

KINDRED OF THE EAST COMPANION

by

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KINDRED OF THE EAST COMPANION

introduction

The screams of the dying became our symphony. Twisting with delight, we knew the agony of sundering flesh.

A demon's place comes from Heaven; how else can Hell be ordered? Creation gains purpose through suffering.

Before enlightenment, chopping wood and carrying water, After enlightenment, chopping wood and carrying water.

- Zen proverb

Mystery and mysticism are hallmarks of the exotic East. No single volume can explore all of the secrets of Asia. Each conundrum peels away to reveal another layer more complex than the last. For the Kindred of the East, the puzzles move from the sublime to the etheric to the heavenly. Questions have been asked; now is the time to answer them.

This companion volume to Kindred of the East expands upon the prodigious lore of that tome. Storytellers and players will find material in here to satiate the most demanding questions. Beyond the Running Monkey gifts of the Kuei-jin are the enigmas held by the mandarins, arhats and other elders of the Cathayans. Remember, though, that the exotic must remain just that - exotic, shrouded and nighunattainable - to keep its worth. Chronicles need to give players and characters goals; the secrets of this volume are perfect treasures for determined players. Use these powers and this book's new information sparingly, as a spice to an already unusual dish.

Each section of this book details a particular brand of material, whether historical, game mechanical or for roleplaying. Players are recommended to peruse only those



sections pertinent to their characters, so as to keep some surprises.

Chapter One: The Hundred Corpse Families relates the history of the Kuei-jin's courts and the development of their structures, families and traditions. The courts did not spring full-formed from nothingness; they are the result of thousands of years of undead interaction. The twisting roads of history give insight into why the Kuei-jin organize along the lines that they use.

Chapter Two: The Demon People details many of the hidden vampires of the East. The Kuei-jin are not the only Chi-stealing unliving monsters in Asia. Game systems are included for these different sorts of vampires, as well as some clarifications of the Kuei-jin themselves.

Chapter Three: Ten Thousand Terrors looks at the powerful Disciplines of the elder Kuei-jin, as well as the lesser-known Disciplines from lost lore or areas on the outskirts of the Middle Kingdom. The Kuei-jin have far more versatility than most suspect, but the mastery of such powers often comes with a price. Beyond the bounds of "acceptable" society, Cathayans practice arts that are both spiritual and disturbing.

Chapter Four: Wandering Directions elaborates on the function of Direction in Kuei-jin society. More than just an astrological convention, Directton has a profound impact upon the duties of a Kuei-jin and her expected place in the courts. While the young Running Monkeys of the modern age may flout the old "superstitions," the elders and magicians pay careful attention to the confluences of Direction.

Chapter Five: The Breath of Gods provides some detail on the religions common to Asia. Buddhism, Zen, Shinto and Hindu are all elaborated so that players unfamiliar with Eastern religious thought can discover the nuances of these powerful and widespread faiths. In addition, a look at the Asian relations to Islam and Christianity rounds out this theological treatise. **Chapter Six: Gweilo** draws attention to the few Kin-jin who exist in the East. Cainites in Asia risk all of the wrong kinds of attention. Kuei-jin in the West are under similar pressures, and survival isn't easy in a land of foreign and hostile vampires.

Appendix: Rules of the Hungry Dead brings Kindred of the East into line with the new changes and updates in Vampire: The Masquerade Revised Edition. Game mechanics are updated and elaborated.

How to Use This Book

Kindred of the East games already boil over with the arcane and unusual. Adding the entirety of this book all at once may be enough to send a carefully planned chronicle careening toward unknown territory. Exercise caution and become familiar with the new elements before diving headlong into deep waters.

That said, there are several sections that can be useful immediately. The expanded information about history and directions gives new depth to characters and to their development. Tossing in a few choice bits about the history or current practices of the courts can add political tension and intrigue to a world already crisscrossing with shadow wars. Directions help players get a firm grasp on the motivations of their characters, and are especially good for introducing new players to the game.

New Disciplines, vampire types and Dharmas need to be handled carefully. On the one hand, many players will delight in the range of possibilities, and will want to include them immediately. On the other hand, adding them all at once cheapens their effectiveness - powers that are common are ""not surprising or terrifying. The scarcity of these new revelations, and their uniqueness even for the Middle Kingdom setting, must be maintained for them to keep their thrill.

The use of revised game mechanics, of course, depends wholly upon whether or not the troupe uses **Vampire: The Masquerade** Revised Edition. Players with those sets of rules will quickly note minor but influential changes that are reflected into **Kindred of the East**. Troupes that still use **Vampire: The Masquerade** Second Edition may find some of the developments in the Appendix confusing, though, and shouldn't feel bound by all of the updates. Ultimately, the Golden Rule rears its gilded head once more. Players and Storytellers alike know what they want to get out of their chronicles. The information in this book can take a chronicle in many new directions, or it can supplement existing stories. Take what works for your troupe; take what you like, and make it your own.



