



ANTHROPOMORPHIC FANTASY ROLE-PLAY

IRONCLAW

The Book
of Jade



FOLLOWING THE TRAIL OF ER LIANG, THE WU SHANG HEROS ARE AMBUSHED BY THE DEMON'S MINIONS. TRAPPED, THEY PREPARE TO DO BATTLE...

DEMON! YOUR REIGN OF TERROR ENDS NOW! NO LONGER WILL THE INNOCENT SUFFER BY YOUR HANDS!



INTRODUCTION

What's in this book?

Welcome to *The Book of Jade*. You are about to take a journey into a fantastic world of magnificent palaces, decaying ruins, ancient temples, forsaken wastelands, virtuous knights, vicious bandits, divine beings, and evil monsters. Many years ago, the Beings of Heaven descended from their domain in the sky to teach the Beings of Earth the disciplines of virtue, of honor, and of wisdom. Today, the Jade Emperor of Zhōngguo rules over his subjects, empowered by the Mandate of Heaven. But as the stars turn in the sky, soon the Mandate will pass from the Blue Dragons to the White Tigers, and there are many who see this change as an opportunity to further their own goals. Some pursue ambitions of grand political careers. Others seek to reap rewards from the coming confusion and inevitable discord. And somewhere in the shadows beyond even the eyes of Heaven, there are those with darkness in their hearts who scheme a grand design of malice, destruction, and death

Character Options page 437

New options for characters that are specific to Zhōngguo: Careers, Gifts, Species, etc.

Martial Arts & Equipment page 459

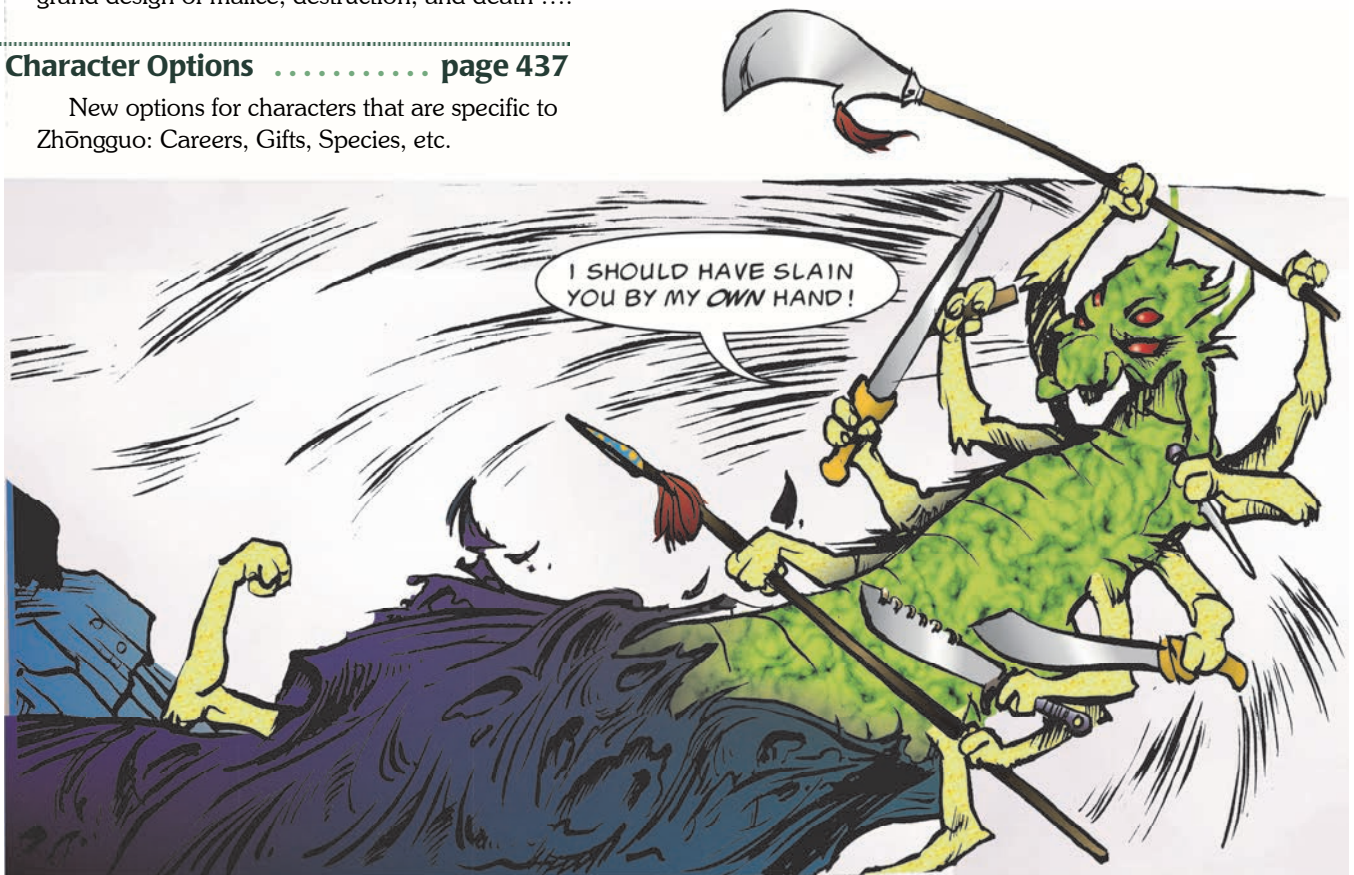
While all the common fighting abilities from the *Player's Book* are still available, the Middle Kingdom has many exotic fighting styles that can be learned, and strange weapons that can be used.

Immortal Magic page 507

The Wiles of the Immortals include spells for changing fortunes, for molding the ways of the universe, for preserving purity in all things, and even greater spells. If the magic of Calabria is said to be fast and furious, then the magic of Zhōngguo is careful and deliberate.

Gazetteer page 543

The Middle Kingdom has thousands of years of history, plenty of places to see, and strange places to explore.



INTRODUCTION

Credits

Written by Chuan Lin

Game Design using Cardinal Game Technology, as created by Jason Holmgren

Developed by Jason Holmgren and Norman Rafferty

Additional Material by Edwin Wendell Dean III, Pieter van Hiel, Adam Lindberg, Arlene Medder, Keith Potter, Fred Stanton, Richard Stewart, and Diana Wray

Peer-less Peer Review by Nikki Giuseffi and Richard Hughes, with Robert Grosso

Concept art by Chris Goodwin

Art direction by Norman Rafferty

Art by Jaimie Belknap, Heater Bruton, Phil Burgess, Brett Foster, Chris Goodwin, Diana Harlan Stein, Jordan Peacock, Pat Kelley, Richard Luschek, N. David Martin, Susan Morgan, Lei Poon, Pat Kelley, Michael Knorr, Norman Rafferty, Ken Singshow, Richard Stewart, and Conrad Wong

This book is a work of fiction. Any resemblance to real persons, places, or events is coincidental. This book is not to be taken as an instructional manual for the practice of real magic, for the creation of explosives, for distilling of elixirs of immortality, for study of martial arts, or for entreating the divines.

Copyright © 1999, 2003, 2007, 2012 Sanguine Productions Ltd. *Ironclaw*, *Jadeclaw* and *Book of Jade* are trademarks of Sanguine Productions Limited. All rights reserved. Duplication of this book without permission is a violation of the mandate of heaven and will be prosecuted with the august swiftness of righteous authority.

The More Firewood, the Greater the Fire

Thanks to our sponsors:

Jonny Aiello, Andrew, Andyroid, arkynfox, Arnold, artemisgallow, Aurelina, Avery, Jason Ayres, Ashley Baillie, Daniel Bentley, Fredrik Bexborn, Bilateralrope, Phil Binkowski, Biscuit, Bluebeagle, BlueCoati, Eugene Boismier, Ian Borchardt, David Bowser, Andrian Breau, Ralph Breseel, Braincraft, Marius Bredsdorff, Aaron Brigati, Stephen J. Broida, Matthew Broome, Bruin, Claire Burville, Damon M. Byg, Robert Cavender, Pierre Chaloux, Chip & Katie, Chris, Clow, Christopher D. Coe, Corey Culdice, concrocotta, CyfnosBlaid, DeadlyReed, Edwin Dean, Derresh, Benoit Devost, DrewSouth, James Earl, Philip Ellerhorst, Eric, Stephen Esdale, David Fageol, Jared Kenjamin Fattmann, Richard Fawcett, Stefan M. Feltmann, John Fiala, Steven Fujisaka, Kyle Fullford, Paul

Gettle, Michael Graves, Robert Grosso, Michael Gue, Eric Hallstrom, Jonas Hansson, Sarah Harper, Hatrack, Carl Hisle, Neil Howell, Richard Hughes, Edward Hyena, Colin Hymel, Michael Iatridis, Jalinth, James, Judor and Iwali, Michael Kirkley, Matthew Koelling, Markus Kostarczyk, Bill Kuelbs, Storm Kwick, Korota, Vincent Lachapelle, Dred Lily, Kim Liu, Kevin Lowery, Kyle, Jonathan Luse, Malcolm MacRae, Magentawolf, Matthew Manganaro, Andrea Martinelli, Robert McNeal, Chik'ki Millson, meowgod, Minder, MoodyFerret, Jeff Morovich, Moul, Nightscaw, David Northover, OctavioArango, Panthera, Paradim, Paris Green, Forest Payne, Pneumonica, poetfox, Pyat, Chris Quin, Raiden, Rakaydos, Alexis Rasimowicz, redwulf, Aaron Rhoads, Patrick Riley, Thomas B. Roberts, Roco, Reserved Rodent, Pablo Romero, Joel Ross, AD Rutledge, Michael Schiciano, sablegryphon, shdragon, David Shinoda, Ronald Siefkas, Daniel Silvia, Jere Sinisalo, Jerry, Elizabeth "Iron Liz" Skochil, Sköld, Kevin Snowpaw, Soraxa, Nicholas R. Soika, Frank Sronce, Patrick Strouse, Taurevanime, TBP Nemo, TinfoilHate, Lucas Toddy, Jonas Trapp, Matt Trepal, Kendall Uyeji, Steve Villing, Vitamancer, Morgan Weeks, WuseMajor, Andy Young, Chris Young, Yuutousei, and everyone else who supported our Kickstarter!



The Mulberry Leaf Becomes a Silk Gown

And extra thanks to our honored emeriti:

Ài Kàng Shū, Daniel "Artemis" Bailey, Jeremy Bailey, Jeff "D. Bruin" Beedon, Jamie Belknap, Jeremy Belknap, Stefan Calico, Kat Cichocki, Denson "Razor-Sharp Feet" Conn, Apollo Crun, David Cubert, Kevin "Soro" Haseman, Erik E. Peterson, Brandon Fowler, L. H. "Evil Heaped Upon Evil" White, Johnell Hipol, Carl Hisle, Colin Hymel, Wade Joyce, Allison June, Wally "Magnificent Weasel" Kendall, Alex King, Aaron Klein, Gerald M. Clark, Dave Matthews, Sean McLane, Josh O'Brien, Sami Ollikainen, Jeff Pullen, Shaun "Sunblaze Wildfire" Reveal, Kris Schmid, Karen Stewart, Amy "Expert Thief-Taker" Stoneburner, James "Understanding Grants Power" Stoneburner, Ghen-ki Tseng, Steve "The Unassailable Fortress" Villing, XTn Jtn Mèng, Perry "Reynard" Warieka, Joel "Darkefur" Ziegler, and everyone on the Ironclaw Mailing list and the Sanguine Games forum.

CHARACTERS

For the best experience, we recommend that you make new characters specifically drawing on *The Book of Jade*. Some of you might want to bring over your heroes of Calabria for a mixed challenge.

Making Characters Local to the Middle Kingdom

The *IRONCLAW* base rules assume that your character comes from Calabria ... and that your character starts with *Language: Calabrese*. Naturally, a character who comes from the Middle Kingdom of Zhōngguo would speak the local language. Player Characters native to Zhōngguo start with ***Language: Zhonggese***, instead. Mark the change on your character sheet.

The writing of Zhōngguo is also very different from Calabria. The Calabrese language uses an alphabet of 24 letters. The Zhonggese write their words using *ideograms*, and there are hundreds of them, if not thousands ... and each one not only represents one or more words, but also social class, artistic style, and penmanship! The Gift of ***Literacy: Zhōngwén*** is needed to read manuscripts from the Middle Kingdom.

All of the Species from the *Players Book* are found in Zhōngguo, but some are far more common than others. On the following pages, you'll find more species listed that are unique to the Middle Kingdom.

Some of the Careers from the *Players Book* might be appropriate, but it's highly recommended that the Player Characters choose their Careers from the listing that starts on page 450.

Importing Characters from Calabria to Zhōngguo

Zhōngguo trades heavily with the Island of Calabria, so playing a foreign character isn't out of the question.

Since a Calabrese foreigner doesn't speak the local tongue – that is, they have *Language: Calabrese* instead of *Language: Zhonggese*, they will have to get the Gift soon or they are in serious trouble! There are many ways to learn the local language: re-training other Gifts to gain quick Experience ... or using a reward to add the Gift.

Even when a character can speak the language, they're still going to look and sound very much out of place, with their strange manners, odd mode of dress, and inability to make sense of the little things that

locals take for granted. The Game Host may require an extra success or two for social skills (Inquiry, Negotiation, Presence, etc.) to adequately make an impact on someone not from your culture. The Gift of *Cosmopolitan* completely removes this penalty.

Zhonggese warriors may know some fearsome Martial Arts ... but the Calabrese warriors are not to be taken lightly. The concept of *The Wilding Way*, of indulging in primal atavisms for personal benefit, is alien to the civilized people of the Middle Kingdom. (The barbarians might see things differently, though...)

Calabrese magic and Zhonggese are the same in principle but different in philosophy. The Wiles of the Immortals are taught separate from any school of magic, and can be learned by anyone with clarity of thought and purpose. By contrast, the common wizardry of White Magic, Cognoscenti, Elementalism, and Thaumaturgy all start with basic elements and then work their way up. Both kinds of magic can work against each other – for example, if an effect Counters Magic, then it counters Magic, regardless if it's a hermetic formula of eldritch wizardry or if it's a calling upon the powers of heaven and earth for righteous dispensation. (Debates of which magic is superior to which are best left to the experts.) And yes, just like a foreigner can learn the methods of secret martial arts, so too can they learn the Changes, Purity, and Tàoiist Magic ... if they can find solutions to the problems of mistrust, of trappings, and of training.

All of the species from the *Player's Book* are permitted as Player-Character in Zhōngguo, with some new ones.

Natural Gifts

Extra Two Hands (Natural)



You have a strange insect-like or arachnoid body.

Requires

Must be a centipede, scorpion, or spider

Two extra off-hands

You have two extra arms, with two extra off-hands. (You still only have one hand that's your good hand.)

Your Extra Two Hands are smaller than regular hands. You can only equip "Good hand" or "off-hand" weapons in them. (And not "2 hand" weapons.) While you may carry multiple shields, Cover bonuses don't stack, you just use the best Cover bonus.

The gift of Ambidexterity turns all your off-hands into good hands, so yes, it's a very good Gift for you to have! You might want to consider Quick Draw for the ability to ready up to four weapons at once, too.

Ophidian (Natural)



You have the body of a snake.

Requires

Must be a snake

No hands, only Prehensile Tail

You have only one hand – a prehensile tail. You may use this tail as a good hand.

You can use the "Wrestle" attack without any hands, by coiling your body around a single target.

+2 Stride, -2 Dash

Add two to your Stride, but subtract two from your Dash.

Extra action "stand up"

You can take an extra action on your turn: the "stand up" action. Yes, you can be knocked down, flipped, rolled over, etc, but at least you get up much faster.

Prehensile Trunk (Natural)



You have the trunk of an elephant.

Requires

Must be an elephant

Extra off-hand

You have an extra off-hand, a trunk in the middle of your face. You can use this off-hand for one-handed weapons or even a shield.

If you try to use a "good hand" in your off-hand, you suffer a d12 penalty. The Gift of Ambidexterity removes this penalty.

You also gain a "Trunk" Brawling Attack as an off-hand move. Like other natural attacks, your attack dice are Body & Brawling, and the effect is Damage +1, Grapple.

Vermin of the State (Chapter, Unholy)



Not all of the Five Vermin have this Gift... but the ones that do have some infernal advantage.

Requires

Must be a centipede, scorpion, spider, toad, or viper

Unholy Aura

You are always *Unholy*. You may not use Holy effects. You take *Slaying* Damage from Holy attacks.

X (Chapter)

Re-roll with bonus 3d6

You may call upon infernal powers to grant you bonuses to one roll. After rolling, declare you will exhaust this Gift to re-roll your dice; you must claim a bonus 3d6, and your roll becomes *Unholy* (with all risks). The second result stands, even if it's worse.

Wings (Natural)



You have separate wings that sprout from your back.

Requires

Must be an zhuque

Extra Wings: +1 to Flying Stride

You have an extra pair of wings that sprout from your shoulder-blades, instead of the winged arms that most species have. These wings give you much more control when you fly.

You can use two-handed weapons while flying. (Characters without the Gift of Wings can only use one-handed weapons while flying.)

Add 1 to your Flying Stride.

NEW SPECIES

Camel



Camels are western barbarians that live within the Great Western Desert of Xi Shamō. There are Nine Tribes of Camels, each of whom controls a number of desert oases. Competition between the tribes is fierce, leading to periodic raiding back and forth. There was once a tenth tribe, but centuries ago it was destroyed by alliance of the other nine for an unforgivable offense—poisoning water holes in the high desert.

For a price, the Camels will act as guides across the Great Western Desert. However, don't expect the service and courtesy normally found when traveling with a caravan within Zhongguo. Camels look down upon others until they have earned their grudging respect, which does not come easily. They are fierce and bad-tempered, and tend to associate with their own kind.

Habitat: Plains

Diet: Herbivore

Cycle: Day

Include Camel Dice with:

- Endurance
- Tactics
- Weather Sense

Senses: Smell, Spot

Weapons: Hooves

Camel's Species Gifts:

- Increased Body
- Strength
- Survival

Centipede



With glittering compound eyes and multiple limbs, Centipedes are fearsome creatures to behold. Centipedes often seek out criminals and the desperate, then they discipline and drill their followers in order to amass fearsome armies. Some Centipedes align themselves with unholy forces, and thus they become one of the "Five Poisonous Vermin" of the state.

Centipedes prefer careers that make them more formidable warriors, such as Vagrant-Warrior. A few have studied as Taoist Wizards.

In game terms, even though a centipede has about two-dozen hands, only some of them are strong enough to use weapons.

Habitat: Forest

Diet: Herbivore

Cycle: Day

Include Centipede Dice with:

- Climbing
- Craft
- Tactics

Senses: Smell, Spot

Weapons: Grab, Teeth, Wrestle

Centipede's Species Gifts:

- Extra Two Hands
- Prehensile Feet
- Venom

new species

Chicken



Precise and calculating, the Chicken sees their world as a huge, well-maintained bureaucracy—under their guidance, of course. To them, everyone should know the pecking order and nothing must be wasted. The Chicken is an inflexible being, a traditionalist who much prefers tried and true methods to something new and radical. Chickens can be extremely pedantic – they will nit-pick to no end.

Not known for their physical strength, Chickens would rather trade verbal barbs than physical blows. They are always willing to let others save face and to leave, but they would never end a discussion without having the final say.

Habitat: Plains

Diet: Omnivore

Cycle: Day

Include Chicken Dice with:

- Climbing
- Dodge
- Searching

Senses: Spot

Weapons: Beak, Claws

Chicken's Species Gifts:

- Coward
- Fast Jumper
- Prehensile Feet

Crane



Cold and distant, Cranes set themselves apart from everyone else. Similarly, the rest of the world often distances itself from the Crane. This is not out of any sense of resentment, but rather because, when nearing a Crane, one often feels small and insignificant. It has nothing to do with Crane's attitude or behavior, but rather one's own self-deprecation. Even when performing the most mundane tasks, the Crane has an aura of sophistication that is hard to explain and yet easily understood by everyone else. Officially, Cranes have never requested to become part of Zhongguo, but everyone else just feels that their prominent status is a given.

Habitat: Shore

Diet: Omnivore

Cycle: Day

Include Crane Dice with:

- Swimming
- Tactics
- Weather Sense

Senses: Spot

Weapons: Beak, Claws

Crane's Species Gifts:

- Acrobat
- Flight
- Prehensile Feet

NEW SPECIES

Dragon



Vital and charismatic, the Dragon feels the weight of the world upon their shoulders. They consider it their duty to strive to the best of their abilities for the good of all. The Dragon loves to take on challenges and difficult tasks, in order to further prove their abilities.

Habitat: Shore

Diet: Omnivore

Cycle: Twilight

Include Dragon Dice with:

- Supernatural
- Swimming
- Weather Sense

Senses: Listen, Smell, Spot

Weapons: Claws, Horns, Teeth

Dragon's Species Gifts:

- Contortionist
- Increased Body
- Increased Mind

Elephant



Elephants are barbarians from the southeastern periphery of Zhongguo. Most of them come from the land known as Yindü. Those who travel to Zhongguo are often mercenaries or bodyguards. Others come to teach and to learn, while others still have been merchants who established the profitable Spice Route. Astute and strong, Elephants have high moral standing and are generous to those who are their friends. Any favor will be repaid tenfold, if not more. Their sense of touch is so refined that many can use their trunks as an additional third arm. Their bulk and strength make them fearsome in battle.

Habitat: Plains

Diet: Herbivore

Cycle: Day

Include Elephant Dice with:

- Endurance
- Presence
- Tactics

Senses: Smell, Spot

Weapons: Trunk, Tusks

Elephant's Species Gifts:

- Increased Body
- Prehensile Trunk
- Strength

new species

Hyena



You might think that Hyenas would have a greater sense of shame, but these canines embrace their role in society. To the Hyena, there is no shame in taking away the piles of refuse, in watching people from the sidelines, in seizing an opportunity when it presents itself. From where the Hyena stands, one must laugh at the Folly of the world, where so many toil so hard for the benefit of so few ... where the poor are deprived and the rich are miserable.

The typical Hyena is an opportunist who takes what they can when they can. The unusual Hyena is someone who is polite, generous, and respectful ... until the opportunity presents itself.

Habitat: Plains

Diet: Omnivore

Cycle: Night

Include Hyena Dice with:

- Endurance
- Searching
- Tactics

Senses: Listen, Smell

Weapons: Claws, Teeth

Hyena's Species Gifts:

- Coward
- Hiking
- Survival

Leopard



Leopards once dwelt in what is now the northeast corner of Zhōngguo. When the State of Yen annexed this land, most Leopards fled into the mountains to continue their simple way of life. Others stayed, and were granted the status of a lower house.

Leopards are solitary creatures, who have never organized into a large house or clan. Once they reach adulthood, most young Leopards leave their parents in search of adventure, to establish a name, and to find a mate. Rarely do they ever return. For many, old family tablets listing a few preceding generations are the only reminder of who they are.

Habitat: Plains

Diet: Carnivore

Cycle: Night

Include Leopard Dice with:

- Climbing
- Endurance
- Stealth

Senses: Listen, Smell

Weapons: Claws, Teeth

Leopard's Species Gifts:

- Fast Climber
- Increased Body
- Increased Speed

new species

Ox



Oxen are driven by unity and obedience. They learn from childhood that the source of their strength is their ability to endure and to persevere. Everything an Ox owns is obtained through hard work. They do not shrink from duty but carry their burdens proudly. Oxen perform well under pressure, but they do not like to take action without a detailed plan.

The Ox is gifted with strong resolve and a methodical mind. They base all decisions upon proven facts. Never one to either complain or to explain, an Ox is often viewed as being unapproachable and inflexible.

Habitat: Plains

Diet: Herbivore

Cycle: Day

Include Ox Dice with:

- Endurance
- Tactics
- Weather Sense

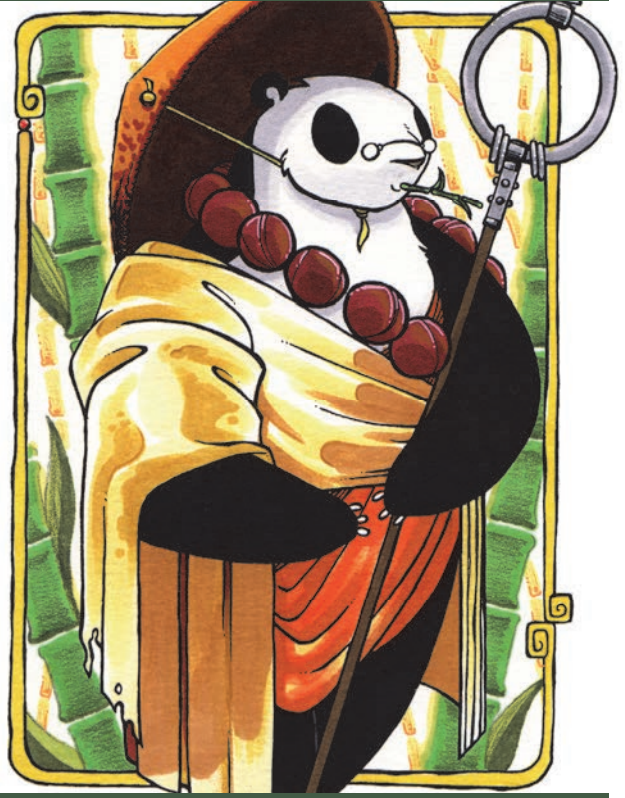
Senses: Spot

Weapons: Hooves, Horns

Ox's Species Gifts:

- Hiking
- Increased Body
- Team Player

Panda



A distant cousin of the Bear, the Panda is known to be spiritual and wise. In fact, some have said that Pandas have already achieved the Tào, for their fur is the representation of Yin and Yang – black and white. In public, they appear very stoic, and they take things in stride. Not many can recall seeing an angry Panda.

The house of Pandas was established as early as the time of the Third Sage King, but they have never been involved in politics. From time to time, a wise Panda has been invited as the teacher or advisor to the court in order to show the way.

Habitat: Forest

Diet: Bamboo

Cycle: Night

Include Panda Dice with:

- Climbing
- Endurance
- Swimming

Senses: Listen, Smell

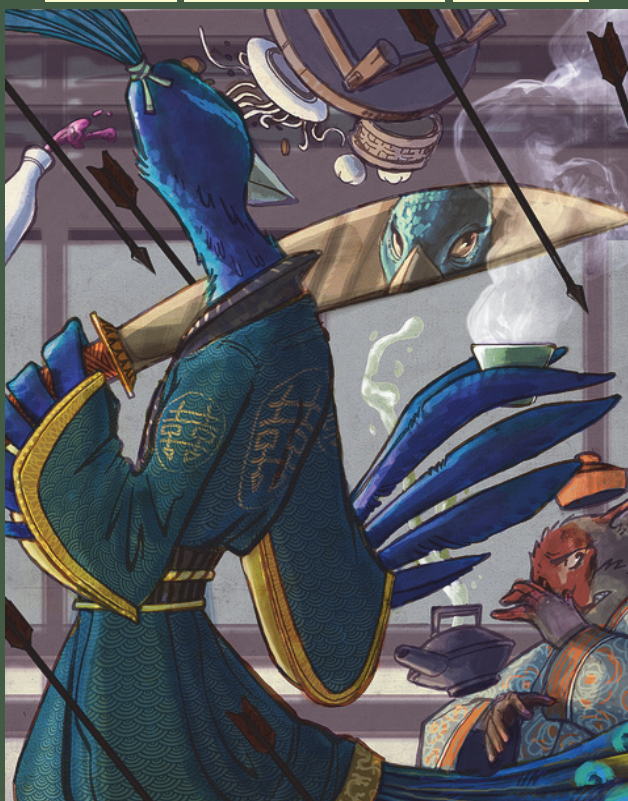
Weapons: Claws, Teeth

Panda's Species Gifts:

- Ambidexterity
- Increased Body
- Night Vision

NEW SPECIES

Peafowl



There's a folk tale that when the people of the world were assembled and the great provinces were being chosen, the Peafowl was too distracted by the beauty of their reflection in a pond to respond to the call.

The males are called Peacocks and the women are called Peahens, and together, they are Peafowl. Only the men have the luxuriant tails with the haunting pattern of eyes on them, but all Peafowl comport themselves with dignity and aplomb. They are quick, precise birds, large and graceful, and they use their reputation as born leaders to advance in the bureaucracy.

Habitat: Forest

Diet: Omnivore

Cycle: Day

Include Peafowl Dice with:

- Jumping
- Presence
- Weather Sense

Senses: Spot

Weapons: Beak, Claws

Peafowl's Species Gifts:

- Flight
- Increased Speed
- Prehensile Feet

Qiling



Many people debate whether Qilings are ancestral spirits of the Horse or a separate race altogether. This is rarely brought up in front of the Qilings themselves, however, and Horses cannot be bothered with such frivolous questions. Not many can withstand the fiery stare of the Qiling after such an imprudent question is asked. The answer is not given, and the questioner's fortune will suffer afterwards.

Habitat: Mountains

Diet: Herbivore

Cycle: Day

Include Qiling Dice with:

- Observation
- Supernatural
- Weather Sense

Senses: Listen, Smell, Spot

Weapons: Horns, Hooves

Qiling's Species Gifts:

- Fast Mover
- Increased Mind
- Increased Will

NEW SPECIES

Red Panda



The Red Panda is sometimes called the "shining cat", but they are neither pandas nor cats. A living contradiction, the Red Panda is reclusive, wary of strangers and taciturn of word, and friendly, always willing to share a kind word or to lend a helping hand. Or so the rumors go. Very few people meet a Red Panda, for they tend to stay in their isolated communities in the deep woods. "Better to do a good deed at home than to go far away and burn incense," is a popular motto among the shining cats.

Habitat: Forest

Diet: Omnivore

Cycle: Night

Senses: Smell, Spot

Weapons: Claws, Teeth

Include Red Panda Dice with:

- Climbing
- Jumping
- Stealth

Red Panda's Species Gifts:

- Ambidexterity
- Fast Climber
- Night Vision

Scorpion



With a tiny head and a long body, the Scorpion's hide is covered with thin layer of chitin that provides protection against physical assault, but its internal organs are quite fragile. They generally prefer the solitary life of the hermit or bookkeeper, accumulating vast libraries of forbidden books.

Ideally, a Scorpion finds a leader who is susceptible to flattery – then they become the leader's personal advisor and confidant, until eventually the leader can't make a single decision without the Scorpion's help. The most insidious tap into unholy powers as a means to their ends, thus becoming one of the "Five Poisonous Vermin" against the state.

(Note: The Scorpion "Sting" attack uses Body, Brawling, Species, and Strength. It causes Damage +1 Impaling and *can* be used with the Venom Gift.)

Habitat: Plains

Diet: Carnivore

Cycle: Day

Senses: Smell, Spot

Weapons: Claws, Grab, Sting

Include Scorpion Dice with:

- Climbing
- Craft
- Stealth

Scorpion's Species Gifts:

- Extra Two Hands
- Fast Mover
- Venom

NEW SPECIES

Sheep



Peaceful and harmonious, the Sheep is sensitive to change and has a narrow range of comfort. They will try to prevent strife within their sphere of influence. For this reason, others come to Sheep with problems and to meet upon a neutral ground.

The Sheep is not comfortable in any sort of direct confrontation. They would rather ask for special consideration of some sort than engage in battle. They will often make themselves appear to be the victim in order to solicit sympathy or to persuade a bystander to intervene on their behalf.

Habitat: Plains

Diet: Herbivore

Cycle: Day

Include Sheep Dice with:

- Climbing
- Searching
- Tactics

Senses: Listen, Spot

Weapons: Horns, Hooves

Sheep's Species Gifts:

- Coward
- Sure-Footed
- Team Player

Spider



Possessed of many nimble fingers, Spiders are often skilled artisans, but more often than not they are too lazy to be bothered to make fine goods, and instead greedily peddle cheap knockoffs to the ignorant. There appear to be more female Spiders than male ones. One of the "Five Poisonous Vermin", Spiders have a reputation as dealers of stolen and illegal goods. A few are known to have truck with dark forces.

Spiders prefer Laborer Careers, though some get involved with wizardry.

Habitat: Plains

Diet: Carnivore

Cycle: Day

Include Spider Dice with:

- Climbing
- Craft
- Stealth

Senses: Smell, Spot

Weapons: Claws, Teeth, Wrestle

Spider's Species Gifts:

- Extra Two Hands
- Prehensile Feet
- Venom

new species

Snake



Snakes are ambitious and wise, cool and collected. They have no need to hurry, yet Snakes are quietly aggressive in their own peculiar way. Difficult to understand, Snakes do not like to reveal how they work things out, or how they arrive at their decisions. Dangerous and merciless, the Snake is a silent and intense fighter with great staying power. They are never gracious losers and will harbor a lifelong enmity.

There is a widespread myth that Snakes have a poisonous bite or spit, but such is not the case. Snakes have powerful muscles and sinewy coils that they use to crush the life from their opponents. Few Snakes become spell-casters – their lack of hands hinders their ability to cast spells ... but the Snakes that do know the art of wizardry can often use the art from surprise.

Habitat: Forest

Diet: Carnivore

Cycle: Day

Include Snake Dice with:

- Climbing
- Dodge
- Stealth

Senses: Listen, Smell

Weapons: Teeth, Wrestle

Snake's Species Gifts:

- Contortionist
- Ophidian
- Strength

Toad



With their bloated bodies, sullen expressions, and mucous-covered hides, Toads are particularly depressing to look upon and to deal with. However, all of them are accomplished accountants, knowledgeable in everything involving money. In the larger cities, a Toad may become a master of lending money, fencing stolen goods, and racketeering. Some Toads throw in with the "Five Poisonous Vermin", becoming masters of black-market goods and unholy, forbidden secrets.

Habitat: Shore

Diet: Carnivore

Cycle: Day

Include Toad Dice with:

- Jumping
- Stealth
- Swimming

Senses: Smell, Spot

Weapons: Kick, Teeth

Toad's Species Gifts:

- Deep Diver
- Fast Jumper
- Venom

new species

Tortoise



Slow and meticulous, the Tortoise approaches life in a deliberate manner. They value the mundane and the routine. Sudden changes confuse them, and confusion makes a Tortoise act even more slowly. Because they do things so gradually, Tortoises have time to review and to correct any mistakes before they become major problems.

Tortoises were granted minor house status around the beginning of East Zhou Dynasty. Some said that the proposed petition request for such status had been begun as early as the time of the Third Sage King.

Habitat: Shore

Diet: Herbivore

Cycle: Day

Include Tortoise Dice with:

- Digging
- Endurance
- Searching

Senses: Listen, Smell

Weapons: Claws, Teeth

Tortoise's Species Gifts:

- Coward
- Increased Body
- Natural Armor

Viper



Not to be confused with the Snake, the Viper has fangs dripping with venom and lacks the flexibility to constrict. Vipers are natural rhetoricians who manufacture treacherous schemes with barbarians or foreigners in order to gain power. They care about no one but themselves and are generally not to be trusted ... especially those Vipers who become one of the "Five Poisonous Vermin", working against the Heaven Court for the ill of all the earth.

Vipers prefer Careers that are all about influencing others, such as Lobbyists.

Habitat: Plains

Diet: Carnivore

Cycle: Day

Include Viper Dice with:

- Climbing
- Dodge
- Presence

Senses: Listen, Smell

Weapons: Teeth

Viper's Species Gifts:

- Contortionist
- Ophidian
- Venom

NEW SPECIES

Yak



Secluded and reclusive, Yaks are rarely seen in Zhōngguo. Most of them reside in the southwestern periphery of the kingdom. They practice a form of mysticism that comes from barbarian land of Yindū. A core tenet of their faith is the belief in reincarnation. They claim that their great spiritual leader has always been with them in various incarnations, down through the centuries.

Habitat: Mountains

Diet: Herbivore

Cycle: Day

Include Yak Dice with:

- Climbing
- Tactics
- Weather Sense

Senses: Listen, Spot

Weapons: Horns, Hooves

Yak's Species Gifts:

- Increased Body
- Sure-Footed
- Team Player

Zhuque



Many are confused by the Zhuque, or "Red Bird", and by other such celestial races. People wonder whether they are truly celestial creatures come down to earth, or if they are earthly creatures who have achieved immortality. Other races often seek out the Zhuque to ask her advice on various matters. She is more approachable and friendly than the enigmatic Panda. However, her answer is generally just as elusive, if not more so. The House of the Zhuque is small in number. Many States consider it a great honor if a Zhuque is willing to participate in court activity.

Habitat: Mountains

Diet: Omnivore

Cycle: Day

Include Zhuque Dice with:

- Presence
- Supernatural
- Weather Sense

Senses: Listen, Spot

Weapons: Beak, Claws

Zhuque's Species Gifts:

- Flight
- True Leader
- Wings



NEW CAREERS

We recommend that natives of Zhōngguo be made with the character careers below. While many of the Careers listed in the *Player's Book* aren't inappropriate, you should stay away from Calabrese-specific classes like the priests or wizards.

Artisan

Every *Gōng Jiāng* dreams of being the best at their trade.

LABORER

Include Artisan Dice with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academics Craft Negotiation 	Artisan Career Gifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Craft Specialty [of choice] Haggling Literacy: Zhōngwén
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), book of crafting

Beggar

A pitiable sort who lives hand to mouth, a *Qī Gāi* is always looking for a handout.

MISCREANT

Include Beggar Dice with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Negotiation Observation Stealth 	Beggar Career Gifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Low Profile Streetwise Survival
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Copy of *The Empty-Hand Methods*

Ascetic

A *Yinshi* who has taken vows of poverty and the like to improve their spirituality. Most learn martial arts only for meditation ... but some are warriors of mythic legend.

ACADEMIC

Include Ascetic Dice with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academics Brawling Supernatural 	Ascetic Career Gifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cosmopolitan Literacy: Zhōngwén Piety
---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Copy of *The Empty-Hand Methods*

Boxer

Yihe Wu believe that through training, diet, martial arts, and prayer, they might perform extra-ordinary feats.

WARRIOR

Include Boxer Dice with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Academics Brawling Dodge 	Boxer Career Gifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brawling Fighter Literacy: Zhōngwén Veteran
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Copy of *The Empty-Hand Methods*

Assassin

The paranoid see them everywhere. And you always see one in every mirror.

MISCREANT

Include Assassin Dice with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brawling Melee Combat Stealth 	Assassin Career Gifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brawling Fighter Disguise Low Profile
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), dagger (Damage +1) change of clothes

Braggart

There's often one *Zhān Pa* whose bark is far worse than their bite.

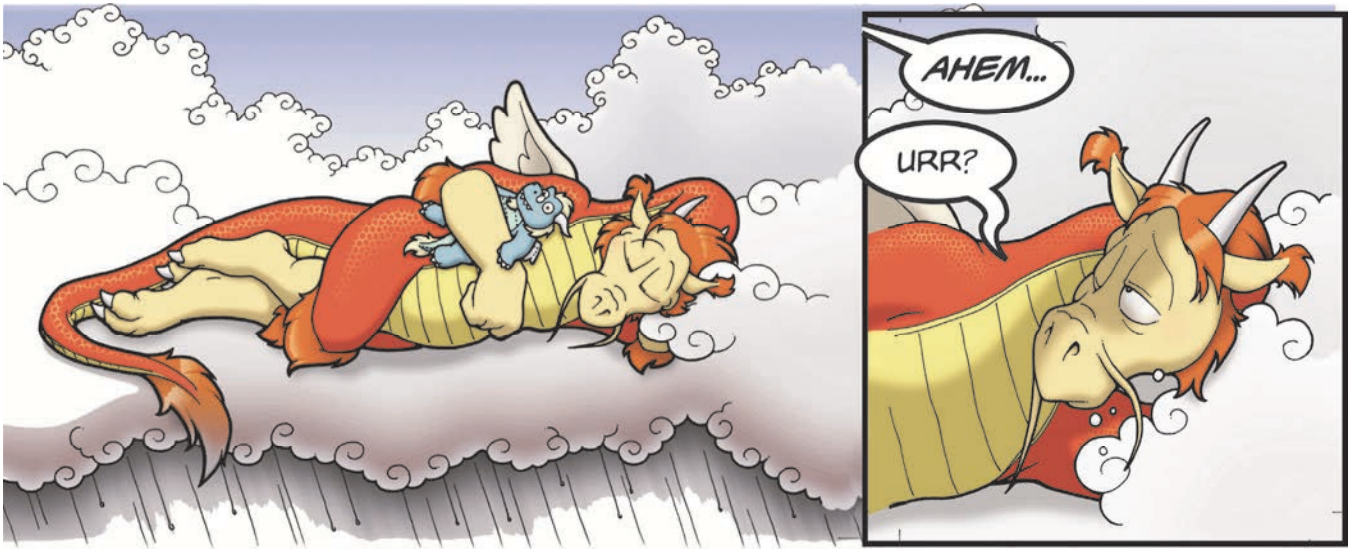
WARRIOR

Include Braggart Dice with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brawling Dodge Presence 	Braggart Career Gifts: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve Scary Fighter Veteran
--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), fancy haircut



NEW CAREERS



Brigand

Unlike some thieves, who are forced into a life of crime out of desperation, *Tu Fei* have formidable arms and armor, with sophisticated networks and domination over large swaths of land.



WARRIOR

Include Brigand Dice with:

- Dodge
- Melee Combat
- Tactics

Brigand Career Gifts:

- Brawling Combat
- Resolve
- Veteran

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), large sack

Bureaucrat

Throughout Zhōngguo's government are the *Liao*, readers of the rules, recorders of the law, and various other bureaucrats who preside over the day-to-day affairs of the noble households.



ACADEMIC

Include Bureaucrat Dice with:

- Academics
- Gossip
- Inquiry

Bureaucrat Career Gifts:

- Law
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Mathematics

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), book of laws, writing kit

Brute

Sometimes, you can solve a problem by bringing in a really big warrior. *Jū Rén* can ask for up to double what other mercenaries get paid.



WARRIOR

Include Brute Dice with:

- Brawling
- Dodge
- Presence

Brute Career Gifts:

- Brawling Combat
- Strength
- Veteran

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), cestus (Damage +1, Parry d12)

Changes Wizard

Fah Shih observe how nature interacts with itself, and they use that knowledge to their advantage, with magic so subtle that it might not even be observed.



WIZARD

Include Changes Wizard Dice with:

- Academics
- Inquiry
- Supernatural

Changes Wizard Career Gifts:

- The Way of Changes
- Changes Wizard's Trappings
- Literacy: Zhōngwén

Trappings: Robes, rod, wand

NEW CAREERS



Debo Shih

A warrior who studies both the martial and the magical arts.



WARRIOR

Include Debo Shih Dice with:

- **Brawling**
- **Dodge**
- **Supernatural**

Debo Shih Career Gifts:

- **Mystic: Immortal Magic**
- **Literacy: Zhōngwén**
- **Veteran**

Trappings: Leather Armor (d6), writing kit

Doctor

A good *Yt Jia* will know acupuncture, moxa burning, and several other techniques to treat injuries and sickness.



ACADEMIC

Include Doctor Dice with:

- **Academics**
- **Inquiry**
- **Observation**

Doctor Career Gifts:

- **Doctor**
- **Literacy: Zhōngwén**
- **Medicine**

Trappings: Cotton armor (d4), 117 acupuncture needles

Destitute

What terrible misfortune must have cursed the *Lü Lāng* to live hand to mouth, wandering the landscape without a home?



MISCREANT

Include Destitute Dice with:

- **Endurance**
- **Negotiation**
- **Searching**

Destitute Career Gifts:

- **Junk Expert**
- **Low Profile**
- **Streetwise**

Trappings: Cotton armor (d4), empty wooden bowl

Escort

A *Biao Ke* guards his target throughout duration of a given trip. Not only must they rely on their fighting abilities, they have to be able to negotiate their way out of troubles too.



WARRIOR

Include Escort Dice with:

- **Brawling**
- **Negotiation**
- **Observation**

Escort Career Gifts:

- **Bodyguard**
- **Brawling Fighter**
- **Danger Sense**

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Staff (Damage +1, Parry d12)

NEW CAREERS



Flamboyant

The dragon flies, the phoenix dances, and the *Lóng Fēi Fēng Wǔ* does everything larger than life.



WARRIOR

Include Flamboyant Dice with:

- Brawling
- Dodge
- Presence

Flamboyant Career Gifts:

- Bravery
- Brawling Fighter
- Veteran

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), jade hairclip

Irregular

A *Mín Bīng* is a commoner who sometimes has to serve in a military capacity, perhaps as a guard, militia, or police.



WARRIOR

Include Irregular Dice with:

- Craft
- Dodge
- Tactics

Irregular Career Gifts:

- Resolve
- Team Player
- Veteran

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Shortsword (Damage +1), Wooden shield (Cover d8)

Immortal Sage

A student of powerful but exhausting magic, the *Shén Xiān* learn magic more useful for state-craft than for combat.



ACADEMIC

Include Immortal Sage Dice with:

- Academics
- Leadership
- Supernatural

Immortal Sage Career Gifts:

- Insider with Shén Xiān
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Mystic: Immortal Magic

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), writing kit

Lancer

Ge Shou are elite soldiers who are able to leap off fast moving chariots or wagons and take advantage of the speed to strike at their enemies.



WARRIOR

Include Lancer Dice with:

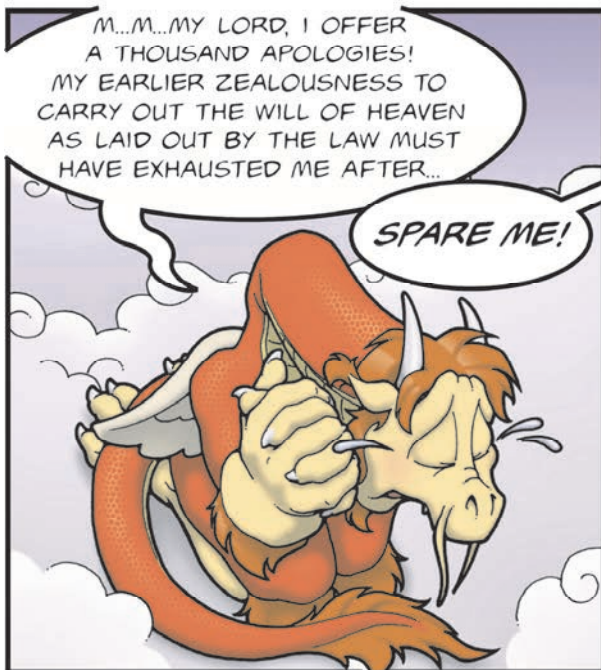
- Dodge
- Melee Combat
- Vehicles

Lancer Career Gifts:

- Acrobat
- Resolve
- Veteran

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Lance (Damage +1, Tilting)

NEW CAREERS



Lobbyist

Shu-Ki loves nothing more than of battles of tongues. Nothing amuses them more than to see confusion on their opponents' faces. Of course, *Shu-Ki* knows what is best for you.



ACADEMIC

Include Lobbyist Dice with:

- Academics
- Inquiry
- Negotiation

Lobbyist Career Gifts:

- Diplomacy
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Oratory

Trappings: Cotton armor (d4), book

Minister

The government of Zhōngguo does not run itself. Many *Buzhang* have their positions as favors granted because of relatives, bribes, or even their own skill or guile.



NOBLE

Include Minister Dice with:

- Academics
- Negotiation
- Presence

Minister Career Gifts:

- Administration
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Nobility

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Copy of *The Empty-Hand Methods*

Method Archer

The war-bands of Zhōngguo prefer to hire their *Gōng Jiān Shǒu* in large groups, to rain a storm of arrows upon their foes.



WARRIOR

Include Method Archer Dice with:

- Dodge
- Observation
- Ranged Combat

Method Archer Career Gifts:

- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Trappings of Superior Archery
- Veteran

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Longbow, thumb guard

Money-Lender

As the wealth of the citizenry increases, so do people's debts. The unpopular *Ye Jie* lends money at huge interest rates ... until the loan's interest builds up and the collateral becomes theirs.



ACADEMIC

Include Money-Lender Dice with:

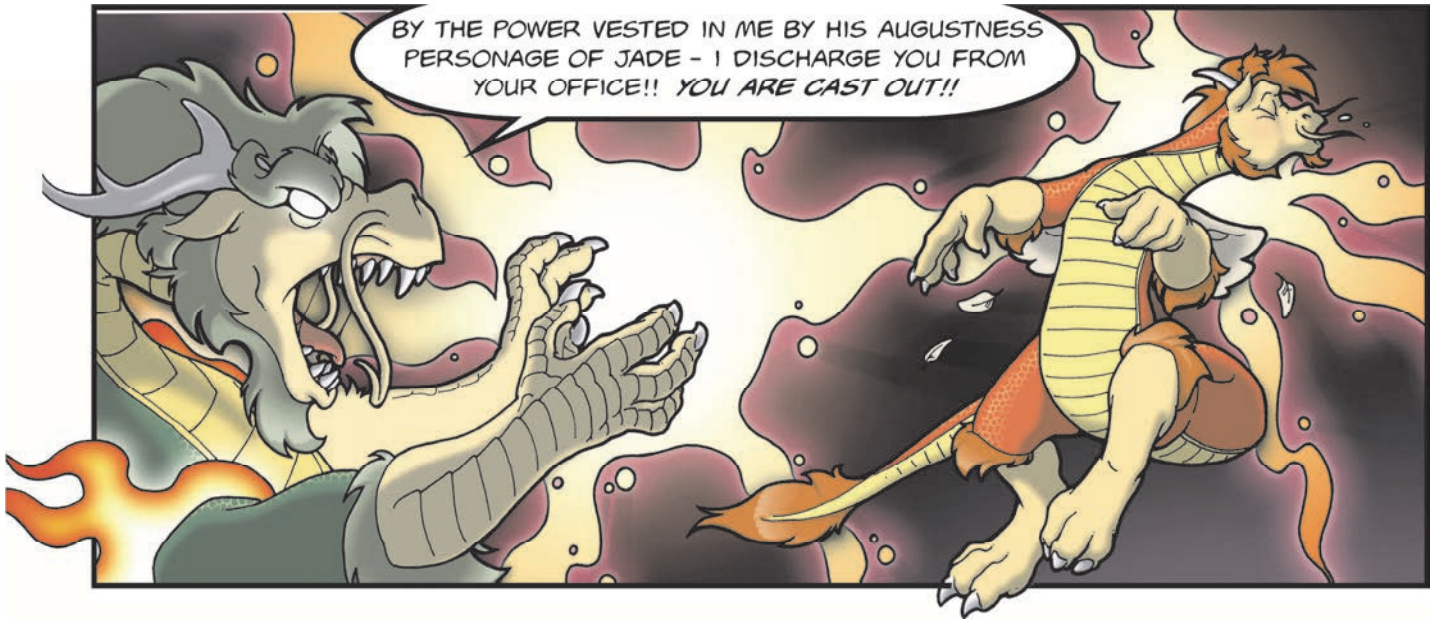
- Academics
- Craft
- Negotiation

Money-Lender Career Gifts:

- Haggling
- Law
- Literacy: Zhōngwén

Trappings: Cloth armor (d4), knife

NEW CAREERS



Mugger

It is not wise to wander through the city streets alone after dark. Some *Qiang Dao* will take your valuables and flee ... but others would sooner kill any witnesses to their crimes.



WARRIOR

Include Mugger Dice with:

- Brawling
- Gossip
- Presence

Mugger Career Gifts:

- Brawling Fighter
- Resolve
- Veteran

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), stolen fruit

Peasant

Almost everyone in Zhōngguo are simple *Nóng Fu* who work the land for their masters.



LABORER

Include Peasant Dice with:

- Craft
- Endurance
- Observation

Peasant Career Gifts:

- Craft Specialty [of choice]
- Low Profile
- Team Player

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Rake (Damage +3 Weak)

Nomad

Living outside cities, the *Di* know nothing of finer civilization but rather live day to day. Almost all nomads are friendly barbarians – the ones who plunder and attack are Bandits



LABORER

Include Nomad Dice with:

- Craft
- Endurance
- Observation

Nomad Career Gifts:

- Hiking
- Survival
- Team Player

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Sling (Damage +1), bedroll

Perfect Knight

A *Jun Zi* is both scholar and a warrior – to maintain composure at all times, to discuss philosophy, to play a musical instrument, and to defend against physical aggression.



NOBLE

Include Perfect Knight Dice with:

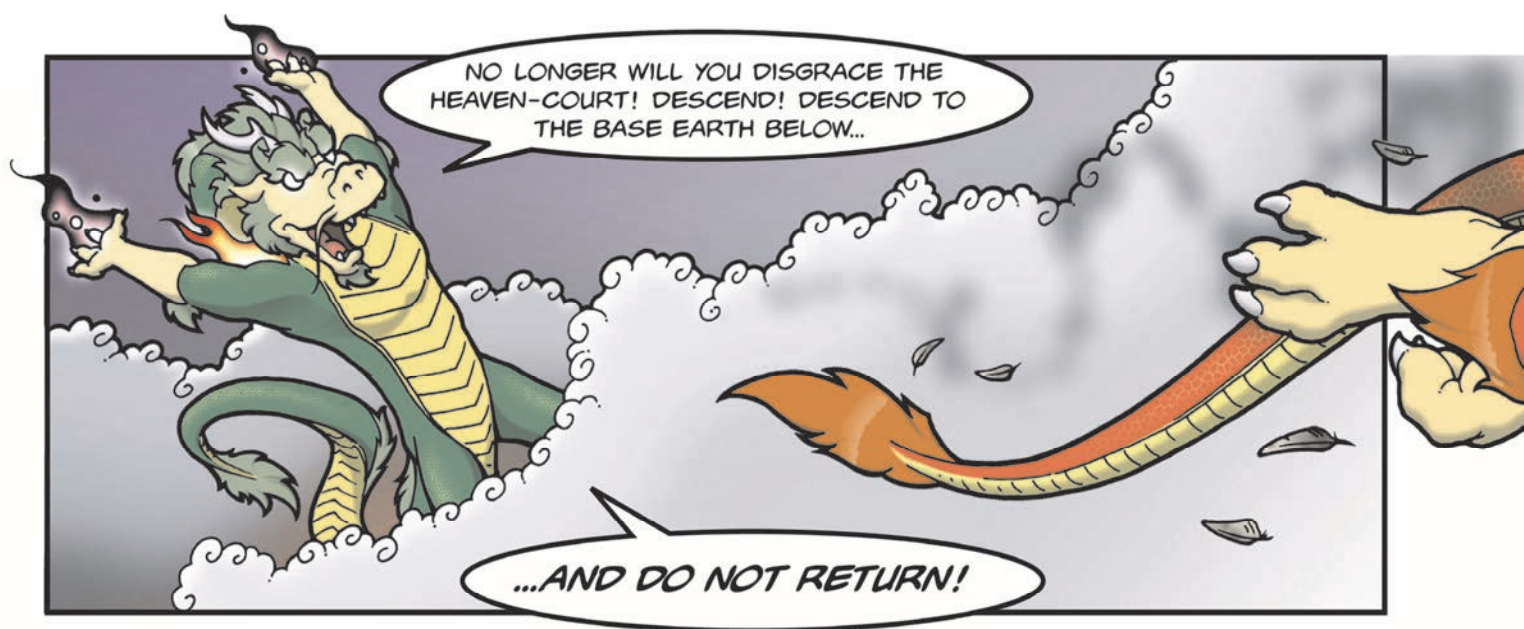
- Academics
- Dodge
- Negotiation

Perfect Knight Career Gifts:

- Clear Headed
- Performance: Flute
- Veteran

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Longsword (Damage +2), flute

NEW CAREERS



Procurer

A professional *Hei Dao* believes that they can do anything faster and better than the government. The best know all the brothels, drinking houses, drug dens, and other places of iniquity.



MISCREANT

Include Procurer Dice with:

- Deceit
- Gossip
- Inquiry

Procurer Career Gifts:

- Fast-Talk
- Hagglng
- Streetwise

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), knife

Racketeer

A thug who extorts money from local businesses. *Feltu-jituan* threaten locals with vandalism and violence if they do not meet their demands of money or favors.



MISCREANT

Include Racketeer Dice with:

- Brawling
- Dodge
- Presence

Racketeer Career Gifts:

- Brawling Fighter
- Hagglng
- Streetwise

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Club (Damage +2 Weak)

Purity Wizard

The most ancient form of magic, the art practiced by *Shén Qīng* existed before written text. Purity Magic works with personal nature, either enriching the pure or punishing the wicked.



WIZARD

Include Purity Wizard Dice with:

- Academics
- Observation
- Supernatural

Purity Wizard Career Gifts:

- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Purity Wizard's Trappings
- The Way of Purity

Trappings: Robes

Scribe

In the absence of regular schooling and inexpensive printing, Literacy: Zhōngwén is largely unknown. *Wen Li* Scribes are necessary for holding any sort of court, legal or noble



ACADEMIC

Include Dice with:

- Academics
- Craft
- Observation

Career Gifts:

- Craft Specialty: calligraphy
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Research

Trappings: Cotton armor (d4), book, writing kit

NEW CAREERS



Soothsayer

It is a common belief that omens that foretell the future are everywhere and can be interpreted by those who can read the signs. A *Xianjianzhe* can read the signs to good effect.



