artists find it wiser to contemplate beauty and dismiss politics with cynical jibes.

An artist must have some appropriate Artistic skill. Common artistic Disadvantages include Alcoholism and rival intellectuals as Enemies. Competing artists barb each other with witty poems (contests of Poetry skill), or resort to swordsmanship.

Artists may begin their careers with money, but must soon find patrons or face bankruptcy. An Artist must make a skill roll for each week's lodging. A Critical Success means that the host agrees to finance the artist's opus. He gives the artist 1d×\$100 in stipends.

Artists suffer censorship or worse (much worse) in the Ch'in Empire (see p. 72).

## Bandits

Bands of robbers lurked in deserted places throughout Chinese history. They not only rob travelers, but also kidnap for ransom, extort "protection" and sell their services as mercenaries. These groups often resemble miniature armies, and include full-time tacticians, spies and diplomats to negotiate with other bandits or corrupt officials. In turbulent times, a bandit chief can sometimes metamorphose into a legal governor. Bandits make excellent villains, especially if the players yearn for some no-holds-barred action while under a stable Empire. Or the party itself could be one of these gangs. Many bandits might defend peasants against oppressors, or simply impose safety and order during upheavals.

## Barbarians

Horse nomads live in the North; jungle tribes lurk in the South; mountain tribes live in the West; and island savages dwell on the Western Sea. In some periods, one of these tribes rules China. Most of the time, the army keeps them at bay, at least in theory. However, barbarian exiles, fugitives, emissaries and traders can always appear in the Middle Kingdom. Any tribesman without a clear errand in China will probably have to adventure, since he will not find any legitimate jobs. Potentates

often hire tribal mercenaries, especially when they suspect their Chinese troops of disloyalty.

The Chinese consider *fan kwei*, or Westerners, simply another breed of savage, albeit a particularly arrogant one. Most primitives try to learn the ways of the Middle Kingdom. Europeans, however, balk at kowtowing before the Emperor and refuse to identify their embassies as tribute missions. They pout childishly when one of them commits a crime and is sentenced to strangle. The Chinese think all Westerners look identical. Imperial explorers learned about France from the Arabs, and the Chinese tend to call all Westerners French, despite their whimsical loyalty to tribes like "Spain" or "Portugal." Westerners probably have more firepower and different backgrounds than Huns, but they can expect the same treatment.

Foreigners must take a -15 point Social Stigma (ugly barbarian) in China. In addition to their bizarre customs and nonexistent manners, most Chinese also consider *fan kwei* remarkably ugly (this is considered part of the Social Stigma, and not a separate Appearance disadvantage). On first seeing a *fan kwei*, children will run in fear, peasants will gape in horror and gentlemen will go to great lengths *not* to notice the foreigner's appearance in any outward way. However, foreigners are not always persecuted. Enlightened Chinese may patronizingly help them learn the ways of the Middle Kingdom. They will only do this for appealing members of an obscure race. When the Mongols or Europeans threaten to engulf the Empire, only traitors cooperate with them.

## Conscripts

Everyone but government scholars owes the state unpaid labor. For peasants, this usually entails cleaning, building fortifications, construction of local nobles' palaces or other civic necessities. This work could also be more adventurous. A Prefect (see p. 14) might draft a posse to catch bandits, emissaries





to plead with the barbarians or wagoners to cart tribute over haunted mountains to the capitol. In certain periods, the Empire might conscript settlers to carve themselves colonies in the southern jungles or northwest wasteland. The GM may merely draft the party for a single adventure. However, a suitably thorny task will generate enough mysteries, vendettas and tantalizing clues to propagate the campaign forever. Besides, if the draftees win glory, the Prefect might summon them again. He might even offer a reward the second time.

Draft dodgers are definitely wanted men.



### **Counselors**

Counselors travel between courts, offering counsel. In the Warring States, their advice concerns war, and their work routinely includes espionage and assassination. Even more enlightened counselors live exciting lives. Nobody with influence at court can escape skulduggery. Other philosophers provide another hazard. Legalists in particular persecute the followers of other schools.

A counselor should have extremely developed skills in his field of expertise. Of course, it might be fun to play a fraud.

### **Entertainers**

Troupes of actors, jugglers, acrobats, stage-magicians and animal-trainers travel about, performing on streets and looking for people to hire them. Wealthy Chinese always like spectacles. By making skill rolls, entertainers can convince a rich man or noble to give them lodging in return for performances. This is a good way for lower-class characters to penetrate the court.

Moralists decry these performers. They accuse entertainers of pandering to the pleasure-seeking rich and distracting people from their labors. This means that PC entertainers have to keep moving. The more popular they become, the more likely it is that somebody will have them arrested as a corrupting influence.

### **Magistrates**

Magistrates often appear as sleuths in Chinese mysteries. See *Government and Justice* (p. 13) for more details. Several things make magistrates especially useful for roleplaying. Judges usually keep teams of retainers (other adventurers). They must frequently switch jurisdictions, providing opportunities for travel and keeping the party from growing used to one setting. Furthermore, magistrates can win promotions. If they outgrow bandits and whodunits, they can move to an Imperial Court campaign.

### **Martial Artists**

Another variety of sage practices the art of unarmed combat. Many of the other character types in this chapter may practice martial arts. Pacifist monks often refrain from carrying weapons, but can fell an attacker with lightning kicks. Pretty young women and shrunken widows often know the same techniques, and the weaker they look, the more dangerous they usually are. Sages, wizards, and sword-saints have similar talents. Most Chinese martial artists use Karate as described on p. B51, but very serious students will use one of the advanced Chinese styles set forth in *GURPS Martial Arts*.

Chinese weaponless combat is seldom as artistic as it appears in Western or Japanese pulp fiction. The real inspiration for martial arts are laws which forbid commoners to have weapons. Martial arts proliferate during revolutions. They were especially widespread in the Boxer Rebellion (see p. 98). The peasants who study unarmed combat seldom bother with stylized maneuvers or colored belts. They satisfy themselves with a few effective blows. Criminals and secret societies also find uses for martial artists. The thugs who supervise gambling or prostitution dens usually know some vicious tricks.

### **Mercenaries**

These are similar to Adventurers, but more organized and specialized. Barbarians often form mercenary companies for work in China. Mercenaries might serve as bodyguards. This would give them a chance to participate in their employer's court intrigues. When the empire manages to quash internal fighting, mercenaries often become outlaws.

### **Merchants**

Merchants speculate on commodities and trade them across the Empire. This career gives the party a reason to travel and the ability to earn and squander fortunes. It also gives them enemies. State officials hate merchants because the traders are richer than they are. Other people resent them because they charge high prices and make profits without doing hard physical labor. Traders suffer a -5 point Social Stigma, causing -1 on all reaction rolls. Confucians refuse to even admit merchants exist.

Normally, the Empire conducts trade as "tribute." Everyone sends gifts of local products to the capitol and the Emperor reciprocates by sending equally valuable gifts back to the provinces. While this system functions, legal merchants can only deal in curios. One could begin an interesting campaign with PC merchants who discover a lucrative new product which the Empire does not regulate — yet. During the Warring States and similar periods, the tribute system collapses. Then, the whole Empire depends on its traders.

### **Ministers**

No position in China is more dangerous than that of Minister to a powerful lord. Each one has an area of responsibility, such as Punishments, Accounts or Barbarian Affairs (see p. 55). A lord may also send his advisers on unrelated missions. PCs

might receive expeditions to uncharted lands as a form of banishment. Conversely, they might be the only ones their lord trusts for the journey.

### **Missionaries**

These are clergy, who spread the faith among the heathen. Missionary work obviously involves journeys to remote areas and may infuriate priests of an old religion. Failed Tibetan monks often become Buddhist missionaries.

Christian missionaries appeared during the Mongol Domination. They became prominent by the late Ming dynasty and the first ones impressed China's people favorably. Despite protests from the missionaries, the Pope and various Protestant leaders ordered their Chinese converts to abandon ancestor worship. As everyone in China expected, this alienated the Chinese, especially the first Manchu Emperor. The French protected the missionaries and built churches in spots calculated to despoil animist shrines. Christians grew yet more aggressive after the Opium War. During the 1800s, many acted as agents of colonial powers, preparing the Chinese for subjugation. The Boxers hated missionaries above all foreigners, and killed them whenever they could.

Christian missionaries may have a band of "rice Christians" as Allies. These Chinese bravos convert to Christianity because of the free food missionaries give their faithful. They often act as thugs for colonial interests. If the police arrest them, they complain of religious harassment. Several treaties from 1860 forbid China to punish anyone for Christianity.

Missionaries should have Theology. Vows, Fanatic and Clerical Investment might also be appropriate. The best missionaries also have Sense of Duty, either to their church leaders or their Chinese converts (the two may be contradictory).

### **Moists**

Moists, pronounced "Moe-ists" (see p. 12), are a special form of Counselor pledged to guide their employers according to the teaching of Mo Tzu. Moists must have the Pacifism, Self-Defense Only, disadvantage. They usually have other Vows, balanced by other Moists as Allies. Note that Moists do not reject warfare in a just cause. However, when they must fight, they insist on a crusade to restore peace, which ought to last forever once the aggressors have been slain.

### **Monks**

Monks can be either Taoists or Buddhists. They can always explain journeys as pilgrimages, and may receive hospitality at monasteries anywhere. A Buddhist monk can even find friends in distant lands like Tibet, India and Japan. Adventurers might disguise themselves as monks. If they really belong to a monastic order, that order might send them on holy quests. Buddhists often want foreign scriptures or advice from the holy men of distant lands. Taoists seek mystic secrets from spirits.

A monk must have Vows, but the exact ones depend on his sect. Clerical Investment, Fanaticism, and Pacifism of either type are all likely but not mandatory. A monk could have family members as Enemies, if his relatives consider his vows a betrayal of his fathers' clan. Monks may also suffer persecution during one of China's sporadic crackdowns on monasticism. One could base an interesting campaign on holy men who must accomplish a holy duty in an era when their vows are illegal.

### **Pirates**

Oriental pirates, or *wako*, are cruel even by the standards of their profession. Every land wants to execute them, and there-

fore they show no mercy to anyone. They massacre all captives and routinely fight to the last man. When they grow bold, wako fleets sweep ashore and sack whole cities. No ports offer the wako havens or letters of marque, but these pirates sometimes build fortresses on deserted islands. In turbulent periods, an unprincipled coastal lord might sponsor some pirate friend. Many pirates come from Japan, Korea or the Philippines. Western pirates, as described in *GURPS Swashbucklers*, also appear in Chinese waters.

### **Princes**

The adventurers might be the nobility. Perhaps one of them even has a claim to the Dragon Throne, and the goal of the campaign is for him to exercise it. Noble adventurers would need High Status and probably Wealth. Nobles have the most freedom in times like the Warring States, when every warlord is a sovereign. They can be local officials or a clique of the court under stable empires. Adventurers who rule their own states do not always get everything their way. Many, if not most, rulers lived in near-slavery to external overlords and powerful advisers.

### **Scholars**

Scholars devote night and day to studying for the government examinations (see p. 14). No matter what their Wealth or Status is, they regularly spend 80 hours a week with their books. This does not sound convenient for an adventurer, but a scholar's pedanticism itself sometimes pulls him into tales. Students sit awake reading by candlelight when spirits and wizards are about.

Supernatural beings frequently call on bookworms for help. Most scholars respect them too much to refuse. Furthermore, a student's disreputable friends (the other adventurers) might drag him from his studies. If these diversions make him fail the examination, he may have to keep adventuring to support himself. His family will probably be furious with him for neglecting the examination. However, if a PC scholar passes the examination, he becomes a magistrate, opening possibilities for a whole new set of adventures.

Scholars must have Literacy, Writing, Law and Musical Instrument. See p. B82 for details on studying. Common scholarly disadvantages include Absent-Mindedness, Honesty and Shyness.

### **Secret Society Members**

Nobody knows who might belong to these dark brotherhoods. Secret societies claim to have religious or social motives, and they surround themselves with mummery of initiations and rituals. They control organized crime but look after local peasants. Many also have plots to overthrow the Empire. The prominent secret societies and their exploits are described in the history chapters.

A secret society member must have Vows and Duties to the society. Society members can have Allies in any imaginable position. One can meet almost anyone through the cabals.

### **Smugglers**

Imperial monopolies control wine, iron, salt and tea. Smugglers sell them all slightly cheaper and still make a fortune. One smuggler owned enough ships to contribute a navy for the Red Turban revolt against the Mongols. Smugglers face a horrible death if arrested, and tend to be desperate. They often fight each other viciously, since too many smugglers drives prices too low. Opium smugglers appear in the late 18th century.



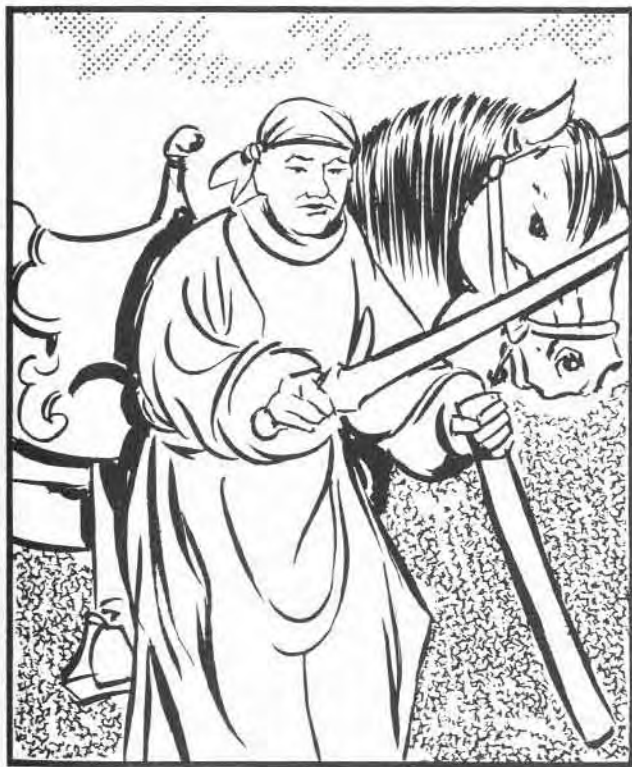
## Sorcerer/Sage

Anyone with the leisure or determination to perfect wisdom can become a sage, or in some campaigns, a magician. Sages and magicians are usually hermits, wandering counselors or the idle rich. They have many reasons to adventure. Sages may travel and teach, while magicians might seek the formula for a lost spell. Most magicians have the ultimate ambition of brewing an elixir of life. Savants can involve themselves in any sort of story. People expect wise men to be eccentric, which may allow them to get away with suspect behavior.

Sages and magicians usually have the Age disadvantage. They generally know Karate too. Some sages make their field of expertise the martial arts. Exact spells and areas of study depend on the players' interests and the campaign.

## Spies

Writers on strategy rhapsodized about "pulling divine strings" with espionage. Every army employs spies, as do bandits, merchants, court cliques and anyone else who wants concealed information. Double agents, triple agents, long-term moles, false-flag recruits (who are deluded about their true employers) and anything else from modern espionage thrillers could appear in ancient China. The GM should remember that Chinese spies are always expendable.



## Sword Saints

A Sword Saint is a Taoist philosopher of battle, seeking perfection through combat. These warriors are not bravos. They do not deign to fight unworthy foes, or throw their lives away without purpose. Until they find a suitable struggle, Sword Saints appear almost craven. They shirk the army and wallow in pleasure. But eventually, every Sword Saint finds his cause and fights for it, though Emperors and gods may oppose him.

Sword Saints might belong to any sort of adventuring party.

They usually have numerous advantages and skills related to their devotion, such as Combat Reflexes, High Pain Threshold, Strong Will, Theology and appropriate weapons skills. Common disadvantages include a Code of Honor and a Reputation for Cowardice. The GM should provide suitably noble adventures for Sword Saints, such as atoning for family dishonor or overthrowing a despicable tyrant.

## Wu

The Wu are animist priests, consecrated by the spirits themselves. They are excellent companions in any campaign which emphasizes the supernatural. Everyone employs the Wu to curse enemies, plead with dragons or defeat evil spirits. Spirits and powerful sorcerers may send them on more unworldly errands, through the Spirit Kingdoms. Furthermore, Wu receive their power directly from spirits, and need not obey the tenets of any standard religion. Of course, local Wu cults may have stringent rules, and it is always wise to obey more powerful shamans.

In the Shang dynasty and before, even kings stand in awe of the Wu. Shamans must buy High Status in any campaign set in this period. Under the Chou and thereafter, Wu lose most of their influence. They become leaders of shadowy cults. Many win rank in the secret societies. Most Wu after the Shang dynasty must hold other jobs and can only command a few superstitious people. They are probably of low status — but not always.

Most peasants believe in the shamans even after Chou, and a few Emperors do too. Wu must always buy a 10-point Clerical Investment advantage. As an alternative, their quest for investment could begin the campaign, as described under the *Spirit Kingdoms*, p. 114. Wu must have the Charisma advantage. They must also know the Dance and Singing skills for their rituals. If magic exists in the campaign, any genuine Wu knows some spells.

## Chinese Women

"I had a plan that would have saved the empire but I was only a girl," runs a lament found inscribed in Shang dynasty ruins. China is a sexist society. Females have an automatic -10 point Social Stigma disadvantage in any historical Chinese campaign. People view daughters as nuisances to find husbands for, and wives as property. Women may have bound feet, as described on p. 88. Furthermore, many Chinese households keep slave-girls, and slavers kidnap their wares. The latter practice is illegal but common.

However, the idea of a heroine overcoming these barriers is very Chinese. Legends credit the wives of the Five Kings and Three Emperors with great inventions. Chang of the Sui dynasty fought alongside her lover (see p. 84). In the dying Manchu period, a woman named Ch'ih Chin spoke against footbinding, founded secret societies and fought with a sword until executed for sedition in 1907. The Communists have countless stories about heroic female guerrillas. Players should feel free to create dashing woman adventurers. Women cannot officially enter the government, but a nobleman's widow often assumes his power. A concubine could find herself in the midst of a story if her consort dies, is imprisoned, is hopelessly incompetent or simply happens to value her skills. Or female PCs could come from some society which defies normal mores, such as a barbarian tribe, gangster clan or animist cult. It is socially acceptable for women to be Wu, Buddhist or Taoist nuns, spies, entertainers or artists, and all of these careers can lead to exciting tales. Sex barriers break most easily in rural areas, where men need women to help with heavy farm work.



## Advantages

### Literacy

The Chinese alphabet contains many thousand characters. Scholars keep it hard to learn on purpose, to maintain their monopoly on learning. Furthermore, early China had many different alphabets, and a scholar needed several. Emperor Shih-Huang eliminated all but one. Variant scripts appeared again after his death, but they were not as difficult. Therefore, literacy has different costs and permutations in different ages. One can always learn an earlier form of writing as a separate skill for interpreting ancient manuscripts.

### Cost of Literacy

Time	Local	Full	Scholarly
Up to 221 BC	+10	+15	+20
221 BC to 500 AD	+10	+10	+15
500 AD to 1930	+10	+10	+12
1930 to 1950	+5	+8	+10
1950 to Present	0	+1	+5

Local literacy applies within one's linguistic region (see the *Dialects of Chinese* map, p. 32). Full literacy allows one to read clearly written things from anywhere in the Empire, although arcane tracts remain illegible. Scholarly literacy allows one to read anything. It is necessary for the Civil Service examination.

A literate character can scrawl ideographs, but those who wish to write gracefully must learn the Writing skill.

### Variable

A few Buddhist priests also know Sanskrit, to read their scriptures in the native language. Literacy in Sanskrit costs 10 points. Literacy in the Latin alphabet is only available to those in contact with Europeans. It is illegal by imperial decree in the early 19th century.

### Longevity

see p. B22

Most sages and magicians have this advantage. Supposedly, many hermits in the hills live for hundreds of years. Some must fake their own deaths to avoid startling ordinary people.

### Military Rank

see p. B22

Adventurers may find an officer's privileges extremely useful. The Chinese recognize a general's right to disobey civilians' orders for the sake of victory. Of course, lords remember officers who offended them. If a commander loses a battle, his rivals will certainly arrange to have him demoted and probably butchered. In the Warring States period, officers are always adventurers, who serve whatever lord can pay them.

### Patron

see p. B24

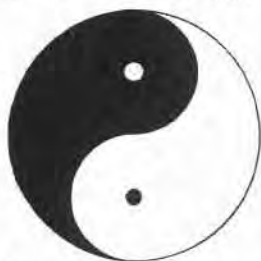
Interesting patrons from Chinese legend include fathers, other close relatives, sages, animal spirits, ghosts and jade women. The last three are described in the *Bestiary* chapter. A Wu might even have a minor deity for a patron. Magicians seeking the elixir of life may offer shelter and finances to adventurers whom they hope can help them in their quest.

## New Advantages

### Harmony with the Tao

20 points

Flexible and spontaneous, one who understands the Way does not need training or preparation. He can simply do things, without knowing how. Someone in Harmony with the Tao can attempt any one skill roll at his IQ or DX, as appropriate, once per game session. The character does not incur any default penalties. Harmony with the Tao does apply to skills which nor-



mally have no default. It does not allow one to perform a task without appropriate tools.

### Pious

5 points

Some people have an innate sense of propriety, which allows them to show uncommon respect to parents, dragons, Emperors and other superiors. Confucius, for example, understood the rites of ancestor worship so well he performed them as a child. A Pious character can show respect in an encounter by making an IQ roll. This gives him a +1 on Reaction rolls with superiors.

This is not Savoir-Faire. Piety is a moral impulse, not a facade of etiquette. It should usually be combined with a Quirk or Confucian Code of Honor. Pious characters usually also have Reputations for propriety, which give them reaction bonuses from almost everyone. The exact Reputation is up to the player.

## Disadvantages

### Age

see p. B27

The Chinese respect venerable people for their wisdom. Any-one over 60 (or of similar appearance) gets a +1 on Reaction rolls, and one over 70 gets +2.

### Code of Honor

see p. B31

Most Chinese feel an overpowering sense of "face." People gain "face" through admirable behavior and lose it by appearing brash, foolish or rude. Common Chinese Codes of Honor, or "Face," include:

*Confucian Code of Honor:* Always obey — and love — parents, elder relatives and social superiors; spend at least \$100 for ceremonies at each birth, death or marriage in your family; pay \$10 per year for ancestral rites; disdain personal luxury; always

behave politely; always strive for the most competent possible government (this can be perilous); influence others by example rather than force whenever possible. -5 points.

A true Confucian would also take Honesty and perhaps Pacifism, Self-Defense Only.

The GM may have deaths, marriages and births occur whenever they add excitement to an adventure. To determine them randomly, assume that an extended Chinese family has 1d births, 1d-2 deaths and 1d-3 marriages per year.

*Barbarian's Code of Honor:* These principles apply to almost all nomads and tribes of Central Asia. Show hospitality to strangers and friends; never refuse a guest's request; never let anyone refuse your request; take prizes in battle; kill anyone who insults you; kill anyone who harms your relative or friend. -10 points.

### Characters

## Eunuch

see p. B28

Only eunuchs and women may work as servants in a noble's court. Therefore, poor men have themselves or their sons castrated to escape poverty. Palace eunuchs receive a salary of \$170 per month, room, board, a tithe of all valuables which pass through their hands, numerous bribes from people seeking audiences with the court and plentiful opportunities to steal. Traditionally, an Emperor has 3,000 eunuchs; a lesser noble, 30; a lord's children and nephews, 20 each; cousins and imperial favorites, 10 each.

Eunuchs pay \$100 for their castration. The surgeon often extorts much more by withholding the physical remains, which each servant must present at the annual court inspection. Only one family of doctors is licensed for this trade.

In the Chinese social system, eunuchs are officially "equal in rank to the lowest of insects." People call them crows because of their high-pitched voices and "he stinks like a eunuch" is a common expression. Many marry and adopt children to moderate their disgrace. A known eunuch also suffers a -2 on Reaction

Rolls outside the court. Any eunuch who does not belong to the imperial staff must take a -10 point Social Stigma.

## Primitive and Social Stigma

see pp. B26-27

The Chinese lump many aboriginal peoples within their Empire as "Barbarians of the Four Directions." Mountain tribes, southerners, the Ge, the Miao and the Hakka all live in China but are considered Primitive. This is more of a -5 point Social Stigma than a disparity in technology. It causes a -1 on Reaction Rolls but does not affect available skills. These peoples had science approximating China's throughout most of history. However, they lacked major industries and institutions. In the 20th century, these people lag one tech level behind the rest of China, and Primitiveness is worth -10 points.

The Middle Kingdom's one advantage over barbarian armies was China's superior technology. Even the Mongols depended on Chinese experts to operate their siege equipment. No Primitive character may have skills with crossbows or black powder weapons in a campaign based on ancient China.

## New Disadvantages

### Devout Buddhist

-5 points

A devout Buddhist is a strict vegetarian who does not even eat fish. He never drinks alcohol and only has sexual relations within marriage. He receives a +1 on all reactions. Even non-Buddhists admire his self-discipline. He resists spells of Illusion and Possession at +1.

Devout Buddhist priests are strict celibates who give up all worldly possessions. They must also take the Pacifism, Self-Defense Only disadvantage. Priests gain a +2 on reactions in China, Korea and Tibet. Cultures which disdain pacifism, such as Japan, react only at +1 to them.

### Yin-Yang Imbalance

-5 points or -10 points

The healthy body balances the Yin of femininity, coldness and sober emotions against the Yang of masculinity, fever and energy. An imbalance between these principles leads to both mental and physical afflictions, which are listed below.

#### All imbalanced characters:

Anyone with a Yin-Yang imbalance suffers these penalties:

A -2 penalty on any HT rolls to avoid diseases.

Anyone with an imbalance must also take the Lecherousness disadvantage.

#### Overbearing Yin

Characters with an overbearing Yin have clammy skin and cruel, catty personalities. Take the Bully disadvantage, but emphasize cutting remarks rather than physical threats.

A Yin-imbalanced person suffers a -3 on all HT rolls to resist cold but a +2 on rolls to endure heat.

Males with excessive Yin may suffer hermaphroditism. This makes the Yin-Yang imbalance worth a total of -10 points. Hermaphrodites must make an HT roll each month. A single failed roll causes appearance to change somewhat towards the female — the character and his close associates will notice, but strangers will just find him a bit odd (-1 to reaction), unless they make a Yin-Yang Healing roll. If the next roll succeeds the character recovers, at least for a while, but if a second consecutive HT roll is failed the condition becomes permanent (until treatment as described below).

#### Overbearing Yang

A Yang imbalance has the opposite effects from Yin. Victims suffer a -3 penalty on HT rolls to resist heat and get a +2 bonus to resist cold.

Women with excessive Yang gain an extra -5 points, but must make an HT roll each month to avoid growing beards and acquiring a masculine frame. A woman with a Yang imbalance may use earned experience to increase her ST by 1 at normal (not doubled as per p. B81) cost.

People with excessive Yang are overbearing hedonists with hot dry skin. They must also take the Impulsive disadvantage.



### Treatment

Chinese doctors can neutralize Yin-Yang imbalances with acupuncture and moxa burning. The latter procedure involves singing mystically significant parts of the skin by sprinkling mugwort powder on them and igniting it. Each treatment for Yin-Yang imbalance costs \$25 and is effective for one month. If

the doctor's Yin-Yang Healing skill roll succeeds, the patient need not roll for hermaphroditism and gains a +3 on Will rolls to resist Bully, Lecherousness or Impulsiveness. A doctor cannot reverse hermaphroditism which has already occurred, but certain potions can. They cost \$500 per dose. It may require an adventure to find an alchemist who can brew one.

## Skills

### Armoury

see p. B53

Only a specially-trained craftsman can make crossbow triggers. Therefore, no armourer can produce crossbows unless he learns trigger-making as a separate Mental/Average Armoury skill. Primitive characters cannot begin with this ability. Genghis Khan kidnapped Chinese crossbow-makers to build his siege ballistae.

### Gambling

see p. B63

Common Chinese games include Mah-Jongg, Go, and Liu Po, a strategy game of uncertain rules. Liu Po apparently involved two to six people and used throws of sticks to determine random moves. The gods supposedly enjoyed Liu Po, and Wu sometimes claimed to have played with them.

### Language Skills (Mental/Average) Defaults as below

The Chinese officially speak Mandarin. Scholars really do, since it most closely resembles written Chinese. However, Man-

darin itself contains dialects, and the peoples of the Middle Kingdom all speak native languages. This has the interesting consequence that magistrates who speak Mandarin usually need translators to talk with the people under their jurisdiction.

Dialects of Mandarin default to each other at Language Skill -2. Distinct languages have no default. However, people tend to learn bits of several tongues where the cultures merge. Someone who speaks a Chinese language may default to one from an adjacent linguistic area at Language Skill -4 (see *Dialects of Chinese* map, below). The dialects of Mandarin are River, Northern, Northwestern and Southwestern.

Manchu, Russian, Korean, Wu, Min, Cantonese, Kejia, Gan, Hsiang, Vietnamese, Burmese, Malayo-Polynesian, Tibetan, Uighur, Kazakh and Mongol are all spoken in China or on its borders. Assorted tribal languages also exist.

The pidgin used to speak with European traders is a Mental/Easy language. A speaker of either English or Chinese can use it by default at IQ -4.

Mandarin Chinese often depends on tone of voice instead of





pronunciation to distinguish between words. This makes it an excellent language for puns. It can also create misunderstandings between people who speak Chinese imperfectly. As always, when speakers fail Language Skill rolls, they may say things they did not mean. Furthermore, they may communicate the wrong emotions. Some Chinese words naturally sound threatening, furious or conspiratorial. The GM may simulate this by using these tones when speaking in character. The players must decide how to interpret them.

### **Writing (Mental/Varies)** *Literate characters (only) may default to IQ-5*

Any Literate person can draw ideographs, but persuasive Writing requires an elegant script and artful wording. Chinese Writing encompasses both calligraphy and rhetoric. Characters must roll against Writing each time they write. Officials and learned men react at -2 to poor writing, or documents in an inappropriate script style.

The list below shows major scripts and the periods in which China used them. The first one a character learns is a Hard skill, or Very Hard for Shell and Bone, Bell and Pot, Stone Drum, Chu Chien and Seal. Each additional style must be learned as a separate, Easy skill.

*Shell and Bone (Very Hard).* Scribes routinely wrote Shell and Bone from 1500 BC to 1000 BC, and use its characters in art today. It is a small script, designed to be carved with a knife and inked.

*Bell and Pot (Very Hard).* Bell and Pot, or Chin Wen, writing began in 1,500 BC and lasted until near the birth of Christ. One

carves it in a wax mold and uses that to make a bronze casting. A writer must know the Blacksmith skill to make the casting. Rulers often order legal documents written in Chin Wen and cast as bronze tablets.

*Stone Drum (Very Hard).* During the 8th century BC, some scribes painted these letters on stone cylinders about one yard high.

*Chu Chien (Very Hard).* Scribes wrote most ordinary documents in this style, on strips of bamboo. It was popular from about 900 BC to 500 AD.

*Seal (Very Hard).* Emperor Shih-Huang-Ti imposed the Seal style on China. It satisfied his Legalist desire for a precise script, without room for euphemism. Furthermore, it spared students the need to learn several different scripts for different purposes. However, sages condemned its austerity. After the August Emperor's death, they developed more expressive styles, except for imperial seals.

*Li and Chang Tsao (Hard).* Scribes developed these two styles along with Seal, and used them until about 500 AD. They dispensed with the formalities of Seal, producing an artistic script which was also easier to learn.

*Kai, Hsing and Tao (Hard).* When paper became common around 100 AD, calligraphers developed these new styles for it. They remain in use today.

*Phonetic Alphabet (Average).* In 1958, the First Plenary Session of the First National People's Congress officially adopted the Pinyin system of spelling Chinese words phonetically with the Latin alphabet. Most literate Chinese still use simplified versions of the ideograph systems mentioned above.

## **New Skills**

### **Gardening (Mental/Easy)** *Defaults to IQ-4*

This is the ability to design and maintain a garden of trees and pools in the Chinese style. It is considered an Artistic Skill.

### **Kite Flying (Physical/Easy)** *Defaults to DX-2*

All ages and classes enjoy kites and kite-fighting. Wu may also use dragon kites in their rituals. Flying other kites is treated as a Contest of Skill.

The Chinese also make manned kites, which are described under *Wondrous Devices* (p. 41). Most manned kites are tethered and controlled from the ground, using this skill. To fly an untethered glider, or to compensate for an error on the ground while aloft, requires the Piloting (manned kite) skill (see p. 34). All Kite Flying rolls are at -2 for a manned kite.

### **Medical Techniques**

Chinese treatments supposedly correct the flow of ch'i, or spirit-substance, through a network of vessels resembling the bloodstream. They involve acupuncture and burning lumps of moxa (mugwort) on body points which correspond to major organs. Chinese doctors call this treatment "health restorative," rather than "curative." A sick person goes to an alchemist (or Western-trained physician) for an immediate remedy. Then ch'i treatments prevent a recurrence.

The GM may decide if ch'i treatments work at all in his campaign. If they do, the following medical skills exist:

*Ch'i Treatment.* Mental/Hard, defaults to IQ-6. It does not immediately alter a sick person's status. However, each time a ch'i healer makes a ch'i healing skill roll, the patient gains a +1

on his next HT roll to resist or overcome effects of the disease. Ch'i treatment may never give the patient more than a +3 bonus on these rolls.

*Pharmacy.* Mental/Hard, defaults to Alchemy-3 or IQ-7. This is a limited form of Diagnosis and Physician which allows an alchemist to brew cures. It includes the ability to find wild herbs, including edible ones. See p. B56 for other information.

*Yin/Yang Healing.* Mental/Hard, defaults to IQ-6. This is a synthesis of herbal and ch'i treatments. It also appears in *GURPS Japan*. Yin/Yang healing can affect either disease or injury like the care of a Physician. See p. B56 for more details.

### **Meditation (Mental/Very Hard)** *No default*

This is the ability to reach a state of self-induced trance in which the mind is totally relaxed but able to react immediately. A successful Meditation roll keeps an injured person from falling unconscious, being shocked or stunned. It also allows berserk-style fighting directed only at enemies.

### **Nei Tan (Mental/Very Hard)** *No default*

This skill allows the user to nourish his body with its own substances. This involves breath control and other disciplines such as refusing to spit. On a successful skill roll, nei tan triples the length of time the user can hold his breath. A successful roll also allows the practitioner to regain a point of lost Fatigue in only two minutes. At the GM's option, nei tan may also give its user a +1 to HT for purposes of Aging rolls. GMs may choose not to permit nei tan in their campaigns, or might require a difficult quest to find a master before it can be learned.

### **Piloting (manned kite) (Physical/Average) Defaults to IQ-6, Piloting (Hang Gliding) or Kite Flying -5**

This extremely rare skill is used to deal with unpredictable situations when one is aloft in a manned kite (see p. 41). Since the primary control for such kites usually comes from a ground crew, using the Kite Flying skill of the primary operator (see p. 33), the penalties for trying to maneuver the kite while aloft are severe.

The GM makes the final decision as to whether any given maneuver is even possible, and at what modifiers, due to weather conditions, local terrain and the tech level of the equipment.

When an unexpected situation comes up, or an unusual maneuver is attempted, the ground crew (if there is one) should normally roll first vs. Kite Flying skill. Only if that roll is missed, or if the maneuver is particularly complicated, will the pilot have to roll. A failure usually means that the pilot ends up

on the ground, somewhere other than his target. A critical failure means damage to both the pilot and the kite, assessed as a fall from the altitude at which the roll was failed. A critical success means that maneuver worked especially well — the pilot not only landed near the boat, but actually on the deck.

Unfavorable conditions for manned Kite Flying might include Unfavorable Weather, -3 to -10, or even more for a severe storm; night, -1 to -4; High Flights, -1 for every increase of 200 feet; precision landing, -1 for each 10 yards of diameter less than 100.

### **Tea Ceremony (Mental/Hard) Defaults to IQ-6 or Meditation-2**

This art appears in the Sung dynasty as a mark of status. It requires pure water, special powdered tea and a number of implements, including a teacup.

## **Sample Character**



### **Wang Tzu**

ST 10 (0 points)	IQ 10 (0 points)	Move: 6
DX 13 (30 points)	HT 14 (45 points)	Basic Speed: 6.75
Dodge: 6	Parry: 8	Block: 7

#### **Advantages:**

- Appearance (Attractive) (5 points)
- Literate (10 points)
- Pious (5 points)

#### **Disadvantages:**

- Gluttony (-5 points)

Overweight (-5 points)

Poverty (Dead Broke) (-25 points)

#### **Skills:**

Broadsword-15 (8 points); Holdout-10 (4 points); Karate-13 (4 points); Literature-10 (2 point); Scrounging-13 (6 points); Shield-15 (4 points); Stealth-14 (4 points); Streetwise-10 (2 points); Survival (Plains)-10 (2 points).

#### **Languages:**

Mandarin-12 (0 points); River Mandarin-10 (2 points); Cantonese-10 (2 points).

#### **Quirks**

- Scrounges bamboo and writing materials (-1 point)
- Copies from classics (-1 point)
- Respects scholars (-1 point)
- Constantly searches for relatives (-1 point)

**Total: 100**

Wang is a novice adventurer of the early Han dynasty. His grandfather was one of the scholars Shih-Huang had buried alive. Under the law of collective punishment, a judge sentenced his parents to forced labor. The State sent his father to the Great Wall and his mother to the South. Wang was born in the southern rice paddies. His mother died in a plague epidemic, but Wang survived. He has a hardy constitution and actually manages to gain weight, even in times of famine. When Liu Pang took power, Wang became a free man, although penniless.

Wang travels about Northern China, hoping to find his father alive. His mother taught him propriety (Pious advantage). She also gave him a deep love for learning, and although he cannot afford books, he scrounges scraps of bamboo to hand-copy passages from the classics. He has managed to read some of Confucius' *Analects*, but actually finds physical skills easier than the scholarship he respects. Wang sold his last blade in a fit of hunger, but fortunately he also knows Stealth and Karate.

## **Social Status**

Confucians divide society into three ranks: scholar-governors, farmers and artisans. China codifies this system by assigning each person a grade from 1 to 20. Everyone inherits an initial grade. The Empire promotes and degrades people according to their behavior. People can rise in the hierarchy if they undertake

adventures for government officials. They lose rank if convicted of crimes.

The privileges of high grade include preferential treatment from magistrates, lower taxes and immunity from the most humiliating punishments. The highest grades receive invitations to



the Imperial Court and regular stipends from the Emperor. They also receive automatic Civil Service positions and the right to a percentage of taxes from lands under their jurisdiction. Details vary under different empires. The upper 12 grades are limited to those who have passed the Civil Service examinations. Theoretically, anyone may move up or down in the hierarchy, depending solely on merit.

In actual practice, family wealth usually controls social status. A rich man's son can study for the state examinations. A poor man's son has to work. The noble families, or *shih*, own the land, dominate the examinations and, in some periods, lead their own armies.

Just as *shih* are above the Confucian system, slaves are below it. Slaves can belong to individuals or the government. Parents sometimes sell daughters as chattel, and debtors may sell themselves. Others become slaves when a magistrate "confiscates" a felon's relatives, keeps some, and sells the rest. A master can give slaves orders and beat them for disobedience, but not legally kill them. Whether one would suffer legal penalties for killing a slave depends on the era.

Rich families also have hereditary servants, who are tied to one job but receive salaries and enjoy normal legal rights. Even peasant farmers often may not leave their landlord's estate, although they are free while on it.

## Effects of Status

Status Level	Grade and Example	Cost of Living	Official Reaction	Taxes and Bribes
8	Emperor	\$100,000	Servility	Inestimable
7	20, Marquis	\$30,000	+5	\$1,000
6	19, Minister, General	\$10,000	+4	\$500
5	17-18, Governor	\$5,000	+3	\$200
4	15-16, Intendant	\$2,500	+2	\$50
3	11-14, Prefect	\$1,500	+1	\$25
2	9-10, Magistrate	\$700	+1	0
1	7-8, Landlord Farmer	\$400	0	0
0	5-6, Peasant Farmer	\$200	0	0
-1	3-4, Artisan	\$100	-1	-\$1
-2	1-2, Beggar	\$50	-2	-\$2
-3	Hereditary Servant	\$50	-3	-\$5
-4	Slave	—	-4	—

Status is as described on p. B18. Grade and Example shows what grade and position a character of that status probably holds. Cost of Living is per month. Official Reaction is a reaction roll modifier applied to trials, lawsuits, petitions and other State business. Use the normal Status modifiers for ordinary encounters.

"Taxes and Bribes" include imperial emoluments, shares of tax revenue and routine bribery. The character receives them each month, in addition to money from jobs, adventures, etc. Characters with a negative number here forfeit this penalty in bribes and extra fees *each time* they pay a tax or toll.

## Time At Work

Wealth Level	Work Hours per Week	Advantage or Disadvantage
Dead Broke	—	-20
Poor	60	-15
Struggling	60	-10
Average	50	0
Comfortable	40	+10
Wealthy	20	+20
Very Wealthy	10	+30
Filthy Rich	10	+50

## Money

The earliest Chinese traded by barter, and this practice never ended in remote provinces. More civilized areas began to cast tokens which resembled desirable items and use them as coins. Model spades, knives and disks were popular, and rulers designed currencies to suit their taste or superstition. All coins were exchanged freely since they contained precious metals. The lowest-denomination coins were bronze. In times of inflation, people would melt them down and make tools out of them. Then, when money became scarce, they would (legally) have their tools cast into coins again.

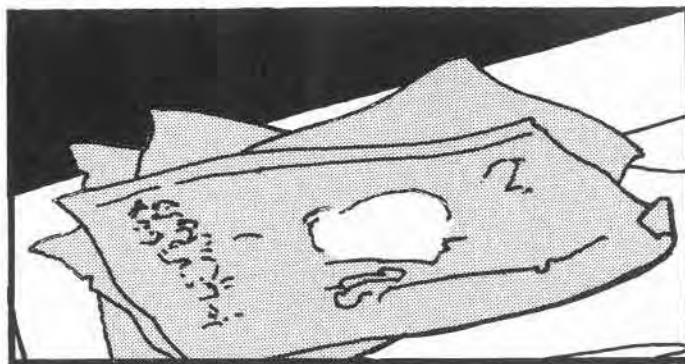
In 221 BC, Emperor Shih-Huan abolished every currency but his own bronze disks and legislated prices for most commodities. His coins lasted for centuries. They had a hole in the middle and could be strung on cords. A string of cash officially held 1,000 Yuan, but most were "short" and had only 500 or 100.

In the 8th century, merchants began trading in paper certificates which could be redeemed for salt or tea. People called the notes "flying money," because wind could tear them out of one's hand. The Empire seized and forbade private money in 1023, and made printing currency an imperial monopoly. It called the new paper bills "Ch'ao" and published them in every measurable denomination, from fractions of a Ch'ao to huge sums. Paper notes were issued with dates and became invalid after three years. Still, the Empire quickly became flooded with paper money and suffered inflation. Counterfeiters operated everywhere, and the Empire began printing money with colored patterns to discourage them. When the Mongols conquered China in the 1270s, they replaced paper currency with balls of silk yarn. But once they were driven out, the old money returned. Ming emperors in the late 1300s vacillated between paper and silver, until inflation ruined the ch'ao completely.

## Currency Table

Currency	Period	Value
Barter	to 500 BC	By negotiation
Local Coins	500 BC-221 BC	\$1
Standard Yuan	221 BC-800s AD	\$1
Paper Ch'ao	1023-1279	Varies (officially \$1)
Silk Notes	1279-1300s	\$5
Precious Note of the Great Ming (Paper)	1375-1400	Varies greatly (officially \$5)
Silver Coins	1400s	\$1
Yuan	1989	about \$.25

The Chinese also conduct transactions in *tael*, or silver ingots, weighing slightly over one ounce. Each one is worth \$17.00. Tael are not officially money, but they are often more stable than government coins.





# Job Table

Some skills referred to on the Job Table are not defined elsewhere, because they have little use except for earning a living.

## Job (prerequisites), Monthly Income

## Success Roll

## Critical Failure

### Poor Jobs

Beggar* (none), \$25	11	2d/FL
Hermit Magician (Magery 11+), \$30	PR	1d/Magic Disaster
Laborer (none), \$25	ST	2d/4d
Palanquin bearer* (ST 12+, DX 12+), \$20	Best PR	1d/2d, 1i
Peddler* (Merchant 11+), \$35	PR	-1i/FL
Porter (ST 12+), \$35	PR	-1i/1d,-2i

### Struggling Jobs

Artist* (any art skill 11+), \$20	PR	-1i/-2i
Apprentice (any craft skill 10+), \$10	PR	2d/3d, 1i
Ascetic Monk — living expenses of \$8 — (Theology 11+, Meditation 11+), \$45	Best PR	2d/FL
Bandit* (Survival 11+, Weapon 11+), \$35	Best PR	3d/3d, FL
Charcoal Maker* (none), \$20	10	1d/FL
Dancer* (Dance), \$30	PR	-1i/2d, -1i
Entertainer* (Acrobatics 11+, Acting 11+), \$40	Best PR	2d/FL
Gambler* (Gambling 11+, Weapon 11+), \$35	Gambling-2	-1i/2d, -2i
Hunter* (Survival 11+, Tracking 11+), \$70	Best PR	2d/3d, 1i
Hustler* (Streetwise 12+), \$50	PR	2d/FL
Maid servant (Savoir-Faire 11+), \$45	PR	-1i/2d, -1i
Miner (Mining 11+), \$70	PR	2d, 1i/4d, 2i
Mercenary/Adventurer (any combat skill 11+), \$30	PR	2d/4d
Musician (Musical Instrument 11+, Singing 11+), \$40	PR	-1i/-2i
Poet* (Poetry 11+), \$20	PR	-1i/-2i
Scholar (Literature 10+, Writing 11+), \$5	Worst PR	-3i
Thief* (Streetwise 11+, DX 11+), \$35	Best PR	-2i, 2d/FL
Woodcutter* (ST 11+, Survival 10+), \$65	Best PR	1d,-1i/3d-1i
Wu, post Chou* (Wu Consecration, Magery 13+ or Fast-Talk 13+), \$100	PR	-1i, Magic Disaster

### Average Jobs

Artisan (any craft skill 13+), \$90	PR	-1i/-2i
Bodyguard (any combat skill 12+), \$100	PR	3d/5d
Buddhist Missionary (Theology 11+), \$50	PR	2d/FL
Clergy (Theology 11+), \$100	PR	-1i/FL
Cook (Cooking 12+), \$70	PR	1d/3d
Courier* (none), \$65	12	2d/4d
Courtesan* (Attractive or better; Sex Appeal 12+), \$25. No living expenses	PR	-1i/1d, -1i
Feng Shui* (Magery 13+ or Fast-Talk 13+), \$200	PR	-1i/Magic Disaster
Shop Owner* (Merchant 12+, a shop), \$135	PR	-1i/FL
Peasant Farmer* (Agronomy 11+), \$85	PR	2d, 1i/FL

### Comfortable Jobs

Alchemist (Alchemy 11+), \$150	PR	2d/Magic Disaster
Civil Servant (Administration 11+, Literature 12+, Law 11+, Rank 3+), \$400	Worst PR	-1i
Confucian Sage* (Literature 11+, Philosophy 11+, Writing 11+), \$200	Best PR	-2i
Compradore (Streetwise 11+, Merchant 11+, European language or Pidgin), \$250	Worst PR	-1i/1d, -1i
Counselor (Politics 11+, Specialty 11+) \$300	Worst PR	-1i/Int



Court Eunuch/Maid (Savoir-Faire 11+), \$170	PR	-1i/Int
Jade Lapidary (Jeweler 12+), \$300	PR	-1i/-3i
Landlord Farmer* (Agronomy 11+, own land), \$220	PR	-1i/Int
Magistrate (Literature 12+, Law 11+, Rank 2), \$300	Law	-1i/Int
Merchant* (Merchant 13+, Administration 13+), \$385	Best PR	-1i/-2i, FL
Smuggler* (Merchant 13+, Streetwise 11+, Administration 13+), \$385	Best PR	-1i/-2i, FL
Physician (Two Medical skills 13+), \$385	Worst PR	-1i/-2i
Teacher (requisite skill 14+), \$165	PR	-1i/2d, -1i
Treasurer (Accounting 11+), \$200	PR	-1i/-3i
Wizard* (Magery 13+), \$150	PR	-1i/Magic Disaster

### Wealthy Jobs

Close Imperial Relative (inherited), \$880	Savoir-Faire	-1i/Int
Governor (Administration 11+, Literature 12+, Law 11+, Rank 3+), \$500	Worst PR	-1i/Int
Imperial Relative (inherited), \$440	Savoir-Faire	-1i/Int
Minister (Savoir-Faire 12+, Politics 11+, Administration 11+, Specialty 11+), \$440	Worst PR	1i/Int
Shih Patriarch (inherited, Politics 11+, Strategy 13+), \$600	Worst PR	-3i/Int
Wu, Pre-Chou* (Wu Consecration, Magery 13+ or Fast-Talk 13+), \$400	Best PR	-1i/Magic Disaster

\* Freelance occupation; see p. B193.

PR=Prerequisite; FL=Identified as a useless citizen and conscripted for forced labor (either leading to an adventure or resulting in 3d months as an unpaid laborer; Int=Intrigue, lose position and possibly face punishment (the GM may opt to play this out as an adventure); LJ=lost job; "d" equals a certain number dice damage from an accident (the GM may opt to play this out as an adventure); "i" equals a certain number of months income lost.

When two possible Critical Failures appear, the second occurs only on a natural roll of 18.

### Notes

Apprentices have no living expenses.

A Magic Disaster can be a Critical Spell Failure on one of a magician's favorite spells or the beginning of an adventure.

Ascetic Monks have 1/8 normal living expenses. They may be Taoist, Buddhist or any other creed.

This table assumes that scholars have scholarships or allowances from wealthy parents. If they do not, they receive no money. A scholarship usually pays one's living expenses. However, someone who decides to study with no patron whatsoever must pay the normal cost of living.

Clergy can be Taoist, Buddhist, etc.

Court Eunuchs have no living expenses and receive more in theft and graft. The GM may turn these affairs into adventures.

Otherwise, use the rules for freelance jobs and assume a base "salary" of \$200 per month.

Hustlers run errands in cities and wheedle jobs as lackeys, whether their employers want them or not.

The details on Confucian Sages also apply to Legalists, Moists, etc.

Peasant Farmers do all their own work and usually live on some noble's estate.

Landlord Farmers actually own their fields and usually have hired help or tenants.

Compradores are Chinese errand-boys for European traders. They have great power, since their wealthy masters know nothing of China. Compradores only exist during the 1800s and late 1700s.

## Names

The Chinese use a family name (*Hsing*) first, then a personal name (*Chiao*). They also take new names for various occasions, such as becoming Emperor or entering some monasteries. People receive a final name when they die, which describes some prominent feature of their lives. Emperor Shih-Huang outlawed this custom, saying that it encouraged children to judge fathers. The tradition returned in the Han dynasty. However, Shih-Huang himself is called Shih-Huang, the name he selected to celebrate his enthronement.

There are relatively few family names. The Mongols once considered depopulating China by selecting the most common syllables and exterminating all people who had them in their names. They never actually did, but this could have slashed the population by half or more. Chinese parents pick personal names simply by choosing a word or phrase they like. There is no absolute distinction between male and female names, although women usually have the names of gentle, pretty things. The Chinese remain quite aware of their names' meanings. For example, the Communist leader Teng Hsiao-p'ing's name means "little wine bottle." In the middle 1970s, when political enemies were castigating him for promoting economic liberalization, friendly crowds left wine bottles at Tiananmen Square as a

symbol of support. In 1989, students disillusioned with Teng went to the same square with bottles and smashed them.

To name a character, choose a family name from the *Common Family Names* list below and then invent a personal name. The *Vocabulary List* suggests common components for Chinese names. You may wish to mix English words with Chinese sounds in order to emphasize a name's meaning. For example, a warrior might call himself "T'ieh the Panther," or "Jade Chu."