CHAPTER ONE: THE HUNDRED CORPSE FAMilies

The rain that births us The fire that moves our bodies Both of these are wrong.

We are different from you.

- A servant at Yao Han

Although Kuei-jin enter the Middle Kingdom alone, few choose to continue existing in isolation. The vividness of the Second Breath etches itself forever into a Kuei-jin's memory, dredging up images of man-eating hell-dogs, rivers of fire, storms of knives - all in the most explicit and debilitating detail. Such memories, simply put, are best not faced alone. Basic survival dictates safety, and sanity, in numbers.

In addition to facing her individual nightmares of the journey through the spirit hells, a Kuei-jin needs the mutual support and assistance of her fellow vampires during the initial stages of her existence. Order and purpose make indelible marks on the Middle Kingdom. Every Kuei-jin, regardless of her personal Road Back to the land of mortals, fits into a specific place in the Great Cycle, preordained by the celestial dragons. In order to understand and fulfill her purpose, a Kuei-jin who rises above the bestial existence of a *chih-mei* undergoes rigorous physical and spiritual instruction. Here too, isolation proves a rash choice.

Kuei-jin society revolves around two basic social structures: the *wu* and the court. These structures provide both support for individual Kuei-jin and order throughout the Middle Kingdom. A *wu* allows an individual Kuei-jin to tap into a trusted reservoir of support as she travels the path to



Dharmic fulfillment. The court, an organization of many interconnected *wu*, provides a network of order and authority for the Kuei-jin of a specific region, be it a city or a larger geographic area.

The composition of *wu* and courts varies from place to place in the Middle Kingdom, depending upon the ulterior motives and purposes of their organization. Yet despite the vast differences among these entities, every *wu* and court act to preserve their members' best interests. Of course, in the Middle Kingdom, such interests often operate at crosspurposes.

CHINA

Long considered to be the nucleus of the Middle Kingdom (at least among those Cathayans who call it home), China has been a playground and a battleground for many of the Spirit Courts' schemes. Cathayan civilization first developed along the banks of the sacred rivers; the great texts and teachings regarding the Kuei-jin's nature have their source here as well. Kuei-jin of pure Chinese origin, regardless of the Age in which they took the Second Breath, know the special position China historically occupies in the Middle Kingdom. As descendants of the font of East-em vampiric society, Chinese Kuei-jin boast of their place at the pinnacle of Cathayan civilization. The most respected elders also know of the other aspect of China's longevity in Kuei-jin history: That by being the first home of the Kuei-jin, China has also suffered the most.

THE FIVE AUGUST COURTS OF THE QUINCUNX

History

Legends record the deeds of the Five Emperors, a quintet of immortals who took it upon themselves to organize the first generations of Kuei-jin under their respective standards. The five Kuei-jin "families" that came together evolved into the five original courts of Kuei-jin society: the Court of the Black Tortoise in the north, the Court of the White Tiger in the west, the Court of the Azure Dragon in the east, the Court of the Scarlet Phoenix in the south, and the Court of the Yellow Emperor in the central regions of the country.

Each of these courts pledged themselves to fulfilling specific tasks and missions for the future of the Kuei-jin and the greater Middle Kingdom. Maintaining the integrity of sacred dragon lines, reclaiming the good graces of the Spirit Courts and finding a path back to unity with the Great Cycle of Being consumed these courts' original activities. In the beginning, this arrangement blossomed; the Five August Courts built up a solid, all-encompassing social, political and philosophical network among the Cathayans. Yet as time progressed, these Five Courts atrophied, concerning themselves more with augmenting their temporal power than fulfilling their duties. Bloody wars with other shen increased; mortal populations suffered under Cathayan-inspired blood cults; internecine guarreling pitted court against court over status, resources and access to the dragon lines. The structure of the Five August Courts split apart; each court chose to pursue its own agenda free from the restrictions imposed by the former arrangements.

Several Black Tortoise wit, now unfettered from the structure of the courts, attached themselves to a band of northern tribes called the Blue Mongols, and traveled south among the forces of Genghis Khan. As the great Khan cut a wide swath through northern China, these *wu* heightened the perception of his army's strength and invincibility by the native Chinese, who viewed the might of the Khan's forces as nothing less than supernatural.

Cathayans ingratiated themselves into some positions of influence within the new Mongol empire, which initiated one of the most drastic periods of upheaval in China. Along with imposing a wholly new government and society, Mongol leaders received audiences of foreign merchants and traders - as well as, unbeknownst to them, a few Kin-jin.

The presence of these foreign *shen* in China sat uneasily with several ancestors still connected to the remnants of the Yellow Emperor court. Dispatching invitations to all the ancestors in China, the Yellow Emperor Kuei-jin proposed to reform and rebuild the network of the original five courts, seeing a new, unified structure as the only way to guard against the unsavoriness that would most assuredly result from the presence of supernatural *gweilo*.