ACADEMIC

Include Dice with:

- Academics
- Searching
- Supernatural

Career Gifts:

- Danger Sense
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Research

Trappings: Cotton armor (d4), good luck charm

Storyteller

Yi Ren brings joys and pleasures to her fellows. The beautiful, the tragic, the comic, the valiant, the villainous of Zhōngguo all come alive through painting, poetry, singing, or dance.



ACADEMIC

Include Storyteller Dice with:

- Academics
- Gossip
- Presence

Storyteller Career Gifts:

- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Oratory
- Performance: Story-Telling

Trappings: Cotton armor (d4), staff (Damage +1, Parry d12)

Spirit Hunter

It is a common belief that omens that foretell the future are everywhere and can be interpreted by those who can read the signs. A *Xianjianzhe* can read the signs to good effect.



WARRIOR

Include Dice with:

- Brawling
- Dodge
- Supernatural

Career Gifts:

- Brawling Fighter
- Resolve
- Veteran

Trappings: Cotton armor (d4), good luck charm

Sword Dancer

To a *Jiān-Nú*, few can understand the thrill of being alive within flashes of sharp edges. They often claim that the ultimate weapon skill is to strike without drawing blood.



WARRIOR

Include Sword Dancer Dice with:

- Dodge
- Melee Combat
- Presence

Sword Dancer Career Gifts:

- Fencing
- Performance: Dance
- Sword-Dancer's Trappings

Trappings: Silk armor (2d4), Martial Sword (Damage +2 Critical), Scholarly Sword (Damage +2 Impaling)

NEW CAREERS

Tàoiſt Wizard

Dào Shih observed how nature interacted with itself and thus became enlightened. Their belief is that all sentient beings should live in harmony with nature instead of dominating or destroying it.



WIZARD

Include Tàoiſt Wizard Dice with:

- Academics
- Dodge
- Supernatural

Tàoiſt Wizard Career Gifts:

- Tàoiſt Trappings
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Tàoiſt Apprentice

Trappings: Robes, Rod (Damage +2, Parry d12), Wand

Tomb Defender

Since the passing of First sage king, a group of loyal Followers called *Líng-mù Shī* has existed, dedicated to maintaining the Final resting-place from deterioration.



WARRIOR

Include Tomb Defender Dice with:

- Brawling
- Digging
- Dodge

Tomb Defender Career Gifts:

- Brawling Fighter
- Night Vision
- Veteran

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Torch (Damage +0 Weak, On Fire))

Tax Collector

Probably the most unpopular person in the empire, the *Ye Chouji* comes to take what is the Emperor's due.



ACADEMIC

Include Tax Collector Dice with:

- Academics
- Inquiry
- Presence

Tax Collector Career Gifts:

- Hagglng
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Mathematics

Trappings: Cotton armor (d4), large sack, ledger, writing kit

Vagrant Warrior

Wu Xiā wander in search of perfection: to become the greatest at fighting with one weapon. The greatest among them aspire to become master of all weapons.



WARRIOR

Include Vagrant Warrior Dice with:

- Dodge
- Melee Combat
- Tactics

Vagrant Warrior Career Gifts:

- Counter Tactics
- Insider with the Vagrant Warriors
- Veteran

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Longsword (Damage +2), Wooden Shield (Cover d8), Short bow (Damage +0 Critical)

Trader

With the rise of the middle class and the popularity of coinage, the *Ye Gu* has become a common occupation. Traders can be a single operation, or the owner of a complex caravan.



LABORER

Include Trader Dice with:

- Academics
- Inquiry
- Negotiation

Trader Career Gifts:

- Administration
- Hagglng
- Literacy: Zhōngwén

Trappings: Leather armor (d6), Hammer (Damage +2 Weak), large sack full of Cheap and Average goods



MARTIAL ARTS

MARTIAL ARTS

In the dark corners of lawlessness in the sprawling cities ... at the summits of the remote mountain fastnesses ... under the shadows of the impenetrable forest canopies ... and in places even more strange are the practitioners of strange and terrible martial arts. Encountering folks who know these methods is the stuff of legend.

Learning even one of these techniques is very difficult. Some martial arts are described in books, such as *Superior Theory of Archery* or *The Striking Methods of the Empty Hand*... but you have to be literate and educated to read such things. Other martial arts, such as *Beggar's Gang* or *Drunken Style* fighting, are closely-guarded secrets by their practitioners – before you can learn them, you have to get them to trust you enough to impart the secrets to you.

A great start to an adventure can be when a player meets a master of a secret martial art ... but the master will only teach the secret once some service is performed for them, such as plucking a chrysanthemum flower from the tree at the top of the mountain ... or by saving the village from the predations of the Three Bandit-Kings ... or even by learning to master one's anger before anger masters oneself. (In game terms, a Non-Player Character may offer a strange Goal, with the reward being one of the Gifts from a Martial Art.)

The martial arts presented here are the exotic techniques known to the Zhonggese. Don't forget that the *Player's Book* is already full of Gifts that give great combat abilities!

Beggar's Style Fighting

The story-tellers speak of a time when the Beggars' Gang were being picked on by a disagreeable prince, who was using their lowly status as an excuse to abuse them any chance he could. Lacking confidence and skill, the Beggars were forced to endure his repeated mistreatment. One day, a rat Taoist monk dressed in rags interfered with a particularly savage beating the prince was giving out. The rat was able to fight off the prince and his five hangers-on without even being touched. The grateful beggars led the monk back to their gathering spot. They bowed before him, thanking him profusely and pleading that he would teach them his fighting arts. After such a display of sincerity, the rat agreed — however, he warned them that they must never use this style in aggression or in hatred, or he would personally remove this knowledge from everyone. The Beggars gave their solemn oath ... the oath known today as *Gài Bang*. Satisfied, the rat stayed with them for eight years and taught them what he knew.

Beggar-Style Fighting (Battle, Combat, *Gài Bang*)



You are skilled at misdirecting your target, by goading them, mocking them as you swing, and saying you're about to do one thing when you're really going to do the other.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Insider with the Beggars' Gang
Streetwise

Action “attack with Beggars' Style Move”

You may strike the target with a Beggar's Style move. It doesn't require a free hand – you use your hands, your feet, your shoulder, your head, etc.

Use your Body, Mind, Brawling, and Inquiry vs. the foe's defense. If you hit, you cause Damage flat 3 and Push 1.

Improvised Fighting (Battle, Combat, *Gài Bang*)



You can use the environment to assault people, as if you have a supply of “specialty weapons” as long as there are items in the environment to use, such as chairs, bowls, chopsticks, etc.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Insider with the Beggars' Gang
Streetwise

X (Special)

Extra action “ready an improvised weapon”

Exhaust this Gift. If you're within 1 pace of an improvised weapon, you may ready it as an extra action. If there is no obvious improvised weapon around, you may pick up something, like a shoe or a rock, or your belt, etc. that becomes an Improvised Weapon. (Mostly likely either a good-handed, Damage +2 Weak weapon ... or a thrown Damage +1 weak weapon.)



MARTIAL ARTS

Trigger: start of your turn

Speed & Searching vs. 3

Extra action: “refresh Improvised Fighting”

At the start of your turn, you may attempt a roll of Speed & Searching vs. 3. If you score one success or more, you may take an extra action: a *refresh* action, but only to refresh this Gift of Improvised Fighting.

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn” still applies.

Trigger: you are holding a one-handed

Improvised Weapon in your good hand

Action “thrown smash attack”

You may throw a one-handed improvised weapon at someone within Short Range. It doesn’t matter if the weapon can normally be thrown or not.

Roll your Body, Mind, Searching, and Throwing vs. the target’s defense. (If you have Strength, include that, too.) If you hit, you cause Damage flat 3 Weak, regardless of what you just threw at them. The improvised weapon you throw at the target shatters and becomes useless.

Trigger: you are holding a two-handed

Improvised Weapon

Action “two-handed melee smash attack”

Are you using a two-handed Improvised Weapon in both hands?

Declare you will make a *melee smash attack*. Roll your Body, Mind, Melee Combat and Searching vs. the target’s defense. (If you have Strength, include that, too.) If you hit, you cause Damage flat 4 Weak. The improvised weapon shatters and becomes useless.

Improvised Trickery

(Battle, Combat, Gài Bang)



You can use the environment to assault people, as if you have a supply of “specialty weapons” as long as there are items in the environment to use, such as chairs, bowls, chopsticks, etc.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Improvised Fighting
Insider with the Beggars’ Gang
Streetwise

X (Battle)

Trigger: hit with Improvised Smash Attack

Did you just use one of the two Improvised Fighting “smash attacks”? Did you hit? Then you may Exhaust this Gift.



You may claim *one and only one* of the following boons to your attack:

點 Your target is Knocked Down. (For example, you could use a bench or a farm tool to sweep under their legs.)

點 Your weapon is not smashed, but the target is Grappled. (For example, you might pin someone to a wall between chair legs, or wrap their hands up in a jacket.)

You must remain Close (1m) to your target to maintain the Grapple. You counter your opponent’s Break Free attempts with your Body, Melee Combat, and Strength. If the target successfully breaks free, the improvised weapon becomes smashed and useless in the escape.

點 Your target suffers +1 Damage. (Declare this effect before they Soak.) Onlookers wince at the extra brutality of this move.

點 Your attack is a *subdual attack*. (That is, if the target becomes Hurt, they also become Asleep. If the target becomes Afraid, they also become Unconscious). Alternatively, if the weapon is flexible, you may use an improvised weapon to Grapple the target.

點 Your weapon is not smashed and can be used again. If you threw the weapon, it rebounds into your hand.

Presumptuous Disarm

(Battle, Combat, Gài Bang)



The Beggars’ Gang believe that whatever isn’t nailed down is theirs for the taking. Whatever you can take from a reeling foe isn’t nailed down.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Improvised Fighting
Insider with the Beggars’ Gang
Legerdemain
Streetwise



MARTIAL ARTS

Trigger: you are Close to a Reeling foe
Interrupt “stunt to ready someone else’s weapon”

Are you Close to a Reeling target (within 1m)? Do they have a ready weapon? You may use the Presumptuous Disarm ... *even if it’s not your turn.*

Exhaust this Gift. Your foe is disarmed, and you now have their weapon. You are now *Reeling*.

You must have the right number of hands to equip the weapon. If you are currently carrying weapons, you can drop some of them on the ground as a free reaction.

King of Beggars (Battle, Combat, Gàì Bang)



Or, if you insist, “Queen of Beggars.” As the dregs of society, we’re in no place to judge.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Improvised Fighting
Insider with the Beggars’ Gang
Legerdemain
Streetwise

Must successfully steal something from another character who has the “King of Beggars” Gift.

Trigger: wearing cheap clothes or armor
Extra refresh action “refresh Gàì Bang gift”

Are you wearing Cheap clothes or armor? You may take an extra refresh action, but only to refresh a Gift with the Gàì Bang descriptor.

The Superiority of Beggars’ Style (Battle, Combat, Gàì Bang)



Your martial arts are Far superior to Drunken Style.

Requires

Beggar’s Style
Brawling Fighter
Insider with the Beggars’ Gang
Resolve
Streetwise

Bonus d12 to Counter or Parry Drunken Style

You may claim a bonus d12 to Counter or to Parry Drunken Fist attacks.

Black Tortoise Gifts

No one is sure who originated this school of gong fu. Based on the Tablet of Masters, Hei Gui Shù was founded in the sixth year of King Ren-bang of the Quan Dynasty (2197) by Master Chen Wù. Master Ju Wei is the 22nd Master of this school. The philosophy behind Hei Gui Shù is to outlast your opponent, to get them to waste their energy while you conserve yours. When the enemy is exhausted, then you strike. An apprentice has to learn to use the *qi* to help reinforce the body.

Practitioners often harden their bodies by repeatedly striking their fore-arms and shins against training dummies, or by breaking and resetting their knuckles until their fingers become hard and their claws (if any) become calloused and large. It is said that the ultimate skill of the Black-Tortoise school is the ability to control the flow of energy through the body to avoid damage, up to and including moving the internal organs around to avoid attack.

Black-Tortoise masters often become bodyguards to the rich, as their skill in defeating foes and their sensitivity to danger is legendary. They carry round metal shields, often with eight sides, like a tortoise shell. Hei Gui Shù does not teach the use of any weapons.

One Post to Support Heaven (Battle, Combat, Hei Gui Shù)



Black-Tortoise masters often become bodyguards to the rich, as their skill in defeating foes and their sensitivity to danger is legendary. Black-Tortoise practitioners carry round metal shields, often with eight sides, like a tortoise shell. *Hei Gui Shù* does not teach the use of any weapons.

Requires

Insider with the Black Tortoise School
Resolve
Shield Fighter

X (Battle)

Trigger: failed defense with shield cover

Did you just fail to defend? Did your defense use your shield? Exhaust this gift to negate 1 point of damage.

MARTIAL ARTS

One Post to Support Earth (Battle, Combat, *Hei Gui Shù*)



It is said that the ultimate skill of the Black-Tortoise school is the ability to control the flow of energy through the body to avoid damage, up to and including moving the internal organs around to avoid attack.

Requires

- Clear Headed
- Insider with the Black Tortoise School
- One Post to Support Heaven
- Resolve
- Shield Fighter

X (Battle)

Trigger: failed Dodge with shield cover

Did you just fail to dodge with your shield? Exhaust this gift to negate 1 point of damage. Yes, this gift stacks with “One Point to Support Heaven”, allowing you to negate 2 points of damage, if you exhaust both. Remember, though, it only works against attacks that you attempt to dodge while using shield cover.

Look to the Sky and Shout (Battle, Combat, *Hei Gui Shù*)



With a loud cry, you stomp heavily on the ground and hold your hands (or shield, or weapon) forward in a defensive position. You are able to channel your internal flow of energy to resist the assaults of those who would seek to harm you.

Requires

- Counter-Tactics
- Insider with the Black Tortoise School
- Resolve
- Shield Fighter
- Veteran

X (Battle)

Stunt “channel energy”

Declare a stunt, then exhaust this Gift. Until next round, you are Guarding (bonus d12 to defense) and all Damage you suffer is Weak.

Heaven Turns and Earth Circles (Battle, Combat, *Hei Gui Shù*)



With a twist of your muscles and a snarl of defiance on your face, you disarm your foe by twisting the weapon in your own wound.

Requires

- Bravery
- Clear Headed
- Insider with the Black Tortoise School
- Resolve
- Shield Fighter

X (Battle)

Trigger: hurt by melee weapon

Were you just hurt (or worse) by a melee weapon? Exhaust this Gift. Your foe is Disarmed – the weapon falls at your feet.

You can't use this gift if they didn't inflict at least a “Hurt” result against you.



The Sun Shines on the Worthy and the Wanting Alike (Battle, Combat, *Hei Gui Shù*)



Summoning forth an extraordinary control of body energy, you can actually channel some of the hostile force back at the attacker!

Requires

- Bravery
- Clear Headed
- Die Hard
- Counter-Tactics
- Heaven Turns and Earth Circles
- Insider with the Black Tortoise School
- Resolve
- Shield Fighter
- Toughness
- Veteran

X (Battle)

Trigger: hit by melee weapon

Were you just hit by a melee weapon? Exhaust this Gift. Your attacker takes the same Damage you just took, but Weak.

Black Tortoise Master (Battle, Combat, *Hei Gui Shù*)



The philosophy behind *Hei Gui Shù* is to outlast your opponent, to get them to waste their energy while you conserve yours. When the enemy is exhausted, then you strike. An apprentice has to learn to use the qi to help reinforce the body.

Requires

- Bravery
- Clear Headed
- Counter-Tactics
- Die Hard

Favor Bonus with Dodge
Heaven Turns and Earth Circles
Insider with the Black Tortoise School
Look to the Sky and Shout
One Post to Support Earth
One Post to Support Heaven
Resolve
Shield Fighter

The Sun Shines on the Worthy and the Wanting
Alike
Toughness
Veteran

Extra action “refresh *Hei Gui Shù* gift”

You may take an extra action each round: a “refresh” action, but only to refresh a gift with the *Hei Gui Shù* descriptor.

Drunken Style Fighting

Another popular style among the underprivileged, Drunken-Fist is named after the way it simulates the unpredictable movements of a drunk. Practitioners of the style specialize in fake pratfalls, random strikes and feints, and in using found objects such as chairs, tables, clothes, etc. as weapons. Masters of the art can even fight while intoxicated, and a few claim superior performance when they are extremely drunk. By tradition, a Drunken-Fist practitioner believes their fighting style is superior to Beggar’s Gang School.



Drunken Style Fighting (Combat, Drunken Fist)

You are skilled at misdirecting your target, by goading them, mocking them as you swing, and saying you’re about to do one thing when you’re really going to do the other.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Carousing
Insider with the Drunken Fists

Action “attack with Drunken Fighters Move”

You may use any of the Drunken Style moves.

Use your Body, Will, Brawling, and Endurance vs. the foe’s defense. If you hit, you cause Damage flat 3, and you may stride 1 pace in any direction.

Misdirection Strike (Battle, Combat, Drunken Fist)



What a waste of a good drink/You totally meant that.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Carousing
Insider with the Drunken Fists
Spring Attack

X (Battle)

Trigger: you successfully Dodge and Retreat

You must be able to Retreat, to use this ability. If you can’t Retreat (because you’re Reeling, Grappled, etc.) then you can’t use this Gift.

If you successfully Dodge an attack, you may declare you will exhaust this Gift. You swap places with a foe that’s within your Stride distance (usually 1m). The swap counts as your Retreat, even if it moves you closer to the attacker! (If you tied on your Dodge roll, the Retreat breaks the tie in your favor, as usual.)

The person you swapped places with must now defend against the attack you just dodged! They roll against the same attack dice you just dodged, and they may use any defense that they can – counter, parry, or dodge. (If they use their counter, they are attacking *your attacker*, not you, so they will usually choose parry or dodge.)

MARTIAL ARTS

Spit Attack (Battle, Combat, Drunken Fist)



What a waste of a good drink!

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Carousing
Insider with the Drunken Fists

X (Battle)

Action “attack with Spit Attack”

You must have a bottle of alcohol ready in your off-hand.

Exhaust this gift, then rapidly drink the alcohol, and spit at a target up to Near Range. Roll your Body, Endurance, and d12 bonus from Carousing vs. the foe’s counter or dodge defense. The attack does no damage if it hits, but any target who is hit is sent Reeling. The attack is also Sweep Near.

X (Battle)

Action “attack with Flaming Spit Attack”

You must have a bottle of alcohol ready in one hand, and an open flame (such as a torch) in the other.

Exhaust this gift, then rapidly drink the alcohol, and spit at a target up to Near Range. Roll your Body, Endurance, and d12 bonus from Carousing vs. the foe’s counter or dodge defense. The attack does no damage if it hits, but any target who is hit is sent Reeling and is On Fire. The attack is also Sweep Near.

Stumbling Motion (Battle, Combat, Drunken Fist)



What looks like drunken stumbling is actually clever movement.

Requires

Acrobat
Brawling Fighter
Carousing
Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Drunken Fists

X (Battle)

Trigger: no Burdens

Action “stumble”

To use this move, you must not be Burdened or Over-burdened.

Declare an occupied spot within Short Range (12m). Roll your Speed & Endurance Dice, and note the score (that is, the highest die). If you score is equal to or greater than the distance to that spot, then you

stumble your way there, over and under obstacles in your way.

If you score less than the distance to that spot ... then you still get there, but you are sent *Reeling*.

In case it matters, the spot has to be on the same altitude that you are.

Stumbling Soak (Battle, Combat, Drunken Fist)



You know how to roll with an attack to take less damage.

Requires

Acrobat
Brawling Fighter
Carousing
Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Drunken Fists

X (Battle)

Trigger: hit by attack while standing

Fall down, claim 2d6 Soak Dice

Are you standing up? Were you just hit by an attack? Exhaust this Gift. You fall down, but you may claim 2d6 Soak Dice vs. the Damage.

You may only use his Gift vs. attacks that cause Damage, and you must have already been standing up, so you can fall down.

Champion of the Drinking Contest (Battle, Combat, Drunken Fist)



Everyone celebrates your victory ... except maybe your liver.

Requires

Acrobat
Brawling Fighter
Carousing
Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Drunken Fists
Spring Attack
Must win a drinking contest against someone who already has the “Champion of the Drinking Contest” Gift

Trigger: no Burdens

Extra refresh action “refresh Drunken Fist gift”

Are you not Burdened or Over-burdened? You may take an extra refresh action, but only to refresh a Gift with the “Drunken Fist” descriptor.

MARTIAL ARTS

The Superiority of Drunken Fist (Combat, Drunken Fist)



Your martial arts are far superior to Beggar's Gang style.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Carousing

Drunken Style Fighting
Insider with the Drunken Fists
Resolve

Bonus d12 to Counter or Parry Beggar's Gang

You may claim a bonus d12 to Counter or to Parry Beggar's Gang attacks.

Empty-Hand Techniques

Known collectively as *Liu ho po fa* ("six co-ordinations, eight methods), the Empty-Hand Methods were originally developed by monks and scholars as a form of exercise. Educated Zhonggese believe that harmony is the key to peace and long life. The Empty-Hand Methods are some-times called "six tries, eight punches," because many find learning all of the methods to be too time-consuming, and they instead prefer to focus on the immediate application of the study: striking people with fists, palm, fingers, and thumbs. Many boast that an accomplished Empty-Hand fighter can strike for more Damage than any weapon known, through dedicated focus of their internal energy, or *qi*.

Empty Hands are just that — empty hands. To use an Empty-Hand Method, the attacker must have *two* hands free, and they must have nothing in either hand. *Hand substitutes, such as Prehensile Tails, do not qualify as Empty Hands.* Empty-Hand Methods do not combine with Claws or other Natural Weapons.

Collapsing the Wall (Battle, Combat, Empty-Hand)



The attacker twists around and body-slams the target. The real trick to the Collapsing-the-Wall Technique is to use the target's own weight against them. The best way to avoid injury is not to resist but to move with the attacker.

Requires

Acrobat
Brawling Fighter

X (Battle)

Action "attack with Huan method"

Declare you will attack using the Fu Method. You roll your Body, Speed, & Brawling & Craft vs. the foe's defense. If you hit, you inflict Damage flat 2 *Penetrating* and the target is Knocked Down.

Concealing the Intent (Battle, Combat, Empty-Hand)



The most mysterious of Empty Hand methods, this attack puts its emphasis on harmony with the Tào and the universe. No two witnesses of the Fu Method describe what they saw the same way — one might swear it was a direct fist blow to the face, another will have seen a quick jab to the ribs, et cetera.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Low Profile

X (Battle)

Action "attack with Fu method"

Declare you will attack using the Fu Method. You roll your Speed, Mind, & Brawling, and Inquiry vs. the foe's defense. If you hit, you inflict Damage flat 3 and the target is Confused.

Deceiving the Prey (Battle, Combat, Empty-Hand)



The martial arts masters of the Hsui School teach the finer arts of feinting to strike in one place ... then suddenly lashing out in another direction. It is said that to avoid the assault of the "Deceiving the Prey" strike, one must not only watch the hands of the attacker, but also their eyes. Those skilled in reading body language and who are wary of deceit can avoid the brunt of this attack.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Fast-Talk

X (Battle)

Action "attack with Hsui method"

Declare you will attack using the Hsui Method. You roll your Speed, Mind, & Brawling & Deceit vs. the foe's defense. If you hit, you inflict Damage flat 5 *Weak* and the target is Pushed up to 3 paces.

MARTIAL ARTS



Opening the Gate (Battle, Combat, Empty-Hand)

The students of the Ku school learn about the eight "pain gates" found within their bodies. By redirecting one's energy from one gate to the other, one can "close their gate" and avoid feeling pain. Also, if one knows where the vulnerable gates are on the target, they can strike them for catastrophic effect. Unfortunately, those who are inured to pain and suffering have greater resistance to this attack.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
First Aid

X (Battle)

Action "attack with Ku method"

Declare you will attack using the Ku Method. You roll your Speed, Mind, Will, & Brawling, and Academics (and no Body and no strength) vs. the foe's defense. If you hit, you inflict Damage flat 6 Weak.

A target Overkilled by this method has their body seize up in horrible paroxysms of pain before their blood vessels rupture from the re-directed pressure, causing them to explode in a horrific display.

Redirecting the Soul (Battle, Combat, Empty-Hand)

Drawing upon a mystical understanding of the body, the attacker delivers a blow with extended fingers that would apparently not be forceful enough to cause any harm – but in effect, the attacker is striking out against the target's internal *chi*, causing an imbalance that inflicts pain, seizures, and possibly even death. Those who are able to channel their spiritual energy have achieved a greater balance of internal energy and thus resist this attack more effectively.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Clear Headed

X (Battle)

Action "attack with Le method"

Declare you will attack using the Le Method. You roll your Mind, Will, & Brawling, & Supernatural vs. the foe's defense. If you hit, you inflict Damage flat 4 Weak and the target is Silenced.

Snapping the Twig (Battle, Combat, Empty-Hand)

The attacker quickly seizes one of the target's limbs and attempts to wrench it right off. The motion is a quick one of opportunity, and the style emphasizes getting clear quickly, so typical grappling and wrestling techniques are ineffective.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Contortionist

X (Battle)

Action "attack with Fu method"

Declare you will attack using the Fu Method. You roll your Speed, Will, & Brawling & Climbing vs. the foe's defense. If you hit, you inflict Damage flat 5 Weak and the target is Disarmed.

MARTIAL ARTS

Sounding the Gong (Battle, Combat, Empty-Hand)



Not very subtle, but frighteningly effective – the attacker leans forward and strikes the target with both palms extended. A traditional Ti practitioner will let out a loud shout as they deliver the blow. The best defense is to get out of the way.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Strength

X (Battle)

Action “attack with Le Ti method”

Declare you will attack using the Le Ti Method. You roll your Body, Speed, Mind, Will, & Brawling & Presence vs. the foe’s defense. If you hit, you inflict Damage flat 3 *Penetrating*.

Working the Bellows (Battle, Combat, Empty-Hand)



The attacker delivers a sharp blow to the target’s abdomen in an upward motion, knocking the wind out of the target. If delivered expertly, the blow strikes quickly and forcefully enough that the air doesn’t have time to escape, rupturing an air pocket inside the target.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Hiking

X (Battle)

Action “attack with Chi method”

Declare you will attack using the Chi Method. You roll your Body, Mind, & Brawling & Endurance vs. the foe’s defense. If you hit, you inflict Damage flat 4 *Weak* and the target is *Fatigued*.



Forest Ghost Gifts

No one really knows who the *Lin Kuei* were. (Or who they *are*, for that matter.) The general belief is that the “Forest Ghosts” were a secret society who lived in secret monastery, and that they were the keepers of the secrets of the deadliest martial arts of the known world. Rumors abound that their “pure technique” allows one to kill with a touch, or even a gaze. Today, the style known as *Lin Kuei Shù* embodies the common moves of the stealthy assassin, combining quiet and quick movements with deadly accuracy.

Naturally, it’s quite dangerous to seek becoming an Insider with the Forest Ghosts, since they are notoriously secretive ... and they’re among the top assassins in the world.

Forest Ghost’s Trappings (Plot, Trappings)



Belongings

You start the game with the following items:

- 點 a Sleeve Sword
- 點 a Dart Fan with four common darts and one poison dart
- 點 Four Daggers

點 Silk Armor

點 A Cheap change of clothes, suitable for a low-profile disguise

X (Special)

Replace your missing trappings

If you are parted from your items, ask the Game Host for a plot twist to return or to replace them.

Once exhausted, you cannot refresh this Gift until the next game session.

MARTIAL ARTS

Caress of the Ghost (Battle, Combat, *Lin Kuei Shù*)



Fighting against you is a bad move.

Requires

Insider with the Forest Ghosts
Low Profile

Attack with Concealable weapon

If you are using a Concealable weapon, you may claim a bonus 2d8 with all attacks. (There is no bonus for parries or counters.)

The Strike Without Shadow (Battle, Combat, *Lin Kuei Shù*)



If done correctly, no one sees anything.

Requires

Insider with the Forest Ghosts
Legerdemain
Quick Draw
Quick Sheathe
Low Profile

X (Battle)

Action “combo stride, ready, attack, put away”

For this attack to work, your weapon must *not* be ready. Declare an opponent, then exhaust this gift.

In one combination action, you ready your weapon, you move your Stride towards a target, you attack your target, and then put your weapon away. (Yes, you put your weapon away even if your attack fails, it's that quick.)

Your other action this turn can be any other action, as long as it's not “ready”, “attack”, or “put away”, since you can't take the same action twice in the same turn.

Any witnesses to your attack must score *two* successes on a roll of Mind, Observation, and Species vs. 3, or they totally didn't notice your attack. (They may claim a bonus d12 to this roll if they have Insider with the Forest Ghosts – they're wise to your tricks.)

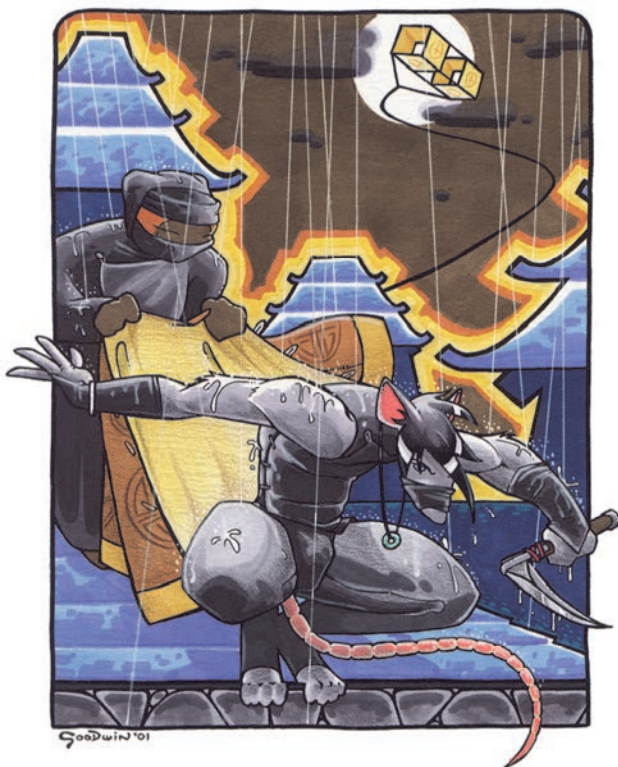
Fleeting Presence (Battle, Combat, *Lin Kuei Shù*)



Were you even there?

Requires

Artful Dodger
Clear-Headed
Fast Mover
Insider with the Forest Ghosts
Low Profile
Caress of the Ghost



X (Battle)

Trigger: foe becomes Dying, Dead, or Overkilled

Did a foe within Short Range (12m) just become Dying, Dead, or Overkilled? It doesn't matter if it's your turn or not. You may interrupt to use this Gift.

Declare a spot within Short Range (12m) of you.

Then, roll your Speed & Stealth dice, and note the score. For example, if you rolled 7, 5, 2, your highest is a 7, so that's the score.

You must now move to the spot you declared, up to the distance you scored. For example, if you scored a 7, trace a path up to 7 paces long to the spot you just declared, making as many twists and turns as you need. If you can't make it to the spot, get as close as you can. (The Game Host may have to use their discretion.)

Hell Punch (Battle, Combat, *Lin Kuei Shù*)



What exactly is the dreaded Hell Punch? We dare not describe the method to you, as we fear for our lives as well as the welfare of our loved ones!

Requires

Insider with the Forest Ghosts
Legerdemain
Low Profile
Spring Attack

X (Battle)

Action “hell-punch attack”

You must have a free off-hand to use the Hell Punch.

Exhaust this Gift. Then, as an attack, roll your Speed, Mind, Brawling, and Stealth vs. your opponent’s defense. (Note: there is no Body or Strength bonus for the Hell Punch.)

If you hit the target, your foe takes Damage flat 3, *Penetrating* and *Weak*. Also, if you hit, you may immediately attempt a *sneak* – roll your Speed & Stealth, move that many paces (making as many twists and turns as you need to), and then end your turn, Reeling.

Sneaky Soak (Battle, Combat, Lin Kuei Shù)



You know how to protect vulnerable body parts from attack.

Requires

- Insider with the Forest Ghosts
- Legerdemain
- Low Profile

X (Battle)

Trigger: Attacked while Reeling from hiding or sneaking

Are you currently Reeling because you took a hide or sneak stunt? Did someone just hit you with an attack to cause Damage?

Exhaust this Gift. You may claim your Stealth dice as extra Soak Dice.

You may not use this Gift’s ability unless you were hiding or sneaking.

The Touch of Death (Dim Mak) (Battle, Combat, Lin Kuei Shù)



Learned accounts differ wildly on what the Dim Mak, or “death touch,” really is (or if it even exists). Reputedly the ultimate assassin’s weapon, the attack causes vibrations in the target’s body, disrupting their internal harmony.

Requires

- Brawling Fighter
- Clear Headed
- Insider with the Forest Ghosts
- Knack for Brawling
- Legerdemain
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Medicine

X (Chapter)

Action “touch-of-death attack”

Declare a target, then execute the touch of death attack. Roll your Body, Mind, and Brawling vs. 3. The target defends with Body, Speed, Dodge, Armor vs. 3. (Or they may counter-attack, if they threaten you.) If you win the contest, the target is hit with the *Touch of Death Attack*.

The attack itself sends the target Reeling and does no damage ... yet.

Once per hour, the target rolls their Body die. If they roll a 1, they become Sick. If the target is already Sick, they become Unconscious. If the target is already Unconscious, they become Dead.

The Touch of Death is almost invisible, and very few know how to treat it. To remove the Touch of Death, a character with the Gift of Medicine must roll their Mind, Academics vs. 3 (with a bonus d12 if they have Insider with the Forest Ghosts) – and no, no one may assist them!

They must win a challenge vs. your own Mind, Academics, and d12 from Insider vs. 3. If they score more successes than you do, the Touch of Death ends (and all effects must be cured normally). If they tie or worse, they can’t try again – they will have to get someone else.

You yourself can remove the Touch of Death, simply by touching the target and declaring a stunt to remove it.

MARTIAL ARTS

Ghost Emperor (Battle, *Lin Kuei Shù*)



If anyone has ever achieved this level of skill, I'd never heard about it.

Requires

Artful Dodger
Brawling Fighter
Caress of the Ghost
Clear-Headed
Fast Mover
Fleeting Presence
Hell Punch
Insider with the Forest Ghosts
Knack for Brawling
Legerdemain
Low Profile
Quick Draw
Quick Sheathe
Sneaky Fighter
Sneaky Soak
Spring Attack
The Strike Without Shadow

Extra Action “refresh *Lin Kuei Shù* gift”

On your turn, you may take an extra action: a “refresh” action, but only to refresh a gift with the “*Lin Kuei Shù*” description. The standard rules still apply.

The Fifth Strike of the Forest Ghosts (Battle, Combat, *Lin Kuei Shù*)



The Ghost Emperors only teach four methods of attack. The fifth method is kept a secret, for some day they may have to use it against you.

Requires

Artful Dodger
Brawling Fighter
Caress of the Ghost
Clear-Headed
Fast Mover
Fleeting Presence
Ghost Emperor
Hell Punch
Insider with the Forest Ghosts
Knack for Brawling
Knack for Stealth

Legerdemain

Low Profile

Quick Draw

Quick Sheathe

Sneaky Fighter

Sneaky Soak

Spring Attack

The Strike Without Shadow

Must successfully survive someone else's attempt to counter-attack you with “The Fifth Strike of the Forest Ghosts”

X (Battle)

Trigger: counter vs. *Lin Kuei Shù* attack

Is someone using a *Lin Kuei Shù* attack on you? (That is any attack provided by a *Lin Kuei Shù* Gift, or one that claims any kind of bonus or boon from a *Lin Kuei Shù* gift.) Declare you will counter with the mythical *Fifth Strike*.

You must have a free off-hand to use this counter. If your hand is full, you may drop your carried item as a free reaction to use this desperate counter.

As a counter, roll your Body, Speed, Mind, Will, Brawling, Inquiry, Stealth vs. your foe's attack.

If you hit, you cause Damage flat 10, *Penetrating* and *Weak*.

If your attack Overkills the target, all characters, friend or foe, who saw the counter *and* have the Gift of Insider with the Forest Ghosts become *Terrified*. All other characters simply see the target fall over Dead (and thus suffer no fear effects).

The Fifth Strike may *only* be used to counter *Lin Kuei Shù* attacks, and it can never be used for any other purpose.

Seven Secret Kicks

Accounts differ on whether the man known today as Kong Dinh-Son ever existed. He is certainly the main character in a number of folk tales and operas, where he is described as a large leopard without a sense of humor. Sometimes, he is comically oblivious to what is going on, and often gets into comic mischief by those who exploit his lack of awareness. Other stories portray him as an uncompromising avatar of justice, immune to indolence, temptation, and any other vices as he metes out his personal justice as dictated by his code of honor. Stories of Kong Dinh-Son are often punctuated by the hero's use of one of his seven special kicks upon some malefactor.

Able Kick (Combat, Seven Kicks)



Requires

Brawling Fighter
Fast Jumper

Trigger: unburdened

Action "attack with able kick"

Body, Speed, Brawling, Jumping

Damage flat 3

Are you *not* Burdened or Over-burdened? You may use the *Able Kick* by kicking with your feet. Roll your Body, Speed, Brawling, and Jumping vs. the target's defense. If you hit, you cause Damage flat 3.

The Able Kick does not exhaust.

Forceful Kick (Battle, Combat, Seven Kicks)



Requires

Able Kick
Brawling Fighter
Fast Jumper

X (Battle)

Trigger: unburdened

Action "attack with forceful kick"

Body, Speed, Brawling, Jumping

Damage flat 4, Push 1, Stride 1

Are you *not* Burdened or Over-burdened? You may use the *Forceful Kick* by exhausting this gift and then kicking with your feet. Roll your Body, Speed, Brawling, and Jumping vs. the target's defense. If you hit, you cause Damage flat 4, Push 1, and you may immediately move up to your Stride in a straight line.

Impressive Kick (Battle, Combat, Seven Kicks)



Requires

Able Kick
Brawling Fighter
Fast Jumper
Forceful Kick

X (Battle)

Trigger: unburdened

Action "attack with impressive kick"

Body, Speed, Brawling, Jumping

Damage flat 4, Push 1, Afraid

Are you *not* Burdened or Over-burdened? You may use the *Impressive Kick* by exhausting this gift and then kicking with your feet. Roll your Body, Speed, Brawling, and Jumping vs. the target's defense. If you hit, you cause Damage flat 4, Push 1, and your target becomes Afraid.

Sweeping Kick (Battle, Combat, Seven Kicks)



Requires

Able Kick
Brawling Fighter
Fast Jumper
Forceful Kick
Impressive Kick
Sure-Footed

X (Battle)

Trigger: unburdened

Action "attack with sweeping kick"

Body, Speed, Brawling, Jumping

Damage flat 3, Sweep Close

Are you *not* Burdened or Over-burdened? You may use the *Able Kick* by exhausting this gift and then kicking with your feet. Roll your Body, Speed, Brawling, and Jumping vs. the target's defense. If you hit, you cause Damage flat 3, and you may Sweep at Close Range (1m).

Triumphant Kick (Battle, Combat, Seven Kicks)



Requires

Able Kick
Brawling Fighter
Counter-Tactics
Fast Jumper
Forceful Kick
Impressive Kick
Sure-Footed
Sweeping Kick

MARTIAL ARTS

X (Battle)

Trigger: unburdened

Action “stride, then attack with triumphant kick”

Body, Speed, Brawling, Jumping

Damage flat 3, Stride, attack again

Are you *not* Burdened or Over-burdened? You may use the *Triumphant Kick* by exhausting this gift and then kicking with your feet. First, move up to your Stride in any direction, Then, roll your Body, Speed, Brawling, and Jumping vs. the target’s defense. If you hit, you cause Damage flat 3, and *you may move up to your Stride* (or not at all) ... and then you may attack a different target with this kick attack.

You may only strike at up to two targets this way. You don’t get the second attack at all if you were sent Reeling after the first attack (say, because of a successful counter) ... but if they just dodged or parried you, then your second move goes off, as normal.

Untiring Kick

(Battle, Combat, Seven Kicks)



Requires

Able Kick
Brawling Fighter
Counter-Tactics
Fast Jumper
Forceful Kick
Impressive Kick
Sure-Footed
Sweeping Kick
Triumphant Kick

X (Battle)

Trigger: unburdened

Action “attack with untiring kick”

Body, Speed, Brawling, Jumping

Damage flat 3, refresh

Are you *not* Burdened or Over-burdened? You may use the *Untiring Kick* by exhausting this gift and then kicking with your feet. First, move up to your Stride in any direction, Then, roll your Body, Speed, Brawling, and Jumping vs. the target’s defense. If you hit, you cause Damage flat 3, and you may immediately take an extra “refresh” action!

If you miss, you don’t get the extra refresh. The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn still applies.



Hundred-Kick Attack

(Respite, Combat, Seven Kicks)



With repeated yells and quick swings of your foot, you bludgeon your foe with an array of rapid-fire kicks.

Requires

Able Kick
Brawling Fighter
Counter-Tactics
Fast Jumper
Forceful Kick
Knack with Jumping
Impressive Kick
Sure-Footed
Sweeping Kick
Triumphant Kick
Untiring Kick

X (Respite)

Trigger: unburdened

Action “attack with hundred kicks”

Body, Speed, Brawling, Jumping

Damage +1, Push 2

Are you *not* Burdened or Over-burdened? You may use the *Hundred Kicks* by exhausting this gift and then kicking with your feet. First, move up to your Stride in any direction, Then, roll your Body, Speed, Brawling, and Jumping vs. the target’s defense.

If you win, you cause Damage +1, Push 1.

If you tie or lose ... or if you don’t like how you rolled ... you may instead replay the contest. You *and* your foe immediately re-roll, *and both you and your foe claim a bonus d12*. If you win, you cause Damage +1, Push 1 ...

But if you tie or lose a *second* time ... or if you want to push your luck ... you *and* your foe immediately replay the contest, and both you and your foe claim *another bonus d12*. (Yes, stacked with before, that’s 2d12). If you hit, you cause Damage +1, Push 1. If you miss ... well, that’s it. (If your foe was countering, you might be in for some serious pain.)

(Yes, you can only use your Knack to re-roll one of these contests, so we suggest you save it for the end.)



Superior Theory of Archery Gifts

The term “martial art” implies discipline and the study of refined lore of military techniques, and few arts exemplify those qualities more than *Wu Bei Yao Lue*, the study of the bow. Practitioners of this art are rare — not only is the study time-consuming and difficult, but the martial art is often controlled by the local rulers, lest the secret skills pass into enemy hands. Indeed, in some places it is illegal to teach *Wu Bei Yao Lue* without a special license... or it may be illegal to teach it at all!

A master of this school learns how to shoot targets at extreme distances, how to retain concentration to aim in circumstances where others cannot, and even to shoot targets they cannot see.

Trappings of Superior Archery (Plot, Trappings)



Belongings

You begin the game with the following items:

- 點 Metal Bow
- 點 12 barbed arrows
- 點 12 regular arrows
- 點 Silk Armor
- 點 an elaborately-decorated ring (to protect the thumb when drawing back a bow string)
- 點 a copy of the book *Superior Theory of Archery*

X (Special)

Replace your missing trappings

If you are parted from your items, ask the Game Host for a plot twist to return or to replace them.

Once exhausted, you cannot refresh this Gift until the next game session.

Superior Theory of Archery (Battle, Combat, *Wu Bei Yao Lue*)



Concentrate the mind to pierce the flea.

Requires

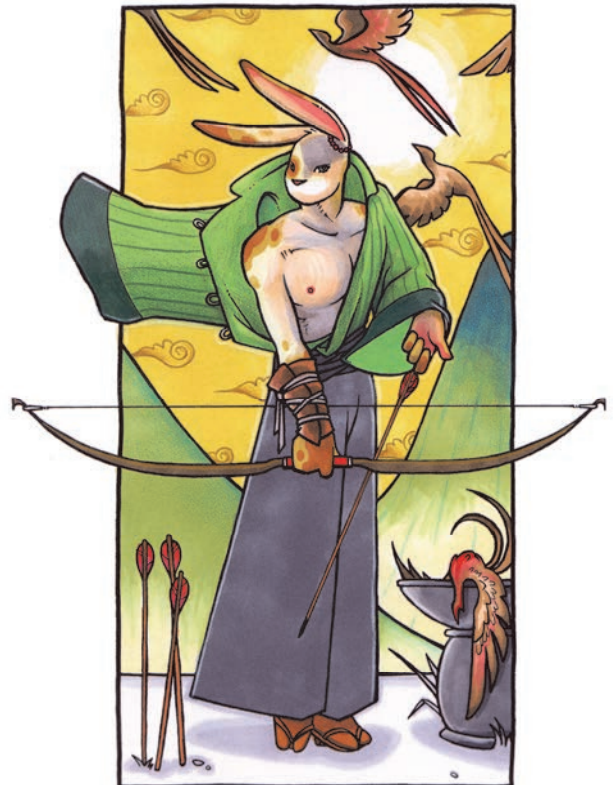
- Clear Headed
- Literacy
- Sharpshooter
- A copy of the book *Superior Theory of Archery*

X (Battle)

Attack action “Superior Archery”

Declare your attack, then exhaust this gift before you roll your attack dice. You focus your internal energy on this shot.

Roll your Body, Speed, Observation, and Ranged Combat vs. the target’s defense. If you hit, the target suffers Damage flat 3 *Penetrating*.



The Moon Rising in One’s Breast (Battle, Combat, Magic, *Wu Bei Yao Lue*)



There is only one point in the universe: the target.

Requires

- Clear Headed
- Instinctive Shot
- Sharpshooter
- Superior Theory of Archery
- A copy of the book *Superior Theory of Archery*

X (Battle)

Action “moon-rising attack”

Before any attack roll with a bow, you may exhaust this Gift. Declare an attack action, and that you will use a *Moon-Rising Attack* with your bow.

MARTIAL ARTS

The Moon-Rising Attack is a *Magic* Attack. It can hit targets that can only be hit by Magic, but it can also be countered by spells and the like that work against Magic.

Roll your Speed, Mind, Ranged Combat, and Supernatural. If you hit, your attack causes Damage flat 3, and your target is *Silenced*.

Arrow Volley (Battle, Combat, Wu Bei Yao Lue)



Fill the sky with arrows like rain.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Clear Headed
Instinctive Shot
Literacy
Sharpshooter
Superior Theory of Archery
A copy of the book *Superior Theory of Archery*

X (Battle)

Attack action “reload and attack with a volley of arrows”

Exhaust this Gift, then declare a spot within Short Range. That spot is now the center for an Explosion with Reach (2m) range.

For each target in the Explosion radius, load your bow with one arrow and then shoot. If you don't have enough arrows, you won't be able to hit all the targets. Yes, unlike a regular explosion, you can choose to exclude some targets.

Each target defends against your attack roll of Speed and Ranged Combat. Those that fail suffer Damage flat 3.

As Many Arrows as Stars in the Sky (Battle, Combat, Wu Bei Yao Lue)



Fill the sky with arrows like rain – *only more*.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Arrow Volley
Clear Headed
Instinctive Shot
Literacy
Sharpshooter
Superior Theory of Archery
Veteran
A copy of the book *Superior Theory of Archery*

X (Respite)

Trigger: volley of arrows

Before you use your “Arrow Volley” gift, declare you will exhaust this Gift. Increase the radius to Near (4m) range.

Sword Dancing

Although the art of Sword-Dancing was not developed as a fighting form, this does not change the fact that the art is nothing less than deadly. Professional Sword-Dancers entertain at court with their fast movements and co-ordination, swinging their sharp blades in a display unforgiving of error. Sword-Dancers are invariably sleek and handsome, dressed in the finest clothes and carrying one or two expensive, stylish swords. A Dancer requires a sponsor to buy their first sword and to lodge them while they train, and there are always more people eager to learn than there are positions available in noble houses. The best Sword-Dancers dance with a partner, in a coordinated “fight” where their swords clash against one another, faster and faster, until their motions are but a blur to on-lookers.

Sword Dancer's Trappings (Plot, Trappings)



Belongings

You start the game with the following items:

點 A Martial Sword
點 A Scholarly Sword
點 Silk Armor
點 A letter of recommendation, endorsing your skills as a Sword Dancer

X (Special)

Replace your missing trappings

If you are parted from your items, ask the Game Host for a plot twist to return or to replace them.

Once exhausted, you cannot refresh this Gift until the next game session.

MARTIAL ARTS

Respectfully Decline with a Thousand Apologies (Battle, Combat, Sword-Dancing)



There are two kinds of sword-dancers: the ones who learn how to avoid being hit ... and the retired.

Requires

Fencing
Performance: Dance
Sword Dancer's Trappings

X (Battle)

Action "Retreat for d12 Cover bonus to Parry"

Whenever you Parry, you may also declare you will Retreat. You move at least 1 pace away from your attacker, and you may claim a bonus d12 Cover against their attack.

Eight Breezes of the World (Battle, Combat, Sword-Dancing)



This maneuver represents the eight basic strokes that are the fundamentals of Sword-Dancing. The exact stroke chosen would depend upon which one would look better to the audience at the time. Despite their showy nature, the Eight Breezes are each very deadly.

Requires

Fencing
Performance: Dance
Sword Dancer's Trappings

X (Battle)

Trigger: Attack with Martial Sword or Scholarly Sword

Action "Attack with eight breezes of the world"

With your ready *Martial Sword*, you may attack your opponent with the Eight Breezes of the World.

You roll your *Body, Speed, Melee Combat, & Presence* vs. the target's defense.

If you win, your attack causes Damage flat 4. (With flat damage, your successes don't add — you just cause exactly 4 points of damage).

Eight Breezes of the World only works with attacks, not counters or parries.

X (Battle)

Trigger: Attack with Scholarly Sword

Action "eight breezes of the world"

With your ready *Scholarly Sword*, you may attack your opponent with the Eight Breezes of the World.

You roll your *Body, Mind, Melee Combat, & Presence* vs. the target's defense.

If you win, your attack causes Damage flat 3. (With flat damage, your successes don't add — you just cause exactly 3 points of damage). In addition, you

have an *Impaling* effect. If your target doesn't Retreat, they take another +2 Damage!

Eight Breezes of the World only works with attacks, not counters or parries.



Showmanship (Battle, Combat, Sword-Dancing)



The show must go on.

Requires

Acrobat
Performance: Dance
Sword Dancer's Trappings

X (Battle)

Parry Defense "with showmanship"

Before rolling your Parry defense, you may declare you will use *Showmanship*.

Exhaust this Gift.

If your Parry succeeds, *count the successes*. You may immediately use those successes to Rally one ally within Short range (12m) of you.

MARTIAL ARTS

Diving Gracefully Aside (Battle, Combat, Sword-Dancing)



It just wouldn't do.

Requires

Fast Mover
Fencing
Performance: Dance
Respectfully Decline with a Thousand Apologies
Sword Dancer's Trappings

Action "Retreat for Bonus d12 vs. Group, Explosion, or Sweep"

If you are a target in an attack with a scope a Group or Explosion, you may retreat away from the attacker for a bonus d12. (If you can't retreat, no bonus).

If you are the *second* or later target in a Sweep, you may retreat away from the attacker for this d12 bonus. (Sorry, no bonus if you're the first target.)

No bonus for Crowd, Landscape, or other scopes.

Appearances are Everything (Chapter, Combat, Major, Saving, Sword-Dancing)



It wouldn't do to be seen dying on stage, would it?

Requires

Fencing
Insider with the Sword Dancers
Overconfidence
Performance: Dance
Sword Dancer's Trappings

X (Chapter)

Trigger: failed attack or defense

Did you just fail an attack or defense roll? Did you just take damage that would render you Dying, Dead, or Overkilled?

First, Exhaust this Gift. Negate the Dying, Dead, or Overkilled result ... for now.



Next, make a Scare attempt against your attacker. (This Scare attempt sends you Reeling, sure, but you should already be Reeling because you lost an attack vs. defense contest.) Your Scare includes the impossibility of you surviving this killing blow.

At the end of this scene, you must roll you Body, Speed, and Species, as per the standard rules for surviving a Dying situation. If anyone attempts First Aid on you, they suffer a d12 penalty – because you had to be so foolish as to fight through the injury!

Pursuit of the Perfect Dream (Battle, Sword-Dancing)



You are a grand master of sword-dancing.

Requires

Acrobat
Appearances are Everything
Diving Gracefully Aside
Eight Breezes of the World
Fencing
Fencing Replay
Respectfully Decline with a Thousand Apologies
Fast Mover
Fencing
Insider with the Sword Dancers
Overconfidence
Performance: Dance
Respectfully Decline with a Thousand Apologies
Showmanship
Sword Dancer's Trappings

Extra Action "refresh Fencing or Sword-Dancing gift"

On your turn, you may take an extra action: a "refresh" action, but only to refresh a gift with *either* the "Fencing" or the "Sword-Dancing" description. The standard rules still apply.

Vagrant Warrior Style

More than one warrior has gone on a long pilgrimage to study the way of the Vagrant Warrior, learning the use of almost every hand-to-hand weapon. Vagrant-Warriors are typified by their seriousness and their wanderlust, and by their broken noses and gnarled hands from too many training-related injuries. Some master Vagrant Warriors become expensive mercenaries, as not only are they nonpareil in the arts of combat, but they can also train others in their techniques. A few are errant adventurers, exploring the world in search of new things, or perhaps new opponents with which to test their skills. More than one Vagrant has practiced a philosophy of non-violence, learning their arts for the sake of discipline and not for shedding blood.



MARTIAL ARTS

Stand as One Against Many (Battle, Combat, Wu Xià)



Vagrant warriors are masters at fighting when outnumbered.

Requires

Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Vagrant Warriors
Veteran

X (Battle)

Trigger: failed counter or parry vs. Tactics

Did you just fail a counter or a parry vs. a foe who used Tactics on you? Exhaust this Gift. You may include your Tactics dice as extra Soak Dice.



All-Out Attack Mastery (Combat, Wu Xià)



If the second strike from your All-Out Attack stunt fails, you may immediately refresh the Gift at no cost.

Requires

All-Out Attack
Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Vagrant Warriors
Stand as One Against Many
Veteran

Trigger: unsuccessful second strike Refresh All-Out Attack

Did you just use the “second strike” ability from the Gift of All-Out Attack? Did you fail to hit your target with the second strike? Immediately refresh the All-Out Attack Gift. (You still failed to hit your target, and you’re still Reeling from the stunt, but at least you don’t have to waste an action refreshing the gift.)

Knockdown Mastery (Combat, Wu Xià)



If your Knockdown Strike fails, you may immediately refresh the Gift at no cost.

Requires

Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Vagrant Warriors
Knockdown Strike
Stand as One Against Many
Veteran

X (Battle)

Trigger: unsuccessful Knockdown Strike Refresh Knockdown Strike

Was your Knockdown Strike unsuccessful? Immediately refresh the Knockdown Strike Gift. (You still failed to hit your target, but at least you don’t have to waste an action refreshing the gift.)

Mighty Mastery (Combat, Wu Xià)



If your Mighty Strike fails, you may immediately refresh the Gift at no cost.

Requires

Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Vagrant Warriors
Mighty Strike
Stand as One Against Many
Strength
Veteran

Trigger: unsuccessful mighty strike Refresh Mighty Strike

Did you just use the “mighty strike” ability from the Gift of Mighty Strike? Did you fail to hit your target? Immediately refresh the Mighty Strike Gift. (You still failed to hit your target, but at least you don’t have to waste an action refreshing the gift.)

MARTIAL ARTS

Movement Mastery (Combat, Wu Xià)



People are amazed at your mobility!

Requires

Counter-Tactics
Fast Mover
Insider with the Vagrant Warriors
Veteran

Extra action: “Refresh Movement Gift”

On your turn, you may take an extra action: a “refresh” action, but only to Refresh a gift that has both the “Battle” and the “Movement” descriptors. (These Gifts include Mad Sprint, Rapid Dash, and Rapid Sprint.)

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn” still applies ... so you still can’t take two Refreshes in the same turn.

Sprint Mastery (Combat, Wu Xià)



No more embarrassingly-short sprints for you!

Requires

Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Vagrant Warriors
Stand as One Against Many
Sure-Footed
Veteran

X (Battle)

Trigger: rolling your Sprint die

Did you just roll your Sprint die for some reason?
Do you not like the roll that came up? Declare you will Exhaust this Gift, then re-roll the Sprint die. You may keep the better of the two rolls!

Threatening Mastery (Combat, Wu Xià)



If the attack triggered by Threatening Fighter fails, you may immediately refresh the Gift at no cost.

Requires

Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Vagrant Warriors
Stand as One Against Many
Threatening Strike
Veteran

Trigger: *unsuccessful* interrupt using Threatening Fighter Refresh Threatening Fighter

Did you just use the interrupt ability from the Gift of Threatening Fighter? Did you fail to hit your target? Immediately refresh the Threatening Fighter Gift, for free. (You still failed to hit your target, but at least you don’t have to waste an action refreshing the gift.)

Tumbling Moves (Battle, Combat)



Using your off hand, you vault about the battle field.