### Common Family Names

An, Cha, Chang, Chao, Ch'ao, Chen, Cheng, Ch'eng, Cheo, Chi, Chia, Chiai, Chiang, Chieh, Chien, Chin, Ch'in, Ch'ing, Chiu, Cho, Chou, Chow, Chu, Chuan, Ch'u, Chung, Fan, Feng, Fu, Han, Hao, Ho, Hung, Hsi, Hsu, Hou, Hsiang, Hsiao, Hsieh, Hsien, Hsing, Hsu, Hsuan, Hua, Huai, Huang, Hu, Hung, Jao, Jang, Jen, Jui, Kai, Kan, K'ao, Kao, Keh, Ko, Ku, Kuei, Kung, Kuo, Kwan, Lao, Lee, Li, Liang, Ling, Liu, Lo, Lu, Lung, Ma, Mao, Miao, Ming, Mo, Nan, Nei, Nu, Pan, P'ang, Pao, Pei, P'eng, Po, Shan, Shang, Shen, Sheng, Shih, Shu, Shum, Shuo, Si, Siao, So, Ssu, Sui, Sung, Szu, Ta, Tai, Tan, T'ang, Tao, Tin, Ting, Tsai, Tsin, Tsu Tzu, Tu, T'ung, Wang, Wei, Wen, Wu, Yang, Yao, Yen, Yi, Yun, Yung.

## Vocabulary List

The following is a simple Chinese vocabulary for selecting personal names. It can also be used to name Chinese places and things.

Chinese	English	Chinese	English	Chinese	English
Ai	Love	Jen	Person	Pijiu	Beer
Ch'ang	Sing	Kan	Diligent	Sha	Killer
Ch'eng	City	K'an	Look	Shan	Mountain
Ch'eng-kung	Success	Kai	Blossoming	Shi	Poem
Ch'i	Eat	Ker	Song	Shu	Tree
Chia	Family	Keng	Despite	Shui	Water
Ch'ian	Money	Ku	Ancient, also Tears	Ta	Big
Chie	Celebration	Kui	Costly	Tao	The Way
Ch'ou	Silk	Kuo	Nation, also, To Cope	Tiao	Dancing
Erji	Son	Lian	Lotus	Tien	Heaven
Fa	Law	Ling-Ling	Adorable	Tifang	Place
Fangji	House	Leng	Cold	T'ong-bian	East
Fei	Fat	Lu	Road, Path To	Tou	All
Feng	Wind	Ma	Horse	Tsai	Repeating
Fengfu	Enriching	Mai	Buying and Selling	Tsao	Early
Hai	Sea	Mei	Lovely	Tsi	Character, Soul
He	River	Men	Door	Tsou	Porridge
Hei	Black	Ming	Brilliant	Tsu	Bamboo, also Lover of
Hen	Very	Nan	South	Tsue	Learning
Hsi	West	Niu	Ox or Cow	Tsui	Mouth
Hsien	First	Pa	To Measure	Tuan	Short
Hsiao	Little, also Laughter	Pao	Slim	Tuo	Many
Hsin	Heart	Pai	White	Wan	Ten Thousand
Hung	Red	Pailanti	Brandy	Wang	Toward
Huan	To Return	Pan	Half	Wu	Misty, also Military
Huar	Flower	Pang	Helpful	Yao	Chemical
Hui	Gray	Peipian	North	Yetsi	Leaf
Jin	Nearby	Pi	To Compel	Ying	Victorious
Jiu	Wine	Ping	Sickness	Yu	Jade
Je	Hot			Yueh	Axe

## Equipment

This section describes equipment, common items and fantastic inventions of ancient China. Campaigns from any historical period can use them, because Chinese tools invented in prehistoric times remain useful even today. The list gives a date of invention for each item. Devices marked "ancient" have no recorded date of invention. As always, the GM decides exactly what has been invented in a particular campaign.

One can also buy standard Fantasy/Medieval equipment in a Chinese campaign, as described on p. B212.

### Common Items

**Abacus:** This confers a +1 bonus on any skill roll involving mathematics. The Chinese began using bamboo counting devices in the 6th century BC. \$10, 1 lb.

**Bamboo Backpack:** Holds 70 lbs. of gear. \$1, 5 lbs.

**Basket:** Holds 50 lbs. \$1, 2 lbs., ancient.

**Bell, Small:** \$2, weight negligible, ancient.

**Bell, Measuring:** Chinese shopkeepers calibrate measurements with a bell which only rings clearly when struck with a clapper precisely seven feet long. Therefore, one can use a measuring-rod as a tuner, and if it sounds, that proves that the stick is accurate. Unfortunately, though, dishonest merchants use irregular bells which give the correct sound with shorter instruments. When Emperor Shih-Huang standardized weights and

measures 200 years before the birth of Christ, he forced all bell casters to accept imperial regulation. These bells first appeared in the 6th century BC. \$15, 100 lbs.

**Books:** Before the 2nd century BC, books had to be written on slips of bamboo and cost \$500 each. After that, the invention of paper reduces their price to \$300 each and the development of stencils in the 8th century AD brings the cost to \$150. Further advances in wood-block printing lower the price to \$75 in the 11th century AD. A manuscript weighs 5 pounds under all these systems.

**Brazier:** \$5, 10 lbs., ancient.

**Cloth, coarse, one bolt:** \$1, 1 lb., ancient.

**Cloth, silk, one bolt:** \$3, 1 lb., ancient.

**Chopsticks:** These can be made of lacquered wood or ivory and gems. People use chopsticks to eat, of course, but also they occasionally jab them at each other in brawls. In combat, they have a reach of C, no minimum strength and do -3 (max 1d-2) impaling damage. 50 cents to \$200 depending on composition, negligible weight, ancient.

**Ceramics:** Wealthy Chinese eat from elegant dishes and decorate their houses with ceramic statues and ornaments. Dishes cost \$5 each and weigh 1 lb. Statues can be worth hundreds of dollars, depending on quality, and weigh up to 500 lbs.

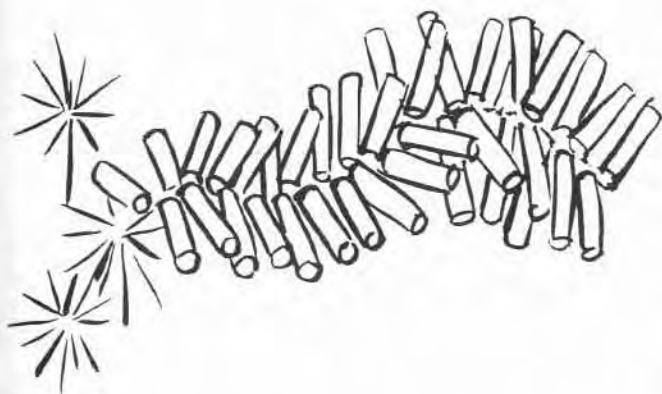
## Characters



The blue-and-white Ming porcelain costs \$20 per dish, but can sometimes be sold for many times that price. In the late 1500s, European traders paid fortunes for them. The Emperor owned a factory which mass-produced these dishes for trade, and many samples have chips or imperfect glazes. Despite the mass production, these dishes are scarce outside the big cities. Pottery, of course, has existed since the stone age. The Chinese invented porcelain in the 3rd century AD.

**Chimes:** The noise of wind chimes pleases good spirits, giving the owner a +1 on reaction rolls with them. \$10, 3 lbs., ancient.

**Drum Set:** \$3, 25 lbs., ancient.



**Firecrackers:** The Chinese threw pieces of bamboo into fires to hear them explode as early as 200 BC. When Taoist monks invented gunpowder in the 10th century, they quickly developed every conceivable type of fireworks. Typical firecrackers come in a string and explode with bangs. One can also buy Roman candles and set pieces which flash in every imaginable color. \$1/string (\$10 for elaborate pieces), weight negligible.

**Flute (Sheng):** The Sheng, or mouth-organ, contains 13 bamboo flutes opening into a wind-chest. It appears around 1,000 BC. \$3, weight negligible.

**Kite:** The Chinese use kites for signalling, entertainment and holding fishing lines away from a boat's shadow (which scares the fish). On at least one occasion, in 1252, Chinese troops used kites to drop propaganda leaflets on the Mongols who had surrounded them. According to official records, these messages caused the Mongols to lift the siege and mutiny. Kites come in all imaginable shapes, including centipedes, frogs, butterflies, dragons and every sort of bird. Kites first appeared in the 5th century BC. See also p. 41. \$1, less than 1 lb.

**Kite, Musical:** This kite trails a bamboo whistle and sings in the wind. Musical kites appear in the 4th century BC. \$3, less than 1 lb.

**Lantern, asbestos wick:** This burns for one hour on a flask of oil and can be refilled any number of times. It was invented in the 9th century AD. \$6, 1 lb.

**Lantern, cloth wick:** This burns for one hour on a flask of oil. The wick disintegrates after 1d refills. \$3, 1 lb., ancient.

**Lute (Pi-Pa):** This appears around 500 AD. \$10, 5 lbs.

**Matches:** These were invented around 577 AD. \$1 for 50, weight negligible.

**Mirror, nonmagical:** \$10, 1 lb., ancient.

**Oil, flask:** 50 cents, 1 lb., ancient.

**Paper, 10 sheets:** Paper appeared in the 2nd century BC. \$2, weight negligible.

**Pot, Iron:** 50 cents, 1 lb., ancient.

**Rocket:** Fireworks developed into rockets in the 11th century AD. This entry covers a small missile used in festivities or as signals. The warrior's "fire arrow" is described in the *Weapons List* (p. 47). \$2, weight negligible.

**Writing Brush, Ink and Blotter Stone:** \$3, 1 lb., ancient.

**Zither (Ch'in):** This appears in the 600s AD. \$20, 3 lb.

## Transportation

**Chariot:** This can carry two people or one person and 200 pounds of gear. \$300, 250 lbs., ancient.

**Watercraft:** Chinese rigging differs from Western varieties. Characters who learned the Boating or Seamanship skills in other campaign settings suffer a -2 penalty when applying it to sailed Oriental vessels, and vice versa. The principle difference is that Chinese sew bamboo battens into their sails. These sails cannot furl, but the crew can fan them open or closed like Venetian blinds, adjusting speed and direction precisely. Also, sailors can climb a battened sail without ratlines or ladders.

Chinese ships can resist far more damage than Western vessels of the same size. The stiff sails hold wind even when riddled with holes. The Chinese also build ships with multiple compartments separated by bulkheads, so that one puncture does not flood the whole hull. Therefore, the captains of Oriental ships receive a +1 on any skill roll to survive storms or artillery fire.

The ships listed below include a maximum speed, but sailing ships may not exceed the windspeed in any event. All ships can also be pushed along at one mile per hour, except on the high sea, where poles will not reach the bottom.

**Dragon Boat:** The Chinese race these unstable boats every year on the fifth and fifteenth days of the fifth moon. This ritual began in the 4th century BC to celebrate the devotion of poet Ch'u Yuan's friends and recreate their search for his body after he drowned. Dragon Boat races are treated as contests of Boating skill. The boats can be from 10 to 40 yards long and carry 39 rowers. They swamp easily, causing everyone who pilots one to take a -4 on all Boating skill rolls. \$500, 500 lbs.

**Landship:** These sailed wagons only work on open beaches or windy fields. They can travel 10 miles per hour in sufficient winds and carry 30 people or 5,500 lbs. In a strong breeze, farmers can supposedly plow fields with them.

**Sampan:** This is a rowboat, and will carry 18 people or one rower and 2,000 lbs. of cargo. \$300, 200 lbs., ancient.

**Lorcha:** This is a Western hull with Chinese rigging. These ships become common in the late 1500s. It appears only in campaigns which have regular contact with Europe, or some equivalent. 60 yards long, 10 yards wide, 8' draft, 500 tons cargo, 20 crew, 38 passengers; maximum speed: 9 mph, \$20,000.

**Kiangsu Junk:** This is one of the most common ships, and pirates favor it. Kiangsu junks can carry 2-10 artillery engines of any sort. 20 yards long, 6 yards wide, 6' draft, 135 tons cargo, 38 crew, 35 passengers; maximum speed: 11 mph, \$25,000, ancient.

**Ocean War Junk:** This ship carries 4-16 artillery engines. 40 yards long, 8 yards wide, 6' draft, 280 tons cargo, 30 crew, 60 passengers; maximum speed: 10 mph, \$60,000, ancient.

**River Junk:** 75' long, 18' wide, 5' draft, 110 tons cargo, 8 crew, 19 passengers; maximum speed: 9 mph sailing, 4 mph rowing, \$15,000.

**Pechilli Junk:** 20 yards long, 4 yards wide, 4' draft, 40 tons cargo, 22 crew, 18 passengers; maximum speed: 10 mph sailing, \$16,000, ancient.

**Small War Junk:** These mount 2-6 artillery engines. 25 yards long, 5 yards wide, 3' draft, 80 tons cargo, 46 crew, 16 passengers; maximum speed: 12 mph sailing, 7 mph rowing, \$26,000, ancient.

**Crooked-Stern Junk:** This vessel's warped hull allows a poler to guide it through rapids with a +2 on skill rolls. 23 yards long, 5 yards wide, 4' draft, 75 tons cargo, 22 crew, 16 passengers; maximum speed: 5 mph rowing, \$11,000, ancient.



**Fishing Junk:** 14 yards long, 3 yards wide, 5' draft, 20 tons cargo, 16 crew, 8 passengers; maximum speed: 9 mph sailing, \$8,000, ancient.

**Flower Junk:** This is a permanently anchored floating tea-house. 10 yards long, 3 yards wide, 3' draft, 13 tons cargo, 7 crew, 36 passengers, maximum speed 2 mph poling, \$7,000.

**House Junk:** 13 yards long, 3 yards wide, 3' draft, 10 tons cargo, 4 crew, 18 passengers; maximum speed 1 mph rowing, \$6,500.

**Wheel Boat:** Chinese shipwrights attached paddle wheels to boats in the 5th century AD. Teams of men power them by pumping treadles. They can accelerate to speeds "faster than a charging horse," according to the historians of Li Kao in the 780s. These boats actually travel at four miles per hour. The Chinese finally began designing boats specifically for use with these wheels. 120 yards long, 14 yards wide, 500 tons cargo, 210 crew, 200 passengers; 8 mph sailing, 4 mph paddling, \$80,000.

## Wondrous Devices

Many of these items are extremely rare or regarded as magical. The GM should always feel free to rule that they are unavailable.

**Automatons:** The Chinese love machines which look like people. Their most common robots were jade navigators mounted on wagons, the robot's hand always pointing south. Although the Chinese knew about lodestone, these devices were not magnetic. Instead, they had a series of gears attached to a wagon's wheels, and whenever the wagon turned, its automaton rotated in the opposite direction to compensate. Craftsmen made even more remarkable robots for the Imperial Court, which danced, played instruments, served meals and performed contortions. Automaton designers received fabulous stipends from the Emperor, and some cheated by disguising actors as machines. To prevent this, Emperors occasionally picked their favorite robots and ordered their heads cut off.

Robots may perform any simple motion their designers desire. They can swing hand-held weapons across pre-planned arcs. Machines cannot see to aim missiles. However, one can position them in narrow corridors where even blind fire is deadly. Naturally, automatons cannot respond to outside stimuli (such as commands or intruders) without a trigger or human operator. Robots cost anything from \$50,000 up and weigh 200 pounds (if man-sized). They appear in the earliest parts of Chinese history. South-pointing carriages existed in the 3rd century AD and probably before.

A south-pointing carriage costs \$10,000 and weighs 150 pounds. When operating, it confers a +3 to Navigation rolls. The GM should secretly roll 1d each day, and on a result of one, the carriage malfunctions and points in the wrong direction. If anyone blocks the robot's wheels or lifts them from the ground, for any reason, the south-pointing carriage automatically fails. Any navigator basing his calculations on a malfunctioning carriage automatically fails. Therefore, it is perilous to rely on robot navigators without some secondary way of finding directions. To recalibrate a faulty carriage, one must make both a Navigation roll and a Mechanic roll — in addition to knowing where south really is.

**Alchemical Laboratory:** This includes stills, evaporating pans, gold-plated sublimation devices and other equipment. The Chinese began researching alchemy around 1,000 BC. \$10,000; different instruments have different weights.

**Balloon:** The Chinese use miniature hot-air balloons for entertainment and signalling. Some are made of eggshells while others are silk and several feet in diameter. Hot-air balloons appear in the 2nd century BC. \$10, weight 1 lb. or less.

**Clock:** Mechanical clocks first appeared in the 8th century AD. They were used to regulate magical rituals, which insured that the Emperor's Yang would not overpower his Yin. The first clocks filled whole buildings, but later ones were smaller and could be kept in a corner. \$1,500, weight 100 pounds or more.

**Compass:** These appear in the 4th century BC. \$100, 1 lb.

**Fireproof Gown:** Notable people occasionally commission asbestos robes, which they wear to parties. There, they cast the cloak into a bonfire and "magically" recover it unharmed. This robe can be used for this trick and also halves all fire damage against the wearer. Cost \$1,500, weight 5 lbs., ancient.

**Globe Lamp:** This device cradles a bowl of burning incense in a pivot, so that it can be jostled without spilling. Wealthy people use these lamps in bed for warmth and perfume. \$10, weight 1 lb., ancient.



**Kites (manned):** Piloted gliding began in the 500s AD, when Emperor Kao Yang condemned criminals to leap from towers with artificial wings — a mockery of the Buddhist ritual where caged birds are set free. When the gliders began to work, sages flew them voluntarily. They learned to rise on thermals and fly indefinitely when the winds were favorable. If a manned kite ascends swiftly, diviners consider it a good omen for sea travel. Marco Polo (see p. 50), in his "Z" manuscript, reported that sailors routinely captured drunkards and sent them flying to test the upper air (and for the amusement value this provided). Adventurers might use these kites to visit lands of the Chi-Kung sky people or the cloudy homes of dragons.

Man-sized gliders use the flight rules from p. B139. These aircraft need a windspeed of at least 20 miles per hour to take off, and can only travel with the wind. The tether for a manned kite must be at least as strong as 3/8" rope (see p. B212). A glider (tethered or not) requires a successful roll vs. Kite Flying or Pilot (kite), and at least three persons (including the pilot) with a combined ST of 30+ to get airborne. Manned kites are controlled by either of the new skills Kite-Flying (from the ground) or Piloting (Kite) (from the air); see pp. 33 and 34. The person controlling a manned kite must make a skill roll when landing or taking off, each time the kite climbs or dives 100', any time an extraordinary maneuver is attempted (GM's option), or whenever the wind changes suddenly. The passenger/pilot must make a successful roll vs. Piloting skill or DX when landing, or take 1d damage (critical failure results in a broken limb).

Most manned kites have tethers and are controlled from the ground. Obviously, this limits their range to the length of rope available. If the kite flies over trees or other obstacles which might snag the string, its operator suffers an additional -2 penalty on Kite Flying rolls. \$800, weight 25 lbs.

**Parachute:** Chinese parachutes consist of several round foils, each above the other, which form a "temple of heaven." They can be used at any height above 1,500'. Like the modern version, this requires a skill roll to use. Parachutes appeared in the 2nd century BC. \$150, weight 30 lbs.

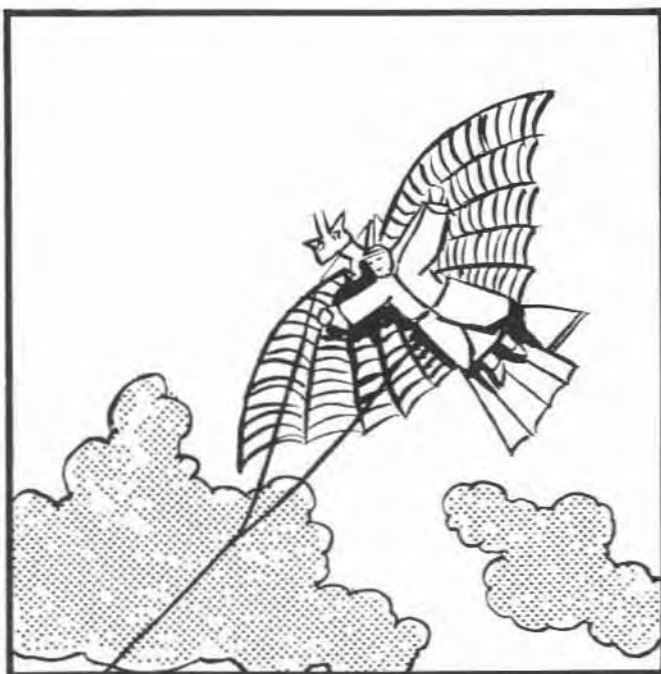
**Phosphorescent Paint:** The Chinese love fireflies and made glow-in-the-dark paint out of them as early as the 10th century AD. \$10 per ounce.

**Rain Bomb:** By the 10th century, the Chinese occasionally tried to end droughts by firing rockets into the clouds. Modern meteorologists say it could not work, but they believed it did, and the GM might allow characters to make Alchemy success rolls at -4 to stimulate rain with missiles. \$100, 1 lb.

**Seismograph:** This dais has brass dragons facing in all directions, which hold spheres in their mouths. When a tremor passes, it shakes the apparatus, causing the dragon on the opposite side from the epicenter to drop its ball. The Chinese invented seismographs in the 2nd century AD. The imperial ministers used them to detect and locate distant earthquakes as they happened. When the court detected a tremor, it would immediately send troops into the shaken region, since earthquakes often triggered rebellion. This practice also has the more humanitarian advantage of speeding relief efforts. \$5,000, 100 lbs.

**Stencil:** This could print one page per minute. It appeared in the 8th century. \$1,000, 10 pounds.

**Zoetrope:** This "lamp which makes fantasies appear" can project moving images on a screen. Street vendors run peep shows with them, displaying horses or dancers, and magicians use zoetropes to fake the apparition of dead emperors. Zoetropes appeared in the 2nd century AD. \$100, 20 lbs.



## Arcane Devices

This list includes sorcerers' instruments and actual magic items. The Chinese value them not only for their power but also for their holiness, and some items cost far more than their effects would imply. Since these items are mythical, no dates of invention are shown. They can appear (or not appear) in any era. GMs should remember that these things are more than mere possessions. Heroes of Chinese folklore occasionally buy magic items or find them in hoards, but the strongest wizardry cannot be traded or found. It must be granted by some magician or god. Wizards may make them using the normal enchantment rules but only if they have the correct formulas. They may have to adventure to find them.

**Aerial Chariot of the Chi-Kung:** These belong to the Chi-Kung people, a race of humans who live in the clouds. The





chariots appear to be ordinary carts with rotors in place of wheels. They can fly at a speed of 12 (24 mph). These chariots can hold up to two passengers, or one passenger and 150 lbs. of baggage. \$100,000, 300 lbs.

**Bell of Earth Ascendant:** This bell must be hung in a building to function. No spirit can endure its peal, and thus rings force them to flee at least 200' away. It also inflicts 2d of damage on them. \$50,000, 500 lbs.

**Bell-Which-Trips-Spirits:** One can carry this bell by hand, and it rings whenever a magically invisible creature approaches within 200'. \$30,000, 1 lb.

**Black Pearl of Earth:** At random intervals, this one-yard-wide pearl brings complete calm over an area one mile in radius, quieting earthquakes and ending wind. Not even gods can control it. \$100,000, 100 lbs.

**Car of Fire:** This chariot glows like molten steel and flares when the rider shouts a command. The burst does not hurt passengers, but does 1d of damage to anyone within 10 yards. \$50,000, 300 lbs.

**Characters of Bodily Harmony:** This must be inscribed in red ink on a strip of yellow paper. It gives the owner a +1 on HT-based success rolls. \$30,000, weight negligible.

**Characters of Fire Warding:** A wooden building will not burn if these characters are written on red paper and hung over its door. \$30,000, weight negligible.

**Characters of Spirit Warding:** These letters are inked on a sliver of wood and must be placed by the door of a house. They prevent any spirit from entering. \$25,000, weight negligible.

**Characters of Stop-Thief:** This must be engraved on a jade statue and placed over the doorpost. Anybody inside suffers a -4 on success rolls involving Camouflage, Disguise, Escape, Hold-out, Lockpicking, Pickpocket, Poisons, Scrounging, Sleight-of-Hand or Stealth. If anyone but the building's owner tries to remove the statue, it swings one punch for an automatic 3d of damage. \$50,000, weight negligible.

**Diviners' Coins:** These copper disks come in sets of eight and must be tossed into the air while the owner chants a command word. The pattern in which they land reveals fate. To simulate this, the GM should give some cryptic hint based on future possibilities for the adventure. For example, if the Emperor is about to die, the coins might reveal "a resplendent dragon, wounded to the death." \$50,000, weight negligible.

**Dragon Bones:** Dragons shed their bones even as snakes drop their skins, excreting the husks through small wounds. Their bones emerge in random colors, depending on the dragon's age and horoscope. The bone remnants can be ground into a powder which restores health. The rare rainbow bones work best of all, but white and yellow are also auspicious colors. Allow a sick or poisoned character who swallows dragon-bone powder a HT roll to recover immediately, with +10 bonus for multi-colored bones, +6 for white and +3 for yellow. Wounded characters recover 9 HT from a dose of rainbow bone, 6 from white, 3 from yellow and 2 from any others.

Newly-found bones weigh 2d lbs. and have the following prices: rainbow, \$1,000 per lb.; white, \$700 per lb.; yellow \$400 per lb.; others \$200 per lb. An alchemist needs ten pounds of raw bone to make one dose of medicine. Once someone distills the bones, each dose weighs only a few ounces. The completed drug sells for these costs: rainbow, \$30,000; white, \$15,000; yellow, \$8,000; others, \$4,000.

**Dragon Swords:** These weapons are not swords at all but dragons who assume the form of blades. They arrange to be found by heroes and confer a +3 on all skill rolls to hit and a +3 on all damage rolls. They cast any spells they know in dragon form (see *Bestiary*). Some Dragon Swords speak, but others conceal their identity. Once a quest ends, these blades return to their natural form and dive into deep water. They never consent to be sold, displayed, or wielded on dishonorable quests. Priceless, 3 lbs.

**Elixir of Gigantic Growth:** This potion swells the user's body to double normal size and strength for 1d hours. Users burst out of ordinary clothing uninjured, but metal armor causes 2d damage. When this elixir's effects wear off, the user's body returns to normal size, but his hair and nails do not. This causes a -2 reaction until the character grooms. \$20,000, 1 lb.

**Elixir of Life:** Nothing could be more coveted than the drink of immortality. However, the Elixir of Life is actually poison. In Taoist theory, it sends the drinker's spirit to the Realms of the Dead. A special ritual of swallowing quartz pills and shielding his body with jade keeps him from actually dying. In the Nether World, the drinker can search for an escape route, for later use. He might also bribe or coerce the spirits there into scratching his name out of the Book of Deaths. This episode can be played out as an adventure. See p. 79 for more details. For a simpler Elixir of Life, use the rules below.

Most experimental Elixirs of Life contain lead, mercury or arsenic. When someone drinks one, he must make an HT roll. If it fails, the poisons kill him. If the user survives his first sip, he need make no Aging rolls for 3d years. After that, he must take another dose or begin deteriorating again. \$200,000, 1 lb.

**Enchanters' Coins:** A Chinese magician can imbue golden coins with any spell he knows. Anyone may then cast the spell by caressing the money's central hole and spending the usual energy. Price depends on spell, weight negligible.

**Enchanters' Mirrors:** These all appear to be bronze mirrors, with a decoration on the reverse side — a magic character, perhaps, or a drawing. One operates the mirror by reflecting bright sunlight on a wall. This spot of light molds itself into whatever pattern appears on the mirror's back, as if the solid bronze were transparent. Mages can cast spells at half normal energy cost by contemplating this reflection. Each mirror allows the user to cast a single spell. Price depends on the spell involved, weight negligible.

**Fiery Pearls of Heaven:** These weapons of the gods can be thrown in combat and burst into flame when they hit, doing 6d damage. \$1,000, weight negligible.

**Fire-Wheel Fan:** No more than 25 of these devices exist. The gods wield them in dangerous battles and also lend them to mortal heroes. They create winds of up to 40 miles per hour within a one-mile radius. By waving the fan, a user can coax out a fireball once every three rounds by making a DX roll. He can then flip the fireballs at an enemy using the fan's blade. Treat these missiles as thrown objects (see p. B148). The fireballs do 8d damage to anyone they hit. They inevitably singe the wielder too, causing 1 point damage per fireball. Cannot be bought or sold; 1 lb.

**Halos of the Blessed:** The gods themselves grant these crowns to the holiest sages. Other people cannot handle them because they are airy and insubstantial to the touch. The halo provides as much light as a fire and drives away any spirit which sees it. Some also blind any person bold enough to gaze purposefully at them. This forces people to avert their eyes in reverence

whenever they see the sage, and also gives enemies a -4 on all rolls to hit him in combat. Huan Ti, the god of war, grants halos that kill anyone who stares at the sage. Cannot be sold; no weight.

**Jewels of Ebb and Flow:** Only the dragons can make these pearls, and they seldom trust them to mortal hands. These jewels harness the force of the tide itself. Some allow the user to force water away, causing it to recede at a rate of five feet per minute everywhere within one mile. Others cause water to rise at the same rate. \$100,000, weight negligible.

**Magic Firecrackers:** The explosions of these fireworks force any spirit within ten feet to flee in terror. Naturally, they are useless after they explode. \$1,000, weight negligible.

**Mirror of Blessed Healing:** This mirror lets the user cast Major Healing spells, as described on p. B162. \$60,000, 2 lbs.

**Mirror of the Heart Within:** This mirror lets the user cast Sense Life, Sense Foes, Sense Emotion, Truthsayer or Mind-reading, as described on p. B155. \$90,000, 2 lbs.

**Mirror of the Thumping Pulse:** Anyone who glimpses this mirror sees an image of his worst self. The mirror's owner may cast Fear, Foolishness or Daze (see p. B164) on his victim, and no touch is required. The effect has a range of 10'. \$65,000, 2 lbs.

**Mirror of the Spirit World:** Anyone looking at this mirror can see all invisible creatures in the area it reflects. It also reveals the true form of anything in magical or psionic disguise. Finally, any unusual gasses appear as green clouds in the reflection. \$50,000, 2 lbs.

**Offering:** The Chinese bury replicas of valuable objects in tombs, as gifts for the departed. These include armies of clay bodyguards, paper furniture and vessels of wine. Spirits of the dead (see *Bestiary*) react at +1 per \$100 of offerings to anyone who sacrifices to them. These offerings cost 30% the price of the actual object, or \$200 for a clay servant/warrior. Clay statues weigh 300 lbs.

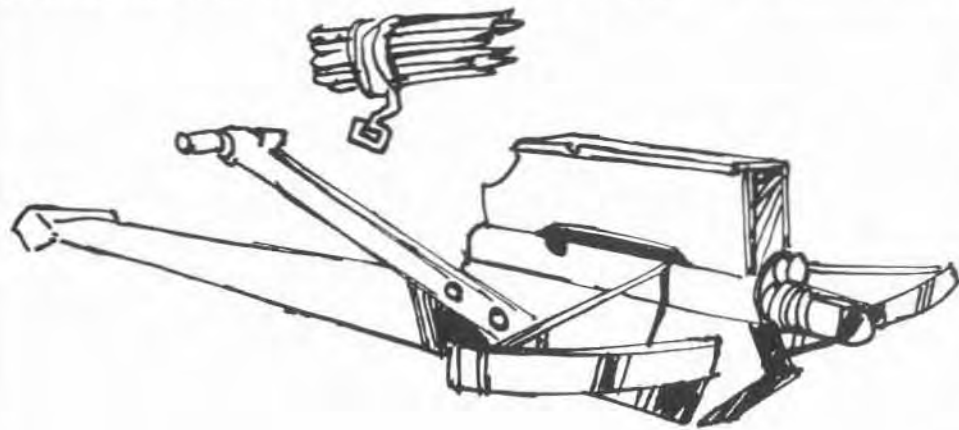
**Pearl of the Element Water:** This allows the owner to cast a Resist Fire spell, as per p. B159. \$17,200, weight negligible.

## Weapon List

### Crossbows

Hand-fired, non-repeating crossbows are covered by the rules on p. B114. Unless otherwise noted, they use the Crossbow skill.

**Arcuballista:** Artillerists string this huge crossbow with up to 10 bolts at once. It can hit multiple targets as distant as 1,000



**Scepter of Resplendent Jade:** The gods forge these rods to ward off blows; they can be used to parry at quadruple normal skill value, against any number of attackers. \$50,000, 3 lbs.

**Sealed Laboratory:** This airtight room dulls the aura of the outside world, letting a magician concentrate on his work. This gives him a +2 bonus on magical success rolls. Furthermore, when the doors are sealed, spirits cannot enter or leave by any means, including magic. The slightest leak destroys this laboratory. \$1,000, non-portable.

**Spouting Bowl:** This is a simple brass bowl with two handles. When it is filled with water and agitated, stationary ripples form and rise into towers of water. A skilled user can create fountains and spires. The spout symbolizes man in harmony with the Tao, and gives magicians within ten feet a +1 bonus on magical success rolls. \$100, 2 lbs.

**Stone of Darkness:** This is a hollow stone, containing the "vital spirit of copper." It saps light, creating a three-yard sphere of darkness, as in the spell on p. B163. Dragons prize these stones and react at +5 to anybody who brings them Stones of Darkness as gifts. \$5,000, 1 lb.

**Sword of Thunder:** Swords of Thunder always belong to gods or saints dear to them. When others acquire these blades, their magic powers vanish. These swords can fight by themselves, attacking and parrying as if the owner were wielding them, while he uses another weapon or retires from combat. Once per minute, this blade sparks with lightning and causes triple damage on its next attack. Cannot be sold, 3 lbs.

**Thunder Pearls:** These drop from dragons' mouths during their battles within thunderstorms. As the beasts strain for each others' throats, pearls tumble from their jaws and fall to the ground where they lie, gleaming like lightning. People use them to illuminate rooms, and they are as bright as large bonfires. \$5,000, weight negligible.

**Wand of Iron:** This metal staff can be commanded to make the user invisible, or reveal invisible things within a 100' radius. It also gives the bearer a +3 bonus on Climbing skill rolls. \$50,000, 5 lbs.

yards. This siege weapon requires only one operator, but cannot be moved while assembled. Anyone can fire it, but ST 9 is required to use the rewinding windlass. It uses the Gunner skill. \$1,000, 100 lbs.

**Bow-Tube:** This barrel attachment adapts a normal crossbow to function as either a normal crossbow or musket. It also improves an archer's accuracy, allowing a +1 bonus to hit when used as a crossbow. \$50, 1/2 lb.

**Chu-Ko-Nu:** This famous repeating crossbow contains a magazine of ten bolts over the stock, with an automatic loading mechanism. Among other tactics, warriors use them to "hose down" underbrush or fortifications before entering. \$500, 10 lbs.

**Crossbow Sight:** This crosshairs device adds a +2 to-hit. Only expert fletchers know about these devices. Someone with the Armory skill and a



specialization in bows must make an Armory roll at -3 to install one. \$10, weight negligible.

**Crossbow Trap:** Legends say the whole concept of crossbows evolved from these snares. A crossbow trap is simply a crossbow with a stick holding the string taut. When anything dislodges the stick, the bow fires. One can detect a crossbow trap by making a Traps roll. Unless the trapper devises some secondary snare, anyone who knows about a crossbow trap can avoid harm by stepping aside. Unaware victims bump the tripwire, firing the bow. It automatically causes 1d+4 damage to the first victim in its path. It is set using the Traps skill.

**Pistol Crossbow:** This light one-handed weapon cannot have a ST above 5. \$150, 4 lbs.

**Sangmiau Crossbow:** An infantryman fires this heavy weapon from his shoulder. He needs three assistants and 5 seconds, or a \$50 windlass and 20 seconds, to cock it. \$400, 15 lbs.

### Fireship

A fireship is a hull full of bombs used to blow up ships. It can be released to drift downstream unmanned or rowed into place by brave sailors. The latter sort of craft includes a detachable stern which allows the users to escape. Free-floating fireships are usually launched in pairs, linked by a chain. When this chain snags a ship, one fireship comes to rest on either side of the victim. Attackers detonate a fireship's bombs by time-fuse, which can burn for up to an hour; a Demolitions roll is required to set it properly. When the explosives go off, they each cause 10d concussion and 3d fragmentation damage to unprotected people within 30 yards. If a wooden ship or building is adjacent, it will catch fire. 3 yards long, 2 yards wide, 3' draft, up to 7 crew; maximum speed 2 mph, \$3,000.

### Flamethrower

A Chinese flamethrower uses a double piston to spray "fierce fire oil" from its square brass cabinet. It appeared in the 10th century AD. Flamethrowers weighed too much to maneuver on battlefields, but sailors mounted them on ships. On land, warriors generally used these weapons to defend castles, finding them especially useful in narrow passages. Flamethrowers ignite paper, cloth or wood, and sear armored targets. Halve the DR of a victim's armor. One can use these devices as area attack weapons, as described on p. B12. Flamethrower is a unique Mental/Easy skill, treated like Guns in all ways. It defaults to DX-4 or any Guns skill of the appropriate tech level at -4. See p. B121 for details. The target of a flamethrower attack takes 3d damage per turn until the flame is put out; this usually requires magic, or rolling in thick sand or cloths.

A flamethrower costs \$1,000 and weighs 200 pounds plus cost and weight of oil. The oil is \$1 per gallon; a flamethrower shoots 20 gallons (150 lbs.) per second. Some have huge reservoirs. "Fierce fire oil" can be used in firebombs or traps, too.

### Guns

Unless otherwise mentioned, these appear in the 13th century AD. They all use Black Powder Weapon skill unless another skill name, such as Gunner, appears at the end of a description.

Cannon may fire balls (to destroy ships or walls) or canister shot (to kill infantry). Canister statistics are given as two numbers, the *number of attacks* and *damage per attack*. Thus, an

Awe-Inspiring cannon firing canister is listed as 40/1d-1 — it makes 40 attacks per shot, each doing 1d-1 damage. The shot cone from canister ammo spreads one hex per ten yards; divide the number of attacks a gun makes by the square yards of dispersion to see how many shots fall on a given target (a person is two square yards). For example, at 30 yards an Awe-Inspiring has 40 shots divided by 9 (dispersion of 3 squared). Four shots (always round down) hit each square yard. Each victim suffers 8 attacks.

**Awe-Inspiring:** The most technologically-advanced cannon of the 1200s, this remarkably compact gun could do devastating damage at medium range.

**Eruptor:** These blunderbusses shoot fire and scraps of metal, which were usually poisoned. They are simple brass tubes, without stocks. An eruptor can fire either shot or slug ammo. The range is drastically reduced with shot, but the firer gets a +1 to hit, due to the spread of the ammo.



**Ever-Victorious Mobile Fire Rack:** This wagon holds up to 200 eruptors and requires a crew of ten. It fires all its guns in a single turn. Anyone who suffers a critical miss while using this weapon becomes Hard of Hearing (see p. B28) from the noise. A 200-barrel rack costs \$2,500 and weighs one ton (proportionately less for smaller racks). Gunner; no single weapon can be pointed, so all shots are at -4 to hit.

**Great General Cannon:** This gigantic cannon fires a huge spread of canister. Gunner.

**Heaven Rumbling Thunderclap Fierce Fire Eruptor:** Soldiers mount this eruptor on a frame, aim it, light the fuse and then leave. It automatically fires three poison gas clay-pot bombs (see below) up to five minutes later. This appears in the 1300s AD. Demolitions.

**One-Eyed Magically-Accurate Gun:** This eruptor has wooden handles and rests on a pole, allowing the gunner to aim.

**Magazine Eruptor:** A magazine eruptor reloads itself, like a Chu-Ko-Nu crossbow, though the gunner still has to add powder. On a roll of 15 or more, it explodes, doing 5d damage to anyone within 3 yards!

**Mattock Gun:** This scatter-shot eruptor is mounted at a right angle to a pole. Soldiers use it to fire over walls and around corners without exposing themselves. Since this impedes aiming, they suffer a -4 on "to-hit" rolls, and do not get the normal +1 to hit for scatter-shot weapons.

**Mr. Facing Both Ways Gun:** Small cannons are often joined at the rear to double the rate of fire. After firing one barrel, the crew turns the gun around and shoots the other. This requires 2 turns. On a natural 17 or 18 on the to-hit roll, if the rear-facing gun is loaded, it will go off. Reloading time, damage and cost depend on the guns chosen; add \$400 and 100 lbs. to the combined cost



and weight of the guns. These appear in the 14th century. Gunner.

**Naval Eruptor:** Naval guns fire two balls at once, linked by a chain. This gives the firer a +1 to hit.

**Thunder Fire Whip:** This three-foot long eruptor has a sharp edge. After it is fired, it can be used like a sword (Broadsword skill, at -2 penalty). The firer is at +1 to hit, due to the scatter-shot nature of the load.

**Wheel Cannon:** Some gunsmiths mount many guns around a cartwheel, for use like a Mr. Facing Both Ways Gun. These weapons may fire up to 36 shots at a rate of one per turn before reloading. Gunners hate these weapons, since some barrels always point at them. Any critical miss indicates some of the wrong barrels have fired; a natural 17 or 18 shoots the gunner! Cost and weight in the table assume a large wheel cannon, with 36 barrels. This appears in the 14th century. Gunner.

**Vast as Heaven Enemy Exterminating Yin Yang Shovel:** This spade-like weapon fires shot and poison gas from its flattened, crescent barrel-tip. It not only does damage, but blows gas (see below) in a 10' by 30' puff, using one tube of gas per shot. The firer is at +1 to hit, due to the scatter-shot nature of the ammunition. Gunner.

## Poison

Chinese weapons often carry a deadly sting. Indeed, looters sometimes forgo discarded weapons for fear of pricking themselves on a poisoned blade. The following venoms can be used either in food or on edged weapons. A single hit or three blocked or parried attacks wipe the poison off a weapon. See p. B132.

**Arrow-poison:** Alchemists brew this from excrement and arsenic. Victims suffer 1d damage immediately and a second 2d from infection 1d days later. One can avoid either with a successful HT roll. A victim may also escape the second roll by accepting treatment from a healer who makes a First Aid roll. \$50, weight negligible.

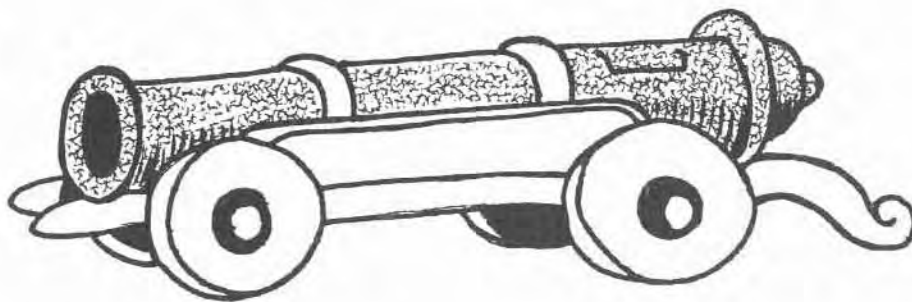
**Wolfsbane:** Barbarians favor this herbal poison. One hour after receiving wolfsbane, a victim suffers 2d damage. Survivors then lose 4 points of DX to numbness and spasms for two hours. A successful HT roll prevents any effect. \$40, weight negligible.

**Cantharides Beetle:** These insects can be crushed and used to poison food or weapons. An hour after being poisoned, the victim suffers 2d damage, and loses 4 points of DX to nausea. A successful HT roll prevents any effect. \$50, weight negligible.

**Bile of Dragon:** This does not come from dragons, but from exotic snakes or fish. The poison causes 4d damage, which the victim can halve with a successful HT roll. Multiple doses each take full effect. This venom requires one hour to take effect. \$500, weight negligible.

## Poison Gas

Noxious fumes fascinate mystics, because of the belief that gasses belong to the spirit world. In the 4th century BC, they invented a furnace with bellows attachments to pump mustard fumes into siege tunnels. These machines cost \$50, weigh 200 pounds, and affect a 10' by 30' area downwind — much more in still air. They can also fill rooms or tunnels, at a rate of 250



cubic feet per combat turn. One dose of gas (see below) is used each turn.

In the 9th century AD, the Chinese developed clay-pot gas bombs, which could be thrown or fired on the tips of special arrows and crossbow quarrels (normal quarrel cost and weight, plus cost and weight of the poison used). Anyone firing these bolts suffers a -3 to hit, because of the projectile's poor balance. One can lob larger bombs with trebuchets, to deliver up to 20 pounds of poison. A clay-pot bomb affects a 10' radius. Trebuchet bundles poison a 40' radius. Clouds of gas last 20 turns indoors, 10 turns outside and one turn in a breeze.

Different types of gas are described below. Mustard balls appeared in the 4th century BC. Other poison gases did not become practical until the 9th century AD, when primitive gunpowder made them easy to ignite. Each entry includes the price for a clay or bamboo tube containing one dose. It weighs half a pound and can power a bellows apparatus for one combat turn, or fill a single pot-bomb. One needs 40 tubes to load a trebuchet. For an extra dollar, alchemists will add a compound of wolf excrement to poison-gas preparations. These burn with red smoke, warning friendly soldiers to avoid the poison.

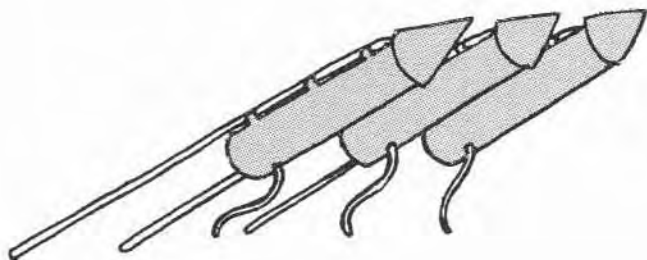
**Excrement Bomb:** Excrement bombs contain excrement, oils, wolfsbane, saltpeter, arsenic sulfide, arsenious oxide, and poisonous beetles. They do 3 points damage per turn to those who breathe their smoke. Victims suffer no damage on any turn they make a HT roll. \$30.

**Five-League Fog:** This is a form of tear gas. It contains sulfur, sawdust, resin, hair and mixed excrements. People who breathe its smoke suffer 1 point of damage per turn, with damage ceasing when they fall unconscious. They may resist this damage with a successful HT roll. Victims must make another roll vs. HT to protect their eyes. Those who fail suffer a -5 on DX for ten minutes. Five-League Fog affects double the normal area for a dose of gas. \$20.

**Lime Powder:** This choking dust works identically to Five-League Fog (see above) except that victims who fail their HT rolls suffer complete blindness. This causes a -10 on all combat rolls. The blindness only ends when victims flush their eyes for five minutes. \$20.

**Mustard Balls:** The smoke of these yellow wads has the effects of Five-League Fog (above). However, it continues to cause damage until the victim dies. Anyone with exposed skin must make a third HT roll each turn to avoid taking 1 point of injury from blisters. Wet victims take double blister damage. \$20.

**Soul-Hunting Fog:** This powder explodes with enough force to cause 1d concussion damage within a 30 yard radius. Its poison causes 4 points damage per round to anyone who breathes it. Victims resist damage in any round they make HT rolls.



### Rockets and Fire Lances

Unless otherwise mentioned, all these weapons appear in the late 10th century AD. Unless otherwise noted, all rockets are fired using the Gunner skill.

**Fire Arrow:** These are arrows tied to rockets. Since they cannot be aimed accurately (-6 to hit), one usually fires dozens at a time, using them as a long-range nuisance weapon or a surprise for foes coming over the walls. They can be launched from bamboo baskets, which hold up to 320 arrows, weigh 3 pounds, cost \$10 and are destroyed by the rocket exhaust. Treat such an attack like canister (p. 44), but spreading only one hex every 30 yards unless the gunner wants a wider spread. Fire arrows can cause fires if they catch in tents, etc., though flares (below) do even better. Fire arrows appear in the 11th century AD.

**Fire Dragon Issuing from Water:** Sailors use this multi-stage rocket against distant ships. It flies about a yard above the water. When its final stage burns out, the Fire Dragon shoots four fire-arrows onto the enemy deck. Roll vs. Gunner-3 to hit. These devices appear in the 1300s AD.

**Fire Lance:** Also called the "Spear of Vehement Fire," this device resembles a Roman candle roughly six feet long. It fires flame and shot, which can be poisoned. A fire lance can only fire once, but well-made lances contain two or three barrels with joined fuses, allowing the wielder to fire three rounds in succession (the "Triple Resister"). Each extra barrel adds \$20 and one pound. Fire lances have pointed tips and can be wielded as javelins, (thrust-1 damage, "cheap" for purposes of determining breakage). They are fired using either the Guns or Black Powder Weapons skill at -2.

**Flare:** A flare rocket has the same range, etc. as a Fire Arrow. It bursts with colored light, illuminating a 100' radius for 1d rounds. This negates any penalties caused by darkness. Flares actually give attackers a +1 bonus on combat rolls when firing at victims within 10' of the explosion. If a flare is fired at a person, the victim takes thrust+1 crushing damage, plus 2 points fire damage. A flare fired at a flammable target, like a tent or ship, can set it afire; a spread of dozens will almost certainly cause a conflagration. \$15, 1 lb.

**Flying Crow with Magic Fire:** This giant rocket flies on wings, resembling a modern cruise missile. It carries a trebuchet-sized thundercrash bomb. Certain versions, costing \$10 extra, spread caltrops throughout the explosion radius. These spikes may carry poison. Anybody moving into the zone must roll successfully vs. IQ to notice them. If he moves faster than half speed, penalize the roll by -1. Failure means the victim suffers 1 point damage, receives any poison in the bomb and can only hobble at 1/4 normal speed until the damage heals. These devices appear in the 1300s AD.

**Flying Powder Tube:** This rocket flies through the sky, drops a clay-pot poison gas bomb and returns safely to its owner. One must reload it with \$5 worth of gunpowder and a new clay-pot bomb after each flight. Roll vs. Gunner to drop the pot accu-

ately; roll again at Gunner-6 for an accurate return. (The GM may rule that genuine magic is required to make this device work!) \$400, 1 lb.

### Thundercrash Bombs

These bombs appeared in the 10th century AD. They come as grenades (using the Thrown Weapons skill), trebuchet missiles (see below) and vast land mines (using the Demolitions skill). Craftsmen can add one die to the fragmentation effects of any bomb by filling it with shrapnel. This costs an extra \$10.

**Bee-Swarm Bomb:** The bee-swarm bomb functions like a trebuchet missile (see below) but also sets everything within its radius on fire. \$80, 30 lbs.

**Grenades:** These do 1d each of concussion and fragmentation damage over a 20' radius. \$50, 1 lb.

**Flying-Sand Magic Bomb Releasing 100 Fires:** These bombs explode like trebuchet missiles (see below), set everything within their radius on fire and disperse excrement gas (see above). \$130, 35 lbs.

**Submarine Dragon Kings:** These are anti-ship mines which have the explosive force of trebuchet missiles. An ox bladder protects the powder from water and goat-intestine snorkels keep the fuse lit. Sailors float them down rivers toward enemy ships. Mines can be timed for any period up to one hour or set to detonate on impact; either use requires a Demolitions roll at -2. The GM should keep track of mines and ships on a hex map or mentally plot their location. \$200, 25 lbs.

**Thunder-Crash Ground Explosives (land mines):** Land mines cause 5d concussion damage and 3d fragmentation damage over a 200' radius. They can be detonated by fuse or with a wheel-lock mechanism triggered by a tripwire; make a Demolitions roll to set one. Anyone walking across a tripwire may attempt a Vision roll at -2 to notice and step over it. Armies sometimes bait these traps with their banners, since captured flags are treasured trophies. \$100, 100 lbs.

**Trebuchet missiles:** These inflict 3d concussion and 2d fragmentation damage over a 90' radius. \$70, 25 lbs.

### Trebuchet

A trebuchet is a catapult which uses a weight to swing a lever. Chinese armies employed trebuchets long after cannon became available, since they could hurl huge bombs of any shape. A trebuchet requires a crew of 10. It cannot fire at targets closer than 200 yards. \$800, 1,000 lbs.

### Throwing Star

Kung Fu artists occasionally hurl these large blade-stars which resemble Japanese shuriken. \$3, 1/10 lb.

### Armor

Most Chinese warriors use ring or scale armor. A few wear nearly impenetrable suits of elephant-hide. Cloth, leather, chain, scale, bronze breastplates, steel breastplates, corselets and shields can all be treated as per p. B210.