The Treaty of the Quincunx

In the year 1304 C.E., one decade after the death of the Mongol-emperor Kublai Khan, the ancestors of the Courts of the Black Tortoise, White Tiger and Yellow Emperor convened at the sacred Shaolin monastery near the ancient city of Changan. This convention, known as the Council of Dragons, established a new authority and system of government for the Kuei-jin of China. The agreement, called the Treaty of the Quincunx, did away with the old argument of the Five August Courts in favor of a system of order specifically generated to combat the presence of foreign Kin-jin in the Middle Kingdom. The main highlights of the treaty are as follows:

Preamble

Whereas we, the right and proper ancestors of the Courts of the Black Tortoise, White Tiger and Yellow Emperor, being the true and direct Descendants and Inheritors of the Duties and Obligations of the Spirit Courts as ordained to the first generations of the Wan Xian at the Sacred City Meru, seeking to form Union among ourselves and the future generations of Wan Kuei that shall be deemed more acceptable to the Dragons of the Spirit Courts and the August Personage of Jade, do gather herein in mutual brotherhood and concert to discover again the correct Path to the Graces of Heaven and the August Personage.

Provisions

We do herein resolve, that the Agreements contained in these Inspired Pages shall be here and hereafter binding to all Wan Kuei throughout the Middle Kingdom, and that any and all Provisions of these Agreements, having been drawn in good faith and in a manner considered to be acceptable to the August Personage of Jade, shall heretofore supersede any and all former Agreements and Arrangements set forth by the original Five August Courts.

We do further resolve that those in Attendance at the Humble Drafting of these Agreements shall be recognized here and hereafter as the Present and Perpetual Authorities over the Wan Kuei of the Middle Kingdom.

We do further resolve, that the Remnants of the Five August Courts shall be dissolved, and that in their place shall be erected Five new courts more pleasing to the August Personage of Jade.

We do further resolve, that the Court of the northern way shall be known as the Blood Court, that the Court of the eastern way shall be known as the Flesh Court, that the Court of the southern way shall be known as the Flame Court, that the Court of the western way shall be known as the Bone Court, that the Court of the center way shall be known as the Jade Court, and that the collective of these courts shall be known hereafter as the Five August Courts of the Quincunx.

We do further resolve, that all Pronouncements spiritual and temporal shall emanate from the central authority of the Quincunx as set forth in this Agreement, and that any and all Pronouncements therefrom shall be here and hereafter binding among all Wan Kuei of the Middle Kingdom.

We do further resolve, that those Supernaturals in our midst calling themselves the Children of Kain shall here and hereafter be considered Enemies of the Wan Kuei, and that all Wan Kuei of the Middle Kingdom are hereby enjoined from any contact or mutual traffic with these Supernaturals.

We do further resolve, that those Wan Kuei of the Remnants of the Courts of the Azure Dragon and the Scarlet Phoenix, having shown their outright Refusal to participate in the Humble Drafting of this Agreement, shall here and thereafter be disallowed from participating in any and all of the Benefits and Rewards resulting from this Agreement, and that their ancestors shall be considered dissolved of their respective Authorities, and that new ancestors shall be chosen from those herein assembled to bring the Wan Kuei residing under the Auspices of these former courts into concert with this Agreement and its Provisions.

Pledged this day before our entire Brethren and the August Personage of Jade, here and hereafter binding.

Witnessed by the Second Minister of the Eighteenth Ministry of the August Personage of Jade.

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The Bestowed Ancestor of the Celestial Realms

The Treaty of the Quincunx confers one ancestor from the five August Courts with the authority to speak *ex cathedra* for the entire Quincunx. This individual, known as the Bestowed Ancestor of the Celestial Realms (or simply the Bestowed Ancestor), is chosen by lottery from all of the ancestors in attendance at a convocation of the Five August Courts. The Bestowed Ancestor holds his or her authority for a term of five years (the length of time between convocations): the position may not be renewed.

The Bestowed Ancestor is mostly a figurehead; any large policy matters are settled at the quinquennial gatherings. However, the individual Kuei-jin chosen to represent the Five August Courts is considered to be the choice of the celestial bureaucracy. He or she represents the only connection many remote or rural Kuei-jin have to the central authority of the Quincunx. The individual Bestowed Ancestor is expected to exercise all due reverence for the teachings of the Great Principle and the decisions of the Five August Courts for the duration of his or her appointment.

The Blood Court of Beijing

The Blood Court acts as the seat of authority for the Five August Courts, a role it has played since the drafting of the Treaty of the Quincunx. Ensconced in Beijing, the capital of China since the Manchu dynasty, the Blood Court promulgates laws and dictates policy for all *wu* under the Quincunx's authority, which according to the Treaty includes every vampire in the Middle Kingdom.