Requires

Acrobat
Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Vagrant Warriors
Stand as One Against Many

Trigger: empty off-hand and no burdens

Extra action “stride”

Are you unburdened? (That is, are you not suffering from the “Burden” or “Over-Burden” effect?) Do you have a free off-hand to use?

You may take an extra action: a “stride” action. The standard rules about actions still apply.

Yes, this Gift is very useful if you have the Gift of Extra Two Hands, Prehensile Feet, or Prehensile Tail.

Merciful Counter (Combat, Wu Xià)



Every soul, no matter how evil, deserves a chance at repentance.

Requires

Counter-Tactics
Knack with Melee Combat
Insider with the Vagrant Warriors
Stand as One Against Many
Pacifism
Veteran

X (Chapter)

Trigger: Counter

You can use this technique with any Counter that can cause Damage.

First, you may claim a bonus d12 with your Counter.

Second, if your counter hits, you manage to stop your weapon a hair’s breadth from causing a lethal injury. Your damage changes as follows:

● Negate any *Hurt* or *Injured* results that you cause.

MARTIAL ARTS

點 If you scored a *Dying* or *Dead* result, negate those results, too. Instead, your target becomes *Terrified* of you.

點 If you scored an *Overkill* result, negate that result ... and not only is your target *Terrified*, but you have the option of permanently

crippling the target. The target must immediately retrain all their Combat gifts. (They can buy them back if they want to, if they are the type to pursue revenge, but at least you gave them the opportunity to reconsider their way of life.)

Volcano School (*Huó Huǒ Shan Shu*)

Many folk believe that wizards are a civilized, over-educated lot, foreign to the body-discipline of combat or the decisiveness of the battlefield. Those who are trained in Volcano School are quite the opposite of this conceit. A calling mostly pursued by Tàoiist Wizards, Volcano-style fighters learn how to manipulate both the energies from without to call forth deadly effects on their foes and the energies from within to use their bodies as deadly weapons.

Volcano Fighter's Trappings (Plot, Trappings)



Belongings

You start the game with the following items:

點 a Volcano Fan

點 Silk Armor

點 A copy of the book *Volcano Fighting Methods*

X (Special)

Replace your missing trappings

If you are parted from your items, ask the Game Host for a plot twist to return or to replace them.

Once exhausted, you cannot refresh this Gift until the next game session.

Fists of Fire (Battle, Combat, *Huó Huǒ Shan Shu*)



By directing the flow of your internal energy, you can focus your internal energy into your fists, where it manifests as supernatural fire.

Requires

Brawling Fighter

Tàoiist Trappings

Literacy

Resolve

Tàoiist Apprentice

A copy of the book *Volcano Fighting Methods*

X (Battle)

Action "Ready fists of fire"

As a "ready" action, you call forth an inner flame, and both of your fists light on fire. You may now use the Fists of Fire against your foes. While the Fists of Fire are readied, you may not hold anything in your hands – anything else would snuff the flames. Your fists radiate light as per two torches.

You may drop the Fists of Fire as a free reaction. Your Fists of Fire also go away if you Refresh this Gift, if you become Asleep or Unconscious, or after the scene ends (in about five minutes).

Attack or counter with Fists of Fire:

Body, Will, Brawling, Presence

Damage flat 3, On Fire

While the Fists of Fire are ready, they attack and threaten at Close Range.

Your attack dice are your Body, Will, Brawling, and Presence. If you hit a target, you cause Damage flat 3, and the target is set *On Fire*.

Unlike a spell, hitting someone with the Fists of Fire does *not* make them unready. You can use the Fists of Fire on a later turn! You can drop the Fists of Fire as a free reaction.

Yes, both of your fists must be on fire.

Body of the Mountain (Battle, Combat, *Huó Huǒ Shan Shu*)



By directing the flow of energy around your body, you may focus your Aura of Earth into supernatural armor.

Requires

Counter Tactics

Tàoiist Trappings

Literacy

Resolve

Tàoiist Apprentice

A copy of the book *Volcano Fighting Methods*

X (Battle)

Action "Ready body of the mountain"

As a "ready" action, you re-direct the flow of energy around your body. You become *Overburdened*. (That is, you suffer an encumbrance limit of d8, your Dash drops to zero, and other attackers may claim a bonus d8 to hit you.) You also have

MARTIAL ARTS

Invulnerability 1. (That is, you subtract 1 point of damage inflicted on you.)

You may drop the Body of the Mountain as a free action. Also, if you refresh this gift, the Body of the Mountain disappears. The Body also only lasts for one scene (about 5 minutes).

Yes, because this spell is a “ready” action, you can declare you will ready Body of the Mountain during initiative.

Fuming Rage of Flaming Fists (Battle, Combat, Huó Huǒ Shan Shu)



Boy, do you have a lot of internal energy!

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Tàoist Trappings
Literacy
Resolve
Tàoist Apprentice
Fists of Fire
Frenzy
Veteran

A copy of the book *Volcano Fighting Methods*

X (Battle)

Trigger: attack or counter with Fists of Fire

Did you just attack or counter with your Fists of Fire? Exhaust this Gift to claim a bonus d12.



Sweeping Gestures of the Iron Fan (Battle, Combat, Huó Huǒ Shan Shu)



The way of the vagrant warrior is to master all weapons.

Requires

Tàoist Trappings
Literacy
Mystic: Tàoist Magic
Resolve
Tàoist Apprentice
A copy of the book *Volcano Fighting Methods*

X (Battle)

Defense “Parry with Iron Fan”

You may use an iron fan to parry magic attacks! It doesn’t matter what range you’re being attacked from – as long as you can Parry with an Iron Fan, you can Parry magic attacks.

You may use the Parry with either on a typical contest (that is, attack vs. defense) or with a challenge (that is, attack vs. 3, defense vs. 3, count the successes).

Volcano Staff Avalanche (Battle, Combat, Huó Huǒ Shan Shu)



Similar to the way a choking cloud of ash can suffocate and kill as debris rains down upon hapless victims, you are able to strike at your opponent’s body to knock the wind out of them and crush their lungs.

Requires

Brawling Fighter
Clear Headed
Tàoist Trappings
Literacy
Resolve
Tàoist Apprentice
A copy of the book *Volcano Fighting Methods*

X (Battle)

Trigger: using a Truncheon weapon Attack “Volcano Avalanche strike”

To use this ability, you must have equipped a weapon with the *Truncheon* descriptor.

Roll your Body, Will, Melee Combat, and Presence vs. the target’s defense.

If your attack hits, it causes Damage flat 5 *Weak*. Your target also becomes *Confused* and *Silenced*.

MARTIAL ARTS

Volcano Fan Replay (Battle, Combat, Huó Huǒ Shan Shu)



Your control of the Volcano Fan amazes all onlookers.

Requires

Literacy
Resolve
Veteran
Tàost Apprentice
A copy of the book *Volcano Fighting Methods*

Trigger: attack, counter, or parry with Volcano Fan

Replay

Did you just play out an attack that used a *Volcano Fan*? (That is, did you attack with a Volcano Fan? Or counter? Or Parry? Or use a Volcano Fan to swat an Attendant Fireball? Or Dodge using a Volcano Fan's Cover dice?) Do you not like the way you rolled?

Declare you will exhaust this Gift. You and your opponent both re-roll your dice. The new result stands, even if it's worse.

Attendant Fireball (Battle, Magic, Apprentice, Changes)



Requires

Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Tàost Apprentice
Tàost Magic Trappings

Action “ready Attendant Fireballs”

Exhaust this Gift, then roll your Will & Presence vs. 3. Each success you score earns you one Attendant Fireball.

The attendant fireballs follow you around, waiting for you to attack with them – see below.

All of the unused fireballs disappear at the end of the scene (about 5 minutes). All fireballs also disappear if you refresh this Gift (as a “refresh” action).

Action “attack with Attendant Fireball”

As a single attack action, you can swat a fireball towards one of your foes. You can't use your bare hands, but one of the following weapons:

- 點 If you use a **Wand**, you may attack up to Medium Range with no range penalties. The Wand must be empty, but you don't have to load the fireball into it.
- 點 If you use a **Rod**, you may attack up to Medium Range ... and you may Counter up to Near (4m)

range. The Rod must be empty, but you don't have to load the fireball into it.

點 If you use an **Iron Fan**, you may attack up to Medium Range.

點 If you use **Fists of Fire**, you may attack up to Short Range.

Anything else doesn't work – the weapon just catches fire, and if you try it bare-handed you simply just hurt yourself.

Your attendant fireballs are a Magic Attack: your Body, Speed, Will, Supernatural, and Throwing vs. your foe's defense. Attendant Fireballs cause Damage flat 3 and your target is now On Fire.

Each attack uses up one fireball. Once you're out of fireballs, you will have to exhaust the Attendant Fireball gift again.

Rain of Fire Worthy-of-Heaven (Battle, Combat, Huó Huǒ Shan Shu)



With consummate skill, you use your iron fan to lash out at your foes with Fire aFter Fire.

Requires

Attendant Fireball
Tàost Trappings
Literacy
Resolve
Veteran
Tàost Apprentice

Add “Sweep” to Attendant Fireball Attacks

You may now Sweep with attendant fireballs. If you hit the first target, move on to the next. Each fireball only hits a target once, so you must have enough Attendant Fireballs in reserve.

Twice-Fold Authority Over Fire (Battle, Combat, Huó Huǒ Shan Shu)



You are able to strike your opponent on their gates of energy flow.

Requires

Attendant Fireball
Tàost Trappings
Literacy
Resolve
Veteran
Tàost Apprentice

Each success makes 2 Fireballs, Not One

When rolling to create Attendant Fireballs, each success that you score makes *two* fireballs, not one.

MARTIAL ARTS

Grand Master of Volcanoes (Battle, Combat, *Huó Huǒ Shan Shu*)



None dare question your mastery of Volcano-Style Fighting.

Requires

Attendant Fireball
Body of the Mountain
Brawling Fighter
Clear Headed
Counter Tactics
Fists of Fire
Literacy
Mystic: Tàoiist Magic
Rain of Fire Worthy-of-Heaven
Resolve

Sweeping Gestures of the Iron Fan
Tàoiist Apprentice
Tàoiist Trappings
Veteran
Volcano Fan Cut
Volcano Staff Avalanche
A copy of the book *Volcano Fighting Methods*

Extra action “Recharge *Huó Huǒ Shan Shu* Gift”

On your turn, you may take an extra action: a “refresh” action, but only to refresh a gift with the *Huó Huǒ Shan Shu* descriptor.

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn” still applies.

White Crane Style Gifts

With her blood-red forehead on her white feathers, the Crane is often viewed as an emblem of the yin & yang existence. As the stories tell it, the first Crane traveled the world, migrating to northern Zhōngguo to Yang-Zhou and teaching White Crane in the 29th Year of King Cun-Bei of the Quan Dynasty (2091). She took as pupils Wong Yun Lam, Chu qi Yiu, Chan Yum, Chou Heung Yuen, and Wong Lam Hoi. These men were the five great grand masters who were responsible for the spread of White Crane. Wong Yun Lam even became the teacher of Imperial Palace Guards whose duty is to protect the Imperial Family. From his students, Ng Siu Chung emerged and officially formed Bái Hè Shù in the 48th Year of King Hsin of the Quan Dynasty (2363). At the great hall of Bái Hè Shù is the tablet listing all the masters since the time of Ng Siu Chung to present Chan Hak Fu, the 16th Master.

The Bái Hè style is typified by calculated study of an opponent’s moves while maintaining a graceful posture. The fighter must maintain rigid attention to stance, poise, and gesture, preferring to trip opponents up on their own moves rather than causing harm through direct action.

Plucking Fish from the Water (Battle, Combat, *Bái Hè Shù*)



It is not enough to strike with force. One must also grab.

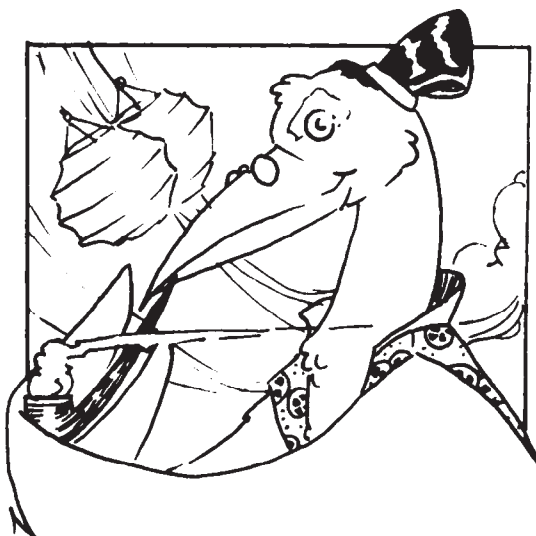
Requires

Acrobat
Brawling Fighter
Insider with the White Crane School
Prehensile Feet

X (Battle)

Action “plucking fish from water”

Exhaust this Gift, then roll Body, Speed, Brawling, and Weather Sense. If you hit, you cause Damage flat 3, and you Grapple with your feet.



MARTIAL ARTS

Twisting the Neck to See Four Corners (Battle, Combat, Bái Hè Shù)



Be aware of all angles of vulnerability.

Requires

Acrobat
Brawling Fighter
Contortionist
Insider with the White Crane School

X (Battle)

Action “Dodge”

Exhaust this gift to claim a bonus d12 with any Dodge roll.

Gouging Strike into the Brush (Battle, Combat, Bái Hè Shù)



Motion and purpose, deadly when synchronized.

Requires

Acrobat
Contortionist
Fencing
Insider with the White Crane School

X (Battle)

Trigger: using a *jiann* blade

Action “gouging strike at Reach”

Body, Speed, Melee Combat, Weather Sense
Damage flat 3

Are you using a *jiann*? Exhaust this Gift, then declare an attack using the *gouging strike*.
You may strike up to Reach range (2m).
Roll your Body, Speed, Melee Combat, and Weather Sense dice vs. your foe’s defense.
If you hit your target, you cause Damage flat 3.

Standing Alone in Midwinter Pond (Battle, Combat, Bái Hè Shù)



You stand upon one leg, with your hands out-stretched.

Requires

Acrobat
Brawling Fighter
Contortionist
Focused Fighter
Insider with the White Crane School
Prehensile Feet

Trigger: Focus

While you are focused, you may claim a bonus d12 to any Parry and to any Counter. (No bonus to Dodge). Yes, this d12 *stacks* with the d12 bonus from the “Focused Fighter” gift.

White Crane Nods to Heaven & Earth (Battle, Combat, Bái Hè Shù)



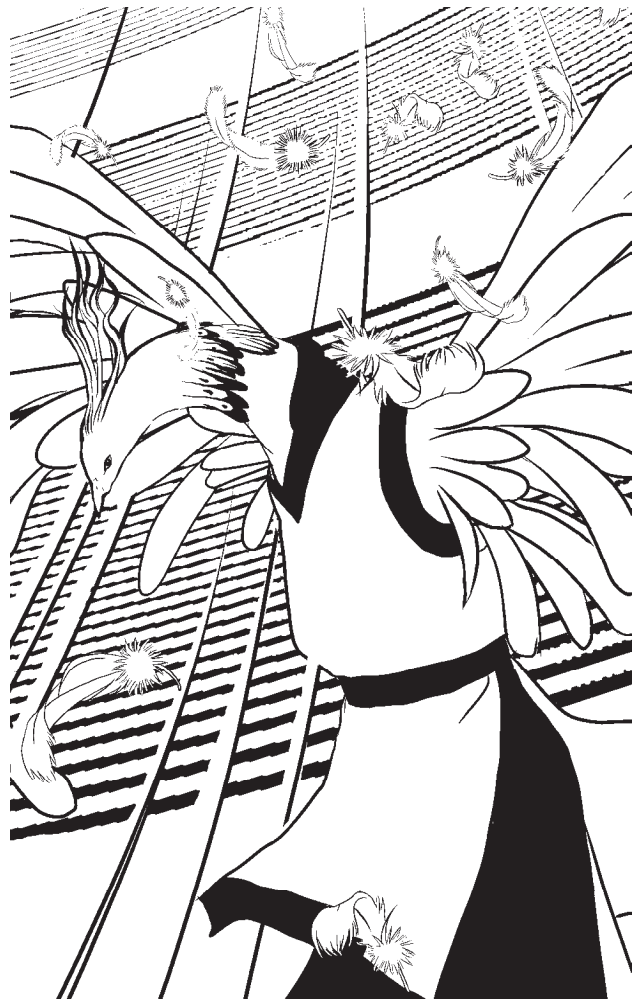
Masters of both land and sky.

Requires

Acrobat
Brawling Fighter
Contortionist
Flying Fighter
Focused Fighter
Insider with the White Crane School
Plucking Fish from the Water
Prehensile Feet
Species Trait of d8 or better
Standing Alone in Midwinter Pond
Twisting the Neck to See Four Corners

Trigger: Flying

While you are flying, you may claim a bonus d12 to Counters, Parries, and Dodges.





Exotic Fighting Gifts

The following fighting techniques are common in Zhōngguo.

Brawling Focus (Combat)



By honing your body as a living weapon, you are constantly ready for a fight.

Requires

Brawling Fighter

Start of battle: initiative roll

Trigger: all hands empty

Focus

Did the Game Host just ask everyone to roll initiative? Declare you will use Brawling Focus.

All of your hands (and hand substitutes!) must be empty. If you're holding anything, you may drop it as a free reaction.

When you roll your initiative dice, if you score at least one success, you start the fight with Focus. (Normally, it takes two successes to start a fight with Focus.)

You must roll to get this focus – you can't just take your rote.

Death from Above (Battle, Combat)



You can jump over foes with acrobatic grace.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Acrobat
Brawling Fighter
Fast Jumper

X (Battle)

Trigger: no burdens

Action "Death from above"

To use this move, you must not be Burdened or Over-Burdened.

Declare a target Near you (4m), then exhaust this Gift to declare a *death-from-above* move. Suddenly, you jump high in the air, with a somersault that plants a hand or a foot on the target.

Roll your Roll Body, Speed, Brawling, Jumping, and Strength (if any) vs. your target's defense.

If the target successfully counters you, then put yourself Close (1m) to the target and you are sent Reeling. (Oh, and you suffer any other Damage the target inflicted on you.). If the target successfully parries or dodges you, then you land Close to the target, in any open space.

Double-Headed Sweep (Battle, Combat)



You may fight with both heads of a double-headed weapon

Requires

Counter-Tactics
Strength

X (Battle)

Action "Attack Sweep with Double Headed Weapon"

Are you using a weapon with the "Double-Headed" descriptor? Declare you will exhaust this gift. Your attack gains the *Sweep* effect.

Fire Hook Sweeping-Horizon Attack (Battle, Combat)



You are skilled with fire hooks.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Ambidexterity

Action "attack with sweeping-horizon attack"

You must have two fire hooks equipped.

Declare you will exhaust this gift. You hook one fire hook into another and sweep around you in a large, sweeping arcs.

Your Fire-Hook may strike up to Close and Reach range, and you gain the "Sweep Reach" effect.

If you are sent Reeling, you are Disarmed of one Fire Hook. Otherwise, you end your turn with both Fire Hooks in hand.



MARTIAL ARTS

Fork Disarm (Battle, Combat)



You may disarm your foes with your fork weapon.

Requires

Counter-Tactics
Veteran

X (Battle)

Action "Attack with Fork, Disarm"

Are you using a weapon with the "Fork" descriptor?
Declare you will exhaust this gift. Your attack gains the *Disarm* effect.

Ringed Momentum (Battle, Combat)



As you swing your weapon, the rings fling forward to give your attack extra momentum.

Requires

Body of d8 or better
Resolve
Veteran

X (Battle)

Trigger: Attack with Ringed weapon

Are you using a weapon with the "Ringed" descriptor? Did you just roll and you don't like the way the roll came out? Exhaust this gift to claim a bonus 2d8 to your roll.

You may only use this Gift on attacks, not counters or parries.

Shang Fu (Battle, Combat)



You can fight with two stone axes in an unstoppable display of death.

Requires

Ambidexterity
Mighty Grip
Tandem Strike
Strength

Extra action "refresh Tandem Strike"

Trigger: Tandem Strike with two stone axes

Did you just play out a Tandem Strike? Are you using two Stone Axes? Are you *not* Reeling? You may take an extra action: a "refresh" action, only to refresh Tandem Strike. (The standard rule of "never the same action twice on the same turn" still applies.)

Yes, this means you could Tandem Strike with two Stone Axes every round. Fear the Shang Fu!

Wind-Mouth Push (Combat)



You are skilled with Wind-Mouth weapons

Requires

Body of d8 or better
Will of d8 or better

Add Push 2 to Wind-Mouth Weapon

Are you fighting with a weapon that has the "Wind-Mouth" descriptor? You may add the "Push 2" effect.



Chopping Weapons Moves

These Gifts can be used with any weapon that has the *Chopping* descriptor.

Mighty Chop (Battle, Combat)



Your deadly blade cuts deep.

Requires

Strength
Veteran

X (Battle)

Trigger: hit with Chopping weapon

Did you just hit a target with a weapon that has the “Chopping” descriptor? You may exhaust this gift to add +1 Damage.

Yes, you can wait until you confirm Damage to add this bonus, but you must declare this bonus *before* the target Soaks.

Tremendous Chop (Respite, Combat)



Your deadly blade cuts deeper.

Requires

Mind of d8 or better
Will of d8 or better
Mighty Chop
Strength
Veteran

And, at some point, you must have killed a foe in battle with your Chopping weapon.

X (Respite)

Trigger: hit with Chopping weapon

Did you just hit a target with a weapon that has the “Chopping” descriptor? You may exhaust this gift to add +1 Damage. You must add this bonus *before* the target Soaks.

And yes, this Damage bonus stacks with Mighty Chop, if you want to exhaust that, too.

Enemy-Exterminating Yin-Yang Chop (Chapter, Combat)

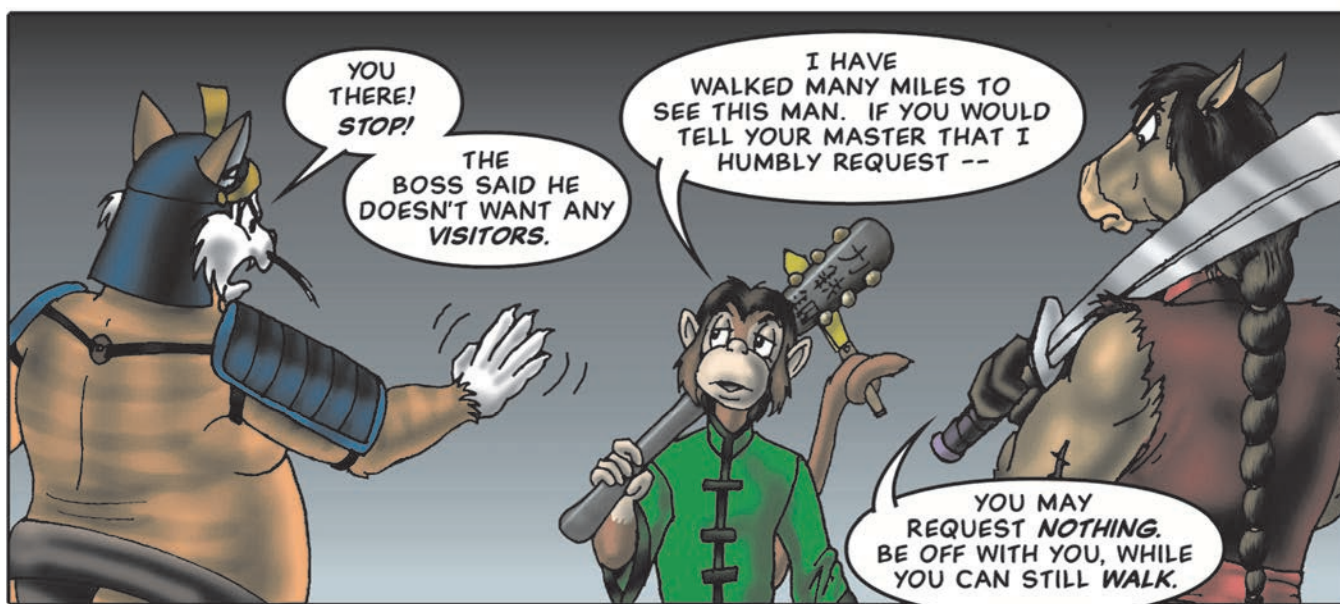


Your deadly blade cuts deepest.

Requires

Body of d8 or better
Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Will of d8 or better
Counter-Tactics
Mighty Chop
Resolve
Scary Fighter
Strength
Tremendous Chop
Veteran

And, at some point, you must have Overkilled a foe in battle with your Chopping weapon.



MARTIAL ARTS

X (Chapter)

Trigger: hit with Chopping weapon

Did you just hit a target with a weapon that has the “Chopping” descriptor? You may exhaust this gift to add +1 Damage. You must add this bonus *before* the target Soaks.

And yes, this Damage bonus stacks with Mighty Chop and with Tremendous Chop, if you want to exhaust those, too.

Earth-Sky Fighting

These Gifts can be used with any weapon that has the *Earth-Sky* descriptor.

Earth-Sky Counter (Combat)



The meaning of life is to attack.

Requires

Counter-Tactics

Bonus 2d8 to Counter with Earth-Sky Weapons

You may claim a 2d8 bonus to Counter with any weapon that has the “Earth-Sky” descriptor.

Earth-Sky Maneuver (Battle, Combat)



They thought they could block you in. They were wrong.

Requires

Will of d8 or better
Counter-Tactics
Earth-Sky Counter

Trigger: Successful Attack or Counter Swap Places with target, then Stride

Did you just successfully attack or counter an attack with your Earth-Sky weapon? Declare you will exhaust this gift. Swap places with your target, then you may

move up to your Stride in any direction.

Earth-Sky Replay (Respite, Combat)



They also didn't know about this special move, either.

Requires

Mind of d8 or better
Will of d8 or better
Counter-Tactics
Earth-Sky Counter
Earth-Sky Maneuver
Resolve

X (Respite)

Trigger: using a Earth-Sky Weapon

Did you just make a roll to use a Earth-Sky Weapon? You may exhaust this gift, and re-roll the entire contest – yes, both you and your target re-roll. The new result stands, even if it's worse for you.



MARTIAL ARTS

Earth-Sky Execution (Chapter, Combat)



You are skilled with Earth-Sky weapons

Requires

Body of d8 or better
Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Will of d8 or better
Counter-Tactics
Earth-Sky Counter

Earth-Sky Replay
Earth-Sky Maneuver
Resolve
Toughness
Veteran

Trigger: using a Earth-Sky Weapon

Before attacking or countering with a Earth-Sky Weapon, declare you will exhaust this gift. Your weapon gains the *Slaying* effect.

Fan Fighting

These Gifts can be used with any weapon that has the *Fan* descriptor.

Fan Combat (Combat, Fan)



You have trained yourself to use a Fan like a shield.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better

Trigger: confident and competent

Cover die from Fan is d12

While you are confident and competent, your cover bonus from an equipped fan is upgraded to near-total (d12).

If you suffer from being *Afraid*, *Berserk*, *Confused*, *Enraged*, *Terrified*, or any other condition that would prevent you from being *Focused*, you will also lose this Cover upgrade.

Fan Guard (Combat, Fan)



When you're on your guard, few can strike past your fan.

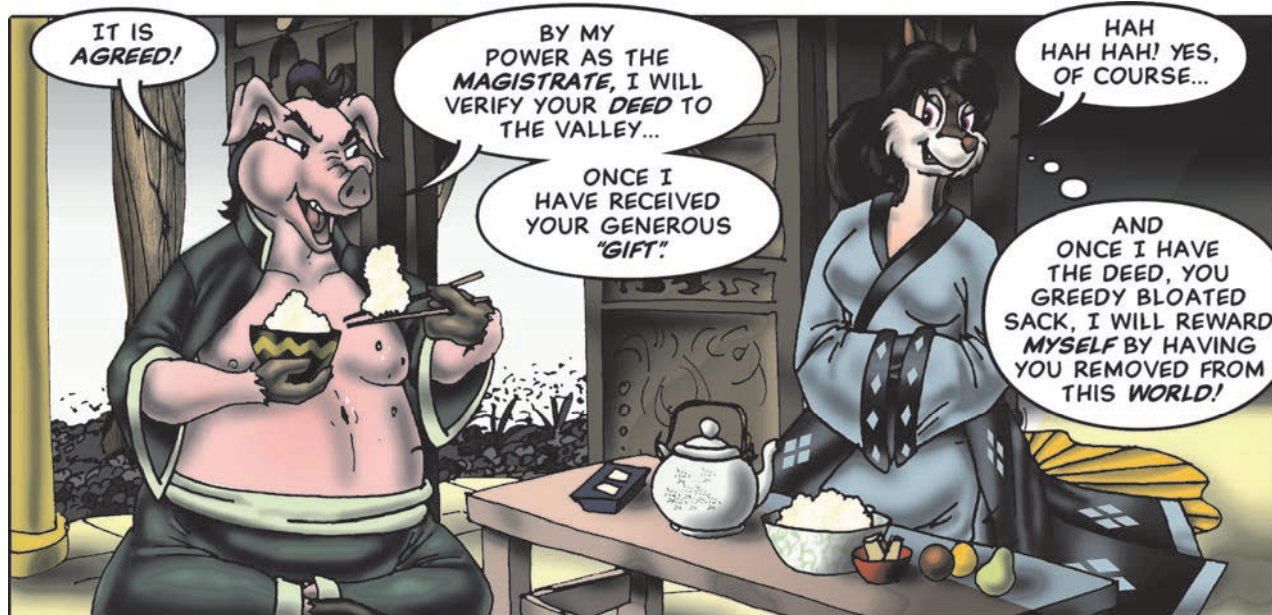
Requires

Counter-Tactics
Fan Combat
Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Veteran

Trigger: Guarding

Bonus d12 to Parry with Fan

Whenever you are Guarding, you may claim a d12 bonus to Parry with a Fan.



MARTIAL ARTS

Fan Save (Chapter, Combat, Fan, Major, Saving)



Sacrifices must be made.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Combat Save
Counter Tactics

Fan Combat

X (Chapter)

Trigger: failed defense with a fan

Did you just attempt a counter or a parry with a fan and fail? Did you take damage?

Exhaust this gift. Negate any Dying, Dead, or Overkilled results from the attack. Your fan is now broken and can't be used until repaired.

Nine Dragon Trident

These Gifts can only be used when fighting with the strange weapon known as the *Nine-Dragon Trident*.

Nine-Dragon Trident Trappings (Plot, Trappings)



Belongings

You start the game with the following items:

點 a Nine-Dragon Trident
點 Silk Armor

X (Special)

Replace your missing trappings

If you are parted from your items, ask the Game Host for a plot twist to return or to replace them.

Once exhausted, you cannot refresh this Gift until the next game session.

Nine-Dragon Impale (Battle, Combat, Nine-Dragon Trident)



Requires

Mind Trait of d8 or better

X (Battle)

Action "attack or counter with Nine-Dragon Trident, add Impale effect"

Before rolling an attack or counter with a Nine-Dragon Trident, declare you will exhaust this gift. Add the *Impale* effect.



MARTIAL ARTS

Nine-Dragon Grapple (Battle, Combat, Nine-Dragon Trident)



Requires

Body Trait of d8 or better

X (Battle)

Action “attack or counter with Nine-Dragon Trident, add Grapple effect”

Before rolling an attack or counter with a Nine-Dragon Trident, declare you will exhaust this gift. Add the *Grapple* effect.

Nine-Dragon Disarm (Battle, Combat, Nine-Dragon Trident)



Requires

Speed Trait of d8 or better

X (Battle)

Action “attack or counter with Nine-Dragon Trident, add Disarm effect”

Before rolling an attack or counter with a Nine-Dragon Trident, declare you will exhaust this gift. Add the *Disarm* effect.

Nine-Dragon Knockdown (Battle, Combat, Nine-Dragon Trident)



Requires

Mind Trait of d8 or better

X (Battle)

Action “attack or counter with Nine-Dragon Trident, add Knockdown effect”

Before rolling an attack or counter with a Nine-Dragon Trident, declare you will exhaust this gift. Add the *Knockdown* effect.

Nine-Dragon Pierce (Battle, Combat, Nine-Dragon Trident)



Requires

Body Trait of d8 or better

Will Trait of d8 or better

X (Battle)

Action “attack or counter with Nine-Dragon Trident, add Penetrating”

Before rolling an attack or counter with a Nine-Dragon Trident, declare you will exhaust this gift. Add the *Penetrating* effect.

Nine-Dragon Lunge (Battle, Combat, Nine-Dragon Trident)



Requires

Speed Trait of d8 or better

Mind Trait of d8 or better

X (Battle)

Action “attack with Nine-Dragon Trident at Near Range”

Before rolling an attack with a Nine-Dragon Trident, declare you will exhaust this gift. You may strike up to Near range (4m).



MARTIAL ARTS

Nine-Dragon Replay (Battle, Combat, Nine-Dragon Trident)



Requires

Speed Trait of d8 or better
Mind Trait of d8 or better
Will Trait of d8 or better

X (Battle)

Action “attack or counter with Nine-Dragon Trident, replay effect”

After rolling an attack or counter with a Nine-Dragon Trident, but before damage is applied, declare you will exhaust this gift. Both you and your opponent re-roll. The second result stands, even if it's worse for you.

Nine-Dragon Stance (Battle, Combat, Nine-Dragon Trident)



Requires

Body of d8 or better
Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Will of d8 or better
At least one other Battle Gift with the “Nine-Dragon Trident” descriptor

Extra action “refresh Nine-Dragon gift”

On your turn, you may take an extra action: a “refresh” action, but only to refresh a Battle Gift with the “Nine-Dragon Trident” descriptor.

Nine-Dragon Master Stroke (Respite, Combat, Nine-Dragon Trident)



Requires

Body Trait of d8 or better
Speed Trait of d8 or better
Mind Trait of d8 or better
Will Trait of d8 or better
Nine-Dragon Impale
Nine-Dragon Lunge
Nine-Dragon Refresh
Nine-Dragon Pierce
Nine-Dragon Replay
Nine-Dragon Knockdown
Nine-Dragon Disarm
Nine-Dragon Grapple

X (Respite)

Action “attack or counter with Nine-Dragon Trident, add Slaying effect”

Before rolling an attack or counter with a Nine-Dragon Trident, declare you will exhaust this gift. Add the *Slaying* effect.



MARTIAL ARTS

Rope Fighting

These Gifts can be used with any weapon that has the *Rope* descriptor.

Rope Lunge (Battle, Combat, Rope)



By putting your body into it, you can strike Foes much further away.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Contortionist

X (Battle)

Attack with Rope weapon up to Near range

Are you attacking with a weapon that has the “Rope” descriptor? Exhaust this Gift. You may attack a foe at up to Near Range (4m).

Rope Sweep (Battle, Combat, Rope)



By swinging your rope weapon in wide circles, you can strike multiple Foes.

Requires

Mind of d8 or better
Counter-Tactics

X (Battle)

Attack with Rope weapon

Are you attacking with a weapon that has the “Rope” descriptor? Before you attack declare you will exhaust this Gift. Your weapon gains the *Sweep* effect, up to your full range. (Yes, this gift goes nicely with “Rope Lunge”.)

Rope Parry (Battle, Combat, Rope)



Only amateurs can't parry with Rope weapons. The secret is to hold the rope firmly in both hands and block with the stretched cord.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Veteran

X (Battle)

Parry with Rope weapon, bonus d12

Do you have a fighting Rope equipped? Are you being attacked? Exhaust this Gift, then declare a Parry defense.

Your Parry may claim a bonus d12.

Characters without this Gift may not Parry with Rope weapons.

Rope Mastery (Battle, Combat, Rope)



You may take an extra action to Refresh Rope Gifts.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Clear-Headed
Contortionist
Counter-Tactics

At least one other Battle Gift with the “Rope” descriptor

Extra action “refresh Rope gift”

On your turn, you may take an extra action: a “refresh” action, but only to a Battle Gift that has the “Rope” descriptor.



Rending Weapons

These Gifts can be used with any weapon that has the *Rending* descriptor.

Agonizing Rend (Battle, Combat)



Your rending attack causes terrible pain.

Requires

Resolve
Veteran

X (Battle)

Trigger: Hurt a target with a Rending weapon

Did you just hit a target with a weapon that has the “Rending” descriptor? Did you *Hurt* the target? You may exhaust this Gift to add the *Confused* effect, too.

Terrifying Rend (Respite, Combat)



Your Foes do not soon Forget.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Will of d8 or better
Agonizing Rend
Resolve
Veteran

And, at some point, you must have killed a foe in battle with your Rending weapon.

X (Respite)

Trigger: Hurt a target with a Rending weapon

Did you just hit a target with a weapon that has the “Rending” descriptor? Did you *Hurt* the target? You may exhaust this Gift to add the *Terrified* effect, too.

Unspeakable Rending (Respite, Combat)



Your rending attack is the stuff of nightmares.

Requires

Body of d8 or better
Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Will of d8 or better
Agonizing Rend
Counter-Tactics
Scary Fighter
Terrifying Rend
Resolve
Veteran

And, at some point, you must have Overkilled a foe in battle with your Rending weapon.

X (Battle)

Trigger: Hurt a target with a Rending weapon

Did you just hit a target with a weapon that has the “Rending” descriptor? Did you *Hurt* the target? You may exhaust this Gift.

Your target becomes *Terrified*. All foes *Near* the target *and Near* you become *Afraid*. If any of those targets were already *Afraid*, they become *Terrified*.

(Yes, you use this gift after you inflict damage, so you may *Overkill* the target, exhaust this gift, and make all those *Afraid* enemies into *Terrified* enemies.)





Soft-Weapon Fighting

These Gifts can be used with any weapon that has the *Soft* descriptor.

Soft Disarm (Battle, Combat, Soft)



Soft weapons are flexible enough that you can wrap them around parts of weapons, and when they snap back, the twisting motion disarms the foe.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Acrobat
Contortionist

X (Battle)

Trigger: hit with Soft Weapon

Did you hit a target with a weapon that has the “Soft” descriptor? Declare you will exhaust this gift. Your weapon gains the *Disarm* effect.

Soft Knockdown (Battle, Combat, Soft)



Soft weapons can be swept around the ankles; in the brief moment while the limb is still held, you pull and trip the target.

Requires

Body of d8 or better
Acrobat
Contortionist

X (Battle)

Action “Attack with Soft Weapon; Knockdown”

Did you hit a target with a weapon that has the “Soft” descriptor? Declare you will exhaust this gift. Your attack gains the *Knockdown* effect.

Soft Replay (Battle, Combat, Soft)



The unpredictable wobbling of a soft weapon makes it difficult to second-guess your attentions.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Clear-Headed

X (Battle)

Attack with Soft weapon

Are you attacking with a weapon that has the “Soft” descriptor? Do you not like the way your attack roll just played out? Then declare you will Exhaust this Gift.

Replay the contest. You re-roll your attack dice, your opponent re-rolls their defense dice. The new rolls stand, even if they’re worse.

Soft Mastery (Battle, Combat, Soft)



You may take an extra action to refresh a Soft Gift.

Requires

Body of d8 or better
Speed of d8 or better
Acrobat
Clear-Headed
Contortionist
At least one other Battle Gift with the “Soft” descriptor

Extra action “refresh Soft Disarm or Soft Knockdown”

On your turn, you may take an extra action: a “refresh” action, but only to refresh a gift that has both the “Soft” and the “Battle” descriptors.

The standard rule of “never the same action twice on the same turn” still applies.



Sun-Moon Weapon Fighting

These Gifts can be used with any weapon that has the *Sun-Moon* descriptor.

Sun-Moon Parry (Combat)



The many edges and points of a Sun-Moon weapon make it well-suited for blocking attacks.

Requires

Resolve

Bonus d12 to Parry with Sun-Moon Weapons

You may claim a d12 bonus to Parry with any weapon that has the “Sun-Moon” descriptor.



Sun-Moon Disarm (Battle, Combat)



First, you wrap the around the target's weapon; then you twist, quickly and precisely.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Resolve
Sun-Moon Parry

X (Battle)

Trigger: Successful Parry Attacker Disarmed

Did you just successfully parry an attack with your Sun-Moon weapon? Declare you will exhaust this gift. Your opponent is *Disarmed* of the weapon they just attacked you with.

Sun-Moon Exploit (Respite, Combat)



There's just so many avenues of attack with a Sun-Moon weapon that what is just a block for a lesser fighter is an attack of opportunity for you.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Counter-Tactics
Resolve
Sun-Moon Parry

X (Respite)

Trigger: Successful Parry

Attacker Reeling, Suffers Damage 3

Did you just successfully parry an attack with your Sun-Moon weapon? Declare you will exhaust this gift. Your opponent becomes Reeling and immediately suffers a flat 3 points of Damage.

Sun-Moon Focus (Chapter, Combat)



Have the clarity of the sun and the patience of the moon, and you will live the moment when it comes.

Requires

Body of d8 or better
Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Will of d8 or better
Counter-Tactics
Danger Sense
Resolve
Sun-Moon Disarm
Sun-Moon Exploit
Sun-Moon Parry
Veteran

X (Chapter)

Trigger: Successful Parry

You gain Focus

Did you just successfully parry an attack with your Sun-Moon weapon? Declare you will exhaust this gift. You immediately gain Focus. (You must be able to gain Focus.)

MARTIAL ARTS

Spring-Loaded Weapon Fighting

These Gifts can be used with any weapon that has the *Spring-Loaded* descriptor.

Spring Loaded Strike (Battle, Combat, Spring-Loaded)



For you, deploying a spring-loaded weapon is second nature.

Requires

Will of d8 or better
Legerdemain
Low Profile

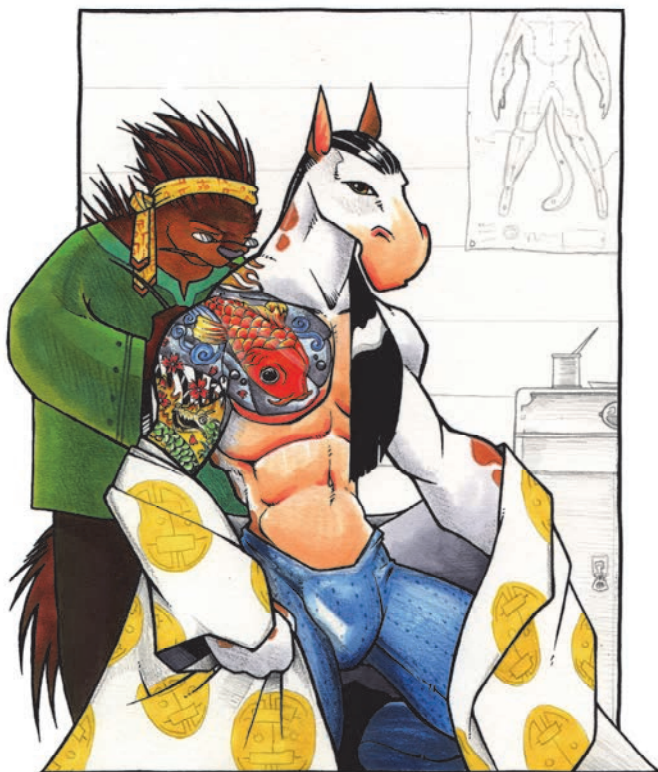
X (Battle)

Combo “aim, ready concealed Spring-Loaded weapon, and then attack”

Do you have a Spring-Loaded weapon? Is it currently *unready*? Declare you will exhaust this gift.

As one single action, you may play out *three* actions: first, declare a target to aim at; then, ready your Spring-Loaded weapon; finally, attack your target with that weapon.

As per the combo rules – since this is all one action, you may use Focus to do all three of these with only one action. Yes, you are that scary.



You can't use this gift again until you refresh it with a “refresh” action (naturally). You also can't use it with Spring-Loaded weapons that are ready -- you will either have to use a “put-away” action to stow your Spring-Loaded weapon ... or you'll have to use a different Spring-Loaded weapon that's still not ready.

Spring Loaded Sheathe (Battle, Combat, Spring-Loaded)



If you strike *Fast* enough, people won't even see your attack.

Requires

Mind of d8 or better
Sneaky Fighter
Streetwise

X (Battle)

Extra action “put away and conceal Spring-Loaded Weapon”

On your turn, exhaust this gift to take an extra action: a “put away” action, but only to put away a Spring-Loaded weapon. The Spring-Loaded weapon is not just put away, it's also concealed. (That's normally a stunt for other characters, but when you use this gift, it's only a “put away” action.)

Spring Loaded Mastery (Battle, Combat, Spring-Loaded)



You may claim an extra action to refresh Spring-Loaded Gifts.

Requires

Mind of d8 or better
Will of d8 or better
Legerdemain
Low Profile
Sneaky Fighter
Streetwise
At least one other Battle Gift with the “Spring-Loaded” descriptor

Extra action “refresh Spring-Loaded Strike or Spring-Loaded Sheathe

On your turn, you may take an extra action – a “refresh” action, but only to refresh either “Spring Loaded Sheathe” or “Spring Loaded Strike” (and not both). The standard rules about actions still apply.

Vast-as-Heaven Weapon Fighting

These Gifts can be used with any weapon that has the *Vast-as-Heaven* descriptor.

Vast-as-Heaven Strike (Battle, Combat)



By leaning into the attack, you can attack and counter at one pace greater.

Requires

Speed of d8 or better
Resolve
Veteran

X (Battle)

Trigger: Attack or Counter with Vast-as-Heaven weapon

Are you attacking with a weapon with the “Vast-as-Heaven” descriptor? Exhaust this Gift to increase your weapon’s range and by 1 pace. (A Close weapon now threatens at Close and Reach – that is, 1 pace and 2 paces.. A Reach weapon now threatens at Reach and one pace beyond that – that is, at 2 paces and 3 paces).

If you’re attacked, you may exhaust this gift to extend your weapon’s threat range by one pace, which will allow you to counter someone who’s further away.

The extended range only lasts for this one move.

Vast-as-Heaven Sweep (Battle, Combat, Vast-as-Heaven)



What good is a long weapon if you can’t hit everyone?

Requires

Mind of d8 or better
Resolve
Veteran

X (Battle)

Attack with Vast-as-Heaven weapon

Are you attacking with a weapon that has the “Vast-as-Heaven” descriptor? Before you attack declare you will exhaust this Gift. Your weapon gains the *Sweep* effect, up to your full range. (Yes, this gift goes nicely with “Vast-as-Heaven Strike”.)

Vast-as-Heaven Vault (Battle, Combat, Vast-as-Heaven)



By planting one part of the weapon in the ground, you can use it as a lever to extend your movement.

Requires

Body of d8 or better
Resolve
Veteran

X (Battle)

Trigger: unburdened Dash, Sprint, or Stride Add 1 or 2 to your stride

Do you have a Vast-as-Heaven weapon equipped? Are you unburdened? Are you moving with a Dash, a Sprint, or a Stride? Then you may exhaust this Gift.

If your Vast-as-Heaven weapon is one-handed, add 1 to your Stride. If your Vast-as-Heaven weapon is two-handed, add 2 to your Stride.

Vast-as-Heaven Mastery (Combat, Vast-as-Heaven)



You may take an extra-action to Refresh a Vast-as-Heaven Gift.

Requires

Body of d8 or better
Speed of d8 or better
Mind of d8 or better
Resolve
Veteran
At least one other Battle Gift with the “Vast-as-Heaven” descriptor

Extra action “refresh Vast-as-Heaven gift”

On your turn, you may take an extra action: a “refresh” action, but only to a Battle Gift that has the “Vast-as-Heaven” descriptor.

EQUIPMENT

Money 钱

The basic unit of money in Zhōngguo is the *bù-qían* (cloth money). This coin is most commonly found in the hands of the common people and peasants and looks like a circular disk with a hole in the center. Sometimes, the coins are threaded with a string, to make carrying them easier.

A more valuable coin, the *jin-dao* (golden blade), looks somewhat like a miniature broadsword. Most commoners never see a *jin-dao*; it's a coin mostly for merchants, nobles, and the rich. One *jin-dao* is worth 30 *bù*.

The most valuable coin is the *zhu-yù* (jewel jade) which looks like a flat lantern with a hole in the center. A *zhu-yù* is worth 300 *bù*.

With peasant wages at only one *bù-qían* per day (or less), few have even seen an *jin-dao*, much less a *zhu-yù*. In Mâjing, the best craftsmen are said to earn a *jin-dao* a day.

For convenience, all prices listed here are in *bù-qían*, with the ideogram 钱.



EQUIPMENT

Converting denarii to bù-qian

Both a *denar* and a *bù* represent one day's worth of unskilled labor ... but coins will need to be converted back and forth. As a general rule, a money-changer will give you 9 *bù* for 10 *denarii* ... or 9 *denarii* for 10 *bù*, so you lose about 10% going either way. Of course, you could always trade in gold and silver, which have a universal value.

Importing Calabrese Goods

While you can get Calabrese equipment here in Zhōngguo, be prepared to pay very steep prices. When importing equipment from Calabria, raise the price by one step. Cheap stuff becomes Average ($\times 6$ cost), Average stuff becomes Expensive ($\times 5$ cost), Expensive stuff becomes Extravagant ($\times 5$ cost), and Extravagant stuff becomes so pricey that if you have to ask, you probably can't afford it ($\times 5$ cost or more).

Crafting

Characters may make their own items, or they may repair ones that break. For simplicity sake, use the item's price as the base line for how long it takes to craft the item.

You will need 20% of the item's price in raw materials to start with. Once you have the materials ready, the item is 20% of the way there. For example, if you need a nice pair of 3 *bù* boots made, then you'll need ($3 \text{ bù} \times 20\% =$) 0.6 *bù* in raw materials.

Work is measured in *bù* worth completed. When you've completed the remaining 80% of the item's value, it's ready to go. Better, more skilled workers will be able to get an item built faster.

It might be easier to list broken items by how good they are. For example, a carriage that's only "60% quality" will need 40% more progress before its standard 100% quality.

When you get the item 100% done or more, it's ready for use. When you get the item 50% done, it might be usable according to the defective rules. An item that's less than 20% done is missing parts. At the discretion of the game host, multiple people might work on a crafting job. A proper workshop, devoted to a single type of crafting, will also grant a bonus d8.

EQUIPMENT

Most crafting rolls use Mind & Craft vs. 3. Physically strenuous tasks might use Body & Craft. Delicate handiwork might be Speed & Craft. Nasty, unpleasant work might be Will & Craft.

Item Cost	Min. Successes	Progress per Hour
Cheap	1	0.1 钱 × successes
Average	2	0.5 钱 × successes
Expensive	3	4 钱 × successes
Extravagant	4	15 钱 × successes
Rare	No change	×2 progress
Proscribed	No change	×3 progress

The more expensive an item is, the more skilled of a craftsman you need to be. You need to score the minimum number of successes to make any progress at all towards crafting an item – if you don't meet the minimum, you just wasted an hour. For example, if you want to make Expensive boots, you must roll 3 successes each time you roll, or you make no progress at all.

On any roll, a Botch ruins the job.

The Gifts of Carpentry, Leatherworking, Mechanics, Metalworking, and Painting each give a bonus d12 to a specialty use of Craft. Consult the Gift's description for more details. A character with one of those Gifts will be able to score more successes, and thus they will be able to craft fancier items.

The Gifts of Alchemy can be exhausted to provide you with certain alchemical weapons. It's assumed that you recharge the gift back at your lab, where your materials are bubbling and percolating away.

Why is it faster to make Rare and Proscribed items? Because the raised costs on those items have to do with the materials they use, the demand on the market to buy them, and the laws that make it difficult to obtain those items. Whether an item is

rare or proscribed has nothing to do with how fast it takes someone to make the item.

For example, a skilled laborer (Mind d6 and Craft d6, Craft Specialty d12), working in a shop (shop bonus d8) would roll four dice. If they took their rote, they have four dice, halved for two successes an hour. At 2 successes an hour on an average cost item, that's 2 *bù* worth of progress every hour. Following the previous example of the boots, if you started with the 0.6 *bù* in raw materials, you'd need 2.4 *bù* more, which means the boots would be made in three hours.

As a rule, a character can work up to 10 hours a day. More than that and the Host may raise the difficulty target to 4, 5, or more, because exhaustion starts to make for mistakes.

It's beyond the scope of this book to provide precise crafting rules for every item in the game. These rules don't provide for rare materials, unusually difficult items, dangerous substances, and special orders. As always, the Game Host will have to make rulings on a case-by-case basis. If the crafting rules don't make sense, don't use them!

Starting Trappings

You can start with as much *Cheap* and *Average* equipment that you can carry (up to, say, 8 stone worth). Rare stuff isn't a problem, either, though you should ask your Game Host for permission for anything that's Proscribed, since getting such things is against the law.

Each Career lists some suggested equipment to start with, to get you started ... but you can swap this equipment for what you think is more appropriate.

Cheap and Common Weapons from the Player's Book are Available

While the shortwords, longwords, javelins, daggers, and the like of Zhōngguo are different than the ones from Calabria, the game rules are the same. These weapons are universal. Instead of denarii (Ð), use the listed prices as bù-qian (钱).

EQUIPMENT



Rare Weapons

The following weapons aren't seen often ... but when they are seen, people remember them.

Rare Melee Weapons

Name	Equip	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
Cave Broadsword	Good hand	Close	Awkward Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Sweep Close	Average, Rare, (12钱), Blade, Vast-as-Heaven, ½ stone
Chopping Broadsword	2 hands	Close	Awkward Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +4	Average, Rare, (18钱), Blade, Chopping, ¾ stone
Fighting Broom	Good hand	Close, Reach	Awkward Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Can't Parry	Damage +1 Grapple	Average, Rare, (12钱), Soft, ½ stone
Fighting Cymbal	Off hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Cover d4 Damage +1	Average, Rare, (6钱), Thrown, ¼ stone
Fighting Mallet	Good hand	Close	Awkward Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Critical	Average, Rare, (18钱), Truncheon, ¾ stone
Fighting Pestle	Off hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +1	Average, Rare, (12钱), Truncheon, ½ stone
Fighting Rake	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +4 Weak Knockdown	Average, Rare, (18钱), Blade, Spear, Vast-as-Heaven, Rending, ¾ stone
Fighting Shovel	2 hands	Reach	Awkward Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +5 Weak	Average, Rare, (24钱), Blade, Truncheon, Vast-as-Heaven, Chopping, 1 stone
Fire Hook	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2	Average, Rare, (12钱), Blade, Fire Hook, ½ stone
Fork Staff	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +1 Impale Sweep Reach	Average, Rare (12钱), Spear, Fork, ½ stone
Hook Scythe	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +1 Impale Knockdown	Average, Rare (24钱), 1 stone
Rope Dagger	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Can't Parry	Damage +2 Grapple	Average, Rare, (24钱), Flail, Rope, 1 stone
Scrape Sword	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +1 Impale	Average, Rare (36钱), Blade, Concealable, Vast-as-Heaven, Proscribed, ½ stone
Shield Fan	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Parry d8	Cover d8 Damage +1	Average, Rare (12钱), Fan, ½ stone
Soft Hammer	Good hand	Close, Reach	Awkward Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Can't Parry	Damage +2	Average, Rare (18钱), Soft, ¾ stone
White Wax Wood Spear	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Critical	Average, Rare (18钱), Soft, Vast-as-Heaven, ¾ stone

The **Cave Broadsword** is a gently-sloping blade that maintains an equal width the entire length, until it tapers to a point. Designed to sweep the legs of the mounts ridden by warriors in combat, this weapon is the longest of broadswords and is found most commonly among the officers of the King's Imperial Guard. The large **Chopping Broadsword** is a typical tool for executioners, for a good clean cut.

Many weapons are militarized versions of typical tools, such as the iron-shod **Fighting Broom**, the sharpened **Fighting Cymbal**, the reinforced **Fighting Mallet**, the studded **Fighting Pestle**, the honed points of the **Fighting Rake**, and the sharpened edges of the **Fighting Shovel**.

A weaponized version of the fire-fighter's tool, the **Fire Hook** is a cutting blade on a long handle. Warriors usually use them in pairs.

Unlike a typical fork, the **Fork Staff** has its tines perpendicular to the shaft, so the weapon is swung rather than thrust.

The **Hook Scythe** is a spear with a hook on the end, used for dismounting or for tripping foes.

The **Rope Dagger** is a dagger-style blade on the end of a long silk rope, the weapon of choice for the discerning rope-weapon fighter.



EQUIPMENT

A **Scrape Sword** has a narrow blade so it can be easily concealed in a sleeve or boot.

Unlike a paper fan, a **Shield Fan** is made of several steel plates, and it fans out to a shape longer than the user's arm.

Only the *shaft* of the **Soft Hammer** is springy and flexible; the head is a hard wood that can break bones.

The **White Wax Wood Spear** has a shaft of extremely flexible, hard, tough wood from the broad-leaf privet tree.

The tip can wobble and snap back and forth in strange, unpredictable arcs.

Rare Ranged Weapons

Name	Equip	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
Sling Bow	2 hands	Medium	Body, Speed, Ranged Combat vs. defense	Damage +0	Average, Rare (6钱), Bow, Sling, ¼ stone, Reload/1
Sling Crossbow	2 hands	Long	Body, Speed, Ranged Combat vs. defense	Damage +1	Average, Rare (12钱), Crossbow, Sling, ½ stone, Reload/2

The **Sling Bow** and **Sling Crossbow** have a small pocket to hurl stone bullets at the target.