**Banded Leather:** PD 3; DR 3. Helm: \$50, 3 lbs. Body armor (covers areas 9-11, 17-18), \$200, 20 lbs. Arms, \$60, 3 lbs. Legs, \$70, 4 lbs.

**Elephant Hide:** PD 3; DR 4. Helm: \$80, 4 lbs. Body armor (covers areas 9-11, 17-18), \$350, 25 lbs. Arms, \$90, 4 lbs. Legs, \$110, 6 lbs.



# Weapon Table

All the ancient/medieval weapons of the *GURPS Basic Set* appear in the Orient. Use the standard statistics for them, since a sword, a halberd or a bow works the same way no matter where it was made. These primitive weapons persist until TL5 or 6. Some Chinese names for common hand weapons appear in the *Glossary* (p. 125).

The table below presents the following statistics on unusual Chinese missile weapons:

**MalF:** The die roll on which a weapon jams. A gunner may restore the weapon in 2d seconds by making a Black Powder Weapons or Gunner roll, as appropriate. Note that the GM rolls all dice, and does not reveal how long repairs will take until they are complete. A critical failure on this "Immediate Action" roll *breaks* the weapon; only an Armourer can fix it.

**Type:** The type of damage a weapon does.

**Damage:** The number of dice of damage a weapon does.

**SS:** The snap-shot number, which is the final to-hit number needed to avoid a snap-shot penalty of -4 with the weapon.

**Acc:** The accuracy modifier of the weapon. See page B15.

**1/2D:** The range at which the accuracy modifier drops to zero and damage is halved.

**Max:** The maximum range of the weapon.

**Wt:** The weight of the loaded weapon in pounds.

**RoF:** Rate of fire.

**Shots:** The number of shots a weapon holds.

**Rcl:** The recoil penalty. A recoil number is given for some one-shot weapons, because an armourer *could* fasten two or more together to create a repeating weapon.

**ST:** The minimum strength necessary to avoid an additional turn readying the weapon after it is fired.

**Cost:** The price for standard ammunition is to the right of the slash.

Weapon	MalF	Type	Damage	SS	Acc	1/2D	Max	Wt	RoF	Shots	Rcl	ST	Cost
<b>Crossbows</b>													
Arcuballista	crit	imp	3d	—	2	300	1,000	100	1/20	10	—	9	\$1,000/\$4
Chu-Ko-Nu	14	imp	thr+2	10	4	ST×15	ST×20	10	1	10	-2	9	\$500/\$2
Crossbow	16	imp	thr+4	12	4	ST×20	ST×25	6	*	1	—	7	\$150/\$2
Pistol Crossbow	16	imp	thr+2	5	5	ST×15	ST×20	4	*	1	—	7	\$150/\$2
Sangmiau	16	imp	3d	14	4	400	500	16	*	1	—	10	\$300/\$2

## Guns/Cannon

Awe-inspirer	12	cr	10d	—	2	280	1,500	160	1/60	1	—	—	\$2,000/\$10
Loaded with canister, fires 40 shots each doing 1d-1 damage**													
Eruptor, shot	12	cr	5d	14	3	15	100	12	1/15	1	-4	13	\$500/\$2
Eruptor, slug	14	cr	5d	14	3	45	300	12	1/15	1	-3	13	\$500/\$2
Ever-Victorious Mobile Fire Rack	See p. 44.												
Great General	12	cr	6d×4	—	2	500	2,400	1,500	1/60	1	—	—	\$1,000/\$25
Loaded with canister, fires 80 shots each doing 1d damage**													
Heaven Rumbling	10	gas	special	—	—	—	600	900	—	3	—	—	\$200 + gas shells
Thunderclap Fierce Fire Eruptor													
Hand Cannon	14	cr	2d-1	16	1	75	450	8	1/20	1	-3	10	\$200/\$2
May also be loaded with buckshot. Roll 15 to hit target; 1/2D of 25, max of 150. Damage is two separate rolls at 1d-1 each.													
One-Eye	16	cr	5d	16	10	45	300	15	1/20	1	-1	10	\$250/\$2
Magazine Eruptor	13	cr	5d	14	3	15	100	12	1/2	10	-3	10	\$700/\$2
Mattock Gun	14	cr	5d	—	1	15	100	15	1/15	1	-5	15	\$550/\$2
Mr. Facing Both Ways Gun — Could be made from any small cannon. See p. 44.													
Naval Eruptor	12	cr	5d	—	3	15	100	15	1/15	1	-2	15	\$600/\$4
Small Cannon	14	cr	4d	—	4	250	1,000	400	1/20	1	-2	10	\$500/\$2
Loaded with canister, fires 20 shots each doing 1d-1 damage**													
Thunder Fire	12	cr	2d-1	13	3	15	100	4	1/60	1	-4	10	\$1,000/\$2
Wheel Cannon	13	cr	2d-1	—	2	100	500	400	1	36	-1	10	\$1,000/\$2
Loaded with canister, fires 10 shots each doing 1d-2 damage**													
Vast as Heaven . . .	13	cr	5d	14	3	15	100	15	1/15	1	-4	15	\$500/\$5 + gas shell

## Rockets

Fire Arrow	14	imp	1d-1	—	2	400	600	1	1	1	—	9	\$5
Fire Dragon	14	imp	2d-1	—	2	600	800	50	1	1	—	—	\$200
Fire Lance	14	cr	2d-2	—	1	30	100	5	1	1-3	-2	9	\$50
Flare	14	—	—	—	2	400	600	1	1	1	—	9	\$15
Flying Crow	14	bomb	—	—	2	1,000	1,000	25	1	1	-2	9	\$40 + price of bomb
Flying Powder Tube	14	gas	—	—	1	500	1,500	1	1	1	-2	9	\$400

## Miscellaneous

Flamethrower	16	fire	3d/sec.	—	7	15	30	1,500	1	varies	—	—	\$1,000/\$20
Throwing Star	—	cut	thr-1	8	1	ST-5	ST	1/10	1	—	—	—	\$3
Trebuchet	crit	cr	10d	—	1	1,000	1,500	1,000	1/240	1	—	—	\$800/throws anything up to 100 pounds

\* See p. B114.

\*\* See p. 44 for canister rules.



# 3

# THE CHINESE CAMPAIGN



No matter what kind of campaign the GM prefers, it can be set in China. Detectives, sorcerers, pirates, spies, explorers, revolutionaries, exorcists, warlords, loyal retainers, spirit journeys, soldiers-of-fortune and diabolically complex intrigues are all staples of Chinese legend.

China's culture allows the GM to set the tone for a story, through historical facts, customs and codes of honor. Heroes must behave courteously and honorably in any Oriental setting or face disgrace, or worse. If the GM wants complete

control over the adventurers, he can make them retainers of an Emperor. An Emperor does not tolerate quibbling. If he chooses to burden his servitors with side errands and taboos, they can only obey. Naturally, failure is unthinkable. Ambitious men lurk throughout the court, eager to exploit a rival's misfortune.

Gamers who prefer complete freedom can play wandering warriors in one of China's troubled periods. As a compromise, they might serve a weak warlord or petty noble who sends them on adventures. However, they need not always obey their lord. Adventurers can desert their master, or even overthrow him.

## Campaign Types

The most fundamental choice a GM must make in designing a Chinese campaign is whether to make the campaign realistic or much more extravagant.

A realistic campaign will use 100-point characters and will concentrate on historical details. Roleplaying, particularly intrigue, will be as important as combat . . . perhaps more so. Except in the Warring States period, the adventurers will probably be in the service of some lord or cause.

It is certainly possible to run a "realistic fantasy" campaign, with magic and monsters (both of which were considered concrete facts of life until very recently in China), but the magic will be limited — most places will be low mana, at best. Monsters will be seldom seen and greatly feared. Such a campaign can be easily run with only this book and the *Basic Set*.

A cinematic campaign set in China can be more of an "anything goes" proposition. Both Chinese legend and popular culture are characterized by wildly improbable action.

Mana levels will be high or very high, but superhuman martial-arts prowess will make warriors more than a match for sorcerers. Monsters, dragons, gods and spirits will be an everyday annoyance, and the adventurers will have to do little more than turn around to find a haunted temple that needs exorcising, a lost treasure that needs recovering, a great wrong that needs righting, or an evil wizard who needs an attitude adjustment.

For authentic examples of such adventures, see the excellent Chinese films *A Chinese Ghost Story* and *Zu: Warriors of the Magic Mountain*, or the four-color martial arts adventures found in *Jademan* or *Leung's* comics, or, for that matter, countless martial arts films. All of these should be more or less readily available in English-language versions.

## "Interesting Times": Historical Settings

Though the rich culture and vast tradition of China make for fascinating roleplaying in any historical period, there are certain eras which virtually cry out to the adventurous.

Below are listed a few of the most turbulent eras of Chinese history, with notes on the sort of campaign they'd best support. Each of these eras is more fully detailed later in this book.

### The Yellow Emperor (see p. 57)

Huangti, the "Earth Ancient," the "Yellow Emperor," is said to have founded the Chinese empire more than 45 centuries ago. This was the golden age of Chinese legend, when gods and heroes stalked the earth. It's an excellent time for the most fantastic and heroic campaigns.

### The Warring States (see p. 64)

About 800 BC, China descended into a feudal chaos, with rival states constantly scrabbling for each others' property. This period greatly resembles the

## Rewriting History

The next three chapters of this book cover the history of China, from the days of legend to the present. All this is perfect adventure material. The GM can use it in many different ways, changing events to fit the campaign — for instance, by substituting a fictional person for some historical figure who led an interesting life.

Ideas from different historical campaigns can be mixed. For a Long March in a medieval-fantasy campaign, simply change the Red Army to the Yellow Turbans. This would be very Chinese. The concept of history repeating itself in a dynastic cycle appears frequently in Chinese thought. Names and dates can be changed to keep things mysterious. However, most of these people are so obscure to Western readers that this is unnecessary.

Wherever possible, the historical accounts include details of personalities and dramatic moments, to help roleplay the rulers, generals and other "actors." These details come from actual annals of the period. Chinese histories often include this information and never object to portraying real people as heroes or storybook villains. Whether the accounts are true or not, they make exciting games. And they may be changed at need; a sinister felon may be recast as a misunderstood hero, or vice-versa. In China as elsewhere, the victors wrote the histories.

# 車

## Military Campaigning

In ancient China, war was routine, the fundamental business of the state. The adventurers will participate, but probably not as ordinary soldiers. *GURPS* emphasizes individual characters, and Chinese battles were impersonal affairs, where troops could only obey orders or lose their heads. Therefore, the GM should decide the results of battles in advance, or use the mass combat systems of *GURPS Japan* and *GURPS Horseclans*.

The adventurers will have more freedom if they are part of the "heavenly web" of spies, diplomats and elite forces. The party can come together as members of a new commando squad, similar to the "Sword Friends," "Gallants From The Three Rivers," "Dissolvers of Difficulty," and "Leapers and Agitators," mentioned by scribes in the margins of *Sun Tzu's Art of War*.



### ***On the Road With Marco Polo***

A fascinating campaign could begin with the party as companions of Marco Polo on his famous journey. Even if the GM chooses not to duplicate the historical expedition, Marco Polo's experiences are a model for similar journeys by Westerners to the Far East. This scenario takes the adventurers through a panorama of exotic lands.

The Polo family's explorations began in 1260, when Niccolo and Maffeo Polo made a trade expedition to Bokara, on the easternmost fringes of Europe's known world (Bokara lies in what is now the Uzbek region of the Soviet Union). By good luck, this journey happened to coincide with a visit by envoys of Kublai Khan, who convinced Polo to return with them to China.

In China, the Polos received an audience with Kublai, Khan of Khans. The Mongol Emperor developed a keen interest in Christianity, if only to weaken the Buddhists among his conquered populations. At the Khan's request, the brothers returned to Europe to recruit 100 missionaries to bring Christianity to China.

However, when they returned home they found the Church in chaos. The Pope was dead, and the wait for a new Pope stretched on and on. When the new Pope was finally chosen, he could only spare two Dominican monks, who soon lost their nerve and returned home. However, Maffeo, Niccolo and Niccolo's 15-year-old son Marco continued alone, encountering the bandits and peoples of the Middle East, Afghanistan and beyond. Among others, the group reportedly had an encounter with the Old Man of the Mountain, the master of the feared Assassin cult. The Polos reached China in 1275. There, they once again met the Khan, who received them lavishly. Marco in particular won prestige in the Mongol court with his quick wit. Both Chinese records and his own account agree that by 1277 Marco Polo was a full member of the Imperial Court.

*Continued on next page . . .*

traditional feudal milieu of many fantasy roleplaying campaigns, with "wandering adventurer" being an accepted, if not exactly respectable, profession. The now-crumbling Chou dynasty had overthrown the old animist religion, but its shamans and their (real or perceived) supernatural powers still existed, underground, as wandering priests and seers. This secret priesthood could be treated as either a persecuted minority or a menace to innocent people. This era produced two of the world's greatest minds: the fabled Confucius and Lao Tzu, the founder of Taoism. Though historically suspect, Chinese tradition holds that these two coexisted, and even met, in the 6th century BC.

### **The First Emperor (see p. 69)**

Imperial China as we know it began in 221 BC, when Shih-Huang-Ti, the first emperor, consolidated the Warring States. A strict legalist and one of the most implacable tyrants known to history, Shih-Huang-Ti built the Great Wall. After his death in 210 BC, the Empire again fell into chaos, until the rise of the common-born emperor Kao-tsu in 202 BC. A long and exciting historical campaign could begin in the reign of Shih-Huang-Ti, with the PCs as escapees from the slave labor crews on the Wall — perhaps followers of the rebel Liu Pang (later Emperor Kao-tsu).

### **The Reign of Wu (see p. 78)**

The long and eventful reign of the Emperor Wu (140 BC to 86 BC) included Chinese campaigns in Vietnam and Korea, the establishment of the Old Silk Road that linked the Chinese and Roman empires commercially, and even a plot to overthrow the Emperor through sorcery.

### **The Three Kingdoms (see p. 80)**

The 180s AD were one of the most picturesque periods of Chinese history, with the legendary Three Heroes leading the fight against secret societies like the Yellow Turbans and the Red Eyebrows, as well as rebellious rival lords. This era was followed by a long period of particularly Machiavellian intrigue lasting until the 6th century (see p. 82).

### **The Rise of T'ang (see p. 84)**

The early 600s saw a resurgence of Chinese strength, with major wars with Korea and Turkey. This period was dominated by the legendary heroes Li Shihmin and Li Tsing. Towards the middle of the century Li Shihmin, now the Emperor Tai Tsung, undertook an epic quest to India to obtain the teachings of Guatama Buddha and bring his religion to China.

### **The Mongols (see p. 89)**

East met West resoundingly at the end of the 13th century. The PCs could be ethnic Chinese or Europeans opposing the conquering armies of Genghis Khan, or be a unit of the Mongol army. Or the campaign could be set a couple of generations later, with the adventurers as companions of Marco Polo or some of his relatives on their journey East (see sidebar, p. 50).

### **The 16th Century (see p. 93)**

In the mid 1500s, Western traders (straight out of *GURPS Swashbucklers*) were bullying their way into China, the Mongols and the secret societies were once again making trouble, and the court intrigues were as Machiavellian as ever, making this a particularly rich time for roleplaying. It all came to a head in the next century, with the rise of the proud Manchu barbarians to power.



## The Opium Wars (see p. 95)

In the 1840s, the Chinese clashed with the English over the lucrative opium trade. A campaign set in this time could easily incorporate supernatural elements from *GURPS Horror* and nautical adventure from *GURPS Swashbucklers*.

## The Boxer Rebellion (see p. 98)

The year 1900 saw the emergence of a group of young, foreigner-hating dissidents. Master martial-artists all, they called themselves the Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists, nicknamed the Boxers by the Europeans. A campaign set during the Boxer Rebellion could combine elements from *GURPS Martial Arts* and *GURPS Cliffhangers* for exciting, suspenseful adventures.

## Red China (see p. 104)

Since 1950, when Mao Tse-tung formed the People's Republic of China, China began an ascent in world politics that made it one of the three global "superpowers" in the '60s. Red China offers countless opportunities for cold-war espionage adventures. In a *Special Ops* campaign, the PCs might be a covert rescue team, sent in to bring one of the organizers of the Tiananmen Square protests safely to the West.



## Campaign Crossovers

*GURPS China* can also be used to expand a different sort of campaign. The following *GURPS* worldbooks mesh especially well with China.

### *GURPS Cliffhangers*

China of the 1930s, with its exotic culture and chaotic politics, is a paradise for pulp heroes. Many of the classic pulp tales were set either in China itself, or in mysterious Chinatowns within the major cities of Europe or the U.S.

### *GURPS Conan*

The nations of the Hyborian age included Khitai, a far-eastern land based strongly on medieval China. If the GM desires to combine heroic fantasy with an Oriental setting, he can easily transfer most of the concepts in this book to Robert E. Howard's Khitai.

## On the Road With Marco Polo (Continued)

At court, Marco observed the Khan's keen interest in strange countries, and his disgust with dull envoys who could tell him of nothing other than their official business. When Marco was sent on missions by the emperor, he won favor by making notes of points of interest to the Khan, and relating them on his return. Marco traveled extensively in the Khan's service, perhaps as far as India and the Gobi Desert — the homeland of the Khans.

In 1292 the Polos left China by sea, on a mission to deliver Kukachin, a young Mongol noblewoman, to her promised husband the Khan of Persia. Kublai Khan outfitted them extravagantly. This voyage took them to Japan and Southeast Asia. Most of the party, including two of the three envoys sent by Kublai to Persia, died on the way. But the three Polos and Kukachin arrived safely. The old Khan of Persia had died during the journey, and Kukachin was safely married off to his son. Eventually the Polos returned to Europe. They arrived in Venice in 1295, where their identity was not believed; until they proved themselves, they were denied entrance into their own house!

Two years later, Genoan troops fought the Venetians and captured Marco Polo. During his year in captivity, he related his experiences to his fellow-prisoner, Rusticano of Pisa, who recorded them.

Marco's life after the war seems to have been uneventful. He is recorded as a Venetian "noble," but his family probably held that rank even before their journey. As might be expected, his journeys made him well-known, and for many years afterward "Marco Million," a traveler and teller of extravagant tales, was a popular figure in Venetian entertainments. Marco died peacefully on January 10, 1324, leaving behind a wife and three daughters. He was buried in the church of St. Lorenzo.

Those willing to take some liberties with history might bring this story to a more exciting crescendo. Suppose the war between Genoa and Venice had been a larger, longer one. Then suppose the Polos decided to go back and beg troops from the Khan on behalf of Venice . . .

## Aliens

The following incident might inspire a *Horror* or *Space* adventure.

In 1938, a Chinese spelunker named Chu Pu Tei found some odd skeletons in a cave near the Tibetan border. They had large, apelike skulls but frail frames. Drawings covered the walls of the cave, depicting the sun, moon and stars, along with figures wearing round helmets. A pattern of lines connected the stars. Chu Pu Tei also found 716 tablets with spiral grooves on them. Letters appeared to be written in the tracks.

Chinese researchers announced in 1962 that they had studied the plates. The discs were made out of cobalt and had been exposed to extreme high voltage. Tests indicated that the material was 12,000 years old. A man named Tsum Um Nui had translated the writings. After initial refusals to publish his findings, he claimed that the plates told of an accident which left the authors stranded on the third planet of a nearby star. Their exploration uncovered no materials for a new spacecraft. The natives were hostile and rebuffed all offers of friendship. The last line went, "Men, women and children hid in the caves. Then they believed the sign and saw that the Others had come with peaceful intentions this time."

A saga among the tribes of that region does mention spindly yellow beings which came from the clouds. In the story, the tribes took pity on their deformities and mercy-killed them "the quick way."



## GURPS Espionage

Intrigue has always been an integral part of Chinese politics. Western intelligence organizations will take a keen interest in goings-on in Red China, particularly in the '50s, '60s and the '90s, following the Tiananmen Square crackdown.

## GURPS Fantasy

Journeys to bizarre new lands create excellent fantasy campaigns. A group of fantasy PCs can imitate Marco Polo and visit legendary China, or a reasonable facsimile thereof. The Chinese naturally consider Halflings, Dwarves and other strange peoples to be savages, but they would be fascinated with the Elves' long life. Chinese Emperors also sent explorers West, which can lead to the opposite sort of campaign.

## GURPS Horror

Chinese legend includes an abundance of ghosts, curses and spells. Taoist alchemists studied the realms of the dead assiduously. They might well discover something Man Was Not Meant To Know.

Late Manchu China is a classic setting for Victorian daredevils. See *The Time of Troubles*, p. 95, for details.

## GURPS Japan

China and Japan are near neighbors, and traded irregularly throughout the Shogunate period. Pirates and smugglers engaged in more active Sino-Japanese relations. The *Imperial China* and *China and the West* chapters describe the major Sino-Japanese encounters. The Chinese and Japanese considered each other barbarians, but each visited the other frequently. These peoples also encounter each other regularly in Korea, often on the battlefield.

## GURPS Martial Arts

China is the birthplace of the Oriental martial arts, and the detailed rules for kung fu and other Chinese combat styles found in *GURPS Martial Arts* will enhance any Chinese campaign. For an exotic and entertaining variant, the GM may wish to run an adventure, or even a whole campaign, based on those extravagant Hong Kong martial arts movies, where everybody's a master of unarmed combat, and fist, feet and thrown weapons are hurtling through the air almost constantly.

## GURPS Old West

Hard-working Chinese settlers were an integral part of the taming of the wild west, bringing their customs and culture to the plains and coasts of 19th-century America. For a real change of pace, an Old West GM could arrange to have his cowboys and Indians shanghied into the chaos of the Boxer Rebellion.

## GURPS Riverworld

With almost 25% of the Earth's population being Chinese-born, some attempt to reconstruct the Empire of the Dragon (or the true Marxist state envisioned by Mao Tse-Tung) on the Riverworld is likely . . . in fact, almost inevitable.

## GURPS Space

Why not have starfarers in the Celestial Empire? They can arrive in any part of China's history, either through time travel, or by visiting some parallel earth. If the PCs are Chinese, extraterrestrials make the ultimate foreign devils (see sidebar). Conversely, if the PCs are the starfarers, they will think the Chinese are aliens. With proper roleplaying, even the players might be fooled. China might also participate in a near-future science fiction campaign. The People's





Republic launched its first satellite in 1970. The Chinese currently sell European companies space on their Long March series of boosters. Perhaps there will be a Chinese arm of the galaxy, with dozens of worlds modeled on the China of various eras.

### **GURPS Swashbucklers**

The West "opened" China in the late swashbuckling period. The China Trade under Ming and Manchu offers limitless opportunities for heroism. Pirates swarmed around Formosa, and smugglers operated everywhere. However, this is not the South Seas. The Chinese subjected foreigners to the full effect of their law, and regularly strangled Western criminals until the Opium War.

### **GURPS Time Travel**

With its five millennia of history and its advanced culture and technology, China is a veritable treasure trove for the time traveler.

## **Inspirational Reading**

There is plenty of adventure fiction set in China, although much of it has gone out of print. James Clavell's *Tai-Pan* is available as a book and a movie (now on videocassette). The movie *The Last Emperor* covers the epic of the fall of the Manchus, the coming of the Japanese and the rise of Communism. *The First Emperor* appears in some museums. It covers the life of Shih-Huang, using soldiers in the People's Liberation Army as cast. On a completely different level, John Carpenter's adventure/comedy/fantasy *Big Trouble in Little China* includes a surprising amount of Chinese culture and mythology, in amongst the non-stop action. Ernest Bramah's Kai Lung stories describe British heroes recast as Chinese, incidentally opening a new avenue for Chinese campaigns — the Orientalized parody of Western events. The popularized histories of Harold Lamb provide a model of how to blend Oriental history with drama in *GURPS China*. The Chinese fantasies of Barry Hughart and E. Hoffman Price are recommended, as are books by Berkley Mather and W.E.B. Griffin. The pulp adventures of Jack Williamson, A. Merrit and F. van Wyck Mason are especially applicable to games. Even Robert E. Howard wrote about Orientals in *The Purple Heart of Erlik*. See the *Bibliography*, p. 126.

## **NPC Archetypes**

Certain typical NPCs will appear in any Chinese campaign. The GM can use them as minor characters, or even major ones if the story turns in directions he never planned for. These people set up adventures, populate the land, patrol the

### **Characters for Campaigns**

The players should select characters to match the theme of the campaign. This list shows probable campaigns and appropriate character types for them. Of course, imaginative GMs will think of new campaigns suitable for different types of PC.

Itinerant fortune-seekers are acceptable in any sort of campaign, of course.

**War.** Conscripts, Merchants (profiteering supply-sutlers), Sword Saints, Spies, Moists (either working for peace or persuaded that the cause is just), Bandits (robbing stragglers or patriotically raiding the foe), Mercenaries, Smugglers, Sorcerers, Barbarians.

**Court Intrigue.** This can be within a noble's estate or rich clan's household instead of the Imperial Court. Magistrates, Artists, Entertainers, Counselors, Ministers, Missionaries, Spies, Princes, Moists, Secret Society members, Sages/Sorcerers.

**Traders.** Artists, Entertainers, Merchants, Bandits, Smugglers, Mercenaries (hired guards), Barbarians.

**Imperially commissioned explorations.** Artists, Conscripts, Ministers, Missionaries, Monks, Scholars, Spies, Princes, Mercenaries, Sage/Sorcerers.

**Urban intrigue.** Magistrates, Mercenaries, Sword Saints (against a despicable criminal), Monks, Scholars, Conscripts, Secret Society members.

**Mystic/Holy Quest.** Magistrates, Artists, Conscripts, Entertainers, Sword Saints, Missionaries, Monks, Scholars, Moists, Sage/Sorcerers, Barbarians, Wu.

**Revolution.** All.

The GM can be lenient about peculiar character mixes. People of quite different backgrounds often adventure together in Chinese legend. The legendary Three Heroes of the Three Kingdoms met by chance in a peach orchard. The Chinese are acutely conscious of social rank, but upper-class adventurers might well accept "inferiors" as comrades. Secret societies often accept people from every social rank.

Certain character types, notably Magistrates and Nobles, would expect to give orders to other members of their party. This can work well, especially if the gamers, like most Chinese, feel that every group must have a leader. However, if players resent taking orders from each other, their leader could be an NPC. Depending on the story, he might be a Patron, Ally, Dependent, or just a superior.

To give the party freedom, the GM can make their leader a bumbling clown, who continually begs his retainers to save him from humiliation by undertaking his adventures. When the PCs succeed, his superiors lavish praise on the incompetent, while he modestly nods. As long as he remembers that he needs the PCs, their fortunes are assured. Even a competent leader may be too busy to give many orders, especially if he works in the imperial bureaucracy.





### **Imperial Tombs**

The well-guarded, opulently-appointed tombs of the Chinese emperors provide an excellent and authentic setting for that traditional fantasy roleplaying scenario, the "dungeon crawl."

The Chinese, like many ancient people, buried treasures with their dead. Those who could afford it had their corpses encased in form-fitting suits with jade plates held together by golden wire. This supposedly prevented decay and kept the soul in a similar state of perfection. Offerings included jars and carved tiles, jade figurines and bronze cauldrons. Less wealthy folk used clay reproductions of offerings, and by the Han dynasty artisans could mass-produce these substitute-gifts from molds.

Powerful people, such as the First Emperor, had themselves buried with households of life-sized clay warriors and servants. In theory, these statues would serve them after death. On occasion, the clay soldiers of such tombs held automatic crossbows, triggered to fire and kill any who defiled the tomb. More complex automatons (see p. 40) are quite possible.

China's earliest rulers offered far more than statues to the dead. Tombs from the Shang dynasty and before contain victims of human sacrifice, some beheaded, others buried alive. According to superstition, the sacrificed people would continue to serve their master even after death. In a fantasy game, the Shang tombs could well contain functioning courts of unquiet dead, where servants and warriors obey a ghostly lord.

The Chou emperors banned human sacrifice. Nevertheless, the lure of servants for the afterlife certainly tempted many nobles. Rumors of secret sacrifices surrounded State burials for many centuries. Adventurers may find themselves hired to investigate such a crisis.

streets, run the shops, and occasionally get eaten by the monsters. The most common sorts are described below, with the statistics most likely to be important in play. They are assumed to have some experience and training. Unless otherwise mentioned, all Mental skills are at the character's IQ and all Physical skills are at his DX. Most characters will have only one or two of the typical advantages and disadvantages.

Also described is the stereotypical personality for that "station" in life, according to Chinese tradition. Feel free to replace these with more fully-developed personas.

### **Peasant**

ST 11, DX 10, IQ 9, HT 10; Move 5; Parry 2. Typical advantages: Acute Hearing, Acute Vision, Common Sense, Danger Sense, Luck, Toughness. Typical disadvantages: Bad Luck, Dependents, Stubbornness, Low Status. Typical skills: Agronomy, Animal Handling, Area Knowledge, Teamster. Peasants in rural areas may have Hunting, Survival and a Weapons skill, but those in civilized provinces are strictly forbidden to practice war. During a revolt, peasants may have weapons skills at the level of their DX and a corresponding Parry score.

Peasants are ignorant and profoundly superstitious, but no scholar can match their earthy shrewdness. This wisdom prompts the Countless Old Families to shun politics and change. They want only to till the soil. Festivals and full harvests brighten the peasants' life, but the specters of famine, plague and war always loom nearby. Peasants must always behave humbly in the presence of their betters.

### **Servant, Shopkeeper or City-Dweller**

ST 9, DX 11, IQ 11, HT 9; Move 5; Parry 2. Typical advantages: Literacy, High Status, Wealth. Typical disadvantages: Addiction, Cowardice, Eunuch (for servants), Greed, Fat, Laziness. Typical skills: appropriate professional skills, Savoir-faire, Streetwise. A street criminal or rich merchant will have a weapon skill, but few ordinary Chinese carry weapons.

The urban middle class includes only an infinitesimal portion of Chinese society. Therefore, the stereotype of a city-dweller is underdeveloped. Businessmen have a reputation for greed and laziness. Artisans enjoy respect, although not prestige. They are usually overworked. Street urchins and paupers are everyday sights in Chinese cities.

Servants constantly scheme to rise in society, and eunuchs have a special reputation for venality. At the same time, eunuchs manage to seem timid and effeminately childish.

### **Barbarian**

ST 13, DX 12, IQ 9, HT 12; Move 6; Parry 7. Typical advantages: Danger Sense, High Pain Threshold, and Toughness. Typical disadvantages: Primitive, and others chosen from Bad Temper, Berserk, Bloodlust, Code of Honor, Intolerance, Odious Personal Habits (anything you can imagine). Typical skills: 15 for primary weapon, 12 for others, Hunting, Riding-14, Survival.

Barbarians are quite primitive but have an animal's cunning and knowledge of the outdoors. They strive to imitate Chinese customs, at least according to a Middle Kingdom conceit. Barbarians conquer the Empire every few generations, but inevitably become Chinese themselves.

### **Foreigner**

ST 11, DX 12, IQ 12, HT 12; Move 6; Parry 8. Typical advantages: Literacy, Military Rank or Clerical Investment and others chosen from Absolute

Direction, Acute Vision, Charisma, Combat Reflexes, Immunity to Disease, Language Talent, Strong Will, Toughness, Voice. Typical disadvantages: Duty to crown or church, Social Stigma (Foreigner — see p. 26) and others chosen from Alcoholism, Code of Honor (Gentleman's), Fanaticism, Greed, Lecherousness, Overconfidence. Typical skills — officer: Fencing and Black Powder Weapons at 13, Area Knowledge (Ports of Call), Boating, Carousing, Diplomacy, Language (Chinese), Leadership, Merchant, Navigation, Seamanship, Shipbuilding, Streetwise. Typical skills — clergy: no weapon skills, Bard, Diplomacy, Language (Chinese), Leadership, Singing, Teaching, Theology, Writing.

These statistics represent a European officer or missionary of the 17th or 18th century. A common sailor would be much like a Chinese soldier (see below) with the addition of Seamanship.

### *Thug or Soldier*

ST 12, DX 11, IQ 9, HT 10; Move 5; Parry 6. Typical advantages: High Pain Threshold, Legal Enforcement Powers, and Toughness. Typical disadvantages: Addiction, Alcoholism, Bully, Cowardice, Enemies. Typical skills: 12 for primary weapon, 11 for others, Carousing, Fast-Talk, Gambling, Scrounging, Streetwise, possibly several Thief/Spy skills.

These statistics could represent a magistrate's henchman, soldier, toughened laborer, criminal or any other rough character. The typical thug laughs loudly and loves to press drinks on his friends. He thinks nothing of stealing a purse or hacking off a head. Conscripts hate their overseers. That does not mean they like their masters' enemies any better.



### *Scholar, Mandarin, Magistrate or Nobleman*

ST 8, DX 10, IQ 14, HT 10; Move 5; Parry 5. Typical advantages: Literacy, Mathematical Ability, Musical Ability, High Status, Wealth. Typical disadvantages: Age, Cowardice, Fat, Gluttony, Greed, Gullibility (mainly for scholars), Honesty (mainly for scholars), Low Pain Threshold, Overweight, Truthfulness (mainly for scholars), Weak Will. Typical skills: one Weapon skill, Administration, Calligraphy, Law, Literature, Musical Instrument, Politics, Savoir-Faire, appropriate Professional skills.

The typical scholar must devote nearly all his time to study, and he is quite helpless in the everyday world. Those who pass the examinations and prosper in the government become corrupt, devious and lazy. This renders the few honest ones powerless. Mandarins and nobility lapse into effete luxury whenever times are peaceful enough to allow it.

In many periods, a noble may be a warrior, with developed Weapon skills and other useful abilities. In this case, add the Thug's combat skills, Strength scores and Dexterity scores to the generic Nobleman's persona.

### *The Dragon Court*

The Emperors ruled China through the traditional "Six Ministries" of Rites, Personnel, Revenues, War, Justice and Public Works. One Grand Counselor oversaw them all. The relative influence of these agencies varied with the politics of the day. The absolute power of the Ministries often exceeded that of the August Personage himself.

Emperors who wished to curb their Ministers generally had to use tyrannical measures. Rulers throughout Chinese history resorted to having powerful ministers killed. The Ming emperors instituted decrees limiting each bureaucrat's access to the Throne, and also instituted a custom by which the Emperor could order an annoying minister spanked with a wooden switch. Nevertheless, the Chinese did not consider ministerial power a necessarily shameful thing, and Confucians held that the ideal Emperor would entrust nearly all decisions to such experts.

Just as ministers could control the Emperor, a staff of assistants controlled each of them. Each Ministry had a "Nei-Ko," or Inner Hall, consisting of several hundred scholars who did the actual work of committing decrees to writing. These secretaries could usually control the wording of the laws. Each Nei-Ko appointed a Grand Secretary, and the Grand Secretaries often served the Emperor as a pseudo-cabinet.

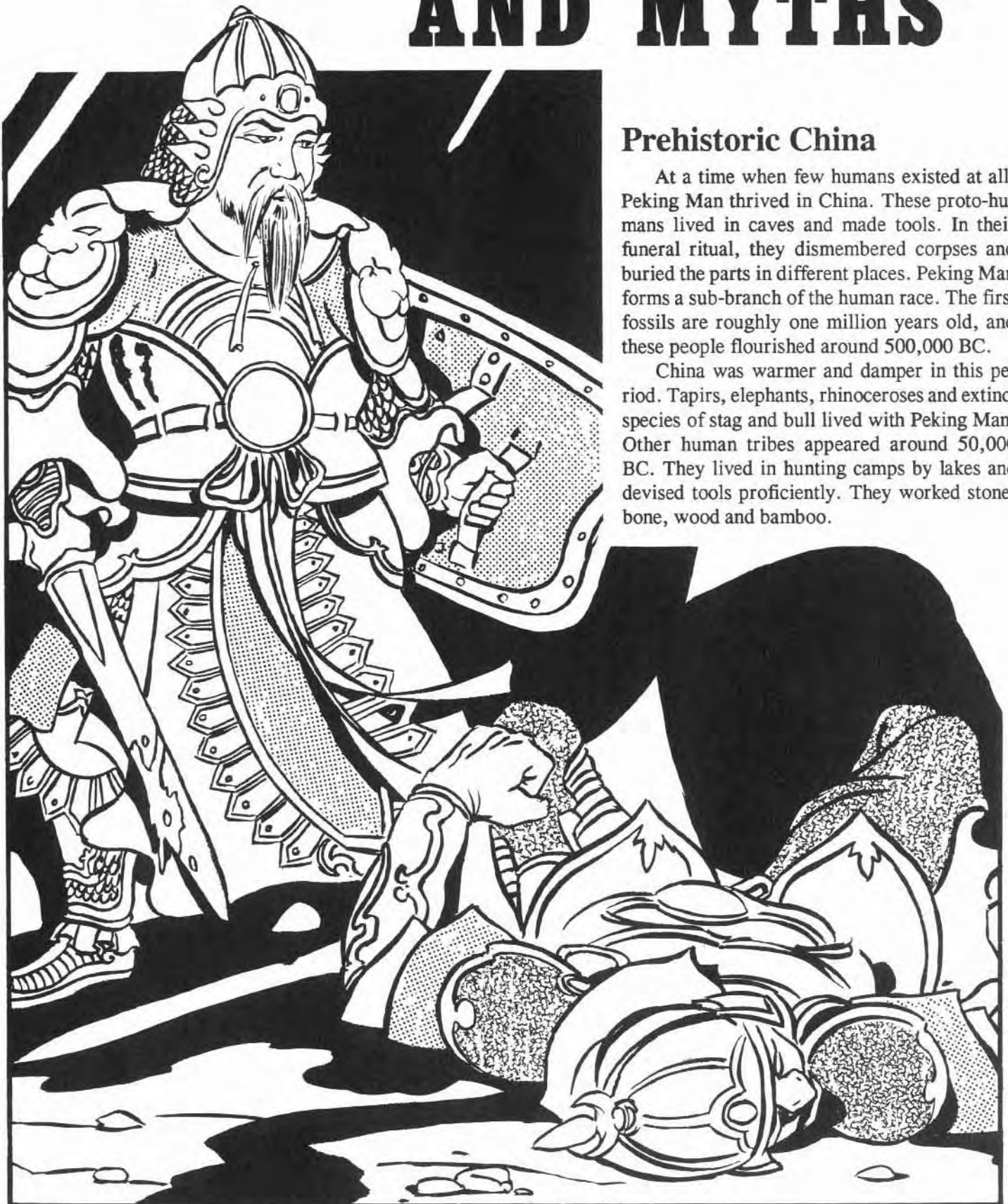
The palace eunuchs had a bureaucracy of their own, with Ministries controlling Utensils, Granaries, Imperial Wardrobe, Imperial Menus, Music, Imperial Implements of Writing, Imperial Seals and similar subjects. The Minister of Ceremonial Equipment generally wielded the most power of all.

And, of course, local nobles had their own bureaucracies, echoing the doings of the Imperial court.

The GM may create any sort of elaborate title without fear; there was a Ministry of every imaginable subject at some time in Chinese history. To an outsider, the bureaucratic maze can be impenetrable. As politics ebb and flow, so does power. The Ministry of Waterways might be powerless in one reign, influential in the next, and abolished by the following Emperor, with its duties assigned to some other branch of the government. And even a powerless Ministry will employ hundreds of civil servants, who will never admit that no one reads their reports or listens to their recommendations. Such a shadow-ministry may have a real purpose, too. It may exist only to provide jobs for retired administrators and incompetent children of bureaucrats. Or it may be a "cover" for an internal spy agency.



## 4

ANNALS  
AND MYTHS**Prehistoric China**

At a time when few humans existed at all, Peking Man thrived in China. These proto-humans lived in caves and made tools. In their funeral ritual, they dismembered corpses and buried the parts in different places. Peking Man forms a sub-branch of the human race. The first fossils are roughly one million years old, and these people flourished around 500,000 BC.

China was warmer and damper in this period. Tapirs, elephants, rhinoceroses and extinct species of stag and bull lived with Peking Man. Other human tribes appeared around 50,000 BC. They lived in hunting camps by lakes and devised tools proficiently. They worked stone, bone, wood and bamboo.



About 25,000 BC, a new human type appeared. Archaeologists have found their remains in the upper layers of the cave that covered Peking Man. Scientists believe that far more lie in poorly-explored parts of North Korea. This people used the most advanced implements of all. They appear to have had a completely different genetic makeup from the Chinese. These humans were not Mongoloid, and all traces of their race have vanished.

By around 4,000 BC, several distinct tribes roamed China, herding cattle. They made excellent stone axes. These people migrated to India, Indonesia, Melanesia and, apparently, Australia. Other tribes replaced them in China.

By 2,500 BC, one can identify regional cultures. A group of hunters and pig-raisers lived in the Northeast, from Peking to Manchuria. West of them, in Shensi, people herded cattle and settled to raise wheat and millet. They grew prosperous enough to tame horses. This was rather extravagant for a primitive tribe, because horses require loving care and at that time were not nearly as large or useful as modern breeds. These horse-breeders eventually migrated to Turkey. In Szechwan, the ancestors of the Tibetans herded goats. The barbaric Liao in the southern jungles did not even have bows and arrows, but south of them, the Tai already grew rice. These peoples gradually mingled and crowned the Three Kings (see below).

## The Time of Ancients

The Chinese know no time before China. They trace their ancestry back to 4,754 BC. Before that, they say, the universe began as a cosmic egg within the primeval chaos. After over 18,000 years of gestation, the bright *Yang* separated from dark *Yin*. These primal forces engendered the Five Elements: Fire, Wood, Earth, Metal and Water. The Elements formed the Earth. The god P'an Ku hatched from the cosmic egg and lived for 18,000 years. Each day of his life Heaven receded ten feet farther from P'an Ku's primordial Earth. When the first god died, his head became four mountains, his eyes the sun and moon, his blood the rivers and his hair the plants and trees. At that time, nine other suns hung in the sky. The Chinese believe that P'an Ku's descendants still populate an island in the southeast.

### Three Kings and Five Emperors

Early "China" consisted of many tribes, who inhabited the province now called Shensi. The Chinese attribute every custom and device to the genius of those tribes' Three Kings. The Kings' ancestor, Sui Jen Shih, invented fire. Fu Hsi, first of the Three Kings, introduced cooking, domestic animals and hunting around the year 4000 BC. He led his tribe across North China as nomads. Fu Hsi's wife Nu Wa invented marriage and children. The next prominent King, Shen Nung, devised the plow and farming around 3500 BC. The third luminary was Huangti, the Earth Ancient.

The Earth Ancient invented pottery and houses. His wife Lo Tsu devised silk. Around 2600 BC, Huangti's people settled the loess, a land of fertile silt around the Yellow River (see *The Yellow River Basin*, p. 17). This allowed the Chinese to farm rice. It also began their continuing struggle against floods.

Huangti also fought the first war. Shen Nung's tribe, now ruled by his son Ch'ih Yu, encroached on the Earth Ancient's land. Huangti tolerated that for many years. Then Ch'ih Yu attempted to conquer Chiai Ch'ih, a brackish lake where Huangti distilled salt. Salt was "the prize of the nation, the treasury of its wealth." Huangti resisted and invented the bow and arrow for his army.

The war began with each side launching invasions across the Yellow River. Huangti invented boats for the crossing, wagons to supply his army, and flutes for signaling. These tools gave his force superior mobility, leading to the Earth

### Campaign Seeds

*GURPS Ice Age* contains more information for anyone who wants to run a campaign in prehistoric China. These times also provide background for *GURPS Horror* adventures — anthropologists say the vanished races merged into modern Chinese. Perhaps they really discovered something Man Was Not Meant To Know. Perhaps someone or something practiced prehistoric genocide. Furthermore, how did Peking Men settle China when humans barely existed outside Africa?

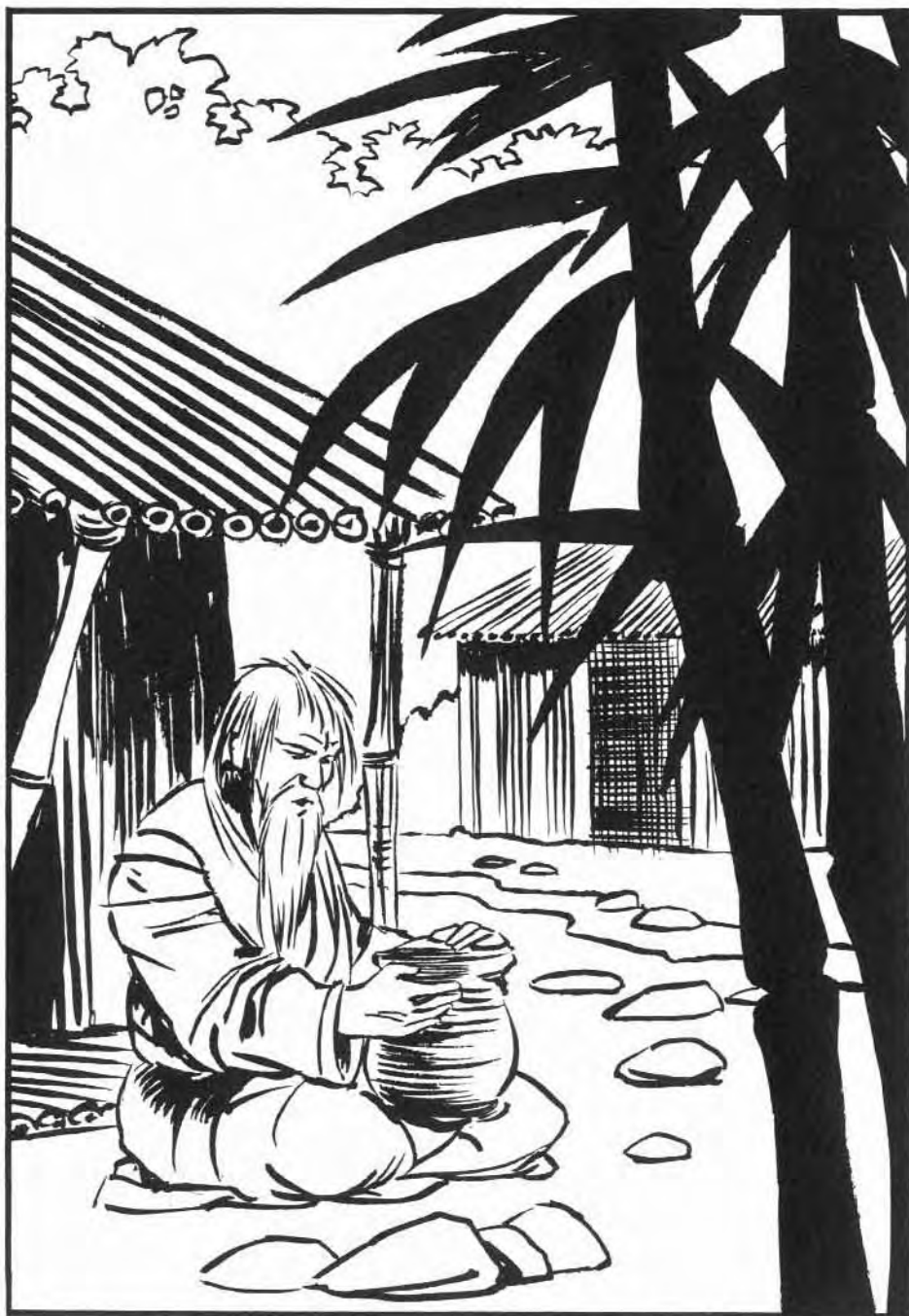


### Peking Man Characters

Peking Man characters have attributes much like those of modern humans. They have, perhaps, -1 IQ, due to their smaller average cranial capacity, but Peking Man brain-weights are within *Homo sapiens*' range. Peking Men have flat skulls with small foreheads, chinless jaws and big teeth. Their limb structure cannot be distinguished from that of modern humanity. Therefore, they receive no ST bonus. In any campaign involving normal humans, Peking Men suffer a -5 point Unusual Appearance disadvantage. They also suffer any Primitive disadvantage appropriate for a Tech Level 0 culture.

### *Ch'ih Yu*

Ch'ih Yu, Huangti's enemy, called himself the Red Emperor and worshiped the gods of Fire. He probably invented bronze or at least used it extensively. This would suit the Chinese Elemental scheme, where Metal succeeds Wood (the agricultural Shen Nung), and Fire succeeds Metal, but Earth (the Yellow Emperor) halts Fire's rise. Tradition says that Ch'ih Yu grew a single horn on his forehead. He wielded it like a spear. The Red Emperor equipped his army with spiked helmets to resemble his horn and (probably) bronzed-tipped pikes. If Ch'ih Yu's troops possessed superior armor and close combat weapons, this may explain why Huangti concentrated on archery.



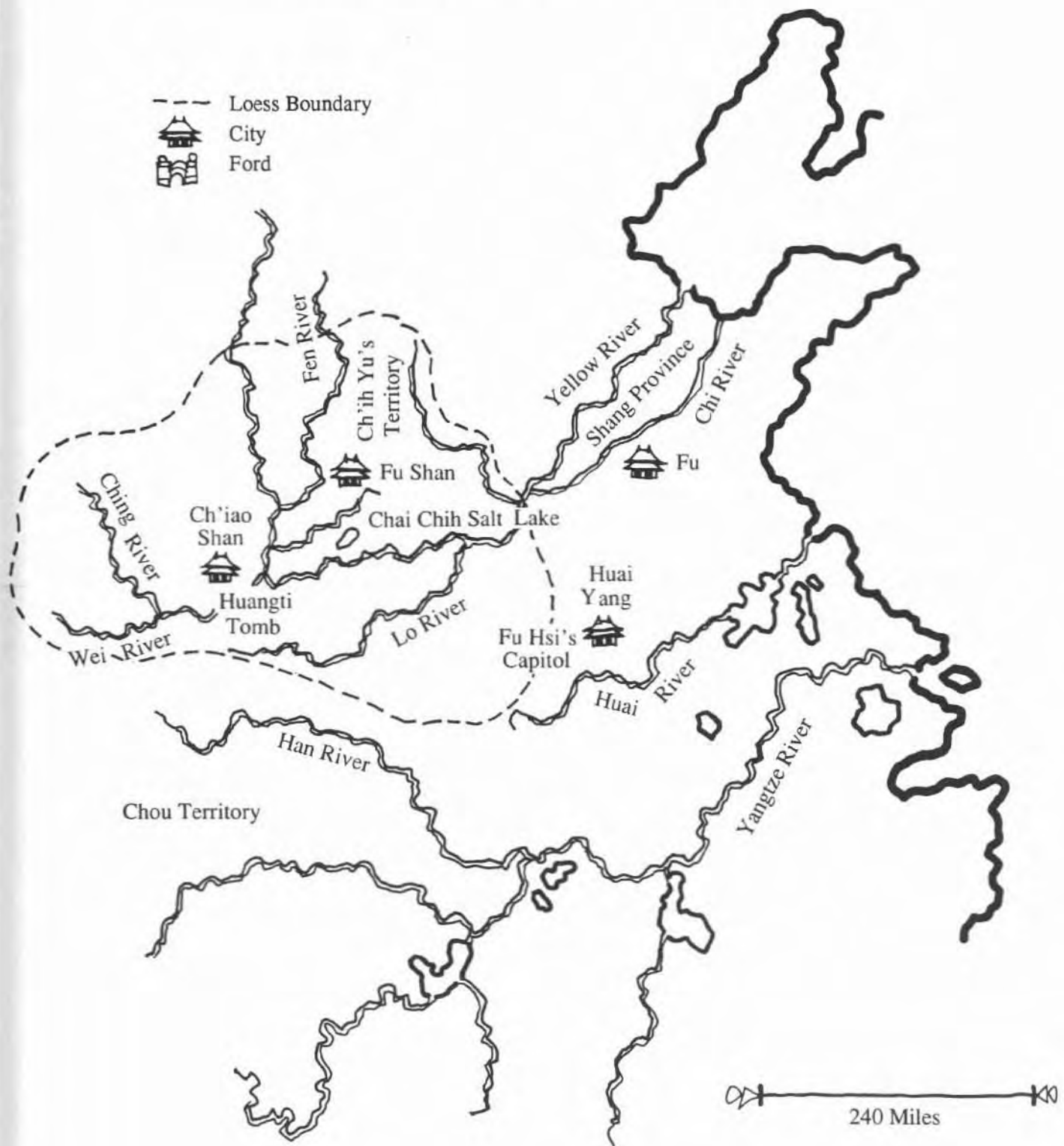
Ancient's reputation as a strategist. He crushed Ch'ih Yu and took the entire loess. Then the other tribes hailed him as lord. Huangti moved his capitol to Pingyang, at the center of the tribal lands, and ruled as the Yellow Emperor.