The Blood Court stands as the bedrock of tradition for the Kuei-jin. Its members, mostly military and noble types, place a premium on correctness and harmony with the Great Cycle. Ritual abounds within Blood Court *wu*; many of the most famous Cathayan ceremonies, such as the Three Dialogues, originated from Blood Court ancestors and sages. Kuei-jin belonging to the Blood Court are generally looked upon as having a more elevated status, both within the Quincunx and throughout the Middle Kingdom, because of their historical proximity to the "hallowed" personage of the emperor. When the Blood Court spoke, it spoke for all Kueijin, and its word was final and long-reaching.

The stability and security of centuries of dynastic rule, of which the Blood Court reaped significant benefits, disappeared decades ago. The sterility of Communist China, with its rejection and suppression of ritual and religion, has forced the Blood Court to adapt itself to the reality of the modern age, while still trying to keep a faithful continuity with the past. Maintaining order among the Kuei-jin and propagating the ancient rituals requires a meticulous balancing act for all *wu*, and the collision of millennia-old ceremony and dictatorial power often puts two or more Blood Court *wu* in opposition to one another.

The Blood Court endeavors to increase the influence of the Quincunx over its present jurisdiction; it also works to reclaim

hegemony over those areas of the Middle Kingdom where the vampiric populations have been declared *akuma*. Kuei-jin aspected to the descendants of the Black Tortoise hold crucial positions as advisors and Blood Court representatives in the plan to return the Flame Court of I long Kong back to its rightful place in the Quincunx's fold

Kuei-jin from the Blood Court also travel to Quincunx-friendly courts in Japan, Korea and elsewhere, bolstering support for the Five August Courts among long-contested areas of the Middle Kingdom. The Blood Court of Beijing oversees the selection and practice of *heimin*, those unaffiliated Cathayans whom the Quincunx uses for couriers between the various courts, and those few Kindred residing in the major cities of the Middle Kingdom.

Cathayans aspected to the northern direction make up the magistrate class of Kuei-jin society; such is the same with the Blood Court of Beijing, the northern point on the Quincunx compass. Kuei-jin in the Blood Court strive to maintain order and harmony among the Kuei-jin. To this end, a selection of ancestors and high-level mandarins convene yearly in a single adjudicating body to address and resolve all noteworthy disputes among the Kuei-jin.

This body, the Revered Tribunal of the August Personage, mediates disputes between *wu*, courts and even individual Kuei-jin if the issue is wide-ranging enough. In addition to its duties as supreme arbiter, the Revered Tribunal also oversees the various "twilight wars" erupt among opponents, by appointing impartial referees to determine the winner. This practice occasionally proves thorny in regard to timing; many twilight wars that erupt out of sync with the convening of the Revered Tribunal and graduate into full-blown, no-quarter "midnight wars" before the Tribunal can meet again to choose the contests' judges.

The Flesh Court of Shanghai

The Flesh Court of Shanghai exists as a court in name only. Both the city and those provinces under the Flesh Court's rubric have been locked in an ongoing nightly war with foreign intruders since Japan's invasion of the Chinese mainland in 1937. During the invasion and subsequent occupation, a torrent of chaos descended upon the city in the form of Nippon *akuma*. The authority over the eastern gate of the Quincunx, precarious by any standard, soon deteriorated into a tenuous oligarchy known locally as the Silent Mandarins.

Such a state of affairs is not new to the Flesh Court. The Council of Dragons originally established the Flesh Court of Shanghai as a stopgap against the *akuma*-ridden Court of the Azure Dragon; the Flesh Court's tacit decree throughout the centuries has been to purge all manifestations of rebellion and divergent thought from the eastern regions. The mission has not proven easy. Holding authority over those sections of China in closest proximity to Japan and Korea, The Flesh Court has historically walked a fine line in its associations with brethren *wu* in these countries.

The current Bestowed Ancestor (a member of the Blood Court not known for his flexibility) often clashes with the Silent Mandarins and their agents over the subtlety and efficacy of the Flesh Court's methods. The Silent Mandarins maintain their position of moving with deliberate speed and craftiness in order to return the errant parts of the Middle Kingdom to the Quincunx's fold. The Bestowed Ancestor prefers harsher and more decisive methods. The Flesh Court, however, has its own agenda.

Total victory over the invaders remains the Court's foremost objective. The war of attrition has held Shanghai (and, by extension, the entire eastern coast) in a viselike grip for the past six decades. The fighting periodically disrupts dragon nests throughout the region, *wu* on opposite sides tangle over the few remaining untouched Chi reservoirs. Communication in the eastern provinces is sporadic at best. Many members of Flesh Court *wu* rely on the haphazard practices of either bribing *heimin* or using mortal couriers to forward messages to allies.