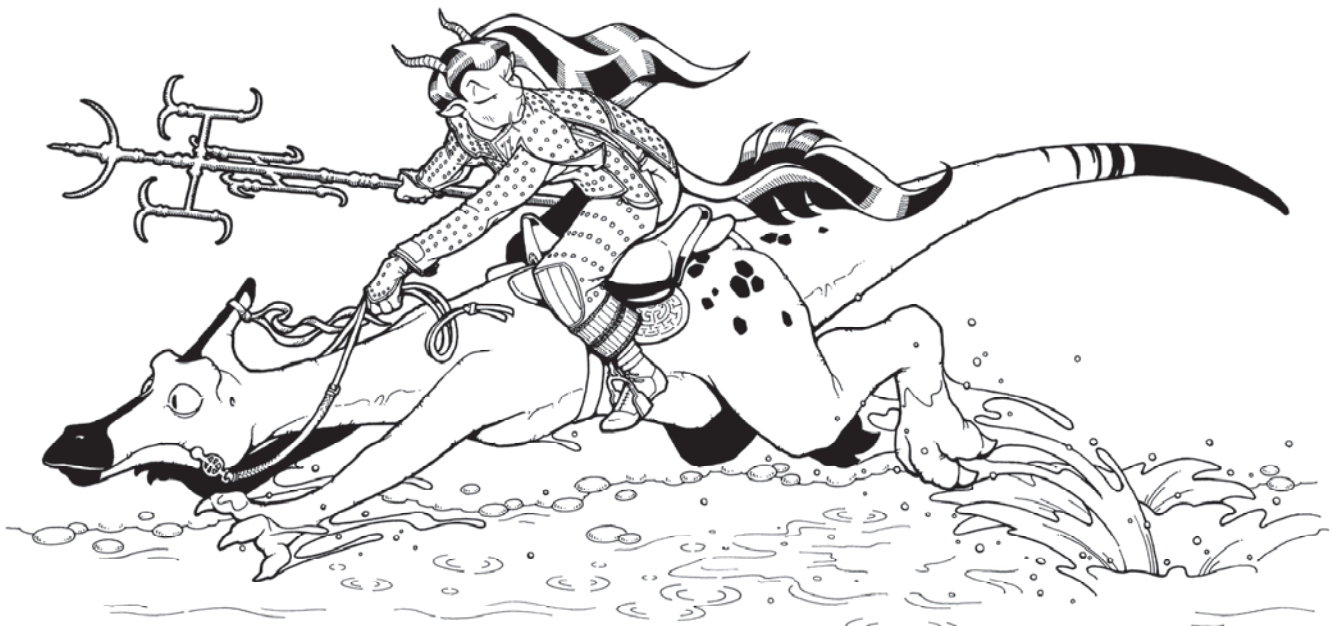
Expensive Weapons

These weapons cost a lot of money, and they must be hand-crafted for specific needs.

Expensive Melee Weapons

Name	Equip	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
Bridge-Tower Hammer	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +3 Critical	Expensive, Rare (90钱), Truncheon, Vast-as-Heaven, ¾ stone
Bridge-Tower Pole	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Parry d12	Damage +2 Critical	Expensive, Rare (60钱), Truncheon, Vast-as-Heaven, ½ stone
Brush Polearm	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +3 Critical	Expensive, Rare (120钱), Spear, Rending, 1 stone
Charioteer's Whip	Off hand	Reach	Body, Melee Combat s. defense Can't Parry	Damage +1 Grapple	Expensive, Rare (60钱), Flail, Soft, ½ stone
Double Headed Hammer	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Grapple	Expensive, Rare (120钱), Flail, Double-Headed, Rope, 1 stone
Double-Headed Spear	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +3 Impale	Expensive, Rare (90钱), Spear, Double-Headed, ¾ stone
Earth-Sky Sun-Moon Saber	Good hand	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Critical	Expensive, Rare (60钱), Blade, Spear, Double-Headed, Earth-Sky, Sun-Moon, ½ stone
Eyebrow-Tip Broadsword	Good hand	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Critical	Expensive, Rare (60钱), Blade, Rending, ½ stone
Fighting Wheel	Off hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Parry d12	Cover d4 Damage +0 Critical	Expensive, Rare (30钱), ¼ stone
Flying Fork	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +1 Impale	Expensive, Rare (60钱), Spear, Thrown, Fork, ½ stone
Iron Chain Link Club	Good hand	Close, Reach	Awkward Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Can't Parry	Damage +1 Critical Knockdown	Expensive (60钱), Vast-as-Heaven, 1 stone
Iron Ruler	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Parry d12	Damage +2	Expensive, Rare (30钱), Truncheon, Vast-as-Heaven, ¼ stone
Jiann	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Impaling	Expensive, Rare (30钱), Blade, Fencing, Earth-Sky, ¼ stone
Lamp Staff	2 hands	Reach	Awkward Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Parry d12	Damage +3	Expensive, Rare (60钱), Staff, Vast-as-Heaven, Ringed, ½ stone
Long-Handled Battle Axe	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Awkward Damage +4	Expensive (45钱), Chopping, Vast-as-Heaven, ¾ stone

EQUIPMENT



Name	Equip	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
Long-Handled Claw	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Critical Disarm, Knockdown	Expensive, Rare (90钱), Blade, Spear, Vast-as-Heaven, ¾ stone
Nine-Ring Broadsword	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Critical	Expensive, Rare (60钱), Blade, Chopping, Ringed, ½ stone
Plum Flower Claw	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Can't Parry	Damage +4 Weak Grapple	Expensive (60钱), Flail, Rope, Vast-as-Heaven, Rending, 1 stone
Sectional Steel Whip	Good hand	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Can't Parry	Damage +1 Critical Grapple	Expensive, Rare (90钱), Flail, Rope, ¾ stone
Sky Halberd	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +3 Critical	Expensive, Rare (120钱), Blade, Spear, Vast-as-Heaven, Earth-Sky, 1 stone
Steel Fork	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +3 Impale	Expensive (45钱), Spear, Fork, ¾ stone
Steel Whip	Good hand	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Can't Parry	Damage +0 Critical Grapple or Knockdown	Expensive, Rare (90钱), Flail, Rope, ¾ stone
Stone Axe	Off hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Awkward Damage +2	Expensive (30钱), Chopping, ½ stone
Sun-Moon Buckler	Off hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Cover d4 Damage +1	Expensive (30钱), Sun-Moon, ½ stone
Sun-Moon Wheel	Off hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2	Expensive, Rare (60钱), Sun-Moon, ½ stone
Three-Section Staff	2 hands	Close, Reach	Awkward Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Can't Parry	Damage +2 Critical Grapple	Expensive, Rare (90钱), Vast-as-Heaven, ¾ stone
Three-Tined Fork	Good hand	Reach	Awkward Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +3 Impale	Expensive (45钱), Spear, Fork, ¾ stone
Wind-Mouth Spear	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +3 Impale	Expensive, Rare (90钱), Spear, Vast-as-Heaven, Wind-Mouth, ¾ stone
Wind-Mouth Staff	2 hands	Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Parry d12	Damage +2	Expensive, Rare (90钱), Staff, Vast-as-Heaven, Wind-Mouth, ¾ stone

Designed to keep foes at bay, the **Bridge-Tower Hammer** and **Bridge-Tower Pole** both have handles so long that it takes skill and strength to use them effectively.

A strange weapon from the southern states, the **Brush Polearm (Bi)** is a brass hand clutching a metal brush pen, mounted on the end of a long staff.

The **Charioteer's Whip** is made of lizard hide, and used defensively to keep foes away from the chariot.

The **Double Headed Hammer** is two metal balls on either end of a rope, often used to dismount riders. Likewise, the **Double-Headed Spear** is a spear held in the middle, with points on both ends.

The exotically-named **Earth-Sky Sun-Moon Saber** has a smaller crescent-shaped blade that covers the grip, inside its larger blade. The **Sun-Moon Buckler** and **Sun-Moon Wheel** also use crescent-shaped blades to protect the grip and to threaten foes.

The **Eyebrow-Tip Broadsword** is a narrow blade with an arc close to the tip, mounted on a long pole.

A **Fighting Wheel** is a metal loop with a leather grip, used to parry attacks at close range.

The **Flying Fork** gets its name from the quick stabbing motions used.

Put a triangular-prism bar on the end of a long chain, attach it to a wooden handle, and you have a **Iron Chain Link Club**, a weapon that's difficult to master but deadly to one's foes.

A popular weapon with officials of state, the **Iron Ruler** can be used to rap knuckles and break bones.

The **jiann** is a long, thin stabbing sword with a cutting edge, a favorite of the White Crane martial artists.

A weapon common among monks, the **Lamp Staff** is also used by troops to clear a path for the Emperor. The staff varies in height and has a large brass ring mounted to the top of it with multiple brass rings joined to it.

The **Long-Handled Battle Axe** is used by only the strongest of warriors. The **Long-Handled Claw** is similar to a Fighting Rake, only the handle is even longer and more unwieldy.

The **Nine-Ring Broadsword** has several rings on its blunt edge (anywhere from three to a dozen or more, but it's always called a "nine-ring broadsword"). When swung, the rings flip towards the front; fans of the weapon claim it gives an extra impact.

The **Plum Flower Claw** is a disk with radiating, articulated metal fingers; when you pull the attached rope, the fingers flex inward, clutching hard.

The **Sky Halberd** takes its name from the extremely long handle; the soldier who carries one hopes that they hit their foe before they get too close.

It's very expensive to make a stabbing **Steel Fork** that won't break, which has two long narrow points; the **Three-Tined Fork** has three shorter points.

Sometimes called the "flexible sword", the **Steel Whip** is several blades chained together; in skilled hands, it makes very nasty cuts. An import from Yindù, the **Sectional Steel Whip** is a dozen steel bars connected by short lengths of chain, and all sharpened to a wicked, slashing edge.

Traditionally, the **Stone Axe** is used in pairs; its heavy, thick blades are an icon of the power of the state.

The **Three-Section Staff** is three wooden poles joined by short links of chain.

The Northern States of Zhōngguo favor sturdy thick weapons in the "Wind-Mouth" style, such as the **Wind-Mouth Spear** and **Wind Mouth Staff**.

Expensive Ranged Weapons

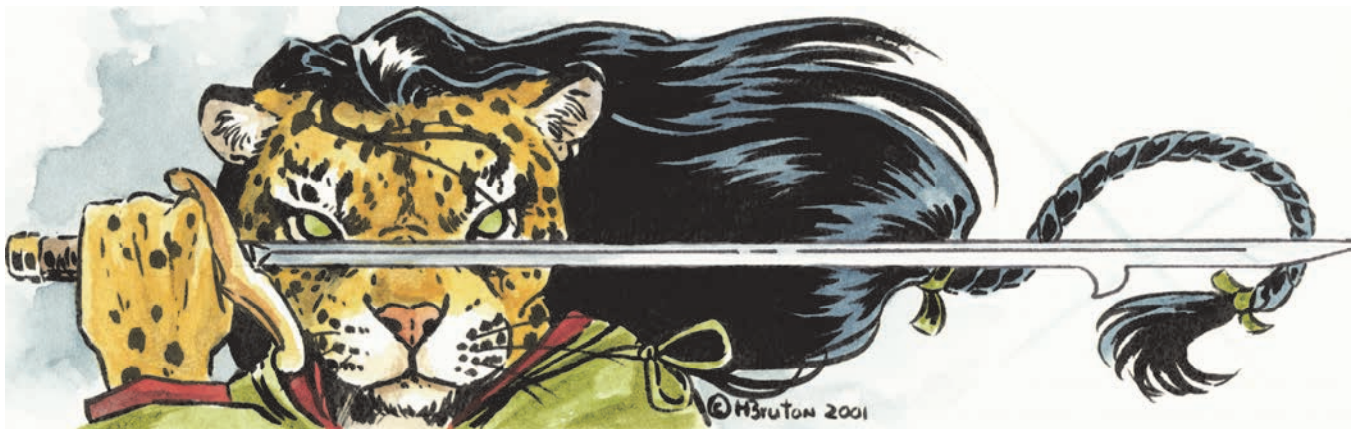
Name	Equip	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
Firework & Torch	2 hands	Long	Explosion: Reach Body, Speed, Throwing vs. 3	Resist: Speed, Dodge vs. 3 Damage +1. Confused	Expensive (30钱 for 4), Loud, Ammo, 1/8 stone
Metal Bow	2 hands	Long	Body, Speed, Ranged Combat vs. defense	Damage +1 Critical	Expensive, Rare (60钱), Bow, Reload/1, 1/2 stone
Repeating Crossbow	2 hands	Medium	Speed, Ranged Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Sweep Medium	Expensive, Proscribed (90钱), Crossbow, Reload 8/3, 1/2 stone
Rocket & Torch	2 hands	Long	Speed, Will, Ranged Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Critical	Expensive (30钱), Loud, Ammo, 1/4 stone
Touch-Hole Gun & Torch	2 hands	Long	Awkward Speed, Will, Ranged Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Slaying	Expensive (90钱), Gun Loud, Proscribed, Reload 1/6, 1/2 stone
Waist-Open Crossbow	2 hands	Long	Speed, Ranged Combat vs. defense	Damage +4	Expensive (135钱), Proscribed, Crossbow, Reload 1/4, 3/4 stone

Monsters tend to be afraid of loud noises, but in a pinch, a **Firework** thrown into a crowd can cause explosive damage, and the sparks and noise can deafen and confuse. Light the fuse, then get away or throw at your enemies. For those of you with nerves of steel, you can try holding onto a paper **Rocket** while the fuse burns down, then you toss the thing at the last moment for maximum accuracy.

Why mess with strange triggers that are prone to failure, when you can just stuff a flame into a hole and ignite the gunpowder yourself? The guns of Zhōngguo are still in the **Touch-Hole** phase.

When wood just won't do, you can have wire drawn and steel curved into a **Metal Bow**.

EQUIPMENT



There is possibly no greater example of the Middle Kingdom’s mechanical ingenuity than the **Repeating Crossbow**. This weapon is fired with a lever mounted on top, while gravity feeds bolts from a box – it takes 3 rounds to reload the 8-bolt box. More popular for city defense is the **Waist-Open Crossbow**, a heavy crossbow braced on the hips, which is cheaper and easier to fix.

Extravagant Weapons

These weapons are the stuff of legend.

Name	Equip	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
Dart Fan	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Parry d8	Cover d4 Damage +1 Critical	Extravagant (300钱), Fan, ½ stone
Flying Guillotine	2 hands	Reach	Awkward Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Can’t Parry	Damage +2 Slaying	Extravagant (900钱), Rare, Proscribed, Rope, ¾ stone
Four-Section Staff	2 hands	Close, Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Awkward	Damage +3 Critical Grapple	Extravagant (450钱), Vast-as-Heaven, ¾ stone
Martial Sword	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Critical	Extravagant (150钱), Fencing, Soft, ¼ stone
Nine-Dragon Trident	2 hands	Close, Reach	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Critical	Extravagant (1,200钱), Rare, Blade, Spear, Truncheon, Nine-Dragon, 1 stone
Scholarly Sword	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Impale	Extravagant (150钱), Fencing, Soft, ¼ stone
Sleeping Bonze	2 hands	Close	Awkward Body, Will, Melee Combat vs. defense Counter Magic	Damage +4	Extravagant (900钱), Truncheon, Holy, 1 ½ stone
Sleeve Sword	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense	Damage +2 Impale	Extravagant (900钱), Blade, Concealable, Vast-as-Heaven, Proscribed, Spring-Loaded, ½ stone
Volcano Fan	Good hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Parry d8 Counter Magic	Cover d8 Damage +1	Extravagant (300钱), Rare, Fan, ¼ stone
Wind-and-Fire Wheel	Off hand	Close	Body, Melee Combat vs. defense Parry d12	Damage +2	Extravagant (150钱), Earth-Sky, Sun-Moon, ¼ stone

The **Dart Fan** looks like an ordinary fan ... but inside the handle is a spring-loaded dart. See the *ammunition* rules for what you can load in it.

The **Flying Guillotine** is a metal hoop on a silk cord. The weapon is hurled around an opponent’s neck or limb and then yanked hard.

When three sections just won’t do, you can try a **Four-Section Staff**.

The **Martial Sword**, sometimes called the “Male Sword”, has a flexible blade but a heavy edge suitable for cutting. Its companion, the **Scholarly Sword** or “Female Sword” is lighter and tapers to a stabbing point.

EQUIPMENT

For monomaniacs only, the **Nine-Dragon Trident** is a polearm with a bizarre variety of tines, blades, spokes, and edges. It's said to be the "king of long weapons".

A very strange weapon, the **Sleeping Bonze** is a stylized statue of a man, usually a monkey, made out of solid bronze. Used by priests when they train in martial arts for meditation, proper focus of the mind allows one to oppose supernatural attacks.

A dreaded weapon of assassins, the spring-loaded **Sleeve Sword** can end a life in an instant.

Crafted from shiny, pattern-folded steel, and engraved with symbols of arcane power, the **Volcano Fan** is the signature weapon of the Volcano-Style Martial Artists.

Usually used in pairs, the **Wind-and-Fire Wheel** is a steel wheel with spokes radiating out from the rings.

Ammunition

Weapons are assumed to use common ammunition, but sometimes you might want to upgrade.

Name	Equip	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
Spring-Loaded Dart	Loaded in Dart Fan	Short	Speed, Deceit, Ranged Combat vs. defense	Damage flat 3	Average (3钱), Spring-Loaded, Concealable, Ammo, 1/8 stone
Spring-Loaded Dart, Poisoned	Loaded in Dart Fan	Short	Speed, Deceit, Ranged Combat vs. defense	Damage flat 4 Weak Target Hurt? Also Sick!	Expensive (60钱), Rare, Proscribed, Spring-Loaded, Concealable, Poison, Ammo, 1/8 stone
Sling Stone	Sling weapon	As sling	As weapon	As weapon	Cheap (12 for free), Ammo, 1/8 stone
Sling Bullet	Sling weapon	As sling	As weapon	Increase Damage by 1	Average (3钱 for 12), Ammo, 1/8 stone
Common Arrow	In bow	As bow	As bow	As bow	Average (3钱 for 24), Ammo, 1/8 stone
Firecracker Arrow	In bow	As bow	Speed, Will, Ranged Combat	Damage becomes Weak Target Confused	Expensive (2钱), Rare, , Ammo, Loud
Common Quarrel	In crossbow	As crossbow	As crossbow	As crossbow	Average (1钱 for 18), Ammo, 1/8 stone
Steel Quarrel	In crossbow	As crossbow	As crossbow	Increase Damage by 1	Expensive (15钱 for 24), Ammo, 1/8 stone
Barbed Arrows	In bow	As bow	As bow	Increase Damage by 1 at Short Range or less	Expensive (7钱 per 24), 1/16 stone, Ammo
Fire Arrows	In bow	As bow	As bow	Damage becomes Weak, On Fire	Expensive (15钱 per 24), 1/8 stone, Ammo
Poisoned Arrow	In bow	As bow	As bow	Damage becomes Weak Target Hurt? Also Sick!	Expensive, (15钱 per 4), Rare, Proscribed, Ammo

Naturally, most weapons are loaded with the **Common** version of their ammunition. **Spring-Loaded Darts** are loaded in Dart Fans. **Steel Quarrels** and **Barbed Arrows** are made with better steel for improved damage. **Poisoned** weapons have an internal reservoir filled with exotic chemicals that, once in the bloodstream, sicken the target. Unfortunately, the added drag also means the ammunition won't fly true. If you can inflict a Hurt result with your attack (even if the target was already Hurt), then the target becomes Sick. While **Firecracker Arrows** are usually used as a signal, nothing stops you from shooting someone with them.

Armor

Armor	Bonus	Weight	Notes
Wizard's Robes	None	1/2 stone	Extravagant (250钱), Rare
Cotton	d4	1 stone	Cheap (1钱)
Vines	2d4	2 stone	Average, Burden (24钱)
Silk	2d4	1/2 stone	Expensive (30钱)
Leather	d6	1/2 stone	Average (12钱)
Disc	d8	2 stone	Expensive (120钱)
Star-Scale	d10	4 stone	Extravagant (1,200钱)
Four Mirrors	d8	2 stone	Extravagant, Rare (1,200钱) Magic Resistance d12
Twin Shield	2d4	1/2 stone	Expensive (30钱)
Mountain-Scale	2d6	1 stone	Expensive, Rare (180钱)
Huishi	2d8	1 stone	Extravagant, Rare (900钱)
Eryth	2d10	4 stone	Extravagant, Rare (3,600钱)

While **Wizard's Robes** technically count as Armor, they provide no protective value.

Cotton armor is quilted fabric. It's not much, but it can do the job. In some remote corners of the Middle Kingdom, armor is made from **Vines** and other plant matter; it automatically Burdens the wearer.

Popular with those who can afford it, layers of **Silk** make for excellent protection. For the rank and file, **Leather** is still flexible and comfortable, and it layers well with other armor. For extra protection, **Disc** armor covers vulnerable areas of attack with bossed metal circles. Scale armor is even better – **Star Scale** armor

EQUIPMENT

uses over-lapping five-pointed shapes, while **Mountain Scale** uses lots of triangles.

Unique to the philosophers of Zhōngguo, the **Four Mirrors** armor resembles Disc armor; only the metal bosses have been treated and inscribed with secret processes that allow it to reflect magic! A combatant wearing Four-Mirrors Armor may claim a d12 bonus to any roll to resist magic, or to parry or to dodge a Magic effect. (There’s no bonus to counter magic.)

Made from an exotic metal mined from deep in the earth, **Hutshi** armor is surprisingly light and protective ... and extremely costly. And the Jakoba family’s influence goes far and wide – their imports have made **Eryth** armor the most prized of all protective-wear, and the smiths of the Emperor would pay a heavy price to know the secret of working with the mysterious mineral known as erythrosinum.

Different Types of Armor Can Be Layered

You may wear up to three layers of armor, just as described in the *Player’s Book*. For example, you may wear both Silk and Leather.

If you wear two layers, you’re automatically *Burdened*. (Your Speed & Dodge dice are limited to d8, and your Dash drops to zero.)



If you wear three layers, you’re automatically Over-Burdened. (Not only do you have the d8 limit and zero Dash, but others can claim a bonus d8 to hit you!)

Normally, it doesn’t matter which layer is on top – anyone who hits you will find out how much armor you’re wearing soon enough. However, Four-Mirrors Armor must always be the outer-most layer if you want to claim the d12 Magic resistance.

Shields

A shield is cover carried as a weapon. It can be used as an Improvised Attack, too.

Shield	Use	Cost	Cover	Weight
Cloak	Off-hand	Expensive (7 ½ 钱)	d4	¼ stone
Wooden Shield	Strapped to arm	Average (6 钱)	d8	1 stone
Metal Shield	Strapped to arm	Expensive (30 钱)	d8	1 stone



IMMORTAL MAGIC

Throughout the history of Zhōngguo, various Celestials have descended from the Kingdom of Heaven to spend time with the virtuous people among the Races of Earth. Some of their teachings were recorded into books. To the casual reader, these books are nothing more than parables, stories, wild tales, and advice on how to live a long and happy life. To those initiated in the mysteries, these books describe how to manipulate supernatural forces and to mold the very shape of creation.

Practitioners of magic are rare. It takes a keen mind, dedicated study, and long hours of tedious reading to be able to cast spells with any reliability. Most folks are too poor to afford universities or scholarships, and must work for a living. The practice of magic, then, is usually reserved for the rich and the educated.

Study, Attunement, and Belongings

It's assumed that your character spends time studying the manuscripts of old, focusing your attention through their magical tools, and generally practicing magic in their off-time. To represent this attunement, most magic requires the character to a gift of Belongings before they can learn advanced magic.

Readying Spells

A *spell* is an effect that you must call forth, and then you can use it with another action. Similar to weapons, spells must be made *ready*. The fastest, easiest way to ready a spell is into a hand, but you may use magical tools such as Wands and Rods.

Ready a spell into a Hand

Using a “ready” action, you may ready a spell into your off-hand. Exhaust the appropriate Gift, then ready the spell. The spell remains in your hand until you drop it (as a free reaction) or until you use it. You will have to refresh the Gift before you can use it again.

When you start a fight and roll your initiative, you may choose to ready a spell instead of a weapon – just exhaust the Gift, as usual.

Your hand may only hold one spell at a time. If you want to ready another spell, you will have to ready the spell into another hand or you will have to drop the old one (a free reaction).

If you are unable to use your hands to hold weapons – say, because you're tied up or manacled – then you can't ready spells, either.

Ready a spell into a Wand

If you already have a Wand that's ready, you may load a spell into the Wand. Any Wand will work.

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same round” still applies, so you can't ready a Wand and a spell in the same round. You will either have to

start combat with the Wand ready (in the initiative part), or you'll have to take two rounds.

(The Gift of Quick-Draw lets you take an extra “ready” action to ready a Wand, but not a spell, and you still can't take two “ready” actions in the same round.)

A Wand may only hold one spell at a time. If you want to ready another spell into the Wand, you must either drop the old one (a free reaction) or use it (as an attack). If you are disarmed of your Wand, you also lose the spell.

Unless the spell is Mystic, onlookers can see your Wand radiate powerful, magical energy.

Spells cast from a Wand suffer no penalties for Range

Your Wand allows you to direct the spell better. If you attack with a spell that was readied into a Wand, your target gains no bonuses to their defense or to their resistance for the Range. You may cast the spell up to its maximum range with no Range penalties.

Ready a spell into a Rod

If you already have a Rod that's ready, you may load a spell into the Rod. Any Rod will work.

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same round” still applies, so you can't ready a Rod and a spell in the same round. You will either have to start combat with the Rod ready (in the initiative part), or you'll have to take two rounds.

(The Gift of Quick-Draw lets you take an extra “ready” action to ready a Rod, but not a spell, and you still can't take two “ready” actions in the same round.)

A Rod may normally only hold one spell at a time. If you want to ready another spell into the Rod, you must either drop the old one (a free reaction) or use it (as an attack). If you are disarmed of your Rod, you also lose the spell.

Unless the spell is Mystic, onlookers can see your Rod radiate powerful, magical energy.

IMMORTAL MAGIC

Spells readied into a Rod threaten up to Near Range

Your Rod allows you to use your spells to defend yourself. If a foe declares an attack at you from within Near Range (4m), you may Counter with a spell readied in your Rod. (Some spells already have the Counter ability, but the Rod adds 'Counter All' at Near Range to any spell.)

Together Greater than Apart: Hexagrams

Advanced Immortal Magic may lead to the combination of two other spells. To use *Hexagram Magic*, you must have the appropriate Gift.

With one “attack” action, use two spells

As part of the “attack” action, you may choose to attack with the first spell ... attack with the second spell ... or attack with a third, powerful *Hexagram*. Combining the two spells together uses both of them up. You will have to ready the spells again on a later turn.

For example, if you want to cast the Hexagram, “Stir Up the Flames and Get Burnt”, you must have both a “Clod of Earth” and a “Spark of Fire” already ready. You can have the spells ready in each hand, or one spell ready in a Wand and the other in a hand. You might have one spell ready in a 2-handed Rod and the other one in a hand-substitute, such as a Prehensile Tail.

When casting a *Hexagram*, you may mix and match tools. For example if one of the two spells was loaded into a Wand, then the Hexagram combination can be cast without Range penalties. If you somehow have the three hands, you might even combine Rod and Wand.

Spells can be made instantly ready into a Talisman by exhausting a Hexagram Gift

The “Hexagram Magic” Gifts are very useful. By exhausting one of them, you may make a spell instantly ready *without using a Ready action!*

For example, if you have “Fire Hexagram Magic”, then you may exhaust the Gift to make any one “Fire” spell that you can use instantly ready – for example, you may equip a “Spark of Fire”. You don’t have to exhaust Tàoiist Magic or any other gift, just the “Fire Hexagram Magic” gift.

When you exhaust the Hexagram Gift, the spell is made ready in your Talisman – it doesn’t occupy a hand, Wand, or Rod. Unless the spell is Mystic, onlookers can see your Talisman radiate powerful, magical energy. The spell remains ready until you use it for something, or until the scene ends (in about five minutes).

In case it matters, Hexagram Magic only works with spells provided by “X (Battle)” Gifts, not with spells that require other kinds of exhaustions.



The Magic of Changes

Changes Magic was the result of the legacy left to the people of Zhōngguo by the Yellow Emperor: his instructions for reaching immortality. In its simplest form, Changes Magic as written in *The Book of Changes* guided people to distinguish right from wrong. Only those who could “read between the lines” — who saw the relationship between opposites in the hexagrams — entered the School of Changes Magic.

Many practitioners of Changes Magic can proudly trace their lineage all the way back to the Yellow Emperor himself. Yet, it was Fu His, the founder of the Tai Ping School of Heavenly Peace, who understood the relations as he copied the original text of *The Book of Changes* for the school library. He wrote a companion book that detailed the Eight Greater Mysteries and Eight Lesser Mysteries. In the mythical days of Zhōngguo, there were numerous students of Tai Ping School of Heavenly Peace, openly and actively helping to minimize disasters and to destroy evils. Yet one great tragedy that ended the mythical days was when a Tai Ping Student (whose name is forever eradicated) accidentally opened the Mysteries of Kun and ushered in the Great Flood. By the time the Great Flood was restrained, the Tai Ping School of Heavenly Peace was no more. Their good name was forever destroyed by the one student’s act of dark sorcery.

In reality, the Tai Ping School of Heavenly Peace had removed itself from public knowledge. The Masters understood that they had reached the apex and then experienced the abyss; if they were to succumb and disband the School, then all their teachings would be for naught. Only through persistently working behind the scenes and against hardship were they able to begin the ascent back to the zenith during the approaching spring and autumn. In modern Zhōngguo, practitioners of Changes Magic are rare, and they surround themselves in an air of mystery.

Changes Magic is largely based on luck and misfortune. The spells work best on large groups of people.

The Way of Changes spells as Magic Weapons

To use these spells, you must first exhaust the gift of *The Way of Changes*, then use a Ready action to put the spell into your hand, your magic Rod, or your magic Wand. To use the spell, declare an “Attack” action -- once used, the spell is gone and must be re-readied.

Spell	Equip	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
Collapsing the Weakest Column	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium	Mind, Inquiry vs. group’s Body, Will, Endurance	Lowest Roller: Damage of 1 point for each target who failed to resist, Penetrating	Magic, Changes, Mountain
Permeation of Wind	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium	Mind, Weather Sense vs. group’s Body, Mind, Weather Sense	Lowest Roller: Reeling, Damage flat 2, Push 1 per success	Magic, Changes, Air
Quagmire of Doubt	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium	Mind, Negotiation vs. group’s Mind, Will, Negotiation	Lowest Roller: Reeling, Confused	Magic, Changes, Marsh
The Turmoil of Silence	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium Counter Magic	Mind, Supernatural vs. group’s Mind, Will, Supernatural	Lowest Roller: Reeling, Silenced	Magic, Changes, Thunder, Loud

Each of these spells only affects one target. Declare a group of up to 12 foes, but only the *lowest roller* – the character who rolled the lowest on their defense dice – is affected. Everyone else is fine – no Reeling or any other bad effects.

The most dramatic of all the spells of the Way of Changes, **Collapsing the Weakest Column** drops a phantom stone upon up to a dozen foes; for each foe that isn’t resilient enough to shrug off the load, someone takes a little more damage. (In game terms, roll your attack vs. the group. For each target who fails to resist, that’s 1 point of damage on the lowest roller. Remember, the lowest roller has to also fail the roll, so if everyone resists, then no one suffers.)

The **Permeation of Wind** blows a chill wind, but only the weakest in flesh and soul are affected by it. The **Quagmire of Doubt** makes the targets question their every move – only the most uncertain among them suffers. **The Turmoil of Silence** makes a loud, thundering sorcery.... exactly how it affects the target can’t be explained, as they are at a loss for words.

IMMORTAL MAGIC

Changes Magic Trappings (Plot, Trappings)



Belongings

You begin the game with:

- 點 one Daopao (道袍) Robe
- 點 one Jīngāng (金剛) Wand, a small scepter with two rounded ends
- 點 one As-One-Wishes Rod (the Ruyi Jingu Bang, 如意金箍棒), a long staff banded with gold
- 點 one Talisman: the Counting Beads (Juzu, 数珠), 108 beads on a long string

X (Special)

If you are parted from your items, ask the Game Host for a plot twist to return or to replace them.

Once exhausted, you cannot recover this Gift until the next game session.

The Way of Changes (Battle, Magic, Apprentice, Changes)



Requires

- Changes Magic Trappings
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese

X (Battle)

Action “ready Changes weapon”

Exhaust this Gift, then use the ready action to draw forth a Changes spell as a Magic weapon. The spell remains in your hand, your rod, or your wand until you cast it forth (with the Attack action), until you drop it (as a free action), or until the end of the Scene (five minutes).

Changes weapons are Magic Attacks. Your Gift allows you to ready the following magical weapons:

- 點 Collapsing the Weakest Column
- 點 Permeation of Wind
- 點 Quagmire of Doubt
- 點 The Turmoil of Silence

Stunt “Reason, Scare, Taunt, Trick with d12 bonus and Loud noise”

Whenever you attempt a Reason, Scare, Taunt, or Trick, you may invoke one of your many Changes spells to “break the golden chain to release the dragon”, and you may claim a bonus d12 with your stunt. Using Changes magic to augment a stunt is quite theatrical and over-the-top, and it’s a Loud noise.

Secrets of Changes Magic (Magic, Skill)



Requires

- Changes Magic Trappings
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese

Add +1 Mark to Supernatural

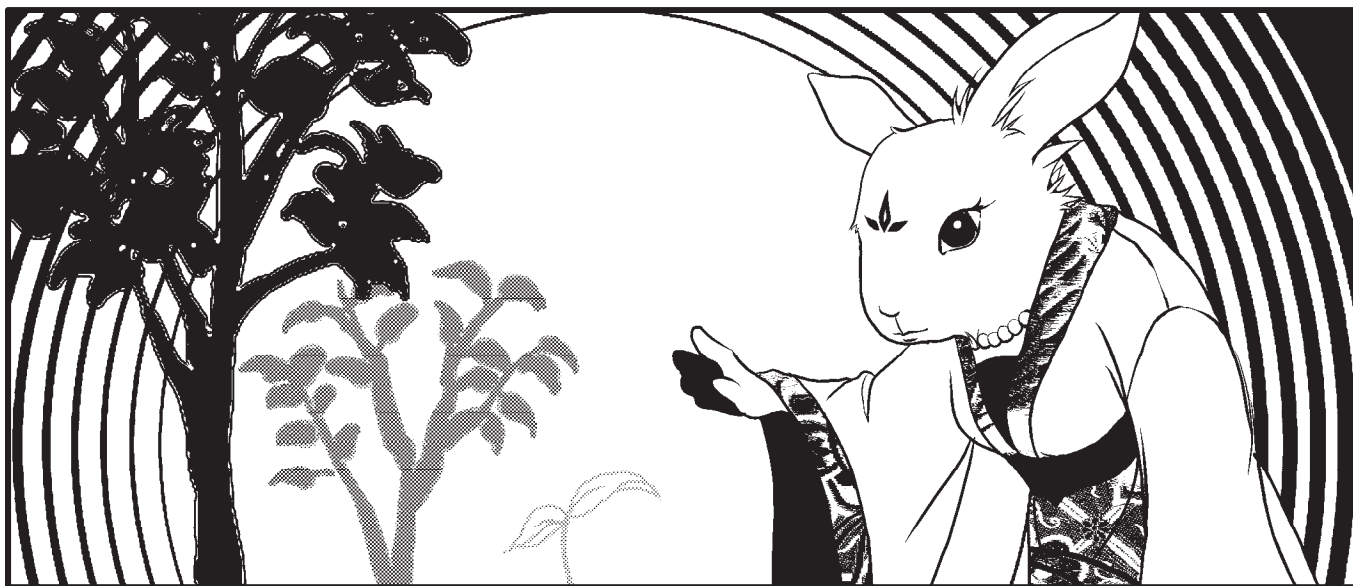
Add one Mark to your Supernatural skill. If you retrain this Gift, you also lose the extra Mark.

Trigger: Wearing a Daopao Robe

Extra action “refresh Changes Apprentice gift”

Are you wearing a Daopao Robe? Then you may claim an extra action on your turn – a *refresh* action, but only to refresh the gift of The Way of Changes.

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn” still applies. So you can’t take two refresh actions on the same turn, no matter how many extra actions you get.



Changes Hexagram Magic

To cast a Hexagram spell, you must not only have an appropriate Hexagram gift, but you must have *two* spells ready – usually one in each hand, sometimes one hand and one wand. As an attack action, combine both spells together and go!

<i>These Two Spells</i>	<i>Combine into Hexagram</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>Attack Dice</i>	<i>Effect</i>	<i>Descriptors</i>
One Air spell and one Thunder spell	Chase the Wind and Clutch at Shadows	Medium	Crowd of all allies and foes Allies roll Body, Will vs. 3 Foes roll Body, Will vs. 3	All allies: Rallied All foes: Confused, Knockdown	Magic, Changes, Hexagram Air, Thunder
Any two Air spells	Coiling Storm	Medium Counter Magic	Mind, Supernatural, Weather Sense vs. group's Body, Mind, Supernatural, Weather Sense	Lowest Roller: Reeling, Damage flat 3 Penetrating, Push 2 per success All other targets: Reeling, Damage flat 2, Push 2	Magic, Changes, Hexagram, Air, Proscribed
Any two Mountain spells	Crush the Mountain Rebels	Medium Counter Magic	Mind, Inquiry, Supernatural vs. group's Body, Will, Endurance, Supernatural	Lowest Roller: Damage of 1, plus 1 point for each target who failed to resist, Penetrating All other targets: Reeling, Damage flat 2 Penetrating	Magic, Changes, Hexagram, Mountain
One Mountain spell and one Thunder spell	Entice the Foes to Leave the Mountain Lair	Medium	Crowd of all allies and foes Allies roll Body, Will vs. 3 Foes roll Body, Will vs. 3	All allies: Rallied All foes: Confused, Push 1	Magic, Changes, Hexagram Mountain, Thunder
Any two Thunder spells	Force of a Thunderbolt	Medium Counter Magic	Mind, Supernatural vs. group's Mind, Will, Supernatural	Lowest Roller: Damage flat 3 Penetrating, Reeling, Silenced All other targets: Reeling, Silenced	Magic, Changes, Hexagram, Thunder, Loud
One Mountain spell and one Marsh spell	Lofty Path of Precipitousness	Medium	Crowd of all allies and foes Allies roll Body, Mind vs. 3 Foes roll Body, Mind vs. 3	All allies: Rallied All foes: Reeling, Hurt, Knockdown	Magic, Changes, Hexagram Mountain, Marsh
One Marsh spell and one Thunder spell	Sound in the East, Strike in the West	Medium	Crowd of all allies and foes Allies roll Mind, Will vs. 3 Foes roll Mind, Will vs. 3	All allies: Rallied All foes: Confused, Knockdown	Magic, Changes, Hexagram Marsh, Thunder
Any two Marsh spells	Uncertainty of Mortality	Medium Counter Magic	Mind, Negotiation, Supernatural vs. group's Mind, Will, Negotiation, Supernatural	Lowest Roller: Reeling, Confused, Damage flat 3 Penetrating All other targets: Reeling, Confused	Magic, Changes, Hexagram, Marsh
One Air spell and one Marsh spell	Wind Blows and Rain Falls	Medium	Crowd of all allies and foes Allies roll Speed, Mind vs. 3 Foes roll Speed, Mind vs. 3	All allies: Rallied All foes: Push 1, Knockdown	Magic, Changes, Hexagram, Air, Marsh
One Air spell and one Mountain spell	A World of Ice and Hail	Medium	Crowd of all allies and foes Allies roll Body, Speed vs. 3 Foes roll Body, Speed vs. 3	All allies: Rallied All foes: Push 1, Reeling, Hurt	Magic, Changes, Hexagram, Air, Mountain

Chase the Wind and Clutch at Shadows sends a magic wind that disorients foes and boosts allies. **Coiling Storm** sends a whirling zephyr that hits one target worse than all the rest. **Crush the Mountain Rebels** is a greater version of “Collapsing the Weakest Column”, as it hits all failures, not just the lowest roller. **Entice the Foes to Leave**

IMMORTAL MAGIC



the Mountain Lair moves foes around. With a terrible boom, **Force of a Thunderbolt** deafens foes on a profound, supernatural level. The **Lofty Path of Precipitousness** uplifts your allies to greater glory while diminishing your enemies. **Sound in the East, Strike in the West** briefly disorients targets while your friends seize the advantage. If the spell works perfectly, **Uncertainty of Mortality** reminds your enemies that nothing lasts ... by killing one of them. **Wind Blows and Rain Falls** scrambles your foes, while **A World of Ice and Hail** buffets them with water and ice.

Air Hexagram Magic (Magic, Changes, Air, Hexagram)



Requires

Clear Headed
Changes Magic Trappings
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese

You may cast Air Hexagram Spells

You are able to cast the following Air Hexagram spells:

點 Chase the Wind and Clutch at Shadows
點 Coiling Storm
點 Wind Blows and Rain Falls
點 A World of Ice and Hail

To cast these spells, you must ready *two* spells, one in each hand. You may also combine a spell from a Wand and an off-hand.

X (Respite)

Interrupt: “equip Air Magic spell into your talisman”

Even if it’s not your turn, you may instantly equip a magic spell that has both the “Air” and “Magic” descriptors. The spell is instantly ready.

The Air spell is equipped into your Talisman. You may use the spell normally, or you may combine it with a spell in your hand, Wand, or Rod to cast a Hexagram spell.

The spell remains ready until the end of this Scene (5 minutes) or until used.

Marsh Hexagram Magic (Magic, Changes, Marsh, Hexagram)



Requires

Craft Specialty: Fishing
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Changes Magic Trappings

You may cast Marsh Hexagram Spells

You are able to cast the following Marsh Hexagram spells:

點 Lofty Path of Precipitousness
點 Sound in the East, Strike in the West

點 Uncertainty of Mortality
點 Wind Blows and Rain Falls

To cast these spells, you must ready *two* spells, one in each hand. You may also combine a spell from a Wand and an off-hand.

X (Respite)

Interrupt: “equip Marsh Magic spell into your talisman”

Even if it’s not your turn, you may instantly equip a magic spell that has both the “Marsh” and “Magic” descriptors. The spell is instantly ready.

The Marsh spell is equipped into your Talisman. You may use the spell normally, or you may combine it with a spell in your hand, Wand, or Rod to cast a Hexagram spell.

The spell remains ready until the end of this Scene (5 minutes) or until used.

Mountain Hexagram Magic (Magic, Tàolist, Mountain, Hexagram)



Requires

Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Sure Footed
Tàolist Magic Trappings

You may cast Mountain Hexagram Spells

You are able to cast the following Mountain Hexagram spells:

點 Crush the Mountain Rebels
點 Entice the Foes to Leave the Mountain Lair
點 Lofty Path of Precipitousness
點 A World of Ice and Hail

To cast these spells, you must ready *two* spells, one in each hand. You may also combine a spell from a Wand and an off-hand.

X (Respite)

Interrupt: “equip Mountain Magic spell into your talisman”

Even if it’s not your turn, you may instantly equip a magic spell that has both the “Mountain” and “Magic” descriptors. The spell is instantly ready.



IMMORTAL MAGIC

The Mountain spell is equipped into your Talisman. You may use the spell normally, or you may combine it with a spell in your hand, Wand, or Rod to cast a Hexagram spell.

The spell remains ready until the end of this Scene (5 minutes) or until used.

Thunder Hexagram Magic (Magic, Changes, Thunder, Hexagram)



Requires

- Oratory
- Changes Magic Trappings
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese

You may cast Thunder Hexagram Spells

You are able to cast the following Thunder Hexagram spells:

- 點 Chase the Wind and Clutch at Shadows

- 點 Entice the Foes to Leave the Mountain Lair
- 點 Force of a Thunderbolt
- 點 Sound in the East, Strike in the West

To cast these spells, you must ready *two* spells, one in each hand. You may also combine a spell from a Wand and an off-hand.

X (Respite)

Interrupt: “equip Thunder Magic spell into your talisman”

Even if it's not your turn, you may instantly equip a magic spell that has both the “Thunder” and “Magic” descriptors. The spell is instantly ready.

The Thunder spell is equipped into your Talisman. You may use the spell normally, or you may combine it with a spell in your hand, Wand, or Rod to cast a Hexagram spell.

The spell remains ready until the end of this Scene (5 minutes) or until used.

Tàoiist Magic

The founder of Tàoiist Magic was Li-Ehr-tan, a mythical figure during the time of the First Sage King, Jang Ren-biao. He was the grand recorder and a close friend of the First Prime Minister, Huli Rui-ning. Legend has it that Li-Ehr-tan was enlightened as he sat at the First Prime Minister's Garden of the World and read the draft of the Dao De Jing. In front of him was a miniature landscape of Zhōngguo. As he read chapter eight, small streams inundated the landscape; at chapter nine, metal and precious stones dotted it; at chapter twenty-one, the miniature landscape shook; at chapter twenty-two, miniature bonsai blossomed and covered the entire landscape; and at chapter twenty six, the landscape burst into flame. Shocked, he turned around and saw the First Prime Minister, who was smiling at him. Huli Rui-ning explained to Li Erh-tan that he had understood the Tao. Furthermore, the First Prime Minister wrote a letter of introduction and recommended that he join the Tai Ping School of Heavenly Peace. Since then, *Dao Shih* have been considered Masters of the Five Forces of Nature.

Tàoiist Magic is separated into five paths each located at the cardinal points of its element (Earth in the Center, Water in the North, Wood in the South, Fire in the East, and Metal in the West). The reason behind this is that after the Great Flood was subdued, the surviving Masters decided that it was best to split their schools and send them to the far corners of Zhōngguo, each focused solely upon one aspect of Tàoiist Magic, to lessen the chances of another catastrophe. Initially, the Masters were committed to gathering once in a while to share knowledge and companionship. However, as each succeeding master came and went, the links among them gradually disintegrated. Despite the lost connection, in the recital of rules and regulations of every Tàoiist Apprentice is the Promise to extend Knowledge and Hospitality to the People of the Earth.

Tàoiist Magic is the most violent of magic, with most of its spells using the elements of Earth, Fire, Metal, Water, and Wood to attack foes.



Tàost Apprentice spells as Magic Weapons

To use these spells, you must first exhaust the gift of *Tàost Apprentice*, then use a Ready action to put the spell into your hand, your magic Rod, or your magic Wand. To use the spell, declare an “Attack” action -- once used, the spell is gone and must be re-readied.

Spell	Equip	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
Clod of Earth	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium	Counter Water Body, Speed, Digging	Damage +1 Critical	Magic, Tàost, Earth
Spark of Fire	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium	Counter Metal Speed, Will, Presence	Damage +0 Critical, On Fire	Magic, Tàost, Fire
Sliver of Metal	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium	Counter Wood Body, Mind, Craft	Damage +0 Critical, Penetrating	Magic, Tàost, Metal
Splinter of Wood	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium	Counter Earth Mind, Will, Endurance	Damage +3 Critical, Weak	Magic, Tàost, Wood
Spray of Water	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium	Counter Fire Speed, Mind, Swimming	Damage +0 Critical, Push 1	Magic, Tàost, Water

While Taoist Magic can be used to manipulate the elements, these five spells call forth a magically-charged, volatile piece that you can direct at a foe to cause harm ... or combine into Hexagrams, if you are properly trained.

Tàost Magic Trappings (Plot, Trappings)



Belongings

You begin the game with:

- 點 one Mo Kun (鄭錕) Wand, a small stick made with drawn wire
- 點 one Tin Rod (the Xīzhàng, 錫杖), a metal staff with a ring on one end, that holds five more rings that jangle noisily
- 點 one Talisman: the Taijitu (数珠), a circle divided in half with contrasting fields.
- 點 One robe of the following types:
 - Huáng (黃), yellow for Earth Magic
 - Hóng (紅), red for Fire Magic
 - Bái (白), white for Metal Magic
 - Lán (藍), blue for Water Magic
 - Qian (芊), green for Wood Magic
 - Zī (縑), black for all Tàost Magic

X (Special)

If you are parted from your items, ask the Game Host for a plot twist to return or to replace them. Once exhausted, you cannot recover this Gift until the next game session.

Tàost Apprentice (Battle, Magic, Apprentice, Tàost)



Requires

Tàost Magic Trappings
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese

X (Battle)

Action “ready Tàost weapon”

Exhaust this Gift, then use the ready action to draw forth a Tàost spell as a Magic weapon. The spell remains in your hand, your rod, or your wand until you cast it forth (with the Attack action), until you drop it (as a free action), or until the end of the Scene (five minutes).

Tàost weapons are Magic Attacks. Your Gift allows you to ready the following magical weapons:

- 點 Clod of Earth
- 點 Spark of Fire
- 點 Spray of Water
- 點 Sliver of Metal
- 點 Splinter of Wood

X (Battle)

New stunt “minor magic effect”

As a stunt, you may perform a minor magical effect Near you (that is, within 4 paces). Minor effects have no real combat usage, but they can impress people around you. You can move a handful of earth, or spark a candle to life, call forth a drink of water, bend a minor amount of metal, sprout a small plant, etc.

Your control over matter allows you to manipulate things up to 4 paces away with no penalty for lack of tools. As a general rule, you will have to use Craft skill to repair things or to manipulate materials. You could also use this stunt to grant an assist bonus to someone’s Craft, Digging, Endurance, Presence, or Swimming dice.



IMMORTAL MAGIC

Secrets of All Tàoiſt Magic (Magic, Skill)



Requires

Tàoiſt Magic Trappings
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese

Add +1 Mark to Dodge

Add one Mark to your Dodge skill. If you retrain this Gift, you also lose the extra Mark.

Trigger: Wearing a ZT Robe

Extra action “refresh Tàoiſt Apprentice gift”

Are you wearing a ZT Robe? You may claim an extra action on your turn – a *refresh* action, but only to refresh the gift of Tàoiſt Apprentice.

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn” still applies. So you can’t take two refresh actions on the same turn, no matter how many extra actions you get.

Secrets of Earth Tàoiſt Magic (Magic, Skill)



Requires

Tàoiſt Magic Trappings
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese

Add +1 Mark to Digging

Add one Mark to your Digging skill. If you retrain this Gift, you also lose the extra Mark.

Trigger: Wearing a Huáng Robe

Extra action “refresh Tàoiſt Apprentice gift”

Are you wearing a Huáng Robe? Then you may claim an extra action on your turn – a *refresh* action, but only to refresh the gift of Tàoiſt Apprentice.

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn” still applies. So you can’t take two refresh actions on the same turn, no matter how many extra actions you get.

Secrets of Fire Tàoiſt Magic (Magic, Skill)



Requires

Tàoiſt Magic Trappings
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese

Add +1 Mark to Presence

Add one Mark to your Presence skill. If you retrain this Gift, you also lose the extra Mark.

Trigger: Wearing a Hóng Robe

Extra action “refresh Tàoiſt Apprentice gift”

Are you wearing a Hóng Robe? Then you may claim an extra action on your turn – a *refresh* action, but only to refresh the gift of Tàoiſt Apprentice.

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn” still applies. So you can’t take two refresh actions on the same turn, no matter how many extra actions you get.

Secrets of Metal Tàoiſt Magic (Magic, Skill)



Requires

Tàoiſt Magic Trappings
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese

Add +1 Mark to Craft

Add one Mark to your Craft skill. If you retrain this Gift, you also lose the extra Mark.

Trigger: Wearing a Bái Robe

Extra action “refresh Tàoiſt Apprentice gift”

Are you wearing a Bái Robe? Then you may claim an extra action on your turn – a *refresh* action, but only to refresh the gift of Tàoiſt Apprentice.

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn” still applies. So you can’t take two refresh actions on the same turn, no matter how many extra actions you get.

Secrets of Water Tàoiſt Magic (Magic, Skill)



Requires

Tàoiſt Magic Trappings
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese

Add +1 Mark to Swimming

Add one Mark to your Swimming skill. If you retrain this Gift, you also lose the extra Mark.

Trigger: Wearing a Lán Robe

Extra action “refresh Tàoiſt Apprentice gift”

Are you wearing a Lán Robe? Then you may claim an extra action on your turn – a *refresh* action, but only to refresh the gift of Tàoiſt Apprentice.

IMMORTAL MAGIC

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn” still applies. So you can’t take two refresh actions on the same turn, no matter how many extra actions you get.

Secrets of Wood Tàoiist Magic (Magic, Skill)



Requires

Tàoiist Magic Trappings
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese

Add +1 Mark to Endurance

Add one Mark to your Endurance skill. If you retrain this Gift, you also lose the extra Mark.

Trigger: Wearing a Huáng Robe

Extra action “refresh Tàoiist Apprentice gift”

Are you wearing a Huáng Robe? Then you may claim an extra action on your turn – a *refresh* action, but only to refresh the gift of Tàoiist Apprentice.

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn” still applies. So you can’t take two refresh actions on the same turn, no matter how many extra actions you get.

Tàoiist Hexagrams

To cast a Hexagram spell, you must not only have an appropriate Hexagram gift, but you must have *two* spells ready – usually one in each hand, sometimes one hand and one wand. As an attack action, combine both spells together and go!

These Two Spells	Combine into Hexagram	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
One Wood spell and one Water spell	Bursting of the Dam	Medium	Explosion: Reach or Near Mind, Will, Endurance, Swimming vs. defense	Damage flat 4 Weak, Push 2	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoiist, Wood, Water, Loud
One Metal spell and one Wood spell	Cacophony of Instruments	Medium	Explosion: Reach or Near Body, Mind, Will, Craft, Endurance vs. defense	Damage flat 3 Weak Penetrating, Confused	Magic, Hexagram, Metal, Wood, Loud
Any two Fire spells	Cascade of Fire	Medium Counter Metal	Speed, Will, Presence, Supernatural vs. defense	Damage +1, Penetrating, On Fire Sweep Medium	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoiist, Fire, Loud
any two Wood spells	Cedar Mattock	Medium Counter Earth	Mind, Will, Endurance, Supernatural vs. defense	Damage +3 Weak, Push 2 Sweep Medium	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoiist, Wood, Loud
any two Metal spells	Cleaver of the Gods	Medium Counter Wood	Body, Mind, Craft, Supernatural vs. defense	Damage +3 Sweep Medium	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoiist, Metal, Loud
One Earth spell and one Water spell	Dodge a Pit Only to Fall in a Well	Medium	Explosion: Reach Body, Speed, Mind, Will, Digging, Swimming vs. defense	Damage flat 5 Weak, Knockdown	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoiist, Earth, Water, Loud
One Fire spell and one Water spell	Fight Inferno with a Cup of Water	Medium	Explosion: Reach or Near Speed, Mind, Will, Presence, Swimming vs. defense	Damage flat 4 Weak, On Fire	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoiist, Fire, Water, Loud
One Earth spell and one Wood spell	Leave Not Even a Blade of Grass	Medium	Explosion: Reach Body, Speed, Mind, Will, Digging, Endurance vs. defense	Damage flat 3, Knockdown	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoiist, Earth, Wood, Loud
any two Earth spells	Momentum of an Avalanche	Medium Counter Water	Body, Speed, Digging, Supernatural vs. defense	Damage +2, Knockdown Sweep Medium	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoiist, Earth, Loud
One Fire spell and one Wood spell	More Tinder Does Not Put Out the Fire	Medium	Explosion: Reach or Near Speed, Mind, Will, Endurance, Presence vs. defense	Damage flat 3, On Fire	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoiist, Fire, Wood, Loud
One Earth spell and one Metal spell	A Night in the Graveyard of Swords	Medium	Explosion: Reach or Near Body, Speed, Mind, Craft, Digging vs. defense	Damage flat 2 Penetrating, Afraid	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoiist, Earth, Metal, Loud

IMMORTAL MAGIC

These Two Spells	Combine into Hexagram	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
One Fire spell and One Metal spell	Scald with Irons from the Forge	Medium	Explosion: Reach Body, Speed, Mind, Will, Craft, Presence vs. defense	Damage flat 2 Penetrating, On Fire	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoist, Fire, Metal, Loud
one Earth spell and one Fire spell	Stir Up the Flames and Get Burnt	Medium	Explosion: Reach or Near Body, Speed, Will, Digging, Presence vs. defense	Damage flat 3, On Fire	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoist, Earth, Fire, Loud
One Metal spell and one Water spell	Suffer the Rain and Rust Away	Medium	Explosion: Reach or Near Body, Mind, Will, Craft, Swimming vs. defense	Damage flat 3 Weak Penetrating, Slowed	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoist, Metal, Water, Loud
any two Water spells	Violent Aegir	Medium Counter Fire	Mind, Will, Supernatural, Swimming vs. defense	Damage flat 4, Push 1 pace per success Sweep Medium	Magic, Hexagram, Tàoist, Water, Loud

The **Bursting of the Dam** explodes as wooden debris and rushing water, very effective against weaker foes. The **Cacophony of Instruments** resounds as horrible noise that rattles the bones. A very popular spell, **Cascade of Fire** is a red flame that jets forth from the caster, striking multiple foes. The **Cedar Mattock** is a giant version of the entrenching hammer, whose handle stretches up to thirty-six paces. The **Cleaver of the Gods** is a frightening large blade with no hit; the caster gestures, the blade swings. Characters affected by **Dodge a Pit Only to Fall in a Well** rise up in the air, then slam down into a shallow pool that splashes and dissipates. For the spell **Fight Inferno with a Cup of Water**, the caster flicks a few droplets of water ... and those droplets explode with violent fire. When a wizard calls forth **Leave Not Even a Blade of Grass**, a giant scythe appears, then reaps down combatants like so many weeds. **Momentum of an Avalanche** creates dust, boulders, and debris that sweep through the area, harming those who fail to dodge. When calling forth **More Tinder Does Not Put Out the Fire**, the caster flings tiny slivers of wood into the air ... those that hit their mark explode with burning ferocity. **A Night in the Graveyard of Swords** causes shimmering blades to fade into existence, which then dart about madly and then disappear as quickly as they came. To use **Scald with Irons from the Forge** is to call forth floating, glowing branding irons that sweep through the battlefield. **Stir Up the Flames and Get Burnt** causes the ground to glow with hot coals, a moment before goutts of fire spring up and strike each foe in turn. To **Suffer the Rain and Rust Away** is to endure a freezing torrential rain. Those who live on the northern coasts have seen the **Violent Aegir**, when waves break on the stony coast; this spell causes the same terrible force of water to rush forth from the caster's hand.