Five Emperors followed the Three Kings. The first one known to have existed historically is the fourth, Yao, who, according to tradition, lived from 2333 BC to 2234 BC. Confucian annals remember him as a model of virtue. However, terrible floods on the Yellow River marred his reign. Yao hired an engineer named Kung Kung to build dikes. Thousands of laborers died in the work. The dams, rather than stopping floods, collected water and burst, causing the worst inundations ever.

The peasants clamored for Kung Kung's dismissal. However, Yao believed that both rulers and people must defer to experts for the good of his State. According to legend, he proved his sincerity by selecting a genius named Shun as heir instead of his own son. (Archaeologists say that Shun actually ruled a rival state which conquered Yao's army.)

# CHINA

in the Time of The Yellow Emperor







### *The Sacred Flame*

The shamans of Hsia and Shang consecrate an Emperor by trusting him with the sacred Flame which symbolizes his rule. Subjects light their own fires from it and then share these with other subjects, until his fire, like his power, permeates every hearth in China. If the sacred flame goes out, the shamans overthrow the Emperor. Therefore, extinguishing it is equivalent to assassinating the Sovereign.

The Chinese used two sorts of fires. They lit ordinary ones with firedrills or flint and tinder, for cooking and metal-work. Shamans also possessed lenses for lighting Ming Ho, or holy fires. They reserved Ming Ho for sacrificial pyres and the Emperor's sacred Flame.

In any event, Shun assumed the throne in 2334 BC. Apparently, Shun mollified his captured subjects with propaganda. He claimed to be the son of a peasant, selected by Yao to rule because of his filial piety. He continued Yao's moral teaching and established most of China's "rites," which include spirit rituals, popular dances and decorative art. He tried to control the Yellow River but, like Yao, failed. Then, to the peoples' delight, Shun executed the engineers.

Emperor Shun's son, Yu, succeeded him in 2184 BC and renewed the efforts to control flooding. He vowed to work as a laborer on the project until it succeeded. Yu abandoned dams and concentrated on diversion ditches and dredging of river chokepoints. His method worked much better. Furthermore, it allowed farmers to irrigate rice paddies. Yu, tanned and muscular from his labor, entered the palace and began a more traditional reign. As Emperor, he reformed tax collection and commissioned an atlas of the world. Yu founded the Hsia dynasty.

## **Hsia, Shang and Chou**

In early China, not even Emperors could govern alone. People did not fear the State nearly as much as gods and their Wu (shamans, see p. 29). Therefore, Emperors guarded their authority by acting as priests of the chief god Ti and transforming supernatural rituals into State ceremonies. If an Emperor died on the throne, he posthumously received the title "Ti" himself. Sorcery became the chief source of political power. When armies fought, they valued prisoners for sacrifice, more than territory.

Meanwhile, the Shih, or land-owning nobility, directly ruled the peasants. Landlords owed tribute of grain, animals and sacred tortoise shells to the Emperor. Each one possessed a private army. Nobles dared not rebel while the oracles forbade it. But if the Emperor lost his sacred status, nothing could keep the princes under control.

### **War**

Regular armies appeared in the late Hsia period. The first armies organized themselves into units of 300 men, divided into equal Right, Left and Central companies. Charioteers dominated the armies of the Shih. Only barbarians sat astride horses, but nobles felt too proud to fight on foot in the mud. They liked the ability to dart around the battlefield at will, or away from it, if necessary. The Chou particularly favored chariots. They established a military system around them, where each chariot supported 25 armored infantrymen and 72 unarmored men. The heavy infantry's armor consisted of a padded jacket and shield. Dignitaries of the Hundred Families might also maintain a Shi of 2,500 infantrymen or a Lu of 500 elite bodyguards.

The nobles wielded bows from the four-horse chariots. Each chariot also carried a spearman and driver. The infantry carried spears, and served mostly to protect the noblemen. Battle plans depended more on auguries than tactics. The ubiquitous chariots confined armies to smooth roads and open fields. Since the charioteers came from the same noble class, chivalry prevailed.

In one famous incident, the army of Greater Chin fled from Ch'u. When a Chin chariot mired itself in a rut, several of Ch'u's soldiers gallantly pushed it out. The noble from Chin thanked them and said, "Truly, we cannot equal your great state in the art of running away."

### *The Fall of Hsia: 3000-2884 BC*

P'o I, Yu's Minister of Wildernesses and Wild Beasts, claimed that the Emperor promised him the throne, but the official will left power to Yu's son Chi. As Yu grew frail, the Minister of Wildernesses climbed a holy mountain to

commune with the nature spirits. While he was there, Yu sickened and died. His son quickly took power before P'o could return. The Minister of Wilderness retired without a struggle but bitterly reminded the court about Yao's precedent of choosing a worthy successor, not an heir. This encouraged other feudal lords not to recognize the new Emperor. Chi's army suppressed their rebellions, but the Shih remained resentful.

An eclipse of the sun marked the crowning of Chi's son, T'ai K'ang. This took place October 22, 2197 BC. Within a year, his empire collapsed. Chinese moralists blame T'ai's demise on his own self-indulgence. T'ai neglected the sacred rites, preferring to hunt and fly falcons. The Shih considered him a fop and revolted. Barbarian tribes invaded China's borders, and the Emperor's magicians refused to assist.

T'ai's brother Chung K'ang took power over the remnants of Empire. He spent most of his reign pursuing Hsi Ho, a court sorcerer who brought the wrath of the gods on the Empire with his drinking and lustful affairs. Hsi Ho defended himself with a private army. Most of the peasantry supported him because of the spells he cast on their behalf. Chung K'ang eventually defeated Hsi Ho in a brilliant campaign, and then pardoned all the wizard's supporters.

Chung K'ang's grandson, Shao K'ang, gradually reconquered the Hsia territories. He received land and an army as a reward from a feudal king for his service as Minister of Food. But his enemies vastly outnumbered him. Therefore, Shao K'ang founded a legendary corps of spies and saboteurs. With their help, he pitted one prince against another, always managing to retain powerful allies himself. Shao K'ang proclaimed the reformation of the Hsia Dynasty. It soon fell again, however, under the brutal rule of Emperor Chieh.

### The Rise of Shang

Emperor Chieh indulged himself with "towers of jade, corridors of ivory, ponds of wine and forests of meat." He refused to heed either counselors or shamans. Emperor Chieh also introduced chopsticks as a more elegant way to eat than the spearing forks of earlier times. The people came to hate him. Ch'eng T'ang, feudal prince of Shang, petitioned him to reform. Chieh first ordered him imprisoned but released him after several years.

Ch'eng T'ang returned to his estate, where a peasant named Yi Yun convinced him that the gods now hated Chieh. Then, as Ch'eng passed a holy lake, an iron sword suddenly bobbed to the surface and floated until he took it. Ch'eng raised an army of revolution. The princes of smaller provinces competed in entreating him to conquer their dominions first. He obliged them and spent several years liberating peripheral kingdoms before advancing on the Capitol. Emperor Chieh had previously sapped his army's strength in a series of conquests and could not resist.

The Shang Dynasty began in 1600 BC. Ch'eng T'ang appointed Yun Prime Minister because of his brilliant diplomatic feats during the revolution. Yi Yun won a reputation for driving conspirators out of court. After Ch'eng T'ang died, at age 100, Yi deposed his malfasant son, T'ai Chi. The commoner Prime Minister did not venture to take the throne. Instead, he installed a brother of Ch'eng T'ang. When he died four years later, Yi Yun installed a different brother. Rumors say that T'ai Chi assassinated Yi Yun out of spite. The Shang histories deny this.

### The Chou Barbarians: 1028-800 BC

The last Shang Emperors dissipated themselves as the Hsia did. In 1028, the Chou tribes overthrew them, led by Wu Wang, the Mightily Martial. Most Shang considered the Chou mere barbarians. They refused to obey them. There-

### Hou I

Hou I, the prince who conquered Emperor T'ai K'ang's capitol (see maintext), shared the Emperor's taste for hunting. No archer in China could equal his skill. The metaphor, "the shooting of Hou I," appears frequently in Chinese literature. Like the Emperor, Hou I abandoned his rites. Han Ch'ao, a minister of his court, assassinated him.

### Immortals

The first of the Eight Immortals (see p. 9) lived in the Chou Dynasty.

*Dschung Li Kuan.* He brewed the first Elixir of Life. Worshipers represent him with a fan.

*Dschang Go.* He is an eccentric known for riding backward on a black ass, beating a drum and calling his own name. Dschang Go also owned a white mule which he could fold up and put in a bag. His symbol is a bamboo drum with two drumsticks or a donkey.



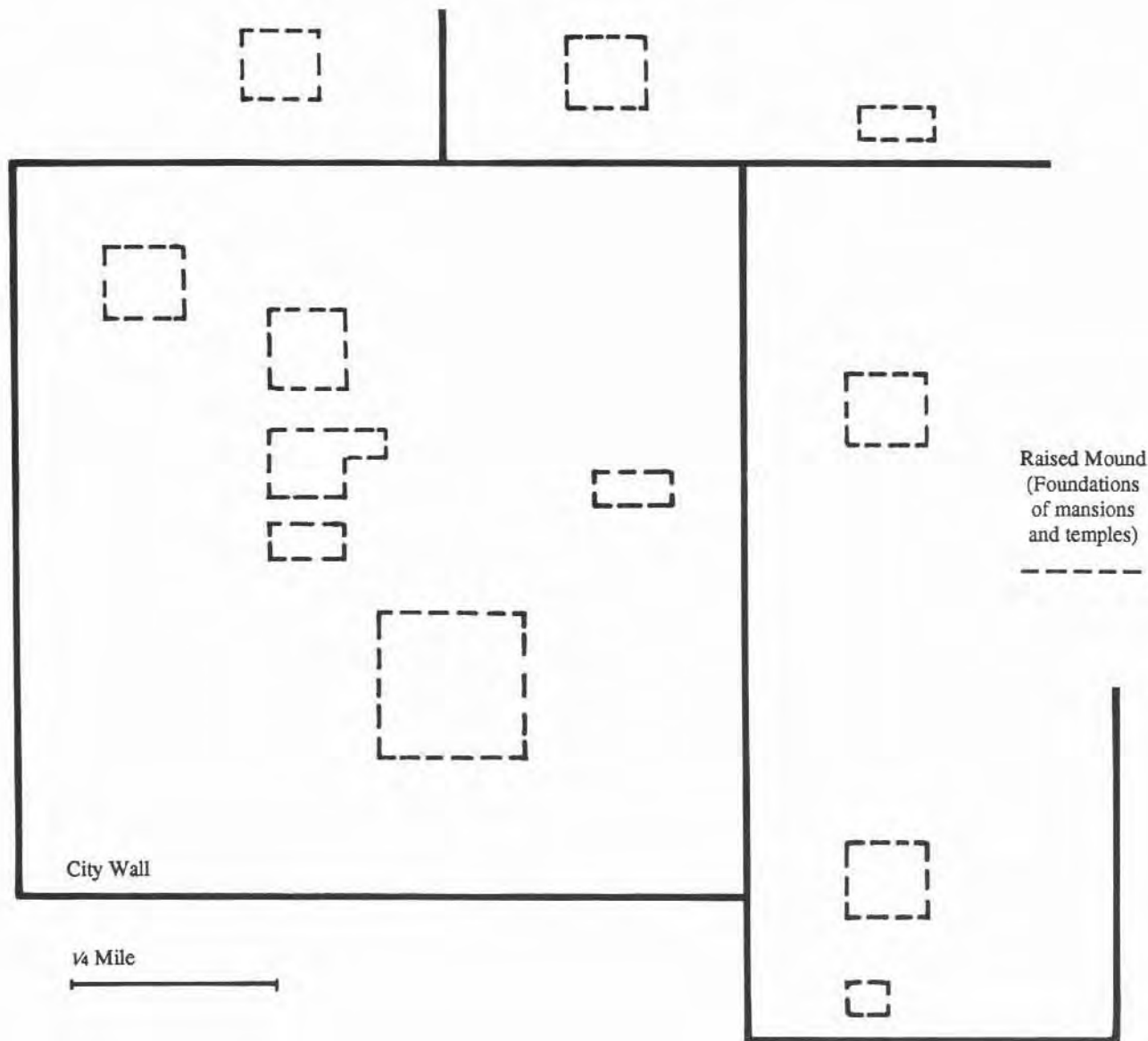
### King Mu

In the mythical reign of King Mu, during Chou's heyday, a magician came from the uttermost West who could breathe beneath water and walk through metal or stone. Mu begged the magician to teach him. The stranger replied that Chou was too humble for his tastes, and he planned to leave. In response, King Mu built a tower of costly wood. According to legend, it stood 6,000 feet high. Mu ordered it stocked with concubines, beautiful paintings, talented singers and magicians. The traveling sorcerer remained indecisive. King Mu helped him make up his mind by ordering him arrested and locked in the new tower. The magician taught King Mu to separate his soul from its body and visit the Spirit Kingdoms. Eventually, the King won favor from the Queen Mother and became an immortal. The King gone, the magician escaped and disappeared.

fore, Wu Wang governed through native landlords, granting fiefs by presenting a duke with a handful of soil from his territory. Existing Shih could keep their old fiefs by joining Chou's empire. Wu Wang created five ranks of nobility: Kung, or duke, Hou, or marquis, Po, or earl, Tsu, or count and Nan, or baron. Greater nobles each received homage from several lesser ones. The Chou Emperor, called the Son of Heaven, or the One Man, gave them all their titles and collected their tribute. He lived with Chou's "Hundred Families," in a private city at Sian.

The Chou crushed Shang's priesthood. They abolished human sacrifice. Chou farmers needed slaves and did not want to waste prisoners on the gods. Furthermore, according to Chou customs, the head of a family conducted prayers, not a priest. The shamans survived only as magicians and oracles. Others became secular officials, using their training in science, calligraphy and administration for new purposes. The Chou willingly adopted their artistic and legal principles, hoping to attain the cultural sophistication of Shang.

### A City of the Warring States: Han Tan, Capital of Chao, as excavated







### *Confucius and Lao Tzu*

Philosophy flourished under the Chou. The "Hundred Schools," which include Confucianism, Taoism and Moism, all started during this period. It became fashionable for Shih to entertain sages. Disciples of different schools wandered between courts, enjoying kings' hospitality and occasionally participating in their intrigues.

Confucius was born in 551 BC. His father died early in his youth, and his impoverished mother, probably a concubine, raised him. However, his father belonged to the Shih, and Confucius managed to win a scholarship at a school the Chou established for aristocrats. He then entered the Civil Service, first as Keeper of the Granaries and then as Director of Pasturelands. He never gained higher office. Confucians attribute this to his honesty and refusal to flatter corrupt superiors.

Confucius sensed that the Chou dynasty was doomed. He devoted all his

### *Idealist Movements*

A mix of utopian cults struggled to restore peace and law. Confucians moralized avidly to any ruler who would hear them. Followers of Mo Tzu realized that kings needed a special incentive to hear sermons about pacifism. They assembled teams of crack sorcerers, physicians, farm-managers, craftsmen and even generals. These experts would serve any king, without charge, but in return he had to endure Moist sermons. Other philosophical movements included:

#### *Agriculturalists*

The Agriculturalists believed that humanity advanced beyond its bounds with the Yellow Emperor. They wanted to return to the subsistence farming of Shen Nung. Agriculturalists abhorred class distinctions. They believed in complete equality, without private property. This cult also opposed metallurgy and all forms of technology. A pilfering adventurer might justify his kleptomania with Agriculturist rhetoric.

#### *Dynastic Cycle Theorists*

Some mystics used their theory of the Five Elements to learn how order might return. According to Tsou Yen's *Lu Shih Ch'un Ch'iu*, the series of empires began with the Yellow Emperor. He ruled by Earth, and enormous earthworms and ants appeared during his reign. Near the end of his time, the evergreen tree appeared. Therefore, the next emperor, Yu the Great, ruled by Wood, with permissive laws and prosperous farms. During the rise of King T'ang, a sword floated to the surface of a holy lake. Metal was in ascendancy, and T'ang ruled by its energetic virtues. Firebirds marked the rise of the Chou dynasty, and its lords were warrior-kings, who wore red and ruled by Fire. In time, Tsou Yen predicted, Heaven would send a new lord who would represent Water. And centuries later, his dynasty too would end and give way to Wood. But Black would be the color of the next Emperor, for he would rule by Yin, cruelty and terror.

These sages resolved to preserve the Warring States. Around 320 BC, they formed a secret society, which schemed to maintain a balance of power. Thereby, they hoped to keep any Kingdom from ruling the others. Since all princes aspired to become Emperors, they excoriated Tsou Yen's cabal. The Dynastic Cycle theorists also refined the scientific method and proposed the theory that other continents existed beyond China. For centuries, kings linked these notions with the Dynastic Cycles. Therefore, they considered the ideas sinister heresies.

## Stratagems

### Mo Tun

In the 700s BC, Mo Tun of the Hsiung-Nu barbarians established great power. His rise began when the powerful Eastern Hu tribe demanded his prize stallion. Some of the Hsiung-Nu talked of war. "How could I begrudge a horse to a neighbor?" Mo Tun asked. He gave it to them. Shortly, the Hu asked for a princess. Mo Tun's entourage implored him to fight. He blandly surrendered his daughter. A short time later, the Hu requested a thousand li (about 3,000 square miles) of territory. Mo Tun consulted his advisers. Remembering the previous incidents, some counselled peace, others war. Mo Tun's voice shook the hide tent. "Land is the living flesh of the tribe! How dare anyone concede it?" He executed the pacifists. Then he sprang on his new horse and galloped toward Hu, gathering warriors as he rode. The Hu, who had assumed he was a coward, expected nothing. Mo Tun conquered all their territory and much of the Chinese state of Yen.

### Queen Nan's Message

When Ch'in resolved to conquer Ch'u, it feared that the other states would form an alliance against it. Ch'i already had promised Ch'u its aid. Therefore, Chang Yi, Ambassador of Ch'in, sent a gift of pearls and jade to Queen Nan of Ch'u. He then asked her to inform Ch'i that he was willing to cede 200 square miles to that state in return for a treaty of friendship between Ch'i, Ch'u and Ch'in. Queen Nan delivered the message. Ch'i eagerly sent negotiators to Ch'in, where the king gently rebuffed them. He claimed that Queen Nan must have exaggerated to further some plot of her own. The king of Ch'i became furious. When Ch'in's army invaded Ch'u, Ch'i merely stewed with rage against both of them. Ch'in's army won with ease. It later conquered Ch'i as well.

### Duke Wen's Dustclouds

In 632 BC, the Ch'u appeared ready to gobble China. When they attacked Ch'in, Tzu-yu, the Ch'u commander, used the war to further a personal vendetta with Duke Wen of Ch'in. Duke Wen withdrew his army to safety and sent insulting messages to Tzu-yu. Then he ordered chariots to speed across parched earth dragging trees, making clouds of dust. Tzu-yu attacked furiously, although he could see nothing. In the dust, Duke Wen's army maneuvered behind him and destroyed his forces.

### Psychological Warfare

In 518 BC, the Count of Wu went to war with Ch'u. Before the battle, Wu sent 3,000 condemned criminals to the front line. In view of the enemy, the ranks of criminals slit their own throats. Seeing this determination, the Ch'u army fled.

teaching to saving it, along with the family piety a stable state fostered. Yet despotism and feuding continued to rise. The Sage died believing he had failed.

Western historians claim that Lao Tzu, founder of Taoism, lived in the fourth century BC, but Chinese believe he was a contemporary of Confucius. Lao Tzu dwelt as a hermit. He met Confucius only once. Confucius asked him to speak on those cardinal Confucian virtues: propriety and ancestor worship. Lao Tzu responded, "The men whom you talk about and their bones have already rotted. Abandon your arrogance, affectations and excessive ambition. That is all the propriety you need." Taoists accuse Confucius of spying on kings as he taught them, and fomenting wars. But Lao Tzu also foresaw the fall of Chou. He neither lamented nor rejoiced. He merely left China and vanished.

## The Warring States

### Days of Spring and Autumn: 800-400 BC

As Lao Tzu and Confucius perceived, the Chou Dynasty was collapsing. In 771 BC, the Chou king humiliated his first bride by lavishing attention on a favorite concubine. The Queen's relatives formed an alliance to attack Sian and exterminate the Hundred Families. Their Hsiung-Nu mercenaries stormed Sian. The Chou only escaped with the aid of the Duke of Ch'in. They established a new capitol at Loyang. The One Man rewarded Ch'in with an enormous fiefdom.

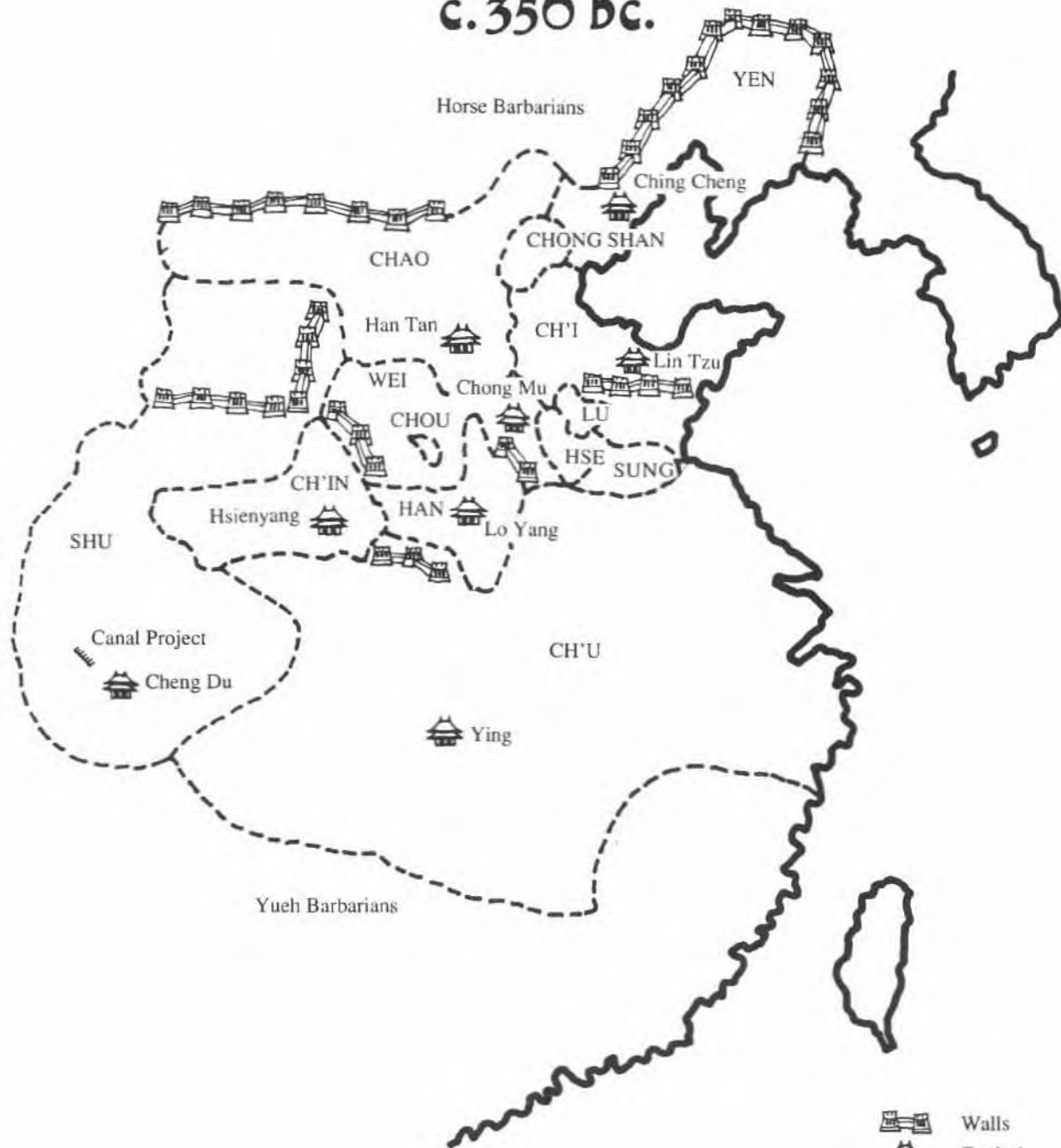
In 704 BC, the prince of Wu took the title Son of Heaven in his own kingdom, making himself a second One Man. The Chou could not stop him. Rebellions grew more frequent, until the Chou became vassals of their own vassals. They customarily allied themselves with the strongest feudal lord. The Chou usually favored Ch'i, a rich fiefdom which straddled the trading routes of bronze and salt. In 678, Duke Huan of Ch'i called a conference of China's rulers and formally became Chou's "Hegemon." All the Shih swore to obey him. With the aid of his shrewd advisor, Kuan Chung, he ruled China masterfully. Duke Huan fought off assorted tribes and kept the half-barbarian state of Ch'u subjugated during his reign. Ch'i's power declined too in 643 BC, when the deceased Duke Huan of Ch'i's two sons battled for the throne. To the people's horror, they allowed the war to delay their father's funeral. When they finally settled the dispute, Duke Huan's undertakers refused to work by daylight.

Gradually, foreign kingdoms forced their way into Chou affairs. Duke Chuang of Ch'u earned admission to the Empire by defeating vicious northern tribes in the 600s BC. He then had the temerity to examine Chou's sacred Nine Tripods and ask how much gold was in them. In 584 BC, Ch'u stripped one of its generals, Wu Ch'en, of his rank. He defected to the Wu barbarian tribe and taught its army devious tactics. (The connection in names is coincidental.) The Wu invented the armed warship and amphibious landing tactics. General — now Admiral — Wu invaded Ch'u by river and forced it to recognize his new territory as yet another civilized State.

Greater Chin, the last Hegemon of Chou, disintegrated in the early 400s. Three of its noble families proclaimed their independence, founding the states of Chao, Wei Han and Ch'i. In 454 BC the powerful Earl of Ch'i formed an alliance with Wei and Han to annex portions of Chao. The trio besieged the Chao lords in Taiyuan for over one year. They diverted rivers to inundate the city, but the floodwaters did not rise over the city walls. Annals record that Taiyuan's citizens exchanged their children to eat. Gradually the lords of Wei and Han became disenchanted with Ch'i, particularly when spies uncovered the Earl's plans for invading them after Chao fell. They assassinated the Earl and offered Chao peace. To seal the truce, they presented Chao with the Earl of Ch'i's skull, made into a goblet. By 450 BC, no traces of Chou authority remained.

# The Warring States

c. 350 bc.



## The Contending Kingdoms: 481-256 BC

Then the princes fought to "roll up all-under-Heaven like a mat and tie up the four seas in a bag." Kings paid fortunes to whatever generals, spies, sages and assassins promised them victory. Thousands of such professionals wandered China, selling their services first to one state, then another. Many popular mercenaries specialized in finding or fabricating proof that a noble possessed Imperial ancestry. Families which once called their forefathers gods now claimed their ancestor-gods as mortal emperors. Hsia ruins became coveted prizes of battle. The polite warfare of Chou vanished. A chronicle of the poison-



## Wu Chi

Wu Chi, a famous author on strategy, was born in Wei at about 430 BC. He engaged his tutor, Tseng Ts'an, with his greed and debauchery. Tseng Ts'an expelled Wu Chi from his presence. Wu proceeded to Lu. He asked for a command in Lu's war against Ch'i, but the king refused to grant it because Wu Chi's wife came from Ch'i. Wu Chi promptly murdered her. Thus assured of his loyalty, the king appointed him general. After Wu Chi defeated Ch'i, Lu's other generals worried that he would supplant them in Court. They tried to prove him guilty of embezzlement. He assassinated several of them, but he finally had to flee Lu. While unemployed, Wu Chi studied Confucianism and took to wearing the robes of a scholar. Wu Chi then received a commission from Marquis Wen of Wei. He disciplined Wei's haphazard army without mercy, but he won the soldiers' affection by sharing hardships with them. Wu Chi won several wars but eventually infuriated the Marquis with his lecturing. Once again, Wu Chi escaped, this time to King Tao of Ch'u, who made him Chancellor. He completely reorganized the Ch'u Court, abolishing corruption unsparingly. When King Tao died in 381 BC, the ministers Wu Chi had ousted killed him.

## Chuang Tzu and Taoists

The Taoists, as always, remained serene. Chuang Tzu, a Taoist sage born in 369 BC, provided a model for them. He occasionally dealt with princes. King Wen of Chao's courtiers hired Chuang Tzu to reason their king out of his obsession with duelling. When offered political power of his own, Chuang Tzu responded as follows:

Once, when Chuang Tzu was fishing, the king of Ch'u had two officials invite him to become a minister of the court. Chuang Tzu held his fishing pole and, without turning his head, said, "I have heard that there is a sacred tortoise that has been dead for three thousand years. The king keeps it wrapped in cloth and boxed, and stores it in the ancestral temple. Now would this tortoise rather be dead and have its bones left behind and honored? Or would it rather be alive and dragging its tail in the mud?"

"It would rather be alive and dragging its tail through the mud," said the two officials.

Chuang Tzu said, "Begone! I'll drag my tail in the mud."

ings, betrayals, wars, bandit-lords and mercenaries who became princes in this period would fill volumes. Perhaps fortunately, only sketchy accounts exist, because when an empire finally rose, Emperor Shih-Huang abolished histories.

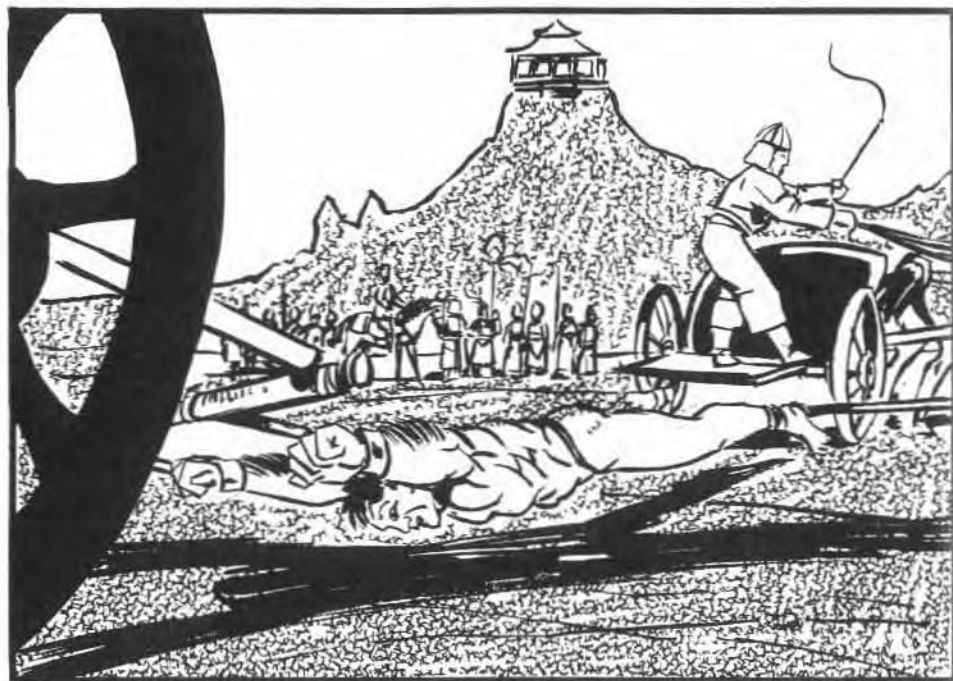
In 450 BC, there were eight influential states in China. Yen in the north and Yueh in the East spent most of their time fighting barbarians and could not devote much attention to Chinese affairs. Yen and its neighbor Chao built vast stretches of fortifications along their northern borders to stop the barbarian raids. Ch'i, Ch'u, Ch'in, and the "Three Chins" of Wei, Han and Chao dominated diplomacy. In the 400s, dozens of small holdings remained free. The large countries "swallowed them up as silkworms eat mulberry leaves." New fiefdoms appeared too, when the large empires needed buffer states, or when a king procrastinated in suppressing some bandit chief for too long.

## The Tiger's Rise

By 350 BC, Ch'in, Ch'u and Ch'i stood above all their rivals. Briefly, Ch'i appeared ready to crush the others. After nine years of mindless hedonism, King Wei of Ch'i suddenly foreswore luxury, boiled his former companions-in-pleasure to death and seized most of the lesser states Chao and Wei. Ch'i quickly dwindled again when Wei died.

Power gravitated inexorably to Ch'in. Its rude, unlettered people were both docile and savage, the perfect civilian base for total war. From 350 to 338, a native of Wei named Shang Yang forged Ch'in a code of law to feed a conqueror's ambitions. Shang Yang cast off the old scruples about morality and just, unbiased administration. He intoxicated Ch'in's King Hsiao with his new philosophy of Legalism. Shang enslaved all Ch'in to feed its King's ambitions. When the Crown Prince ignored the new decrees, Shang Yang ordered him punished like any peasant. Thereafter, there was no dissension in Ch'in.

After King Hsiao died, Shang Yang's many enemies accused him of sedition. He escaped the Capitol disguised as a commoner, and asked for a room in an inn where he hoped to hide. The innkeeper, who did not recognize Shang Yang, refused, saying that under the laws of Lord Shang, he could not accept guests without identification documents (written on bamboo chits). The new rulers had Shang Yang quartered by chariots. Still, he gave them the strongest war machine China had known.



# 火籠箭式

## Sun Pin

Sun Pin was one of the Warring States' most famous generals and possibly the author of the book called *Sun Tzu's Art of War*. Pin studied tactics in the 350s BC, along with a cadet named P'ang Chuan. Both then received commissions in the Army of Wei. P'ang Chuan realized that Sun Pin was a master of strategy, and he resolved not to let his old companion impede his career. Therefore, he sent an anonymous letter to the King of Wei, accusing Sun Pin of disloyalty. The king had Sun Pin's face branded and his feet sawn off.

Then an ambassador from Ch'i came to Wei. He secretly visited Sun Pin and talked with him about strategy. Sun Pin impressed the ambassador, who smuggled him to Ch'i inside a clothes hamper. There he met T'ien Chi, General of Ch'i.

T'ien Chi loved to gamble on horse races. In Ch'i, each participant in a race entered three horses, one first-class, one second-class and one third-class. Whoever won the majority of the races won the prize. When Sun Pin observed this, he whispered to T'ien Chi that he saw how to win. At Sun Pin's urging, the general wagered 1,000 pieces of gold against the king of Ch'i. Sun Pin pitted T'ien's worst horse against the king's best. He put his best against second best and T'ien's second-rated against the king's weakest. T'ien Chi lost one race but won two and beat his king. He appointed Sun Pin chief of staff. Sun Pin discarded the army's old weapons and equipped it with crossbows.

*Continued on next page . . .*

This regimented citizenry provided conscript labor for national projects. In 300 BC, Ch'in built long walls in Shu to keep the nomads out of Ch'in proper. That freed its army for wars within China. Ch'in built canals, forts, roads and bridges at a frenzied pace from then on.

Soon Ch'in gained territory too. He began by conquering much of Chu in 300 BC. Then, in 285 BC, Ch'in absorbed the vast but disorganized state of Shu under the pretext of stopping a coup. Several years later, Ch'in actually achieved the north-south alliance Warring States geopoliticians continually called for. Ch'in, Ch'u, Yan, Chao, Wei and Han attacked Ch'i. Previously, an east-west alliance had always appeared to stop these schemes. This time, Ch'i fell, in 284 BC. Tian Dan, a master of propaganda, reconstituted Ch'i several years later. However, his kingdom never joined the great alliances again.

The other States saw their peril. Frantically, they searched for a way to resist Ch'in. King Wu Ling of Chao tried to rejuvenate his nation by importing barbarian customs, and in 296, he conquered several tiny fiefdoms. Then a series of scandals shook his realm. Wu Ling abdicated for his nation's sake. Instead of restoring stability, his absence touched off a civil war. The exhausted winners begged for a mutual non-aggression treaty from Ch'in, leaving it free for battles elsewhere.

In 260 BC, Ch'in fought Han over a town called Shang Tang. Han capitulated, but the citizens of Shang Tang appealed to Chao for aid. Ch'in had hoped for exactly that. The Ch'in general, Peace of Arms, trapped the Chao army, besieged it for 46 days, and finally persuaded its commander to surrender. His troops disarmed the 400,000 famished defenders — then slew them all.

In 256 BC, Ch'in invaded the Chou city and forced its impotent One Man to formally abdicate.

The lords of Han concocted a plan to slow Ch'in's rise. Remembering the Ch'in's love for monumental works and receptiveness to foreign advisers, they bribed an engineer named Cheng Kuo to bankrupt the rising state. Cheng Kuo proposed an enormous canal for the Min river, in southern Shu. Ch'in's governor in Shu, Li Ping, was an accomplished engineer too, and the plan entranced him. Work began in 250 BC. Ch'in indeed remained dormant for several decades, but more due to internal disputes than the canal. By 246 BC, the canal was almost finished.

Then, following an attempted coup, King Cheng of Ch'in compiled dossiers on all his officials. He discovered Cheng Kuo's plot. When summoned to the Capitol for punishment, Cheng Kuo boldly asked for a reward instead. The canal already irrigated many thousand acres. When complete, it would give the region a rich, dependable crop, despite Shu's fickle rainfall. At last, Ch'in could supply its entire army without buying from profiteering merchants. King Cheng paid the engineer richly. "Men's minds are a mystery," King Cheng said. "I do not care what harm this man intended. Let the world know that Ch'in judges by results."

## War in the Warring States

Infantry ruled the battlefields of the Contending Kingdoms. Footsoldiers of the Warring States wore armor and carried well-made halberds or swords. Warriors especially prized Han's excellent weapons. Nobles still rode chariots, with the entourage prescribed by Chou, but they were wary. A crossbow could fell the best-armored aristocrat. Sun Pin's innovation of employing crossbows en masse, instead of dispersed among halberdiers, made archery especially effective. Only walls could keep the arrows out, and armies dug in whenever time permitted, building square camps surrounded by tamped earthen walls. Intersecting fire lanes for crossbows crisscrossed their positions. Attackers used armored wagons, or "tortoises," to approach these trench lines.



### *Sun Pin (Continued)*

In 356 BC, Wei attacked Chao, and Chao begged Ch'i for help. The King of Ch'i offered to make Sun Pin commander-in-chief. Sun Pin declined, saying that it would not be seemly for an ex-convict to lead the army. T'ien Chi retained his command and became doubly devoted to his Chief of Staff. At Sun Pin's advice, Ch'i remained neutral until Wei had committed its army in Chao. Then Ch'i marched on Wei's capitol. Wei quickly sued for peace.

Fifteen years later, Chao and Wei forgot their differences and made an alliance to attack Han. The King of Ch'i happily ordered T'ien Chi to repeat the march on Wei. This time, Wei expected it. P'ang Chuan, now Wei's commander-in-chief, had a vast army poised to swing back from Han and crush Ch'i. Sun Pin decided to encourage him. He convinced the army to halt in the mountains. Then, at his suggestion, they lit 100,000 cooking fires the first night of their advance. The second night, they lit 50,000. The third, Ch'i's army lit only 30,000. Meanwhile, the troops prepared ambushes in the mountain gorges. When the fourth night came, Sun Pin instructed them to enter the positions, cock their crossbows but not fire until they saw flame. Then they were all to shoot at it. After this, Sun Pin went to a large tree and carved the words, "P'ang Chuan dies here" into the bark.

P'ang Chuan watched the fires in the hills each night and could not contain his glee. He clearly saw Ch'i's army deserting. Therefore, he ordered the Wei army to abandon its supplies, strip off its armor and hurry to defeat Ch'i. Still, darkness fell before he entered the mountains. He drove his exhausted troops into the gorges and came to a tree, with something written on it. Curious, P'ang Chuan lit a torch . . .



In the fifth century BC, Chao's army introduced the nomads' tactic of mounting archers on horseback instead of in chariots. The other states quickly copied it. Ch'in developed China's finest cavalry, partially because it had the fewest qualms about adopting barbarian customs. Its horsemen, and then the whole state, even copied primitive clothing, such as trousers. The hazardous journey to bring horses from the northwest became rewarding indeed.

The new mass armies made peasants valuable. The lords conscripted soldiers unflinchingly and trained them to various degrees. Ch'in routinely mobilized every living citizen whenever it fought. Kings frequently offered stipends to immigrants. In war, lords often kidnapped the populations of rival states. When this failed, they exterminated them.

### *Military Organization in the Warring States*

Generals of the Contending Kingdoms subdivided their armies into 500-man Lu, 100-man Zu and five-man Wu. A noble with chariot and entourage under the Chou organization also equalled a Zu. Sun Tzu stated that the average war required 1,000 Zu, each led by a four-horse light chariot, along with a squadron of 1,000 armored shock chariots and two Lu of armored halberdiers. He estimated that this

would cost 1,000 pieces of gold per day to supply.

The armies used banners and musical instruments for signalling. At one beat of the drums, troops assembled in formations. Two ordered them to rehearse assaults. Three meant "mess call." Four meant "prepare for battle." Five signalled the attack. Bells indicated a halt. A frantic tattoo of kettledrums meant retreat. Armies occasionally confused each other by beating both an advance and retreat at once.

### *Wealth in the Warring States*

Despite the turmoil, the Warring States brought China incredible prosperity. Iron plows and improved techniques made farms radically more productive. This freed farmers to study, join armies or take up lucrative jobs in cities. Merchants made fortunes. Shih began selling their land to finance wars, and the newly-rich commoners bought it eagerly. At last, one could obtain a farm without inheriting it. The details of debts and ownerships became complex enough to baffle most princes. Since lords could not accurately assess their subjects' wealth, they began selling the privilege of levying taxes, with all the corruption that implies.



# IMPERIAL CHINA

# 5

## The August Emperor: 221-206 BC

As Ch'in rose, a merchant named Lu Pu-Wei wormed into the heart of its Court. Lu Pu-Wei was a typical man of the Warring States. Born in Wei, he mastered enough astrology to forecast market trends and became fabulously rich through trade. He hired spies to tell him what the stars did not and made even greater profits by investing in horses, grain and iron just before princes went to war. Lu Pu-Wei was far richer than any noble and intelligent enough not to flaunt it. And he always remembered what his father



### The Perils of Tzu Chu

Tzu Chu spent ten harrowing years in Chao after becoming heir, and Lu Pu-Wei hired many agents to discreetly protect him. These henchmen could include the adventurers. King Hsiao-wen had other wives and potential heirs, who wanted Tzu Chu killed. The life of a hostage is dangerous enough anyway.

In 260 BC, the Premier of Wei ordered an orator named Fan Sui beaten for disloyalty. Fan Sui apparently died in the process, and the Premier threw his body in a latrine. The speaker revived and escaped to Ch'in. Ch'in's king, Ch'in The Resplendent, hoped to provoke a war. He appointed Fan Sui as his Premier and demanded the Wei Premier's head. The Premier of Wei did not wait to test his king's reaction. He took refuge in the estates of P'ing Yuan, a younger prince in Chao.

The king of Ch'in pretended not to know and invited P'ing Yuan to a revel at his court. P'ing mistrusted the invitation, but diplomatic etiquette forced his father to send him. Ch'in the Resplendent kidnapped P'ing. Then he demanded the Premier of Wei's head, using P'ing as a hostage. To Lu Pu-Wei's relief, the Premier's attempts to escape into Wei failed. The Premier committed suicide, and Chao promptly sent the head.

That same year, Ch'in declared war on Chao. A struggle between Lu Pu-Wei's agents and the Hsiao-wen's other children raged all year over Ch'in's strategy. Lu Pu-Wei wanted General Peace of Arms to raid the Chao capitol and rescue Ch'in's citizens. Tzu Hsi, Hsiao-wen's original heir, preferred a prolonged war of attrition, with plenty of atrocities. Tzu Hsi won. After the massacre of 400,000, the King of Chao condemned Tzu Chu to die. Lu Pu-Wei personally rescued the prince and his family the night before the execution. They escaped from Chao disguised as dried-fish merchants.

told him when he was twelve. He had asked what profit one could make in farming. "Double the investment." Lu Pu-Wei then asked about jade. "One hundred times that amount."

Then the young Lu Pu-Wei narrowed his eyes. "And setting a prince on the throne?"

"My son, no figure can be placed on that."

In 261 BC, Lu Pu-Wei found his prince. At the court of Chao, he met Tzu Chu, a young prince of Ch'in. King Hsiao-wen of Ch'in sent Tzu Chu to Chao as a goodwill hostage, following a common custom. As a son of the second wife, the young prince lived in poverty. Lu Pu-Wei befriended the young prince and bought him finery to help him cut a suitable figure among other princes. Then Lu Pu-Wei used his connections to stir up jealousy in the Ch'in harem. To pacify his pouting wife, King Hsiao-wen promised to make her firstborn heir.

During this time, Lu Pu-Wei fell in love. One of his concubines, nameless in Chinese histories, infatuated him, and when she confided that she was pregnant, he would not be parted from her. Lu Pu-Wei moved the girl to Chao to be with him while he assisted Tzu Chu. Tzu Chu observed the beautiful slave-girl and asked to have her. The girl ran her eyes over Tzu Chu's broad shoulders. She uttered no protest. In agony, Lu Pu-Wei gave her away.



The girl bore a son eight months later. Tzu Chu proudly assumed it was his. The prince named the boy Cheng, or "Ordinance," because he ceaselessly ordered people around by crying, like a king. All his life, people observed that he had "the face of a wolf with the eyes of a wasp." Tzu Hsi, Tzu Chu's rival for the throne, commented that Cheng was greedy enough to drive his nurses away. That child would become Shih-Huang-Ti, Emperor of All Under Heaven.

In 250 BC, Hsiao-wen died. Tzu Chu took power and declared Cheng his own heir. He made Lu Pu-Wei Grand Counselor and virtually king. At last the merchant dared to spend money as freely as he wished, without fear of offending the nobles. People said the Counselor's servants lived better than princes. Lu Pu-Wei commissioned great encyclopedias and research expeditions. Three years later, Tzu Chu died of fever. Cheng, then 13, took the throne. The Queen Mother, Lu Pu-Wei's former concubine, appointed the merchant regent. Then she let Lu Pu-Wei know that she admired Lao Ai, one of his male slaves.

It would have shocked all China for the widowed Queen to take a lover. Therefore, Lu Pu-Wei publicly ordered Lao Ai castrated and given to the Queen. He lavished gifts on Cheng and Lao Ai. Lao Ai soon fathered two sons, confirming rumors about his emasculation. He became the Queen's favorite, practically the king. The false eunuch bullied Lu Pu-Wei mercilessly. In 238 he attempted a coup. Young King Cheng called on Ch'in's generals for support and triumphed.

Cheng now truly had the powers of a king. He was eager to use them. The prince disliked his disgraceful mother, and he hated Lu Pu-Wei, her first lover. Li Ssu, a brilliant minister who helped crush the rebellion, gave Cheng a file listing Lu Pu-Wei's excesses. Cheng stripped the merchant of property and banished him to Shu. Lu Pu-Wei realized that worse things would follow. Instead of surrendering his riches, he spent them all on a legendary feast for his friends. Amid the merry-making, the merchant drank poison.

King Cheng exiled all Lu Pu-Wei's guests and sent his mother with them. When Confucians lectured him about filial piety, he ordered their backs broken and their flesh minced. Li Ssu approved. He made a speech about the law sparing neither beggar nor Queen. Cheng appointed Li Ssu Minister of Justice.

## The Last Enemies

In 230, Ch'in annexed Han. In 228 it annexed Chao. Li Ssu rose steadily through the hierarchy, and Cheng Kuo completed the Shu canals. King Cheng scarcely noticed that during Ch'in's war with Chao one of his hostages ran away.

The hostage was Prince Tan of Yen. He tearfully refused his ministers' talk of diplomacy. He wanted revenge. The Prince inquired with a local circle of Taoists and met a monastic swordsman named Ching K'o.

Ching K'o moved into the palace at Yen. He made no promises. For one year, the swordsman contemplated the Way and spent Prince Tan's money with abandon. On one occasion, he went fishing by hurling bars of gold into the river. After Prince Tan tolerated this for more than a year, Ching K'o suddenly gave back his silk finery and appeared before the court in his battered armor. Prince Tan had passed his tests. He was ready.

Ching K'o planned to gain access to the Ch'in court by bringing valuable presents, and then to stab the King. At that time, a general who had offended King Cheng was living in exile at the court of Yen. Ch'in offered ten thousand pieces of gold and an estate with ten thousand serfs for his head. Ching K'o considered his head a suitable present. Prince Tan refused to betray the fugitive. However, when the general learned of the idea, he committed suicide to further it. Ch'ing Ko offered King Cheng the head, along with a map of the key defenses in Yen. The King of Ch'in promised him an audience. The swordsman left Yen in 227 BC. He went with only one brigand to help him, dressed in mourning white and singing dirges. As his chariot reached Ch'in, he switched to a martial epic.

## Li Ssu

Li Ssu, architect of the Ch'in Empire, began his career as a clerk in Ch'u. He gave up this position and left his beloved son to study under a Confucian master. Li Ssu despised Confucius, but as he explained, he was inspired by the two kinds of rats. There are latrine rats, who live where they belong, eat filth and run away at every sound. Then there are granary rats, who not only enjoy a world of food but grow fearless and strong. In the Warring States, scholarly courtiers were the granary rats.

Li Ssu became the close friend of another student, Han Fei-tzu. They laughed together at their teacher's sentimental moralism. Both of them liked Shang Yang's pragmatic Legalism. Han Fei-tzu refined the principles of dictatorship in brilliant essays which Li Ssu could only envy. However, Han stuttered and confessed to harboring traces of soft-heartedness himself. He was a prince in the kingdom of Han, but he preferred bloodless scholarship to statecraft. Li Ssu, while less gifted, had real ambition.

In 247 BC Li Ssu left his master for the court of Ch'in. He got there in 246. Lu Pu-Wei made him an administrator, and the young king Cheng liked his advice. Li Ssu established a network of infiltrators to undermine the power of the Shih. He rose steadily until 237 BC, when King Cheng discovered Cheng Kuo's canal plot and his native ministers convinced him to deport all foreigners. Li Ssu won readmission with a brilliant essay. Meanwhile, the rival ministers had encroached on his position. Then in 234 BC, Han Fei-tzu came as an ambassador to Ch'in.

King Cheng adored Han Fei-tzu's book on politics, *The Five Lices*. However, members of the court warned that Han came from the State of Han and must know of Ch'in's plans to subjugate it. He probably came as a spy. Li Ssu knew that his own rhetoric sounded childish compared to *The Five Lices*. Therefore, he assented to Han's arrest.

Li Ssu visited his old friend in prison. Han asked about the petitions he had sent the king. Since Li Ssu knew they never arrived, the friends concluded that ministers in the court were intercepting them. Han and Li talked about Ch'in's methods of torture, and concluded together that Han should kill himself. Li Ssu provided poison. Afterward, Li Ssu went to king Cheng and persuaded him to reopen Han's case. As the King wept over his favorite author's death, Li Ssu's agents brought him Han's petition, explaining that other ministers had delayed it. As always, Han's prose was moving, brilliant. King Cheng imprisoned the ministers. He allowed Han's defender, Li Ssu, his pick of the vacant positions.

*Continued on next page . . .*





At the steps of the throne, Ching's accomplice fainted. Ching apologized that the man was not prepared for the majesty of Ch'in. Then, carrying the head and map, he approached the King. Ching drew a venomous dagger from the map's scroll, seized King Cheng's sleeve — and stabbed. The King leaped back, and his sleeve tore away. Ching K'o chased him around the hall's pillars. Nobody could help the King, who forbade courtiers to carry weapons. King Cheng struggled with his own sword, but it was too long and would not come out of its scabbard. The court physician hit Ching K'o with his medicine bag. Ching K'o hurled his dagger, but it glanced off a pillar. A courtier helped the king draw his sword. Ching K'o leaned against the column and laughed. He looked at the King and said, "I failed because I wanted to capture you alive. Now someone else will have to serve the crown prince." Then the guards finally arrived and killed Ching K'o.