War is all hell, however, and the Silent Mandarins willingly overlook the odd excesses perpetrated by loyal Flesh Court *wu* if it garners their side an advantage. In particular, the Mandarins have continually overlooked the activities of the Ministry of the Scarlet Vessel, a group of several Flesh Court *wu* who maintain underground "storehouses" of mortals for Chi ingestion by Cathayan fighters loyal to the Quincunx. The Vessel replenishes its stores from the ranks of runaways, unwanted children, beggars, prostitutes and other denizens of the rats' alleys in the Shanghai metropolis. The Mandarins publicly state then desire to arrest the Scarlet Vessel's activities Privately, they would like to place the clandestine entity under their sole aegis. Nearly as important as expelling the *akuma* invaders, the Silent Mandarins also hope to find a suitable ancestor for the Flesh Court. No single ancestor has headed the Flesh Court since the invasion; in 1938, assassins from a *wu* affiliated with the Koga *uji* cut down the last Cathayan to hold the post. A combination of the nocturnal war and the unsuitability of any candidates over the years cripples the Mandarins' efforts in this matter. War or no war, however, an ancestor must be found; the Five August Courts have made that much clear. Thus in addition to keeping *uji* minions from rampaging through the Quincunx's eastern portals, Kuei-jin in Shanghai search among their ranks for the one Kuei-jin fit to assume the title of ancestor of the Flesh Court - an unenviable position, at best.

The Flame Court of Hong Kong

The Quincunx keeps a hawk's eye on this city to the south, and for good reason. The transfer of Hong Kong from British back to Chinese direction provides the Five August Courts with the perfect opportunity to smash the gaijin Kindred bloodsuckers - and not solely in Hong Kong.

Kuei-jin loyal to the Quincunx work feverishly to rebuild the structures of the old Flame Court. Cathayans involved in the undertaking even go so far as to speak, act and interact with one another (and especially toward the city's other *shen* and its few Kindred) as if the restoration is a fait accompli. These vampires do so partly out of fidelity to the stance of the Five August Courts, but mostly out of their specific interpretation of the Way of Propriety: That which is to come must be treated as if it always was.

To this end, "Flame Court" *wu* mercilessly root out the numerous pockets of Cainites scattered throughout the claustrophiliac city. Convinced of the inevitability of their triumph, Kuei-jin in the Victorious Whirlwind hunt down the network of Kindred who huddle around the personage of Oliver Thrace, the notorious Tremere magus. Opposition to Victorious Whirlwind exists in the form of the Righteous Devils of Kowloon, a Kuei-jin sect that enjoyed peaceful coexistence with the former Ventrue "Tai-pan," Robert Pedder, during British rule of the territory. (For more on the intricacies of the metropolis' vampiric politics, see the supplement **World of Darkness: Hong Kong**.)

The Bestowed Ancestor, speaking on behalf of the Quincunx, dismisses the Righteous Devils as an insolent bunch of collaborators and opportunists. Rumor has it that the Quincunx is toying with the notion of declaring the Righteous Devils akuma, thereby giving de facto legitimacy to the Victorious Whirlwind as the proper architects for the restoration of the Flame Court. But that's only a rumor, of course.

Wu loyal to the Five August Courts also tussle with the region's hengeyokai. The reality of mortal British rule and the division of Hong Kong into Kindred and Kuei-jin camps left several dragon nests m the city and the surrounding region

up for grabs. Various groups of shapeshifters subsequently insinuated themselves into control of several of these energy nodes. *Shen* politics during British rule made the possibility of direct attacks dicey, with the return of Hong Kong to British rule, several tradition-bound *wu* are gearing up for full frontal assaults on the contested sites.

Yet these varied intrigues constitute only the first phase of the Flame Court's larger agenda. Ultimate victory encompasses a much broader goal In recent years, representatives of the Flame Court, with the blessing of the Quincunx, have been journeying overseas to major Western cities. These various *wu*, known collectively as the Ashes of the Phoenix, maneuver and erect power bases among the various Chinatowns and other Asian populations in Europe and North America. These Cathayans represent the first wave of attack in a move of global proportions.

This move, called the Great Leap Outward, entails a massive strike against the major centers of Kindred concentration. Once the Quincunx retain total dominion over Hong Kong and excise all Kindred from the city, the Ashes plan to strike crippling blows against various Cainite princes throughout the Western hemisphere, in retaliation for the indignities suffered during the previous era of foreign profligacy in Hong Kong. Ideally, the location and destruction of Kindred such as Robert Pedder or Thomas Wyncham (the member of the Tremere Inner Circle ostensibly "in charge" of Asia) would give the Ashes and the Quincunx untold amounts of symbolic ammunition, and, thus, tangible support throughout the Middle Kingdom.

The Bone Court of Chongqing

Even to its counterparts in the Quincunx, the Bone Court remains a puzzle. Headquartered in the relatively small and nondescript western city of Chongqing, the Bone Court sits as the governing body for some of China's most rural regions. Yet despite its isolation from the freneticism of the other, more cosmopolitan centers of Cathayan supremacy, the Bone Court occupies an unexceptionable position among the Five August Courts.