Yes, if you are cross-trained in Calabrese Elementalism and Tàoist Magic, you can make Hexagrams from any spell of the same element. For example, you could combine "Move Earth" and "Ignite Fire" to make "Stir Up The Flames And Get Burnt" ... if you could somehow get all the gifts you need.

Earth Hexagram Magic (Magic, Tàoist, Earth, Hexagram)



Requires

Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Secrets of Earth Tàoist Magic
Tàoist Magic Trappings

You may cast Earth Hexagram Spells

You are able to cast the following Earth Hexagram spells:

- 點 Dodge a Pit Only to Fall in a Well
- 點 Leave Not Even a Blade of Grass
- 點 Momentum of an Avalanche
- 點 A Night in the Graveyard of Swords
- 點 Stir Up the Flames and Get Burnt

To cast these spells, you must ready *two* spells, one in each hand. You may also combine a spell from a Wand and an off-hand.

X (Respite)

Interrupt: "equip Earth Magic spell into your talisman"

Even if it's not your turn, you may instantly equip a magic spell that has both the "Earth" and "Magic" descriptors. The spell is instantly ready.

The Earth spell is equipped into your Talisman. You may use the spell normally, or you may combine it with a spell in your hand, Wand, or Rod to cast a Hexagram spell.

Fire Hexagram Magic (Magic, Tàoist, Fire, Hexagram)



Requires

Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Secrets of Fire Tàoist Magic
Tàoist Magic Trappings

IMMORTAL MAGIC

You may cast Fire Hexagram Spells

You are able to cast the following Fire Hexagram spells:

- 點 Cascade of Fire
- 點 Fight Inferno with a Cup of Water
- 點 More Tinder Does Not Put Out the Fire
- 點 Scald with Irons from the Forge
- 點 Stir Up the Flames and Get Burnt

To cast these spells, you must ready *two* spells, one in each hand. You may also combine a spell from a Wand and an off-hand.

X (Respite)

Interrupt: “equip Fire Magic spell into your talisman”

Even if it's not your turn, you may instantly equip a magic spell that has both the “Fire” and “Magic” descriptors. The spell is instantly ready.

The Fire spell is equipped into your Talisman. You may use the spell normally, or you may combine it with a spell in your hand, Wand, or Rod to cast a Hexagram spell.

Metal Hexagram Magic (Magic, Tàist, Metal, Hexagram)



Requires

- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese
- Secrets of Metal Tàist Magic
- Tàist Magic Trappings

You may cast Metal Hexagram Spells

You are able to cast the following Metal Hexagram spells:

- 點 Cacophony of Instruments
- 點 Cleaver of the Gods
- 點 A Night in the Graveyard of Swords
- 點 Scald with Irons from the Forge
- 點 Suffer the Rain and Rust Away

To cast these spells, you must ready *two* spells, one in each hand. You may also combine a spell from a Wand and an off-hand.

X (Respite)

Interrupt: “equip Metal Magic spell into your talisman”

Even if it's not your turn, you may instantly equip a magic spell that has both the “Metal” and “Magic” descriptors. The spell is instantly ready.



The Metal spell is equipped into your Talisman. You may use the spell normally, or you may combine it with a spell in your hand, Wand, or Rod to cast a Hexagram spell.

Water Hexagram Magic (Magic, Tàist, Water, Hexagram)



Requires

- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese
- Secrets of Water Tàist Magic
- Tàist Magic Trappings

You may cast Water Hexagram Spells

You are able to cast the following Water Hexagram spells:

- 點 Bursting of the Dam
- 點 Dodge a Pit Only to Fall in a Well
- 點 Fight Inferno with a Cup of Water
- 點 Suffer the Rain and Rust Away
- 點 Violent Aegir

To cast these spells, you must ready *two* spells, one in each hand. You may also combine a spell from a Wand and an off-hand.

X (Respite)

Interrupt: “equip Water Magic spell into your talisman”

Even if it's not your turn, you may instantly equip a magic spell that has both the “Water” and “Magic” descriptors. The spell is instantly ready.

The Water spell is equipped into your Talisman. You may use the spell normally, or you may combine it with a spell in your hand, Wand, or Rod to cast a Hexagram spell.

Wood Hexagram Magic (Magic, Tàist, Wood, Hexagram)



Requires

- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese
- Secrets of Wood Tàist Magic
- Tàist Magic Trappings

You may cast Wood Hexagram Spells

You are able to cast the following Wood Hexagram spells:

- 點 Bursting of the Dam
- 點 Cacophony of Instruments
- 點 Cedar Mattock
- 點 Leave Not Even a Blade of Grass
- 點 More Tinder Does Not Put Out the Fire



To cast these spells, you must ready *two* spells, one in each hand. You may also combine a spell from a Wand and an off-hand.

X (Respite)

Interrupt: “equip Wood Magic spell into your talisman”

Even if it's not your turn, you may instantly equip a magic spell that has both the “Wood” and “Magic” descriptors. The spell is instantly ready.

The Wood spell is equipped into your Talisman. You may use the spell normally, or you may combine it with a spell in your hand, Wand, or Rod to cast a Hexagram spell.

Purity Magic

Of all the magic of Zhōngguo, none is more respected than Purity Magic. Masters of Purity Magic sometimes jocularly dismiss Tàoiist Magic and Changes Magic as simplifications of “true magic.” Before the nation known today as Zhōngguo was even a concept, the land was filled with numerous tribes, whose shamans communed with ancestral spirits. They allowed the supernatural forces to enter their bodies to speak through them. When the spirits departed, they left part of their wisdom behind, and the secrets they told were verbally passed down from one generation to the next.

These secrets were gathered and written as part of The Book of Vanishing Heavenly Stem. However, as various authors copied the book, bits of knowledge were gradually discarded, as they were viewed as being nonsensical, through the ignorance of the copiers. Fortunately, descendants of the original shamans were able to find one original edition of the Book. They brought it with them to the Tai Ping School of Heavenly Peace. There, they remained as the third branch of the Mystery College of Tai Ping School of Heavenly Peace. Prior to the Great Flood, masters of Purity Magic began to disperse, taking with them their copies of the Book. They, and their secrets, survived the Great Flood with minimal loss.

After the Great Flood, Masters of Purity Magic reached the same conclusion as the Masters of Tàoiist Magic. They were to remain disperse and they set it as the criteria for the final stage of the Being of Spiritual Purity that the potential candidates for teaching would have to travel throughout Zhōngguo to pay homage to no less than seven other Masters of Being of Spiritual Purity. Along the way, they have to render aid to no less than eight people in need.

Purity Magic is the most gentle and subtle of magic. The spells are weak on offense, and there are no Hexagrams.





The Way of Purity spells as Magic Weapons

To use these spells, you must first exhaust the gift of *The Way of Purity*, then use a Ready action to put the spell into your hand, your magic Rod, or your magic Wand. To use the spell, declare an “Attack” action -- once used, the spell is gone and must be re-readied.

Spell	Equip	Range	Attack Dice	Effect	Descriptors
Call Down the Lightning	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium	Speed, Mind, Weather Sense vs. 3 Target's Speed, Dodge vs. 3	Damage +0 Penetrating	Magic, Purity, Proscribed, Indirect
Display of Propriety	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium	Group of targets Mind, Will, Inquiry vs. 3 Group of targets Mind, Will, Deceit vs. 3	<i>Unreal or Unholy</i> <i>Targets Only:</i> Reeling, Damage +0 Slaying, Penetrating Other targets: Reeling	Magic, Changes, Heaven
Righteous Arrow	Rod, Wand or Off-Hand	Medium	Mind, Will, Presence vs. 3 Target's Speed, Dodge vs. 3	Damage +1	Magic, Purity, Holy

Call Down the Lightning brings a bolt of lightning down from the sky. It will be blocked by rooftops if the target is inside. By bowing the head and looking sincere, the **Display of Propriety** humbles those who would play false. The most showy of the spells is the **Righteous Arrow**, where a magic arrow made of peach wood appears in the air and flies towards the target, guided by mystic force.

Purity Magic Trappings (Plot, Trappings)



Belongings

You begin the game with:

- 點 one Xuanduan (玄端) Robe
- 點 one Ruyi (如意) Wand, a small scepter with one round end
- 點 one Scholar's Rod (the Wenren Zhang, 文人杖), an ornate staff with symbols of authority
- 點 one Talisman: the Abacus (Juzu, 算盤), a counting tray with beads on spokes

X (Special)

If you are parted from your items, ask the Game Host for a plot twist to return or to replace them.

Once exhausted, you cannot recover this Gift until the next game session.

Purity Apprentice (Battle, Magic, Apprentice, Changes)



Requires

- Purity Magic Trappings
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese

X (Battle)

Action “ready Purity weapon”

Exhaust this Gift, then use the ready action to draw forth a Purity spell as a Magic weapon. The spell remains in your hand, your rod, or your wand until you cast it

forth (with the Attack action), until you drop it (as a free action), or until the end of the Scene (five minutes).

Purity weapons are Magic Attacks. Your Gift allows you to ready the following magical weapons:

- 點 Call Down the Lightning
- 點 Display of Propriety
- 點 Righteous Arrow

Action “rally a target with improved boons”

When you rally a target, you may claim the following boons.

- 點 Reduce Dying to Injured and Unconscious
- 點 Remove On Fire
- 點 Remove Hurt

Secrets of Purity Magic (Magic, Skill)



Requires

- Language: Zhonggese
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Purity Magic Trappings

Add +1 Mark to Leadership

Add one Mark to your Leadership skill. If you retrain this Gift, you also lose the extra Mark.

Trigger: Wearing a Xuanduan Robe

Extra action “refresh The Way of Purity gift”

Are you wearing a Xuanduan Robe? Then you may claim an extra action on your turn – a *refresh* action, but only to refresh the gift of The Way of Purity.



IMMORTAL MAGIC

The standard rule of “never the same action twice in the same turn” still applies. So you can’t take two

refresh actions on the same turn, no matter how many extra actions you get.

Wiles of the Immortals

Not all wizards toss their magic about like stones into a river. The Wiles of the Immortals are Magical Gifts are spells that don’t need to be readied, but they can only be used occasionally. Many spells are reserved for the government, especially the ones that control the weather; casting spells with the *Proscribed* descriptor can get you in trouble with the law.

Learning these Gifts requires basic education (Literacy and Language) and appropriate connections with a teacher or a library (Insider with the Shén Xiàn). Earning these Gifts can be excellent Goals for aspiring wizards.

Authority (Respite, Magic, Immortal)



This spell makes another seem more commanding, by giving timbre to their voice, precision to their gestures, and a greater countenance of dignity.

Requires

Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Oratory

X (Respite)

Attack: Crowd’s Mind, Will, Career vs. 6

Exhaust this Gift, then declare an attack using the *Authority* spell. (You don’t have to ready this beforehand, just attack!)

Declare a Crowd of foes. All must test their Mind, Will & Career vs. 6. Those who tie or better are unaffected. Those who fail become *Afraid*, suddenly feeling alone and lost, their sense of camaraderie gone ... and the lowest roller becomes *Terrified*.



Basket (Special, Magic, Immortal)



Requires

Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Knack for Searching

X (Special)

Stunt “create basket”

You snap your fingers, and a wicker basket appears, floating in space to be slightly above the height of your waist.

The basket can hold anything that would fit in a 1-pace wide basket, and it can hold up to your maximized Mind dice, in stone. (For example, if your Mind die is d8, then the basket can hold up to 8 stone in weight.)

You may add items to the basket by using a “put away” action, and you may take items out of the basket by using a “ready action”, whenever the basket is Close enough for you to reach it. You can also use a “ready” action to send the basket floating to any point within Short Range (12m) of you.

Friendly characters Close to the basket can retrieve an item by using a “ready” action. Unfriendly characters can attack the basket – any Damage of 4 or more will destroy the basket.

The basket disappears if it is ever more than Short Range away from you, if the basket is destroyed, or if you refresh this Gift (as a Refresh action). When the basket disappears, all its contents fall to the ground.

IMMORTAL MAGIC

Better to Bend as a Reed than to Break as a Tree (Respite, Magic, Immortal)



You make a sweeping motion with your hand, and a magic wind springs up, violently buffeting your Foes.

Requires

Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Knack for Weather Sense

X (Respite)

Attack: Crowd's Speed & Dodge vs. 6

Exhaust this Gift, then declare an attack using the "Better to Bend as a Reed than to Break as a Tree" spell. (You don't have to ready this before-hand, just attack!)

Declare a Crowd of foes. All must test their Speed & Dodge vs. 6. They may claim a bonus d12 if they have the Gift of Contortionist.

Those who tie or better are unaffected. Those who fail become *Reeling and Hurt* ... and the lowest roller becomes *Reeling, Hurt*, and suffers Damage flat 3 Penetrating. (Don't forget the +1 from being Hurt!)

Cloud Vaulting (Chapter, Magic, Immortal, Proscribed)



The caster gestures their arms in a circle, and then leaps into the air, disappearing into the clouds above. This spell will not work if there are no clouds in the sky. (While you may be able to use another spell to change the weather, know that weather-manipulation can be a criminal offense.)

Requires

Clear Headed
Fast Jumper
Hiking
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Must not be *Unholy*

X (Chapter)

Stunt "Cloud-Vaulting"

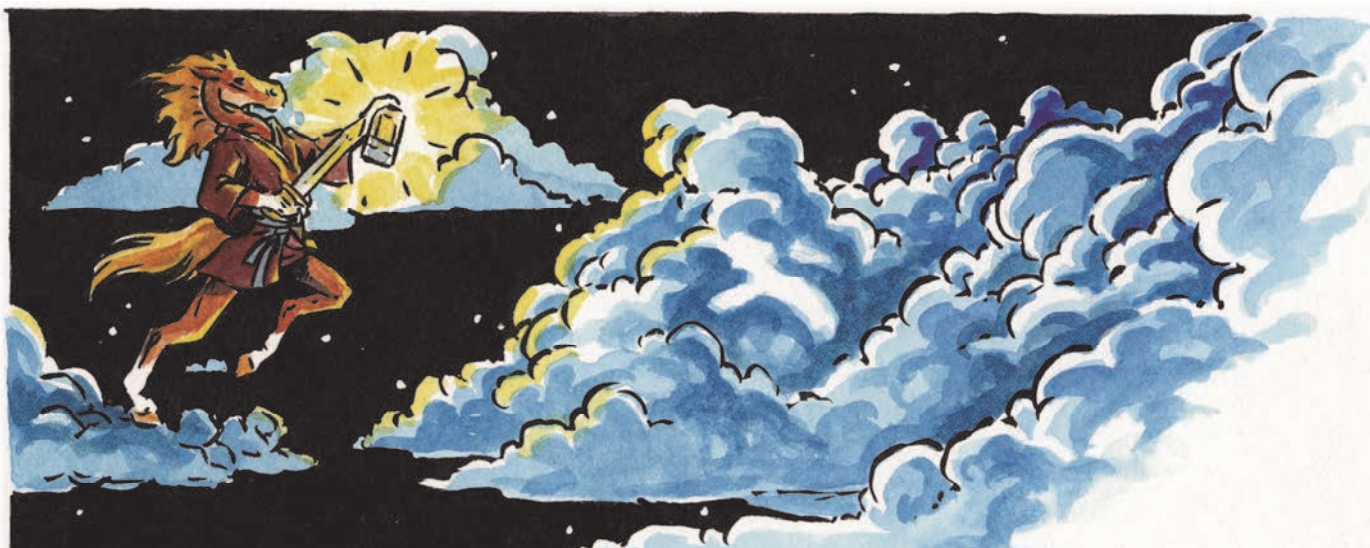
Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the spell. (You don't have to ready this spell before-hand!).

You instantly soar into the air, hundreds of meters up, into the clouds. You then may leap from cloud to cloud, traveling several leagues with each jump.

Roll your Body, Speed, Mind, Will, Jumping and Weather Sense Dice vs. 2d6. (If you are Burdened, each of your dice is limited to d8 in size). Each success takes you 1 league of distance.

If a leap takes you into an area where there are no clouds, you will land safely back to earth.

Use of this spell within city limits is prohibited by law.



IMMORTAL MAGIC

Cloud Walking (Magic, Immortal, Proscribed)



You can walk in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Requires

Clear Headed
Cloud Vaulting
Fast Jumper
Geography
Hiking
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Piety
Must not be *Unholy*

Walk on clouds

You can walk on the clouds of heaven as if they were fair terrain. Unless you jump off a mountain that towers above the clouds, you will have to vault into the sky to get there.

Commanding Greatness (Chapter, Magic, Immortal, Proscribed)



As part of the casting of this spell, you raise two fingers high and command others to halt in their tracks. Those who are affected feel their willpower drain away.

Requires

Diplomacy
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic

X (Chapter)

Attack: Mind, Will, Inquiry vs. Group's Mind, Will, Deceit, Inquiry

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the "Commanding Greatness" spell. (You don't have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Declare a Group of up to 12 targets. Roll your Mind, Will, and Inquiry vs. the targets' Mind, Will, Deceit, and Inquiry. The lowest-rolling failure becomes *Mesmerized*. The Game Host secretly notes how many successes were scored against them. These successes mark the *degree of Mesmerism*.

A Mesmerized character is in a hypnagogic daze, listening to what anyone says and replying in a monotone.

A Mesmerized character may only take one action per turn, and only if someone orders them to do it (by using a Rally action).

A Mesmerized character consciously remembers nothing of what happens during this status ... but if the character is Mesmerized again, anyone may ask what happened during their last status, and they will reply truthfully, as they remember subconsciously.

Anyone may use skills on a Mesmerized target to influence them. (For example, they may use Inquiry to ask questions, or Negotiation to get favors, or Deceit to plant false memories). A Mesmerized target is a hypnotized, suggestible state. Each time a skill fails to influence the target, reduce the Mesmerism by one degree. Once the Mesmerism is reduced to zero, the character becomes *Confused*, instead – they're no longer hypnotized, they're awake but disoriented. However, the character will not be conscious of anything that happened while they were Mesmerized.

A Mesmerized character may also be told to forget everything they heard, or to do something later. Treat Mesmerism as a super-hypnotism – the character can be influenced, but not made suicidal. Also, every 5 minutes, reduce the Mesmerism by one degree, until it burns down to Confusion, as above.

Controlling someone else's mind in this manner is called *ensorcelling*. Such magic is reserved for the Kingdom of Heaven and is proscribed by law.

Considerable Earthquake (Chapter, Magic, Immortal, Proscribed)



You cast this spell against a landscape, causing the earth to tremble. Casting such a spell without imperial permission in a populated landscape could be punishable by death!

Requires

Geography
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Knack with Digging
Language: Zhonggese
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Mystic: Immortal Magic

X (Special)

Focus and sustain earthquake

Exhaust this Gift, declare you will take a Focus turn, then declare you will use the "Considerable Earthquake" spell. (You don't have to ready this spell before-hand!)

As long as you have Focus, the earth quakes ... little at first, but sometimes in terrible, rippling waves. Everyone but yourself suffers bad footing. Travel over-land is halved.

In combat situations, during the end-of-round maintenance phase, each combatant standing on quaking earth must roll their Speed & Weather Sense dice (if any). If they *botch*, they are sent Reeling.

IMMORTAL MAGIC

If you maintain this spell for more than five minutes, buildings will start to collapse, avalanches will fall down hillsides, and many structures will be destroyed. The Game Host may call for rolls of your Mind, Digging, and Weather Sense dice vs. 3. The more successes you score, the more havoc you can wreak.

Controlling the Rain (Respite, Magic, Immortal, Proscribed)



When casting this spell, you raise your arms to the sky and then let them fall. Immediately, clouds begin to gather in the sky above you.

Requires

Clear-Headed
Geography
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Knack with Weather Sense

X (Respite)

Stunt “Control Rain”

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the “Controlling the Rain” spell. (You don’t have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Declare a landscape, then roll your Mind, Swimming, and Weather Sense dice vs. 3. (You may claim a bonus d12 if you have Local Knowledge of this landscape.)

You may change the rain, from a clear sky to a torrential rainstorm. Changes that normally take days can be manifested in an hour (with one success), in minutes (with two successes) or in rounds (with three successes).

Weather control spells are proscribed by Zhonggese law.

Controlling the Rivers (Respite, Magic, Immortal, Proscribed)



As part of the casting of this spell, you raise two fingers high and command others to halt in their tracks. Those who are affected feel their willpower drain away.

Requires

Fast Swimmer
Geography
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Knack with Weather Sense

X (Respite)

Stunt “Control Rivers”

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the “Controlling the Rivers” spell. (You don’t have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Declare a landscape, then roll your Mind, Swimming, and Weather Sense dice. (You may claim a bonus d12 if you have Local Knowledge of this landscape.) Changes that normally take days can be manifested in an hour (with one success), in minutes (with two successes) or in rounds (with three successes).

Weather control spells are proscribed by Zhonggese law.

Conversation with the Earth (Respite, Magic, Immortal)



You can ask the grass, plants, and other Flora for information about what it may have seen or have experienced. You must ask your questions verbally, and the plants respond with a disembodied voice that others can hear. (While others can ask questions, the plants do not respond to them.)

Requires

Cosmopolitan
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Knack with Inquiry

X (Respite)

Stunt “talk to the earth”

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the “Conversation with the Earth” spell. (You don’t have to ready this spell before-hand!)

IMMORTAL MAGIC

Roll your Mind, Digging, and Inquiry vs. 3. The more successes you score, the more rocks you can talk to.

點 **One success:** You may converse with jade, jadeite, or nephrite, the most heavenly of precious stones.

點 **Two successes:** As above, but you can also talk to precious stones.

點 **Three successes:** As above, but you can also talk to worked stone, such as a statue or a castle wall.

點 **Four successes:** As above, but you can also talk to unworked stone.

點 **Five successes:** As above, but you can also talk to the most desolate dust or desert.

The plants are relatively pleasant conversation, and they can comment on things that they've witnessed, to the best of their ability. After a conversation of about five minutes, the spell ends.

Conversation with the Wood (Respite, Magic, Immortal)



You can ask the grass, plants, and other flora for information about what it may have seen or have experienced. You must ask your questions verbally, and the plants respond with a disembodied voice that others can hear. (While others can ask questions, the plants do not respond to them.)

Requires

Cosmopolitan
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Knack with Inquiry

X (Respite)

Stunt "talk to plants"

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the "Conversation with the Wood" spell. (You don't have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Roll your Mind, Endurance, and Inquiry vs. 3. The more successes you score, the more plants you can talk to.

點 **One success:** You may converse with a peach-wood tree, the most heavenly of trees.

點 **Two successes:** As above, but you can also talk to a hundred-year old tree or a garden worthy-of-heaven.

點 **Three successes:** As above, but you can also talk to young trees or to a tended garden.

點 **Four successes:** As above, but you can also talk to a bushes, undergrowth, or bamboo.

點 **Five successes:** As above, but you can also talk to the most withered of weeds.

The plants are relatively pleasant conversation, and they can comment on things that they've witnessed, to the best of their ability. After a conversation of about five minutes, the spell ends.

Curing Cloud of Moxibustion (Chapter, Magic, Immortal, Healing)



Your target is enveloped in a puff of smoke, similar to that produced by moxa burning.

Requires

Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Medicine
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Knack with Academics

X (Chapter)

Stunt "heal an ally"

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the "Curing Cloud of Moxibustion" spell. (You don't have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Choose one target that's not you, and remove the *Injured* status. Like all stunts, this spell leaves you Reeling.

Dancing Weapon (Respite, Magic, Immortal)



You can use this spell to animate a weapon to attack your foes. To cast this spell, you must draw the sword and throw it into the air. Traditionally, a sword is used, but you can use any weapon you want.

Requires

Clear Headed
Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic

X (Respite)

Stunt "dancing weapon"

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the "Dancing Weapon" spell. You don't have to ready the spell before-hand, but you must have the weapon you will cast it on already ready in your hand. You let go of your ready weapon, and it starts to fight on its own!

Only Melee Weapons may be made into Dancing Weapons. Dancing Weapons are not attended by you, and they can't use any of your gifts or abilities. (So no Mighty Strikes, no storing magic spells, etc.)

The weapon fights with Body d6 and Speed d6. It has a "Dancing Weapon" Career of d12 that adds to Dodge, Melee Combat, and Tactics. The weapon has

IMMORTAL MAGIC

no Mind, Will or Species traits; if a spell or effect requires those effects, it automatically resists.

The weapon floats in the air. A “Reeling” result sends the weapon spinning end-over-end in the air, until it recovers. Treat any strange result, such as Knockdown or Half-Buried, as simple Reeling.

The weapon takes its turn in the battle sequence as a combatant on your side. On its turn, the weapon will first recover from Reeling, and then Guard as a Veteran (bonus d12). If attacked, the weapon will counter if it can, otherwise it will parry or dodge. (Its attack and counter dice are d12, 2d6, and it can claim bonuses from weapon type.) If the weapon takes damage, it has Invulnerability 2 (that is, it soaks 2 points of damage, no rolling needed) but otherwise it has no Soak dice. The weapon ignores Critical, Impaling, Penetrating, and Slaying effects. The weapon also ignores the *Afraid* status ... but it can be Hurt or Injured, and it will have to be repaired later.

The weapon threatens just like any other friendly combatant, and note that it has its own Tactics dice of d12, which it will always use.

The spell ends, and the weapon falls to the floor, lifeless and inanimate, if any of the following conditions are met:

- 點 Five minutes pass, and the scene ends.
- 點 Someone successfully inflicts a Dying result or better on the weapon. (With its 2 points of Invulnerability, then Damage of 6 points will take the weapon out in one hit.)
- 點 You yourself are Overkilled. (Yes, if you’re Dying or Dead, the weapon keeps fighting!)
- 點 You are no longer within Medium Range (36m) of the weapon.

Action “rally a dancing weapon to attack”

To make the Dancing Weapon attack of your own will, you must successfully use the Rally action on the weapon. (Yes, you can Rally your weapon out of Reeling.) The weapon flies through the air up to 12 paces – and this movement need not be in a straight line. It then will Attack a foe that you choose, rolling d12 and 2d6. The target defends normally. The weapon takes no other actions ... so when ordered to attack, it does not Guard.

Trigger: you are hit with an attack

Move dancing weapon 4 paces and attack

If you are hit with an attack, the Dancing Weapon will try to defend you. The Dancing Weapon must not be Reeling or otherwise incapacitated.

After you are hit, the Dancing Weapon immediately moves up to 4 paces closer to the attacker who just hit you. If that puts the weapon in range, it attacks. The target defends normally.

The Dancing Weapon does not automatically attack the combatants who miss you or that you successfully defend against.



Drawing from the Well (Special, Magic, Immortal)



Your target is enveloped in a puff of smoke, similar to that produced by moxa burning.

Requires

- Cosmopolitan
- Insider with the Shén Xiàn
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese
- Mystic: Immortal Magic
- Knack with Leadership

X (Special)

Stunt “drawing from the well”

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the “Drawing from the Well” spell. (You don’t have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Declare a target for this spell. If the target chooses to resist, you must roll your Mind & Will vs. the target’s

IMMORTAL MAGIC

Will & Career dice. Otherwise, you automatically succeed.

Choose one skill that is increased by the target's Career Dice. (This spell will tell you what skills you have to choose from.) You may claim a d8 assist bonus to that skill.

Note that this spell doesn't help with attacks, counters, parries, or dodges, since those actions don't claim assist bonuses!

The bonus ends when you refresh this Gift, with a simple refresh action.

Great Chain of Gathering (Respite, Magic, Immortal)



This spell rewards those who would cooperate in battle. While in the Great Chain of Gathering, each of the targets is joined by a Flickering band of Fire that can be seen only by those who can detect magic. Each target affected becomes a link in the chain.

Requires

Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
True Leader
Troop Leader

X (Respite)

Action “rally with Troop Leader”

Exhaust this Gift, then declare a group: yourself and up to 11 allies. Roll your Will & Leadership; whatever you score is the maximum number of allies who can be affected. If any targets want to resist, they resist with Speed, Will, Deceit, Stealth, and Tactics.

You and your allies are now joined in the *Great Chain of Gathering*. This has the following effects:

- 點 You must stay Near each other (within 4 paces). If any of you move 5 or more paces away, the chain is broken for that person. The other combatants stay in the chain.
- 點 If any one of you is hit with an effect that causes Damage, *all of you are sent Reeling*.
- 點 When resisting Damage, any one combatant rolls *the Body Dice of everyone in the chain*, not just their own Body dice.

The spell ends after five minutes, or if everyone breaks the chain by moving 5 or more paces away from each other.

Improved Cloud Vaulting (Magic, Immortal, Proscribed)



You can cloud-vault over great distances.

Requires

Cloud Vaulting
Fast Jumper
Geography
Hiking
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Must not be *Unholy*

Trigger: the stunt of cloud vaulting

Immediately after a successful Cloud-Vault, declare you will use this Gift, then roll your Academics dice vs. 3. (You may claim a bonus d12 if you have Local Knowledge of the place you landed).

If you succeed, you may refresh your Gift of Cloud Vaulting. If you fail, Cloud-Vaulting stays exhausted.

Judicious Counsel (Chapter, Magic, Immortal)



The target calls forth the spell by calling upon your name for advice.

Requires

History
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Knack with Negotiation

X (Chapter)

Stunt “judicious counsel”

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the spell. (You don't have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Choose a target within Medium Range, and have them listen to your words of immortal wisdom.

If the target does not resist, then Exhaust this Gift. The target of your wisdom is instantly rallied – remove any Reeling or Afraid effects on the target.

Sometime in the future, the target may reflect upon your wisdom. As an interrupt, at any time, the target may choose to become Rallied – remove any Reeling, Afraid, Terrified, Berserk, Enraged, or other mental conditions that would prevent Focus, and then gain Focus.

If the target doesn't use the wisdom by the next Chapter, the meaning of the words have lost impact and the spell ends.

IMMORTAL MAGIC

Largesse of the Great Household (Special, Magic, Immortal, Multiple)



The greatest wizards can call upon great reserves.

Requires

Clear-Headed
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Team Player
True Leader
Mystic: Immortal Magic

X (Chapter)

Trigger: successful Rally

Refresh one of the target's Respite Gift

Did you successfully Rally a target? Declare you will exhaust this Gift. The target may then refresh one of their exhausted Respite Gifts.

(You can't use this Gift to refresh Chapter, Special, or other kinds of Gifts... only Gifts with both the descriptors of "Magic" and "Respite".)

You may have Multiples of this Gift

Each new Gift of "Largesse of the Great Household" gives you one more exhaustion, to use to refresh one more Magic Respite Gift.

Mirror Reflecting the Mystic Pattern (Respite, Magic, Immortal)



You put your thumbs together and hold up your hands as if you were displaying a mirror. Any flat surface, up to thirty-six paces away from you in a direct line, shows a reflection of a mystic pattern. Those who cannot understand the mystery will become trans-fixed.

Requires

Clear-Headed
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Knack with Deceit
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic

X (Respite)

Action "guard and create mystic pattern"

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the "Mirror Reflecting the Mystic Pattern" spell. (You don't have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Declare a wall, a piece of ground, or other flat surface to have the Mystic Pattern on it. This spot must be a circle 1 pace in diameter, it must be unoccupied by any combatants. (It's okay if there's people in between you and the spot, though – see below.)



Roll your Mind, Deceit, and Supernatural Dice.

All foes that can see the pattern must roll their Will, Stealth, and Supernatural Dice to resist. They may claim bonus resistance dice for Range.

All allies that can see the pattern must roll their Will, Stealth, Supernatural, and Tactics dice to resist, with a bonus d8. They may also claim bonus resistance dice for Range.

In addition, any combatant, friend or foe, who is caught within the line of effect from you to the pattern suffers a penalty d12 on their resistance.

Anyone, friend or foe, who ties or better is immune to mystic patterns for the rest of this scene (about 5 minutes). Those who fail are forced to stare at it. This trans-fixation has the following effects:

- 點 They become *Confused*. (They suffer a d8 concealment penalty and can no longer counter-attack.) The Confused status can be removed normally.
- 點 They become *Afraid* of doing anything else but looking at the pattern. (They can no longer Attack, Rally, or Focus.) The Afraid status can be removed normally.
- 點 As long as the pattern remains, they can't voluntarily increase their distance from the pattern. They can move towards it, they can circle around it, but they can't move away from it.

If you stop guarding, then you stop making the pattern, and the combatants may move freely again, but they're still both Afraid and Confused. They will have to remove those conditions, somehow.

Misfortune of the Elements (Respite, Magic, Immortal)



The caster of this spell claps their hands together and draws them apart in a sweeping motion, as if they have clanged two cymbals together, and calls out a curse of misfortune on those the spell is directed against.

Requires

Counter-Tactics
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Knack with Academics

X (Respite)

Stunt "misfortune vs. group"

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the "Misfortune of the Elements" spell. (You don't have to ready this spell before-hand!)



IMMORTAL MAGIC

Declare a Group of up to 12 foes. Roll your Academics and Supernatural Dice. Your foes roll their Species, Dodge, and Supernatural dice. The foes that succeed on this test are out of danger. The foes that tie must Retreat away from you, or be counted as failures.

The failures are in for a terrible surprise. First, they all become Reeling. Next, they must roll:

- 點 All failures must now roll their Body dice. The lowest roller is crushed under a heavy boulder, and is now Hurt and Knocked Down.
- 點 All failures must now roll their Speed dice. The lowest roller becomes pierced by a thousand Metal needles and is now Hurt and Injured.
- 點 All failures must now roll their Mind dice. The lowest roller chokes on drowning water, and is now Hurt and Silenced.
- 點 All failures must now roll their Will dice. The lowest roller becomes On Fire.
- 點 All failures must now roll their Career dice. The lowest roller becomes entangled in wooden thorns, and is now Hurt and Grappled, until they can use an attack of "Break Free" vs. 3.

Phantom Servant (Special, Magic, Immortal, Unreal)



At your command, a phantom servant appears, dressed in the tasteful, understated clothes that befit a high-class servant. The servant's head is constantly bowed, and if anyone examines it closely, they will discover it has no Face. The servant's appearance is blurry and indistinct – people will know that it is not real.

Requires

Administration
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Knack with Academics
Language: Zhonggese
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Mystic: Immortal Magic

X (Special)

Stunt "summon servant"

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the "Phantom Servant". (You don't have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Your Phantom Servant appears in any unoccupied spot Near you (within 4 paces). The Phantom Servant has Body d6, Speed d6, Mind d6, Will d6. It has the Phantom Servant Career Trait which applies to Academics, Craft, and Endurance. It has the Gifts of Coward, Pacifism, and Team Player. It has no face, and thus it has no voice. It is perpetually Afraid and Silenced.

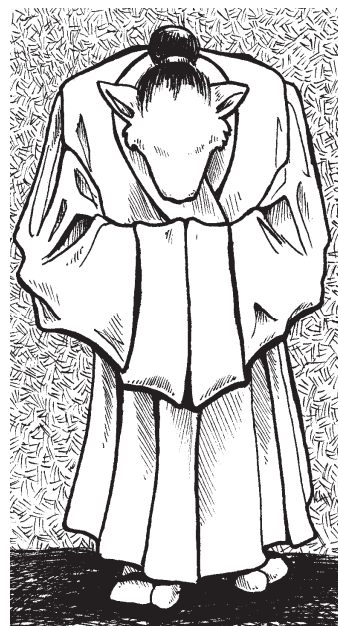
The Phantom Servant is always Afraid, so it can't attack. It will dodge with Speed d6 and 2d12 bonuses from Coward and Pacifism. If the servant suffers a

Damage result, it has no Soak and it disappears in a cloud of pleasant-smelling incense. The Phantom is *Unreal*, and it doesn't eat, drink, breathe; it's immune to anything that only affects real people.

It can carry 2 stone with no burdens, 5 stone with Burden, and 8 stone with Over-Burden. It appears with only its phantom robes on its back, but it will use any equipment that it is given to the best of its ability.

The Phantom Servant requires verbal instruction – it doesn't have any telepathic link to the caster. The Phantom Servant can be ordered to do specific tasks, and it will perform any task up to that it is able to do, up to and including its own destruction. Remember, though, that being Afraid and Silenced, it can't attack, nor can it talk to anyone. It can write, though.

You can't refresh this Gift until the next Chapter and then if you do refresh it (as an action), the servant disappears in a puff of smoke.



Pheasant Cries out in Darkness (Respite, Magic, Immortal)



The caster cups their hands to their mouth and cries out with an eerie bird-like call.

Requires

Clear-Headed
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Knack with Supernatural
Language: Zhonggese
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Mystic: Immortal Magic

X (Respite)

Stunt "cry out in darkness"

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the "Pheasant Cries out in Darkness" spell. (You don't have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Declare a Group of up to 12 foes. Roll your Mind, Will, and Supernatural. The targets roll their Body, Mind, Will, Presence, and Supernatural to resist.

IMMORTAL MAGIC

All targets that fail to resist are sent Reeling and are Silenced. (Silenced targets cannot Rally or cast spells.)

In addition, the lowest roller is also Blinded. (A blinded target's Dash drops to zero, they cannot counter, and their attacks suffer a d12 concealment penalty. Other attackers may claim a concealment bonus of d8 to hit them, as if they were Reeling.)

Pouring into the Well (Chapter, Magic, Immortal, Multiple)



The greatest wizards can call upon great reserves.

Requires

Mind of d8 or better
Will of d8 or better
Clear-Headed
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic

X (Chapter)

Refresh one Magic Respite Gift

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will Refresh any one Magic Gift that is also a Respite Gift.

You can't use *Pouring into the Well* to refresh Chapter, Special, or other kinds of Gifts... only Gifts with both the descriptors of "Magic" and "Respite".

You may have Multiples of this Gift

Each new Gift of "Pouring into the Well" gives you one more exhaustion, to use to refresh one more Magic Respite Gift.

Twice-Fold Magic (Magic, Master)



When you use your ability to put powerful magics into each of both ends of your Magic Rod, it really impresses people when you hold your Rod high above your head and spin it around.

Requires

Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Language: Zhonggese
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Must own a wizard's Rod

Action "Ready a second spell into a rod"

You can ready *two* spells into a magic Rod – one on each end. Readying each spell is a separate action, however, so you will have to spend two separate rounds readying them.

Weight of the Leaf (Respite, Magic, Immortal)



The targets of this spell has their weight magically reduced.

Requires

Clear-Headed
Insider with the Shén Xiàn
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Knack with Jumping

X (Respite)

Stunt "weight of a leaf"

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the "Weight of a Leaf" spell. (You don't have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Declare a Group of up to 12 combatants. Roll your Mind, Will, Jumping, and Supernatural dice. Any targets that choose to resist roll their Speed, Will, Deceit, Endurance, and Supernatural Dice.

All targets that do not resist have their weight reduced to that of a leaf. Their possessions are reduced, too. This has the following magical effects:

They fall at only 4 paces every round. If they land on the ground and can pass a test of Body, Speed, & Jumping vs. 3, they take no damage. Otherwise, they suffer Damage 2 Penetrating.

Any Push effects against them have their results multiplied by 10. In other words, if they are pushed 2 paces, then they're Pushed *twenty* paces.

They can be carried by someone else. Their size didn't change, so anyone carrying someone else is still Burdened, but at least they don't have to worry about weight.

The spell's effect lasts for only one Scene (about 5 minutes.)

Withdrawal from Earthly Perception (Respite, Magic, Immortal)



The caster cups their hands to their mouth and cries out with an eerie bird-like call.

Requires

Low Profile
Insider with the Shén Xiān
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
Mystic: Immortal Magic
Knack with Stealth

X (Respite)

Focus and withdraw from earthly perception

Exhaust this Gift, then declare you will use the “Withdrawal from Earthly Perception” spell. (You don’t have to ready this spell before-hand!)

Declare you will take a *Focus* turn. You disappear from view and become imperceptible. Attempts to locate you or to attack you suffer a d12 concealment penalty. Attacks made from further than Short Range (12m) suffer an extra d12 cover penalty.

Combatants who didn’t see you before you disappeared might not even know you’re there. They

only way they can notice you is to take a *Focus* turn and try to win a contest of Mind, Observation, and Species vs. your Speed, Mind, Stealth, and d12 bonus for concealment.

Each time your turn comes up in the sequence of battle, if you declare you will take a *Focus* turn, you remain imperceptible. When you take a *Focus* turn, you move up to your *Stride*, and take no other action, although you may interrupt combatants at any time.

As soon as you lose *Focus*, the spell ends and other can see you. You will lose *Focus* if you interrupt someone, if you decline to take a *Focus* turn (and instead take an action turn), or if you become *Afraid*, *Confused*, or some other status that prevents *Focus*. (In case it matters, yes, if you take an action turn, you get your three actions, and you become visible right when you take the first action.)

Outside of combat situations, you may try to use this spell to pass without trace. You move *very* slowly – it would take you eight hours to move one league (4.8km). If you can score 1 success by rote, you can sneak past normal people; for 2 successes, you can sneak past vigilant people like trained guards.

Dragon Magic

The *Romance of Chien Tang and her Nine Sons* is a classic of Zhōngguo literature. It tells the story of how the Dragon Prince Liu Yu fell in love with the peasant vixen Chien Tang. Tung Ting, the jealous nephew of the Dragon King, ran off to tell his uncle about the tryst, in hopes that his cousin would be disowned and he himself might ascend to the throne that day. But the Dragon King consulted the omens (in the popular version, he breaks a fishbone into two pieces), and decided to bless the union. In a fit of rage, Tung Ting attacked the Dragon Prince, and then flooded the entire valley with a torrential rain, hoping to kill Chien Tang. Liu Yu took his bride to safety on a high mountain-top, then flew into the sky to engage Tung Ting in mortal combat. Tung Ting snapped Liu Yu’s neck in his mighty jaws. Chien Tang, consumed with grief and rage, found the spiritual energy within herself to transform into a dragon, and she grew to such size as to span the entire valley with her body, claws, and tail. She struck down Tung Ting and ended the rains, albeit too late. She mourned her dead husband, but in due course she gave birth to nine dragon eggs, which hatched into nine young dragons, who became known as the Nine Sons of Chien Tang. In atonement for the tragedy they had brought to the valley, Chien Tang sent each of her sons in a different direction, on a quest to do some great, selfless act.

Most folks have only read abridged copies of the *Romance*. The full text itself, if read properly, describes in detail the numerous spells ascribed to Dragons throughout literature, including magic that would allow oneself to take on transformation into a Dragon! For this reason, the Zhōngguo Empire has made it illegal for someone to own a copy of the *Romance* without written permission, because changing into a different race violates the “natural order of things.” Just making reading the *Romance* a crime, however, does not prevent the curious from seeking the books out...

Dragon Magic is divided into three tiers. The lowest tier is *Nephrite Dragon Magic* – spells that many species will have to learn to resemble dragons. Because the next tier, *Jadeite Dragon*, requires the wizard to have the attributes like a dragon’s, such as teeth, claws, or barbels. (If you already have those, then you have a head start. If you don’t, then you’ll have to learn how to get them!) The final tier, *Jade Dragon*, allows one to call forth the tremendous fury of the dragons of legend.

IMMORTAL MAGIC

Nephrite Dragon Magic

Baxia Crosses the River (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Nephrite)



Requires

- Fast Swimmer
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese
- An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

Re-Roll any Swimming roll

Exhaust this Gift, then re-roll any roll that includes your Swimming dice. The second result stands, even if it's worse.

Bixi Carries the Burden (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Nephrite)



Requires

- Strength
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese
- An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

Negate Burdened or Over-burdened

At the start of your turn, exhaust this Gift. You may negate any Burdened or Over-burdened status on yourself, this round.

For long-distance travel, if all you're doing is carrying stuff, you may by-pass the Encumbrance limit of d8 for your hiking rolls.

Chiwen Gazes Into the Distance Battle, (Magic, Dragon, Nephrite)



Requires

- Clear Headed
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese
- An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

Negate Range Penalties

At the start of your turn, exhaust this Gift. No range penalties apply to any of your rolls for this round.



Haoxian Defends the Castle (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Nephrite)



Requires

- Counter-Tactics
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese
- An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

Trigger: Guarding

Re-roll any defense roll

Are you Guarding? You may exhaust this Gift to re-roll any one counter, parry, or dodge. You must keep the new roll, even if it's worse.

Jiaotu Closes the Door (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Nephrite)



Requires

- Danger Sense
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese
- An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

IMMORTAL MAGIC

X (Battle)

Re-roll any Stealth roll

Exhaust this gift to re-roll any Stealth roll. You must abide by the second roll, even if it's worse.

Pulao Roars at the Annoyances (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Nephrite)



Requires

Bravery
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

Trigger: Scare

You shout, making a Loud noise. Declare a Scare attempt, then Exhaust this gift. You are not sent Reeling from your Stunt, and you may claim a bonus d12. The stunt still ends your turn, however.

Quiniu Appreciates the Music (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Nephrite)



Requires

History
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

Re-roll any Academics roll

Exhaust this gift to re-roll any Academics roll. You must abide by the second roll, even if it's worse.

Suanmi Burns the Incense (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Nephrite)



Requires

Bravery
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

Re-roll any Leadership roll

Exhaust this gift to re-roll any Leadership roll. You must abide by the second roll, even if it's worse.

Yazi Wields the Sword (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Nephrite)



Requires

Bravery
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

Parry a Magic, Ranged, or Thrown Attack

Are you using a weapon with the “Blade” descriptor? Are you the target of a Magic attack? Exhaust this gift to use your Parry defense, instead of your usual resistance dice, against the magic. You cut the magic in half with your enchanted sword!

Are you the target of a Ranged or Thrown attack? Exhaust this gift to use your blade's Parry to swat the projectile out of the air.

Nature of the Dragon (Magic, Dragon, Nephrite)



Requires

Contortionist
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*
Must not already be a dragon

Extra Species Trait: Dragon d4

You have an extra species Trait: a Dragon Trait of d4. Other people can't help but comment on your august nature and mercurial temperament.

You may improve this Dragon Species Trait further by buying the gift of “Increased Trait: Dragon Species.” You must improve your Dragon Species Trait and your original Species Trait separately.

While you may claim the bonus to skills, you don't get any of the natural weapons, etc. ... but see “Jadeite Dragon Magic”, below.



Jadeite Dragon Magic

Dragon's Body-Fire (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Jadeite)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d4 or better
Fast Jumper
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

"Fly Near the Ground"

Exhaust this Gift. You may add 3 to your Stride. In addition, you may fly through the air – you may end your turn in the air, with an altitude of Close to the ground (1m), in Reach of the ground (2m), or Near the ground (4m). The weight of your earthly nature prevents you from levitating any higher than Near.

During end-of-round maintenance, if you didn't use your Gift of Body-Fire at any point in the round to stay in the air, then you fall. You'll be fine as long as you Refresh and exhaust this gift every round – try to avoid unconsciousness.

Dragon's Claws (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Jadeite)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d4 or better
Brawling Fighter
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

You have Claws!

Yes, you have some nasty looking claws. Claws are a natural weapon that use Body, appropriate Species, and Brawling dice for your attacks. You may use your claws whether this Gift is exhausted or not.

X (Battle)

Declare attack or counter with dragon's claws for +1 Damage, Holy

Before rolling an attack or counter with your dragon's claws, exhaust this Gift. If you win, then you cause +1 Damage, and all your damage is Holy and Magic.

Dragon's Eyes (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Jadeite)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d4 or better
Clear-Headed
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

Ignore Concealment

Exhaust this Gift. Until the end of your next turn, concealment penalties do not affect you. Yes, this means you can counter while Reeling.

Dragon's Face (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Jadeite)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d4 or better
Brawling Fighter
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

You have Teeth!

Yes, you have some nasty looking teeth. Teeth are a natural weapon that use Body, appropriate Species, and Brawling dice for your attacks. You may use your teeth whether this Gift is exhausted or not.

X (Battle)

Declare attack or counter with dragon's Teeth for +1 Damage, Holy

Before rolling an attack or counter with your dragon's teeth, exhaust this Gift. If you win, then you cause +1 Damage, and all your damage is Holy and Magic.

Dragon's Horns (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Jadeite)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d4 or better
Brawling Fighter
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*



IMMORTAL MAGIC

You have Horns!

Yes, you have some nasty looking horns. Horns are a natural weapon that use Body, appropriate Species, and Brawling dice for your attacks. You may use your horns whether this Gift is exhausted or not.

X (Battle)

Declare attack or counter with dragon's claws for +1 Damage, Holy

Before rolling an attack or counter with your dragon's claws, exhaust this Gift. If you win, then you cause +1 Damage, and all your damage is Holy and Magic.

Dragon's Mane (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Jadeite)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d4 or better
Knack for Supernatural
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

Re-roll any defense or resistance vs. magic

Did you just make a roll to defend or to resist magic? Exhaust this Gift, then re-roll all your dice. The second roll stands, even if it's worse.

Dragon's Scales (Battle, Magic, Dragon, Jadeite)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d4 or better
Resolve
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X (Battle)

Bonus 2d6 armor

Before rolling Soak, declare you will exhaust this Gift. You may claim a bonus 2d6 to your Soak. Note this is a Soak bonus, *not* an Armor bonus.

Dragon's Tail (Magic, Dragon, Jadeite)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d4 or better
Contortionist
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

Extra off-hand: tail.

You have a long tail that can be used as an extra off-hand. Besides the name and the requirements, this gift is the same as "Prehensile Tail". (No, you don't get a monkey with two tails.)

Jade Dragon Magic

Chien Tang Grows to Immense Size (Chapter, Magic, Dragon, Jade)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d8 or better
Bravery
Frenzy
Veteran
Scary Fighter
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X: Chapter

Stunt "Scare and grow to immense size"

Declare a "Scare" stunt, then exhaust this Gift. You become a gigantic 33 paces in length. Your clothes become shreds, and your armor is useless.

Increase your Body dice by d12. (Your Soak also increases by d12). Immediately make a Scare attempt and don't forget to include your improved Body dice with it! Increase your carrying capacity, at all levels, by 12 stone.

IMMORTAL MAGIC

Increase your Stride by 1, your Dash by 2, and your run by 8 (yes, that includes the Dash bonus).

All your Brawling and Melee Attacks may claim a bonus d12. You may attack up to Near (4m) range, and you may threaten up to Reach (2m) range.

You have a d12 penalty to all Dodges.

The effect ends if, during end of round maintenance, you are Afraid, Terrified, Asleep, or Unconscious. (Don't forget to use your Bravery and Frenzy to negate being Afraid!).

An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X: Chapter

Overwhelmingly Resist any Magic Effect

Were you just hit with a magic effect? Exhaust this Gift to claim an automatic resistance or defense against the effect.

In case it matters, you automatically resist with 8 successes in your favor.

Tung Ting Shakes His Hair (Chapter, Magic, Dragon, Jade)



Requires

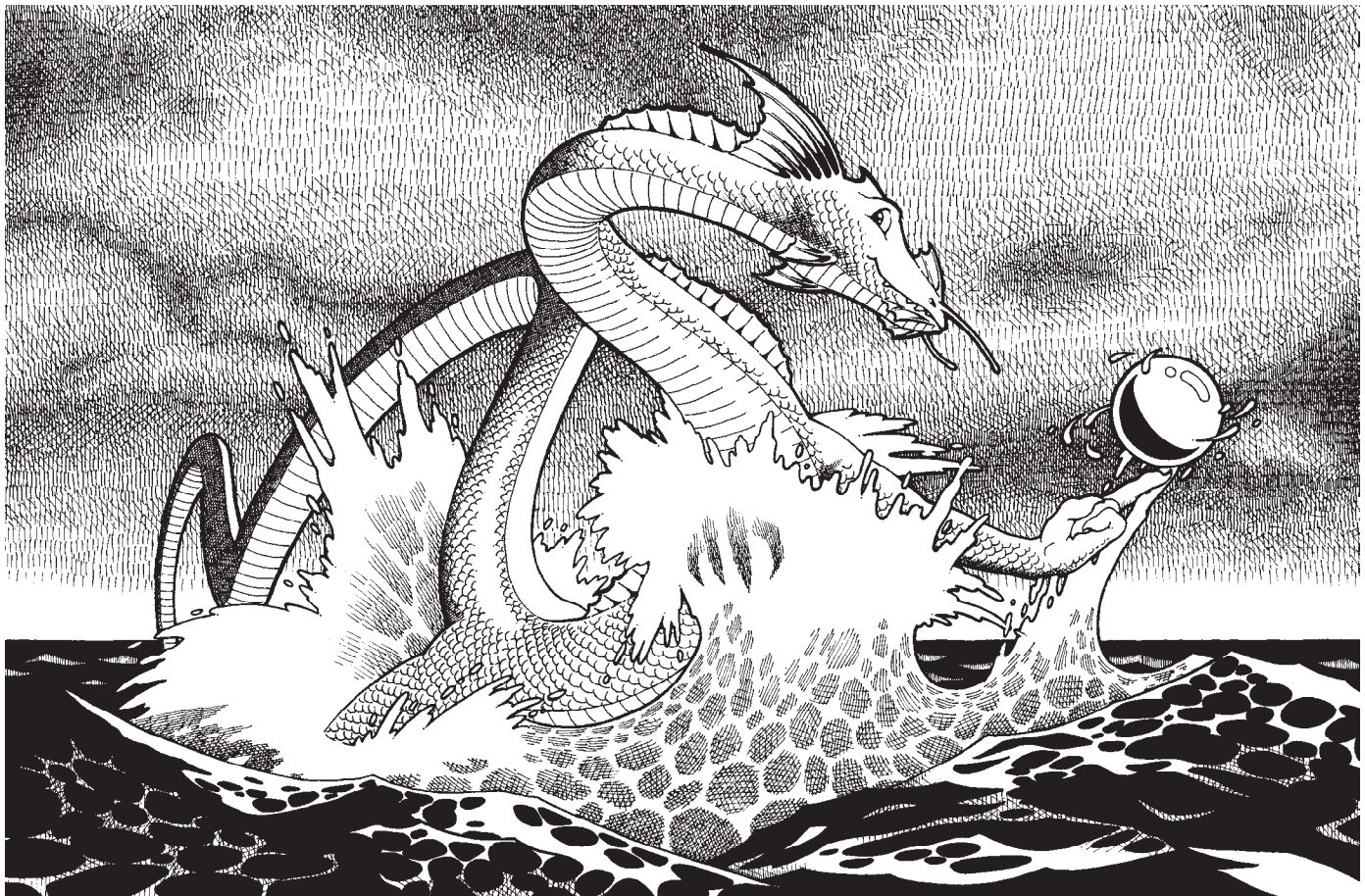
Dragon Species Trait of d8 or better
Dragon's Mane
Knack for Supernatural
Mystic: Purity Magic
Mystic: Changes Magic
Mystic: Taoist Magic
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese

Chien Tang Thrashes the Earth (Chapter, Magic, Dragon, Jade)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d8 or better
Dragon's Tail
Contortionist
Knack for Digging
Strength
Literacy: Zhōngwén
Language: Zhonggese
An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*



IMMORTAL MAGIC

X: Chapter

Attack “thrash the earth”

You smash the ground with your mighty tail, and your Dragon Nature allows you to direct more power against those you seek to destroy.

Roll your Body, Strength, and Digging Dice.

All *allies* Near you (4m) must roll their Body, Strength, and Jumping. If they fail to resist, they are sent Reeling and Knocked Down.

All *foes* Near you (4m) must roll their Body, Strength, and Jumping. If they fail to resist, they are Reeling, Knocked Down, and they suffer Damage +0 Penetrating and Slaying.

All *foes* within Short Range of you (12m) must roll their Body, Strength, and Jumping dice. Short-range targets that are Flying may include their Weather Sense, too. Those that fail to resist become Reeling and they suffer Damage +1 Penetrating.

All *foes* within Medium Range of you (36m) must roll their Body, Strength, and Jumping dice – except for flying ones, who are unaffected. Those that fail to resist become Reeling and they suffer Damage flat 2, Penetrating.