Finally, Ch'in annexed Wei in 225 BC. In 223 BC, Ch'in swallowed Ch'u. The next year, at last, its army entered Yen. The King of Yen sent Prince Tan's head to placate Ch'in, but even that did not save him. King Cheng annexed Yen and condemned the entire royal family to penal labor.

Ching K'o's Taoist companions changed their names and hid. But one, Kao Chien-li, loved music too much to give up his harp, and someone recognized his exquisite style. The secret police captured him. King Cheng himself could not bear to execute the brilliant musician. Instead, he ordered the man blinded. Cheng said, "That will make him play even better," and kept Kao to entertain the court.

### *Li Ssu (Continued)*

Li Ssu never wasted time making friends, except with the Emperor himself. Even Shih-Huang came to tire him, with his obsessions of immortality. The main text explains Li Ssu's fate under the Second Emperor. As the guards gathered Li Ssu's family for the executioner, he met his son again. "Remember," the boy tearfully asked, "when we were happy with nothing but our one brown mutt?"

# 狼

### **The First Emperor**

In 221 BC, Ch'i, last of the Warring States, surrendered to Ch'in. The new Empire destroyed every imaginable rival to its power. It massacred noble families. It abolished the Shih. Henceforth, all authority would come from the State, not by accident of birth. Ch'in crisscrossed its Empire with a net of tree-lined highways, allowing it to react at once to any rebellion. The Empire gathered the weapons of all feudal lords, melted them and cast a series of monstrous statues for the streets of Hsienyang.

Li Ssu proclaimed the Legalist dream, a State where thought itself would be unnecessary. There would be no choices. People would either obey the written law or die a hideous death. Punishments rained down. The mildest penalty was decades of slavery in a labor brigade. The new laws filled volumes. To remove all loopholes, Li Ssu outlawed regional differences. He gave China one currency, one set of weights and measures and one alphabet of pictograms. To enforce the law, he ordered the entire population divided into mutual-responsibility groups.

bility spheres of five or six neighbors. If anyone broke a law and the other members of his sphere failed to find out and report it, the State would slaughter them all.

King Cheng abandoned his old name. At the advice of court astrologers, he proclaimed the Empire of Ch'in-a (origin of the word China) and based its rule on Water. The ministers then competed to devise a title for the Emperor. Cheng rejected their flowery suggestions. He changed his name to Shih-Huang, or First Emperor. As an afterthought, he added the name of the god Ti, as well, making his full name Shih-Huang-Ti, although previous Emperors did not receive the god's name until they died.

According to tradition, Huangti, the Lord of Shang, and China's other great Emperors all rose to Heaven as Immortals. Ch'in now ruled a greater empire than any of them. Yet days went by, and Shih-Huang-Ti remained a man. His nightmares flared up again, and he began commissioning magicians and explorers to find him the elixir of eternal life.

### The Search for Immortality

In 219 BC, the blinded bard Kao Chien-Li filled his harp with lead, managed to get close to Shih-Huang-Ti and clubbed him with it, but he missed the Emperor's head. Li Ssu prescribed a gruesome butchery. It failed to quench the king's enemies. Shortly afterward, another Taoist bard appeared in the market of Hsienyang and sang a tragic ballad about the heroism of Ching K'o. Then he disappeared into an alley. The people watched, transfixed. Li Ssu ordered all city officials deported to Shu for allowing his escape. Eventually the secret police found the singer, and Shih-Huang-Ti had him viciously tortured before the execution. He banned itinerant bards and forced all musicians to obtain licenses for each song. However, the singer inspired people throughout the empire. In 218 BC, Chang Liang, an ex-Shih of Han, hurled an iron mace into the Imperial carriage. Fortunately for Shih-Huang-Ti, the coach was a decoy.

These incidents added urgency to Shih-Huang-Ti's search for immortality. The Emperor himself climbed mountains seeking the Spirit Kingdoms. He performed an ancient sacrificial rite on the summit of Mt. Tai. He brought Ch'in's finest engineers and thousands of convicts to the Yellow River to excavate underwater relics of the Yellow Emperor. Floods killed his crews. Tattooing the prisoners with phoenixes and sacred dragons did not stop the deluges. Therefore, the Emperor raised a larger army of laborers to torture the river by cutting grooves into its banks. Shortly afterward, a mountain storm blocked mountain passes, delaying an expedition for the Elixir of Life. Shih-Huang-Ti ordered all mountains involved stripped of trees and painted red. In a dream, the Emperor saw his empire sacked by barbarians. He sent General Meng T'ien to conquer the horse nomads. The general then connected China's northern fortifications into the Great Wall.

First the barbarians traded with the army, then they attacked. Meng T'ien began systematically exterminating them. He moved to conquer the lands south. Li Ssu seized the conquests as an opportunity to dissolve any regional factions which might be forming in the Empire. He moved entire populations to the colonies. Disease and tribesmen ravaged the settlers. Then some of the Emperor's sailors returned from the Eastern Sea claiming to have visited

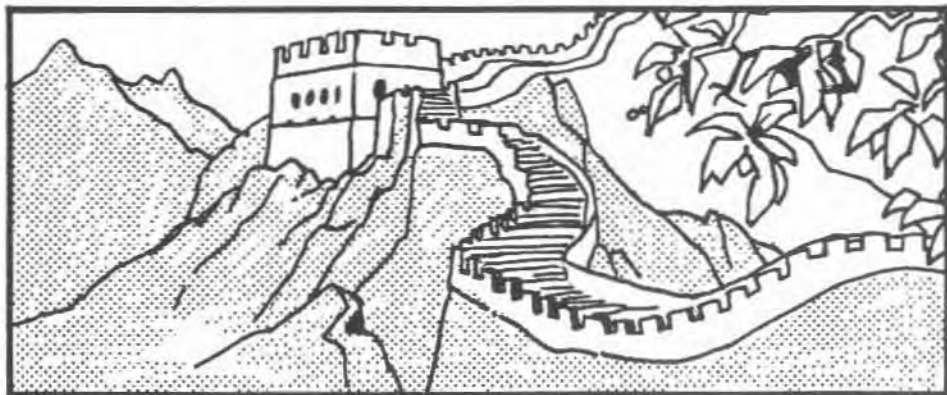
### The Great Wall

In 214 BC, the First Emperor commissioned General Meng T'ien to build the Great Wall of China. He ordered this project, in part, to consolidate his victories over the northern nomads, and partially because of a letter from a sage, which contained a hidden message, reading, "Hu shall be the downfall of Ch'in." The Hu tribe was one of many bands which terrorized northern China. Later commentators noted that although the Emperor decimated the Hu raiders, it was his weakling son, Hu Hai, who presided over the fall of his empire.

According to tradition, over one million laborers died in the Emperor's project. Their bones became part of the wall.

The Great Wall did not actually begin with the First Emperor, nor did he build it in its current form. Centuries before 214 BC, nations of the Warring States had erected earthworks which served as the starting-point for the Great Wall. Furthermore, the original Great Wall consisted only of a rampart made from rammed earth. Only in the 1370s AD did the founder of the Ming dynasty have this defense-work clad in stone.

The Great Wall stretches more than 1,500 miles. It begins at the sea at Shanhai-kwan and goes to the borders on Sinkiang. The wall is 20' wide at the base, and averages 20' in height. A roadway 15' wide runs along its top. Large fortresses stand at strategic points, and smaller towers rise every hundred yards.





### Subversive Tales

Many tales spread protesting the First Emperor's cruelty. Li Ssu hired people to start counter-legends friendly to the First Emperor. Since these proved less popular, the secret police began arresting all gossips. This could add peril to that roleplaying cliché of "rumors at the inn."

One ballad told of Meng Chiang, the wife of a man drafted to build the Great Wall. Meng followed the slave-gangs north and after many adventures, learned that her husband had frozen to death. His bones, like millions of others, were now part of the Wall. Under Meng's tears, part of the wall dissolved, and her husband sprang out, alive again.

Another story described Chu Yuan, the legendary poet of Ch'u. He tried to form alliances against Ch'in, but corrupt officials of the Ch'u government banished him. He fled about the empire, often on the back of a dragon. When finally trapped in a city besieged by Ch'in, he drowned himself in a river. In commemoration of this event, the Chinese hold their annual Dragon Boat race. The boats are intended to resemble dragons and thereby intimidate the Spirit King of the river into leaving Chu Yuan's soul unmolested.

Of course, Li Ssu would not tolerate a Dragon Boat race. Adventurers could have an interesting escapade trying to hold a secret one. They could also seek other ways to defend Chu Yuan. Perhaps adventurers must fight for his freedom in the Spirit Kingdoms.



the gods on P'eng Lai, Isle of Immortality. The gods wanted citizens for their realm. Shih-Huang-Ti sealed nearly one million people into ships and sent them sailing east. The Chinese say that they founded Japan.

Several of the Emperor's explorers failed to return. Finally he learned that they had taken his lavish stipends, hired assistants and established luxurious freeholds on remote islands. Out of prudence, the Emperor began another project. His tomb.

### The Emperor's Death

In 213 BC, the Confucian Shun-yu Yueh dared to condemn the First Emperor's tyranny. He spoke on behalf of "antiquity" and the rights of feudal lords. Li Ssu, following Legalist theory, blamed the dissent on independent scholars. Private education stirs up dangerous memories, he warned. History reminds people of old patriotism to feudal states while philosophy can contradict Imperial Decrees. Li Ssu made teaching a State monopoly. Shih-Huang ordered all books in the empire burned. He spared only Li Ssu's private library and books on medicine, agriculture, divination and the Elixir of Life.

The next year, rumors spread that Confucius' ghost had appeared and predicted the Emperor's death. Shih-Huang-Ti ordered 460 Confucian scholars buried alive. When the Emperor's son Fu-su remonstrated with him, Shih-Huang-Ti banished him to supervise expansions of the Great Wall.

In 210 BC, the First Emperor toured his entire empire. On his journey, he visited Confucius' tomb. Li Ssu told him to ignore it, for fear of encouraging the Confucians. However, the Emperor wanted to see the monument to the great man, who most people believed had become immortal. He entered the tomb and examined the burial-offerings. Shih-Huang-Ti pictured himself as the revered Sage. He tried on a pair of boots there and leaned on Confucius' staff. Then a Kilin, Prince of Fourfoots (see p. 119), appeared, and spat out a jade tablet bearing a poem in Confucius' script.

*O'er kingdoms six Shih-Huang his army led,  
To ope my grave and find my humble bed;  
He steals my shoes and takes my staff away  
To reach Shakiu — and his last earthly day.*

The Emperor moved on, shaken. With each bounce of his coach, queasy chills shot through his body. He ordered his procession to find accommodations for the night. By the time they reached a village, Shih-Huang-Ti was delirious. As his servants carried him to a bed, he asked what town they had stopped in. A coachman answered, "Shakiu." Shih-Huang's head dropped and he died.

### The Second and Third Emperors

Li Ssu ordered the death kept secret. If the Empire learned that it had no Emperor, chaos would erupt. A eunuch named Chao Kao rode in the Emperor's carriage and pretended to be Shih-Huang. Soon the corpse reeked, and Chao Kao ordered a wagon of herring placed in the procession to mask the smell of the rotting Emperor. The eunuch convinced Li Ssu that the Emperor's son Fu-su must not inherit the throne. As a Confucian sympathizer, Fu-su despised Legalism, and as a friend of General Meng Ti'en, he had the military strength to reshape China. Li Ssu and Chao Kao forged a letter from Shih-Huang-Ti commanding Fu-su and Meng Ti'en to commit suicide. Confucius also taught obedience. Both obeyed. Chao Kao wrote a will naming Shih-Huang-Ti's youngest son, Hu Hai, heir. Chao Kao then helped the young Emperor purge his court of potential malcontents from the old regime. The eunuch included his own rival, Li Ssu. Hu Hai had the Grand Counselor sawed in half in 208 BC, along with his family.





Meanwhile, the peasants found that they were strong. In 209 BC, two farmers named Chen Sheng and Wu Kuang refused to come when the Emperor drafted them and started a rebellion instead. Soon afterward, Liu Pang, a minor officer, unchained the columns of condemned prisoners he was escorting and armed them (see sidebar, p. 77). Then the Hsiang Family, which once provided generals for Ch'u, joined the peasants seeking a restoration of feudalism. Other ex-feudal lords rose, and not only fought the Empire, but revived their own feuds from the Warring States.

The Emperor dispatched Chang Han to suppress the rebellions. He won victory after victory, until Chao Kao began to consider him a threat. Remembering Li Ssu's fate, Chang defected to the rebellion. The rebels bullied his troops fiercely, remembering how the Ch'in soldiers used to torment them. People feared that the Ch'in soldiers would mutiny and serve the Emperor again. Even-

### *Imperial Tokens*

The Ch'in State regulated its people with identification papers. Citizens carried bamboo passport chits, and had to present them at every city gate and before any business transaction. These chits were also common throughout the Warring States period. Before a war, kings often rescinded all passports to trap spies in one country.

Officials and generals identified themselves with wooden tiger figurines which could be taken apart like puzzles. An official authorized his commands by sending pieces with them. An order was invalid if the fragments did not fit on the recipient's tiger. Obviously, a schemer could find many uses for stolen tigers. Both a Wood-working roll and a Forgery (TL3) roll must be made to duplicate one.



## The Scholars

Scholarship burgeoned under the Han dynasty. Emperor Kao-tsu was illiterate and took a yokel's pride in his own ignorance, but he realized that the Empire needed learning. He selected many officials through scholarly examinations. His successor, Wu, established a university of fifty students in 124 BC. Enrollment quickly grew to 30,000.

Scholars labored to piece together the lore lost when Shih-Huang-Ti burned the books. Since Hsiang Yu's rebels had burned Li Ssu's collection, almost no manuscripts remained. People hunted for them in ruins and in secret hermitages where magicians defied the decrees. In the early years AD, several texts materialized from air near relics of Confucius. They often contained political advice supporting Wang Mang, the powerful court minister who "discovered" them. Magicians fought over the validity of these documents. One could base a series of adventures on the search for a lost manuscript.

### Ssu Ma's Great History

A scholar named Ssu-ma Chien (146-86 BC) re-assembled the history of China in *Records of the Grand Historian*. His work involved many interviews with survivors of Kao-tsu's revolution. Ssu-ma Chien also went on several of Emperor Wu's voyages of exploration. However, at the start of the campaigns against the Hsiung-nu, Ssu-ma spoke in defense of a general who surrendered to the barbarians. Emperor Wu ordered him castrated for sedition. Unable to raise the fine permitted as an alternative punishment, Ssu-ma Chien refused his friends' advice to commit suicide, believing that he had a duty to complete his histories. He underwent the punishment and wisely omitted the wars with the Hsiung-nu from his chronicle. The Grand Historian died in 86 BC with books still in progress. Ssu-ma Chien's daughter Pan Chao completed this history, and wrote several books of her own, calling for the liberation of women.

### Medicine

The Han also made several discoveries in medicine. A doctor named Chang Chi developed an anesthetic called *ma fei san*, which consisted largely of wine. The same doctor developed "five animals play," or Tai Chi, an exercise in which one imitates a tiger, deer, bear, monkey and bird. Explorers from the barbarian lands introduced tea, which they considered a medicinal tonic.

tually, with Chang Han's consent, the rebels ambushed his troops and massacred 200,000.

Chao Kao concentrated on his own intrigues. He gripped the entire court with stark terror. The eunuch cemented his power by presenting Hu Hai, the Second Emperor, with a stag and calling it a horse. Nobody dared disagree. Hu Hai, convinced that he was losing his mind, went to a forest to sacrifice, meditate and hunt. Then Chao Kao persuaded a courtier to assassinate him.

Chao Kao scheduled his own coronation, but after an earthquake, he decided that Heaven had forbidden him the throne and gave it to the Second Emperor's nephew, Tzu-Ying. When Chao Kao began manipulating him, too, the Third Emperor lured the eunuch to his own castle by feigning illness. Tzu-Ying's henchmen stabbed Chao Kao in the back.

Forty-six days later, Liu Pang's ex-convicts seized the capitol. Tzu-Ying surrendered at once, wearing a silken noose around his neck but begging for mercy. Liu Pang spared him. Six weeks afterward, Hsiang Yu arrived with the main peasant army. Its furious troops beheaded the whole Imperial Family, slaughtered people in the streets, desecrated the markers over Shih-Huang-Ti's tomb and set fire to the Capitol. The ruins smoldered for three full months.

## Han

Liu Pang upbraided Hsiang Yu for killing the harmless Third Emperor, who had already surrendered. Hsiang, in turn, scorned Liu as a mere commoner. Meanwhile, to both leaders' dismay, feudal lords in Ch'i and elsewhere announced the re-creation of their old states. Hsiang Yu marched toward his homeland of Ch'u, intending to revive the abolished royal family and declare its leader Righteous Emperor.

One rebel, fearing a split between the victorious commanders, warned Hsiang Yu to entrench his troops in the mountains of Wei. The general refused to listen. Hsiang Yu wanted to restore the royal family of Ch'u at once. In a gesture of contempt for cautious advice, he gave the Wei mountains to three of Ch'in's generals who had defected with Chang Han. Liu Pang promptly seized the mountains from these weak owners. A new civil war now appeared inevitable, and Ch'u had lost the commanding heights. General Hsiang Yu's advisor commented, "I now understand why men say that the people of Ch'u are but monkeys with hats on." The general boiled him alive.

Liu Pang officially broke the rebel alliance in 206 BC. He then attacked Hsiang Yu and lost so many men "the rivers ceased to flow." Liu Pang withdrew his decimated forces to the mountains. Hsiang Yu pursued him, and, in turn, dashed his army apart in the mountains. Liu Pang committed several craven acts in the ensuing war. During one panicked retreat, he pushed his wife and children from his wagon in order to escape faster. A subordinate pulled them back and convinced Liu Pang that their weight did not slow the horses. Hsiang Yu laboriously withdrew his forces from Ch'i, never cracking the mountain strongholds. In 202 BC, he fell in battle. Then the peasants crowned Liu Pang as Emperor Kao-tsu, and he selected Loyang for his capitol.

Once Emperor, Liu Pang/Kao-tsu issued the following decrees:

*For murder, death.*

*For injury to the person, proportionate punishment.*

*For theft, proportionate punishment.*

*The remainder of the laws of Ch'in I hereby abrogate.*

### The Han Empire: 206 BC-184 BC

Kao-tsu ruled a ravaged Empire. To repopulate the countryside, he exempted families with children from most taxes. He disbanded armies and freed

slaves to create new farmers. The Emperor disliked merchants and strictly limited their profiteering. Kao-tsu populated his court with skillful administrators, although he kept personal friends too, and awarded at least one ministership to a man who told witty jokes. Unfortunately, as China recovered, the Hsiung-nu took notice.

In 210 BC, barbarians swept into the Empire, through gaps in the Great Wall. Kao-tsu went to fight them, and they captured the Emperor himself. However, Kao-tsu managed to impress the wife of a Hsiung-nu chieftain. She convinced her husband to release him. He returned to China, negotiated with the tribe which held him captive, and made peace by sending a Chinese woman to marry the Hsiung-nu prince, Mao Tun. Kao-tsu had planned to send his own daughter, but his wife, Empress Lu, forbade it.



### *Forced Labor*

The Empire might easily conscript the adventurers for forced labor. Judges sentenced petty criminals to toil, and Ch'in routinely drafted people for their work-gangs. If the campaign began during the Warring States and the adventurers have a reputation as professional adventurers, they are especially vulnerable. Legalists abhor mercenaries. The more dashing and knightly a band of heroes seems, the more they threaten Absolute Law.

Getting laborers to the project often required great marches. Actual criminals trudged in groups of 20, their legs chained. Conscripts traveled to their projects in files, which filled the roads for miles. They needed few guards; everyone knew that the engineers would execute entire columns if a single member escaped. The guards also killed them if they arrived late, and most mass escapes occurred when freak weather delayed a slave convoy, and the conscripts considered themselves doomed.

In theory, conscripts eventually returned home, but few survived long enough. Barbarians considered the work-camps tempting targets. They stole food supplies, the guards' iron weapons, and the commander's treasure. Some kept the laborers as slaves, some massacred them and most simply left them in the stripped labor camp, with nothing to eat. Of course, an adventurer might persuade the tribesmen to assist an escape. Tales also tell of nomad kings who took Chinese slaves and became impressed enough by their cunning to give them authority in the tribe.

The work consisted largely of beating dirt with rams, either to excavate canals or compact it into earthworks. Laborers who worked hard could complete their terms as Ssu Kuo, or trustees. The Ssu Kuo supervised all work. They had a reputation for extreme cruelty.

A whole campaign could begin with the party as members of a band of prisoners like those released by Liu Pang in 209 BC (see p. 75).





### *Sky of Dawn*

In the reign of Emperor Wu, a peasant boy named Sky of Dawn suddenly began running away from home and returning with tales of the Spirit Kingdoms. His parents did not believe him. Still, word reached the Emperor, and he brought Sky of Dawn to court. The boy taught Emperor Wu magic, and the Emperor became one of China's greatest sorcerers. The child occasionally hinted that he was more than he seemed but refused to explain more, clapping his hands with glee. At age 18, Sky of Dawn vanished. Astrologers later concluded that he was the incarnation of a star and had returned to the sky.

### *Adventure Seed*

This adventure begins when mystical disasters start befalling the Crown Prince. Ghosts ambush him; magical fevers strike his sons. The Court hires the party to end the attacks. Sky of Dawn knows something about the affair, but he impishly refuses to speak, except in riddles. Actually, the Prince has begun his conspiracy with Liu An. Sky of Dawn learned this in a divination, but he wisely decided not to denounce the Emperor's son. Instead, he used his magic to create the "haunting." He intends to guide the adventurers into accusing the Prince.

Any number of other adventures could revolve around the Emperor's precocious child-advisor.

## Emperor Wu

Empress Lu ruled for fifteen years after her husband's death in battle (195 BC). A tough ex-peasant woman, she governed capably — although her detractors accused her of finding excuses to execute her husband's old concubines. Mao Tun of the Hsiung-nu frequently asked to marry her, but she dismissed him with jokes about her wrinkles and bad teeth. Lu died in 179. Emperors Wen (180-157 BC) and Ching (157-141 BC) continued Kao-tsu's policies of passive rule without active legislation, largely because intrigues between Court families paralyzed them. Then in 140 BC, Lu's robust descendant Wu crushed his rivals and took the throne.

China still lay in poverty, and Emperor Wu sent explorers in every direction to find a benefactor. The explorers found mostly primitive tribes. China conquered some of them. Wu's adventurers fought their way south into Vietnam and down the Korean peninsula. They divided their colonies into commanderies, ruled by native officials appointed by the Chinese.

Other explorers established the Silk Road. It consisted of a chain of oases crossing Asia, each one guarded by exiles and desperate men, analogous, perhaps, to the French Foreign Legion. Few merchants traveled the whole length, but trade between various outposts eventually shuttled goods between China and Rome.

## The Hsiung-nu Decline

Fortunately for China, the Hsiung-nu collapsed along with the Han Dynasty. In 58 BC, the Mongols stole their best pasturage. Their young warriors wanted to migrate north and capture new lands. Conservatives preferred to stay where they could gather tribute from China. The tribe split. The staid southern section accepted Chinese domination.

In 97 AD, Pan Ch'ao learned of another kingdom farther West, called "Ta-ts'in" (the Roman Empire). He detached a portion of his army to conquer it. The commander of the expedition, Kan Ying, eventually called off the invasion to concentrate on barbarians nearer China. His forces turned back only a few days march from the Roman Emperor Trajan's frontier in Asia Minor.

## Capitol Affairs

One of the Shih in Emperor Wu's Capitol, Liu An, who bore the empty title King of Huai Nan, grew fascinated with witchcraft. He hired magicians from across China to teach him. Liu An learned quickly, and recorded his spells in the book, *Philosophical Work of Liu An*. Emperor Wu's eldest son liked the book. He immediately began to study under Liu An.

The Prince and Liu An plotted to overthrow Emperor Wu. They planned to dull his mind with wizardry and force him to abdicate in favor of his son. In return for Liu An's help, the Crown Prince agreed to restore the old powers of feudal kings. Most of the nobles in the city joined the plot, and it nearly succeeded. But an informer warned Emperor Wu. He condemned every conspirator to die, his son included. Liu An committed suicide to escape arrest. This occurred in the early 80s BC. Emperor Wu died in 86 BC, leaving no heir.

Over the next 300 years, intrigues engulfed the court. The Shih, now lacking feudal estates, competed for power by introducing eunuchs and brides into the Imperial Court. Most eunuchs and "splendid young girls" came from poor families desperate enough to sell a child to the nobility. A few volunteered, hoping to get rich among the gentry.

Once in the Imperial Court, eunuchs incessantly developed schemes of their own, since, as poor men, they could only win advancement through intrigues. The eunuchs became deadly enemies of the educated Civil Servants, who won

# China's Imperial Expansion



their office by examination. Emperors could only govern by playing the palace cliques against each other. See *Disadvantages*, p. 31, for more on eunuchs.

Each time an Emperor died, his Empress' family would try to usurp the throne, until princes began massacring their mothers' relatives. In 8 AD, a minister named Wang Mang deposed the infant Emperor, took the throne, and degraded the Imperial Family to common status. He believed he had rediscovered a lost sorcery from the Chou Dynasty, which allowed him to solve the problems of first-century China. His rituals involved the restoration of Chou feudalism and the imposition of archaic farming practices on the peasantry. The Middle Kingdom's chronic bankruptcy made all this plotting more bitter than ever.

The Empire went into debt. It devised elaborate ways to shortchange the barbarians who claimed tribute. Emperor Wu had made salt, wine and iron-mining Imperial monopolies in 119 BC. Wang Mang intervened doggedly in the economy by debasing the currency, stockpiling commodities when the prices were low and then flooding the market to stop inflation. He established a State bank which loaned money at 3% interest per month. Since Confucian teaching warned against merchants' greed, each Emperor sought new ways to tax them. None of this relieved the people's poverty. The only way to pay taxes or buy food remained debt, and the only way to pay debts remained selling one's land. Merchants gobbled farmland. The Imperial bank only made the people more miserable, since private moneylenders would often compromise, but the State seized everything they had. Peasants began to talk of revolution.

## Elixir of Life

Emperor Wu's court attempted to find him the Elixir of Life. They finally located a magician who brewed an elixir which he promised would protect the Emperor from all harm. One of Wu's old friends, Tung-fang So, sneaked a sip. The horrified ministers demanded his execution, but Tung-fang cheerfully told the Emperor, "If the draught works, you can't kill me. And if it doesn't, I haven't stolen anything worth having." Wu pardoned him.

## Adventure Seed: Bankruptcy's Price

This adventure takes place in the last years of the Han Empire. It begins when Sun Wu, one of an Emperor's ex-advisers, hires the party to restore his position. Sun Wu served as Imperial Accountant and hoped to become Minister of the Treasury. But a scandal arose when the Court authorized a military expedition West, raised the troops and then could not pay to feed them. General Li Fung blamed the Treasury, and the Minister of Finance blamed his Accountants. Sun Wu wants the party to gather evidence that the shortfall occurred because of corrupt generals, not poor accounting. The adventurers must spy in Imperial offices and investigate the camps of angry, unpaid soldiers. Then they must present their findings to Emperor Wu.

The party learns that neither the generals nor treasurers caused the shortfall. The Emperor did. He wants to weaken the Ministerial cliques by making them fight each other. Therefore, the Emperor is extremely interested in evidence against Li Fung, but he is reluctant to excuse the Treasury. However, a clever party could turn this into a triumph for their patron. The Emperor could depose the Minister of Finance and give the less-influential Accountant his position.

# The Three Kingdoms

Hsien-pi



## Tsai Wen-chi

When the Hsiung-nu resumed their raids, they captured the poetess, Tsai Wen-chi. Their chieftain forced her to marry him and kept her for twelve years. After Tsao Tsao returned from his wars to Wei, he bribed them into releasing her. This displeased many Chinese, who felt that any kidnapped woman who did not dare commit suicide deserved her captivity. Eventually, Tsai restored her reputation by writing a poem called *The Eighteen Laments*. She completed her adventures by rescuing one of Tsao's inept officials from the death penalty and marrying him.



## The Three Kingdoms

In 18 AD a secret society called the Red Eyebrows led mobs against Wang Mang. (Members dyed their eyebrows red to prevent defections, hence their name.) The Red Eyebrows' leaders claimed to be defending the Imperial family against a usurper. Most members merely wanted food. The soldiers sent to crush their revolt joined it. China's border-guards also mutinied, but fortunately the Hsiung-nu were too divided themselves to manage an invasion. Wang Mang answered the revolution by calling for a counter-uprising. The prospect of loot was sufficient to bring him an army.

However, the nobility began to restore its old power. Baron Liu Hsiu from the iron-rich province of Nanyang led a third revolt. He crushed both Wang Mang and the Red Eyebrows in 23 AD. The ex-emperor refused to flee, but received Liu Hsiu in mystic robes, reciting Confucian proverbs and pronouncing

Chou incantations against usurpers. Liu Hsiu cut off his head.

## The Yellow Turbans

Liu Hsiu took the throne, and the Empire went on. At first, the depopulation and abundance of booty relieved poverty. Life seemed better. But the eunuchs began plotting again. In 159, they slaughtered relatives of the Empress Liang, confiscated private fiefs and ruled the Empire by junta. The 30,000 students at Emperor Wu's university launched raucous demonstrations. Hou Tan, the strongest and most corrupt eunuch, imprisoned several thousand of them, and over 100 died in their cells.

General misery returned. The merchants who bought out bankrupt farmers bullied their tenants like feudal lords, employing bands of "house guests," or mercenaries. At the same time, wandering magicians collected bands of acolytes, and Buddhist priests were everywhere. Peasants began to hope for supernatural deliverance.

Around 150 AD, a cult called the Yellow Turbans sprang up, led by Taoist magicians. A similar religion appeared in Western China, called the Way of The Five Pecks of Rice, because of the tribute each follower paid the sorcerer he followed. These cults established communes where people owned property in common, cured diseases with faith healing and expiated crimes with confessions. The Yellow Turbans simply commandeered land for their utopias. By 184 AD, the avalanche of Yellow Turban uprisings forced the eunuchs to suppress them.

The eunuchs appointed General Tung Cho to suppress the revolt. Instead, he seized the capitol, ousted the eunuchs and installed an Imperial heir. Rival generals rose in challenge. He retreated westward with the Emperor. The rival generals fought for several years, each capturing the Emperor, taking him around China in search of a safe capitol and finally surrendering him to another general. This ended in 190 when general Tsao Tsao captured and kept the Emperor.

## The Three Kingdoms: 184-580 AD

A trio of legendary heroes, Liu Pei, Chang Fei and Kuan Yu, crushed the Yellow Turbans for Tsao Tsao in the 180s. However, they were quixotic men.



Instead of returning China to intriguers like their general, Liu Pei founded the kingdom of Shu in his captured territory. The other two served in his court. This inspired General Sun Ch'uan to set up another renegade empire, Wu, on the coast.

The three heroes continued to fight for Tsao Tsao, and he ordered them to launch another campaign against rebels. While leading the march, Kuan Yu learned that Tsao Tsao planned to oust Liu Pei in his absence. He wheeled his army back — and fell into an enemy ambush. The rebels offered to make Kuan a general in their own army, but Kuan Yu refused. They executed him. Kuan's famous horse, Red Hare, immediately ceased to eat and died. Most of Kuan's soldiers fell on their swords, leaving their positions open to all enemies.

China began another period of division. In 208, Tsao Tsao fought the two rebel empires at Red Cliff in Hopei. He lost, retreated to the original capitol at Loyang, and established his own empire of Wei. His son, Tsao Pei, inherited the throne. Shortly thereafter, Shu attempted to invade Wei with help from Tibetan tribes, but failed. Wei remained the richest Kingdom, due to fertile land and active traders. Wu, the poorest kingdom, contended with the fact that few of its natives were ethnic Chinese. It engaged in frantic diplomacy to keep the other two Kingdoms from invading. Wu traded heavily with India, and became a center of Buddhism. In Wei, the Ssu-ma family gained power while the Tsaos fought the other two Kingdoms. The house of Ssu-ma usurped power in 265 AD, changed the kingdom's name to Chin and divided it into family fiefdoms. Meanwhile, the southern Hsiung-nu merged with the Mongols and swarmed into China.



*Kuan Yu*

Kuan Yu, greatest of the Three Heroes, began his career as a wandering swordsman in the Three Kingdoms. Tales describe him as having ruddy skin, the eyes of a phoenix and the delicate eyebrows of a silk moth. His beard hung to his stomach, and he carried it in a silken pouch. He carried a crescent knife named Green Dragon and owned a horse called Red Hare. While sleeping in a peach orchard, he met two other heroes, Liu Pei and Chang Fe. The three shared a passion for China and a dream of restoring its grandeur. They swore eternal brotherhood, although none came from the same family.

Kuan Yu distinguished himself with several lone attacks on whole armies. He said that masses of troops resemble masses of pottery dogs: impressive but incapable of action. To prove it, he often charged into enemy hosts and beheaded a commander as he exhorted the troops. Tsao Tsao's army would charge in the panic which followed.

#### *Kuan Yu's Divinity*

When Kuan Yu's ghost saw the disasters which followed his death, he haunted China, groaning for his head back. Finally, a Buddhist monk reasoned with Kuan Yu, explaining that since he slew, he must accept being slain. He then became an animist god, named Kuan Di. Kuan Di's spirit remained active and won rapid promotions in the realms of the dead. He eventually rose to the Heavens, first as Prince Kuan, then as King Kuan and finally as the full-fledged God of War, Kuan Ti. He delivers worshipers from evil spirits and heralds the rise of empires. Kuan Ti's worshipers consider only Confucius his equal.





### **Buddhism**

Buddhism flourished throughout China during the 300s. Southern China, with its close ties to India, received a constant flow of missionaries and new sects. These sects occasionally fought with each other and the Taoists. Buddhism became the religion of merchants. The nomad emperors encouraged Buddhism in their realms, both out of faith and to weaken the power of Chinese Confucianists. In the North, only walled Buddhist monasteries were safe from barbarian raids. They doubled as refuges, warehouses and banks.

### **Army Organization**

The army of the fading Han Dynasty and rising Three Kingdoms based their forces on the "tu-wei-fu," or regiment. It consisted of a varying number of hou-kuan, or companies. Each hou-kuan contained four to six hou, or platoons, and each hou contained six to seven 11-man squads, or sui. Each sui picked its best fighter to join the Gallants From The Three Rivers, an elite commando tu-wei-fu. The following list shows officers' titles, with a numerical grade for use with the Military Rank Advantage (p. B22): Tu-wei, 6; Hou, 4; Hou-chang, 3; Sui-chang, 1. Ranks 2 and 5 do not exist in Han China.

Infantry composed most of the army, although a Tu-wei usually had a small cavalry detachment. The Han armies wore down their opponents with crossbow and arcuballistae fire, with spearmen protecting the archers. (A Chinese arcuballista was a crew-served siege engine which fired several quarrels at once. See the *Weapons List*, p. 43, for more details.) If horses were plentiful, a commander might use a chariot or cavalry charge to finish off defeated foes.

The Han Emperors imposed universal conscription for military training. Trained soldiers became a reserve, which the Emperor could mobilize at need. Reserve units met every eighth month for examination, and officers' careers (or often, lives) depended on impressing the inspectors.

Han armies also used convict troops. Common prisoners formed labor brigades and cannon fodder. The Han also maintained elite forces of Ch'ih-hsing, or amnestied convicts noted for their violent crimes. All enemies dreaded these depraved troops. Tsao Tsao liked to employ Hsiung-nu mercenaries.

### **Chaos and Sui**

The Chinese cared more about their own disputes than about invaders. Chin took back Shu in 265 and finally conquered Wu in 280. The Chin leaders could not afford their army in peace, and they immediately disbanded it, exhorting the troops to farm and grow rich. However, the soldiers had no farms, and the Empire had no way to disarm them. Local princes hired them as mercenaries. The Three Kingdoms ended not in empire, but in anarchy.

In the Capitol, a whirlwind of assassinations and machinations by Dowager Empresses resumed. The barbarians participated along with the others. Naturally, tribes raided the countryside, but they did not always come as crass conquerors. Some refused the throne, admitting that they had no moral authority to rule the Celestial Empire. They contented themselves with puppet Chinese Emperors. Others, notably the Toba, established stable Imperial dynasties and considered themselves saviors of the fractious Chinese.

The nomad Emperors tried to shed their barbaric customs. All of the tribes labored to adopt China's culture. Chinese factions found they made devoted mercenaries. The barbarians likewise hired dispossessed Chinese landlords when they wanted well-mannered henchmen. The barbarians did not give up raiding. They used North China extensively for their tribal rivalries.

### **The Southern Empire**

The barbarian Emperors never managed to conquer Southern China. Survivors of the Chin ruled there, trading by sea with India. Refugees from barbarian invasions swelled their Chinese population, but most of their subjects were from jungle tribes. The Southern Chinese adopted several local customs, such as a diet of seafood and vegetables.

Constant intrigues occupied the southern court, without even the barbarians to moderate them. The cities of Nanking and Hankow both dominated trade, and each one's ruling family believed that its city should contain the Capitol. In the early 300s, Emperor Yuan Ti's Nanking clique fought Wang Tun of Hankow.



The aging Emperor prepared to abdicate but died first, and his son managed to subdue the rebels. Northern bandit gangs formed a third faction in the South. They attempted to seize the throne too. The Nanking family remained dominant through the children of its General Yu Liang. Within Nanking, members engaged in several schemes to put children on the throne and seize power.

In 400, the Yellow Turbans briefly reappeared. General Liu Yu suppressed them, signed a non-aggression treaty with the Toba and conquered southwestern China too. He then returned to Nanking seeking the throne. Meanwhile, a northern barbarian tribe which the Toba did not control swooped south and took his territory. Liu Yu managed to become Emperor, but his rivals went north and persuaded the Toba to help them. The northern empire began to sponsor uprisings and assassinations in the South. In the mid-500s, several Southern generals declared independent states, most subservient to the also-disintegrating North.

### Sui: 581-618

Yang Chien of the Sui finally reunited the Empire. He married a barbarian noblewoman, who made him powerful in the northern court of the 580s (which actually ruled very little). The Emperor married Yang's daughter and, eventually, his infant grandson became heir. The court asked Yang Chien to take the throne instead, to prevent another dynastic struggle. And even while accepting, Emperor Yang perceived that all the rivals to Imperial power had worn themselves out.

Yang conquered the Southern Empire in 587. A series of campaigns destroyed the other Chinese Empires, leaving only Sui by 605. To consolidate his power, Yang Chien issued personal challenges to all rivals for the throne. He duelled and slew sixty princes of the blood.

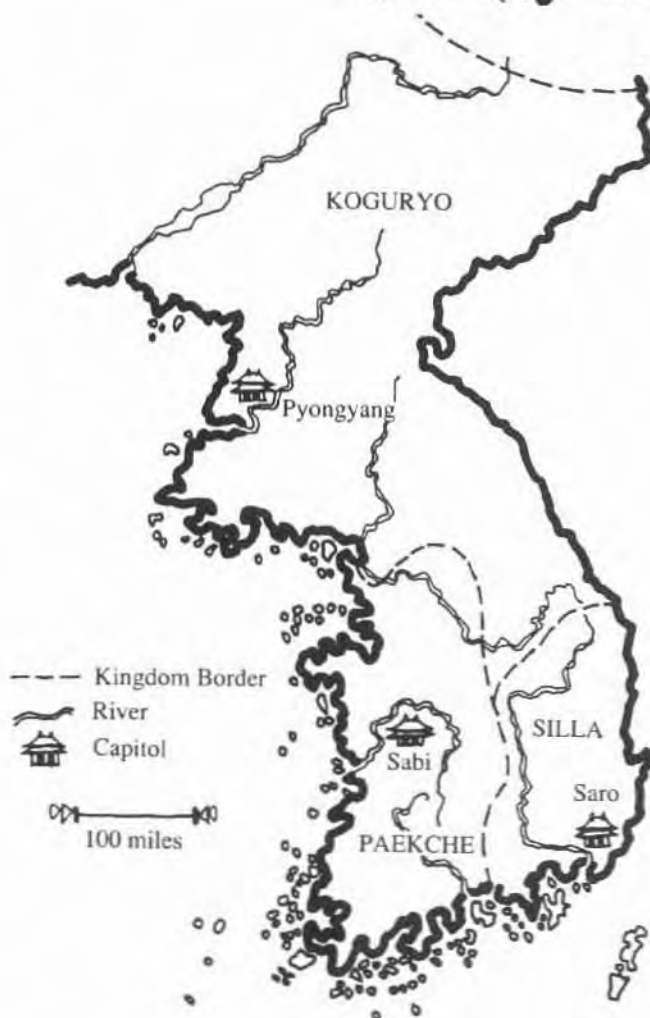
Yang Chien took steps to keep foreigners from invading again. In 582, before his army had finished conquering China, he encouraged the Western Turks to rebel against the eastern ones, hoping to weaken both. But the violent chief Tardu of the West subdued the East so easily that Yang Chien had to switch sides in 585. Then the Eastern Khan died, and Tardu annexed his possessions. Fortunately for Yang Chien, the Chinese secret agent P'ei Chu engineered a revolution in the Turkish empire which ousted Tardu in 603. In 608 the victors, under P'ei Chu's influence, attacked China's Mongol enemies and drove them into Tibet.

Yang Chien desperately wanted to invade Korea, to keep it from joining the Turks and presenting him with a two-front war. The task was formidable. The Sui dynasty's four invasions of Korea between 598 and 614 each ended in disaster. On one occasion, over one million Chinese troops fled the Koreans. Other campaigns were more successful. In 610, Sui China invaded Formosa by sea. The Japanese sent Sui regular envoys, and China sent ambassadors to India, who returned with lion skins, agate goblets, asbestos, dancing girls and Buddhist sutras.

Yang Chien's son Yang Ti inherited the throne in 605. Although his father's wars and bribes to Turkish factions left the budget small, he embarked on an assortment of projects. Yang Ti ordered his subjects to pay ten years worth of taxes in advance.

## KOREA

### Three Kingdoms







### *An Opportunity Missed*

During Li Tsing's adventures, he discovered a castle in the wilderness and spent the night there. At midnight, the lady of the palace woke him. She explained that the castle actually belonged to a family of spirits, and Heaven had just commanded them to send rain to a parched village. Her husband, the rain master, was away. She did not dare ride his dragon, but if they allowed the crops to wither, Heaven would punish them. Li Tsing gallantly offered to ride the dragon. She gave him a bottle and told him to sprinkle one drop on the town.

When he flew over the village, Li Tsing recognized it. He once hid from enemies there, and he wanted to reward its farmers. He thought they deserved more than a drop, and he emptied the entire bottle on them. That drowned the villagers under a deluge of rain. The lady of the castle helped Li flee her castle before the master learned what he had done. To apologize for not warning him more carefully, she offered him his choice of two servants, one wise and the other strong. Li Tsing took the strong one, fearing that the other could not endure an adventurer's life. As a result, he became a superb general, but never a ruler. Tales say that had Li Tsing picked the wise servant, he, not Li Shihmin, could have become Emperor.

The party could have a similar encounter, and end up with the wise servant as a patron. This might inspire peasants to promote one of them as Emperor — whether he wants to be or not. This could be especially interesting if the party already serves another contender for the throne.

With the money, he extended the Great Wall. He embellished the cities of Yangchow and Changan with secondary capitols. Yang Ti crowned his rule in 605 by opening the Grand Canal, which linked the Yellow, Huai and Yangtze rivers. These projects required millions of conscripted workers. The Empire ordered each family to provide an old woman simply to cook for the work gangs. Peasants began to resent Yang Ti. His love for unbridled luxury and corrupt civil administration added to the belief that the Sui dynasty had lost the Mandate of Heaven.

In 615, the Turks attacked. They cut off the Chinese army and would have destroyed it but for the wily youthful Chinese commander, Li Shihmin, who managed to convince them that he expected reinforcements. Next he persuaded a Chinese princess who was married to a Turkish chief to tell her husband that rival nomadic tribes planned to pillage the Turks' homelands while they were in China. The Turks withdrew.

However, now the generals also doubted Yang Ti's power. They assassinated him in 618. This left no successor, but the Sui had given China enough unity to avoid another collapse. Sui officials continued the Empire without an Emperor. They maintained their graft and effete pleasures too. For five years, swordsmen wandered China, hoping to found the next dynasty.

## **T'ang**

A young officer named Li Tsing became the hero who united China. He deserted the army when he realized that his effete general, along with the greedy nobility, could never rejuvenate the Sui Empire. Li Tsing knew that whoever eventually did take power would scourge the corrupt hierarchy; he did not want to be purged with his general. Chang, one of the general's neglected concubines, appreciated the same facts and followed Li Tsing, despite his admonitions. Chang disguised herself as a man, and the two lived as bandits.

After many adventures, the two met a recluse named Curly-Beard who gave them shelter. Curly-Beard burned to become Emperor. Unfortunately, his diviners had told him that the hero of the Turkish War, Li Shihmin, was fated to be True Dragon. Not wishing to struggle against Destiny, Curly-Beard directed a campaign to make Li Shihmin Emperor. General Li himself could not spare attention from the war and negotiations with the Turks. Li Tsing and Chang joined forces with Curly-Beard.

Under Curly-Beard's tutelage, Li Tsing became a wiler general than Li Shihmin himself. He organized an army of Turkish and Chinese mercenaries which defeated the remnants of the Sui. Curly-Beard and Li Tsing kept their word and gave Li Shihmin the throne. The general passed the Imperial title to his elderly father Li Yuan out of filial piety. Curly-Beard then vanished. Some time later, rumors spread that an unknown old man had raised an army in the distant south and conquered himself a kingdom. Only Li Tsing knew who the conqueror was.

### **The T'ang Dynasty: 618-906**

The early T'ang dynasty disappointed nobody. Li Shihmin finally made peace with the Turks and actually signed an alliance with them in 615. He invoked the old Toba law to grant each peasant land. Furthermore, the Sui had completed their Grand Canal. Li Shihmin basked in its success without being blamed for the sacrifices of building it.

Li Shihmin declared, "Taxation is like eating your own flesh." He reduced taxes and allowed peasants to substitute labor for tax money or extra payments for conscript labor, as they chose. The T'ang Emperors used Ch'ang-an as the place for their prime capitol but did not diminish Loyang's authority, pleasing

the dignitaries of both cities. Li Shihmin formally ascended the Dragon Throne in 627, taking the name Tai Tsung. In 639 the Turks broke their treaties and raided a city-state which paid tribute to China. In response, Tai Tsung and Li Tsing conquered all Turkestan.

### The Journey West

Legends credit Tai Tsung with obtaining the complete writings of Guatama, the founder of Buddhism. According to the tale, a terrible drought struck China, and the Emperor's prayers for rain reached Ti. Ti commanded the dragons to send three inches of rain. However, the Dragon of the Milky Way had wagered that Earth would receive only two inches, and he had promised to turn into a mud salamander if he sent more. He could not bear to lose the bet. So he sent only two inches. Unfortunately, Tai Tsung mentioned the two inches of rain in his prayers. Ti sentenced the dragon to die, and chose We Tschong, Tai Tsung's chief general, as the executioner.

The Dragon of the Milky Way persuaded Emperor Tai Tsung to spare him. He explained that the general could only enter Heaven in his sleep, and, therefore, the Emperor should keep him awake. Emperor Tai Tsung summoned his general for a chess game. Although midnight went by, We Tschong did not dare leave while the Son of Heaven was enjoying the game. However, when the



### Noble Feuds

Although China did not disintegrate again when Sui fell, its nobles fought several internal wars. One noteworthy incident was the clash between Wudu and Lanzhou.

The Count of Wudu had lung trouble, which grew worse in summer. To cure it, he invaded the northern province of Lanzhou with a vast army. Lanzhou's Count could not resist. As the Count of Lanzhou pondered his fate, a slave-girl pertly offered to scout the enemy camp. In despair, he gave her permission. She not only penetrated the enemy position, but she walked unhindered to the Count of Wudu's bed. Instead of killing him, she stole a golden ornament from his pillow.

At the girl's suggestion, the Count of Lanzhou sent a messenger to return the bauble. He also sent a note, reading, "One of your possessions has fallen into my hands, but as an honest man, I have not ventured to keep it. If you have any doubts remaining, let me reassure you. You will not receive a letter from me again."

Within hours, the Count of Wudu sent Count Lanzhou 30,000 bales of silk and a team of four prize stallions. He thanked Lanzhou for sparing his life and assured him that his "citizen soldiery" was actually intended for fighting bandits. The Count of Wudu swore friendship to Lanzhou and became its docile ally.

The slave-girl received her freedom. She vanished, vowing to study Buddhism.

### Adventure Seed

The girl took more than a pillow decoration. She stole a set of Wudu's secret treaties, planning to blackmail him with them if the assassination threat did not work. Tai Tsung's Imperial Censors hire the party to get these documents. First they must find the girl. Now that Wudu and Lanzhou are allies, both officially wish to suppress the incident. Still, the Count of Wudu wonders who penetrated his tent. Meanwhile, the slave girl climbs West through the mountains.



### ***Tang Immortals***

Five of the Eight Immortals (see p. 9) lived in the Tang era. They are:

**Lu Yuan.** Lu fled the downfall of the Tang dynasty and learned the ways of immortality in hiding. He is an especially popular Immortal, who brings good luck and aids diviners. A tree spirit named Willowelf studies under him. Lu carries a sword which fights by itself and once killed a dragon with it. After this incident, he returned to the world and squandered immortality on mortal pleasures. Dschung Li Kuan reformed him and restored his power.

Lu Yuan's worshipers represent him as a man with a sword strapped over one shoulder. His symbol is a basket of flowers.

**Tsau Guo Gui.** Tsau briefly ruled as Emperor but preferred alchemy to statecraft. His symbol is a pair of boards.

**Lan Tsai Ho.** He is a hermit who wore a blue Taoist monk's robe with one shoe and sung songs about the futility of life. Some stories depict him as female. Worshipers symbolize him with a flute.

**Hang Siang Dsi.** Hang was the nephew of a famous Taoist. He once saved his uncle's life by predicting a snowstorm. He quickly surpassed his uncle's wisdom and entered Heaven. His wife remained on Earth, pining for him. Hang tried to teach her his wisdom three times, but she never found the way to Heaven.

**Ho Sian Gu.** Ho received her wisdom by stealing from her stepmother to give alms. Worshipers represent her with a spoon like the one with which she doled out rice.



Emperor concentrated on a tricky move, We Tschong dozed off. The Emperor shook him vigorously, but he did not wake up. Finally, Tai Tsung called eunuchs to bring a pail of water. When We Tschong awoke, he described a dream about beheading a dragon.

When Emperor Tai Tsung went to bed, the god Yen-Wang-Yeh accosted him in his dream. He thundered that the Dragon of the Milky Way was a saint, ready for Nirvana. But since he died with a sin unatoned for, he would have to begin the cycle of rebirths again. Only the gospel of Buddha could save him. The Emperor promised to send to the West and to bring the holiest sutras from India. The Emperor commissioned a great quest for the scriptures. A monk named Hsuan-tsang recovered them.

### **T'ang Matures**

Trade with Japan became lucrative under T'ang, conducted through Korean brokers. In the late 660s, Tai Tsung invaded Korea to eliminate the middleman. He died before the campaign ended, but his son Kao Tsung finally defeated Korea. The land campaigns against Korea all failed, but Kao Tsung managed to seize ports in the south by sea and catch Korea between hammer and anvil. The Chinese established a colony there. Japan attempted to revive an independent Korea but lost its navy in a battle on the Kum river in 663.

Kao Tsung fell in love with his father's ex-concubine, Lady Wu. Tradition dictated that she retire to a Buddhist nunnery when the Emperor died, but Kao brought her back, divorced his Empress and married her. She helped him devise the invasion of Paekche and won great awe from the lords of Silla. Wu unofficially became ruler when Kao Tsung went blind in 660. When he died, she first placed two of her sons on the throne and then took it herself in 690. Fearing for her safety, Wu executed Kao's first wife. Before the old Empress died, she prayed to be reborn as a cat and torment Wu as a cat plays with a mouse. Wu immediately moved her capitol to Loyang and banned all cats within the city.