Whereas the Blood, Flesh and Flame Courts concern themselves with meeting the coming Age of Sorrow in the most prepared manner possible, those *wu* aspected to the westernmost court seek a return to the ways of the ancients. Several Bone Court *wu* take upon themselves to recover those sacred artifacts and teachings lost during the destruction of Mount Meru and the diaspora of the Wan Xian m the Third Age. Various snippets of Cathayan apocrypha speak of potent talismans, jade stores, artistic creations and original Meru-era epistles reportedly penned by Wan Xian authors.

Details on the location (not to mention existence) of these sacred periapts remain sketchy. Yet those Kuei-jin who pledge themselves to the retrieval of such renowned artifacts doggedly crisscross the Middle Kingdom m their pursuit, retracing the hallowed paths traversed by the first generations of Wan Xian. Many ancestors would reward handsomely the members of any *wu* who happen to unearth one of these objects of spiritual and magical potency.

Chasing after lost amulets and writings is of secondary concern to the Bone Court, though. The most important task the Bone Court sees for itself is discovering a path back to the age-old holy sites atop Mount Meiu, the Cathayans' hallowed promontory situated deep within the ranges of Tibet. As the self-professed descendants of the Court of the White Tiger (one of the three original Imperial Courts that convened at the Council of Dragons), Kuei-jin loyal to the Bone Court perceive it as their duty to continue the White Tiger's quest for a return to the Kuei-jin's true land of origin.

The peculiar powers of Bone Court Kuei-jin reflect such selfimposed obligations. By retaining a close communion with the unspoiled and feral areas, Bone Court Kuei-jin believe themselves to be uncorrupted by the accelerated decadence and decomposition present in the seats of the other August Courts, such as Beijing, Shanghai and Hong Kong. The relative "purity" of western-based Cathayans (so the Bone



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Court believes) guarantees these vampires eventual success in reacquiring possession of the holy mount of the Wan Xian.

So confident is the Bone Court of its inevitable return to Mount Meru, and so convinced are its Kuei-jin of their singular ability to reopen the road back to the holy sites, that dialogue between the Bone ancestor and her Quincunx peers over access to the region stands immovably stalled. The Bone ancestor contends that the threat of Kindred infiltration into the area demands a tight grip over the region, one that only the Bone Court can provide. The remaining ancestors of the Five August Courts assert decided skepticism about the Bone Court's admonitions, and periodically send spies into the region in hopes of finding out the true activities of Bone Court *wu*. None of these reconnaissance groups, though, have yet returned east.

The Jade Court of Changan

The Jade Court functions as a spiritual vinculum for the entire Kuei-jin population. Situated in the Yellow River region, the birthplace of Chinese civilization, the Jade Court concerns itself with understanding and proselytizing on the great Kuei-jin texts. Jade Cathayans are renowned throughout the Middle Kingdom for their wisdom and intellectual acumen Jade Court mandarins and jina serve not only the Court and their own disciples, but also any and all Kuei-jin who travel to the Jade Court seeking guidance.

The most famous *wu* within the Jade Court, the Kuei-jin residing at the Shaolin Monastery, consist wholly of bodhisattvas. Called the Sages of the Fivefold Way, this *wu* makes periodic pronouncements on the teachings of the Grand Arhat Xue and the vast litanies of Kuei-jin precepts and laws outlined in the *Ki Chuan*, the Cathayans' most sacred scripture. Although Kuei-jin disciples are expected to discover the road to internal harmony and balance in their own fashion, many Kuei-jin have, over the centuries, embraced the comments of the Sages and regarded such pronouncements as tantamount to canon law.

The prestige enjoyed by the Sages and similar bands of Cathayan gurus resounds in the political realm of the Kueijin, as well as the spiritual realm. Jade Court vampires regularly advise and consult with powerful ancestors in China and elsewhere throughout Asia. Especially in the more secluded (and often contested) regions of Quincunx influence, non-Chinese ancestors welcome the trustworthiness and unimpeachability of such Jade wise men as a gift directly from the Spirit Courts themselves.

But not all Jade Court *wu* spend their nights poring over old texts and playing clandestine sounding boards for the inner sancta of influential Kuei-jin suzerainties. There exist some groups of Jade-aspected vampires whose internal balance remains so rigidly fixed and whose comprehension of the full array of Cathayan teachings is so meticulous, that they actively take it upon themselves to seek out disciples whom they feel are not progressing apace along their Dharmic path,



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or whom they feel have "strayed" altogether, and attempt to set them aright once more.

Such fanatical *wu* perform a vital service for the Kuei-jin, at least in their individual members' eyes. Their members, who refer to themselves as "correctors," have no doubt that they are agents ordained by the Great Cycle to return as many Wan Kuei as possible to their rightful place in the universe. The methods employed range anywhere from intellectual debate to outright physical coercion; tales about "correctors" destroying the odd disciple or two in order to "return" them to the Great Cycle quicker circulate occasionally.