All ground within Short Range (12m) of your thrashing becomes uneven ground. Walls and structures Near you suffer Damage 7; structures in Short range suffer Damage 5. See the Property Damage rules for more effects. Injured structures may within a few minutes; Ruined ones, in a few rounds.

Liu Yu Breaks Open the Shell (Chapter, Magic, Dragon, Jade)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d8 or better

Dragon's Claws

Ambidexterity

Brawling Fighter

Knack for Brawling

Strength

Literacy: Zhōngwén

Language: Zhonggese

An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X: Chapter

Trigger: Grappled victim

Attack “break open the shell”

You must have a grappled target to use this attack. Declare an attack action, then use your claws.

Roll your Body, Will, Dragon, Strength, and Brawling Dice.

The target counters or defends normally. If you succeed, the target's best armor is destroyed, ripped

to useless shreds. Then the target takes Damage +2 Slaying.

All *foes* within Near Range of your target must roll Body, Will, and Presence vs. your roll or become Afraid. All *foes* within Short Range must roll Body, Will, Presence and bonus d8 vs. your roll or become Afraid.

Liu Yu Rears His Head (Chapter, Magic, Dragon, Jade)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d8 or better

Dragon's Horns

Charging Strike

Brawling Fighter

Knack for Brawling

Strength

Literacy: Zhōngwén

Language: Zhonggese

An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

X: Chapter

Attack “attack with horns”

You use this as a “Horns” attack, only roll your Body, Speed, Dragon, Strength, and Brawling Dice.

The target counters or defends normally. If your attack hits, then the target takes Damage +2 Slaying damage. The target is Pushed away 1 pace, plus 1 for every success you scored. If your attack was a charging attack, the target is pushed another 1 pace away for each pace you moved towards the target. (For example, if you had charged 3 paces, then that's +3 paces).

As the target flies back, any combatants in the way must defend, by parrying, dodging or even countering your original roll. If they fail, they are Knocked Down and suffer Damage +2 Weak.

Tung Ting Shrinks to Diminutive Size (Chapter, Magic, Dragon, Jade)



Requires

Dragon Species Trait of d8 or better

Contortionist

Coward

Low Profile

Knack for Stealth

Literacy: Zhōngwén

Language: Zhonggese

An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

IMMORTAL MAGIC

X: Chapter

Trigger: Afraid or Terrified

You must be Afraid or Terrified to use this power. Exhaust this Gift, and then you shrink to only 1cm in height.

You drop all your equipment. Your carrying capacity drops to 1/32 stone.

You suffer a d12 penalty on all rolls that include Body Dice. That includes Soak rolls.

You may claim a bonus d12 to Dodge and Stealth rolls. You will have a d12 penalty or greater for rolls that require normal-sized people, such as Craft or Endurance. At the discretion of the Game host, some tasks may be impossible.

You no longer threaten with brawling or melee attacks. (And your parries will probably suffer that d12 penalty.) You cannot use attacks, because you're Afraid.

Oddly enough, your Dash, Stride, Sprint, and Run are unaffected by your reduced size. (After your drop your equipment, you might not even be burdened any more!) Your climbing, jumping, swimming distances stay the same... though that d12 penalty to Body rolls might get in your way.

Your unusual size will allow you to claim cover and concealment from very small things, and it should allow you to sneak into many places impossible for larger characters. At the discretion of the game host, you may have to make rolls of Body, Will & Presence to *make* people notice you ... and don't forget that d12 penalty!

The effect ends if, during end of round maintenance, you are Asleep or Unconscious... or if you are no longer Afraid or Terrified.

Chien Tang is Transformed by Grief (Magic, Dragon, Jade)



Requires

- Dragon Species Trait of d8 or better
- Any three gifts that have the "Dragon" and "Jadeite" descriptors
- Frenzy
- Literacy: Zhōngwén
- Language: Zhonggese
- An unedited copy of *The Romance of Chien Tang and Her Nine Sons*

Extra action: "refresh Jadeite Dragon gift"

You may take an extra action in the round: an extra *Refresh* action, but only to refresh a Jadeite Dragon gift. (That is, a Gift that has both the "Jadeite" and "Dragon" descriptors.)

The standard rule of "never the same action twice in the same around" still applies.



At the dawn of time there was only the Absolute. For eons, the Absolute transformed, gradually dividing into the opposing yet balancing states of Yin and Yang. Each state then divided into two elements: Major and Minor.

As time passed these four states divided once more, becoming the Eight Spirits. The first of the spirits was Qian Qiling, who claimed heaven as his domain. Scores of gods and spirits followed....



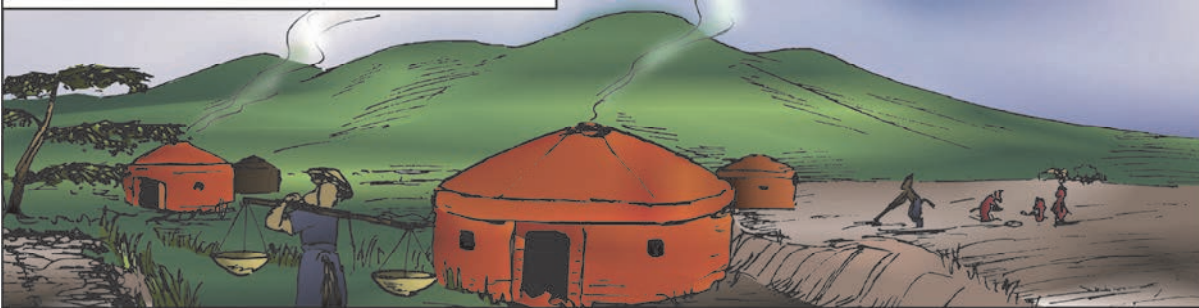
Seeing the vast emptiness around them, they decided to create things to fill it. Together, the spirits divided heaven and earth, spewed forth water to fill the rivers, lakes, and oceans, shaped the mountains and valleys, pushed up the trees, and gave the earth strength.





While the world was still relatively new, the spirits settled down upon their creation. Each called forth their respective tribes to wander the land. Protected by their spirits, these tribes were fruitful and multiplied.

Small villages developed out of the wilderness as the tribes settled down, in solitude, each with its own customs. As they spread, they came into contact with each other. Development soon slowed, and the races stagnated.



Then, one day, Qián Qiling approached the other spirits to invite them to join together all their peoples to form a larger whole. The hope was that it might promote the sharing of knowledge, develop laws to govern and protect, and prosper. Eleven of the spirits agreed to Qián's proposition. The others refused, too foolish or stubborn in their pride, and went their separate ways.





The Twelve Tribes were immortalized into years, incorporated into a calendar based on the order of their entry into the Kingdom. These were the people of the Horse, the Sheep, the Monkey, the Rooster, the Dog, the Boar, the Rat, the Ox, the Tiger, the Hare, the Dragon, and the Snake.

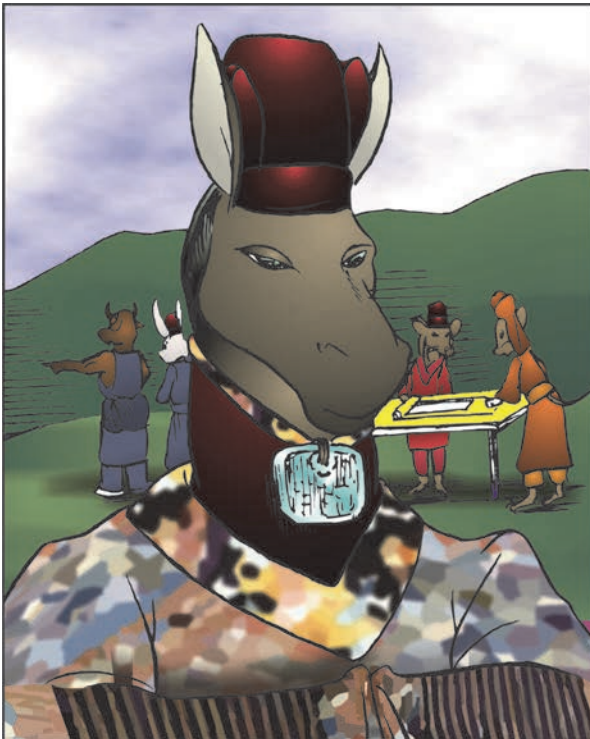


The Horse was the first to join, and the children of Qián were selected as the ruling tribe.



A Mandate of Heaven was presented to their leader, Gongsun, upon a jade tablet.

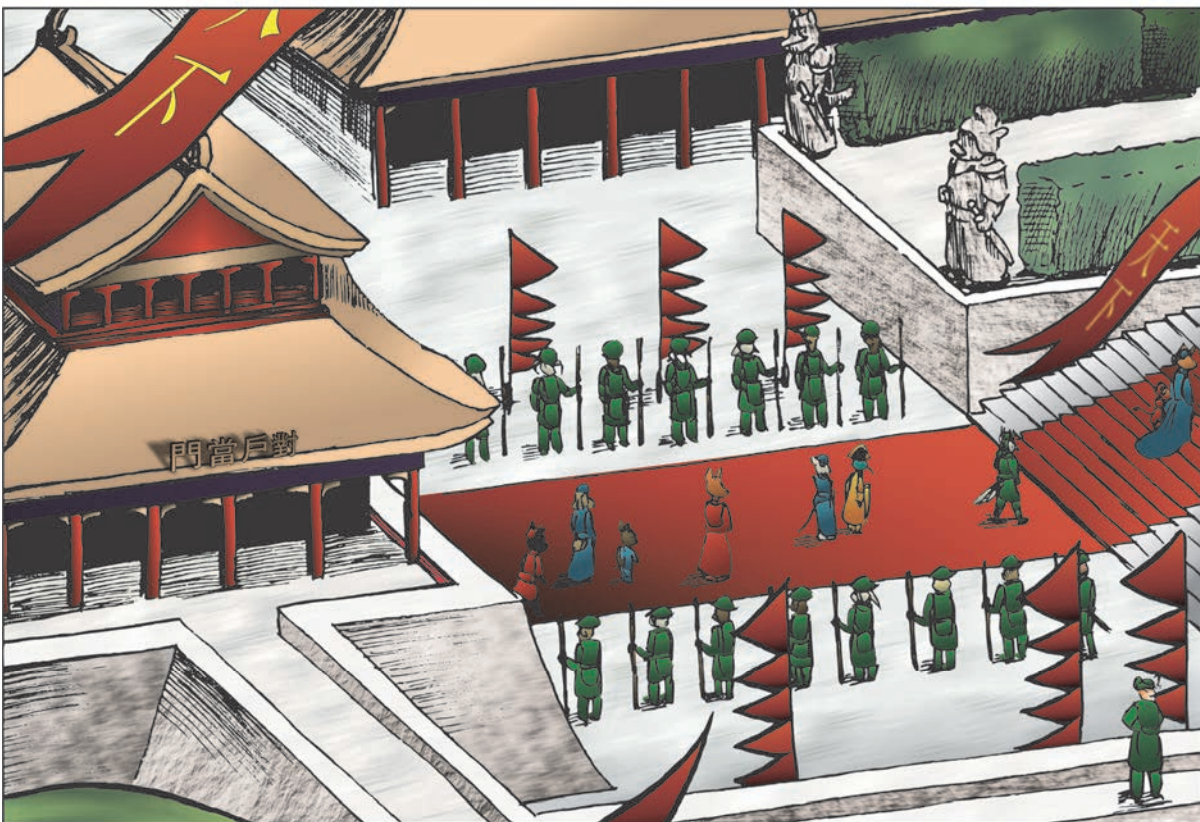
HISTORY



When the Celestial Spirits departed, Gongsun announced that a magnificent capital city for the new Kingdom should be constructed to commemorate the occasion.



They finally found a suitable site in a place named **Pao-chi**, a location closest to all five elements. The building of the city took many long decades.



Finally the Twelve Tribes completed their work and named the city **Mājing**. Together with the other eleven leaders, Gongsun personally thanked the celestial spirits and asked for their blessing in return. The Heavens sent four representatives, who passed through the city and then separated, each to the four corners of the compass.

HISTORY

HISTORY

At the dawn of time, there was only the *Absolute*. For eons, the Absolute gradually divided into the opposing, yet balancing states of *Yin* and *Yang*. Each state then divided into *Major* and *Minor* elements. In time, these four divided once again in to the Eight Spirits.

The first of the spirits was *Qián Qiling*. As the first, he claimed the Heaven as his domain. *Kun* the Ox followed, claiming the Earth as hers. Next *Zhen* the Dragon claimed Thunder, and *Xun* the Crane chose the Wind. *Kan* the Tortoise claimed the realm of Water, and *Gen* the Tiger claimed the Mountains. *Li* the Zhuque claimed Fire, and finally, *Dui* the Snake claimed the Marshes as her own. Together, they called their brethren up from the void. Scores of gods and spirits arose. Seeing the vast emptiness around them, they chose to fill it. Together, the spirits divided heaven from earth, spewed forth water to fill the rivers, lakes, and oceans, shaped the mountains and valleys, pushed up the trees, and gave the earth strength.

The spirits, satisfied with their work, waited for the awakening of the Five Elements. First to awaken to the new world was the Earth. It greeted the waiting spirits with a deep rumbling voice that awoke Metal within its bosom. Metal leapt forth, and wept upon seeing the beauty of the world. Its tears fell to the ocean below, awakening Water. Wanting to see the world, it formed itself into clouds. Wood felt its sibling pass overhead and stretched toward the heavens. Feeling the push of its kinsfolk, Fire left its abode in the sky and frolicked upon the surface. Water ordered Fire to pay respect to the elder elements. Relenting, Fire offered the gift of ashes to Earth. When Earth accepted this gift, the Five Elements were balanced and set the world in motion.

The Coming of The Twelve Houses

While the world was still new, the spirits settled down upon their creation. Each called forth their tribe to wander the land. With the protection of their spirits, these tribes were fruitful and multiplied. Small villages developed from the wilderness when the tribes settled down in solitude, each with their own customs. As they spread, they came into contact with each other. Sometimes the result was war and other times peace,

but trade was rare and unusual. Development slowed, and the people stagnated.

One day, *Qián Qiling* invited the other spirits to join all their peoples together, in the hope of promoting the sharing of knowledge and the development of laws. Together, they might govern, protect, and prosper. Eleven of the spirits agreed to *Qián's* proposition, but the others refused, too foolish or stubborn in their pride, and went their separate ways. The Twelve Tribes were incorporated into a calendar based on the order of their entry into the Kingdom. These were the people of the



Gongsun then asked for an oath from each of the Tribes to the throne. To formalize this oath, each Tribe gave an item of great beauty and wealth to the Emperor. In return, the Emperor promised to protect and to enrich the people.

HISTORY

Horse, the Sheep, the Monkey, the Rooster, the Dog, the Boar, the Rat, the Ox, the Tiger, the Hare, the Dragon, and the Snake. The Horse were the first to join, and the children of Qián were selected as the ruling tribe. The Twelve Spirits presented the Mandate of Heaven inscribed upon a tablet of jade to their leader, Gongsun. The Spirits met with the leader of each tribe and provided wise counsel, then departed the terrestrial realm. Together, the Twelve Tribes united to become the Kingdom. The celestial spirits formed their own kingdom, led by the Qiling, the Black Tortoise, the Blue Dragon, the Red Zhuque, and the White Tiger.

The Age of the Yellow Emperor

When the Celestial Spirits departed, Gongsun announced that a magnificent capital city for the new Kingdom should be constructed to commemorate the occasion. Gongsun summoned the leaders and shamans of each Tribe, and together they searched for a location for the new capital. They finally found a suitable site close to all five elements in a place named *Pao-chi*.

Building the city took many decades, but finally the Twelve Tribes completed their work and named the city *Mâjing*. Together with the other eleven leaders, Gongsun personally thanked the celestial spirits and asked for their blessing in return. The Heavens sent four representatives: a Black Turtle, a Red Zhuque, a White Tiger, and a Green Dragon. They passed through *Mâjing* and separated to the four corners of the compass. They transformed themselves into the four hills, mountains, and plains that surround the city - the Heavens would help protect and provide for the city in this form.

Gongsun then asked each of the Tribes to swear an oath the throne. To formalize this oath, each Tribe gave an item of great beauty and wealth to the Emperor. The tribal gifts, the Twelve Insignia of the Imperial Throne, were placed upon matching bronze tripods. In return the Emperor promised to not only protect the people of the Kingdom, but to enrich them both materially and spiritually. Emperor Gongsun then gave each Tribe an official name and area to guide, protect, and rule. These were known as the Twelve Houses: *Jizhou* to the Roosters, *Lóngzhou* to the Dragons, *Shézhou* to the Snakes, *Yangzhou* to the Sheep, *Hóuzhou* to the Monkeys, *Quánzhou* to the Dogs, *Zhuzhou* to the Boars, *Shúzhou* to the Rats, *Níuzhou* to the Oxen, *Huzhou* to the Tiger, *Tùzhou* to the Hare, and finally *Mâzhou* to his own people, the Horses.

Despite their promises of fealty, some of the Houses were not loyal to the Throne. Gongsun was shocked to learn that even his own brother, *Chi-you*, plotted against him to usurp the new Kingdom. *Chi-you* allied himself

with the Houses of *Quán* and *Zhu*, and also with several lesser immortal spirits of great power.

The rebels invaded *Mâzhou* Province and drove towards the shining capital. The two armies met in the valley south of *Mâjing*. According to legend, *Chi-you* laid a great blanket of fog that covered the entire valley for three days. Neither army could find the other. On the third day, Gongsun led his troops out of the mists with the aid of the "Heaven and Earth Compass Chariot," a gift from the Celestial Spirits at his coronation ceremony. The mystic glow of the chariot burned a path through the fog and out onto open ground. Upon seeing the Immortals, Gongsun called down upon the battlefield the Dragon spirit, who swallowed them whole, destroying them and taking their essence. With their powerful allies gone and the magical fog lifting, the rebel army was caught in the open by the Emperor's troops and annihilated.

Chi-you was punished for trying to destroy the Kingdom. His physical form was destroyed, and his soul was imprisoned within a large obsidian pearl. After this there were no other uprisings, and Gongsun's authority over the Twelve Houses was solidified.

As he had promised, the Emperor guided the Kingdom. He took the knowledge of each of the Houses and collected them into a group of writings known as the *Dùn Jià Tien Shû*, "The Book of the Vanishing Heavenly Stem." This became the very core of the knowledge and the teachings of the people of the Kingdom, who in turn became the foundation of the Kingdoms and Dynasties to follow. He had copies of the scrolls sent to each of the other Houses, sharing the knowledge so that all would prosper as one. The knowledge and wealth of the twelve Houses advanced by leaps and bounds. Gongsun traveled the land, sharing the teachings with all and honoring each of the Houses for their contribution towards the growth of the Kingdom. At the age of one hundred and eighty, Gongsun was elevated to an immortal and honored across the lands.

As time went by, Gongsun distanced himself from the day-to-day involvement in ruling the Kingdom and began to devote more time to meditation. During this time, he wrote the *Yi-Ching*, or "Book of Changes." This is a collection of his observations of the ways of nature and the ways of the people. It would become the scripture for the Tàoiist priests.

With Gongsun's time taken up in philosophical pursuits, his Minister, *Huli-Rui-ning*, acted on his behalf in more earthly matters. It was clear that the great Emperor's reign was drawing to a close, and the Houses began to question him as to who would be his successor, but he never answered. Throughout the

Kingdom, everyone asked the same question: Who would follow in the great Gongsun's footsteps?

Finally, Gongsun came before his people as they prepared to celebrate the birth of the Kingdom and made an unexpected farewell speech. At first there was silence. Then, as one, the crowd rose and let out a great cry in hope of dissuading the Emperor from leaving. Gongsun gently reminded his people that others must have their chance to rule, and that his time was at an end. The old man lifted a hand towards the heavens and transformed into a Qiling. The Celestial Spirits came down, hovering over the city to guide him. The crowd rushed towards their Emperor as he flew into the sky, but could not hold on to him. Led by the spirits, Gongsun flew over the city, and out across the countryside.

The First Sage King

While following the path of the departing Emperor, the leaders and magistrates of the Twelve Houses encountered a herdsman named *Jang Ren-biao*. The rooster held in his wings one of the Twelve Insignia of the Throne. He was shocked to see the most important leaders in all the Kingdom standing in front of him. Quickly, they asked him where he had found the item in his hands. His answer was simple: a beautiful Qiling dropped it to him from the heavens. Gongsun's Minister now understood why Gongsun had not named his successor — secretly, he had chosen this humble shepherd to become the next Emperor.

Many of the Houses doubted the omen. The First Prime Minister, Huli-Rui-ning, led the assembled noblemen and sages to the hidden Heavenly Pool, the secret spring designated by the Spirits as the final test for the one who would be Emperor. The candidate was to plunge himself into this pool, and the true form he would take in Heaven (one of the ruling spirits) would be revealed to observers before he emerged from the pool unharmed. The unqualified would simply die. Passing this test granted authority of the Throne over the Kingdom.

Immediately, three nobles leapt into the pool. The surface boiled and steam shot into the air. Minutes later, the three nobles' bodies floated to the surface, dead. Horrified, Jang Ren-biao refused to enter the waters—after all, he was a mere shepherd! But the First Prime Minister convinced him that even the heavens demanded it. Jang Ren-biao smiled in resignation at his fate, and walked forward, submerging himself completely within the spring. The assembled ministers saw the form of a Red Zhuque swimming within the pool. The water remained peaceful and calm, and the shepherd climbed out, his body and soul cleansed. No



HISTORY

one questioned Jang Ren-biao's right to the Throne from that point on.

The new Emperor took his place on the Throne as the Sage King Jang, the first of three wise Kings. Huli Rui-ning guided him slowly, tutoring him in the arts of statesmanship. It was not long before the Sage King Jang became more involved in the courts, and eventually, the First Prime Minister faded into the background. He had a large map of the Kingdom made for the Sage King Jang. When all was right, Huli Rui-ning presented the Emperor with a book, *Dào de Jing* ("The Book of the Way"), containing all the Minister's knowledge. Knowing he was no longer needed, Huli Rui-ning took his leave and left for the west, never to be seen again.

The Sage King Jang Ren-biao read the *Dào de Jing*. He began to live a frugal life. Despite living within a luxurious palace, he ate coarse rice and drank tea and wild-herb soups. He did not expand on the glory of the palace, but simply maintained it. Even during winter, he would wear the most simple of clothing. Any excess wealth was redistributed back to the people. Tradition decrees that no noble shall live above the Emperor, and so the leaders of the Twelve Houses and their nobles were forced to live similarly austere lifestyles. Jang Ren-biao felt responsible for all those under his rule. It was said that his actions so pleased the Celestial Spirits that no natural disaster befell the Kingdom during his reign of three hundred and sixty years. After three centuries, the Sage King Jang Ren-biao knew he would have to name a successor, yet he felt that none of his children could survive the test of the Heavenly Pool. The Sage King traveled across the land many times looking for the individual he could grant the Throne. It was on one of these trips that Ren-biao found his successor: the tiger *Shun Chong-hua*.

Shun Chong-hua was a good man, who had fled from an abusive father and stepmother, to settle in a small village near the foot of Tai-Huan Mountain. Shun Chong-hua became a successful farmer, and followed a simple lifestyle, like the Sage King. He helped his neighbors and travelers survive in hard times. His kindness to people became famous. Many went to him for advice, whether it concerned farming or pottery making. Eventually, the town became very successful and prosperous.

Having heard many good things about Shun Chong-hua and his work, the First Sage King went in search of him. The Emperor wished to test him. He said that he knew of a local spring that could revitalize one's body and spirit, and commanded Shun to bring back a gourd full of water from it. Shun Chong-hua had no trouble finding the spring, and soon returned unharmed. The Sage King Jang Ren-biao poured for both of them and

they toasted each other and drank. Afterward, the Sage King Jang Ren-biao announced that the spring was none other than the hidden Heavenly Pool. For Shun to be able to find it, return unharmed, and drink from it, meant the Celestial Spirits had chosen him as the next Emperor. The First Sage King named Shun Chong-hua as his successor and took him back to Mâjing.

Receiving word of the First Sage King's proclamation, his sons and daughters rushed back to the capital city. Led by the eldest son, *Dan Zhu*, they begged their father to reconsider his decision. Looking at them, Jang Ren-biao knew none of them were fit to rule and sadly declined their requests. Knowing that they would contest his decision, he took his children and Shun Chong-hua back to the Heavenly Pool. The new Emperor entered the pool and they saw the form of a White Tiger swimming there. Shun Chong-hua emerged unharmed. Most of Jang Ren-biao's children backed away, knowing that they were not fit for the Throne, but Dan Zhu persisted. Before anyone could stop him, the Emperor's son threw himself into the magical pool. His lifeless body floated to the surface –the decision had already been made, and there could be only one Emperor.

Shun Chong-hua was proclaimed the next ruler of the Kingdom. Jang Ren-biao's was heartbroken from the loss of his son, and he soon passed quietly away. The people mourned him across all the Kingdom.

The Second Sage King

The Second Sage King brought with him a great sense of energy. His first act upon taking the Throne was to forgive his parents and bring them to the Palace. He gave them a place to live and rebuilt his relationship with them. Next, Shun Chong-hua assigned his brother to a government position to help him rule.

The Second Sage King researched the Kingdom. He summoned all the court cartographers and gave orders to have all knowledge of his domain updated. One night, after staring at the large floor map built centuries earlier by Huli Rui-ning, he made the decision to expand the Kingdom. Not only would expansion help benefit the Houses, it would bring peace and prosperity to the regions beyond the Kingdom's borders.

The following day, he sent his troops forth. They quickly subdued the poorly organized neighboring regions, and established garrisons in the newly occupied lands. They would protect the people and help them improve their fields and roads. The entire Kingdom became energized almost overnight. Those nobles with good skills in government and trade were given positions as governors in these areas. Their coffers ran over as trade developed in these untapped areas. In a matter of years, the Kingdom grew substantially.

The Coming of the Four Evils

Then, disaster struck. Like a tornado, Four Evils swept in from the corners of Shenzhou, spreading death and mayhem. From the South came the Immortal known as *Nián*. He terrorized new settlers, razed entire towns, and defeated the best of the Imperial troops in the region. From the East came the Immortal *Gong-gong*. He could control the elements, and used them to sweep the coast with storms, destroying crops and livestock. From the North came the demon *Han-doù*. He rode the winds, spreading plagues and diseases across the countryside. From the West came the Barbarian King *Sanmiao*. Leading his tribes across the frontier, this three-horned rhino swept through Shenzhou like a scythe, destroying imperial forces and looting frontier towns and villages before putting them to the torch.

Seeing Shenzhou on the brink of disaster, the Emperor called for its heroes to defend the people in their hour of need. The first to answer the call was *Shou Gou-wei*, the greatest of the *Shù* heroes. Shou led a group of *Tàoists* to the south and confronted *Nián* in eight days of battle. Shou finally encountered *Nián*, and after several hours of fighting, ran a spear through him. *Nián* disappeared, but returned the next day, scarred but otherwise completely healed. Again the hero and the Immortal fought, and again the monster was slain, but the following day *Nián* returned, and yet again the hero dispatched him. This continued for five more days. Each time, the *Tàoist* hero would kill the creature using a different method more thorough than before, yet none would permanently slay the Immortal. On the eighth day, *Nián* returned once more. Shou had nothing left but a few firecrackers, and in desperation he lit and threw them into the monster's gaping maw. The resulting explosion sent the creature reeling, its teeth shattered, and *Nián* fled back from whence he came. Shou and his band of heroes waited until they were sure the beast would not return, and sent word to the Emperor of their great victory. To this day, firecrackers are used to ward off evil all across Shenzhou.

To the east traveled *Hua Yan-zi*, the mistress of the famous *Tài Ping* School of Heavenly Peace. She reached the coastline that *Gong-gong* terrorized and set her camp. She laid out a feast and began playing beautiful music on her mandolin. The Immortal appeared, consumed the feast, and then quickly vanished. Every day for a month she repeated this, until one day *Gong-gong* lowered his guard and remained for a while, listening to the soothing sounds after his meal. He drank wine, which loosened his tongue a bit, and the mistress of *Tài Ping* ascertained the true name of *Gong-gong*. She called it out to the heavens and gained power

over him, and contained his essence within a gourd. It is said that the power of *Gong-gong* is such that he breaks out of the gourd for a month during the summer. During this time he wracks the coastline with monsoons and storms, but his power always weakens and his spirit is once more returned to the container.

Upon hearing of this second victory, the Emperor smiled. Two Evils were defeated. He decided to attack the plague demon *Han-doù* next. Shun Chong-hua fasted for seven days and asked the Celestial Spirits for advice. An emissary journeyed from Heaven and spoke with the Emperor. From this meeting came *Tài-shun*, "The Book of Heavenly Cures," with which to battle all the ailments that plagued the Kingdom. Armed with this knowledge, Shun Chong-hua traveled north to the areas affected by *Han-doù* and began treating the sick. *Han-doù* gained its power through the people it infected by diseases and plagues. As the regions were cleansed of his touch, the monster lost its power, and in the end, *Han-doù* fled. The demon is sometimes seen from time to time visiting the regions around battlefields and sieges, preying on the weak and the dying, but never since the invasion of the Four Evils has it returned to do battle against the throne.

With victory over the third Evil attained, the Second Sage King focused his attention to the last of them: the marauding army of *Sanmiao*. Shun Chong-hua first gathered together his armies. The best smiths of Huzhou constructed *Da Fú*, a large glowing axe, for the Second Sage King to use in battle. He then marched westward to meet *Sanmiao*. After a series of small battles, the armies met in what is now *Hàn Zhong*. The Second Sage King charged forward, surrounded by his elite bodyguards, melting away the ranks of barbarians before them. Shun Chong-hua reached *Sanmiao* and challenged him to a duel. Almost equally matched, the two battled for hours until, the sun setting, the Second Sage King beheaded the Immortal. Shocked by the death of their leader, the barbarian army was quickly routed. The Second Sage King picked up the spear of his fallen foe and drove it into the ground. He commissioned at that place a monument to those that gave their lives defending Shenzhou against the Four Evils.

In the aftermath of the violence, a peaceful calm fell over Shenzhou. Shun Chong-hua realized that they now needed a wise guide to take his place upon the throne. The Kingdom needed a teacher who could help to unify and integrate the new lands acquired under his rule. It was time for Shun Chong-hua to find the new Emperor.

The Third Sage King

Tù Xie-he was the Chief of Records under the rule of the Second Sage King. He first came to the Emperor's attention after completing his first book, called *Shu Ching* or "The Book of History." This tome contained references to Shenzhou's first Emperor, Gongsun, citing examples of speeches, early laws, and mandates from Heaven. It quickly became a classic in teaching both Imperial and regional leaders to rule with wisdom. After reading *Shu Ching*, the Emperor Shun Chong-hua summoned his Chief of Records, and they discussed at length the course Shenzhou should pursue next. Tù Xie-he agreed that the focus should be to further develop the Kingdom - not only its leadership, but also the people themselves. The Second Sage King then commissioned Tù Xie-he to write more works that would help to properly educate his Kingdom.

In the ten years that followed, Tù Xie-he wrote four more books. The first book was known as *Shih Ching*, or "The Book of Odes." It was a collection of three hundred poems and psalms that both educated and entertained. The second book was the *Li Chi*, or "The Book of Rituals." It detailed the proper behavior of rulers, families, and of the people. The third book was *Yi-Ching Chi*, or "The Companion Book of Changes." It further explained the meaning behind *Yi-Ching* through the use of symbols that represented both a form of numerology and the natural "way" of things. The fifth book was *Chun-qiū*, or "Book of Spring and Autumn." It was a book of one hundred and eight verses of beautiful words, which supposedly hid a prediction of the future. It foretold a division of Shenzhou into warring States, followed by great advances in science, medicine, and philosophy that would eventually help in the establishment of a new, greater Shenzhou. These four books, together with *Shu Ching*, became known as the *Five Classics*.

Upon completion of these books, Shun Chong-hua abdicated the throne and quietly went into study, reading the *Five Classics* till the day of his death. Tù Xie-he picked up where the Second Sage King left off. No one contested the transfer of power, for there was little doubt in the minds of the people that the new Emperor was the wisest man in all the known lands.

The Third Sage King began his work immediately. He traveled into the countryside and visited each of the noble houses, teaching them the fundamentals of his works so that they, in turn, could teach their people. During this period Tù Xie-he began to formulate more writings that would further enhance and expand the teachings of the *Five Classics*. With help from his students, the Emperor developed the fundamental elements of Shenzhou culture by introducing the

concepts of the Five Virtues, the Six Relationships, and *Jun-zì*, or "The Perfect Gentleman."

Following the Third Sage King's lead, historians began to keep accurate documentation of events in Shenzhou. It was a time of great learning and exploration. However, after long decades of prosperity and peace, a terrible natural disaster shook Shenzhou to its very foundations: the Great Flood.

Some say that the Spirits, incensed by attempts of Tàoiist mages to attain heavenly magic, ripped the very heart of the land asunder. This issued forth a great wall of water the length of the *Hei Lung Jiang*, or Black Dragon River, sweeping all whom had offended the Spirits into the sea. Some blamed the famed Tàì Ping School of Heavenly Peace, which was destroyed as the waters rushed from the hole, while others feared it was another invasion of demons and immortals. As the flood spread and destroyed entire villages, towns, and even cities, a call went up for help. The Emperor Tù Xie-he, seeing this as a test of skill for himself and his people, issued a proclamation. Anyone that could control the raging waters of the Twin Dragons would not only have the thanks of the people, but of the Heavens—the one to control the river would become the next Emperor. For almost two decades, heroes offered their services and failed, often losing their lives either through shame or carelessness.

After all the years of failure, an architect, a bear by the name *Xíong Wei-li* was the twenty-second challenger to test his skill against the Twin Dragons. He came from the Minor House of *Xíong*, which had been slowly gaining power in Shenzhou since the Second Sage King conquered their lands. The bear saw this as a chance to elevate the position of his House within the Kingdom. Unfortunately, try as he might, he was never able to contain the muddy waters, and committed suicide to spare his House the loss of face from his failure.

Undaunted by his father's defeat, *Xíong Wei-li*'s son, *Xíong Yu*, took up the challenge of the flood. He was the one to finally defeat the river and control the raging waters. By wisely working with the river through the use of canals, irrigation, and many small dams, rather than fighting against it, *Xíong Yu* triumphed over the Great Flood. With his success, he brought prosperity to agricultural regions and cities by providing them with a constant supply of pure water. Tù Xie-he saw the makings of a wise Emperor in *Xíong Yu*, and the Third Sage King handed down the mantle of Shenzhou as those before him had done.

The Dynasties

The Xíong Dynasty

Following the coronation of Xíong Yu, the day-to-day life in Shenzhou returned to normal. Emperor Yu ruled wisely for over half a century. In his failing age, he decided to select a new Emperor. Looking over the possible successors, the Emperor decided upon his able-bodied Prime Minister, *Níu Dào-jun*. While the Minister was very honored, he refused, and suggested that the Emperor's own son be selected instead. Xíong Yu agreed, and passed the Throne to his son, *Xíong Mu-rong*.

This event set a precedent that would be followed for generations. Each Emperor handed over rulership, either to his eldest son, or to the closest male member of the family should he not have any male children. Emperor Mu-rong named this lineage the Xíong Dynasty.

The son of Mu-rong, *Tian-ti*, became Emperor late in his life. Shortly after he ascended to the throne, a major earthquake devastated several mining towns in the Xíongzhou region. It was said that the Earth, displeased with the wounds opened in its body, was taking revenge on those that had hurt it. Tian-ti ordered metal and silver smiths in the region to sacrifice a portion of all their wares each year to appease the Earth and its Spirit.

In due course, Tian-ti's son *Jin-jian* took his place as Emperor of Shenzhou. It was during his reign that the demon *Er Gui* plagued Tùzhou. The creature consumed crops and caused widespread famine throughout the region. The head of the House, *Tù Lingzhi*, sought assistance from the Huli Enchantress, and together they fought Er Gui. They defeated the demon, and saved Tùzhou.

After nearly a century of rule, Jin-jian died. His son, *Jue-liang*, was a great philosopher and calligrapher. Before taking the throne he had begun deciphering and expanding the art of Celestial Calligraphy. With the resources of the Shenzhou at his disposal, the Emperor continued the research, forming two great schools dedicated to the art. In the north was the School of Eternal Light, and in the south was the School of Righteous Thought. It was also during this time that *Zhu Chao Nan*, one of the Eight Perfect Tàoists, was born. It was rumored that Chao Nan had found the Heavenly Pool and survived its test, giving question to the legitimacy of the current Emperor - even if just briefly. Upon the Tàolist's death, his pupils saw a Blue Dragon fly Heavenward.

At the time of his death, Jue-liang had but one surviving son, and he was very young. *Li-jue* was unfamiliar with the responsibilities that went with being

Emperor when he took the throne. There had been a series of floods in the Emperor's homelands, and a practice of sacrificing people to the River Spirit began ... which did nothing to please the Spirit and did everything to make the people feel afraid and hopeless. This went on for decades, until a Xíong hero named Xiao Feng-xun sought out the Tàolist priests responsible for the atrocities - he killed them, and he offered an apology to the Spirit and those innocent lives they had taken in its name.

The last of the direct line of Xíong Yu was Emperor *Long-tang*. As he was an Emperor without an heir, it would be up to his distant cousin to follow his rule. It was during this time that a severe earthquake rocked the land of Shézhou, destroying its capital and killing tens of thousands who lived there. Led by their leader, Lady *Shé Hui-min*, the remaining population relocated the capital.

With the destruction of the Shé capital there was a growing feeling of discontent with the Emperor. This was the high-water mark of the Xíong Dynasty - the period following was one of decline. While the Xíong line still controlled the throne, it was becoming apparent that they controlled little else. Increasingly, the Houses were fighting among themselves, and the fringes of Shenzhou suffered from bandit raids and depressed economies. The leaders of the Shenzhou began to shut themselves off from the rest of the people.

The Late Xíong Period

Emperor *Lû-tiao*, son of the impotent Long Tang, attempted to repair some of the damaging decisions made by his forefathers. He arranged several marriages between the Houses in an attempt to end some of the political infighting. While no formal alliances were made, he was able to mend the relationship between the Houses of Quân and Tù (the two most violently opposed factions) and, for a brief time, the land knew peace.

It was during the rule of Lû-tiao's grandsons that the Xíong Dynasty finally collapsed completely. The first recorded political assassinations began. While rulers often dueled with each other over grievances, their unscrupulous use of assassins was unprecedented, and marked a change in the methods used to exert political pressure on opponents. Shenzhou was plunged into chaos.

Half a century and four short-lived Emperors later, Shenzhou was on the verge of losing all that it had gained during the era of the Three Sage Kings. The newest Emperor, *Chieh*, had murdered his own brother and nephew to lay claim to the throne. He led a decadent life, using the Royal Treasury for his grossly

HISTORY

fantastic personal whims. When voices of opposition began to speak out against him, he quickly silenced them. His opponents became the first of a number of “sacrifices” made to the Spirits.

Despite this, dissent grew. Several nobles began to plot against the Emperor. They believed the Heavens did not favor this ruler, and that a new line was needed to properly guide Shenzhou. Rumors circulated that *Quân Kai-gan*, the Emperor of *Quânzhou*, had found the Heavenly Pool and passed its test. From this, he gained knowledge from the heavens of making iron weapons and armor. They quickly pooled resources and equipped a small force of men with iron weapons. Upon hearing of this, the Emperor sent troops to *Quânzhou* to crush the rebellion. The Imperial Army met an elite unit of three hundred men at the border. Even outnumbered ten to one, this small force routed the Emperor’s troops and paved the way for open rebellion. Soon after, Emperor Chieh was surrounded and trapped within the Imperial City. Seeing his doom, the Emperor and his family committed suicide. The City was taken, and the entire House of *Xíong* was hunted down, put on trial, and executed for their crimes against the people of Shenzhou.



The *Quân* Dynasty

Quân Kai-gan took the throne, and spent nearly a century trying to rebuild Shenzhou. But undoing the damage done over more than a century of misrule would be a task for many generations. It seemed that the Heavens approved of the new Emperor, who lived to be one hundred and eight.

The following century saw Emperor after Emperor, the sons and grandsons of *Quân*, trying to mend Shenzhou. They tried to stop the political infighting that had consumed the Houses at the end of the previous dynasty, and worked to reclaim the outer regions of Shenzhou. They also rebuilt the roads and canals, which had fallen into disrepair. Their attempts were hindered, however, by the continued fighting and bickering of the

Houses. Some headway was made between the Houses of *Níu* and *Zhu*, ending their conflict for a generation. Heavy-handed treatment of the Emperors’ own house, *Quân*, and its enemy, *Mâ*, ended a century-long struggle between them. The Emperors were continually dealing with peasant uprisings against their local rulers, and often had to send troops to keep both sides from laying whole regions to waste.

In addition to these mundane problems, the Emperors worked against rogue *Tàoist* wizards. With the loss of the *Tài Ping* School over four centuries ago, Shenzhou had lost the knowledge precious to *Tàoist* mages and priests. Numerous self-proclaimed ‘true descendants’ of the *Tài Ping* School came and went. The knowledge was slowly recovered, but only by individuals bent on using it for personal gain and power. There was no central institution to govern these rogues. As a result, Shenzhou was under threat from miscast magic and powerful mages following a “false path.” One such event happened within the capital of *Shézhou*, where a sorceress, attempting to summon fire, set fire to the city. Since it was no ordinary fire, it could not be put out by water. It wasn’t until a group of metallurgists and *Tàoists* made *Bing Shan*, a magic fan, so that they were able to blow out the flames. By the time the smoke cleared, nearly half the city had been ruined.

The following century saw more civil unrest. Emperor *Zhan-bing* was forced to invade his own home, *Quânzhou*, when peasants and disenfranchised nobles overthrew the government there and killed the Emperor’s uncle. Led by *Zhan-bing*, the imperial troops marched in, rounded up all the confederates, and had them drawn and quartered. The Emperor then reestablished the government there and returned to the Imperial City.

During this uprising, a small event along the coast of Shenzhou went almost unnoticed. A small, primitive sailing ship ran aground. Through help from *Tàoist* priests, these foreigners were found to be refugees from a large island to the east. They were former slaves of a group of foreign wizard-kings known as the *Autarchs*. The small group was eventually assimilated into the region’s population, and records of their travels were placed into the Imperial Library. The Kingdom eventually sent ships and ambassadors to attempt to contact this island and establish trade, but they never returned. Myths developed that the land was filled with demons and cannibal immortals, and the quest for the mysterious island was abandoned.

The final chapter in the *Quân* dynasty came with Emperor *Hsin*. He was a capable ruler. During his reign, the process for making steel was discovered. The Emperor, understanding well how metal technology had helped his forefathers gain power, controlled the technology and carefully granted rights to produce

weapons and armor. Some of the Houses chafed under this tight control, but in the end, the people accepted it.

Then, the Emperor fell in love with a fox named *Huli Mei-rong*. She was an enchantress and a rogue Tàòist priestess, and quickly had Hsin under her control. He began to spend large amounts of money at the expense of the people, and built a miniature estate within the confines of the Imperial City. He had exotic items brought in from the Four Corners of Shenzhou. There were fountains of wine and streams of milk and honey, with backdrops of mountains made of obsidian. The extravagant living brought criticism from the Emperor's ministers. With the first cries of opposition, the Emperor, in a fit of anger, had the officials tied to a heated pillar until they burned to death. It was said that Huli Mei-rong stood watching, amused by the executions. What little initial opposition arose was quickly put down through the use of Imperial soldiers and sorcery. All across Shenzhou the people and their rulers came to the same conclusion: the Emperor had lost the Mandate of Heaven. It was time for another to rise and stand against him.

The Zhou Dynasty

The first to do so was *Shû Wen*, a duke with large land holdings in Shuzhou. The Emperor's troops and sorcerers quickly crushed his attempt at rebellion. He was captured along with his wife, and spent ten years in prison. During this time he came across a copy of the *Dào De Jing*. He spent those years in study, when he was not forced to work at punishing menial tasks. Upon his release, many saw him a broken man, and he offered tributes to the Emperor to show his fealty, but it was all a false front. Duke Wen had become a Tàòist priest, and began to secretly build opposition to the Emperor. He hired weapon-smiths and soldiers, and felt out the leaders of the Houses in search of allies.

One day, Shû Wen was traveling in Tûzhou and met a Tàòist priest named *Huang Tàì Kung*, who led him to the Heavenly Pool. Duke Wen, familiar with the test from his studies, plunged himself into the pool. Huang Tàì Kung saw the image of a dragon swimming through the waters and was satisfied that Shû Wen was the chosen Emperor. As the Duke emerged from the pool, Huang Tàì Kung advised him to fast for seven days and prepare himself to receive the Mandate from Heaven. On the seventh day a ball of fire dropped from the sky and landed next to Shû Wen. The fire vanished, revealing a jade tablet similar to that of the one received by the Yellow Emperor thousands of years before. He took the Mandate and returned to his home.

Upon his arrival, Duke Wen and Huang Tàì Kung set about planning the overthrow of the Emperor. Together,

they reorganized the people of Shuzhou into five social orders: warriors, literate, farmers, craftsmen and merchants. Each of these social classes had further divisions, allowing for growth within their social element in reward for hard work. The effects were almost immediate, as production and learning increased threefold. Shuzhou was slowly developing into a very wealthy House.

Shû Wen then sold off much of his armory to other houses and merchants. In the public eye this made the him look weak, but behind the scenes the Duke was secretly building forges designed to mass-produce steel. The steel was turned into weapons and armor, which were stored in hidden caches around Shuzhou. Finally, with his own house ready, the Duke began recruiting other nobles. This task was made easier as the Emperor slid further into tyrannical rule over his people. Sensing his slow loss of control, Hsin imposed a tax upon the House of Zhu. Zhu had been the most vocal in opposition towards the Emperor. The House's nobles were outraged and open talk of rebellion was even heard in the streets.

This single act brought over the nobles from many of the Houses. With their backing, Shû Wen's forces swelled. He began to make plans with his new resources. A decade after his release from imprisonment, Shû Wen was finally ready to face the Emperor. Despite the oracles' belief in a Shû Emperor and the waning power of the Quàn Throne, Duke Wen knew his foe was still very dangerous. The nobles loyal to him grew impatient and demanded action, but Shû Wen was waiting for the right moment. That moment came when Emperor Hsin invaded Zhuzhou with a large contingent of Imperial troops to preempt a rebellion.

Shû Wen called together the other rebel nobles. They brought with them bodies of troops and massed along the border, ready to drive upon the Imperial City. Shû Wen opened up his caches of steel weapons and distributed them to his army. As dawn crept across the open plain, the sunlight glinted off the strong armor and weapons of hundreds of elite Shû warriors. The rebel army began its march towards Mâjing, with Shû Wen at the head of the column and his troops guarding its flanks.

Messengers arrived later that day, warning the Emperor of the army a mere two days' march from the capital. Emperor Hsin was not worried, for he had over a thousand of his best Imperial Guards surrounding the Palace. There was also the Tàòist magic of his wife Huli Mei-rong. He was sure that together, these forces could defeat any rebel threat. He sent messengers to his forces in Zhuzhou, ordering them to return to the capital and strike the rear of the rebel army. But a sudden flood

HISTORY

prevented them from carrying out this move. Even the Celestial Spirits seemed to help the small rebel force.

The two armies met on the plains near Mâjing. A pitched battle of sorcery began as Huli Mei-rong summoned fireballs and winds to destroy the rebels. Together, Shû Wen and Huang Tâi Kung countered these spells with magic of their own. Their combined power overwhelmed the enchantress, and they trapped her spirit in a nearby mountain.

The next stage of the battle began the following day, as the sun rose over Mâjing. Emperor Hsin, distraught over the loss of his wife and fearing a long siege, led his forces to meet Shû Wen's outside the capital. Familiar with the tactics of his opponent, the Shû Noble defeated the Emperor's forces just before sunset in bitter fighting. The ferocity of the battle remains unmatched to this day. Hsin fled the capital and Shû Wen, armed with the Mandate of Heaven, entered the city as the new Emperor of Shenzhou. The crazed Hsin was later captured as he attempted to flee Shenzhou in hopes of raising a barbarian army to take back Mâjing. Rather than executing the deposed ruler, for Shû Wen could not slay his own Emperor, he had him installed as his First Minister.

Shû Wen set into motion a change of ministers and set out the loyal nobles to keep a watchful eye upon the Houses. He then began the long and painful process of rebuilding Shenzhou. But the problems he saw could not be completely erased. Centuries of misrule had left their mark upon the Houses. Few trusted each other completely. The Emperor and the nobles involved in the rebellion shared a vision of reclaiming the Golden Age of Shenzhou, but this was not true of the leaders of the Houses. Shû Wen became depressed and spent many long hours in counsel with his son, Duke Wu, the new leader of Shuzhou. Eventually, on his death bed, the Emperor gave his position to his son.

Duke Wu swiftly took charge. He traveled to Mâjing and killed the now insane Hsin for his crimes against the Kingdom. He announced that, unlike his father, he was not a subject of the Quân Dynasty but the leader of Shuzhou. He then set decrees in motion changing laws that had held sway for centuries. It was the dawn of a new dynasty called Zhou, or "Divine Center." It would be protected by the peripheral states. No more would the Kingdom be governed by races, but by an idea of one centralized nation called Zhōngguo or "The Middle Kingdom." The Heavens had spoken through the Mandate his father had received. He knew the task ahead of him, and while he shared a vision similar to his father's, he knew it was not going to be easy.

Emperor Wu and his father's allies gathered their armies once again and marched against those still loyal to the Quân Dynasty, who still held on to the old ways.

They campaigned for two years, overcoming opposition through the use of force. As the war waged, the Emperor redistributed both land and court positions to those loyal to his Zhou Dynasty. At the end of the fighting, ten of the original Houses had been destroyed, their capitals razed to the ground, but their people and countryside were untouched. The Emperor had decapitated the Houses. He then redrew their boundaries so that they would no longer be based on Race, but on political allegiance and functionality. These new "States" were named in honor of his father's allies and the help they gave in overthrowing the previous corrupt dynasty.

The first was the State of *Zhou*. It contained Mâjing, and the vast plains and hills surrounding the Imperial City. The second was the State of *Wei*. It was the protector of the State of Zhou, and guardian against northern barbarian invasions. The third was the State of *Chi*. It stretched from *Wei Yu Bay* to the northern reaches of the *Wei Shir Mountains* and protected Zhōngguo from the western barbarians. The fourth was the State of *Sung*. It was a reward for those members of the Quân Dynasty that had recognized Shû Wen's authority. The fifth was the State of *Lû*, which stood watch over the State of Sung to prevent old Quân dynasty rebellions. Between them, these five States controlled much of the region once ruled by the Twelve Houses. The Emperor's rule proved short, however. Three years later, Emperor Wu declared an end to his campaign and began the trek back to Mâjing. Near the capital, he fell from his chariot and broke his neck. His eldest son, *Cheng*, took over where he left off.

A small faction of the opposition that had remained hidden tried to invade Sung and reestablish the Quân Dynasty, but they were quickly put down. With help from the courts, Emperor Cheng was able to solidify control and complete the transition begun a decade earlier. He began to expand outside the five existing States, reclaiming lands lost to barbarians during the previous dynasty. He awarded these lands to his brother and sister. They became the States of *Jin*, to the north, and *Cheng*, the vast stretch of coastline on the Sea of the East.

The following Emperor, *Kang*, created the State of *Shen*. Centered upon the Shen River, the land for this State was parceled out from the State of Zhou.

During an expansive period under the guidance of Emperor *Chao*, the State of *Chu* was formed. This territory secured the other side of the *Yongyuan Sea*, making it a safe region for fisherman and traders alike. As the Emperor made additional gains in territory along the southern coastline, he came upon envoys of the city-state *Wu-cheng*, whose ancestors were from the old House of Shû. During the festival celebrating their return

to Zhōngguo, he named the region the State of *Wu* and gave them control over it.

During the next half century, a number of Emperors occupied the Throne. While none were tyrants, they were not exceptional leaders. It was during the rule of Emperor *Hsiao* that the State of *Qin* was created. This newest State controlled the mouth of the Black Dragon River. Nobles from other States began putting forth issues left dormant for centuries, testing the Emperor's control over the people, the land, and the court.

Historians noted that it wasn't till the reign of Emperor *Yi* that the decline in power truly began. He was not well respected among the leaders of other States, and was often sick. He also meddled in the internal affairs of the States, often naming successors of his own choosing. Rumors circulated that the Shù Dynasty had lost the Mandate of Heaven.

Upon his death, *Yi*'s son, *Li-tu*, took the throne. Shortly thereafter, barbarians began raiding the towns and small villages along the borders of *Jin* and *Chi*. The young Emperor sent a large portion of the Imperial Guard to defend the western regions of Zhōngguo.

During this period *Li-tu* set into place a number of laws that declared all common land as private royal grounds. No commoner could hunt, fish, or chop timber on these lands. The people voiced their anger in the streets. Around the Kingdom there were isolated incidents of looting and burning of Imperial structures. Public gatherings were outlawed and were punishable by death. Even the nobles of the other States began to question the authority of the Throne and decided to place an embargo upon the Imperial Palace. The tithes paid annually to the Emperor stopped. Seeing his Kingdom on the verge of rebellion, the Emperor fled the palace and went into exile in the State of *Shen*. Despite his absence, a Taoist priest, *Tài Zhu*, proclaimed the heavens still favored the Zhou Dynasty. He then selected the noble Duke *Hou* to act as minister in the Emperor's stead. Duke *Hou* quickly dissolved the damaging decrees and brought back a level of normality to the day-to-day life in Zhōngguo.

The young prince *Jing* took the throne after *Li-tu* died in exile. He changed his name to *Hsuan*, or "the one who returns home." Emperor *Hsuan* continued the war against the barbarians, and eventually forced them back. The States of *Jin* and *Chi* both began building a series of fortifications, joined together by a wall stretching along their borders. This added a new buffer between the outlying regions of Zhōngguo and the

barbarians of the west and north. The Middle Kingdom was peaceful as a new Zhou Emperor had emerged and established proper authority over the people.

It was during this period of calm that contact was established with the fabled island of Calabria. First were the slavers and pirates; while fleeing Calabrese law, they would run from the Island's waters and sail directly west, eventually making contact with the local villages along the coastline. The old tales of Autarchs and demons were replaced with stories of strange, foreign cities and the possibility of trade. Worried that further ships would arrive and establish a foothold upon the continent, Emperor *Hsuan* pushed into the vast wilderness north of the State of *Cheng*. Here he established trade routes and ports far away from the heart of Zhōngguo. He named this territory *Yen*, the twelfth and final State. Here, foreigners sailed to trade gold and new weapons called guns in exchange for silks, slaves, and spices. An open trade route was developed across the seas, and eventually trade with the Houses of Calabria became commonplace. Regardless of the trade relations, the foreign traders were usually not allowed to travel beyond the port cities in which they harbored.

Decades passed and Emperor *Hsuan* continued his rule. However, he had no son to follow him after his death. When he passed away, his cousin *Yu* took the throne.

The East Zhou Period

Again, a tyrant had become Emperor. *Yu* ruled with an iron hand. The court withdrew its support of him quickly, and respect for Imperial rule dropped. Zhōngguo was hit with a series of droughts that destroyed crops, stopped the flow of rivers, and dried up wells. These events were taken as a sign of Heaven's dissatisfaction with *Yu*'s rule. As the sun baked the land, the pleas of the people fell upon deaf ears. Closed off behind the great walls of the Imperial Palace, *Yu* cared little for his citizens. He removed his wife and son to their home city of *Hong Non* and elevated his concubine and her son over them. The Duke of *Jin* protested this exile (as the Queen was his daughter); Emperor *Yu* simply reminded him of his "place" and told him to do as he was bid. The Duke of *Jin* swallowed his pride publicly, and began to make plans privately. Once again, rumors circulated that the Zhou Dynasty had lost the Mandate of Heaven and a change was coming.

HISTORY

Hearing omens of defeat and rumors of the Mandate's loss, Emperor Yu decided to become more visible. On a rare occasion, the Emperor traveled the countryside of the State of Jin, surveying the damage that five years of drought had caused. As he entered a valley near the capital of *An Ding*, he looked up to see barbarians surrounding him. His retreat had been cut off. Angered at the treatment of his daughter, the Duke of Jin had allowed a force of barbarians from the north to enter his State unmolested and find the Emperor. After a heroic stand by the Emperor's bodyguard, Yu was killed, and the barbarians fled back across the border.

Prince *Yi-jiu*, the son of the Queen, made plans to take back his rightful place upon the Throne. The armies from the States of Qin, Zheng, and Jin protected him as he consulted with the heavens and fasted for seven days. He led the combined armies against the capital to take back the Imperial Palace from the Concubine and her son. Upon his arrival, he found the Palace deserted. She had fled, fearing for the life of her son, and had taken a goodly portion of the Imperial treasury with her.

Yi-jiu did not take the Throne immediately, but rather waited to see if someone else would appear with the blessings of the Spirits and the Mandate of Heaven in hand. None came, and so, after seven more days, he humbly took the throne, renaming himself Emperor *Ping*, or "Emperor of Peace." During that spring, the rains came, replenishing wells and rivers, and once again the fields of Zhōngguo flourished. Emperor Ping went about the lands of the Middle Kingdom to personally oversee the relief of villages and towns. The people rejoiced over his wisdom and saw him as favored by the Heavens.