Technically, the rise of Empress Wu destroyed the T'ang dynasty. However, she retained its policies, and China's prosperity only multiplied. Scholars filled the ministries, and Empress Wu allowed women to compete in the scholarly examinations. Wealth poured in from east and west; the Japanese and barbarians aped Chinese customs; and China reached its zenith.

## **Sung and the Mongol Invasion**

The courtiers hated Empress Wu as a usurper, and in 705 her generals deposed her. She died the same year. With her abdication, the T'ang dynasty officially resumed, once again with little turmoil. Wu's son became Emperor. He survived for five years before his wife poisoned him. His nephew Hsuan-tsung took the throne and restored a temporary calm. (This is not the monk-adventurer Hsuan-tsang, discussed above, although their names differ by only one letter.) Hsuan-tsung drove both conspirators and parasites from office. He established new universities and sponsored great poets. Hsuan-tsung maintained an effective secret police; they reduced crime to the point where he felt safe in abolishing the death penalty. He even lived frugally himself, to save the peasants' money. People called him Ming-huang, or "Brilliant Monarch."

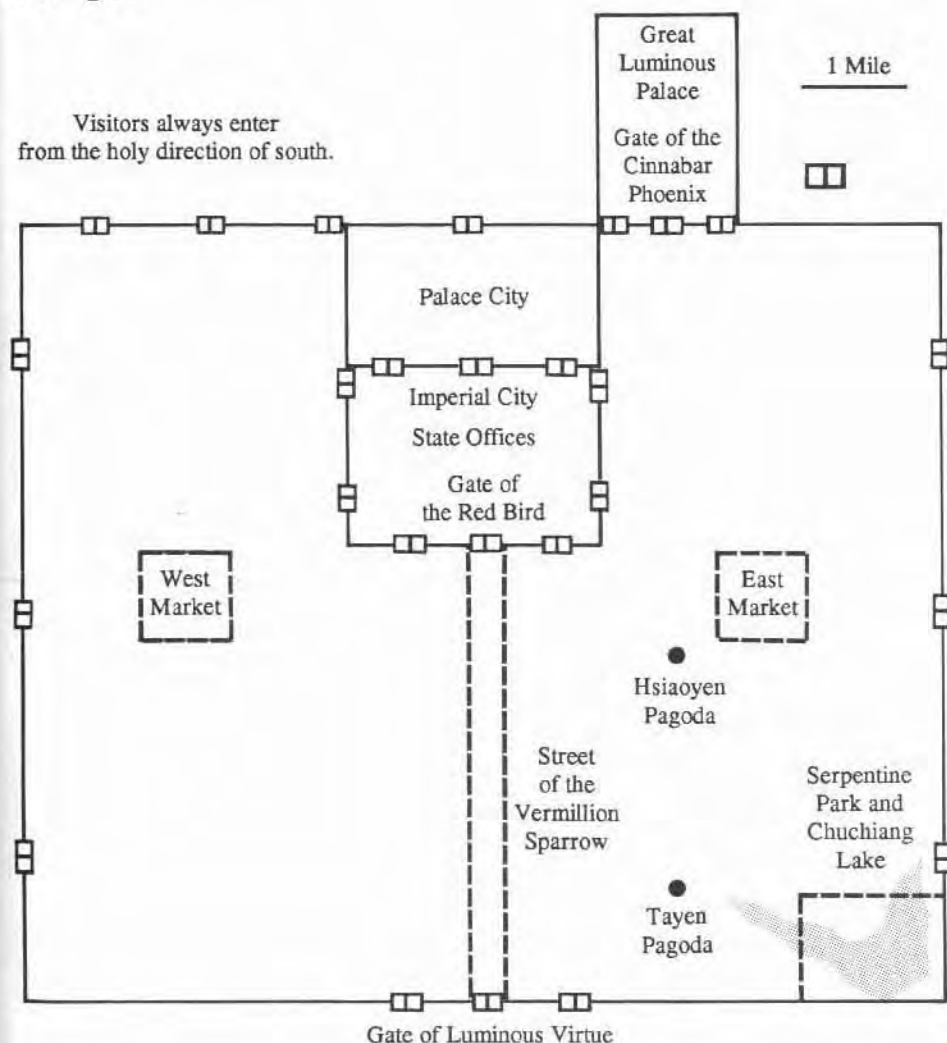
But over time his luster faded. His own eunuchs and sycophants grew as corrupt as the ones he had purged. In 745, at age 60, he began to dote on a young concubine named Yang, and appointed her relatives to high positions. Her favorite general, An Lu-shan, an obese and witty Turk, received the highest commands. In 755, after a series of defeats in Central Asia by Tibetans, Turks and secessionist Chinese rebels, An Lu-shan led a mutiny. He pillaged Loyang and



then the capitol at Changan itself. The court fled south. Hsuan-tsung's followers blamed his concubine and killed her. The Emperor abdicated in misery.

An Lu-shan proclaimed himself Emperor but quickly grew blind and irritable. His son murdered him, and then was murdered. Mutinies and local rebellions became routine as local princes began to rule independently again. In 875, a salt merchant named Huang Ch'ao led a rebellion and captured the capitol. The Empire regained control only with Turkish help. Duke Chu Wen tried to restore order in 900 by seizing Changan and purging the eunuchs. Eventually he removed the Emperor too, first installing a child successor and finally taking the throne himself.

## Changan



## Ten Kingdoms, Five Dynasties: 907-960

China broke into ten kingdoms. The princes who established them refused to recognize Chu Wen as their emperor, but did not particularly want to fight him. They continued T'ang institutions and prosperity, ignoring the struggle in Changan. There, as poets wrote, "States rose and fell as candles gutter in the wind."

Barbarian adventurers dominated the affairs of the Capitol. The Khitan tribes raised a new nation in the northeast, learning to farm and smelt iron from Chinese fugitives. They eventually helped Shih Ching-tang, lord of one of the Ten Kingdoms, seize the throne. At their bidding, he moved the capitol to Peking and surrendered much of north China to them. His son stopped paying tribute. The Khitan promptly invaded and declared themselves the Liao dynasty.

## Lin Tia Guai

Lin Tia Guai, last of the Eight Immortals (see p. 9), lived in the Sung dynasty. Having lost his parents, he fled into the hills to escape his stepparents and learned magic there. He once used his leg as firewood and would have remained unharmed if his sister-in-law had not broken the spell by asking if the fire hurt. When she spoke, the fire seared his foot off. Lin simply took her poker and left, using it as a crutch. His symbol is a crutch or iron poker.

## The Wax Ball

One infamous trick of the Sung dynasty involved a condemned prisoner, whom the Chief of Staff Tsao pardoned in return for his services as a courier. He ordered the man to swallow a wax ball with a secret message. He sent the man disguised as a monk through the tribal lands of the Tangut. There, Tsao promised, another agent would meet him and retrieve the message from his feces.

The barbarians captured the spy. He naturally felt no loyalty to the Empire which had condemned him to die. The messenger told the Tanguts everything. Then, when he excreted the ball, he gave it to them. They opened it and found a letter from Tsao to the Tangut's wily commander. The Tangut Chief quickly executed the general, although he was Tangut's most brilliant strategist. Later, he realized the general was innocent and slew the messenger too. Thus, the Emperor's death sentence was carried out.

## Adventure Seed: A Hero's Reward

In this adventure, Sung bureaucrats hire the party as commandos to recover a prefecture from Chin. They receive a dozen mercenaries, but must win by guile, not force. As adventurers humiliate the barbarians, they become darlings of the patriotic movement. This infuriates their employers. Corrupt officials conspire to betray them to the Jurchen. Failing that, they plan to recall the adventurers, arrest them on trumped-up charges and arrange for them to die in their cells. Fortunately, the student underground offers them shelter and tries to get them back north to win the township, even though the army wants to lose it.

### ***Footbinding***

Footbinding became fashionable around 950, perhaps inspired by styles in dance and women's shoes. Parents would bandage their daughters' feet at age eight or nine, and then make the bindings progressively tighter throughout the girl's adolescence until, by adulthood, her arches broke and her toes became permanently curled. People considered the resulting "lily foot" beautiful, and the mincing stride it produced a sign of demure, feminine charm. The northern barbarians, boat-dwellers of Kwangtung and peasants of the southwest remained unimpressed and never adopted this custom. However, in ethnic China, girls with normal feet became almost unmarriageable, and not even government decrees could end the practice until the middle of the twentieth century.

Treat bound feet as the Lame (Crippled Leg) Disadvantage. A teenage girl still wearing the bandages suffers enough pain to equal the One Leg Disadvantage. For game purposes, a woman's parents remove the bandages at age 1d+12. In a historical Chinese campaign set between 1000 AD and 1900 AD, any woman who has unbound feet receives a -5 point Social Stigma, in addition to any other Social Stigmas she suffers. She should also have a character story that accounts for her escape from footbinding.

### ***Tea and Horse Offices***

The Sung Chinese established many Tea and Horse Offices along the northern border, where they traded silk for tea and horses. Chinese merchants considered the Tea and Horse Offices proof of barbarian stupidity, since the tribes paid horses in return for mere cloth. These Offices might serve as sanctuaries for travelers. Adventurers could exchange their booty for gold here.

### ***The Conquered Lands***

The Khitans, and then the Jurchen, revered their nomad culture. They refused to accept Chinese ways, and ruled their northern states as tribal pasturage. In Liao, Chinese peasants were nearly slaves. Pugnacious renegades received more respect and often became henchmen to Khitan chieftains. The Jurchen allowed their Chinese subjects to form their own government, based on examinations. Chin tribal leaders supervised it. Many tribesmen studied Chinese literature. When the Mongols came, they could not distinguish between Jurchen and Chinese.

The Liao never ruled much of China, and the dynastic struggles continued. In 960, General Chao Kuang-yin led an expedition against the Khitans. After a few days' march, his officers mutinied and forced him at sword point to don the yellow robes of an Emperor. With little choice, he took the capitol.

Chao, the first Sung Emperor, began his reign by inviting all his ministers to a banquet and describing the circumstances of his ascension. He lamented that he could never sleep peacefully again, knowing that any of them might envy his position. Even the honest ones might be forced into a coup, as he had been. The next day many of his officials resigned. He called those back joyfully and gave them the highest positions.

Sung reunited China and continued its prosperity. The wealthy became preoccupied with fashion. The Empire eventually passed sumptuary laws to keep rich merchants from looking more chic than Imperial Ministers. One sample decree ruled that only scholars could wear square-cornered caps. As the rage for stylishness continued, families began to bind girls' feet (see sidebar).

However, seeds of poverty began to appear. The Liao barbarians and their allies the Tanguts isolated China from Central Asia, depriving the Chinese of horses and trade. Inflation and shortages became common. The laws entitling each peasant to land remained effective only in the tax code, which levied a property tax on everyone. Landlords ruled most of the land, often by annexing estates donated for Buddhist temples. The law entitled a landowner to half of his serfs' produce, but most took more. A common saying went, "People hate their rulers as fish hate the net." A minister named Wang An-shih, himself from a poor family, prevented revolution in the 1050s with a series of social programs. He established government hospitals and subsidized food and free brothels for soldiers. Buddhist temples helped him with all projects but the last.

Emperor Chao never defeated the Liao. In 1118, Sung China formed an alliance with the Jurchen tribes to conquer Liao. China received its lost territory, on the condition that all tax revenues go to Jurchen. In 1125, the Chinese reneged on tribute, and the Jurchen seized most of North China. There, they established the nation of Jin. The Sung dynasty moved its capitol to Hangchow. They continued the war against Chin in name only.

Courtiers fought for power, exchanging bitter recriminations about the loss of the north. Patriotic students agitated for full-blooded war against the barbarians. The collaborationist officials struggled to quash them. Popular tales told of Madame D, who cuckolded her husband, a government censor, with a clandestine student leader.

Marco Polo visited Hangchow during his journey of 1275-1292, but he made few comments on its politics.

### ***Military Organization***

China's Emperors in this period commanded fleets, enormous armies and troops equipped with primitive gunpowder weapons. However, they lacked steeds. Generals loathed to fight the nomads' powerful cavalry without horses and usually lost when they did. This made tricks like the wax ball (see sidebar, p. 87) particularly valuable. If the adventurers dare wreak mischief among the barbarians, Sung commanders will probably pay them.

The early Sung used detailed tables of organization. Five men composed a squad; two squads, a section; five sections, a platoon; two platoons, a company; two companies, a battalion; two battalions, a regiment; two regiments, a group; two groups, a brigade; and two brigades, an army. This complex hierarchy often led to confusion in battle. In 1050, the Empire replaced it with units of 10, 50 and 500. It also replaced its mercenary rabble with an elite corps of crack hireswords backed by a general militia.

# CHINA AND THE WEST

# 6



## Mongol Yuan: 1280-1368

In 1206, the Mongols met on the Kerulen River. One by one, every tribe in Mongolia swore allegiance to Genghis Khan, Prince of Conquerors. In 1209, the Khan rode over Jin. The Jurchen held him at bay from walled redoubts which they owed to the Chinese, until their last forts fell in 1215. Genghis swept into Northern China. There, he reflected that



## Mongol Castes

Four castes existed in Yuan China. First came the Mongols themselves, then foreigners, then northern Chinese and, lowest, southern Chinese. The higher classes could not be punished for assaulting the lower ones. In *GURPS* terms, foreign birth is a -5 point disadvantage, northern birth is -10 and southern is -15. It costs 5 points to be a Mongol in Yuan China — until the rebels take over.

## Piracy and Trade

Piracy appeared along the coast during the Sung dynasty. It festered during Mongol rule and spread wildly under the Ming. The pirates, or *wako*, not only seized ships but landed to loot the mainland, forcing many fishing communities to relocate inland. Korea's ineffective despots were especially vulnerable to these assaults. Pirates forcibly turned that peninsula into their base of operations. The original *Wako* were Japanese, but their force grew to include Chinese, Koreans, Dutch, Malaysians, Portuguese, and Filipinos, often all on the same ship. Gamers who like parties of mismatched characters flung together by fate will enjoy this period. Hung-wu never subdued these marauders. When the Chinese attempted to build fleets, the *Wako* managed to unite and storm the shipyards. In the early 1600s, only the Chinese government's clever manipulation of *Wako* factions kept pirates from colonizing much of China's coastline.

Many buccaneers also landed to trade. The Chinese loved Japanese swords, and conversely, Chinese copper coins were worth as much as double face value in Japan. Since the Ming Empire monopolized salt-trading, smugglers could make fortunes by selling it at slightly less outrageous prices. Europeans also smuggled to avoid their own nations' tariffs on porcelain and silk.

Whether freebooters or honest traders, the Ming Dynasty is a perfect time for characters from *GURPS Swashbucklers* or *GURPS Japan* to visit China. The significant European ports in Asia included Macao (Portuguese, 1554); Amoy (Portuguese, 1544); the Philippines (Spanish, 1565);, Formosa (Dutch, 1622). The Dutch frequently attempted to displace the Portuguese from Amoy, but failed. Russian traders, coming overland from Siberia, also wanted trading rights in China, but the Ming court refused to grant them in 1567 and again in 1619.

the Chinese were useless. Furthermore, their settlements spoiled good pasturelands. Better to exterminate the people, level their buildings, and use the land to raise sheep. A Jhitan minister saved the Empire. At his plea, Genghis Khan decreed that the Chinese would not be killed but taxed.

Genghis remained contemptuous of China and never bothered to conquer more of it. The Mongols did not come south of the Yellow River. Then, in 1233 Ogodai Khan (grandnephew of Genghis Khan) convinced the Sung to help him destroy the last remnants of Jurchen Jin. Three years afterward the Chinese attacked the Mongols. By now, Kublai Khan ruled the Mongol Empire. He ordered the invasion of China. The war lasted 46 years. After spending the first five years besieging key ports, Kublai Khan controlled the Yangtze River. He gradually split China into sections and devoured them. The Chinese resisted with guerrilla raids and extensive use of explosives. In 1276 Hangchow fell, and in 1279 the Mongols caught the last Imperial heir on a ship in Canton. Kublai Khan moved his capitol to Peking and declared China part of his realm.



Chinese call Mongol rule the Yuan dynasty. The Khans allowed a Chinese government of examinations, but set quotas of foreign officials to receive the top posts. They not only demanded Mongol rulers, but Arabic and Christian ones. The Khans encouraged travel, trade and missionary journeys around their empire. Merchants like Maffeo and Niccolo Polo (see p. 50) came East, and Chinese pilgrims went West. They brought Chinese craftsmen to Mongolia, where the artisans labored as hard as slaves but often received valuable compensation. Chinese artillery experts assisted the Mongols' campaigns. The rest of China knew peace. The Yuan dynasty was not intolerable.

## The Mongol Army

Ghengis Khan commanded more than a "horde." He divided his troops into the following units: ten men composed an arban; ten arban, a jagun; ten jagun, a minghan; ten minghan, a tumen; and ten tumen, a tuk. In *GURPS* ranks (see p. B22), a Rank 1 commander leads an arban; a Rank 4 commander leads a jagun; a Rank 5 commander leads a minghan; a Rank 6 commander a tumen; and a Rank 7 commander, a tuk. Ranks 2 and 3 do not exist among the Mongols.

Nearly the entire Mongol army rode. Mongol troops lived off the land, drinking their mares' milk. A force of camel cavalry protected the indispensable supplies. The first two ranks wore heavy metal armor. Three successive ranks wore only hide. In battle, rank after rank would gallop toward the enemy, protected by clouds of dust, fire an arrow at close range and turn away. The Mongols had large supplies of fresh horses and could maintain this tactic for hours. It was folly to pursue them, since they could gallop away, firing arrows backwards with deadly effect.

A force of mercenaries and auxiliaries from conquered nations followed the army to fight skirmishes, build fortifications and besiege fortress. Another group went in front, to absorb arrows. Elite manguadai, or foreign suicide troops, went in front too, to lure the enemy into a hasty charge. Chinese may well find themselves dragooned into one of these brigades.

## Ming: 1368-1644

Foreign rule became worse. As the Mongols' conquests ended, they grew frightened of the people they had already subjugated. The Khans imposed harsh restrictions on China. They forbade all weapons and limited kitchen knives to one per ten families. The Khans imposed curfews, forbade fairs, outlawed physical sports and required each household to post a list of everyone sleeping there. By some estimates, one out of every ten Chinese was a Mongol informer. Still, secret societies plotted revolution. In the 1350s, a rabble of peasants and artisans called the Red Turbans revolted in the north. They plundered rich Mongols and rich Chinese alike.

By 1356, the Red Turbans seized Nanking. A peasant and ex-Buddhist monk named Chu Yuan-chang led the attack. On the advice of two comrades, Chu Yuan-chang banned pillaging. Therefore he enjoyed popular affection, unlike the other rebels.

The Mongols no longer possessed an invincible army. They contained many Red Turban uprisings by bribing the leaders. When this failed, their agents seeded counter-revolutions among the Chinese. Chu Yuan-chang refused any offered bribes, and the people loved him enough not to rebel. The Mongols brought a Korean army to fight the Red Turbans. Chu Yuan-chang repelled it, and he invaded Korea in 1359. Secret societies on the peninsula rose to support the Chinese and expelled the Mongols from Korea.



## Torture

The legendary Chinese artists of torture were quite real, and served several purposes. Some rulers, especially the Legalists (see p. 12 and the sidebar, p. 15), prescribed savage tortures as punishments. The "bastinado," a severe beating, was common. Offenders might also be maimed or blinded.

Judicial torture was also common. Magistrates could order any commoner tortured to obtain a confession, or simply for information (see p. 15). And confession or information was usually forthcoming. This type of torture was rarely elaborate. The lash, the clamp and hot iron proved effective enough to render more imaginative methods frivolous.

More elaborate torture appeared most often as a form of execution, especially for political offenders. Transgressors — and their families — might be sawn in half, boiled in oil, buried alive or pulled to pieces by wild horses. Strangling was a "merciful" type of execution.

The Chinese well understood the psychological requirements of torture. Someone with a fear of rodents might have his head placed in a cage of starving rats, which would then devour such fleshy morsels as the nose, eyes and lips. The well-known Chinese water torture — where water was dripped on the head of a bound victim one drop at a time — could drive its victim mad in a few days. Executioners could stretch the Lingering Death (known in the West as the Death of One Thousand and One Cuts) over months by placing the names of body parts to be amputated in a jar and drawing them at random, one per day. Each day one body part would be amputated at the joint, and the wound immediately cauterized so the victim could not bleed to death.

In general, China's torturers worked with sharp knives and bamboo splinters. Such experts studied the bodily regions most susceptible to pain. They knew which nerve centers they could pierce without inducing shock, and what organs would produce the broadest variety of agonies. Scraping the kidneys, for instance, produces a different sensation from that of removing the breastbone. With the Chinese knowledge of the nervous system and anatomy, they had a sound scientific basis for their conclusions.



### Secret Societies

Secret societies riddled China at least from the time of the Red Eyebrow Rebellion. Notable conspiracies included the Green Pang, the Red Pang, the Red Spears, the Big Swords, the Small Swords, the Yellow Beards, the Single-Hearted Celestials, and the Dragon Flowers. Most of them modeled themselves on the White Lotus Lodge, which supposedly existed to meditate on the coming of a Buddhist Messiah. It was actually a vigilante group, dedicated to advancing its members and defending its version of Chinese ideals.

The leaders of White Lotus Lodge supposedly practiced magic. Police learned to ambush these wizards and lock them in bamboo cages before they could turn invisible. One infamous insurgent still managed to escape by conjuring an illusionary monster, which attacked the prison. When the guards shrank in terror, he offered to drive the thing away. They released him to fight the monster. He made it appear to devour him, turned invisible, and escaped.

The societies loved initiation ordeals. At the end of each ritual, they bound a rooster and lopped off its head. This symbolized the fate of a traitor. Society members discussed secrets in a coded language of puns, which sounded innocuous to the uninformed. Treat this as a Hard language skill.

In the early 1900s, almost all the societies adopted the slogan, "Overthrow Ch'ing, Restore Ming." They founded communities in foreign countries to mobilize expatriate Chinese for the revolution. These groups quickly acquired less patriotic functions. They established protection rackets and vice dens. They initiated fresh immigrants to the new country. Secret societies also sponsored shops, apartment complexes, corporations, labor unions — in short, every form of social organization. Chinese-Americans called these groups the Tong, after the Chinese word for "meetingplace." At least one Tong, the Triads, still operates extortion rings in Hong Kong and Singapore. Certain anti-communist Tongs smuggle people out of Red China.

Another set of secret societies, the "Academies," defended Shih against the Imperial Court. These appeared under Ming, when the hereditary gentry lost almost all its power. Academies plotted to defend their members' estates from annexation. They also rescued their followers from rivals who had the Emperor's ear. Several of these groups helped the Manchus overthrow Ming.

### Revolt

In 1360, three branches of the Red Turbans existed: one under Chu, one under Chang Shih-ch'eng and one under the aggressive Ch'en Yu-liang. Chu turned on Ch'en Yu-liang in 1363, considering him the prime threat. Ch'en fought more fiercely than the Mongols. Still, Chu diverted part of his forces to rescue Han Lin-erh, another rebel who claimed to be the latest Sung Emperor. The campaign ended in an immense naval battle on Poyang Lake for control of the Yangtze. Ch'en had nearly routed Chu when the winds changed, allowing Chu's forces to use their wrecks as fireships, starting an inferno in the close-packed enemy fleet. After this victory, Chu then conquered Chang and executed him. In 1366, Han Lin-erh died, leaving no heir. After some indecision, Chu Yuan-chang declared himself fit to rule. He became Emperor Hung-wu of the Ming Dynasty in 1368. He placed his capitol at Nanking, to control the river.





## Ming Rule: 1368-1644

Emperor Hung-wu tolerated no rivals. He eliminated many ministerial posts, reserving their authority for himself. This made him many enemies, who delighted in circulating handbills displaying Hung-wu's pocked face and deformed, pig-like nose. The Emperor conducted frequent inquisitions for assassins. The fact that numerous secret societies remained active intensified this paranoia. Hung-wu revived the old custom of having ministers beaten during audiences. The Emperor treated peasants more benevolently, redistributing land and liberalizing the examination system to insure that anyone, of any social class, could compete.

The Ming vigorously explored the outside world. Since bandits now swarmed the Central Asian trade routes, Hung-wu's adventurers traveled by sea. Ming sailors sought trade, tribute and allies against Mongol resurgence. They brought the Emperor ostriches, zebras, giraffes and the kidnaped King of Ceylon. The Emperor gave trusted explorers a less frivolous mission. He suspected that rival leaders of the secret societies had fled to foreign lands or secret island bases, where they plotted to overthrow him. Hung-wu wanted to track them down before they succeeded.

## Mongols Again

In the early 1400s, the Mongols managed to start raiding again. Wang Chen, a eunuch in the Chinese Court, inveigled the ministers into raising an army to punish them. It completed its muster in 1449. Emperor Ying Tsung ostensibly led the expedition, but since he was barely 21, Wang Chen had effective command. However, the eunuch had never lived outside the palace. He was no general. The Mongols captured China's force intact, and Ying Tsung with it. They demanded a huge ransom.

Then, one of the Emperor's wives gave birth, providing an heir. Court ministers, hoping to become regents, proposed crowning Ying Tsung's son. The Mongols hastily lowered their ransom. Then a eunuch clique attempted to crown the Emperor's brother, Ching Tsung. The Mongols found their hostage worth less and less. They practically gave him back. The Emperor's brother managed to keep the throne until he fell ill. Then the eunuchs brought Ying back to power, since he was easier to manipulate.

External affairs continued to deteriorate in the 1500s. The Mongols seized Peking in 1549 and forced the Chinese to buy annual quotas of Mongol goods at artificially high prices. A small merchant service developed around this mandatory trade. Descendants of the Jurchen in Manchuria formed an empire which skirmished with China. European merchants began abusing the Ming too. Portuguese "merchants" attempted to colonize Canton and Ningpo in 1545. English ships, which had no license to enter China, began forcing their way into ports. The Empire gradually enacted laws to block foreign influence. These codes prohibited the building of oceangoing ships and forbade anyone to meet foreign visitors without Imperial approval.

## Manchu

In the 1600s, the secret societies which established the Ming dynasty turned on it. As peasant conditions became intolerable, the White Lotus Lodge, a shadowy faction of the Red Turbans, incited uprisings. Several Academies among the nobility hampered the Empire's ability to respond by refusing to contribute to the army. Therefore, the Imperial soldiers went unpaid and often refused to fight. A rebel named Li Tzu-ch'eng seized Peking in 1644. Hearing the news, the last Ming Emperor committed suicide. Li Tzu-ch'eng declared himself Emperor, but at that moment, his title meant little.

## The Golden Lotus

In the sixteenth century, a civil official named Wang Shih-chen decided to murder a rival bureaucrat. He planned to rub arsenic on the pages of a book, so that when his enemy flipped through the pages, licking his fingers to turn them, he would poison himself. To make sure the plan would work, Wang had to write an irresistibly tantalizing novel. His result, *The Golden Lotus*, is now recognized as one of China's greatest books. It tells about the adventures of a salacious merchant named Hsi-men Ch'ing. No other details about Wang or his enemy survive.



## Russian Forts

In 1644, Russian trappers built forts in Chinese territory. The Manchus attacked and defeated them. This eventually led to Russian concessions of territory and a treaty authorizing border trade. Several decades later, the Russians started probing again. During the late Ch'ing dynasty, the Manchus encouraged brave Chinese to settle northern Manchuria and defend it against the Russians. They strengthened vital points with stockades for the pioneers to rally at. An interesting adventure could be designed for either Russian trappers or Chinese homesteaders.



### *Chinese View the Foreign Devils*

To the extreme west there are the red-haired and western foreigners, a fierce and violent lot, quite unlike the other barbarians of the Western lands. Among them are the English, the Islamists, the French, the Dutch, the Spaniards and the Portuguese . . . Their natures are dark, dangerous and inscrutable; wherever they go they spy around with a view to stealing other peoples' lands.

*(Written by an inspector in Canton.)*

Take [Chinese] tea and rhubarb, for example; foreign countries cannot get along for a single day without them. If China cuts off these benefits with no sympathy for those who are to suffer, then what can the barbarians rely upon to keep themselves alive . . . On the other hand, articles coming from outside China can only be used as toys. We can take them or get along without them.

*(Written by Lin Tse-hsu, justifying his destruction of opium.)*

China's best troops were on the Great Wall, to keep the Manchu barbarians from intervening in China's upheaval. The general there, Wu San-kui, reflected that the rebels had grown more dangerous than any outsiders. He invited the Manchus to invade, with hopes for the throne in his mind. Wu and the Manchus seized Peking, and Li fled into the countryside where peasants killed him. But the Manchus refused to leave. They kept Wu San-kui as a general, but not an Emperor.

The Manchu's culture closely resembled that of the Chinese. They portrayed themselves as restorers, reviving the Mandate of Heaven. However, they did not wish to lose their identity. The conquerors insisted that native Chinese shave their foreheads and wear pigtails to distinguish themselves from Manchus. For the same reason, they forbade Manchu women to bind their daughters' feet. Manchu men organized themselves into paramilitary "banner" clans to preserve their fighting spirit. To the relief of both Chinese and Manchus, the law firmly banned intermarriage between the two.

Wu San-kui, frustrated in his quest for the throne, seized an independent fiefdom. After long attempts to placate him, the Manchus drove his rebel army into the jungles of South China. Manchu armies finally defeated Wu's son in 1681. A Mongol named Galdan tried to lead a revolt too, supported by Manchus who feared absorption by Chinese culture. The new empire suppressed them easily.

### **Ch'ing Dynasty: 1644-1911**

Many thousands of Ming officials committed suicide rather than collaborate with barbarians, but most of the Chinese recognized the Manchus as having the Mandate of Heaven. As Galdan feared, the Manchus became completely Chinese. They established their capitol in Peking and a seven-year-old named Sheng Tsu as Emperor. He reigned for over 60 years.

Sheng Tsu won great affection for his honest government and cultured ways. He set up stable relationships with foreign peoples. Sheng corresponded regularly with Popes until the Catholics infuriated him by condemning ancestor worship. The Emperor also collected European wonders, especially clocks. The Manchus brought both external and internal peace until the late 1700s.

Sheng's successors remained benevolent. However, the secret societies considered all the Manchus aliens and continued to plot against them. In 1775, the White Lotus led a determined revolt. This group won victory after victory until the Manchus resorted to a purge and beheaded 20,000 suspected conspirators. The ferment continued. In 1813, the "Society of Heaven's Law" bribed eunuchs, got into the palace and nearly slew the Emperor.

### **The West**

European visitors flooded China in the Manchu period. The Empire imposed restrictions to avoid being overwhelmed. It forbade any visitors to learn Chinese, reducing all communication to pidgin (see *Language Skills*, p. 32). Foreign ships could only land at Canton. Even there, they had to trade exclusively with 13 licensed Chinese wholesalers, or *co-hong*.

The Europeans avidly purchased silk, tea, sugar, rhubarb, porcelain, lacquered cabinets, spices and vermilion. In return, they brought the Chinese clocks, wind-up toys and musical snuffboxes. The Chinese laughed at these offerings. They were no more interested in England's textiles, tin or lead. The *co-hong* wanted only silver, and they became a dangerous hemorrhage to Europe's supply of precious metal. Then, in the 1780s, traders discovered what the Chinese would buy — opium.

## The Time of Troubles

Opium not only ravaged addicts, it bled China's economy. For the first time in Chinese history, the Celestial Empire bought more than it sold abroad. When the Manchus passed edicts against it, the foreign merchants established floating opium warehouses offshore, where they could sell the drug to Chinese smugglers.

In 1839, Emperor Tao Kuang appointed Lin Tse-hsu, a zealous opponent of opium, Commissioner of Canton. Lin had already invented a medicine which cured addiction, and the wives of addicts kowtowed in the street to him from gratitude. As Commissioner, Lin sent a letter to the foreign community in Canton condemning the drug trade. Then he blockaded them in their homes, ordered their Chinese servants to leave and held them hostage until they agreed to surrender their opium. He contaminated the drug with lime and cast it into the harbor, begging forgiveness from the spirits of the sea.



### Opium

Opium is a mild narcotic obtained by slitting poppies. Doctors prescribed it throughout the nineteenth century for dysentery, asthma, fevers and as an analgesic. One smokes opium by dipping the gummy substance up with a needle, heating it in a flame, and placing the smoldering drug under a pipe. Despite stories of opium-crazed madmen, the drug causes only a quiet euphoria. However, like all narcotics, its effects depend on the imbiber's psychological state. The symptoms of addiction include emaciation and paleness. When withdrawing from the drug, an addict suffers fainting spells, cramps, watery eyes and mouth, and nausea.

The British East India company possessed a legal monopoly on English opium trading. It harvested the drug in India, gathering about 20 lbs. per acre of poppies. Then the Company shipped it to China in chests of 120 pounds each. At auction, a chest brought about 300 silver dollars.

In game terms, opium is a -5 point Addiction, or -10 points if the laws against it are enforced. Opium costs \$10 per daily dose. There is a -5 penalty to all withdrawal rolls.



### Adventure Seed: Sold!

The deal was complete. Harold Weatherbane, an English private trader, had paid for a shipment of porcelain. He expected Chinese sailors to bring it from Canton to Macao months ago. But time has passed and Lin Tse-hsu has seized the opium. Since then, communication between the co-hongs and English merchants has become sporadic. The trader hires adventurers to get him his goods.

In Canton, the party finds the ship loaded, but tied up in port. Dock officials are delaying its paperwork because Harold Weatherbane neglected their usual bribes. Unfortunately, the adventurers cannot just pay them. Lin Tse-hsu is rooting out corruption, and one risks one's head by proposing such transactions.

Meanwhile, smugglers scheme to get the ship. If they find a legitimate reason to reach the English, they hope to obtain more opium, which now sells for outrageous prices. The smugglers might cooperate with adventurers to get the ship out of port. Then they plan to steal it.

Whether the smugglers succeed or not, word of their plot reaches Lin Tse-hsu. He assumes the party is in league with them, especially if they attempt to bribe port officials. The Commissioner pays local sailors to capture the ship. The adventure ends in a chase through rivers into the Gulf of Canton, amid house-junks thick as city traffic.

### Foreigners in Taiping

Although Western governments supported the Manchus, idealistic Europeans occasionally fought for the God Worshipers (see p. 97). One notable one was Augustus F. Lindley, who sailed to Taiping as chief mate on a silk merchant's steamer. He rescued a Portuguese woman named Marie from a forced marriage in Macao. Together, they bought a ship and served the God Worshipers as blockade runners.

On one occasion, the Manchus boarded his craft. Lindley won his freedom by presenting a commission from "His Majesty the King of America." The Manchu conscripts accepted a Manchester carpet as the King of America's flag and two Bass Pale Ale labels as His Majesty's Writ of Authority. However, Marie died in a later firefight. In 1864, the British arrested Lindley and returned him to England.

*Visiting ships must acquire first a set of "Chops" or permits at Macao and then pay tolls on the islands in the Bogue. Western traders unloaded cargoes at Whampoa, where lighter Chinese ships carried the goods upriver.*



Once free, the foreigners withdrew to Macao. A year went by. Lin closed the approach to Canton and appealed to China's fishermen to form a miniature navy. In 1840, Great Britain sent a fleet to recapture its trading privileges. The Emperor had never expected a war. He dismissed Lin and appointed a man named Kishan as Commissioner. Kishan dismantled Lin's defenses and offered to resume trade.

The British demanded more. Their warships reduced the forts on Canton River in 1841 and sailed into the city. For another year, British ships and independent captains roamed the coast of China, bombarding cities and making forays up rivers. The Imperial army could not stop them, and China's antique cannon proved useless. By contrast, the British gunners fired with such effect that the officer who commanded Canton's defense claimed they aimed their shots with the "sorcery of their evil religion."

Independent troops did better. Peasant mobs captured several detachments of marines. Chinese sailors forced Britain's steamships to proceed cautiously by sending fireships down rivers. The Emperor did not dare encourage these movements, for fear that the peasants might later rebel. In 1842, he negotiated a peace. The British demanded Hong Kong outright. They also limited tariffs to five percent and insisted on free trade in Amoy, Foochow, Ningpo and Shanghai. Finally, the British demanded the right to try British criminals in their own courts, sparing Englishmen the grotesque punishments of Chinese law.

## The Taiping Uprising

The anti-Manchu societies swelled after the Opium War, fueled by resentment towards foreigners. Alien teachings also sparked new clans. In the 1840s, a Christian society spread around Thistle Mountain in Kwangsi, based on the visions of a farmer named Hung Hsiu-ch'uan. It called itself the Society of God Worshipers and attracted many of the poorest people. Richer Chinese joined too, to escape racial persecution by the Manchus.

In 1850, the government dispatched troops to arrest some notorious outlaws in the Thistle Mountain area. The soldiers used the opportunity to pillage the residents. Hung's Society struck back. After a series of battles, the soldiers kidnapped a prominent God Worshiper's wife and left, promising reprisals. The God Worshipers responded by proclaiming a revolution for "Taiping," or the Kingdom of God On Earth.

In Taiping, there would be no slavery, prostitution, opium, infanticide or torture. Citizens held property in common and built public hospitals. The God Worshipers outlawed footbinding and granted women complete equality. Hung Hsiu-ch'uan ruled as Lord Heavenly Prince. Two charcoal-merchants who conveniently had visions during an earlier episode of disruption became Eastern and Western Princes. Northern and Southern Princes also existed. By 1852, the Taiping army numbered over one million, despite bans on both conscription and the payment of soldiers.

The Western and Southern Princes died in early fighting, but by 1853 the God Worshipers controlled half of China. The miners and laborers of the movement formed an elite engineer corps. The army also contained crack Amazon detachments. The Heavenly Prince declared his capitol in Nanking. His forces advanced on Peking itself.

## The Second Opium War

In 1856, the Canton police seized a Chinese smuggler whose ship flew an English flag. The British began another series of coastal bombardments, and the French quickly joined them. Russia fought a separate war against China and won territory on the Amur River. Hsien-feng, the current Emperor, sought peace. Both Britain and France profited immensely, securing ten more free-trade ports, naval bases, jurisdiction over legal cases and indemnities of four million dollars.

The Europeans certainly did not want revolutionaries to take power and renounce these treaties. They had remained neutral before. The Taiping rebels were Christian, they promised free trade throughout China and they called Europeans "Foreign Brothers" instead of "Foreign Devils." However, the Westerners turned to the Manchus.

Meanwhile, internal clashes shook the God Worshipers. The Heavenly Princes executed looters and gamblers, while reserving privileges to themselves, contrary to Taiping ideals. In 1853, Hung himself kicked a woman in anger. The Eastern Prince claimed to have a vision in which God sentenced the Heavenly Prince to forty strokes of bamboo. Hung assented, and the Eastern Prince saw another vision forgiving him, but the two hated each other bitterly ever afterward. In 1856, Hung conspired with the ambitious Western Prince to seize the Eastern Prince's palace and murder him. Manchu camps bubbled with hopeful gossip of massacres and reprisals in Taiping.

Europe sent the Manchus arms and advisers. American mercenaries founded an army to support the Empire. A British officer, Gordon, eventually took command, disciplined the forces, and won them the epithet, "Ever-Victorious Army." In 1864, Nanking fell. The Manchus destroyed its fortifications using a new import from Europe: dynamite.

## The Empress Dowager

During the Taiping Uprising, Emperor Hsien-feng grew despondent over the Dragon Throne's fall in prestige. He soon became sick. The Emperor lapsed into self-destructive debauchery, encouraged by his embezzling courtiers. To the revulsion of the Taipings, this Manchu visited opium dens and halls of prostitution incognito, contaminating Chinese women. The Emperor died in 1861. The court crowned his young son. His mother, Tzu Hsi, was only a concubine of the fifth rank, but she paid a eunuch to bring her an Imperial Seal. Using it, she displaced the eight other regents and became Dowager Empress, the true ruler of China.

Tzu Hsi quickly received a reputation for cruelty. Her dupes had the old ministers and princes arrested and sentenced to the Death of One Thousand and One Cuts (see p. 91). The Dowager pardoned them on the condition they commit suicide. Among her victims was Su-shun, a minister of accounts noted for ruining the peasantry with inflation. He had embezzled a fortune for himself, which the Dowager acquired.

Tzu's son came of age in 1874 and died of smallpox the next year. On his deathbed, he named his mother as regent again. She managed to appoint another infant Emperor. Several ministers committed suicide in protest. Tzu remained Regent until 1879 and actual ruler until her death in 1908.





### ***Bounties***

The Manchus regularly put prices on their enemies' heads. In the first Opium War, they offered \$5,000 for a ship's captain, \$100 for a plain Englishman alive, and \$20 for a British head. Anyone who burned a 74-gun warship could claim \$10,000. In the Taiping revolt, the Empire paid only \$6 per head to the pirates who hunted God Worshipers. Many brigands were not particular about whose heads they took. During the Second Opium War and Boxer Rebellion, the government paid \$50 for a male foreigner, \$40 for a female and \$30 for a child. The bounties were for live prisoners, but one could collect \$10-\$20 per head, and some warriors tried to disguise wide-eyed Chinese heads as Europeans.

### ***Adventure Seed: Disappearing Act***

This adventure begins in Spring, 1900, when Fu Chieh, a merchant who deals with the European legations, vanishes. His European friends hire adventurers to save him. The party must search for clues, amid angry mobs. An unknown agent fabricates evidence that he is dead, but other witnesses claim to have seen him in the Forbidden City itself.

Fu is actually a court eunuch in disguise. The Empress Dowager uses him to spy on the foreigners she hates. He spies on her too, as an agent of the (non-historical) Singing Bamboo Lodge. The leaders of the Lodge respect the foreign devils' firepower and previously used Fu to keep Tzu Hsi neutral in the rebellion.

Now, Fu can no longer restrain the Dowager's affection for the Boxers. The Lodge wants to get him away from the court, to keep him alive in the clashes they expect. When the chaos ends, he can forget the court and continue his role as a friend of the victorious Westerners. First, the Lodge wants to fake Fu's death to get him out of court. He is attempting to break all contacts for this escape.

Hu does not mind going to the Foreign Legation, if his full story remains hidden. The Lodge does not tell the party anything, but will let Hu cooperate with adventurers. However, the Empress Dowager's agents must conceal his mission in the Legations. They try to assassinate anyone who seems to know of his espionage.

## **Foreign Affairs**

The Japanese exploited China's weakness. In 1878, they forced the king of the Loochoo islands to pay tribute to them, instead of China. The French imitated them by taking Vietnam, despite the heroic resistance of Li Hung-chang, an ex-God Worshiper whose Black Flag warriors changed sides after Taiping's defeat. As the 1880s began, the Japanese and Chinese plotted against each other in the Korean government. In 1893, Korean peasants revolted, led by a society called Tonghak, or Eastern Doctrine, (as opposed to the Western Doctrine of Christianity). Korea's king persuaded China to intervene. The Manchus sent the Black Flags, despite Japan's protests. The Chinese hoped that the threat of Russia would restrain Japan.

In July 1894, the Japanese captured the Korean palace and installed a new ruler, who asked them to expel the Chinese. The Japanese won with ease, and Li Hung-chang's enemies blamed him. They wrote letters to the court requesting to dine on his flesh. However, he was a covert supporter of the Empress Dowager, Tzu Hsi, and escaped punishment. Li Hung-chang then toured Europe and returned urging China to adopt modern weapons and Western ways. The Dowager abhorred even the suggestion.

In 1898, a group of ministers petitioned for even more radical reforms, in the "Hundred-Days Movement." They demanded a European parliament and constitution. Since the Emperor seemed attracted by them, Tzu Hsi ordered him imprisoned in an island palace. She resumed her regency. Then, the Dowager had several Hundred-Days supporters sawn in half.

### **Society of Righteous and Harmonious Fists**

Youths began to appear on Chinese streets, distributing leaflets and practicing combat. They hated the foreigners and loved the Empire. These warriors belonged to a cabal known as the I Ho Chuan, or Fists of Righteous Harmony. They were masters of the martial arts, and Europeans called them the Boxers. These warriors hacked each other with swords in their demonstrations, without harm. Folk said the spirits protected them and not even bullets could pierce their skin.

The Boxers warned that the Europeans were at war with Heaven itself. Westerners' telegraph cables were actually blades to injure the wind, and the rusty water which dripped from them was the blood of gods. In the wind, one could hear spirits moaning as they passed the wire. Other pamphlets asserted that Christian missionaries poisoned wells and stole corpses for their necromancy. The Empress Dowager took secret pleasure in it all.

In June 1900, Boxer mobs closed in on the walled Foreign Quarter in Peking. The foreign staffs there organized impromptu defenses. They even sent parties to save Christian Chinese, the Boxers' prime enemies. Boxer sympathizers in the Court warned the Dowager that foreign officials planned to restore the imprisoned Emperor. She ordered all foreigners to leave. After heated debate, they agreed, despite the knowledge that their Chinese friends would be slain. Then snipers made evacuation impossible anyway.

A coalition of Europeans, Americans and Japanese marched on Peking. The Kaiser instructed the troops, "Just as the Huns a thousand years ago, under the leadership of Attila gained a reputation by which they still live in historical tradition, so let the name of Germany become known in China." His men obeyed. The Empress Dowager escaped with the Emperor. As they went, the Emperor's favorite concubine implored her to stay in the Capitol rather than dishonor the dynasty by flight. Tzu Hsi ordered her eunuchs to cast the concubine into a well and continued her retreat.

The foreign army rescued its legations. Li Hung-chang negotiated with the



victors. They demanded executions of Boxer leaders, monuments to fallen foreigners, more military rights and an indemnity of 28 million pounds of silver. Tzu Hsi and her Emperor returned to power. In 1908, the Emperor died. The Dowager died a few days later, having presided over one last council of succession. She left another infant, Pu Yi, on the throne.

## Revolution

The Manchus' enemies gathered in Japan. In 1905, a revolutionary named Sun Yat-sen organized their secret societies into a united T'ung-meng-hui, or General League. They agreed to fight for the Three People's Principles, of Nationality, Republican Government and People's Livelihood, or land reform. Russian anarchists and Japanese terrorist societies instructed members in guerrilla warfare. The conspiracy leaders did not dare return to China. However, secret societies were fashionable, and many of the cadets China's army sent to study in Tokyo joined the General League.

On October 9, 1911, a secret League arsenal in Wuchang, China blew up. The subsequent investigation revealed most of the revolutionaries in the city, including many military officers. Fearing arrest, the plotters launched their uprising. On October Ten, the Double Tenth, the Manchu viceroy fled.

This success sparked revolts throughout China. The Court begged veteran general Yuan Shih-k'ai to return from retirement and subdue the rebellion. Manchu leaders had previously insulted Yuan by forcing him into retirement on the pretext that his limp offended the Court. Now, he replied that his leg was not up to leading an army. To bring Yuan back, the Court made him Viceroy over Hupei and Hunan and gave him sole command of the army. Once in the field, Yuan concentrated an overwhelming force at Hankow and won a battle there. Then he negotiated with the rebels and agreed to found the Republic they wanted, on the condition that he be its President. On Christmas Day, Sun Yat-sen landed in Shanghai. Yuan made him President temporarily.

Since Yuan had not yet become President, he still headed the Manchu's army. He used this status to tap the Imperial Treasury. Then he persuaded the Manchus to abdicate, promising that they could continue to live in the Forbidden City, as before. A few spoke of returning to the North and raising another horde,





### *Life in Nationalist China*

The Chinese Republic tried to attain both discipline and cosmopolitanism. Chiang Kai-shek forced slick Westernisms into the quaint squalor of traditional China. His law did not recognize concubinage. Chinese Boy Scouts patrolled the streets beating vagrants, snatching cigarettes from disreputable smokers and forcibly grooming disheveled people. Mussolini and Hitler sent advisers to assist these campaigns. Chiang also nurtured a Chinese cinema and fashion industry. However, the cities remained dirty and the Countless Old Families of peasants sowed their crops unruffled, as they had for centuries.

The Nationalists enforced laws selectively. Chiang and his allies controlled the government. His friends, such as the alleged gangster, Big-Eared Tu, had almost unlimited power. Magnates like the Soong family owned most of China's wealth. Anyone can get away with almost anything in Nationalist China, if he pleases the right people. Otherwise, the government will exterminate him.

but the days of barbarian horsemen were gone. In 1912, Yuan became First President.

When China held its first elections in 1912, Yuan's Republican Party lost badly. However, the victorious Nationalist Party (called the Kuomintang) could not force Yuan to obey it. The victory only served to divide the Kuomintang, since its factions disagreed about almost all policy. Throughout 1913, Yuan attempted to provoke a Kuomintang revolt. He eventually succeeded, which gave him an excuse to crush his rivals, and, in 1914, dissolve parliament. Sun Yat-sen fled back to Japan. Yuan summoned a Convention of Citizens' Representatives to decide China's future government, and it unanimously called on him to become Emperor, "down through one thousand generations." After a courteous expression of surprise, he agreed.

### **The Warlords**

The Kuomintang continued to struggle from Canton. Sun Yat-sen revived his old secret society and attempted to restore its unity. Spies and assassins shuttled across the Sea of Japan as revolutionaries attacked Yuan, and he struck back. The Chinese governors had little use for Yuan. In 1915, Yunnan declared independence and Kweichow followed suit. Yuan's generals refused to suppress them. At their urging, Yuan renounced the Throne. He died later that year.

This left China ruled by its local governors, or warlords. Often, even the official warlord could not govern his land, because of the lesser warlords who owned parts of it. Bandits roamed freely, too. The roles of brigand and governor quickly became interchangeable. These leaders regularly assassinated each other. On the battlefield, they usually refrained from mass slaughter, if only because defeated armies joined the victorious side. Generals would also change sides (with their troops) for money. An army's loyalty usually cost \$300,000 to \$400,000. Therefore, the warlords could only support their troops by continually conquering new peasants to tax. All of them hoped to conquer Peking and exploit the remnants of national government.

Japan used the turmoil masterfully. It entered World War I on the Allied side and collected Germany's old rights in China afterward. In 1915, the Japanese presented Yuan Shih-k'ai with the Twenty-One Demands, which requested joint Sino-Japanese control over all military, industrial and police activity. Yuan accepted most of them in return for help in his plot to become Emperor. When central government broke down, the Japanese used warlords as proxies, controlling them through loans.

Peking joined the Allies too, in 1917. However, the Treaty of Versailles left the Twenty-One Demands intact. This inspired new nationalist fury in China. Students held massive protests on the Fourth of May, and the Kuomintang swelled. Then the Soviet Union renounced Russia's old conquests in China, winning Chinese adulation. It sent Comintern agents to found a Chinese Communist party, and they succeeded in 1921. A young man named Mao Tse-tung founded the Hunan cell. The Communists worried that the Kuomintang was too fractious to lead a revolution, but eventually merged with it. Comintern dispatched an agent to reorganize the Nationalists. They chose Michael Borodin, a veteran agitator fresh from prison in England.

### **The East Is Red**

Sun Yat-sen landed at Canton in the summer of 1923. He needed an aggressive leader to fight the warlords; he chose one of the military students who joined his Japanese organization, Chiang Kai-shek. The USSR offered to teach Chiang the latest in tactics, and he accepted a scholarship to their military academy. But other cadets there tormented him, and Chiang returned hating all Russians.

The Kuomintang split into factions when Sun Yat-sen died in 1925. The Western Hills group demanded immediate expulsion of the Communists. The matter grew fiercer when two of its members were mysteriously shot. Insisting on unity for their organization, Chiang Kai-shek led an expedition against the Shanghai warlords.

Chiang won gloriously, cutting the warlords' railway supply lines with surprise marches through the wilderness. Communists organized strikes to hamper the warlords. Chiang Kai-shek stopped for the winter in Nanchang. The leaders of Shanghai's secret societies sneaked across the lines to pay him both visits and bribes.

Meanwhile, Mao Tse-tung raised a peasant army in Yunnan. Leftist members of the Kuomintang decided to assert their independence. They moved the Nationalist government to Hankow, against Chiang's orders. At first, he seemed ready to tolerate it.