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Although diminutive in comparison to its western neighbor, Japan occupies as significant a place in the Middle Kingdom as China. The *gaki*, as Japan's Kuei-jin refer to themselves, proudly display a sense of history and purpose that remain definitively, vehemently Japanese.

Japanese vampiric culture and society revolves around the intimate bonds between the *gaki* and the island's natural forces. In other words, Japan's Kuei-jin see themselves as the custodians of the delicate web of dragon lines and Chi reservoirs that give life to this chain of islands. Recently, however, certain episodes have radically altered the situation of the *gaki*. The explosive growth of Japan's postwar society and the increasing assimilation of Western ideas pit the two most powerful houses against each other. Tradition-bound courts and their futurist opposites have opened a deep, wide gulf in *gaki* society, especially regarding those few Cainites who dwell in Japan's largest cities.

In addition, the ineluctable decay of Japan's Chi lines resulting from the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki poses a much larger, permanent problem. The corrupted dragon nests slowly poison each and every Kuei-jin, regardless of their respective political leanings. Even as they ingest the tainted energy, all Kuei-jin in Japan know that they are slowly, almost imperceptibly, changing. And not one of them wishes to linger over what exactly he or she is changing



into.

THE Uji

History

The arrival of Kuei-jin from the Chinese mainland around 600 B.C.E. marked the first Cathayan attempt at establishing hegemony over Japan. Native gala clashed with the raiders in many coastal and inland battles, destroying a number of mortal villages and Chi lines in the process. Unable to draw upon sufficient Chi to repel the intruders, the largest group of the *gaki*, the Bishamon, went into hiding. The Bishamon withdrew to the wilderness regions and the outer islands of the Japanese chain, taking themselves out of the picture for years.

The triumphant Cathayans placed Japan under the control of the Court of the Azure Dragon. To make their usurpation of power palatable to the indigenous *shen* populations. The Cathayans reconstituted themselves as House Genji, and integrated themselves into *shen* society in place of the vanquished Bishamon.

Those who live by the sword die by the sword, however, and the Genji's reign ended as it started - in a torrent of blood. The rise of the Mongol empire in China and the decline of the Five August Courts cut the Genji off from the Azure Dragon. The invaders found themselves vulnerable to enemies, most notably the *gaki* whom they had driven out centuries ago.

Those selfsame *gaki* returned from exile with blood in their eyes. Spearheaded by the Bishamon, these exiles laid waste to the Genji, using powerful natural magics they learned and perfected during their years in hiding. These returning vampires were dubbed *tobi*, or "black kites," after a certain carrion' eating predatory bird native to Japan.

The resultant purge, known in Kuei-jin history as the Year of the Black Kites, signaled the end of the Azure Dragon's hold over Japan. The Bishamon regained the upper hand, and brought it down hard upon the largest group of Genji warriors and instigators. The Bishamon let the (very few) remaining Genji survive as three small and insignificant *wu*, stripped forever of the power they originally possessed. The Genji quickly accepted the terms of surrender, and both houses began to abide, if not in harmony, at least not at each other's throats.

It was out of the Black Kites' purge that the Bishamon, Genji and other, smaller groups of vampires followed the examples of powerful mortal clans and organized themselves into *uji*, extended "families" of like-minded Kuei-jin. Uji are still the structures under which the Kuei-jin of Japan exist to this night. In the Fifth Age, however, *uji* coalesce and evolve in far different and much more desperate circumstances. The approaching Age of Sorrow forces even the most ancient *gaki* families to adjust to some measure of change.

House Bishamon

House Bishamon encompasses a host of lesser *uji* under its aegis. Yet every one of these subordinate families can trace their individual roots back to the original *gaki* of Japan. Bishamon Kuei-jin are traditionalist to the core; many of the House's ancestors lived their mortal lives as samurai, *daimyo* or other such virtuous members of bygone eras. As former members of the elite strata of mortal society, these Bishamon play similar roles as leaders and fighters in their own *uji*.

However, the coming of the modern era - and the Emperor Meiji's opening of Japan to foreigners in the 19th century left the Bishamon struggling to catch up with the watershed changes. Among other things, the Meiji Restoration dissolved the classic social structure of Japan, which included disbanding the samurai and *daimyo* of past shogunates. Westernization steadily eroded away such traditional authorities, forbidding the loyal warriors to act as keepers of order or even to wear their traditional katanas.

The emperor, by ending many of the ancient traditions, effectively ended the "old" Bishamon ways. When a revolt by samurai and *gaki* against the emperor was quelled in 1876, the Bishamon found themselves adrift in a whirlpool of changing customs and foreign oddities. And as they had done before, the Bishamon retreated again to their meditative fiefdoms, and left the Fifth Age to its own devices.