Today, Zhōngguo continues to prosper under the guidance of this kind ruler. The rule of Emperor Ping has now known nearly two decades of peace. Some still question whether the Zhou Dynasty still has the Mandate of Heaven, or if change is afoot. Who, if any, would be the ones to replace them? Daily life continues, as peasants and merchants are too busy to worry about such things.

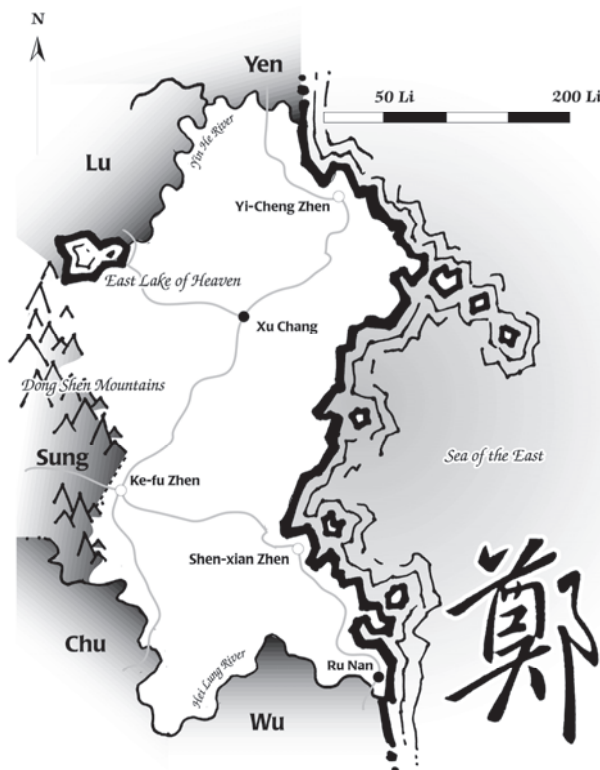


TWELVE STATES

TWELVE STATES OF ZHONGGUO

When Shù Wen overthrew the Quan Dynasty, he eliminated its racially divided political structure. The original Twelve Houses were no more. His son perpetuated this ideology and began redrawing political boundaries, not based on race, but on loyalty. He rewarded those loyal to his father, and placed them as guardians of the Kingdom, defending the people and their leader from attacks, both from outside and from within. These became the first States. In the end there would be Twelve States created during the Zhou Dynasty, each one with a specific role within Zhōngguo.

State of Chèng (The Solemn Land)



This State occupies one third of the eastern coastline of Zhōngguo. The land is almost all flat, rolling plains, and is ideal for farming. Because of its access to great agricultural wealth, huge fishing fleets, and solid coastal and river commerce, the State of Cheng has promoted free trade. Trade guilds have grown wealthy and numerous, taking advantage of the flow of goods through the City Port of Ru Nan, and it is known for its exceptional merchants. Prosperity led to a huge growth in population. Cheng has become one of the more powerful States in the Middle Kingdom.

Nobility in the State of Cheng

- 點 Zhèng Hóu-jué (*City of worship, Dog, Duke*)
- 點 Cui Nán-jué (*Harbinger from the mountain, Rat, Baroness*)
- 點 Xi-Mén Nán-jué (*Lord of the western gate, Rooster, Baron*)
- 點 Xióng Nán-jué (*Fire tamer; Bear, Baroness*)

Ru Nan (City of the Southern Goddess)

After Mâjing, Ru Nan is the largest and most important city in Zhōngguo. It is the capital of Chèng State, and home to the Five Trading Houses. Located on the coast, near the end of the Hei Lung River as it empties into the Sea of the East, Ru Nan is the single largest port in the known world. Hundreds of sailing ships can be seen in the harbor as various vessels restocking to travel east to Calabria or South to Yindù. The population is still growing, and the city is slowly spreading outward into more rural areas. As with Mâjing, many of the nearby towns and villages exist purely as support centers for the needs of the city. The city has no major exports of its own.

Xu Chang (Permits to Flourish)

This small city is situated on the plains north of Ru Nan. It is a city of agricultural trade. Farmers from all over central Cheng come here to trade rice and wheat. The quality of the local crops is such that many of the Emperor's buyers come here to restock the palace's food stores. Life in the city is simple in contrast to the fast-paced lifestyles in Ru Nan. Citizens know each other, crime is nearly non-existent, and a general feeling of well-being and ease predominates. As a result, many doctors and monks come here to practice new forms of medicine. During the winter and growing seasons, these caretakers can be found almost everywhere, discussing current topics of acupuncture, feng shùì, and any number of herbal treatments.

TWELVE STATES

Places of Interest in Cheng

The Canals: Once part of the irrigation projects that defeated the Great Flood, simple ditches have been widened and deepened to accommodate river barges and sailing vessels. The canals connect traffic

on the Hei Lung River to the Harbor at Ru Nan, thus avoiding more turbulent waters as the river empties into the Sea of the East. At either end of the canal are locks that raise and lower vessels, using a series of complex mechanical pumps. The vessels are pulled the length of the canal by lizards.

State of Chi (Land of Order)



The land of Chi occupies almost the entire Wei Shi Mountain range. It forms a daunting barrier against the barbarian hordes to the west. While certainly the largest of the States geographically, Chi has the smallest population. There are many towns and villages, and a city or two, but for the most part, the land is only dotted with border forts and trading posts. It was on the eastern plains of Chi that the Second Sage King fought and defeated the Three-Horned Rhinoceros Sanmiao and his army. Currently, some of the leaders of Chi are working with the barbarians along the Xue He River to increase local trade traffic. Because of the numerous small temples and religious schools found in the

mountains of Chi, the State has become known for its exceptional Tàoist monks and priests.

Nobility in the State of Chi

- 點 Jiang Gong-jué (*Shepherdess, Dog, Duchess*)
- 點 Gou Hóu-jué (*One who entangles, Dog Marquise*)
- 點 Chéng Hóu-jué (*One who measures, Rabbit, Marquise*)
- 點 Zi-jué Wàn (*Ten thousands, Tiger, Count*)

Hàn Zhong (In The Midst of Fellowship)

Hàn Zhong is located on the Eastern plain, near the foothills of the Wei Shi Mountains, sitting on the banks of the Hei Lung River. This is the gateway to central Zhōngguo. The main Western Trade Route passes through this city, so business flourishes within the Chi capital.

The principal export of Han Zhong is lumber, which it sends downriver to Mǎjīng. Because of the trade route, many small shops of both mundane and exotic nature flourish. There are few goods one cannot find in Han Zhong. Paper was invented here.

Chéng Dou (City of Accomplishment)

Chéng Dou is the capital of Chi State. The city is located in the southern end of the State along the banks of the Du River, in a meandering valley surrounded by lofty mountains. This city is the last stop for many monks searching for teachers and schools in the mountains. The city is also a supply center for a great deal of these small schools and temples. Because of the large number of intellectuals and philosophers, Cheng Dou has become known as a place of learning and magic. The largest population of Pandas is near the capital city. The principle export of Chéng Dou is cut stone.

Places of Interest in Chi

Tai-hua Shan (Flowery Mountain): The five peaks of the mountain resemble a five-petal flower; they are the tallest in the known world. Trade caravans from the west travel in their shadow on their way to sell goods in Han Zhong and Mǎjīng. There are many stories about monks traveling to the top of the mountain to pursue enlightenment, and there are at least a dozen poems about lovers jumping from the peak to join their loved ones in the afterworld. Visitors who want to climb at

TWELVE STATES

least part of the way up the mountain begin their journey at Yu-guan Si (Jade Mountain Temple). From here they can travel to four of the peaks along paths constructed into the stone face. The fifth, tallest peak is approached without a guide.

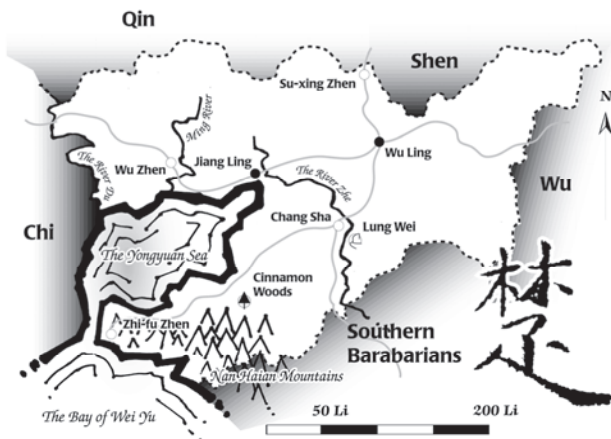
Three Gorges: Located on the Du River, up from Cheng Dou, this natural feature is not one but three gorges that divide the river. Each gorge ends in a beautiful waterfall. Many monks and martial artists come here to practice their arts.

The Qin Lin Monument: Located upriver from Han Zhong on the Eastern Plain, this huge battlefield monument was erected by the Second Sage King in honor of those that gave their lives defending Zhōngguo against the invading armies of the Three Horned Rhinoceros.

Hua Si (Blossom Temple)

The preeminent Tàost martial arts school. Its location is unknown - one can only join the school if they are invited and shown the path, and students must vow to keep it hidden. A number of pure warriors found in contemporary Zhou literature are said to have attended this school.

State of Chû (Land of Knee-High Forests)



Chû was one of the first States created from barbarian lands. Early in the Zhou Dynasty there was a call to control the Southern border (the River Zhe) and protect fishermen from pirates in the Yongyuan Sea. The land was taken and the pirate raids were stopped, and the government encouraged retired soldiers to settle there, providing a standing army ready to be called up at a moment's notice. Considered almost a barbarian State by other nobles, Chû contains a wide variety of lesser Yindù houses and nobles that decided to stay after

the invasion. Those who stayed have been slowly absorbed into Zhōngguo society.

Nobility in the State of Chû

- 點 Chû Gong-jué (*Underwoods, Rabbit, Duke*)
- 點 Gui Hóu-jué (*Twice the distance, Horse, Marquise*)
- 點 Kuang Hóu-jué (*King's defender, Snake, Marquise*)
- 點 Wei Bo-jué (*Guardian of fire, Boar, Marquise*)
- 點 Nie Zi-jué (*One who murmurs, Elephant, Count*)

Jian Ling (High Mound By The River)

Chû's only major port city, Jian Ling sits on a massive hill line that separates the Yongyuan Sea and the Zhe River valley. From atop the city walls, one can actually see both the harbor and the river. Because of the valley behind the city, most of the surrounding flat land is marshy, so raised roads are used for transportation. During unusually high tides there is serious flooding throughout the valley.

The economy of Jian Ling rests almost solely on the shoulders of its extensive fishing fleets. Ships large and small bring in their catches, selling it to purchasing companies that clean, salt, and store it. From these large warehouses they ship it to other cities, or sell directly to buyers that meet daily at one of Jian Ling's many fish markets.

Wú Ling (High Martial Mound)

When Chû's capital was built, thousands of retired soldiers and veterans were encouraged to make this area their home. This was in part to form a cadre of officers and sergeants in time of war, but to also add to the number of fighting soldiers in the area. Over time the town slowly became a city, and today Wú Ling stands as the military center of Chû and the Kingdom. Not only are most of the military academies of the Kingdom located here, but many fighting schools as well. While the city proper is but a few li in diameter, the numerous training grounds extend far into the countryside. The city is made up of a series of concentric walls on a hilltop. The largest outer ring extends beyond the base of the hill. This is also the most heavily defended city in all of Zhōngguo, save Mâjing. The inhabitants of the city make their living by selling wares and services to the local soldiers and officers.

Places of Interest in Chû

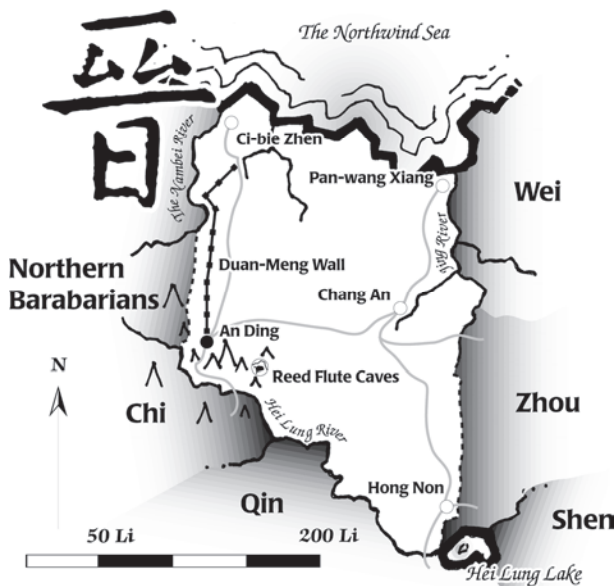
Cinnamon Forest: This is one of the few parks open to the public. The Cinnamon Forest is named for the smell of burning incense emanating from all the

TWELVE STATES

statues, idols and altars found throughout the area. Small, perfectly rounded mounds form rows upon these hills, and in the surrounding woods rest thousands of handmade statues. Some honor ancestors, some spirits, others nature herself. The road approaching the park is lined with 24 statues - two for each of the twelve ancient Houses.

Lung Wei (Dragon's Tail): South of Wú Ling, where the River Zhe drops sharply and speeds up through a series of rapids, the river shoots at a steep angle into a granite cliff face. The resulting impact causes a jet of water to shoot high into the air. The water then continues its flow southward around the face, and becomes quite tranquil as it widens out.

State of Jīn (The Land of Swooping Zhuque in the Midday Sun)



Another territory gained in the expansion following the fall of the Quan Dynasty, Jīn is the barrier that holds the Northern Barbarians back from sweeping south into the heartland of Zhōngguo. The further north one travels in Jīn, the more barren the land becomes. The growing season is short in the north, and very few export crops are grown. Northern villages and towns that dot the coastline of the North-wind Sea take advantage of almost unlimited fishing, while the southern towns grow wheat and barley. This is all secondary to those towns that support the Duang Mung Wall, the series of forts stretching along the northwestern border of the State. A majority of Jīn's small population stands here, keeping watch over the barbarian lands beyond the Wall.

Nobility in the State of Jīn

- 點 Ou Gong-jué (*Strike with precision*, Sheep, Duke)
- 點 Gan Bo-jué (*Shield maiden*, Rat, Countess)
- 點 Su Nán-jué (*Plentiful*, Boar, Baron)
- 點 Yù Bo-jué (*Jade*, Ox, Countess)
- 點 Lún Bo-jué (*Messenger*, Cat, Countess)

An Ding (City of Righteous Women)

During the early days of pacification, many of the men in the area were sent north to battle the barbarians. In that time it became an accepted custom for women to rule in the place of men. This custom held sway even after times of peace. Today, women can be found at the heads of all government branches. Only the Duke of Jīn is above them. Even he respects the wisdom of the rulers of An Ding; he lets them manage the city, while he focuses on the State. There are even female-only militia that operate next to their male counterparts. The northern trade route passes through An Ding, and quite a number of merchants here trade directly with the Northern Barbarians.

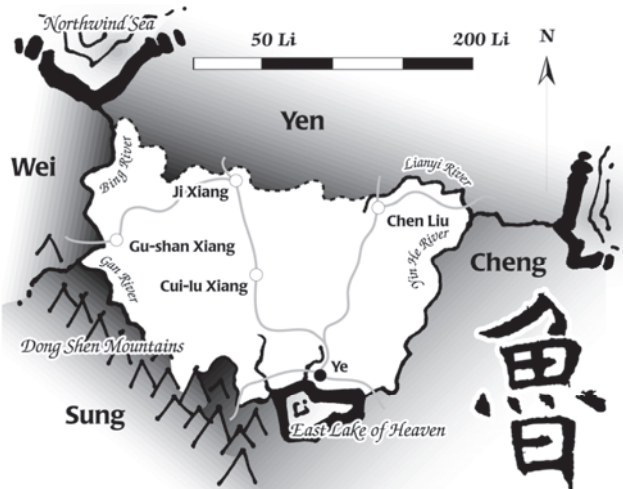
Places of Interest in Jīn

Duan Mung Wall: A defensive barrier built after the Barbarians had been pushed far north, the Duan Mung Wall is the largest artificial structure in Zhōngguo. The wall stretches along the northwest border of Jīn. A fort is positioned every four li. Each garrison is responsible for defending its section of the wall, but may be sent to the aid of a garrison under attack. A series of smoke pots are used to send signals up and down the length of the wall.

The Flute Reed Cave: This cave is said to be the largest and deepest in the world. Though no one knows exactly how deep the cave goes, adventurers and cartographers have spent weeks traveling and mapping its maze-like passageways. It is said that the populations of entire cities and towns hid here when the four evils invaded the Kingdom during the rule of the Second Sage King. The cave receives its name from the reeds that grow around it. Travelers can hear the song of the reeds float across the valley as they bend in the breeze.

TWELVE STATES

State of Lu (The Land of Open-Mouthed Fishes)



One of the original five States created by Emperor Cheng, Lu's purpose was to watch over and protect the State of Sung and the remnants of the old Quàn Dynasty. Lu took in many old Quàn scholars and craftsmen, and stored their knowledge in libraries or other places of learning. The State has provided the Emperor with his most advanced troops. Lu is also known for its odd combination of wizardry and technology. It is rumored that there are craftsmen working on a massive mobile fortress armed with rocket arrows and muskets. Lu was the first State to make use of the gun.

All of Lu is forest. It is the single largest source of hardwood, and the trade of raw lumber and products made of wood has given the State of Lu a strong treasury.

Nobility in the State of Lu

- 點 Lu Gong-jué (*Man of busy feeding, Tiger, Duke*)
- 點 Che Zi-jué (*Master of chariot, Horse, Viscount*)
- 點 Yuè-Zhèng Bo-jué (*Walk in a righteous path, Snake, Count*)
- 點 Zhong Bo-jué (*In midst of all things, Horse, Count*)

Yè (Industrial City)

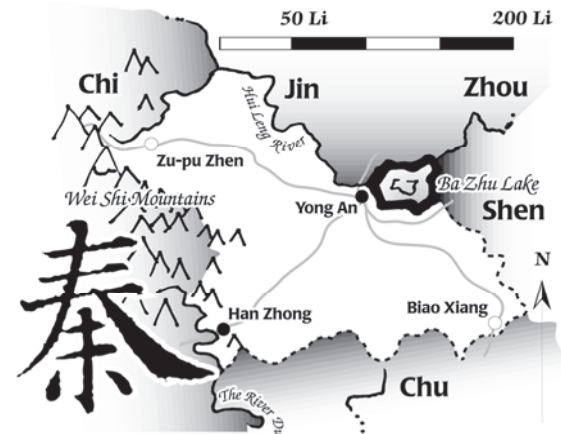
On first viewing Yè, one might think the city was wrapped in a shroud of dark, sooty fog; it is not fog, but smoke from hundreds of smiths and kilns. While the people of Yè may export lumber, they are primarily known as the only makers of quality firearms. There are also other new creations, blends of technology and magic, which can be seen from time to time: steed-less chariots, drilling machines, moving walls, and odd

constructs that defy imagination. A day does not go by in Yè that the dull roar of metal-working and bellows is not drowned out by an explosion or two as magic is miscast or as poorly-designed machines self-destruct.

Places of Interest in Yè

The East Lake of Heaven: This lake is considered to be one of the most beautiful bodies of water in all of Zhōngguo. Fed by cold mountain streams, The East Lake of Heaven is a location artists and poets visit for inspiration. Located around the lake's shoreline are temples for various spirits. It said that, if one is present at the very break of dawn, one can see a red zhuque leaving the waters on its way to the heavens.

State of Qín (Land of Plentiful Rice)



The State of Qín occupies what used to be part of the State of Zhou. Qín has developed into one of Zhōngguo's major agricultural centers. While Cheng may harvest large crops of wheat, Qín harvests rice. The yield of these crops is so large that Qín often deals with buyers from Yindù, the barbarian lands to the far south. Like many of the newer States that have dual purposes, Qín is also a buffer State, providing one more territory through which invaders must fight to reach Mājing. Once a year, buyers travel to Sung to purchase draft animals and return to Yōng An and the Wú Dou military complex situated there. Some of the world's finest charioteers and lancers are trained here.

Nobility in the State of Qín

- 點 Qín Gong-jué (*Land of plentiful rice, Sheep, Duke*)
- 點 Hú Nán-jué (*Cousin of Dog, Fox, Baroness*)
- 點 Léi Bo-jué (*Storm summoner, Dog, Countess*)
- 點 Xi Zi-jué (*Hope, Rabbit, Viscount*)
- 點 Liàn Zi-jué (*Steward, Monkey, Viscount*)

TWELVE STATES

Hàn Zhong (In The Midst of Fellowship)

Hàn Zhong is located at the foothills of two great mountains: Qin-ling Shan to the north, and Ba Shan Shan to the south. This is the gateway to the Qín State from southern Chi. The city is well defended and has a series of high lateral walls facing the valley between the two mountains. Should Chi collapse, this city would be one of the chokepoints an invading army would need to pass through to reach the flat plains of the Kingdom's heartland. It is here that foreign representatives from Yindù purchase large amounts of surplus rice. Rather than following the Southern Trade Route, they simply travel south into Chû and commission a ship to travel to the southernmost tip of the barbarian nation.

Yông An (City of Eternal Peace)

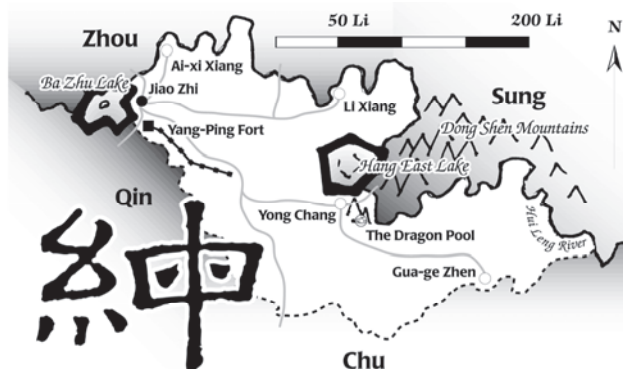
Yông An sits on the banks of the Hui Leng River as it empties into Ba Zhu Lake. Situated on the main caravan route from the northern and western barbarian lands, Yông An is a city filled with merchants and markets, and the major distribution center for rice trade with the rest of Zhōngguo. In addition to all of this, Yông An has a flourishing trade in lumber harvested from nearby forests and raw uncut timber floated down the river to Mâjing.

Places of Interest in Qín

Bái Wáng Sì (White King's Temple): Not too far from Hàn Zhong is Bái Wáng Sì. The temple is situated on the top of the mountain Qin-ling Shan. To reach the temple, monks and commoners alike must climb the thousand steps, set a very steep angle, straight up the mountainside. This temple is dedicated to the deification of the first Zhou Emperor, Wen.

Wú Dou (Martial Capital): Wú Dou is the military "city" of Qín. The complex, located on the outskirts of Hàn Zhong, deals almost solely with mounted combat and produces some of the finest charioteers and lancers in the Kingdom. Many nobles' sons attend this school both for the military experience and the prestige. Non-military personnel are kept to a minimum within the walls and training grounds of Wú Dou.

State of Shen (Land of Extending Brush)



The State of Shen was given to a loyal noble sometime after the reforming of the kingdom. While creating the State weakened the power base of the Zhou Emperor of that time, it prevented open war between several nobles and their troops. The Duke was given the duty of protecting the Southern border of Zhōngguo. Later, after the creation of the State of Chû, there was no longer a need for the role the State played as defender. It maintained its defenses, however, ever vigilant for a time when they might be needed. As trade developed between the Kingdom and the various barbarian lands, trade routes were established. Shen and the capital city of Jiao Zhî became the crossroads of the kingdom.

Nobility in the State of Shen

- 點 Zeng Gong-jué (*One who doubles the output, Sheep, Duke*)
- 點 Tián Bo-jué (*Master of plantation, Rooster, Count*)
- 點 Bào Bo-jué (*Protector of earth, Cat, Count*)
- 點 Ràn Zi-ju (*Double furs, Rat, Viscount*)

Jiao Zhî (Crossroads City)

The center of Zhōngguo, Jiao Zhî, is the crossroads of not only the kingdom but also its trade routes. The city boasts the single largest market in the world, as well as dozen smaller ones located throughout the city. Merchants travel here from afar to do business with other Zhōngguo merchants, or to buy from caravans from even more distant lands. There is also a large black market located here, dealing in stolen goods or contraband. Jiao Zhî is a place where almost anything can be bought for a price, and one of the few cities that does not suffer from the xenophobia so commonplace in Zhōngguo. With so many foreigners and trade representatives, the city is one of the most cosmopolitan on the continent.

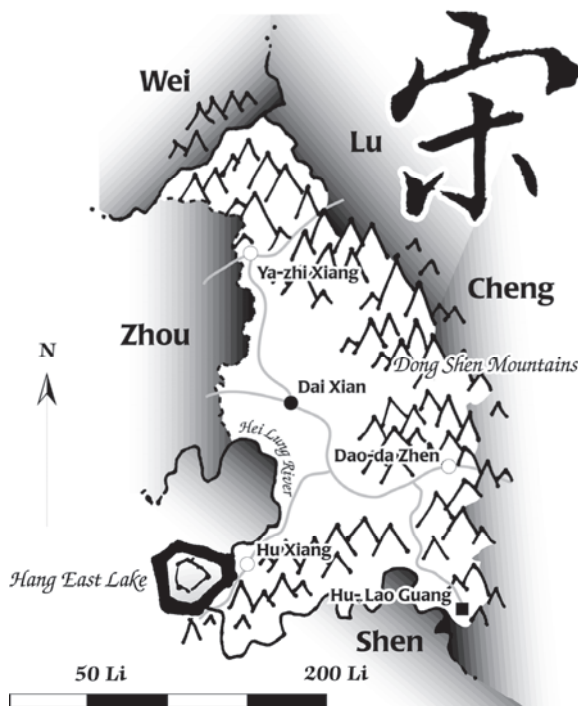
TWELVE STATES

Places of Interest in Shen

Yang Ping Fort: While there are no longer any barbarians roaming the lands south of the Yang Ping Fort, the fortress and the structures that extend eastward from it are still garrisoned and well kept. This is partly because of its proximity to Jiao Zhî, and partly as a show of force to the barbarian caravan merchants that are constantly on the move along the adjacent trade route. Patrols can be found almost everywhere in proximity to the fortress complex. This portion of Zhōngguo is considered one of the safest outside the State of Wei.

The Dragon Pool: It is said that there is a pool located in the southernmost reaches of the Dong Shen Mountains. Legends claim that the pool, fed by an underground spring, is a source of longevity and beauty. The location of the pool has remained a mystery, even though many adventurers and nobles, including an Emperor or two, have searched for it. It's not uncommon to find many elixirs for sale in the nearby town claiming to be made from the waters of the Dragon Pool. They are, of course, most likely from the waters of a nearby stream.

State of Sung (Land of Wooden Huts)



The State of Sung is the remnant of the old Shang Dynasty, and one of the five original States. Those that recognized the passing of the Mandate of Heaven into

the hands of Zhou Emperor Wen were given a safe haven for their service. The knowledge accumulated during their dynasty was collected and safeguarded. The State of Lu was created to defend Sung from anyone wanting to take revenge on or destroy the former Shangs. Since its creation, the State of Sung sat on the windswept plains on the western side of the Dong Shen mountains. The land is not suitable for more than small gardens, just enough to feed the agrarian culture outside the capital. Thus, Dai Xian imports a good portion of its grain from neighboring Cheng. While agriculture may be lacking, the Sung are renowned for their riding lizards. Trade representatives of some of the most influential nobles and merchants from all over Zhōngguo find their way to Sung for one month each year, waiting for the new herd to be driven into the corrals at Dai Xian.

Nobility in the State of Sung

- 點 Sung Gong-jué (*Maker of the wooden hut, Sheep, Duke*)
- 點 Lóu Nán-jué (*Lady of the house, Snake, Baroness*)
- 點 Yì Nán-jué (*Properly-behaved gentleman, Baron*)
- 點 Táng Bo-jué (*One who kept secrets, Ox, Count*)

Dài Xian (City of Another Era)

The only major city and the capital of Sung, Dài Xian is a city of learning. Located within its walls are the greatest sources of learning collected in Zhōngguo. When the loyal Shang were given Sung as a reward, they were also charged with keeping ancient histories and knowledge, so there are many libraries and schools located here. Nobles send their children to Dài Xian to be formally educated, while ministers often use the locals to train for their entrance exams in nearby Mǎjing. The local climate allows for outdoor gardens and amphitheatres, which are used for teaching and philosophic discussion. The city is normally quiet and reserved; however, one month each year, the great herds are driven into corrals located outside the city. Buyers and traders looking to acquire the finest in riding lizards come from the far corners of the continent. With them come various merchants and tradesmen who sell their goods to the crowd. The population of the city practically doubles overnight, with a huge tent city and market set up outside the city walls.

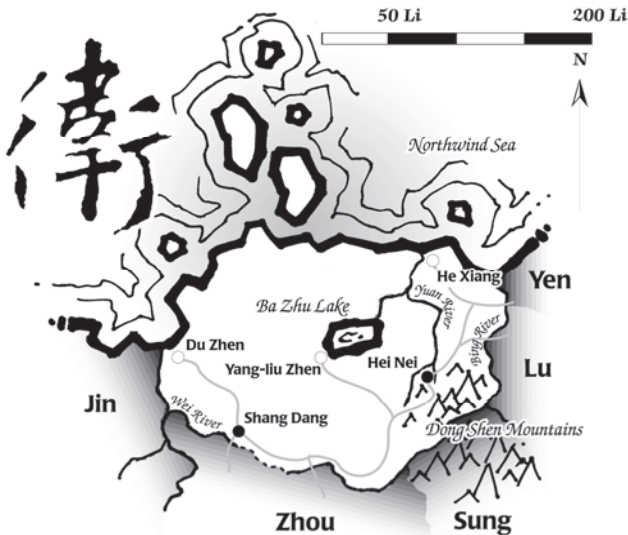
Places of Interest in Sung

The Great Library: Located in Dài Xian, the Great Library is the single largest collection of written works in the known world. It is also the official Imperial Library, which was relocated away from the Emperor several centuries ago in case of siege or invasion, so that, even if

TWELVE STATES

the head of the Kingdom fell, the knowledge would survive. It is rumored that the original copies of the Ye Ching and Books of the Vanishing Heavenly Stem can be found deep within the bowels of the magnificent building.

State of Wei (The Land of Opposing Advance)



One of the original five States, Wei is the protector of Zhou. While this role may seem redundant after the expansion of the Kingdom into the twelve current States, Wei provides the bodyguards for the Emperor and other Nobles to this day. The Wei Army has defended the Emperor with their very lives in the past, crushing several rebellions and revolts. Now, however, it is only a shadow of its former self. Peace and prosperity have reduced the army's ranks. Over one hundred years ago, many soldiers were left without work. Many took to a life of crime, becoming robbers and bandits, sometimes operating in large groups. Others became bodyguards and mercenaries. Eventually the criminal groups were eradicated, and what was left was a flourishing business of guardianship that has developed into its current form, the Escort Service. Nobles, merchants, trade caravans, all need to be protected from attack and they hire individuals from these service agencies. One can find Protection Agency offices all over Zhōngguo, and each Agency is headquartered in Wei.

Nobility in the State of Wei

- 點 Feng Gong-jué (One who was borne by the winds, Rat, Duke)
- 點 Ying Bo-jué (One who watches over the plantation, Snake, Count)

- 點 Shù Bo-jué (One who travels extensively, Boar, Count)
- 點 Hóu Nán-jué (One who seeks his target, Horse, Baron)

Hé Nèi (City within Forking Rivers)

The capital of Wei, Hé Nèi was built upon a hill located strategically in the center of a fork of the Yuan River. The city is, at best, in economic decline. It was once one of the largest suppliers of timber, but the forests have been exhausted and better sources have been found outside of Wei. The Duke is currently planning to relocate the capital to Shàng Dâng, and awaits approval from the Emperor and his ministers.

Shàng Dâng (City of Growing Factions)

Shàng Dâng is the main operating center for almost nine in ten of the Escort Services, and the center of business in Wei. Sixty escort agencies compete with each other for contracts to protect Nobles or trade shipments, with headquarters scattered throughout the city. The city also has a fairly prosperous marble trade. The stone is cut, placed on large wheeled skids, and sent to other cities. Because most buildings are made of thatching, tamped earth and wood, marble is considered special building material, primarily used in the construction of government and imperial structures.

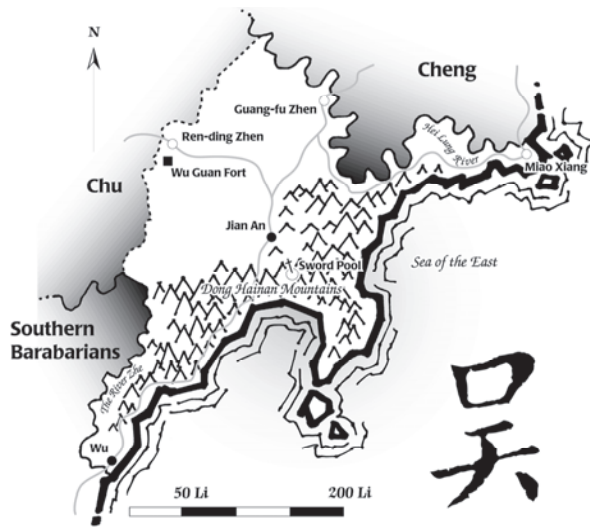
Places of Interest in Wei

The Fighting Square: Because of the large numbers of soldiers and martial artists in Shàng Dâng, fights break out more often than in other cities. Because they are so common and a great deal of the economy is based on these fighters, the laws have changed to reflect this. If there is a public brawl or violent disagreement, the disputing parties are placed into a square fighting arena. Neither fighter is considered a criminal, but honor is at stake. The loser is usually fired by his or her employer, and the winner gains face. It is not uncommon for a fight to result in the loser's death, whether by the violence of the fight or the consequences of dishonor.

The Quarry: Large holes cut in the rock by the flow of the Wei River dot this area. Thousands of workers can be found excavating dirt, cutting the stone, and transporting it to Shàng Dâng. While quarries are commonplace all over Zhōngguo, this immense project is larger in area than neighboring Shàng Dâng, warranting its placement on every official map.

TWELVE STATES

State of Wú (Land of Excessive Glory)



The State of Wú was settled by early descendants of the Shù Dynasty. They had traveled in search of an alternative southern trade route to the Southern end of the River Zhe, where it empties into the Sea of the East; here they built the city of Wú. During the upheaval of several corrupt Emperors, Zhōngguo lost contact with the distant city. It wasn't until after the destruction of the Twelve Houses and the establishment of the Zhou Dynasty that contact was reestablished. To honor the inhabitants of Wú, the Emperor awarded them their own State.

Presently, Wú is still somewhat isolated. While it does benefit from being located along coastal shipping routes, which helped the City of Wú grow, overland trade with the rest of the Kingdom is nearly non-existent save for the ore shipments to Mǎjing from Jiàn An. Instead, there is a healthy amount of trade with the southern barbarians of Yìndù.

Nobility in the State of Wú

Yin Gong-jué (*Cloudy day, Rabbit, Duke*)
Fù Zi-jué (*Three steps, Rooster, Viscount*)
Ài Nán-jué (*Love, Crane, Baroness*)
Gēng Nán-jué (*Fiercy ear, Horse, Baron*)

Wú (City of Plenty)

The capital of Wú is the city the State was named for. Wú is a port city that receives a fair amount of

commerce from ships coming to port on journeys up and down the coast. Wú is the southernmost city in Zhōngguo, and the last major city along the coast. The culture here is often considered independent of the rest of Zhōngguo, partly because of its several centuries of separation from the Kingdom, and partly because of its proximity to Yìndù.

Jiàn An (City of Enlightened Peace)

The city of Jiàn An, relatively new to Wú and Zhōngguo, appeared almost overnight when miners found various deposits of ore and precious metals in the Dong Hainan Mountains. This city is famous for the high quality of its swords, and the refined ore used to make them. Some scholars think that the old legends of the mythical Sword Pool originated here, and are simply stories told by the weapon-smiths to gain more prestige. There is almost always a haze over the city from the numerous smithies and foundries working metal and preparing ore shipments.

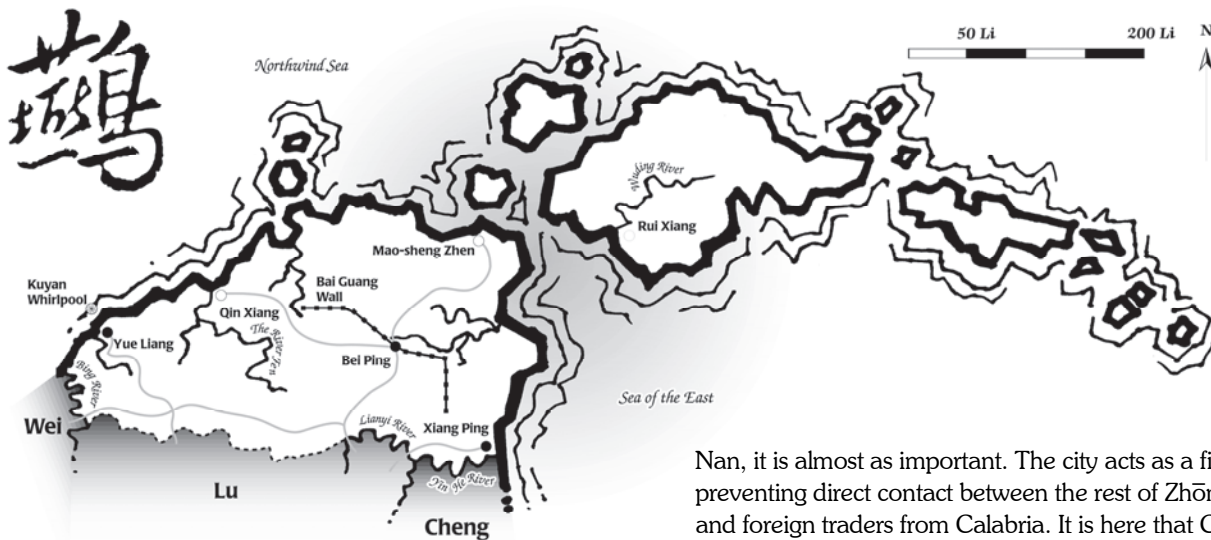
Places of Interest in Wú

The Sword Pool: Ancient legends tell of two lovers, both sword-makers, who lost their lives making the two finest swords ever created. The legend claims that the lovers' spirits were contained within the swords. The two swords were lost, but are rumored to be located in a pool of water high up in the Dong Hainan Mountains. Over time, other swords both heroic and infamous joined the male and female sword at the bottom of the pond, a graveyard for weapons. The Sword Pool has never been found, and it remains a highly prized mystery.

Wú Guan Fort: During the Zhou Dynasty, Wú has had to deal with violence from other States, primarily the State of Chù – although the Emperor eventually settled that dispute. In return, the State of Wú began sending a tribute of ore once per year to ensure continued protection from the Throne. Wú officials were not satisfied with promises of protection, though; fearing more incursions into their lands, they built the Wú Guan Fort. The fortification sits near the only road leading into western Zhōngguo and the State of Chù. The fort has several units of soldiers stationed here at all times. It is a reminder that harmony cannot be found everywhere within the Kingdom.

TWELVE STATES

State of Yen (Land of Swallows)



The State of Yen is the northernmost State. It is located on the northeastern coast of the continent, and includes the islands where the Sea of the East and the North-wind Sea meet. There are hundreds of small fishing and trading communities along the coast and among the islands. Yen was created to stem possible invasions, whether by northeastern barbarians or the Calabrese. Yen was just a third of its current size at first. It reached as far as the Bai Guang Wall, a series of fortifications designed to hinder barbarian raids across the border. When contact was reestablished with Calabria, the Emperor feared that they would attempt to establish their own ports and cities among the barbarians. To prevent this from happening he simply took the rest of the northeastern peninsula and required all vessels sailing from Calabria to register at the port city of Xiang Ping. Today, the Bai Guang Wall sits unused and in disrepair, a reminder of different times.

Nobility in the State of Yen

- 點 Shào Clan Gong-jué (*He who summons, Tiger, Duke*)
- 點 Tú Bo-jué (*By the river, Rabbit Countess*)
- 點 Yán Clan Zi-jué (*One who is refined, Monkey, Viscount*)
- 點 Gong Clan Nán-jué (*One who postulates, Snake, Baron*)
- 點 Zhu Bo-jué (*White boar, Boar, Countess*)

Xiang Ping (City Built by Bareback Barbarians)

The capital of Yen, Xiang Ping is located on the coastline where the Yin He River empties into the Sea of the East. Once the city of a proud barbarian nation centuries ago, it is now a thriving commerce center and the seat of government for the State of Yen. Xiang Ping is a major port city, and while it is not nearly as large as Ru

Nan, it is almost as important. The city acts as a filter, preventing direct contact between the rest of Zhōngguo and foreign traders from Calabria. It is here that Calabrese merchants and ship captains apply for the proper papers to sail into ports further south and do business inland. A foreigner from the east cannot travel in Zhōngguo without having stopped first in Xiang Ping. While there are similar “entry” locations along all the major trade routes, none are as large or institutionalized as the city of Xiang Ping.

Bei Ping (The Great Northern Plains)

Once the capital of Yen, Bei Ping lost importance when the government moved to Xiang Ping. With the threat of barbarian raiding parties gone, there is no longer a need for soldiers to man the Bai Guang Wall. Soldiers were the backbone of the economy for Bei Ping. When they left, so did the merchants, which led to the ultimate downfall of this majestic city. Today, the city is a place of crime and neglect. Those that can afford to move have already done so. Every manner of criminal can be found here, preying upon each other or those unfortunates who have stayed. While it is not a city of open lawlessness, there is a powerful, thriving underworld.

Yue Liang (City of Thunderous Waves)

The northernmost city in Zhōngguo, Yue Liang was built by barbarians nearly a thousand years ago. The city sits on bluffs overlooking a sheltered cove. Further out in the water lies one of the wonders of Zhōngguo, the Kuyan Whirlpool. The constant roar of circulating water can be heard throughout the city, and creates a natural tempo to the daily life of the city. While there is little in the way of commerce other than the daily needs of the population, there are a fair amount of hot springs, bath houses, and tea

TWELVE STATES

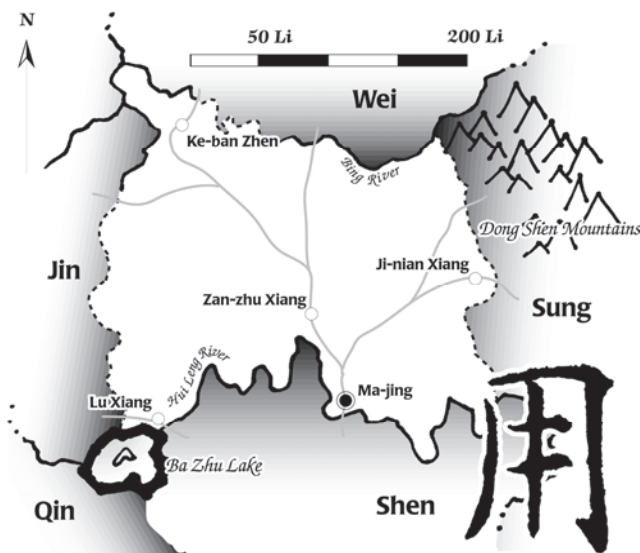
shops that attract poets, intellectuals, and a fair number of nobles looking to rest, clear the mind, and create.

Places of Interest in Yen

Kunyan (Extended Inundating Whirlpool): The whirlpool, almost a full li across, predates any civilization. According to local lore, it was created when a divine spirit, scorned by a lover, cast herself from the heavens into the North-wind Sea. Others say that it is an angry beast that sits at the bottom, consuming both ships and sailors. Once a vessel becomes trapped in its twisting waters, it is doomed. Kunyan does not prevent the most skilled of sailors from reaching the city port, but it does form a natural barrier keeping pirates and late winter's floating ice out of Yue Liang's harbor.

Bai Guang Wall: While the Bai Guang Wall is no longer used and in a state of disrepair, it's still one of the largest series of fortifications in Zhōngguo. It's not actually a wall, per se, but a series of forts and sentry stations that extend in either direction for nearly one hundred li, north of Bei Ping. Each fort used to house over five hundred troops. Now, many of the forts are home to ghosts and criminals. Because the government does not have the money or the troops necessary to police the area, disreputable types have made their home here. Bribes of government officials and careful control of the thieves by crime bosses have controlled the situation for now. There may come a time when the Emperor himself decides to clean up the area.

State of Zhou (Land of Caveat)



The sovereign State of the Zhou Dynasty was the first of the Twelve States. It is the very center of Zhōngguo in

every way, politically, spiritually, and geographically. Once more than twice its current size, Zhou has been reduced in size to reward nobles and maintain the status quo among the other States, preventing open rebellion and war. Necessity made Zhou what it is today. The surrounding lands of Zhou exist solely to support Mâjing. Because of this, Zhou has only one city, the largest in the Kingdom. The rest of the population is spread out across the countryside, tending the fields and pastures of nobles assigned the task of feeding the capital and the Emperor. In Zhou, one will also find the largest number of livestock in the Kingdom, with pastures sometimes dozens of li square. The roads are always patrolled regularly, with small forts that also serve as signal towers located every five or six li along the roadside. Only the caravan routes are more traveled than the three major roads leading to Mâjing. Every year, thousands of student politicians and minor nobles from across Zhōngguo travel to the capital to take part in the entrance exams, a series of tests for placement within the various guilds and ministerial staffs. This testing serves two purposes: It supplies the Kingdom with a group of dedicated politicians to run the day-to-day management of the Kingdom, and it sets one's feet on the path of loyalty to the Emperor. All civic leaders and minor nobles have spent some part of their lives in Zhou.

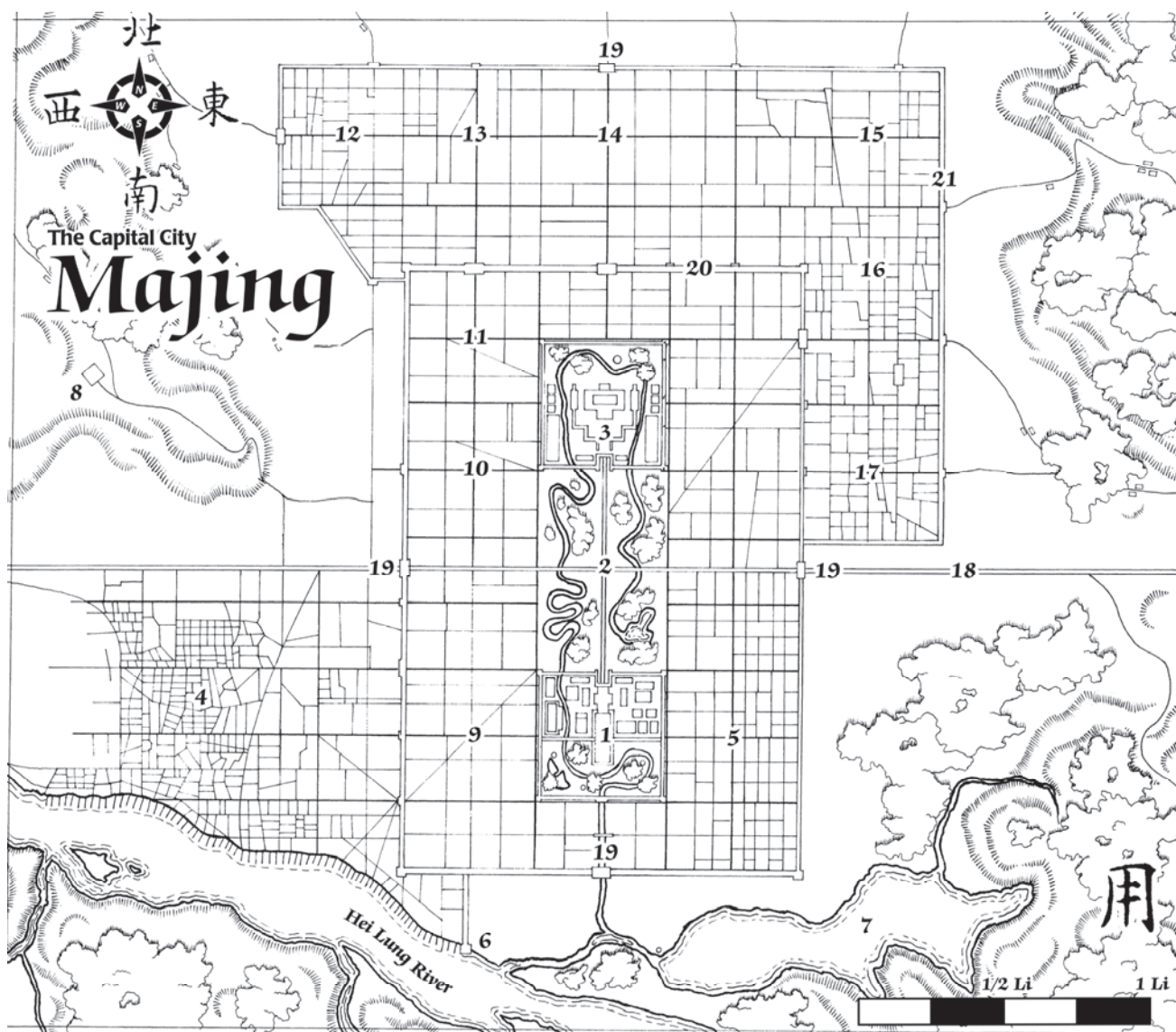
Nobility in State of Zhou

- 點 Wang Ping, Yi-jiu (*King of Peace*, Rat, Emperor)
- 點 Shangguan (*The minister*, Dog, Emperor's Minister)
- 點 Ouyang (*Exhaling yang energy*, Ox, Minister)
- 點 Gongsun (*Grand sun*, Zhuque, Minister)
- 點 Zhuge (*From All Cloths*, Crane, Minister)
- 點 Weishih (*Hereditary warrior*, Tiger, Minister)
- 點 Sima (*Minister of war*, Sheep, Minister)
- 點 Xiaoyan (*Solemn affair*, Cat, Minister)
- 點 Zhouyi (*Descendant of Zhou*, Rat, Minister)
- 點 Taigung (*Grand elder*, Horse, Minister)
- 點 Dao Hóu-jué (*Master of blade*, Rooster, Marquise)
- 點 Xuan Zi-jué (*He who is announced*, Dog, Viscount)



鼠
牛
狗
猴
猪
鸡
羊
兔
马
蛇
虎
龙





Mājing (Horse City)


Situated on a rise on the Northern side of the Hei Lung River, Mājing spreads over thousands of acres. It is the single largest city not only in Zhōngguo, but the continent. The one hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants of the city, almost to a person, are there to support the Throne and the day-to-day life within the city. The city is named to honor the first Emperor, Gongsun.

The purpose of the city is to support the Emperor and his court. Thus, the palace is the center of the city, both in design and in daily life. The city around the Palace is laid out in a grid pattern, and builders have rigidly adhered to this linear form since it was designed several thousand years ago. The layout divides the city into walled areas based on functionality and caste. Between the communities are twenty-four boulevards

running the length and breadth of the city, all lined with willow trees. At the end of each thoroughfare is a gate. The four main gates to the city are nearly one hundred feet wide and close to forty feet tall. The twenty other gates, while impressive on their own, are minor, forming part of the wall itself. The wall, nearly forty feet tall, runs around the perimeter of the city, connecting each of the gates.

The Forbidden City (Emperor's Palace):

The Palace itself is in the heart of Mājing, surrounded on all four sides by a moat and high walls. The structure stands tall above the other communities and is always the dominating feature in view when someone enters the city through any of the gates. The one main gate stands in front of an ornate stone bridge crossing the moat. The main entryway nearly bisects the entire length of the palace, ending at the Emperor's council chambers and



the Throne. To either side is a maze of buildings for the Courts of Zhōngguo, the Ministers, and a plethora of minor functionaries. Past the Emperor's council chambers are the living quarters. Here the Emperor, his family, his concubines, and his servants live out daily life. Throughout the palace there are grand stairs and open courtyards, expansive gardens, pools, fountains and streams. Very few in Zhōngguo ever see the outer walls of the palace. Even fewer see within them.

1. Southern Interdict Halls

Here is where the Emperor of Zhōngguo meets with his ministers and other lesser lords.

2. Imperial Boulevard and Dragon Pond Park

The Imperial Boulevard is a stone road, one zhàng (23 paces) above the ground, which connects the Southern Interdict Halls to the Northern Forbidden City.

3. Northern Forbidden Palace

This is where the Emperor and his immediate family reside. The name “Forbidden” reminds all that commoners may not enter.

4. Farmer's Quarter

Even the greatest cities need farmers and fishermen; this is where they live. Because of their proximity to the seat of power, most enjoy greater wealth than their countryside counterparts.

5. Imperial Guards Ward

This quarter is where the great Yù-wèi live, where they are trained, and where they store their arms.

6. Imperial Navy Dock

A series of wharfs and warehouses used to unload and store goods being sent by barge to the Palace, the Dock is also used by the Emperor also as the departure point for trips up and down river.

7. Red Bird Lake

This lake is rumored to be the residency of Celestial Red Bird, whose task is to protect Mâjing.

8. White Tiger Hill

The burial ground of past rulers and heroes of Zhōngguo. This hill is also rumored to be the residency of Celestial White Tiger, whose task is to protect Mâjing.

9. State-Craftsman Ward

The Zhou State's greatest craftsmen and their families live here. The nobility frown upon merchants and guilds, and thus all craftsmen swear loyalty oaths to the Emperor.

10. Major Bureaucrat Ward

Here are the homes of high-ranking ministers, secretaries, functionaries, and their families. Many statesmen hope to rise in the ranks to eventually live here.

11. Nobility Ward

Lords from various states have their residences here. Every noble house maintains at least one estate.

12. Wealthy Class Residence

The merchant-kings and master artisans (who have not sworn loyalty to Zhou) make their homes here. The streets are zealously policed at night by highly paid militia.

13. Minor Bureaucrat Ward

Here are where low ranking ministers, secretaries, functionaries and their families reside, while they dream of attaining higher offices and privileges.

14. Scholar Ward

Sometimes called “The School of a Hundred Thoughts,” this is where one finds the private schools to educate those of means in the Five Classics, or perhaps even in wizardry. There are a few libraries, but they are maintained by private donations, and to gain entry one has to be heavy in the purse and quick with the wit.

15. Merchants' Ward

A necessity of affluence, this part of town has almost every item imaginable – for extremely high prices. Almost all vendor licenses are legitimate – the Zhou only barely tolerate the merchants as it is, and any excuse to make an example out of one of them is seen as a grand opportunity. Similar products and services are grouped by street.

16. Craftsman's Ward

Second only to Lu, the craftsmen of Mâjing are famous for their beautiful and cunning designs. If they are not directly employed by the state, they set up shop in the Craftsman's Ward, where they can command higher prices and work to their own schedule.

17. Martial Ward

Sometimes called, “The School of a Hundred Fists,” the numerous schools of Martial Arts are found here. Although dueling is forbidden by law, the fierce rivalries that develop between schools often lead to challenges, fights, and tragedy.

LIFE IN ZHONGGUO



18. Imperial Horizontal Thoroughfare

This is the main road that travels east to west through the city.

19. The Four Compass Points (Main Gates)

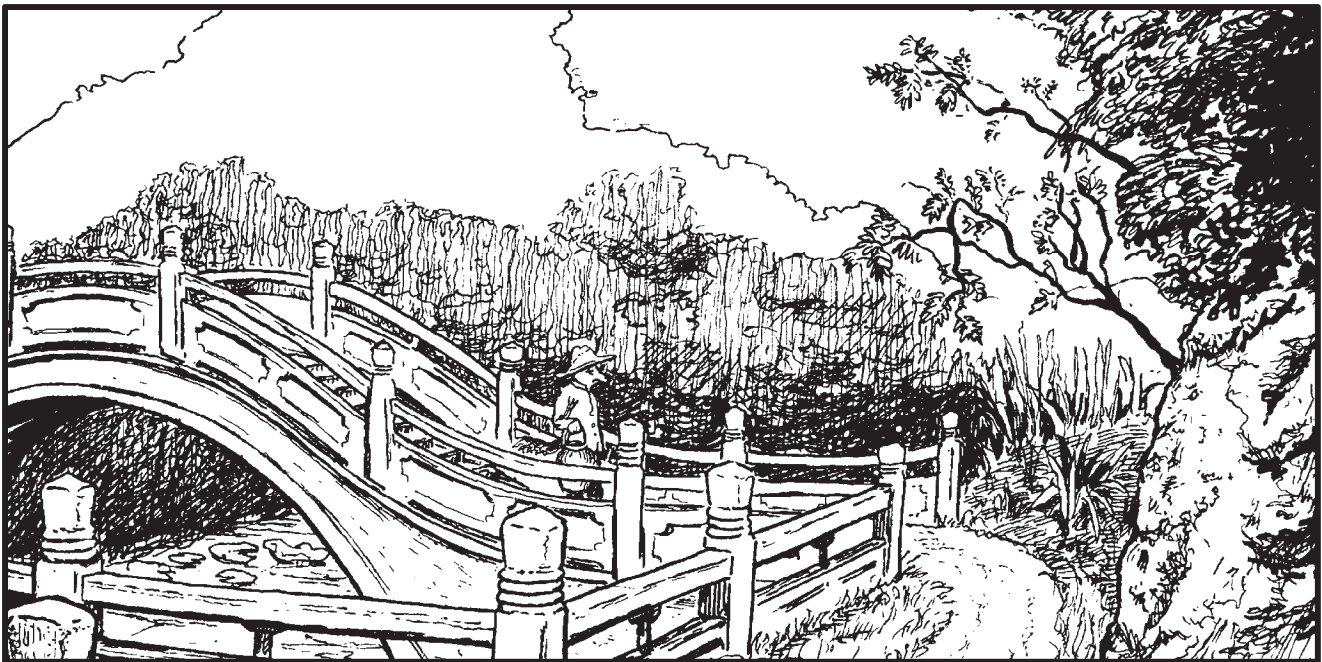
The four main entry points to Mâjing; each faces, directly North, South, East, or West. By tradition, the Emperor exits through the South Gate and enters through the North Gate, so as to always be facing south – for better feng-shûi.