Chiang reopened his drive on Shanghai. Leftist labor unions in the city seized control, were brutally crushed, but rose again. With this help, Chiang Kai-shek's Kuomintang army marched into the city. Upon arrival, Chiang's troops massacred the leftists who had just helped them. Secret societies ferreted out the Communists who escaped.

## The Republic

China's last powerful warlord, Chang Tso-lin, squabbled with his Japanese patrons in early 1928. Shortly afterward, his train hit a mine far from any war zone. His wastrel son, Chang Hsueh-liang, retained an army north of the Great Wall. Several other warlords joined the Kuomintang, notably Feng Yu-hsiang, the Christian General, who baptized whole regiments with a fire hose. In 1928, Chiang Kai-shek took Peking and changed its name to Peip'ing, or "The North Pacified."

On July 6, he visited the Green Cloud Temple, where Sun Yat-sen still lay in state. Chiang solemnly told the corpse that the Kuomintang had fulfilled his dream. Chiang founded the Chinese Republic, with a capitol in Nanking.

Soon after the victory, Chiang's rivals formed an Association for the Reorganization of the Kuomintang. They accused Chiang of planning to become dictator and led armed revolts in 1929 and 1930. The Christian General and other ex-warlords joined them. Chiang Kai-shek bargained with Chang Tso-lin's son to subdue the rebels. In payment, Chiang restored the Chang family's power over North China. It was a good move. Young Chang became an able ruler who stoutly refused to deal with the Japanese.

## The Long March

While Chiang subdued the Northern warlords, one of his generals, the Communist Chu Teh, declared his forces a separate Red Army. He founded a new Communist China around Nanchang. After a few defeats, Chu retreated into the mountains, where he met Mao Tse-tung. He recognized Mao as a political genius, and the two became partners. By 1930, islands of Communism dotted Southern China, especially in Kiangsi province.

The Communist leaders had established a headquarters in Shanghai. Mao ignored much of their advice. He based his revolutions on the countryside, not urban workers, although this contradicted Marxist-Leninist theory. Furthermore, when the Red Army captured an area, it did not massacre the landlords or confiscate their lands. Mao knew that the Communists could not afford enemies.

Chiang Kai-shek moved to wipe out Communism in 1930. His followers scoured Shanghai for Communist leaders. European agents in the International Concession helped them. Even at the end, the Communists fought over Party

## Manchukuo

In 1929, the Kuomintang nationalized a Manchurian section of the Trans-Siberian railroad to protest the USSR's attempt to start a revolution in Canton. A Soviet army appeared on the border. Chiang Kai-shek quickly changed his mind. The watching Japanese judged that Chiang was weak. The event also made the Japanese more eager to assert their power, since the Soviets were their fiercest rivals in Manchuria. Certain Japanese generals predicted war with the Soviets by 1940.

In Tokyo, leaders still debated Japan's China policy. The generals in command of Japan's elite Kwantung Army, already in China, had no patience for this. They considered China ripe for conquest. They resolved to act for the glory of their nation, whether they had orders or not. The Kwantung Army found pretexts for its plans. In summer 1931, one of its intelligence officers, Captain Nakamura, traveled about China disguised as a drug pusher. The Chinese police not only arrested but shot him. Then, on Sept. 18, 1931, a bomb exploded on Japan's South Manchurian railway. That called for retaliation. Within hours, the Kwantung Army swept over Manchuria.

Chiang Kai-shek dreaded war with Japan. He did nothing. However, riots and demonstrations erupted around China, especially near the Japanese legation in Shanghai. Inevitably, they caught and killed a Japanese civilian, who happened to be a Buddhist monk. Japan sent a fleet to threaten Shanghai. Shanghai's Mayor offered all the concessions that Japan demanded. Then, without informing the Chinese, the guards of the Japanese legation attempted to seize several city blocks outside the International Settlement to "strengthen their position." Chinese troops shot back. The Japanese responded with aerial bombing — and then invaded China, penetrating almost to Nanking. Japan declared Manchuria to be an independent nation called "Manchukuo," and installed Pu Yi, former Emperor of China, to govern it as their puppet.



### *The Japanese Army*

Japanese detachments make dangerous enemies. A Japanese infantry platoon contained three squads of 13 men each. Every squad had a light machine gun. The platoon contained an additional squad with three "knee mortar" grenade launchers. Divisions could reinforce important positions with heavy machine guns or artillery. Tanks operated in platoons of three or four vehicles. The most common tank, the Type 97, traveled 25 mph and carried a 57mm cannon.

Japanese units rarely received replacements. Therefore, if guerrillas shatter a Japanese unit, it will probably stay crippled.



leadership, often betraying each other to the Nationalists. After finishing in Shanghai, Chiang's troops marched inland. They laid siege to Mao's countryside Soviets.

In October 1934, Mao, Chu and 100,000 Communists broke out of Chiang's trap in Kiangsi. Their peasant soldiers blamed the Shanghai establishment for their hardships and acclaimed Mao as leader of the Party. The Communists retreated West. Chiang Kai-Shek pursued them. The Red Army continued to retreat, province after province. It crossed wildernesses with picturesque names like Golden Sands, Dadau Gorge, the Great Grasslands, the Great Snowy Mountains and Caves of Shansi, for 6,000 miles. Only about 4,000 Reds survived. This "Long March" was to become a central historical event in Mao's China.

While Communists fought Nationalists, the Japanese quietly absorbed Hopei province. Seven million Chinese fell under Japan's rule. After two years of this,

Kuomintang leaders could endure Japan no more. Chiang refused to listen to them. He insisted on winning the war with Mao, which was going gloriously, before starting a daunting new one.

Chiang's officers refused to continue China's fratricide. In December 1936, Chang Hsueh-liang, the heroic Young Marshal, reached an unspoken truce with the Communists in Sian. When Chiang Kai-shek arrived to demand an offensive, Chang Hsueh-liang kidnaped him. The Young Marshal forced Chiang Kai-shek to talk with the Reds. Mao's silver-tongued diplomat, Chou En-lai, proposed a united effort against the Japanese. Chiang, without much choice, submitted. The Young Marshal released him on Christmas Day. Chang Hsueh-liang then went to Nanking to apologize for his insubordination. Chiang Kai-shek arrested him. He kept the Young Marshal in prison for 27 years, the last of them in Taiwan.

## The War Years

World War Two began for China in July, 1937. Chinese and Japanese troops exchanged a few shots outside Peking on July 7, when the Japanese wanted to enter a walled town. By the end of the month, the Japanese attacked and captured Peking and Tientsin. Chinese radio then reported several Kuomintang triumphs, as propaganda. The brigands whom Japan installed in Hopei panicked. To avoid being captured as collaborators, they revolted and slaughtered Japanese. Japan remembered that. The Japanese conquered Nanking in December, committing brutal atrocities. Chiang Kai-shek retreated to Chungking, and the Japanese spread out over China.

The Allies sent aid, first through the jungles of Burma, and when that country fell, by air over the Himalayan "hump." Mercenaries also helped the Chinese, notably General Claire Chennault's "Flying Tigers." Chiang Kai-shek, to the fury of his American advisor, General Joseph Stilwell, shunned battle. When Chinese troops did fight, the Japanese almost always won. However, Japan lacked the manpower to control more than key cities and roads, which rendered them naked to Mao's guerrilla warfare.

The Red Army fought doggedly. In July 1945, it claimed to have liberated over one hundred million Chinese. As Mao gained confidence, he grew harsher with the landlords, not only redistributing their wealth but forcing them to pay peasants restitution for previous exploitation. In August 1945, Japan capitulated. Soviet troops overran Manchuria. The Nationalists, with American transportation, scrambled to reach Japan's provincial administrators and accept their surrenders. However, the Red Army often got there first.

The civil war resumed, and through 1946-1947, Chiang Kai-shek triumphed. He outnumbered the Communists, with three million men against 600,000 Red Army regulars. But peasants of the liberated areas flocked to Mao's army. By late 1948, the forces were equal. Inflation tore through Nationalist China as well. It took billions of Chinese yuan to equal a U.S. dollar. To curb inflation, Chiang Kai-shek issued a new currency and confiscated all gold, silver and US dollars. Soldiers shot hoarders on the streets. Much of China's gold later appeared in the foreign bank accounts of Chiang's allies, the Soong family. In 1949-1950, the Kuomintang withdrew to Taiwan. Mao founded the People's Republic of China, with his capitol in Peking.

## Mao's Guerrillas

Mao raised rebellion wherever he could, welcoming army units, local militia, deserters from the enemy and freebooting gangs as guerrilla bands. Anyone in China during this period must cope with the revolutionaries. The adventuring party itself may be one of these bands. They do not need to want Communism. Mao believed the ancient saying, "Mt. Tai is a mountain because it does not

## Adventure Seed: Unit 731

Japan considered Manchuria ideal for research in germ warfare. Its vast wildernesses provided secrecy. It was distant from population centers. Furthermore, nearby China offered a limitless supply of experimental subjects.

In 1935, the Imperial Japanese Army opened its Unit 731 Biological Warfare detachment at a soy sauce factory in Harbin. The Unit later expanded to Pingfan Prison and the Anta proving grounds. It experimented with anthrax, cholera, dysentery, plague, typhoid and paratyphoid. Unit 731 invented fountain pens and umbrellas with hidden germ sprayers. It also developed paper bombs which could fall, disperse infectious clouds, and then spontaneously burn, obliterating all evidence. Other weapons included disease balloons to float along upper-air winds and ceramic bombs filled with ceramic shrapnel to cause non-fatal wounds that could become infected.

The Japanese tested their products on Chinese prisoners. They also worked with American POWs, occasionally convincing them to volunteer for experiments by promising medical care and better food. The care, of course, involved examinations to collect data, and the food contained experimental bacteria. Prisoners rioted at least twice in Pingfan prison. In 1943, one jumped a guard and managed to set several others free. The Japanese "fumigated" the complex with phosgene. Another occurred in August, 1945, when the Japanese attempted to exterminate all witnesses to Unit 731.

If the Japanese capture PCs in a World War II campaign, they might send them to Unit 731. There, they participate in an experiment too important to interrupt, even when Japan surrenders. Renegade doctors from Unit 731 keep them in secret Harbin laboratories after the war. When they break free, they find themselves in the midst of the Chinese Civil War.

For a more extravagant adventure, the Unit 731 experiments might have unpredictable effects on the prisoners, granting them strange powers drawn from *GURPS Supers* or *GURPS Psionics*.

scorn the merest handful of dirt, the seas are deep because they do not scorn the smallest trickle."

The guerrillas officially used the following organization. A brigade equalled two regiments. Each regiment contained trained doctors and two to four battalions. Several cavalry regiments operated in North China. A battalion contained a heavy machine gun detachment (with as many guns as the commander could capture), and two to four companies. Each company included three platoons and an Intelligence Squad. At least one company per battalion dispersed its intelligence squad undercover in local townships. When possible, a different company equipped its intelligence agents with horses, for daring reconnaissance and messenger work. Adventurers might serve as either sort of squad. Each platoon contained three squads, and each squad contained eight men with one commander. Each unit contained one commander and one political officer.

These organizations can be modified. The party might be an independent squad, with little control from above. Discipline declined dramatically below battalion level. Units seldom had all their members, or even standard weapons. Mao frequently warned that the Red Army could not distribute guns too freely. He advised guerrillas to use birding guns, spears, big swords and captured equipment.

### Kuomintang Organization

The Nationalist organization was slightly more haphazard than that of the Reds. A division officially consisted of 9,529 men. Few actually contained more than 7,000. These forces relied on 18-30 trench mortars each for artillery, and every division had about 200 light machine guns. Generals still behaved like warlords. When the Allies sent modern weapons, whichever unit received the shipment hoarded them all. The troops had no desire to fight in their petty feuds. Officers often had to rope soldiers together to prevent desertions. General Stilwell attempted to train 30 elite divisions to American standards and arm them with modern equipment. Chiang Kai-shek always feared that the generals of these superior divisions might mutiny.

### Unite Beneath the Glorious People's Party

*The east is red.  
The sun rises.  
China has brought forth a Mao Tse-tung.  
He works for the people's happiness.  
He is the people's great savior.*

The conversion to Communism went exactly as planned. The Soviet Union returned Emperor Pu Yi for re-education. People's Tribunals throughout the countryside denounced landlords, took their property and often shot them. Former bourgeois confessed daily. The Party harassed suspected sympathizers incessantly, surrounding their homes with loudspeaker trucks which blared accusations 24 hours a day.

In 1953, the Party introduced its first Five Year Plan. With it, the government took back the land it granted peasants and organized communes. The new system produced a bountiful harvest, despite several natural disasters. Then Communist good fortune began to wane. In 1957, Mao pronounced his Hundred Flowers campaign, based on his own saying, "Let a hundred flowers bloom, let a hundred schools of thought contend." For six weeks, there was no censorship, and people freely cursed Communism. The Party decided to reverse course and banished its critics to remote provinces. "We wanted flowers," one announcement read, "not weeds." The Party christened its second Five Year Plan, of





1958, "The Great Leap Forward." However, it collapsed and nearly ended in mass starvation.

### The Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution

In theory, the Cultural Revolution began when students realized that their college tests were a relic of the Imperial examination scheme. The examinations perpetuated a class system, where the educated not only did no manual labor, but felt superior to those who did. China's youth realized that this was only one of many injustices left over from earlier times and rose up to erase the last traces of bourgeois thought. Mao Tse-tung, the Peoples' Great Savior, encouraged them with his slogan, "To rebel is right."

Mao had less romantic motives too. He was losing power. The Party bureaucracy had become stratified and gained a will of its own. In 1958, a Party



### The Sino-Soviet Split

Mao despised Nikita Khrushchev as a pusillanimous "revisionist" of Marxism. This, combined with the fact that the Soviet Union occupies significant parts of historical China, led to angry rivalry between the two Communist powers. By the late 1950s, the Communist Parties of the two nations regularly wrote barbed editorials about each other. When China detonated an atomic bomb in 1964, Sino-Soviet relations chilled dramatically. Soviet diplomats reportedly asked American officials how the U.S. would react if the USSR bombed China's nuclear facility at Lop Nor. The United States warned them not to. The U.S., USSR and China began to play one against another in a three-way balance of power. Chou En-Lai's diplomacy served China well. In the late 1960s, the Soviet Union and China fought a border war. Its extent and duration remain matters of speculation.

## The Lin Piao Affair

In 1970, Lin Piao appeared certain to succeed Mao. He was a devout follower of the Chairman and had fought at his side since the Long March. Lin Piao first circulated the Little Red Book of Mao's sayings, which later became a sort of bible. Lin was also a firebrand, who once suggested that China blow up an American city to spark global nuclear war between the USSR and USA. Then, after the superpowers destroyed each other, China could bring its own Communism to the world. But something changed. Mao rewrote Lin Piao's speech at the Ninth Party Congress, forcing him to say things with which he did not agree. In the last phases of Cultural Revolution self-examination, party members wrote scathingly of fictitious officials who resembled Lin Piao.

In September 1971, Lin Piao attempted to murder Mao. Some reports say that Lin's supporters planned to blow up Mao's train while Lin himself was on vacation, and therefore unlikely to be implicated. Others say Lin intended to sound the air raid sirens and then set fire to the Great Helmsman's sealed bunker where he would be racing for safety. In either event, his accomplices warned Mao. Lin commandeered a military airplane and escaped. He turned North, as if expecting sanctuary in the USSR. The aircraft disappeared over Mongolia. Officially, nobody ever found the wreckage.

Perhaps Lin lacked the time to fuel his plane. Perhaps the Chinese shot him down. Perhaps the Soviets, not wanting to be caught in a scandal, destroyed him. Or perhaps something stranger occurred. One rumor says that Mongol officials actually located the wreckage. They determined that the pilot died in mid-flight, hit by a pistol bullet fired at close range.

intriguer named Liu Shao-ch'i maneuvered Mao into resigning as head of State. Mao and his ultra-radical Minister of Defense, Lin Piao, resolved to shake their enemies at the roots. They mobilized the youth as "Red Guards." These cadres appeared everywhere, lynching "bourgeois elements," dragging enemies about in dunce caps and chanting slogans. They went on "little long marches," to spread the Cultural Revolution around the countryside. One million Red Guards rallied in Peking that August, condemning Liu Shao-ch'i.

Soon, the Red Guards realized that some of their own were not sincere. They merely "waved the red banner to beat down the red banner." The most radical, led by Madame Mao's Cultural Revolution Group, attacked the others. Factions fought in the streets, stealing weapons from the Peoples' Liberation Army. The troops had orders not to intervene. Only Chou En-lai dared speak of moderation. He insured that China's nuclear program went on unhindered, defending physicists from persecution and banning the Red Guards from Sinkiang.

In 1967, Lin Piao himself realized that the Red Guards had to be controlled. He authorized the army to guard their munitions and suppress street battles. Mao urged his followers to compromise. Red Guards were to go one by one into the countryside to peacefully teach communism. Despite orders, enemy Red Guards fought tank battles as late as 1968.

In 1969, Mao declared the Cultural Revolution a victory — and therefore over. He instituted several reforms to reflect its lessons. They included sending "barefoot doctor" paramedics to rural regions, and educational reforms. China's Communists held the rancorous Ninth Congress and eventually agreed to expel Liu Shao-chi from the Party. The Congress named Lin Piao as the "closest comrade in Mao's arms."

## To Get Rich Is Glorious

Debate between moderate and radical communists dominated the 1970s. Chou En-lai, the peacemaker, died in January 1976. The ultra-communist Gang of Four, led by Mao's wife, curtailed the public mourning. In April, several students led raucous demonstrations in Chou's behalf. Mao died in September. The moderates took power and arrested the Gang of Four. In 1980, the moderates put them on trial. They sentenced Madame Mao, the "White-Boned Demon," to die, although this sentence was later suspended. Teng Hsiao-ping, a moderate leader whom the communists had purged twice, became Chairman. He restored individual farms instead of communes, allowed private profit and rehabilitated other purged pragmatists. China's economy soared, and several millionaires appeared in the Peoples' Republic. "I don't care if the cat is white or black," Teng said, "as long as it catches mice."

Teng never wanted a political revolution. Those who did, both democrats and extreme communists, held demonstrations throughout the '70s and '80s. The most recent occurred in the Summer of 1989, at Tiananmen Square. As in the Cultural Revolution, the corrupt party bureaucracy infuriated student activists. The students encamped in the square for several days, demanding democratic reforms, until troops were brought in from rural districts to brutally suppress the demonstrations.

The Chinese still live in interesting times.





# THE SUPERNATURAL

# 7



## Sorcery

*Ch'ishu* — forces and numbers — govern every detail of ancient Chinese life. Nobody would build a house, begin a journey or declare war without consulting a diviner. That does not mean every Chinese campaign has to involve the supernatural. A GM can run a no-magic campaign in which forces and numbers are merely superstitions. However, the China of legends includes almost as much magic as Western fantasy.



## Associations

The Chinese base their magic on five Elements: Fire, Wood, Earth, Metal and Water. Each substance has its own meaning and sphere of power over seemingly unrelated things. These relationships determine the components of Sympathetic Magic spells and the advice of diviners. They can also be used to design game settings, names, Quirks and other adventure details. A swordsman who wins his first victory in Autumn might keep a pet ciao, or the tomb of a Legalist lord might be painted black.

### *Fire, the Element of Greater Yang*

*Astrological Omens.* Sun; Mars; Heat; Summer; South; Red; Number 7.

*Medical Meanings.* Tongue; Bitter; Burning smell; Lungs; Joy; Insight.

*Political Meanings.* Chou Empire; War; Enlightened; liberal legislation.

*Miscellaneous.* Fowl; Feathered creatures; Beans; Growth; Virtue. Mars, the planet of Fire, can be a good omen but also indicates friction and unexpected obstacles.

*Sacrificial Location.* Hearth.

### *Wood, the Element of Lesser Yang*

*Astrological Omens.* Jupiter; Wind; Spring; East; Green; Number 8.

*Medical Meanings.* Eyes; Sour tastes; Goatish smells; Spleen; Anger; Overall personality.

*Political Meanings.* Hsia Empire; Agriculture; Lenient legislation.

*Miscellaneous.* Sheep; Scaly-skinned beings; Wheat; Birth; Charity.

*Sacrificial Location.* Inside a doorway.

### *Earth, the Element of Balance*

*Astrological Omens.* Saturn; Thunder; 6th month; Center; Yellow; Number 5.

*Medical Meanings.* Mouth; Sweet; Fragrant smells; Heart; Desire; Intelligence.

*Political Meanings.* Three Kings and Five Emperors; City administration; Prudent legislation.

*Miscellaneous.* Oxen; Hairless animals; Panicked millet.

*Sacrificial Location.* Internal courtyard.

*Continued on next page . . .*

## Learning and Using Magic

Anyone can learn magic, but, except in certain high-mana areas, only someone with Magical Aptitude may actually use it. Mana concentrates in wizard's homes, holy mountains, caves, haunted houses, tombs and many other enchanted locations. Outside these focal points, magicians suffer a -3 penalty on Magic rolls.

Chinese magicians pen countless books of spells and alchemical formulas, but few can claim to be complete. Most successful sorcerers learn spells from their fathers, or as apprentices. Many Chinese sorcerers are eager for students. They need trained assistants to undertake mystic quests and then test prototype Elixirs of Life. Since Elixirs of Life contain poison, few wish to serve as a sorcerer's guinea pig. Wizards must recruit apprentices by befriending a likely candidate, perhaps helping him out of some debt or impossible dilemma, and gradually persuading him to study with them and try their potions.

All spells are Mental/Hard skills unless specified otherwise.

## Available Spells

Some spells fit Chinese folklore better than others, but wizards know far more than the uninitiated ever guess. Any spell from the *Basic Set*, *GURPS Magic* or *GURPS Japan* could appear in China. If players bring enchanters to China from a foreign setting, they find that Oriental mana functions differently from Western mystic energy. Therefore, they must treat high-mana areas as normal mana, normal-mana areas as low mana and low-mana areas as no mana. Even Japanese magicians suffer these penalties, because of the complex Chinese elemental system. For the same reason, Chinese magicians suffer these penalties when traveling abroad.

Chinese magicians cast their spells not with incantations, but by whistling tunes.

The following spells from the *Basic Set* and *GURPS Magic* are especially well-known in China, although sometimes in a modified form.

### *Elemental Spells*

Western elemental spirits, such as salamanders, undines and elementals, do not live in China.

### *Earth Spells*

All the Earth spells are available although using them may anger a local spirit lord. Only dragons and spirits know Earthquake and Volcano.

Since Metal is a separate element, no Earth spells may affect metal or ore in any way.

### *Air Spells*

Air is not an Element in China, but simple Air spells (those in the *Basic Set*) do work. Unauthorized attempts to control the weather may anger a local dragon or nature spirit. However, these beings may also implore wizards to help them when they have been lazy and face punishment for neglecting to send rain.

### *Water Spells*

As with Air spells, Water spells may attract attention from spirits..

### *Animal Spells*

Human mages know only the Beast-Soother, Beast-Summoning and Beast Speech spells. Kilin, dragons and other spirits often cast more advanced ones.

### **Communication and Empathy**

Diviners often use Sense Life, Sense Foes and Sense Emotion and wizards of every sort may have Persuasion. Most dragons and spirit lords know Mind-Reading.

### **Enchantment Spells**

Chinese craftsmen often use Enchant, Scroll, Remove Enchantment, Accuracy, Power, Bane and Fortify. A dragon can cast Powerstone on pearls, opals or copper.

### **Food Spells**

A few Chinese magicians know these spells, but their formulas are treasured secrets.

### **Healing Spells**

Lend Strength, Lend Health, Recover Strength, Awaken, Minor Healing, Major Healing, Cure Disease and Restoration exist. To use these spells, Chinese mages must cast Judge the Balance (see new spells) and obtain the components it calls for. In Tibet, people revere Healing mages as if they had the Pious Advantage.

### **Illusion and Creation Spells**

All Illusion spells appear frequently in China. Usually only tree-spirits know Creation spells.

### **Knowledge Spells**

Diviners know Aura, Seeker, Trace, History and Ancient History. The huns of one's ancestors (see Great Spirits) can know any knowledge spell. They cast them in return for sacrifices.

### **Light and Darkness Spells**

Dragons often know these spells, but few humans use them.

### **Making and Breaking Spells**

Human magicians often know Find Weakness, Weaken, Shatter, Restore, Rejoin and Repair. Wishing Trees can often Rejoin or Repair broken objects.

### **Meta-Spells**

Common Meta-Spells include Link, Scryguard, Counterspell, Dispel Magic, Bless and Curse. Dispel Magic and Counterspell only work if used with components selected by a Judge The Balance spell (see *New Spells*, p. 110).

### **Mind Control Spells**

The most common Mind Control Spells are Fear, Daze, Mass Daze, Sleep and Mass Sleep.

Rishis and other ascetics can resist these spells (see *The Way*).

### **Movement Spells**

These are common. Levitation is often used in rituals for consuming the Elixir of Life.

### **Associations (Continued)**

#### **Metal, the Element of Lesser Yin**

*Astrological Omens.* Venus; Cold; Autumn; West; White; Number 9.

*Medical Meanings.* Nose; Acrid taste; Rank smell; Kidney; Sorrow; Speech.

*Political Meanings.* Shang Empire; Justice; Energetic legislation.

*Miscellaneous.* Dog; Hairy animals; Hemp; Fulfillment of oaths.

*Sacrificial Location.* Outside a door.

#### **Water, the Element of Greater Yin**

*Astrological Omens.* Moon; Mercury (planet); Rain; Winter; North; Black; Number 6.

*Medical Meanings.* Ear; Salty taste; Rotten smell; Liver; Fear; Acute hearing and perceptiveness.

*Political Meanings.* Ch'in Empire; Labor for the State; Legalism.

*Miscellaneous.* Pig; Shelled animals; Millet; Seemly behavior; Punishment.

*Sacrificial Location.* Well.



### **Elements and the Calendar**

The Chinese calendar (see pp. 23-24) is also based on the elements. Each 12-year "animal cycle" is ruled by a different element, giving a greater 60-year cycle. Thus, 1991 is not just the Year of the Ram, but the Year of the Metal Ram.

The years of the current element cycle are:

Wood: 1948-1959

Fire: 1960-1971

Earth: 1972-1983

Metal: 1984-1995

Water: 1996-2007

## The Cycle of Changes

Each element has an enemy which inevitably overcomes it. This leads to an endlessly repeating cycle in which things of one force replace those of the previous one. However, the process is more complex than this. A third element instigates each change. A fourth limits its extent. For example, Metal always replaces Wood, but only on behalf of Fire. Water can stop the process. As a loose interpretation, metal axes can chop trees, but only after being forged in fire. If the fire is extinguished by water, no more axes may be forged. Sympathetic Magic can exploit these changes, but ultimately people must conform to them. Diviners help people uncover the Cycle and adapt to it.

The Elements change in the following sequence.

1. Wood conquers Earth, but Metal controls the process, and Fire limits it.
2. Metal conquers Wood, but Fire controls the process, and Water limits it.
3. Fire conquers Metal, but Water controls the process, and Earth limits it.
4. Water conquers Fire, but Earth controls the process, and Wood limits it.
5. Earth conquers Water, but Wood controls the process, and Metal limits it.
6. Return to #1.

## I Ching

I Ching readings are actually more complex than "yes" and "no." A GM may wish to give detailed hints in an I Ching reading but obscure them with cryptic language. It can grow very interesting when PCs try to figure out these hints. Here are some sample passages if GMs want to imitate real readings.

To be closemouthed like a sack is neither praiseworthy nor blameworthy. If one is careful, there will be no trouble.

Dragons do battle in the fields. Their blood is red and yellow.

When one steps on hoarfrost, one knows that solid ice will soon appear.

There is an uncertain leap at the abyss. There is no fault going forward. There is a flying dragon in the heavens. The great man is creative. The overbearing dragon is cause for regret. That which overflows cannot last for long.

## Necromantic Spells

Wu often use Banish to dismiss evil ghosts. For more information, see *Ghosts*, p. 118. People consider other necromancy an abomination. Still, it is distressingly common.

## Protection and Warning Spells

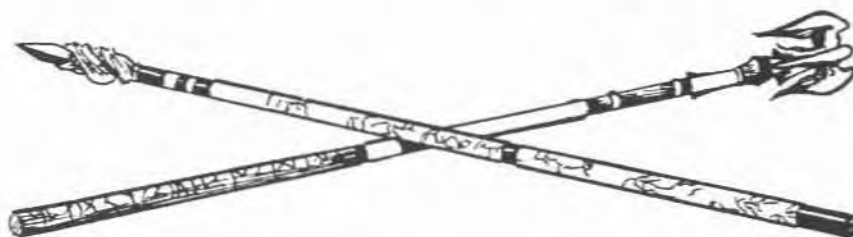
Sense Danger and Watchdog are the most common.

## Sound Spells

Common.

## New and Modified Spells

The following spells are presented for the first time here or are significantly adapted from the *GURPS Magic*. They probably do not exist in Japanese or Western campaigns unless a visiting Chinese magician teaches them.



## New Spells

### Elemental Spells

#### Sympathetic Magic

This spell imbues an item with Elemental harmony. One casts it on a tool, vehicle or weapon, and it modifies all skill rolls involving that object by +2 or -2. The caster governs this spell with a model which represents the enchanted object. No matter where the talisman is, if it is symbolically functioning, the actual item receives bonuses. If something disturbs the talisman, it inflicts a -2 penalty. Typical talismans include toy ships floating in bowls and ornate candles. They cause disasters if the ship tips over or the candle blows out. The model must either resemble the enchanted object or contain some Elemental connection with it. Use the guidelines in the sidebars *Associations* (p. 108), *Cycles of Changes* and *I Ching* to find analogous symbols. The talisman must cost at least twice as much as the original object.

*Duration.* One day.

*Cost:* 10 to cast; 5 to maintain.

*Time To Cast:* 10 seconds.

*Prerequisite:* Any Elemental spell.

### Knowledge Spells

#### Divination

Divinations are the most widespread Chinese spells, and certainly the most profitable. Each type of divination is a separate spell, which requires its own materials. These spell descriptions also include prices, since wizards support themselves by telling fortunes.



Cost (to the caster), time to cast and general prerequisites for Divination are all as described in *GURPS Magic* except where otherwise mentioned.

Chinese diviners not only learn the future, they can improve it. When a wizard casts Ming Sun or the advanced versions of Feng Shui, he prescribes a ritual. If the spell recipient follows these suggestions, he receives a one-time use of the Luck advantage. Anyone who rejects the magician's advice automatically suffers one incident of Bad Luck. He also infuriates the diviner.

The Diviner's prescription should symbolize the Element which controls the event in question or a Cycle which can change that element. See the sidebars *Associations* (p. 108) and *The Cycle of Changes* (p. 110) for details on the elements. The GM may invent exact details. Treat the rituals as temporary Quirks. Examples: "Wood is the timely Element of Spring. If you travel then, carry no weapons of Metal, for they will conquer its auspicious omens," "Bring the Rain Dragon a live pig, the animal of Water. Until you reach him, the hog must accompany you everywhere," or "To invoke the Yang of Fire, carry eight red objects at all times."

**Feng Shui (Geomancy).** The word Feng Shui literally means "wind and water." People often use the term to indicate this art's experts, the "masters of prescription." By studying the landscape, a Feng Shui master can determine the fortunes of a piece of terrain. As with any other Divination spell, a successful casting of this spell gives the diviner a vision about the location's future. After 3d days of analysis with this spell, a sorcerer can recommend rituals as described above. These usually involve the building's design ("all doors must face South") but can involve behavior within its walls, etc.. The Luck or Bad Luck invoked by Feng Shui rituals automatically occurs during construction. If the Diviner makes his Luck skill roll by three or more, the Luck (Good or Bad) recurs once per year as long as the building stands. Feng Shui only reveals information about the immediate area. One cannot use it to study distant locations. *Prerequisite:* five Earth spells. \$200 for the first single casting, \$50 per day of study.

**I Ching.** A diviner consults I Ching by casting six sticks, each with an unbroken line on one side and a broken one on the other. This produces a hexagram, or design of six sticks. It can answer one yes-or-no question. The diviner needs a copy of the I Ching (Book of Changes) to use this spell. It costs \$50 and weighs five pounds. *Prerequisite:* One spell from each of the five elements. \$20 per casting.

**Physiognomy.** This analyzes a person's character from the shape of his face. In game terms, each casting reveals one Advantage, Disadvantage, Quirk, Skill or Attribute score. The caster may specify which characteristic he wishes to examine. This spell also indicates the real form of an illusion, ghost or Shapeshifting being.

A person can have Physiognomy cast on himself to determine if he has the fortitude for a particular task. This helps him decide whether or not to attempt it. To resolve this in the game, allow the character to attempt the Skill roll while under the spell. If the roll succeeds, he can automatically perform the feat. If it fails, he will fail the actual task at least once. If it is possible to try again, he may do so with normal chances for success. This only works when the wizard knows exactly what the task involves. If there are any roll modifiers that the diviner did not anticipate, the character must attempt a new roll when actually confronted with the task. *Prerequisite:* Any other Knowledge spell. \$25 per casting.

**Ming Sun.** Ming Sun is Chinese astrology. It provides a prescription for Luck, as described above. *Prerequisite:* Astronomy/TL3. \$50 per casting.

## Mystic Journeys

**Shamanic Consecration.** Even wizards cannot say how long ago this rite began. It merely exists, and it is the way that Wu gain their affinity for spirits. Shamanic Consecration consists of a journey. The subject does not know his destination when he begins, but must wander, seeking advice from sages and spirits until he learns. Any spirits he meets test him with ordeals and quests to judge his courage, respect, honesty and spiritual power. At last, if he passes all trials, a dragon pronounces him ready and tattoos his forehead with the ideogram of a priest. This sigil is only visible to spirits.

No person can attempt Consecration alone. A dog must accompany each shaman, to guide him where human senses cannot. Temples train these beasts and sell them for \$500. They fight for their masters. Shaman's dogs (see p. 113) recognize Shapeshifting spirits by smell and alert their masters with a growl. They can also track spiritual footprints to guide their masters to the gates of Spirit Kingdoms. In legend, a shaman celebrated receiving the tattoo by sacrificing his dog. This can inspire some touching roleplaying. Or, both GM and player might rather have the dog for future adventures.

In game terms, a Consecrated Shaman gains a +1 on all Reaction rolls with spirits. He also receives the Clerical Investiture and Magical Aptitude advantages. If characters undertake Consecration after play begins, they need not spend any extra character points for these advantages. Play out the quest. It makes a perfect pretext for adventuring.

**Soul Wandering.** In times of extreme trauma, one's soul can leave its body and wander by itself, on Earth or in the Spirit Kingdoms. A disembodied soul can Possess animals with an IQ below 7. The Possession is a long-range spell, as on p. B151. Spirit Wandering is a fickle power, which one can gain by chance and lose for no reason. Some users can choose what animals they will Possess but many cannot. The GM should invoke it at whim to create interesting stories. Spirit Wandering can strip PCs of their hoarded powers and preconceptions by forcing them to adventure as mere animals in some bizarre setting. This need not always be a handicap. Perhaps the adventurers lie in prison, but their spirits, in the form of loyal dogs, complete the quest. NPCs can also Spirit Wander. What if the beggar adventurers tossed stones at in the day becomes a tiger at night?

*Continued on next page . . .*

### *Mystic Journeys (Continued)*

A Soul Wanderer is trapped in the Possessed animal. If he wishes, he may attempt a Will roll each day to return to his own body. Modify these checks by +1 if his new form can see the human body and -3 if it cannot. The spirit also gains a +2 bonus if someone treats the body with a successful Yin-Yang Healing roll. The spirit may attempt one additional Will roll to return to human form if its animal form dies, but if this fails, the Soul Wanderer will perish too. While a spirit wanders, its human body lies in a fever and can do nothing but accept food. The wandering soul does not know what happens to it. However, if something destroys the original body, the spirit dies instantly.

**Atonement Quests.** Chinese spirits occasionally demand a quest from impious humans. These errands seldom involve a lesson. Chinese spirits order sinners to do practical things, like fighting barbarians, finding precious sacrifices or doing the "dirty work" in the intrigues of the spirit world.

### *Purification*

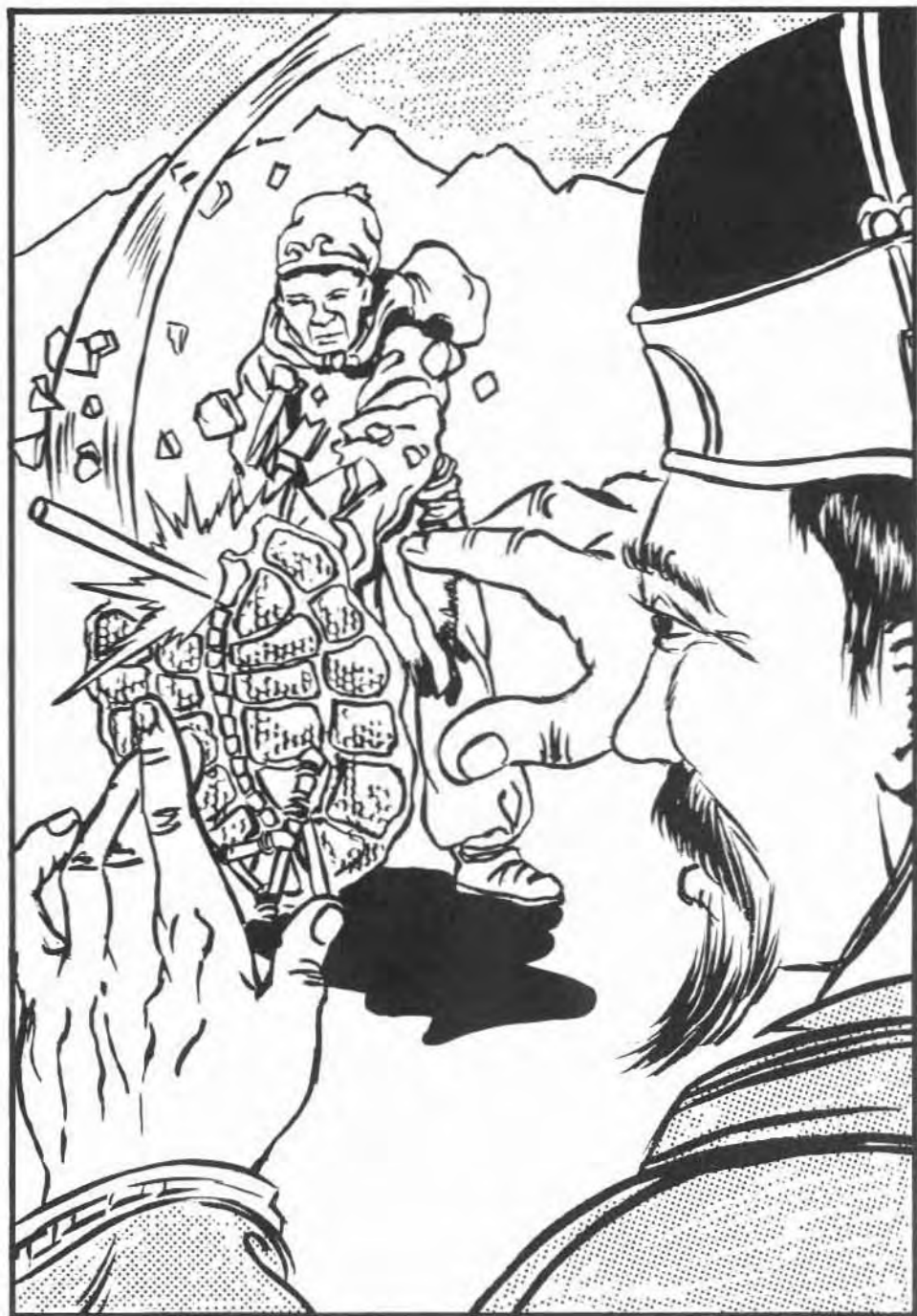
All peoples of heaven react at -3 to someone who presumes to enter the Spirit Kingdoms without purification. Prehistoric shamans developed three cleansing rituals, which continued throughout Chinese history. One involved fire, one involved water, and one involved perfume.

To purify oneself with Water, one must bathe in a sacred river. These conveniently flow past shrines where priests regularly visit the spirits. However, most people would have to make a pilgrimage to find one. Only a Consecrated Shaman (see The Way) can clean himself this easily.

The Perfume ritual involves bathing in a hot tub with bundles of the fragrant *hsing tsau* grasses. Only a female with the Dancing skill can cleanse herself with Perfume. To complete the ritual, she must dance for the spirits and pass a Dancing skill check. The grasses cost \$50. Someone with the Botany skill can find them wild.

Most people must use the Fire ritual. It requires one to walk through a bed of coals barefoot. The fire is hot enough to cause 1d-1 points damage. A purified character Moves at half speed until the damage heals. However, there is no requirement for the purification to injure its subject. Anyone with the Resist Fire spell or similar powers may use them.

Purification lasts for one journey to and from the spirit kingdoms.



**Fish Scale Divination.** To perform this divination, one must catch a particular sort of fish from a holy lake. Then, the caster can see a vision relating to his question in the fish's scales. At the GM's option, certain remote lakes and dangerous species of fish may provide more detailed visions.

The Chinese perform a spell with tortoise shells that has the same effect. Tortoise divination involves inscribing a topic on the (empty) carapace and then shattering the shell with a heated iron. Tortoise divination not only provides information, it pleases spirits. By dedicating a shell augury to some particular spirit, a supplicant gains a +1 on his next reaction roll from that being. A second divination does not provide any extra bonuses. Tortoise shells were a major trading commodity before the Chou dynasty.

**Prerequisite:** At least one Animal spell. \$25 per casting, plus expenses of reaching the holy lake. Tortoise diviners must be Literate and know the Shell and Bone Writing skill.



### Judge the Balance

This spell analyzes the proportion of each Element in a person, object or area. Three versions exist, but a person who knows the main spell can use any of them.

**Read Spirits.** This reveals what spirits (see *What Is a Spirit?* sidebar, p. 114) live within a 10 mile radius. It does not help the caster recognize these beings if he meets them. By combining this spell with Feng Shui, the caster may determine if an engineering project would offend any spirits.

**Temperament.** This senses the emotions and physical health of one subject, who must be within 10' of the caster. A magician must cast this spell before using Healing magic or certain other spells (see *Available Spells*, p. 109).

**Purpose.** This reveals the purpose of an item. It does not function on magical items. Purpose can identify an unknown object, and explain why someone put a particular tool in a particular place. It does not say *who* left it there, only *why*.

**Karma.** Only a devout Buddhist priest can cast this version of Judge the Balance. It gives the caster a vision depicting one previous event which shaped a specified person, place or thing. This spell can provide insight into a person's motivations, but the GM should not let it short-circuit an adventure. For example, if a priest cast it on an accused murderer, he might see a bitter argument between the suspect and the victim. The caster would not actually witness the crime.

**Cost:** 5

**Time To Cast:** 1 minute.

**Prerequisite:** Any Divination spell.

### Movement Spells

#### Cloud Vaulting

This spell allows the caster to travel great distances in a single somersault. He flips into the sky and bounces to his destination using clouds like trampolines. The more gymnastic the caster's vaults, the farther he can go. Cloud Vaulting carries the caster up to 100 miles, plus 100 miles per skill level in Acrobatics. One must make an Acrobatics roll for each 100 miles. If it fails, the caster falls 3d×10 feet and lands at a random location along the intended path. A passenger may cling to the wizard's back when he Cloud-Vaults, but this causes a -4 penalty on the Acrobatics roll.

**Duration:** practically instantaneous.

**Cost:** 7

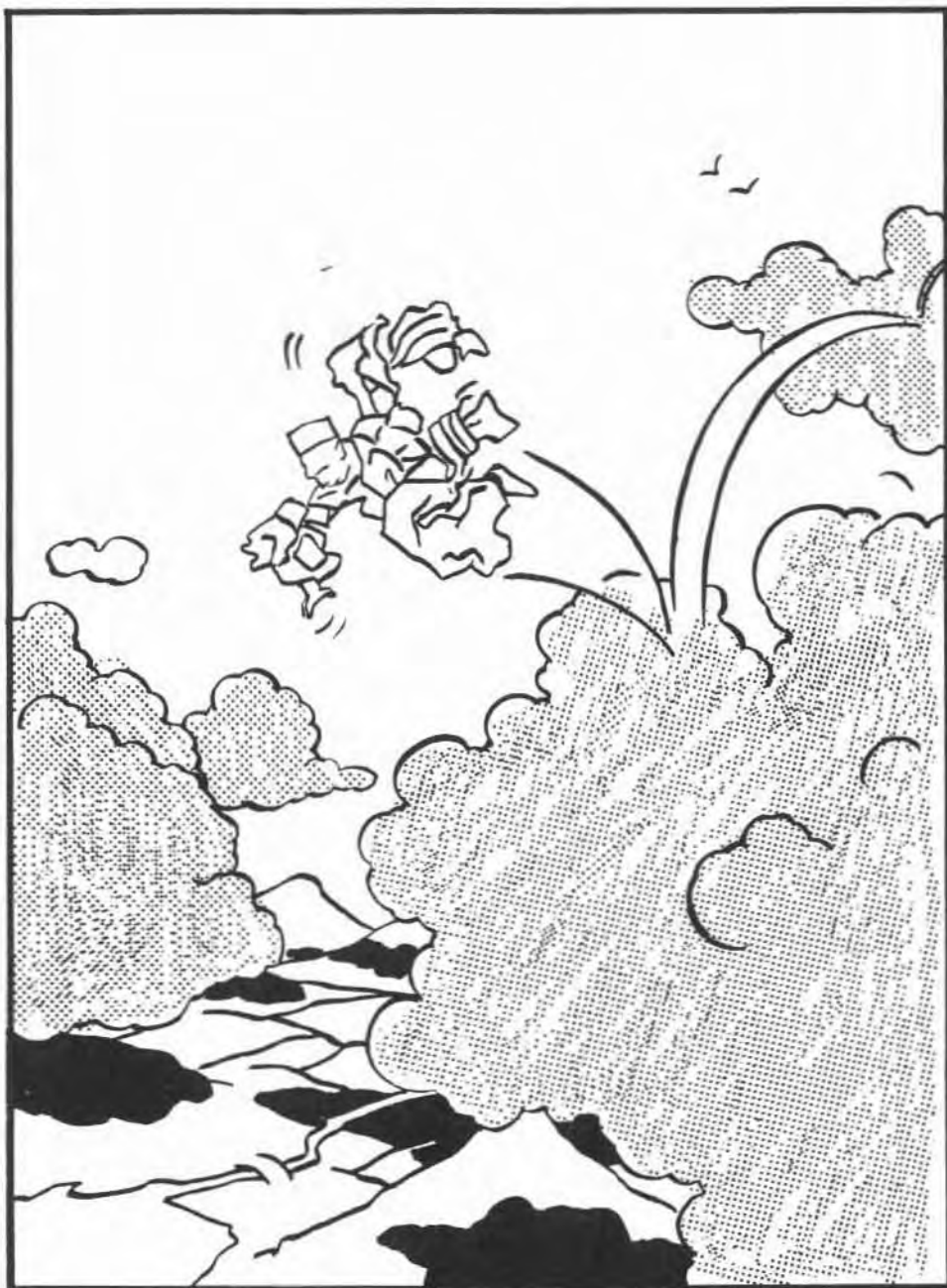
**Time To Cast:** 1 second.

**Prerequisite:** Levitation.

### Shamans' Dogs

Any breed of dog can guide a shaman. They typically have ST 6, DX 10, IQ 5, HT 14/6. Speed 9. Hide has PD 1, DR 1. Weight 35 lbs.; size 1 hex. Attacks by biting (close combat) for 1d-2 cutting damage.

All shaman's dogs have a Smell roll of 18 against spirits and Shapeshifting beings. For more information, see p. 111.





### What Is a Spirit?

For purposes of *GURPS China*, these entities are Spirits:

Baleful Stars (see sidebar, *Stars, Gods and New Spirits*)

Customized Spirits (see sidebar, *Stars, Gods and New Spirits*).

Dragons (Oriental only)

Gods (See *Religion*, p. 9)

Fong

Ghosts

Huns

Mountain Demons

P'o

River Kings

Tiger's Decoys

Wishing Trees

### Stars, Gods and New Spirits

Chinese mythology contains 36,000 gods — or more. Every star represents a devil, and a nature spirit rules every piece of wilderness. New spirits usually have ST 15 (weak garden spirit)-45 (devil), DX 15, IQ 10-30, HT 10/20-20/60, Speed 8. PD 1, DR 1. Weight 0-500 lbs.; size 1d-3 hexes. Bite or strike with fist for 1 to 2 dice of cutting or crushing damage, (humanoid forms use weapons).

Typical Advantages: Magical Aptitude, Pious, Intuition. Typical Disadvantages: Vows, Phobias (Quirk to mild intensity). Typical Skills: Savoir-Faire, Elemental spells, Knowledge spells, Animal spells (for nature spirits), Enchantment spells, Shapeshifting, Movement spells.

Spirits may look like almost anything and can almost always change their form by Shapeshifting. Nature spirits either look like part of their environment or beautifully-formed humans. They usually have some Quirk which connects them to their domain. A forest spirit might refuse to touch metal, or a stone spirit might have white quartz teeth. Spirits usually have an imperious bearing among mortals. Devils generally appear humanoid, with brightly colored skin and hair. Their descriptions often resemble Western humans, with round blue eyes and yellow hair. Baleful Stars often appear as grotesque animals.

## The Spirit Kingdoms

Spirits live alongside the normal world. Their realms exist beneath waterfalls, in animal burrows, within trees, atop clouds, or simply floating in space, invisible and ethereal. Anyone who discovers these realms' gates can walk in. To those who cannot find the entrances, Spirit Kingdoms seem not to exist. The inhabitants of Spirit Kingdoms can guide humans in or out. A shaman's dog (see *Mystic Journeys* sidebar, p. 111) can find entrances by tracking spirits to the gates.

### Realms of Nature

*Spirit Palaces.* Dragons, River Kings and other governors of nature dwell in castles like those of human lords. They hide their gates within the rivers, tree trunks, mountain gorges, or the other places they rule. If anyone steals from a spirit's palace, all his booty turns to pebbles when brought into the mundane world. Spirits pursue thieves violently anyway.

*Chi-Kung.* The Chi-Kung people live in the clouds. Few legends speak of them, but they sometimes appear in their flying chariots to help warriors fight the barbarians.



*Tiny People.* A race of midgets lives in abandoned anthills and hollow logs throughout China. These people look, act and live like ordinary people but stand only one inch tall. They normally hide from bigger folk. People seldom meet them except through Soul Wandering. Occasionally, a lonely scholar sees hunting parties of these people, pursuing a wounded insect.

Tiny people have the attributes of normal people relative to their size. They weigh proportionally more than humans (about 1.5 ounces each) and therefore do not blow away in breezes. Compared to ordinary humans, tiny people have a typical Strength of 1, and die after a single point of damage. However, they have +3 Dodge when fighting anything larger than a mouse.

### Realms of the Dead

Feng-tu, the Nether World, exists under rivers and beneath mountains. The hordes of undistinguished dead labor as ghosts here. The most illustrious ones can receive promotions and become Ghost Constables, Ghost Magistrates or even minor immortals, but most labor eternally, hauling rock. T'ai-yin, city of the capitol of Feng-tu, lies beneath a gloomy island in the utter north. The ten Princes of the Slain rule from T'ai-yin, the Citadel of Night. This city also contains San-kuan, the Three Offices, where Yen-Wang-Yeh judges the dead.

Yen-Wang-Yeh sends the souls of saints downward to Tung-t'ien, the Cavern Heavens. A race of living holy men also lives there. Ghosts and humans mingle freely in its tunnels. This may be the same Subterranean Kingdom the

Tibetans speak of. Alchemists aspire to go here rather than Feng-tu, since in the Cavern Heavens they have enough leisure to search for ways to return to life and brew a drink of immortality.

Spirits have two ways of returning to life. A ghost which leaves Feng-Tu to haunt the world of the living can sometimes receive a license to re-animate a corpse (never its own). Some living person who has undergone Shamanic Consecration must persuade a Ghost Magistrate to issue the writ of permission. Ghosts who receive these permits compete fiercely for young, unburied corpses. The revived body regains one point of HT (allowing it to survive) but remains as old as it was before, and is still infected with any previous disease. Therefore, few find this satisfactory. Yang-Wang-Yeh sends other spirits to Chu-huo kung, the Palace of Vermilion Fire. There, the dragons smelt their souls in a furnace and reforge them into new infants, about to be born.

When a saint attains immortality, his spirit may finally go to Chiu-kung, the Nine Mansions, or T'ai-ch'ing, the Plain of Great Purity. Chiu-kung floats in the sky over Mount K'un-lun, in the far west. T'ai-ch'ing is in the far east. The Perfected can occasionally advance beyond, to the Heavens.

Only Feng-tu connects directly with Earth. The Citadel of Night protects the only gates to higher planes. Taoists search for the realms of Death, hoping to find the secrets of reaching higher planes either by virtue or trickery. It is no coincidence that Elixirs of Life contain poison. These draughts open gates to the Nether World, allowing the drinker to explore it. This could make a fascinating quest for mystic PCs.

### Realms of the Heavens

The Chinese gods dwell in T'ai Chi, or the Grand Bourne, and Shang-ch'ing, or Supreme Purity. Ti rules from his Jasper Castle in the Bourne. One thousand tribes of gods serve him. They own palaces in these heavens and orchards of peaches which confer immortality on anyone who eats them. They feast on these peaches frequently and drink strong wine made from their juice. Also, there is Lao Tzu's laboratory which makes them Elixirs of Life. An even higher realm exists, called Yu-ch'ing, or Jade Purity, but the spirits there have never manifested themselves on Earth.





## 8

## BESTIARY



All of the monsters and spirits detailed in this chapter (with the single exception of the Ciao dog) are mythical beings unique to Chinese legends and folk tales. More mundane Chinese beasts — anything from horses to pigs to lions to giant pandas — can be found or extrapolated from creatures detailed on p. B141-144, or in the *GURPS Bestiary*.



The characteristics below are generally for a large — but not abnormally so — specimen of the species in question. GMs should feel free to reduce these values somewhat in an encounter with a member of any of the below species. Rare and exceptional individuals might have characteristics somewhat higher. An asterisk (\*) in a creature's description means that the ability or attack is special in some way — see the text for details. A “—” means that the heading does not apply. A “#” sign means that there are exceptions to the number given — see the text for details. If a “C” appears under the creature's reach, that indicates that it can attack in close combat only. All other entries below are either self-explanatory or as per the *GURPS Basic Set*.



#### Arctic Mole

ST: 50	Move/Dodge: 3/4	Size: 4 hexes
DX: 8	PD/DR: 3/2	Weight: 1-2 tons
IQ: 3	Damage: 2d cut	Habitats: Arctic
HT: 15/30	Reach: C	

These brown beasts look like great walruses. They tunnel in the ice and tundra. Arctic moles die if the sun hits them, so they only surface at night. Arctic moles fish and eat a medley of plants and insects in the soil. They attack anyone who molests them. Tribesmen hunt arctic moles for their tusks, which are worth \$100 each.

#### Ch'ing Shih

ST: 17	Move/Dodge: 6/7	Size: 1 hex
DX: 15	PD/DR: 3/1	Weight: 130 lbs.
IQ: 7	Damage: 1d + 1 cut	Habitats: All
HT: 20	Reach: C	

The ch'ing shih is a malevolent corpse, which kills with its stinking breath. It eagerly blows on anyone it can. Anyone who breathes the moist, fetid vapor must make an HT roll or suffer 1d damage. Ch'ing shih can blow at one target per round, with a maximum range of one yard. They may claw other victims simultaneously. These creatures usually have the Berserk disadvantage, combined with Concentration, allowing them to go berserk at will.

Ch'ing shih form when people leave a corpse unburied, and its spirit separates into an evil *p'o* and a kindly *hun*. See pp. 119 and 120 for details on these beings. When a ch'ing shih forms,

the *p'o* reclaims its body. Some of these undead are destroyed if the corpse is burned. In other cases, the *p'o* traps the *hun* in some inanimate object. While the *hun* is imprisoned, the *p'o* may stay with its body. One can “kill” the ch'ing shih, but it will reform after 1d days, even if burned. Then it returns for revenge, possibly bringing other *p'o* or ch'ing shih with it. A *p'o* which traps its *hun* does not naturally disintegrate either. To banish the *p'o* forever, one must break the object which holds the *hun*.

#### Ciao Dog (Chow)

ST: 8	Move/Dodge: 4/6	Size: 1 hex
DX: 12	PD/DR: 2/1	Weight: 35-50 lbs.
IQ: 5	Damage: *	Habitats: Domestic
HT: 14/6	Reach: C	

Barbarians of the northwest raise these wrinkled dogs. They present them to princes of the Middle Kingdom as tokens of esteem. Ciao have a mad ferocity, born of the conviction that nothing can pierce their dense fur. When they bite, they do biting damage based on their strength (see p. B140). The highest-pedigree ciao have black, lustrous coats and livid purple tongues.

#### Ear Centipedes

These parasites invade people's bodies, usually through infected food. Centipedes can also inject their eggs with a stinger. Witches sometimes use these creatures to poison enemies. Ear centipedes travel to the skull and multiply, causing unbearable headaches and eventually crushing the brain. Anybody exposed to these creatures can keep them from implanting themselves by making an HT roll. If it fails, the victim immediately loses a point of HT. The centipedes cause an additional point of injury each week. None of this damage can heal until someone extracts the centipedes.

Most physicians remove these creatures by opening the skull. This requires a Surgery roll at a -3 penalty. Then the surgeon must make a DX roll to lift out the wriggling worms without letting them bite him. If he is bitten, he must make a HT roll or be infected himself. A critical failure leaves the patient blind, deaf, paralyzed in one limb or afflicted with a mental aberration (such as Paranoia or Berserk). The GM may choose an exact affliction.

The best doctors can entice these insects to voluntarily crawl out a patient's ears without surgery. Only someone with a Physician or Yin-Yang Healing skill above 18 will automatically know of this technique, although anyone could perform it if shown how. In this procedure, the patient drinks a special herbal tea. Then he lies with his head in the sun, while the doctor holds a bowl of cool water under one ear. The victim's skull traps heat, prompting the centipedes to emerge and cool themselves in the water. This treatment only works in deserts sanctified by some holy spirit.

#### Fong

ST: 10	Move/Dodge: 6/7	Size: 1 hex
DX: 15	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: 50-90 lbs.
IQ: 10	Damage: Weapon	Habitats: Forest
HT: 17/7	Reach: C	

The fong look like graceful women, dressed in dignified silks. They ask to borrow houses for their parties and meetings. Fong frequently appear to scholars, travelers and other lonely people, asking for protection from some wicked spirit. They reward benefactors with magical flowers (worth \$1,000 to anyone seeking the Elixir of Life). These creatures are actually

spirits of flowers, trees and winds, who use Shapeshifting spells to appear as people.

Typical disadvantage: Impulsiveness. Typical skills: Gardening, spells of Shapeshifting, Illusion and Earth, Air, Metal, Wood or Water.

## Ghost

China teems with spirits of the dead. Many appear when people die with deeds unfinished, their murderers unpunished or strong passions unfulfilled. Magicians learn to kill people and bind their ghosts as slaves. Others have no obvious motive. According to some sorcerers, all dead people become ghosts at least temporarily, although only a few break the spirit laws which forbid them to appear in the physical world.

Ghost Magistrates and Ghost Constables govern the spirits of the dead. They obey greater beings, such as river gods or dragons. These spirits use ghosts as laborers, servants and guards. The Ghost Magistrates maintain order, forbidding ghosts to disobey great spirits, disturb the living or fight each other. Like the living, spirits often break these laws. Ghosts who specifically need to appear before people, such as Yao Nien (see p. 121), usually carry permits authorizing them to enter the living world.

Ghosts visit the living most often in graveyards and haunted houses. Ghost Constables usually overlook apparitions there, or even officially license them, to make humans properly respectful of the Nether World. The dead have many reasons to contact the living. They may have an errand from their spirit lord (in which case they carry permits to speak with the quick). They may want information about relatives, or help in an unfinished quest. Also, death warps one's mind and sense of humor. Spirits delight in scaring people, especially those who claim not to believe in ghosts.

Ghosts have the attributes they had while alive, along with several new powers. The beings are naturally invisible and only appear when they specifically want to (visibility does not require any effort). An invisible ghost has no physical form. It cannot affect real things, and only other spirit beings can attack it. However, visible ghosts do have bodies and easily masquerade as the living. Weapons hurt them normally. If a ghost is "killed" in material form, it vanishes. Its spirit reforms as a slave in the Nether World and must labor there for 1d centuries. A ghost can retire to the Nether World to escape battle, but this takes a complete combat turn. Since ghosts are actually creatures of the Nether World, a magician may force them back with the Banish spell (p. M65). A Banished ghost cannot reappear on Earth for one year.

One can ward off ghosts with paintings of their enemies. Shades of the dead must make a Will roll to come within three yards of a likeness of someone who frightened them in life, or any spirit who scares them now. An artist must make an Artist roll with a -2 penalty to execute a realistic enough drawing to affect ghosts. He also must know what god or person to pick. This varies with each ghost. Wu often use Divination spells to find things that might scare a ghost.

Spirits of the dead consider words like "ghost" and "devil" grossly obscene. Most ghosts have a -10 point Hemophobia (fear of blood), although this does not apply to blood they spill. Ghosts do not eat, but they yearn to absorb odors of food and other pleasures. Some linger behind smokers to share their pipes or sniff drinkers for fumes of alcohol. All ghosts love burnt offerings.

When a ghost "dies," it divides into a p'o and hun (see pp. 119 and 120). See ch'ing shih (p. 117) and *Great Spirits* (p. 122) for more details.

Certain types of ghost appear particularly often and usually

have similar statistics and abilities. See Yao Nien, Ghost Constable, Tigers' Decoy and Hanging Ghost for details on common sorts of spirits.

Typical advantages (of all ghosts): Night Vision. Typical disadvantages: Phobias (Hemophobia and others). Typical spells: Shapeshifting.

## Ghost Constable

ST: 17	Move/Dodge: 5/6	Size: 1 hex
DX: 13	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 130-170 lbs.
IQ: 9	Damage: #	Habitats: All
HT: 16	Reach: C	

The most effective constables retain their office in the Nether World. Normally, they police the lands of ghosts. Spirit-lords also dispatch Ghost Constables to seize offenders in the physical world. They track down sinners against the spirits, and those villains who manage to commit truly awful crimes while remaining within the bounds of mortal law. Ghost Constables freely call on living colleagues for help. Occasionally, this forces a low-ranking policeman to turn against his superiors.

Ghost Constables carry staves. They use them in combat and to beat information out of miscreants or even innocent witnesses. A spirit lord can authorize his chief Ghost Constable to strike a living miscreant with fever. When the Constable hits a designated criminal with his staff, the victim must make a HT roll or contract a disease, as described on p. B133.

Typical advantages: Combat Reflexes, Legal Enforcement Powers. Typical disadvantage: Sense of Duty (to the spirit lord, and a less pressing one to all law-fearing people). Typical skills: Brawling, Combat Skills, Interrogation, Streetwise, Law.

## Ghost Magistrate

ST: 10	Move/Dodge: 7/7	Size: 1 hex
DX: 15	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: 120-130 lbs.
IQ: 19	Damage: #	Habitats: All
HT: 10	Reach: C	

Spirit-lords appoint humanity's most perceptive judges as Ghost Magistrates in the Nether World. These judges perform their legal duties over the dead and in places on Earth where their master holds sway. A Ghost Magistrate might keep order near the court of a River King, or on a holy mountain. Several Ghost Constables serve each Ghost Magistrate.

Typical advantage: Intuition. Typical skills: Interrogation, Administration, Law.

## Hanging Ghost

ST: 10	Move/Dodge: 7/5	Size: 1 hex
DX: 10	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: 130 lbs.
IQ: 13	Damage: #	Habitats: All
HT: 15	Reach: C	

People who hang themselves always become ghosts. Before they may enter the Nether World, they must convince another person to commit suicide too. These creatures know illusion spells and use them to tantalize deranged people with visions of quick suicide and attentive relatives at the funeral. Normally, these ghosts can only affect willing victims, but for one who has recently suffered some calamity or grossly violated his own principles (for example, breaking a Vow), the GM may require a Will roll to resist a Hanging Ghost's offer. The only way to save a suicidal dupe is to fight off the Ghost.

Hanging Ghosts carry the rope they died on and offer it to their victims. If anyone knots this cord around a living person, it grows into the character's flesh and can only be removed by



surgery or suicide. The rope hampers a victim's character's movement, subtracting one point of DX. Cutting it off inflicts 1d damage, which can be halved by a successful Surgery roll.

Typical advantage: Empathy (to locate prospective victims).  
Typical skill: Fast-Talk.

### Hun

ST: 10	Move/Dodge: 9/5	Size: 1 hex
DX: 10	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: 100 lbs.
IQ: *	Damage: #	Habitats: All
HT: 18/9	Reach: C	

A person's soul consists of two primary elements: the evil *p'o* and the benevolent *hun*. After death, these parts may separate, especially if the dead person's ghost fails to obtain nourishing odors (see *Ghosts*, p. 118). Each year, the *p'o* and *hun* must make Will rolls to avoid disintegrating into smaller fractions of the soul. Unless the living give them offerings of food and incense, they suffer a -4 on this roll. In times of famine, when people cannot afford sacrifices, not only hungry men but hungry ghosts roam the land. A *hun* or *p'o* gains a +1 on Will for this roll if people devote a room or stone cairn to its worship and leave the offerings there.

People diligently tend to the *huns* of their ancestors, out of filial piety and in hopes of receiving advice from them. *Huns* occasionally recall wisdom from their centuries of existence, or use Knowledge spells for their descendants. They can also cast Bless on their most beloved worshipers. *Huns* are naturally invisible and noncorporeal except when consciously taking physical form. They cannot be detected except on the rare occasions they intervene in the physical world. The living do not know when they disintegrate. Worshipers must leave their offerings for *huns* who may not still exist.

*Huns* retain the IQ they had while alive. Their other attributes change to those shown above.



Also see *P'o*, p. 120.

Typical advantages: Pious, Intuition. Typical disadvantages: Pacifism, Cannot Kill. Typical spells: Knowledge spells, Bless, Rain.

### Jade Woman

ST: 10	Move/Dodge: 4/7	Size: 1 hex
DX: 14	PD/DR: 1/0	Weight: 100-120 lbs.
IQ: 17	Damage: #	Habitats: All
HT: 9	Reach: C	

These women spring from jade statuettes or bookmarks, as companions for extremely deserving people. They teach skills and give wily advice. Jade women must often break their charges' naivete and teach them the worldly skills they need for political success. In return, they want a share of their pupils' luxury and power. If a jade woman's lover clings to foolish scruples, she may return to bookmark form forever.

A jade woman is a 20-point patron, because of her magical nature.

Typical advantages: Intuition, Magical Aptitude. Typical disadvantage: Bad Temper. Typical skills: Politics, Savoir-Faire, Sex Appeal, Shapeshifting, Teaching, some form of arcane lore useful for companion.

### Kilin

ST: 15	Move/Dodge: 18/9	Size: 2 hexes
DX: 16	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: 300 lbs.
IQ: 19	Damage: 1d-1 cr	Habitats: All
HT: 17	Reach: C	

The Kilin rule as princes of the four-footed animals. They look like tawny short-necked giraffes, with infinitely wise eyes (see illustration, p. 75). Translators of Chinese myths sometimes call these beasts "unicorns," but some sages say the Kilin have no horn, while others say their "horn" is a fleshy knob on their forehead. It is possible that some Kilin have this protrusion, while others do not. In melee, they lash out with their hooves. When Kilin wish, they may walk straight up or down through the air, at their normal speed. These animals do not speak aloud, but they can spit out jade tablets with words inscribed on them. Each tablet contains \$500 worth of jade. Kilin know all Animal spells from the *GURPS Basic Set*. These animals are invisible unless they choose to be seen. Kilin allow mortals to glimpse them when some great man walks the earth.

The Princes of Fourfoots bring prophecies and advice to the wise. They also foretell the doom of Heaven's enemies. Kilin are intensely compassionate but recognize their duty to destroy the enemies of heaven. They may rally heroes for holy quests. Anyone impious enough to commit blasphemy while a Kilin is watching immediately succumbs to a fever. The victim must make an HT roll each day or lose 1d HT. On any day that the roll succeeds, the victim regains a single point of HT. Medicine cannot cure this disease, but the sufferer might win release by performing a quest of atonement.

Typical advantages: Animal Empathy, Clerical Investment, Pious.

### Pi

ST: 20	Move/Dodge: 9/7	Size: 1 hex
DX: 14	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 160-180 lbs.
IQ: 10	Damage: 1d + 1 cut	Habitats: Forest
HT: 15/14	Reach: C	

These giant, silvery foxes can learn any language in one year. Their souls combine the cunning of foxes with the feral hunger of panthers. They use their knowledge of human tongues to lure meals to them. When not hungry, Pi enjoy calling to people



from hideouts and watching them search for the source of the voice. These creatures know the psionic skills *Telesend*, *Telereceive* and *Telecontrol* at 15, with *Telepathic power* 12. Pi especially enjoy using *Telecontrol* to possess humans. They force their victims to bring them food, play cunning pranks or go into the forests and prowl like foxes. A Pi's pelt is worth \$5,000.

Typical advantage: Language Talent. Typical skills: Languages, Stealth, Ventriloquism.

### **P'o**

ST: 14	Move/Dodge: 6/6	Size: 1 hex
DX: 13	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 110-120 lbs.
IQ: *	Damage: *	Habitats: All
HT: 12	Reach: C	

A p'o is the evil portion of the human soul. See *hun* for more details. Like the *hun*, it must make an annual Will roll to avoid destruction. Since nobody would worship a wicked p'o, it must force people to give it sacrifices. Therefore, p'os need to act in the living world.

Some p'os inhabit a corpse, becoming *ch'ing shihs* (see p. 117). Others create their own bodies. They look like short men with bright red hair. P'o are imbued with the utter dryness of death. They can desiccate human flesh with blows from an iron rod, draining 1d-3 HT per hit in addition to causing weapon damage. P'o also cause droughts. They threaten to destroy farmland unless given regular offerings.

P'os retain the IQ they had in life. Their other statistics change to those shown above.

Typical advantage: Toughness. Typical spells: Invisibility, Rain spell (only to *stop* rain).

### **Pong**

ST: 20	Move/Dodge: 18/9	Size: 2 hexes
DX: 12	PD/DR: 2/2	Weight: 500-600 lbs.
IQ: 8	Damage: 2d-1 imp	Habitats: Coastal
HT: 13/25	Reach: C	

The Pongs, or Rocs, are vast eagle-like birds. They live on an island in the Eastern Sea, which is strewn with gold and silver. Pongs have little to eat there and often fly inland to catch meat or gobble ears of grain, particularly millet. In battle, they strike with their talons. Despite their strength, Pongs try to make amends when farmers capture them. They carry victims to their isle, where one can scoop up treasure. However, the sun there is hot enough to kill humans. Pongs bring people in before dawn, and fly them away when they are ready. Many greedy souls become entranced by the gold and linger gathering it until the sun rises and scorches them to death. The Pongs themselves are immune to heat damage, even from open flame.

Adventurers can also meet Pongs as servants to powerful spirits, or guardians of magical lands.

One can gather 3d×\$10 worth of gold at once on the Pong's island. Searchers can find additional caches of 1d dollars by searching for one hour and making a Vision roll. When the sun rises, the temperature on their island instantly soars from 80° to 250°. This rapid change causes anyone in the open to suffer 2d points damage from shock, and the unearthly glare causes one point sunburn damage per hour on even the smallest bit of exposed skin. See p. B130 for details on the other effects of high temperatures. Explorers might hide from the sun by burrowing underground. There are no trees or other sources of shade, except, perhaps, the walls of a Pong's stony rookery. Neither water nor food exists on the island. The Pongs will attack anyone who schemes to stay on their treasure-filled home. They consider the sun just punishment for avarice.

### **Raksha**

ST: 25	Move/Dodge: 7/8	Size: 1 hex
DX: 16	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 300-400 lbs.
IQ: 9	Damage: #	Habitats: Islands, Southwest
HT: 20	Reach: C	

The Raksha ogres come from Ceylon but have since spread into Western China. They look like huge people, with bulbous eyes, hideous red lips and crooked fangs which make it impossible for them to completely close their mouths. These creatures devour people. However, if a victim offers the ogres a useful skill, they may spare him. The ogres particularly want cooks, since one of their reasons for eating people is the rankness of their normal meat. Some former prisoners marry Raksha, producing half-breed children.

The strongest Raksha grow wings and learn sorcery. These creatures can fly at a speed of 9. Flying Raksha always know *Shapeshifting* and *Illusion* spells. Ghost Constables often help pursue particularly gruesome Raksha.

Typical advantages: Toughness. Typical disadvantages: Odious Personal Habits (of any sort), Social Stigma, Bad Temper. Typical skills: Brawling, Weapon skills.

### **Thunder Sheep**

ST: 18	Move/Dodge: 8/6	Size: 1 hex
DX: 13	PD/DR: 2/1	Weight: 100-250 lbs.
IQ: 5	Damage: 1d-3 cr	Habitats: W/ Dragons
HT: 15/8	Reach: C	

The dragons raise fierce, proud sheep, with wool like clouds and horns like lightning. These beasts can cast Air spells either at whim or when commanded by their shepherds. Thunder Sheep can also walk straight up or down, at their normal movement rate. Although Thunder Sheep are sacred, dragons despise labor and do not like to tend them. Dragon kings punish renegades by making them care for sheep, and female dragons become shep-



herds when their husbands disown them. Shepherds sometimes ask travelers to help avenge their dishonor.

### Tiger's Decoy

When a tiger kills a human being, it captures the victim's spirit. The dead man's ghost lingers as a slave until the tiger kills another person to take its place. Tiger's Decoys have no physical body. They are visible and can speak, but they may not manipulate objects or fight the living. A Tiger's Decoy may appear in whatever shape it chooses. Many masquerade as lumps of gold, guides or maidens in distress, to lure a new victim for the tiger.



### White Monkey

ST: 20	Move/Dodge: 11/10	Size: 1 hex
DX: 15	PD/DR: 3/1	Weight: 200-500 lbs.
IQ: 10	Damage: Weapon	Habitats: Mountain,
HT: 14/20	Reach: Weapon	jungle, swamp

The White Monkeys are an honorable, intelligent race, probably an offshoot of primitive humans. They stand over seven feet tall. Pale hair hangs from every part of their bodies, and they have Neanderthal-like faces, leading to their name. These creatures seldom live with each other, but they often lead bands of human savages. Monkeys lead their people well, providing everything a tribe could need except for salt and knives.

The Monkeys steal freely from civilized lands. However, they are equally willing to trade. Peasants often barter with nearby tribes and warn the Monkeys about threats to their tribal ground. Tribes insist that their contacts keep these liaisons secret, since government officials frequently launch campaigns to subjugate barbarians. The Monkeys assassinate anyone who betrays their hidden lairs.

White Monkeys have no females. They can reproduce with human women but only father sons. This brings Monkeys the reputation of great virility but hampers the race's ability to multiply. Therefore, they follow a creed called Tuochin, which

demand that every Monkey seize a bride. Only a coward would take one of his followers' daughters, even if the tribe would permit it. Instead, White Monkeys abduct foreign women. Monkeys practice Tuochin solely to produce children. Although their wives are prisoners, Monkeys give them remarkable freedom by Chinese standards. Husbands do not expect to be obeyed or loved, although they fondly believe that all women become tender wives once they bear children. If a White Monkey cannot impregnate his wife after one year, he releases her to look for a more fertile man.

White Monkeys could be used as a character race, using the rules from *GURPS Fantasy Folk*.

Typical advantages: Allies (human friends), Luck, Combat Reflexes. Typical disadvantages: Code of Honor (Tuochin), Gigantism, Social Stigma (outside mountains). Typical skills: Bow, Brawling, Survival, Naturalist, Tracking, Climbing, Fishing, Hunting.

### Yao Nien

ST: 10	Move/Dodge: 5/7	Size: 1 hex
DX: 15	PD/DR: 0/0	Weight: 90-130 lbs.
IQ: 12	Damage: #	Habitats: Any
HT: 15+	Reach: C	

Yao Nien are ghosts who appear as stunningly beautiful women. They seduce men and then destroy them. A Yao Nien usually works with other sorts of ghost, who masquerade as matchmakers, pimps, maids or wealthy parents. They help keep a victim from guessing that his lover is more than she seems. Yao Nien seldom appear as strumpets. They marry their men.

These ghosts have all the usual ghostly powers (see *Ghosts*, p. 118). All Yao Nien have Sex Appeal and they usually accompany that with the advantages of Empathy, Intuition, and Voice. Most also learn Cooking and other skills for making their victims comfortable. These spirits develop special abilities to complement those of a particular victim. If a Yao Nien wanted to seduce a scholar, she would learn the works of sages. To win a thief, she might learn to pick pockets.

Each time a man spends the night with a Yao Nien, she drains 1d HT from him. He can recover HT (see *Natural Recovery*, p. B128). If his HT falls to zero, he becomes an obviously dying man; pale, listless, weak and enervated. But he is still not unconscious and still responds to the erotic appeal of his dream lover. If his HT reaches  $-5 \times$  HT, he automatically dies. Injuries and illnesses are added to the loss from the Yao Nien.

It takes a successful Will roll to give up a Yao Nien. A typical victim sees no reason even to try. The ghost woman's allure prevents him from perceiving his condition, or at least makes him attribute its symptoms to other factors. If a Yao Nien seduces a PC, the GM should keep track of his HT loss secretly and inform the players of other characters when their friend becomes obviously ill. If these friends realize what has happened, they can warn the victim and attempt to drive off or destroy the Yao Nien. See *Ghosts*, p. 118, for information on fighting spirits of the dead. In physical combat, Yao Nien can savage enemies with weapons or their nails. A ghost woman's lover will naturally try to deny that his dream woman is a ghost. Yao Nien try to prevent these incidents in the first place by sequestering their mates from all human companions, under the guise of jealousy.

Most Yao Nien relish their lovers' deaths. One famous Yao Nien lured dozens of men into a cave, where she kept a sort of harem. Each time this ghost finished with a lover, her ghost-servants fed her the poor fellow's heart, still beating, from a silver platter. However, a few seem more playful than evil. They coyly refuse the acts which drain a man's life, preferring to flirt with



him and scare away his human lovers. They sometimes rescue him from danger by haunting his enemies, although this is illegal in the Nether World. Some men go on quests to help their Yao Nien be reborn.

Typical disadvantages: Jealousy. Typical skills: See above. Spells: Fear, Bravery and Sleep.

## Great Spirits

The following creatures range from influential spirits to near-gods. They supposedly serve heaven by regulating nature and acting as minor deities, but often abuse these positions. Despite their divinity, these spirits freely become involved in mundane affairs such as romances, feuds and intrigues. They might recruit brave humans for their schemes, especially if they wish to deny the affair later. It is not necessarily impious to oppose a spirit, or even attack it. However, supernatural beings usually find ways to punish their enemies.

All these spirits can control "acts of nature" within their river, forest or other domain. If the adventurers insult a rain dragon, they can expect downpours whenever they travel. If they give the River King a lustrous pearl, they might get a special bonus on their Boating rolls in deadly rapids. The GM may devise the exact details, guided by the rules for the Luck advantage and Bad Luck disadvantage. See p. B37 and p. B21.

Shamans build *tu di miao*, or "little field-god shrines," wherever they observe a spirit's influence.

### Dragons

Preserver and Destroyer, Lord of the Wind, Rain and Sea, the dragon is the soul of China. Dragons appear as the sinuous reptiles of art, or as noble humans, with the sharp, proud features of immortals. They also Shape Change freely. People might meet dragons disguised as rats, snakes, fish, fireflies, trees and marvelous swords. Woe to those who offend them in their disguises!

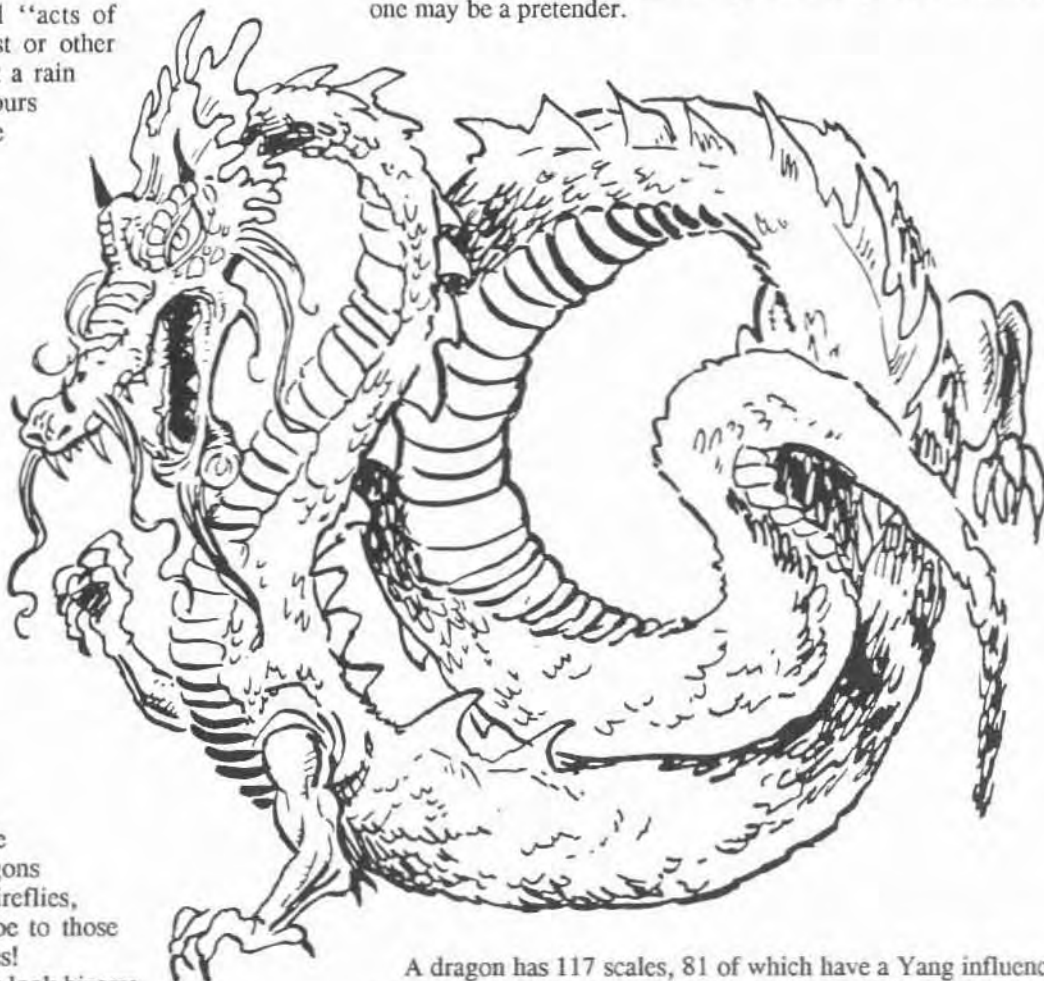
In their serpent shape, dragons look bizarre. They can be red, yellow, white, blue or black. Males have whiskers, an undulating horn and large pearls under their chins. The sage Wang Lu portrayed dragons with heads like camels, horns like stags, eyes like demons, ears like cows, necks like snakes, stomachs like clams, scales like carp and five-clawed feet. A sacred lump, or *chi'ih muh*, grows on a dragon's forehead, allowing it to fly. These beasts incorporate features of every animal but the tiger, which is a mortal enemy of dragon-kind.

Dragons rule the weather. When they neglect their duties, no rain falls. If mortals anger them, they can blight the land with floods. Winter is dry because the dragons are asleep. Each spring, they rise from their pools and fight. This causes thunder-

storms. Farmers hope the yellow and blue dragons win, since they provide the best rains for crops. When dragon wars are not quickly resolved, the rivers rise and wash away towns. Anyone who stares at the battle in the clouds risks a curse of bad luck. (This makes an interesting background for characters with the Bad Luck disadvantage. Perhaps the victim saw a dragon do something cowardly and received this curse as a warning never to reveal it.)

Most dragons live at the bottom of deep pools, often in mountain caves. Others dwell under roaring waterfalls. When their homes lie near settled areas, they disguise themselves as eels, fish or gnarled, scaly pines which stretch their roots toward the water.

A Chinese Emperor is the human incarnation of the dragon god. As such, he must control his own people as well as mankind. In long droughts, people riot against the Emperor, for failing to discipline the cloud dragons. The GM must decide if the Emperor is literally a shape-changed dragon, or merely a symbolic one. Even if some Emperors are spirits, the current one may be a pretender.



A dragon has 117 scales, 81 of which have a Yang influence and 36 of which lean to Yin. When a dragon's Yang scales are dominant, he acts as the Preserver. Otherwise, he is a Destroyer who devours men. Human warriors must sometimes slay ravening dragons, but the victims' relatives remember these incidents, and may seek revenge. A few dragons allow their Yin to master them entirely. They become renegades. Dragon lords sometimes keep one as an enforcer.

Even kindly dragons despise disturbances. One must pacify them with meals of pearls and opals. Sailors often cast gems into the sea when they cross the underwater caves of ocean dragons. Dragons react at -4 to any disturbance, but one can reduce this penalty or change it to a bonus with bribes, at the rate of +1 per \$500 worth of gems. Dragons also like copper and react at +1



for every ten pounds of it a supplicant gives them. The maximum reaction bonus for bribes is +4.

Dragons do favors for mortals that give them these presents. They occasionally let favorite worshippers ride on their backs. However, those who ride dragons must sit carefully. If the rider even tickles a Yin scale, the dragon turns and savages him. One must make a Riding skill each hour to ride a dragon safely.

Dragons hate iron. Its pungent aroma stings their eyes, and if anyone dips iron in a dragon's pool, the inhabitant must reach fresh air within five minutes to avoid blindness. Naturally, it soars out enraged. Still, when the dragons oversleep and allow droughts, desperate farmers sometimes try to waken them with iron.

An alchemist can use the congealed vapors from a dragon's skull to make a pill that gives mortals influence with dragons. One must make an Alchemy roll at -5 to solidify the gases. Chemists can reduce this penalty by consulting distant sages and oracles. Anybody who swallows these pills receives a mystical ability to ingratiate himself with dragons for one day. Dragons react at +3 to anyone who uses these potions. On an Influence Roll critical success, this charm forces the dragon to obey one demand.

One can also intimidate dragons with wax. Fishermen often survive encounters with these beasts because their waxed waterproof garments smell menacing to dragons. If dragons detect this scent on a guest, they treat him with polite respect. Of course, no odor will restrain an angry dragon.

Dragons provide people with several precious charms. See *Dragon Bones*, and *Dragon Swords* (p. 42), for some common ones. An edible green slime fills dragons' cliffside sea-caves. It may not tempt the palate of emperors, but it has saved many shipwrecked sailors. Dragons also tend the Red Cloud Herb and Dragon's Liver Plant, which alchemists use for elixirs of healing and fertility. These treasures, combined with dragons' secret knowledge, continually inspire brave souls to visit the realms of dragonkind.

**Types of Dragon.** Dragons hatch from beautiful stones which fall from the sky. They undergo three metamorphoses before reaching maturity. The younger dragons live almost everywhere, and often let their Yin control them. Older ones have positions of authority and are more conservative. Dragons have the following characteristics at different stages of development:

#### *Infant*

<b>ST:</b> 6	<b>Move/Dodge:</b> 6/4	<b>Size:</b> 1 hex
<b>DX:</b> 8	<b>PD/DR:</b> 0/0	<b>Weight:</b> 10-50 lbs.
<b>IQ:</b> 8	<b>Damage:</b> 1d-3 cut	<b>Habitats:</b> Sky
<b>HT:</b> 15/4	<b>Reach:</b> C	

When a dragon-egg hatches, lightning flashes, thunder roars, an inexplicable darkness blots out the day, and then water pours from the shell. Afterward, a tiny lizard flies into the sky. There it grows into a Lung, doted on by its parents. This lasts 500 years.

#### *Lung*

<b>ST:</b> 14	<b>Move/Dodge:</b> 10/5	<b>Size:</b> 6 hexes
<b>DX:</b> 10	<b>PD/DR:</b> 2/2	<b>Weight:</b> 500-1,000 lbs.
<b>IQ:</b> 9	<b>Damage:</b> 2d-2 cut	<b>Habitats:</b> Forest
<b>HT:</b> 15/20	<b>Reach:</b> C	

These adolescent beasts have dragon heads, two forelegs and the body of a monstrous carp. They cannot shape change, fly, or exist out of water for more than one hour. Lung are shy creatures, who avoid people.

Typical advantages: Acute Hearing, Acute Taste and Smell, Beautiful Appearance, Luck, Patron (parents) Telepathy power. Typical disadvantage: Youth. Typical skills: Telereceive.

#### *Kioh-Lung*

<b>ST:</b> 20	<b>Move/Dodge:</b> 16/7	<b>Size:</b> 6 hexes
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>PD/DR:</b> 3/4	<b>Weight:</b> 1/2-1 ton
<b>IQ:</b> 16	<b>Damage:</b> 2d cut	<b>Habitats:</b> Forest
<b>HT:</b> 15/40	<b>Reach:</b> C	

After 500 years, a Lung develops horns (if male), rear legs and magical powers. A Kioh-Lung can exist either above or below water. Dragon parents arrange marriages for their children at this age. These unions occasionally dissolve when the couples mature, leading to intrigues and battles between dragon clans. Jilted dragon brides sometimes ask humans for help finding revenge. Dragon fathers defend their daughters furiously against unkind husbands.

Typical advantages: Alertness, Magical Aptitude, Pious, psionic powers, Toughness, Wealth. Typical disadvantages: Gluttony, Greed, Phobia. Typical skills: psi skills, Literacy, Poetry, spells of Water, Air, Light and Darkness, Geomancy and Shapeshifting. Kioh-Lung retain any Skills, Advantages or Disadvantages from Lunthood.

When another 500 years pass, a Kioh-Lung becomes a Ying-Lung, or adult dragon. It retains all old skills, advantages and disadvantages except Youth. Unless otherwise mentioned, dragons can breathe equally well in air or water. They can also fly at their normal speed, using the chi'ih muh. A dragon can mature into any one of the following forms:

#### *Li Ying Lung*

<b>ST:</b> 80	<b>Move/Dodge:</b> 8/6	<b>Size:</b> 6 hexes
<b>DX:</b> 14	<b>PD/DR:</b> 4/6	<b>Weight:</b> 1-2 tons
<b>IQ:</b> 16	<b>Damage:</b> 4d cut	<b>Habitats:</b> Desert, mountain
<b>HT:</b> 15/80	<b>Reach:</b> C, 1	

The Li Lung defy many generalizations about dragons. They live in dry caves, cannot breathe water, and fly with physical wings instead of a chi'ih muh. Since Li Lung lack the mystic power of other dragons, a Kioh Lung can become one without much effort. A Li Lung looks like a winged lion with a dragon's head and peculiarly human facial features. It flies at Speed 12, Dodge 7.

Li Lung can burrow through earth with a speed of 1. They never suffer damage from cave-ins, earthquakes or landslides, due to a special harmony with Earth. These beings can rock the earth by roaring. Anyone within ten hexes must make a DX roll each second to avoid being thrown to the ground. Furthermore, if the Li Lung makes an HT roll, pillars, houses, cave ceilings and other constructions collapse. The Game Master must determine what can fall. People within the Li Lung's earthquake usually take 2d damage from falling rubble, but the GM may overrule this figure. If a structure is particularly strong, it may not collapse at all.

Typical skills: Geology, Prospecting.

#### *Ying Lung Wang*

<b>ST:</b> 90	<b>Move/Dodge:</b> 6/6	<b>Size:</b> 60+ hexes
<b>DX:</b> 12	<b>PD/DR:</b> 10/10	<b>Weight:</b> 100+ tons
<b>IQ:</b> 18	<b>Damage:</b> 5d cut	<b>Habitats:</b> aquatic
<b>HT:</b> 15/90	<b>Reach:</b> C, 1	

Lung Wang have the shells and flippers of immense sea turtles. They grow over 30' in diameter, and can flip over a ship by surfacing underneath it. These beings live alone on the sea floor,

speaking their own language. They despise intrusion more than any sort of dragon, but they will promise not to attack sailors in return for regular offerings of treasure, dumped overboard at a given spot.

Typical disadvantage: Intolerance. Typical spells: Reptile Control and Fish Control.

### *P'an Ying Lung*

ST: 55	Move/Dodge: 16/7	Size: 18 hexes
DX: 20	PD/DR: 3/4	Weight: 1-2 tons
IQ: 18	Damage: 3d-1 cut	Habitats: Sky
HT: 15/70	Reach: C, 1, 2	

The slender P'an Lung ripple through clouds. They control the rain to an extent unusual even for dragons. A P'an Lung looks like a long snake, with tiny legs and a dragon's head. These beings can immolate themselves with "water fire," which surrounds their bodies and causes 3d damage per second to anyone within one yard. Ordinary fire extinguishes the "water flame." P'an Lung share a secret language with the Shen Lung (see below).

These dragons also appear in Japanese legend.

Typical spells: Mind Control, Fish Control and Reptile Control.

### *Shen Ying Lung*

ST: 60	Move/Dodge: 22/6	Size: 16 hexes
DX: 15	PD/DR: 4/6	Weight: 1-2 tons
IQ: 20	Damage: 3d cut	Habitats: All
HT: 15/75	Reach: C, 1, 2	

Shen Lung live everywhere, administering rivers and lakes as spirit lords. These are the most conventional looking dragons. The Shen Lung share a language with P'an Lung. They also share the P'an Lung's power to create water fire. See above for more details. One cannot poison a Shen Lung, and no poisonous animal may approach within 20 yards of one.

A Shen Lung can imbue a person with either Luck or Bad Luck once per day, within a 10' radius. A victim may attempt a Will roll to escape Bad Luck. Either effect lasts 2d days. The GM should roll for the duration secretly, because the subject does not know when fortune might change.

Typical spells: Mind Control, Reptile Control and Fish Control.

### *Tien Ying Lung*

ST: 65	Move/Dodge: 25/6	Size: 16 hexes
DX: 17	PD/DR: 4/6	Weight: 1-2 tons
IQ: 25	Damage: 3d cut	Habitats: Mountain, sky
HT: 15/90	Reach: C, 1, 2	

Tien Lung, the Heavenly Dragons, rule dragonkind. They live in cloud castles or mountaintop pools, with retinues of other spirits, dragons and ghosts. Heavenly Dragons have long, twisting horns and whiskers. Yellow dragons become Tien Lung most often, although these beings appear in all colors.

Tien Lung can breathe fire up to 16 yards. The fire automatically hits and causes 3d-1 of flame damage. Each breath costs the Tien Lung 2 fatigue points.

Typical advantage: Allies. Typical skills: Administration, Politics, Diplomacy.

### *River King*

ST: 10	Move/Dodge: 6/6	Size: 1 hex
DX: 12	PD/DR: 1/1	Weight: 120-150 lbs.
IQ: 20	Damage: #	Habitats: Forest
HT: 19	Reach: C	

A spirit king rules each great river, from a hidden underwater palace, often behind a waterfall. He lives in a luxurious court, where the ghosts of all who drown in the river wait on him. These spirits can Shape Change and usually appear as handsome men. Since governing a river and its fish seldom requires much effort, they live lives of pleasure.

River Kings feel no particular sympathy for humanity and do not mind killing in order to get more servants. They happily perform magic for sorcerers in return for sacrifices. Devoted priesthoods adore River Kings and act as their agents on land. One can appeal to them by casting valuables into the water. If the River King hears the prayer, he returns the sacrifice in the belly of a food fish. However, River Kings never fight for their worshipers. People can kill a River King by damming his river or diverting it into a new channel. This makes these spirits reluctant to annoy powerful humans.

Of course, a mighty River King can fight human engineers. He can cause a flood after one day of preparation, which covers everything within an area twice the width of the river. The inundation begins in a sudden torrent and lasts 1d days. Anybody within the flood area when it begins must make a DX roll at a -3 penalty to scramble away from the surging water. If this fails, he must make a Swimming roll at -2 to stay above water. Furthermore, the king's ghosts and other spirit allies will aid him. Most River Kings know at least one dragon.

Once people dam or divert a River King's river, he loses one point of HT per day until the old course is restored or he dies.

Spirits similar to River Kings, although occasionally with different personalities, rule fields, forests, mountains and other natural features.

Typical advantages: Magical Aptitude, Allies, Wealth. Typical skills: Administration, Politics. Typical spells: Water Spells, Enchantment Spells, Shapeshifting.



# GLOSSARY

## Pronunciation

Supposedly, one pronounces Chinese spellings as if they were English. Unfortunately, many of them contain sounds which would be difficult in English, too. The following guidelines explain how to say Chinese words.

## Vowels

a as in father  
ang sounds like ung  
ai as y in my  
e as u in up  
ei as in weigh  
i as ee in bee  
ih as e in her  
ing as in ring  
iu as iew in view  
o (after h, k or k') as uh  
o (after other consonants) as aw in law  
ou as oe in toe  
u (after ss, sz, tz, tz') silent  
u (after y) like eo in yecoman  
ui (or uei) as way in sway

## Consonants

ch as j in joy  
ch' as in church  
j is similar to r  
k as g in gun  
k' as in kid  
p as b in bottle  
p' as p in pot  
t as d in dot  
t' as t in tot  
ts or tz as dz in adze  
ts' or tz' as ts in cats  
hs as sh in she

China has switched to the newer Pinyin system of spelling. The two systems can be converted as follows.

## Pinyin to Wade-Giles

Pinyin	Wade-Giles
b	p
c	ts', tz'
ch	ch'
d	t
g	k
ian	ien
j	ch
Ji	chi
k	k'
ong	ung
p	p'
q	ch'
qi, qu	ch'i, ch'u

r	j
si	szu
t	t'
x	hs
yi	i
you	yu
z	ts
zh	ch
zha, zhu	cha, chu
or zhi	or chih
zi	tzu

## Wade-Giles to Pinyin

Wade-Giles	Pinyin
Chi	ji
cha, chu, chih	zha, zhu, zhi
ch'i, ch'u	qi, qu
ch'a, ch'u	cha, chu
ch'e, ch'ih	che, chi
hs	x
i	yi
ien	ian
j	r
k	g
k'	k
p	b
p'	p
szu	si
t	d
t'	t
ts	z
ts', tz'	c
tzu	zi
ung	ong
yu	you
yuch	yue

## Important Terms

*Ch'ishu* [Ch-ee-shew]: Forces and numbers, i.e., magic.

*Ching* [ching]: Family name.

*Fa-Chia* [Fa-she-a]: Legalism.

*Feng-tu* [as spelled]: The Nether World, the home of dead spirits.

*Fang Chang* [as spelled]: Abbot in a Taoist monastery.

*Feng Shui* [Feng Shoo-ee]: Geomancy, magical determination of the lucky place to put a building. Literally, "Wind and Water." Figuratively, "The Masters of Prescription."

*Hsiung-nu* [Zing-noo]: Vicious horse nomads, notably the Huns.

*Ideographs*: A writing system of several thousand characters, each one representing a word.

*Jen* [ren]: Humaneness, virtue.

*Jiao* [Jay-ow]: Full name.

*K'e* [kee]: 14.4 minutes.

*Loess* [low-iss]: A fine-grained yellow dirt.

*Nei Tan* [Nay Tan]: Health ritual involving the conservation of bodily fluids.

*Rishi* [Ree-shee]: One who gains supernatural powers through asceticism.

*Sheng-Ji* [Shung Gee]: Birthday.

*Shih* [She]: The land-holding, chariot-riding nobility. A warrior caste until the Warring States. After that, the Shih changed from fighters to scholars. Their political power ranged from incredible to nothing, since there were long periods in which the Emperor persecuted all rival nobles.

This word can also mean a measure of time, lasting two hours.

*Ssu Kuo* [Sue-Go]: Boss in forced-labor project.

*Tael* [Taal]: A unit of weight, usually used to measure silver. Taels of silver are often an unofficial currency.

*Tao* [Dow]: The Way, the principle of existence.

*Tao-Shih* [Dow-she]: Taoist monk.

*Ti* [Dee]: Chief god of Chinese pantheon, the unfeeling deity of the skies. When used in a name, it indicates that a person has divine status.

*Tzu-P'u* [See-poo]: Password.

*Wu* [Woo]: A magician-shaman, consecrated by the spirits themselves.

*Wu-Keng* [Woo Kung]: Night watch, hour of darkness.

## Chinese Measurements

This book uses English measurements, for gamers' convenience. However, many books of Chinese history use the following units:

*Li*: 1/3 mile.

*Mou*: 0.165 acre.

*Catty*: 1.1 lb.

*Picul*: 1 quart.

*Tael*: 1 1/3 ounces.

## Weapon Glossary

The following are Chinese names for common hand weapons.

*Battleaxe*: Fu, Liu, Ch'iang, Chi, Chin, Yuch, Chien, Fu, I Huang.

*Halberd*: Ko (early dagger-axe), Ch'i-Ch'i.

*Hatchet*: Piso.

*Javelin*: Mau.

*Lance*: Shuo.

*Pike*: Mao.



# BIBLIOGRAPHY

The following references proved especially useful for this sourcebook, or contain episodes which might make interesting campaigns. The books are rated, with one asterisk (\*) indicating a particularly useful reference, and two asterisks (\*\*) indicating an even more definitive work.

One encounters plenty of contradictions in this material. At least three different versions of Liu Pang's creation of the Han Empire exist. This book presents the most exciting amalgam. The GM may pick whatever suits the campaign. As the Sinologists' saying goes, the only problem with Chinese history is that there is so much of it.

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SJG01695 6037

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# ERRATA

This is the known errata for the print version of *GURPS China* when this PDF was created:

1 –  
Mike Naylor should have been credited for the maps.

3 and 25 –  
In the illustration on these two pages, the magistrate is shown writing with a quill pen. Of course, he should be using a brush!

30 –  
Replace the Literacy entry with:

#### Literacy

See p. B21

The Chinese script contains many thousands of characters. Scholars keep it hard to learn on purpose, to maintain their monopoly on learning. Furthermore, early China had many different scripts, and a scholar needed several. Emperor Shih-Huang eliminated all but one. Variant scripts appeared again after his death, but they were not as difficult. Therefore, literacy has different costs and permutations in different ages. One can always learn an earlier form of writing as a separate skill for interpreting ancient manuscripts.

Up to the early 1900s, Literacy is a 10 point advantage, although many people will have 5-point Semi-Literacy, which the GM can consider as full Literacy within one's linguistic region (see the Dialects of China map, p. 32). Full Literacy allows one to read clearly written things from anywhere in the Empire, although more arcane tracts remain illegible.

After 1930 or so, China becomes a Semi-Literate society (p. C129), making full Literacy a 5-point advantage and Illiteracy a -5-point disadvantage.

To handle scholarly and arcane materials, a separate M/A language skill, Chinese Ideographs, is required. The Civil Service examination requires a Chinese Ideographs skill level of at least 12.

A literate character can scrawl ideographs, but those who wish to write gracefully must learn the Calligraphy skill. Characters with a knowledge of a foreign language, such as Buddhist monks who know Sanskrit, will know its script at their level of literacy for game purposes.

33 –  
Change Writing (Mental/Varies) to "Calligraphy (Physical/Average) see p. B47". The various script skills become familiarities.  
Add the following under New Skills:

Chinese Ideographs (M/A) Defaults to Language (Japanese, Korean, Okinawan or any Chinese)-3

#### Prerequisite: Literacy

This is the knowledge of the kanji beyond those encountered in day-to-day writing. Old manuscripts, academic texts, flowery literature and scrolls of secret knowledge might require the use of this skill for full comprehension and appreciation. If this skill exceeds the appropriate language skill, it is even possible to discern the meaning of a text without being able to read it aloud (although many ideographs include a pronunciation cue). This will also enable communication between, say, a Japanese speaker and a Mandarin speaker if they can trace the characters on the ground, for instance.

111 –  
The prerequisites for the I Ching Divination spell are Literacy and two spells from each of the four elements.

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