20. The Inner Wall

The original wall that was built around the city, Mâjing has since outgrown its original boundaries. This wall is taller than the outer wall and used to separate the nobility and government officials from the rest of the city. Practice of *any* kind of magic within the inner wall is punishable by torture, or worse.

21. The Outer Wall

Built several centuries ago as the population of Mâjing grew quickly outside the original walls, the outer wall is still an impressive feat of engineering.



LIFE IN ZHONGGUO

The great nation of Zhōngguo, also known as the Middle Kingdom, is considered by its people to be the center of the world. To them, it is the center of philosophy, enlightenment, and technology. It is the cradle of all learning, and the child of the first of the Spirits of Heaven—direct descendents of Yin and Yang and the Absolute. Zhōngguo is also the heart of civilization, which grew to its present might from a tiny kingdom surrounded on all sides by a vast land of savage barbarians.

The lands of Zhōngguo stretch across a wide variety of geographical regions and climates, and its people are just as diverse. What was originally a nation made up of individual, racially-based Houses allied under a single Emperor became, over the past several centuries, a unified group of States where racial lines have been largely erased. Everyday life in the Middle Kingdom is strictly organized in accordance with traditions established over dozens of generations.

While the society remains primarily agrarian, many of the major cities have grown to be quite large—larger, in fact, than any of their counterparts elsewhere in the world. The contrast between urban and rural life is like night and day, but all follow the same form of organized living. The population is fairly ethnocentric and frowns upon outsiders, considering them barbarians regardless of where they hail from. This xenophobia exists even at the lowest levels of society;



local villagers tend to keep to their “own.” Most peasants never see more of the outside world than a passing merchant selling their wares or an official collecting taxes. This insularity leads to distinct styles and customs in almost every provincial region, making the kingdom a wealth of culture and intrigue.

The social hierarchy of Zhōngguo is very rigid and orderly. Since the formation of Zhou Dynasty, the social structure has been broken down into five castes. The most important caste is the Shì, or warrior caste, which includes the nobility. Next is the Xue, the literati, which includes the provincial officials known as Mandarins. The Nong, or farmer caste, is next, and includes hunters. Below them comes Gong, the caste of craftsmen and engineers. The lowest of the five is Shang, the merchant caste, which includes bankers.

Fate dictates which caste one is born into. In general, citizens can never leave their caste; there are exceptions, but they are rare. It is recognized that the nation can only prosper if everyone works at the position fate has assigned him, striving to promote the common good.

Tàoisists are considered to live outside the caste system, for the life they lead defies the system's natural law. Similarly, the system does not apply to barbarians; they have neither the civility nor the cultural understanding necessary to appreciate such fine social distinctions.

Those who Rule: Shì (The Warrior Caste)

The Emperor (Wang)

The political structure of Zhōngguo is a hierarchical arrangement, much like that of Yi-Ching. At the top is the Emperor, who holds absolute power, paralleling the Absolute, where all things originate. He rules with the authority of the Mandate of Heaven, which is granted to him by the Spirits. This makes him the single most important being on earth.

The Emperor rules from the Throne, which stands in the Royal Palace at the heart the great capital city of Mājing. From here the Emperor manages all the affairs of the Middle Kingdom. He sets policies, enacts laws, levies taxes, dispenses justice, conducts diplomacy, raises armies, and wages war. He is aided in this enormous task by his ministers, who deal directly with the twelve states of Zhōngguo in his name.

The Emperor is very rarely seen in public, and usually remains within the Forbidden Palace. The most common exception is the annual Spring Festival, which requires his symbolic presence and ritual blessing.



The Emperor is entitled to the utmost respect. Tradition demands that no other person, be they noble or commoner, may stand higher than him, live more extravagantly than him, or even look directly upon him.

The Dukes (Dong)

A duke rules over each State in the Middle Kingdom and oversees regional affairs. The dukes hold a prestigious rank, second only to the Emperor himself. For this reason, the dukedoms are given to the twelve most loyal supporters of the Zhou dynasty. In exchange for this great honor, they pay tribute to the Emperor twice a year—once at the end of winter, and a second time at the end of the harvest season. This tribute, raised through taxes, often amounts to a fantastic treasure; it is delivered to the Forbidden Palace at Mâjing by a grand caravan escorted by a large contingent of royal troops.

The dukes are responsible for the prosperity of their individual states and the defense of the Middle Kingdom as a whole. Each of them also has a specific task to perform. Jin, Yen, Chi, Chu, Wu, and Qin are charged with defending Zhōngguo against foreign barbarians. Sung, Shen, and Lu maintain the Kingdom's lore. Wei is responsible for maintaining peace within the Kingdom, while Cheng deals with the merchants and matters of commerce. The Emperor's own house, Zhou, governs.

The dukes are required to appear regularly before the Emperor's court in the capital. They will often time their visits to coincide with the delivery of a caravan bearing tribute. The frequency of audiences varies depending on where the states are located. For the closer states of Wei, Cheng and Zhou, the duke is required to be present at the Emperor's court once a year. For the more distant states of Sung, Shen and Lu, the duke has to appear once every two years. For the peripheral states of Jin, Yen, Chi, Chu, Wu and Qin, the requirement is an audience every three years. In addition, the Emperor will grant audiences to representatives of the barbarian lands every four years.

Each duke is aided in his duties by a miniature version of the royal court, with a council of ministers acting under him. They advise the duke in matters of government and carry out his decisions. They are granted the authority to act in his name, which gives them great power. For this reason, only the most trusted of counselors attain this position.

The Minor Nobles

Below the Emperor and the dukes is a class of lesser nobles, who also hold the authority to govern. They are spread throughout the Middle Kingdom. Some

states contain up to four or five minor noble houses; others might have only one or two.

These nobles bridge the gap between the ruling class and the common people. They set policy and oversee government matters at the local level. In this capacity, these nobles have the most contact with the common people, and also the greatest direct impact on their lives.

Historically, the nobility owed their allegiance directly to their House, but this is no longer the case. Their titles are no longer based on family lineage, but on service to their Duke. They are a diverse group, nearly as diverse as the people themselves. Some hold great tracts of land, worked by thousands of farmers, while others are landless and work as officials in the government.

The Royal Guards (Yù wèi)

Since the start of Zhou Dynasty, each province has been required, as a symbol of their fealty, to send a thousand soldiers to the Royal City to serve as Yù-wèi (Royal Guards). These troops must renounce all previous oaths to any other nobles, and swear eternal loyalty to the Royal Zhou Dynasty.

As part of the induction ceremony, the Minister of Celestial Affairs burns these oaths. This sends the names of the guardsmen to the celestial censor, and ensures that any act of betrayal will be punished in the spiritual world as well as on Earth. Upon completion of the ceremony, the guards receive a new set of weapons and armor of the highest quality. They then begin formal training under experts in the fighting arts, which turns them into the most skilled warriors in the Middle Kingdom.

One of the duties of the Royal Guard is to patrol the Royal City, Mâjing. They man the guard-posts at the city gates, the gates of the Forbidden City, the elevated boulevard connecting the Forbidden City to the Northern Palace, and the southern halls of the ministers. When the Emperor holds court, only they and a select few are allowed to carry arms. They also act as the personal bodyguard for the Emperor and his extended family, though only female Yù-wèi are allowed to watch over the royal concubines. They rotate duties annually, to keep from becoming complacent.

The royal family provides for the daily needs of the guardsmen, housing and feeding them in great barracks within the royal palace complex. They also provide whatever equipment the Royal Guard requires.

Serving in the guard is a great honor, and many families do so for generations. A guardsman's position

and military rank are passed down from generation to generation. Only the eldest child inherits the position; other heirs may join the royal guards voluntarily, but enters at the starting rank.



The Warriors (Shì)

The *Shì* are the fighting core of Zhōngguo's warrior caste. In ancient times, they were the bodyguards of the tribal chiefs. Today, they serve in the retinues of the noble houses. Their first duty, above all others, is to protect their lords and ladies with their lives. The *Shì* hold their ranks for life, and rank is passed down from generation to generation to the oldest male heir. Other heirs are entitled to serve in the *Shì* warrior class, but begin at the lowest rank.

In a noteworthy exception to the normally rigid social hierarchy in Zhōngguo, it is possible for a person from the lower castes to attain the rank of *Shì* by showing extreme heroism in battle and then swearing loyalty to a particular noble house. *Shì* rank can similarly be revoked as a punishment for cowardice, disloyalty, or failure.

All *Shì* serve in a noble's retinue; there is no such thing as a *Shì* without a master. If a noble house is destroyed, its *Shì* are supposed to be the first ones killed defending their lord. The *Shì* of a vanquished

lord are rarely accepted into another household; the fact that the *Shì* remains alive, while their former lord does not, speaks for itself.

It is possible for a particularly powerful line of *Shì* to be elevated to the nobility to form a new noble house. Achieving this can take generations, however.

Regular Soldiers (Bing)

There is no uniform way of handling *bīng*, or common troops, in Zhōngguo. Each state operates in its own way. In the inner states, troops are generally only raised in time of war or crisis, except for small bodies of guards to protect the duke and maintain public order. Outriders from the Ministry of War go from village to village commanding the censors to bring forth one able-bodied person from each of the registered families. Depending upon the severity of the crisis, the conscription may increase to two or three persons per family, or even to all available able-bodied citizens. When the crisis is resolved, the army is rapidly demobilized. Nearly everyone is released at once.

Those states that lie adjacent the barbarian lands, on the other hand, maintain large standing armies to garrison the border and fend off any incursions or raids. These armies often contain tens of thousands of troops, which are split into three divisions: The regular forces, the frontier forces, and the Ducal Guard. The first two fall under the aegis of the Ministry of War. The duke's guard is privately funded, and receives better training, pay, and equipment, but it is inevitably much smaller.

By law, each family must send one able-bodied person to serve. Those families with only one child are exempt; the duty to perpetuate the family line supersedes the duty of military service. In standing armies, this conscription runs according to generation. As younger family members grow up, they are sent to replace older members, who then return home.

The army is organized along caste lines. The Shang caste generally forms the vanguard, or is given the least desirable duties or garrisons. Those from the Gong caste who possess valuable skills (such as armorers, fletchers, cooks, or smiths) are put to work according to their profession; the rest are put into the first ranks, or fill out any other undesirable positions. Troops from the Nong caste are assigned to the second ranks. Those from the Xue caste are assigned to support or staff positions. Any troops from the Shi caste act as commanders or elite units.

When called up for service, the conscripts gather at the nearest army camp to be separated into groups. Those with arms or military experience become officers and sergeants. Those who lack training and weapons are given them, and go into the rank and file. They are



further subdivided by caste, as explained above. Those who fail to complete their training are put to work in supporting roles, such as diggers, armorers, drivers, bearers, or personal servants for the officers.

Units of criminals are often used as shock troops in war. They are placed at the front of any attack, and generally suffer terrible losses. The convicts are given pardons if they survive, but very few manage to win their freedom in this manner.

Mercenaries (Yong-bing)

Of all the inner states, Wei has the strongest military tradition, owing to its historic duty to protect the state of Sung. As time went by, however, the threat to Sung gradually diminished, eliminating the need to maintain such a large, expensive army. In response, the Wei Ministry of War eased its conscription rules, cutting the period of service from twenty years down to ten. Seasoned troops began to be released from active duty.

These veterans were still in their prime, but they were too old to enter an apprenticeship or learn a new trade. Their trade was war, and soon enough they began to practice it. Enterprising merchants formed security businesses, hiring veterans to protect valuable caravans from bandit attacks. Other former soldiers banded together into free companies and offered their services to states.

Mercenaries are now common in the Middle Kingdom, and the profession has become an accepted one. The other inner states are tolerant of this, because their own small professional armies are sufficient to handle any problems short of full-fledged war.

Fighting Schools (Junxiao)

Fighting Schools have developed along two general lines. The first are the fighting academies formed by the Shi. The Shi must be alert and ready to either defend or strike at any moment, and their schools offer them a place to learn these skills and hone their abilities.

These academies have developed various Gong Fu styles that have been handed down from generation to generation and are often named after the race or house that created them. Other Gong Fu styles are based on observations of one's surroundings, and range from purely offensive to completely defensive styles.

Surprisingly, Taoism is the second source of fighting schools. In their unending quest for immortality, the Taoist teachers realized that, by fixating on spiritual matters, they were failing to take care of their physical selves. Immortality would be worthless if the body had

deteriorated through neglect, after all. They therefore began to incorporate physical exercises into their regimen. Through observation, they determined that the combination of a sound body with a sound mind made spell-casting easier.

The idea of a fighting school that trained students in the martial arts did not develop until well into the Quan Dynasty, when rogue Taoists began to create chaos throughout Zhongguo. By combining magic and Gong-Fu in a previously unknown way, they showed a fighting ability that shocked the martial world. Neither their magical abilities nor their combat skills were particularly noteworthy, but the combination of the two into a single fighting style led to something greater than the sum of its parts. From this synthesis came the eight perfect Taoists: martial artists following a path so in tune with the world that they attained immortality.

After capturing the rogues, the eight Taoist masters formed schools reflecting their philosophies. They taught basic breathing techniques, physical exercises, and meditation to anyone who came through their door with a sincere desire to learn. Only the most gifted and talented, however, were allowed to progress to the next level of training. The secondary purpose of the fighting schools was to keep rogue Taoists from rampaging through the Kingdom again. Their fellow students would be more than ready to stop anyone who would disgrace the school in that fashion.

These two lines of fighting school have become intertwined in the martial world. A skilled fighter can often identify the school his opponent trained at simply by listening to the name of a technique. Those with non-Taoist backgrounds tend to name their techniques after the one of the 12 Great Houses, such as "Snake Strike" or natural events, like "Mountain Strike." Those from Taoist schools tend to name their maneuvers in abstract or spiritual terms.

The fighting schools stand open to all members of society, though the majority of pupils come from the Shi caste, as they have the most free time available to practice.

Those who Govern: Xue (The Literate Caste)

The Ministers

Ruling the Middle Kingdom is a huge task; governing it is an even bigger one. While the Emperor and the nobility set policy and exercise ultimate power, the actual machinery of government is run by a great bureaucracy. This bureaucracy is directed by a class of Ministers.



The Emperor's ministers command considerable power. While they technically hold a lower social rank than the dukes, their actual influence is far greater. Because the ministers speak in the Emperor's name, even the dukes must abide by their rulings. It is not uncommon for this to lead to friction between a minister and a duke. Historically, this has sometimes led the Emperor to replace the duke, despite his nominally superior social rank.

Each minister is responsible for a specific area, such as the law, the treasury, public works, transportation, farming, diplomacy, history, and any of a number of other mundane aspects of daily life. There are other ministers who deal with less common matters, such as the Minister for Celestial Affairs, who is responsible for both magic and spirits.

Each minister directs a bureaucratic organization known as a ministry. The ministries are made up of the various courts and offices that govern each area of responsibility. The size of the ministries varies considerably depending on each Minister's function and needs. The Minister of the Treasury, for example, requires hundreds of record keepers and agents, and thus has a very large staff with many offices throughout Zhōngguo. The Minister of Celestial Affairs, however, needs only a few dozen scribes and assistants to note miracles and sightings.

The bureaucrats who work in these ministries range from young nobles serving the crown, to tax collectors, to simple bodyguards. They are expected to work hard, and to be loyal to their Minister and his efforts to aid the Kingdom.

There are nine different ranks of ministers. The lowest three ranks deal with the common people and can be found in every capital and major town. The middle three ranks deal with the nobility, and are usually found at the seat of State governments. The highest three ranks advise the Emperor himself on matters relating to their particular specialty, and can only be found in Mâjing.

Of all the various ministers, the Ssu-Kuo (or magistrates of laws) are perhaps the most publicly visible. They represent the Ministry of Law, tasked with enforcing the Emperor's justice. As such, they must reach (and be reachable by) those from all walks of life. Also within the Ministry of Law are the Yan-Wei, who are responsible for the apprehension of criminals.

Like any other class of officials, the Ssu-Kou are divided into ranks. Higher-ranked Ssu-Kou can overturn the judgments of lower magistrates. While nobody is above the law, even the nobility, the law also forbids anyone from being judged by a magistrate of lower social rank. For this reason, the higher ranked Ssu-Kuo are also responsible for hearing and deciding

cases against noblemen. When charges are brought against a noble, he is held under house arrest until an appropriately-ranked magistrate can arrive to decide his case.

Ministers that Serve the Emperor

- 點 Ssu-Tu (Minister of Multitudes)
- 點 Ssu-Kung (Minister of Works)
- 點 Ssu-Kou (Minister of Law)
- 點 Ssu-Ma (Minister of War)
- 點 Tai-pu (Minister of Transportation)
- 點 Shao Fu (Minister of Stewardship)
- 點 Da Si-Nong (Minister of Treasury)
- 點 Da Hong Liu (Minister of Foreign Affairs)
- 點 Yan Wei (Minister of Order)
- 點 Tai Chang (Minister of Etiquette)
- 點 Tai Zhu (Minister of Celestial Affairs)
- 點 Da Gong Jiang (Minister of Crafts)

Those Who Toil: *Nong* (The Farmer Caste)

The Village Leader (Ling Nong-fu)

The bureaucratic reach of the Zhou Dynasty does not extend to the local level. Individual villages are simply too small to justify the cost of maintaining an official presence there. Instead, the Mandarins make periodic visits to collect taxes and resolve disputes. Such visits are infrequent, and the Mandarins seldom remain longer than a week or so. The presence of the royal government is scarcely felt within the village itself. In its absence, the village leaders govern.

These leaders are drawn from the elders of the most powerful household of each village. They are responsible for keeping the peace in the village and resolving any minor disputes that come up. They also represent the village in its dealings with the Royal government.

LIFE IN ZHONGGUO



The Farmer (Nong-fu)

Most of the citizens of Zhōngguo are Nong-fu, or farmers. They work in communal groups; generally, eight families are assigned a lot to farm. Part of that land belongs to the local noble, and the rest is divided among the families. Together, they work to farm their own land and, collectively, that of their lord. It is usually the village leader who divides up these lots and assigns them to the different families.

Peasant farmers spend most of their lives in hard, backbreaking labor. They get up before dawn and spend their entire morning working together on the noble's land. In the afternoon, they are allowed to return home to work on their individual farms. The work is hard, and the demands of working two plots lead to long days. In addition, the farmers must fight in the army in time of war, and are often conscripted into government work projects such as the construction of walls or canals.

At harvest time, the noble's land is the first to be cleared. Only when this is done can the farmers bring in their own crops. At tax time, they must give half of their own produce to their lord as rent for the land and payment for their equipment.

While the men work in the fields, a group of women from the same eight families work at a communal house of silkworms. This house is divided into several rooms and is kept at a constant warm temperature to keep the worms comfortable. Silk is produced year round in this controlled environment.

Elder women, who have lost their sense of smell and hearing, are assigned to the actual care of the worms. A room full of the constant gnawing on mulberry leaves and the smell of silkworm excrement would drive a healthy worker away before long. The young women gather the mulberry leaves and dead branches, clean them, and store them in the leaf room.

The older women handle the actual boiling of the silk eggs, and the separation and drying of the silks.

At end of each season, the total amount of silk produced is divided into nine lots, with the last lot used for taxation. When caravans pass through the village, women can trade silks to merchants for necessities and small luxuries.

While two-thirds of families are involved in actual farming, the remaining third are responsible for hunting, caring for livestock, and animal husbandry. Some herd the large animals to grassy pastures, while other raise smaller animals in pens on the farms themselves. Others range about in search of game to supplement the food supply on the farms. Any surplus livestock raised is traded with the neighbors for grain and vegetables, or sold to merchants when trading caravans pass through.

Farmers and villagers generally work about twelve hours a day. They only have a couple of hours for leisure time before going to bed. Most farmers spend even this brief time on home maintenance, while the women knit and repair clothes. Only the children run wild before being shepherded off to bed. Farmers only really have time to themselves in deep winter (when work becomes impossible) and on holidays.

Occasionally, some villages also have a tavern or inn along a well-traveled path. Others may have a retired scholar who runs a school for the village children in exchange for food.

Those Who Produce: *Gong* (The Craftsman Caste)

While the Nong-Fu spends his life toiling outdoors, the Gong-Ren (or craftsman) works inside. The Gong-Ren are divided into two classes—those who work for the state (including those who work for particular noble houses), and freelancers who work for themselves.

People become state Gong-Ren by seeking out state employment, as prisoners given a second chance as life-indentured Gong-Ren, or by being born into that station. The state workers have their needs provided for by the government and the nobility so that they can focus on their work. They are given a place to stay, a yearly stipend, and a sense of security. Something is always needed, be it for war or peace.

Unfortunately, state Gong-Ren rarely have time to become masters of their craft. They simply have too many deadlines to meet—sometimes, for example, the Ministry of War requires a smith to forge ten swords in a single month. If he fails to deliver, he risks execution, so he doesn't have the luxury of refining his skills to the level of a master. There are other downsides to working for the state as well. The

craftsman will never grow rich, and his lot in life will never improve. Worse, sometimes they are uprooted and sent to another state or noble house as a gift or tribute!

Freelance Gong-Ren set up shop in the merchant quarters of a large city, or wherever they can purchase land in a town or village. In the city, shops of similar products are placed next to each other to promote competition and make it easier to find particular items. Sometimes, they receive contracts for work from the state or nobility, but they usually have to sell most of their wares themselves on the open market. They do, however, have the time needed to refine their skills and, eventually, become masters of their art. Almost all the master Gong-Ren are freelancers. A master Gong-Ren will have no shortage of business, and can quote his own price and delivery date.

Sometimes, merchants will purchase a Gong-Ren's entire stock of goods at a low price and transport them to other cities to sell for a profit. If a Gong-Ren can make such a deal, his life will be much easier, as he is assured a steady flow of business.

There are no craft-guilds or associations; the state does not tolerate collective bargaining. A Gong-Ren works for either himself or the Kingdom. A freelancer can advance his station in life by attaining master status, or by hiring other Gong-Ren or apprentices to work for him.

Apprenticeship is a long and arduous process. In the early days, one must perform the menial tasks of cleaning tools, gathering and preparing raw materials, and running errands for the craftsman. In return, they learn from the master by watching and listening as he works. Gradually, they are allowed to practice some of the basic elements of the craft for themselves.

After five years of apprenticeship, they advance to the level of journeyman. Journeymen are allowed to do most of the work of a practicing craftsman, letting more senior Gong-Ren focus only on the most important work.

By their tenth year, most workers reach the status of Gong-Ren. Because they cannot compete with their masters (it would be unforgivably disrespectful), they usually either travel to another city to set up shop, or simply stay on as an employee.



Those Who Trade: *Shang* (The Merchant Caste)

Merchant Princes

Of all the castes, the merchants are the lowest ranked. There is strong prejudice against them, because they do not actually produce anything. Instead, they live off of the work of others, simply transferring finished goods from one place to another—a service for which they charge an exorbitant price.

This attitude is prevalent everywhere except for Cheng province. The nobles there made a pact long ago with the various merchant houses: as long as the merchants remain loyal, the lords will protect them. For this reason, most of the merchant guilds have established their bases there, and sworn loyalty to the House of Cheng.

Because they have a solid base at Cheng, merchants have become prosperous and have spread throughout the Middle Kingdom. They bring wood to those who live near an ocean or river, and fish to those who live high up in the mountains (albeit salted fish). They bring manufactured goods and modern tools to the farmers, so they can have more leisure time, and they bring grains and vegetables to the Gong-Ren so that they can spend more time perfecting their arts rather than looking for food. The rise of the merchant caste led to a better distribution of goods throughout the Kingdom, which in turn allowed cities to grow to tremendous size, with tens of thousands of residents.

LIFE IN ZHONGGUO

The capital of Cheng province, Xu Chang, is home to the five master merchant houses known as the Shang-Zhu.

- 點 The House of Bái are horses. They trade with the foreign barbarians.
- 點 The House of Lóng are oxen. They trade in raw materials, including timber, fuel, and coal.
- 點 The House of Yù-chí are sheep. They trade in *cao xi-yi* and other kinds of drays.
- 點 The House of Qiú are boars and deal with finished metal goods.
- 點 The House of Kài are also boars. They deal in products made of wood.

Money Village (Qián-zhuang)

One by-product of the strong merchant presence in Cheng state is the banking system of qián-zhuang, or “money villages.” It deals almost exclusively with merchants, although it occasionally makes exceptions for other castes. It allows merchants to deposit large sums with a central bank and then to withdraw the funds from branches in other cities. This saves both time and expenses for traveling merchants who have to spend money to hire bodyguards and other support groups.

Merchants can write a letter of credit, sign it with a personal seal, and bring it to the qián-zhuang to either withdraw cash or transfer funds to another merchant.

Once the credit has been verified and approved, the local banker puts his seal on the letter of credit. This indicates the official backing of the Merchant Bank of Zhōngguo. The letter’s recipient can then redeem it for cash at any qián-zhuang. If there are insufficient funds available, the qián-zhuang may request additional money from other nearby qián-zhuang.

Outside the Caste System

Convicts

Convicts are people punished under the judicial system. See “Rewards, Reparations, & Punishments,” page 582.

Slaves

Under the laws of Zhōngguo, slaves are property of the state. Individuals, even nobles, cannot own slaves. Slaves are considered enemies of the state that have been captured and put to work to serve the state’s needs, though they are fairly rare; most convicted criminals are executed. Particularly skilled convicts are sometimes spared so that their talents can be put to use instead.



Slaves are often assigned to work particularly hazardous jobs. Their faces are shaved of fur and tattooed to indicate their status. They are the lowest level of Zhonggese society, below even the lowest tier of the caste system.

Prisoners of War

Occasionally, strife between different states flares into open warfare. One result of the fighting is the capture of prisoners of war. The prisoners become bargaining chips in negotiations, used to win something of value from the other side in exchange for their safe return. Until then, they are kept in stockades in military camps.

If they aren’t exchanged within a few months, their value as bargaining chips diminishes considerably. After that, the state holding them usually negotiates with Yen State to exchange their prisoners for resources.

Barbarians

Barbarians are the scourge of civilization. Every child in Zhōngguo has heard the tales of how the Great Sage King had to defeat Sanmiao, the barbarian chief, one of the Four Evils of the world.



In dealing with barbarians, the Middle Kingdom generally either ignores them or tries to absorb them. It is hoped that demonstrating the superiority of Zhonggese civilization will impress barbarians to the point that they abandon their backward way of life and embrace the Kingdom and its culture.

Both of these approaches can be seen in the State of Yen. There, a magnificent fortification was built, called the Bei Wall. It was designed to keep barbarian raiders out of Zhōngguo and force them to prey upon other tribes instead. Over time the Kingdom has slowly encroached on the wilderness to the north of the great wall. This forced the barbarians living there to adapt to the Zhonggese way of life, as they had no place to go except the sea. Over several centuries, the barbarians in the north-eastern corner of Zhōngguo were absorbed into the Kingdom.

Law and Order in Zhōngguo

The ancient code handed down from the time of the Sage King Tu Xie-he provides the foundation for the current legal system in the Middle Kingdom. It states that no one is above the law—kings and princes must submit to judgment just like any commoner. The Yan Wei, the civil police, are responsible for apprehending criminals. The magistrates known as the Ssu-Kou preside over the cases and render judgment.

Generally, anyone in the Middle Kingdom can seek relief from the courts of law. However, there are a few exceptions. Servants and slaves may not raise complaints against their masters, unless a very serious public crime such as treason, public agitation, or public ensorcellment is involved. Servants and slaves suffer corporal punishment for any falsehoods, or for filing any lesser complaint.

Similarly, family members cannot file complaints against one another. In particular, the younger generations can't file grievances against their elders. (Again, there are exceptions for crimes like treason.) Family members who file lesser charges receive civil punishments, and also risk the loss of their family name and heritage—not a trivial thing in the culture of Zhōngguo.

The very old (those over eighty) and children (under the age of ten) cannot file a complaint, nor can those suffering from a serious disease or mental illness. Prisoners cannot bring charges either, except to either confess or reveal accomplices in their crimes, or in cases of unwarranted torture by their jailers.

The party seeking relief is called the plaintiff. The process of bringing a complaint before the court is governed by procedures which have evolved over centuries and which are steeped in tradition and



ceremony. The first thing the plaintiff must do is prepare their complaint in writing. If they're illiterate, they may go to a recorder or scribe to have it done. The plaintiff may also hire an advocate, skilled in the law, to represent him before the court.

The plaintiff then takes their complaint to the hall of the local magistrate. Each judicial hall has a large drum by the front door; the plaintiff must personally sound this drum to summon the Ssu-Kuo. When the drum is sounded, the magistrate's secretary lights the candles in the main hall. The court recorder prepares his brush



and inks on a stone pad. Five guardsmen wearing leather armor and armed with quarterstaves take up position along each side of the hall. When all is in readiness, the Ssu-Kuo enters and sits down upon the judicial bench. As befits his authority, he sits at an elevated desk, higher than everyone else in the hall.

The Yan Wei then call out, demanding that he who has summoned the Ssu-Kuo present himself before the court. The guardsmen bang their staves against the floor in unison, calling “Wei-yan” (“be proper and silent”). The plaintiff enters the hall, and prostrates himself or herself before the magistrate. Their advocate, if any, may remain standing. Throughout the entire process, the plaintiff kneels and the advocate stands.

The plaintiff must first state their name, family, home, and date of birth. These are written down by the recorder. The magistrate’s secretary then comes forward and takes the plaintiff’s written complaint. They read out the nature of the crime and the name of the accused. If the offender is present, the Ssu-Kuo proceeds with the trial. If not, then the Yan-Wei go out to bring him before the court. If he is not immediately available, the court goes into recess, to reconvene once he has been placed in custody.

Officially, Yan Wei have the power to bring the accused before the court immediately. However, they must walk a fine line in exercising this authority; any Yan Wei who carries out his duties too rigidly would be stripped of his rank for lack of discretion. If he is too relaxed, on the other hand, he will be viewed as corrupt. Certain courtesies, of course, must be given when apprehending those who are of higher rank—while the Yan Wei have authority over everyone, they must still exercise care not to anger the nobles.

If the accused cannot be readily apprehended, the Yan Wei draw up wanted posters and post them publically. If he is known to have fled the locality, then a Yan Wei is sent to track him down. In this case, the Yan Wei is given appropriate papers and warrants, a spending allowance, and (if needed) a retinue of guardsmen. He must return with the accused by a set deadline, or suffer a black mark on his record.

There are five prominent Yan Wei who work throughout the Middle Kingdom to track down particularly dangerous or difficult offenders. They are known only as Without Emotion, Cold Blood, Iron Claw, Bronze Feet, and Unrelenting. Each of them usually works alone. Sometimes, two of them will team up to bring in a particularly difficult offender. In a few cases, three of them have had to work together, and in two extreme cases, four of them collaborated to apprehend offenders of mythical status. So far, there has been no case that required the services of all five at the same time.

Eventually, the accused will be brought to trial. Should they so desire, they are allowed to hire an advocate of their own to help present their defense. When brought before the court, they must prostrate themselves before the magistrate and remain kneeling throughout the trial. As with the plaintiff, the recorder will take down their name, family, address, and date of birth.

What is the law?

Once both parties and the case have been presented, the Ssu-Kuo begins to determine who is right and who is wrong. Both sides may call witnesses to help them make their cases; the witnesses must wait outside, ready to appear before the court when summoned. The parties may also introduce material evidence. The recorder writes down everything that transpires.

The Ssu-Kuo weighs the testimony, evidence, and arguments presented before him in reaching a verdict. Once the Ssu-Kuo has decided, he announces his judgment before the court. The plaintiff and the accused must sign to indicate their agreement with the ruling; only when both have done so is the case considered closed. When necessary, torture is used to encourage reluctant parties to sign off on the verdict or confess to their crimes.

The Ssu-Kuo has great flexibility in selecting the punishment. He can impose a fine, or a prison sentence. He can order the return of stolen property, or the cessation of some offensive activity. Corporal punishments, such as a number of slaps to the face or strokes from a cane, are commonplace. The forehead of the offender might be marked with inks or tattoos to indicate their crime. The Ssu-Kuo can also impose other, more diabolic punishments—their authority is nearly unlimited. They can even sentence an offender to slavery, or condemn him to death.

There are two types of punishment, Wen and Wu. Wen-related punishments are less severe than Wu-related punishments and are carried out immediately. Wu-related punishments are reviewed by the next ranking Ssu-Kuo; the offender is held in custody for up to three months while this takes place. If this higher judgment is accepted, then a date for punishment is announced. This is usually set in early spring, so that the blood of the offender can enrich the earth before the planting season starts. Otherwise, the case is promoted up to the next higher Ssu-Kuo and the process repeats once again.

Corporal punishments are usually carried out before the court. The Ssu-Kuo selects a stalk from the canister of

punishment that sits next to his bench and throws it to the ground in the courtyard. The secretary then picks it up and reads the sentence to be imposed aloud from the stalk. This might be a number of slaps to the face, strokes from the cane, or months or years of imprisonment.

Throughout the judicial proceedings, the magistrate can punish anyone who speaks out of turn, shows disrespect for the court, disrupts the trial, or lies when giving testimony. If an advocate commits these offenses, then his employer suffers any punishment imposed. The usual penalty is either a series of face-slaps or a caning. If the accused or the plaintiff should die as a result of this punishment, however, the Ssu-Kuo faces demotion, the end of his career, or even death, depending on the circumstances.

Typically, once a case is received and recorded by the court, the Ssu-Kuo has fifteen days to decide it. This is extended to thirty days if the accused is not immediately available. If the case remains open for longer than that, it is sent to the next highest-ranking Ssu-Kuo to determine the reason for the delay. Magistrates are responsible for seeing that justice is done in a timely fashion; every case that remains open past the specified time counts against the Ssu-Kuo that presided over it.

What are crimes?

There is no statute of limitations for any crime —offenders can be tried for crimes committed twenty or more years ago as if they happened yesterday.

Crime	Description	Punishment	Standard Reparation
Agitation	The stirring up of public interest in a matter of controversy, such as a political or social issue.	Wu	50 bù-qián per number of people affected; charges may include Treason, as well
Arson	Setting fire to a building or another's property.	Wu	400 bù-qián per rank of victim's social status
Assault	The act or an instance of unlawfully threatening or attempting to injure another	Wen	200 bù-qián per victim's social status; double if the victim fell Unconscious. If the victim was maimed, the family may sue for lost wages over the victim's lifetime.
Corruption	Inducing a violation of duty using bribery.	Wen	300 bù-qián per rank of offender's social status
Enslavement	Reducing others to slavery without due process of law.	Wu	50 bù-qián per number of people affected
Ensorcellment	Use of magic or supernatural power on another person without their consent.	Wu	100 bù-qián per number of people affected; charges may include Assault or Negligence, as well.
Kidnapping	The unlawful act of capturing and carrying away a person against their will and holding them in false imprisonment.	Wu	300 bù-qián per rank of victim's social status
Murder	The unlawful killing of one person by another, especially with premeditated malice.	Wu	750 bù-qián per rank of victim's social status
Negligence	Failure to exercise the degree of care considered reasonable under the circumstances.	Wu	300 bù-qián per rank of victim's social status
Robbery	The act or an instance of unlawfully taking the property of another by the use of violence or intimidation.	Wu	500 bù-qián for first offense; 1,000 bù-qián or more for a repeat offender
Theft	The act or an instance of stealing; larceny.	Wen	300 bù-qián for first offense; 600 bù-qián or more for a repeat offender
Treason	Violation of allegiance toward one's country or sovereign, or of betraying the state into the hands of a foreign power	Wu	1,000 bù-qián per rank of offender's social status
Vandalism	Willful or malicious destruction of public or private property.	Wu	600 bù-qián per rank of victim's social status

INDEX

Rewards, Reparations, & Punishments

The state can confiscate the property of anyone convicted of a crime. Generally, they take most of what the offender owns—often three-quarters or more of his total property. This is then used to pay reparations to victims, and rewards to anyone who assisted in his capture. The confiscated property is generally split with 70% to the victims and 30% to anyone entitled to a reward, respectively.

Punishments are listed in increasing degree of severity. Different magistrates mete out different kinds of punishment.

Wen Method

- 點 Caning (in multiple of 100s)
- 點 Whipping (in multiple of 50s)
- 點 Chain gang (sentences in multiples of 5 years)
- 點 Banishment (lifetime—sent to the border of adjacent state, never to return; for those of peripheral States, sent out to live among barbarians or the Calabrese)
- 點 Clean, quick death

Absolute, 574
Age of the Yellow Emperor, 574
Agitation, 616
Agonizing Rend, 515
Air Hexagram Magic, 536
Ammunition, 529
An Ding, 590
Appearances are Everything, 497
Armor, 529
Arrow Volley, 493
Arson, 616
As Many Arrows as Stars in the Sky, 494
Assault, 616
Attendant Fireball, 503
Authority, 547
Awakening of the Five Elements, 574
Bai Guang Wall, 598
Bái Wáng Sì, 592
Barbarian
 Caste, 613
Basket, 548
Baxia Crosses the River, 561
Beggar-Style Fighting, 474
Bei Ping, 597
Better to Bend as a Reed than to Break
 as a Tree, 548
Bixi Carries the Burden, 562
Black Dragon River, 579
Black Tortoise, 476
Black Tortoise Master, 478

Blossom Temple, 588
Body of the Mountain, 501
Book of Changes
 History, 575
Book of History, 578
Book of Odes, 578
Book of Rituals, 578
Book of Spring and Autumn, 578
Book of the Vanishing Heavenly Stem
 History, 575
Brawling Focus, 508
bù-qián, 522
Camel, 440
Canals of Cheng, 587
Caress of the Ghost, 485
Centipede, 441
Champion of the Drinking Contest, 481
Changes Hexagram Magic, 535
Changes Magic, 533
Changes Magic Trappings, 534
Chéng Dou, 588
Chi, State of, 587
Chieh, 580
Chien Tang Grows to Immense Size, 566
Chien Tang is Transformed by Grief, 569
Chien Tang Thrashes the Earth, 567
Chiwen Gazes Into the Distance, 562
Chi-you, 575
Chû, State of, 588
Chun-jiu, 578

Wu Method

- 點 Tattooing — The nature of crime ("arson", "agitation", "molestation", etc.) is tattooed onto the offender's forehead, cheek, then moving downward to other parts of the body.
- 點 De-clawing
- 點 Loss of a limb
- 點 Loss of reproductive organ
- 點 Agonizing death — By cuts (12, 24, a thousand, etc.), by boiling, by beheading, by head-crushing, by being pulled apart, etc.

Pardons

Certain situations lead to general pardons for criminals. If a natural disaster occurs, anyone serving on a chain gang has their sentences reduced by five years, while those sentenced to death have their sentence commuted to thirty years of hard labor. The same is done upon the accession of a new Emperor (in Zhou province) or duke (in the rest of the kingdom). In a time of war, all chain-gang prisoners are drafted into the vanguards, and all prisoners sentenced to death are drafted into the suicide squad.

INDEX

Cinnamon Forest, 589
City Built by Bareback Barbarians, 597
City of Accomplishment, 588
City of Another Era, 594
City of Enlightened Peace, 596
City of Eternal Peace, 592
City of Growing Factions, 595
City of Plenty, 596
City of Righteous Women, 590
City of the Southern Goddess, 586
City of Thunderous Waves, 598
City within Forking Rivers, 595
Clod of Earth, 538
Cloud Vaulting, 549
Cloud Walking, 549
Collapsing the Wall, 482
Collapsing the Weakest Column, 533
Coming of the Four Evils, 577
Coming of The Twelve Houses, 574
Commanding Greatness, 549
Companion Book of Changes, 578
Concealing the Intent, 482
Considerable Earthquake, 550
Controlling the Rain, 551
Controlling the Rivers, 551
Conversation with the Earth, 551
Conversation with the Wood, 552
Convicts, 613
Corruption, 616
Crafting, 522
Craftsman

Caste, 611
Crane, 443
Crimes, 616
Crossroads City, 593
Curing Cloud of Moxibustion, 553
Dài Xian, 594
Dancing Weapon, 553
Death from Above, 508
Deceiving the Prey, 482
Dim Mak, 487
Divine Center, 583
Diving Gracefully Aside, 496
Dong, 605
Double-Headed Sweep, 508
Dragon, 444
Dragon Magic, 561
Dragon Pool, 593
Dragon's Body-Fire, 564
Dragon's Claws, 564
Dragon's Eyes, 564
Dragon's Face, 564
Dragon's Horns, 565
Dragon's Mane, 565
Dragon's Scales, 565
Dragon's Tail, 565
Dragon's Tail (Lung Wei), 590
Drawing from the Well, 555
Drunken Style Fighting, 479
Dui the Snake, 574
Dukes, 605
Dùn Jià Tien Shù, 575

- Dynasties, 579
 Earth Hexagram Magic, 543
 Earth-Sky Counter, 511
 Earth-Sky Execution, 511
 Earth-Sky Fighting, 511
 Earth-Sky Maneuver, 511
 Earth-Sky Replay, 511
 East Lake of Heaven, 591
 East Zhou Period, 585
 Eight Breezes of the World, 495
 Eight Perfect Daoists, 580
 Elephant, 445
 Emperor's Palace, 602
 Empty-Hand Techniques, 481
 Enemy-Exterminating Yin-Yang Chop, 510
 Enslavement, 616
 Ensurcellment, 616
 Exotic Fighting Gifts, 508
 Extended Inundating Whirlpool, 598
 Extravagant Weapons, 528
 Fan Combat, 512
 Fan Guard, 512
 Fan Save, 512
 Farmer
 Caste, 609
 Fifth Strike of the Forest Ghosts, 488
 Fighting Schools
 Caste, 608
 Fighting Square, 596
 Fire Hexagram Magic, 544
 Fire Hook Sweeping-Horizon Attack, 508
 Fists of Fire, 501
 Five Classics
 History, 578
 Fleeting Presence, 486
 Flowery Mountain, 588
 Flute Reed Cave, 591
 Forbidden City, 602
 Forest Ghost, 485
 Forest Ghost's Trappings, 485
 Fork Disarm, 509
 Four Evils, 577
 Fuming Rage of Flaming Fists, 502
 Gen the Tiger, 574
 Ghost Emperor, 488
 Gongsun, 574
 Gouging Strike into the Brush, 506
 Grand Master of Volcanos, 505
 Great Chain of Gathering, 555
 Great Library, 594
 Great Northern Plains, The, 597
 Hàn Zhong, 588, 592
 Haoxian Defends the Castle, 562
 Hé Nèi, 595
 Heaven and Earth Compass Chariot, 575
 Heaven Turns and Earth Circles, 478
 Hei Lung Jiang, 579
 Hell Punch, 486
 Hexagrams, 532
 High Martial Mound, 589
 High Mound By The River, 589
 Horse City, 602
 Hóuzhou, 575
 Hsin, 581
 Hua Si, 588
 Hua Yan-zi, 577
 Huang Tài Kung, 582
 Huli Mei-rong, 582
 Huli-Rui-ning, 575
 Huzhou, 575
 Hyena, 446
 Immortal Magic, 531
 Improved Cloud Vaulting, 555
 Improvised Fighting, 474
 Improvised Trickery, 475
 Industrial City, 591
 Jade Dragon (Spell Lists), 561
 Jade Dragon Magic, 566
 Jadeite Dragon Magic, 564
 Jiàn An, 596
 Jian Ling, 589
 Jiao Zhì, 593
 Jiaotu Closes the Door, 562
 Jin, State of, 590
 jin-dao, 522
 Jin-jian, 579
 Jizhou, 575
 Judicious Counsel, 556
 Jue-liang, 579
 Kan the Tortoise, 574
 Kidnapping, 616
 King, 604
 King of Beggars, 476
 King of Peace, 585
 Knockdown Mastery, 498
 Kunyan, 598
 Land of Caveat, 598
 Land of Excessive Glory, 596
 Land of Extending Brush, 592
 Land of Knee-High Forests, 588
 Land of Open-Mouthed Fishes, 591
 Land of Opposing Advance, 595
 Land of Order, 587
 Land of Plentiful Rice, 591
 Land of Swallows, 597
 Land of Swooping Phoenixes in the Midday Sun, 590
 Land of Wooden Huts, 593
 Largesse of the Great Household, 556
 Late Xiong Period, 580
 Law and Order, 613
 Leopard, 447
 Li Chi, 578
 Li the Phoenix, 574
 Li-jue, 580
 Literate
 Caste, 608
 Liu Yu Breaks Open the Shell, 567
 Liu Yu Rears His Head, 568
 Long-tang, 580
 Lóngzhou, 575
 Look to the Sky and Shout, 477
 Lu, State of, 591
 Lung Wei, 590
 Lù-tiao, 580
 Magic, 531
 Mǎ-jing, 574, 602
 Marsh Hexagram Magic, 537
 Martial Capital, 592
 Mǎzhou, 575
 Mercenary
 Caste, 607
 Merchant
 Caste, 612
 Merciful Counter, 500
 Metal Hexagram Magic, 544
 Middle Kingdom
 Founding, 583
 Mighty Chop, 510
 Mighty Mastery, 499
 Ministers, 608
 Ministers that Serve the Emperor, 609
 Minor Nobles, 605
 Mirror Reflecting the Mystic Pattern, 557
 Misdirection Strike, 479
 Misfortune of the Elements, 557
 Money, 522
 Moon Rising in One's Breast, 493
 Mountain Hexagram Magic, 537
 Movement Mastery, 499
 Murder, 616
 Nature of the Dragon (Gift), 563
 Negligence, 616
 Nephrite Dragon Magic, 561
 Nine-Dragon Disarm, 513
 Nine-Dragon Grapple, 513
 Nine-Dragon Impale, 513
 Nine-Dragon Knockdown, 513
 Nine-Dragon Lunge, 513
 Nine-Dragon Master Stroke, 514
 Nine-Dragon Pierce, 513
 Nine-Dragon Replay, 514
 Nine-Dragon Stance, 514
 Nine-Dragon Trident Trappings, 513
 Niuzhou, 575
 One Post to Support Earth, 477
 One Post to Support Heaven, 477
 Opening the Gate, 483
 Ophidian, 438
 Outside the Caste System, 613
 Ox, 448
 Panda, 449
 Pardons for Crimes, 617
 Peacock, 450
 Peafowl, 450
 Permeation of Wind, 533
 Phantom Servant, 558
 Pheasant Cries out in Darkness, 559
 Phoenix. *See* Zhuque
 Ping (King of Peace), 585
 Plucking Fish from the Water, 505
 Pouring into the Well, 559
 Prehensile Trunk, 438
 Presumptuous Disarm, 476
 Prisoners of War, 613
 Puloa Roars at the Annoyances, 562
 Purity Apprentice, 546
 Purity Magic, 545
 Purity Magic Trappings, 546
 Pursuit of the Perfect Dream, 497
 Qián the Qiling, 574
 Qiling, 451
 Qin Lin Monument, The, 588
 Qin, State of, 591
 Quagmire of Doubt, 533
 Quàn Dynasty, 581
 Quàn Kai-gan, 580, 581
 Quǎnzhou, 575
 Quarry, 596
 Quiniu Appreciates the Music, 563
 Rain of Fire Worthy-of-Heaven, 504
 Reading Spells, 531
 Red Panda, 452
 Redirecting the Soul, 483
 Regular Soldiers, 607
 Respectfully Decline with a Thousand Apologies, 495
 Ringed Momentum, 509
 Robbery, 616
 Romance of Chien Tang and her 9 Sons, 561
 Rope Lunge, 514
 Rope Parry, 515
 Rope Sweep, 515
 Royal Guards, 605
 Ru Nan, 586
 Sanmiao (King), 577
 Scorpion, 453
 Secrets of All Taoist Magic, 540
 Secrets of Changes Magic, 534
 Secrets of Earth Taoist Magic, 540
 Secrets of Fire Taoist Magic, 540
 Secrets of Metal Taoist Magic, 541
 Secrets of Purity Magic, 547
 Secrets Of The Jade Dragon (Spell List), 561
 Secrets of Water Taoist Magic, 541
 Secrets of Wood Taoist Magic, 541
 Shàng Dàng, 595
 Shang Fu, 509
 Shé Hui-min, 580
 Sheep, 454
 Shen, State of, 592
 Shézhou, 575
 Shih Ching, 578
 Shou Gou-wei, 577
 Showmanship, 496
 Shu Ching, 578
 Shù Wen, 582
 Shùzhou, 575
 Slaves, 613
 Sliver of Metal, 539
 Snake, 456
 Snapping the Twig, 484
 Sneaky Soak, 487
 Soft Disarm, 516
 Soft Knockdown, 516
 Soft Mastery, 517
 Soft Replay, 517
 Sounding the Gong, 484
 Spark of Fire, 539
 Spider, 455
 Spit Attack, 480
 Splinter of Wood, 539
 Spray of Water, 539

PRONUNCIATION



Spring Loaded Mastery, 519
Spring Loaded Sheathe, 519
Spring Loaded Strike, 519
Sprint Mastery, 499
Stand as One Against Many, 498
Standing Alone in Midwinter Pond, 506
State of Chi, 587
State of Chù, 588
State of Jin, 590
State of Lu, 591
State of Qin, 591
State of Shen, 592
State of Sung, 593
State of Wei, 595
State of Wú, 596
State of Yen, 597
State of Zhou, 598
Strike Without Shadow, 486
Stumbling Motion, 480
Stumbling Soak, 481
Suanmi Burns the Incense, 563
Sun Shines on the Worthy and the
Wanting Alike, 478
Sung, State of, 593
Sun-Moon Disarm, 518
Sun-Moon Exploit, 518
Sun-Moon Focus, 518
Sun-Moon Parry, 517
Superior Theory of Archery, 489, 490,
491, 492
Superiority of Beggars' Style, 476
Superiority of Drunken Fist, 481
Sweeping Gestures of the Iron Fan, 503

Sword Dancer's Trappings, 494
Sword Pool, 597
Tai-hua Shan, 588
Tài-shun, 578
Tàoist Apprentice, 539
Tàoist Magic, 538
Tàoist Magic Trappings, 539
Terrifying Rend, 516
Theft, 616
Threatening Mastery, 500
Three Gorges, 588
Thunder Hexagram Magic, 538
Tian-ti, 579
Toad, 457
Tortoise, 458
Touch of Death, 487
Trappings of Superior Archery, 492
Treason, 616
Tremendous Chop, 510
Tù Xie-he (Third Sage King), 578
Tumbling Moves, 500
Tung Ting Shakes His Hair, 566
Tung Ting Shrinks to Diminutive Size,
568
Turmoil of Silence, 533
Tùzhou, 575
Twelve Houses, 575
Twice-Fold Authority Over Fire, 504
Twice-Fold Magic, 559
Twisting the Neck to See Four Corners,
506
Unspeakable Rending, 516
Vandalism, 616

Vast-as-Heaven Mastery, 521
Vast-as-Heaven Strike, 520
Vast-as-Heaven Sweep, 520
Vast-as-Heaven Vault, 520
Vermin of the State, 438
Village Leader, 609
Viper, 459
Volcano Fan Replay, 503
Volcano Fighter's Trappings, 501
Volcano School, 501
Volcano Staff Avalanche, 503
Wang, 604
Warrior
Caste, 604
Warriors
Caste, 606
Water Hexagram Magic, 544
Way of Changes, 534
Wei, State of, 595
Weight of the Leaf, 560
White Crane Nods to Heaven & Earth,
507
White King's Temple, 592
Wiles of the Immortals, 547
Wind-Mouth Push, 509
Wings, 439
Withdrawal from Earthly Perception,
560
Wood Hexagram Magic, 545
Working the Bellows, 484
Wú, 596
Wú Dou, 592
Wú Guan Fort, 597

Wú Ling, 589
Wú, State of, 596
Xiang Ping, 597
Xiong Dynasty, 579
Xiong Mu-rong, 579
Xiong Wei-li, 579
Xiong Yu, 579
Xu Chang, 587
Xun the Crane, 574
Yak, 460
Yang Ping Fort, 593
Yangzhou, 575
Yazi Wields the Sword, 563
Yè the Industrial City, 591
Yen, State of, 597
Yi-Ching
History, 575
Yi-Ching Chi, 578
Yi-jiu, 585
Yong An, 592
Yongyuan Sea, 584
Yù wèi, 605
Yue Liang, 598
Zhan-bing, 581
Zhen the Dragon, 574
Zhongguo
Founding, 583
Zhou, State of, 598
Zhu Chao Nan, 580
Zhuque, 461
zhu-yù, 522
Zhuzhou, 575

PRONUNCIATION

Where possible, the Zhonggese dialect has been transliterated into the following phonetics:

Letter	Pronunciation
A	A as in <u>fa</u> ther
AI	AI as in <u>ai</u> slle
C	TS as in <u>its</u>
CHI	CHUR as in <u>ch</u> urn
CI	TS as in <u>its</u> + I as in <u>di</u> vide
E	OO as in <u>hoo</u> k
Ê	E as in <u>be</u> t
EN	UN as in <u>su</u> n

Letter	Pronunciation
ENG	UNG as in <u>su</u> ng
I	I as in mach <u>i</u> ne
IA	YA as in <u>ya</u> rd
IAN	YEN as in <u>ye</u> n
IU	EO as in <u>Leo</u>
JU	J as in <u>ju</u> mp + OO as in <u>too</u>
O	AW as in <u>la</u> w
OU	O as in <u>jo</u> ke

Letter	Pronunciation
Q	CH as in <u>ch</u> air
QU	CHOO as in <u>choo</u> se
RI	R as in <u>ri</u> p + IR as in <u>si</u> r
SHI	SH as in <u>fi</u> sh + IR as in <u>si</u> r
SI	S as in <u>su</u> m + I as in <u>di</u> vide
U	U as in <u>pru</u> ne
Ü	U as in German <u>ü</u> ber
UI	AY as in <u>wa</u> y

Letter	Pronunciation
UN	UN as in <u>hu</u> n
X	SH as in <u>sh</u> e
XU	SHOO as in <u>shoo</u> t
YAN	YEN as in <u>ye</u> n
Z	DS as in <u>bud</u> s
ZH	J as in <u>ju</u> mp
ZHI	IR as in <u>si</u> r
ZI	Z as in <u>zoo</u> + I as in <u>di</u> vide

Zhonggese words may also have one of five *tones* of vowels, which can make it confusing to pronounce.

點 “Neutral” tone, where there is no change in pitch, the vowel is pronounced fast and quick. (Think “Hah!”).

點 “Dark level” tone, as a steady high sound, is marked as **ā**, **ē**, **ī**, **ō**, or **ū**. (Think “Moo!”)

點 “Light level” tone, a sound that rises from mid-level to a high tone. It is marked as **á**, **é**, **í**, **ó**, or **ú**. (Think “Whaaaaat?!”)

點 “Rising” tone, which starts off mid-level, drops low, then rises high. It is marked as **ǎ**, **ě**, **ǐ**, **ǒ**, or **ǔ**. (Think of a high howl that drops low, then high, such as “AROOooooOOO!!”)

點 “Departing” tone, a sharp fall from high to low. (Think of someone barking, “Stop!”). It is marked as **à**, **è**, **ì**, **ò**, or **ù**.



WHERE HEAVEN AND EARTH MEET IS THE MIDDLE KINGDOM

Enter the land of Zhongguo, where Dragons, Qilings, and other creatures of legend live among Cats, Rats, Dogs, and dozens of other races ... Where the Celestial Bureaucracy governs not only the Noble Houses of Earth, but also the Heaven Court and even the weather itself ... Where evil lurks in forgotten places, and ambition stirs in the hearts of the greedy and the wrathful ... Where masters of the mystic martial arts make impossible feats look effortless ... Where wizards conjure forth balls of fire, bolts of lightning, thunderstorms, or even changes to fate itself ... Where adventure can be found from the uncharted wilderness, to the Forbidden City of Mâjing, and all places in between.

The Book of Jade expands your IRONCLAW campaign with new lands for adventure, new species and careers, new martial arts, and new magic.

You will need the IRONCLAW Player's Book or the Omnibus to play this game.



SanguineGames.com