The end of WWII and the onset of the Burnings (the name *gaki* give to the twin atomic blasts at Hiroshima and Nagasaki) compelled the Bishamon to return and seize power again in several key cities. The present generations of Bishamon now face several dilemmas. They must readjust their unlifestyles to fit in with the coming third millennium without betraying the ancient traditions or forsaking their Dharmas. They must face the increasing encroachment of Cainites into Japan and keep their holiest sites away from rapacious Occidentals. And they must deal with the decaying dragon nests brought about by the Burnings.

The predicaments of Dharmic reorientation and Cainite presences often divide younger and older Bishamon. The oldest ancestors and bodhisattvas - who have been around for at least several centuries - regularly denounce the fact that they must share Japan's Chi with foreign interlopers. The open association of a new breed of Genji Kuei-jin with a few Sabbat packs in major cities infuriates these elders to no end. For such reactionaries, the Black Kites purge (at which a few of them were present) remains incomplete. The deeds begun centuries ago will only be successful, the elders argue, when all foreign vampires - as well as those native *shen* who collaborate with them - are wiped from the face of Middle Kingdom Japan.

While most Bishamon find it hard to argue with the spirit of such a position, the idea of starting a wholesale expulsion of unwanted supernatural does not sit well with younger members. The Black Kites purge may have worked well in the feudal era with a sparse mortal population, but blowing up Tokyo's Roppongi nightclub district in search of a stray Tzimisce haven is not the sort of thing that can be easily camouflaged. It creates more problems than it solves - such as alerting the attention of Strike Force Zero. For the moment, the *gaijin* have done nothing to warrant a direct assault... not yet. The more pragmatic Bishamon are willing to tolerate a few scattered confederations of Genji and Cainites. But just a few.

Preparing for the oncoming Sixth Age remains the most pressing issue for the Bishamon. To varying degrees, all Bishamon plan for the coming Age of Sorrow. Certain groups, however, make a point of concerning themselves with the speed at which the Wheel of Ages turns, be it to arrest or hasten its course.

The toxins generated by the Burnings affect all Kuei-jin who ingest the island's Chi. Individual groups confront this fate differently. Some *uji* fear that the continual intake of poisoned energy obstructs their ability to fulfill their individual Dharmas; consequently several sects experiment with magics and rituals to find some way of "purifying" the island's Chi. On the other side of the coin, some Bishamon embrace the poisoned dragon nests. One extremist offshoot, called the Keepers of the Two Fires, interprets the altering of Japan's natural energies as a necessary part of the Great Cycle.

For the Keepers, the Burnings represent a defense mechanism against the theft of Japan's Chi by unworthy *shen*, in particular those Kuei-jin who ally with Western Kindred. The Keepers believe that the Chi will soon reach a state where these unworthy Kuei-jin can no longer ingest it. When this happens - at the start of the Sixth Age-the Bishamon will rise up and destroy the barbarians and their Kuei-jin accomplices. The native *gaki* will complete the tasks begun during the Year of the Black Kites, and return the *shen* society of Japan to its original, homogenous state. The Age of Sorrow will then come to an end, and a new Japan will emerge in the Middle Kingdom, with the honorable institutions of old returned to their rightful places.

House Genji

None of the original members of House Genji, those Cathayans who landed on the island of Japan over 2,500 years ago, survive. The Black Kites purge effectively eradicated the clan; the handful of Cathayans who were spared fell into obscurity and disappeared centuries ago. What happened to these elder Genji remains a rather esoteric topic of speculation, akin to postulating the whereabouts of the Lost Tribes of Israel. Some Kuei-jin speculate that the remaining Genji latched on to other *uji*; some say they were quietly disposed of by Bishamon assassins. A few hold to the idea that these elder Cathayans completed their Dharmas and reunited with the Great Cycle long ago, but no hard evidence exists to support this theory.

Regardless, the contemporary collective of Kuei-jin known as House Genji is a wholly modern creation, a product of the Fifth Age and the sudden transformation of Japan in the wake of the Meiji era. The vast litany of Meiji reforms attracted many younger Kuei-jin. These vampires supported the forward-looking emperor and embraced the new, cosmopolitan lifestyle that Meiji encouraged. As the heretofore dominant Bishamon retreated to their private lairs, their roles were quickly filled by these modernist Kuei-jin. In deference to the first incarnation of vampires who drove out the Bishamon centuries previous, these modernist Kuei-jin called themselves the "new" Genji.

The Genji augmented their power and confidence as Japan's star rose during the late-19th and early 20th century. With the accession of Hirohito to the imperial throne in 1926, Japan readied itself to lead Asia onto the center of the world stage. The Genji rode the crest of Japan's expansionist wave throughout the first quarter of the century, buoyed by a victorious war over Russia in 1905 and a successful invasion of Manchuria on 1932. In 1937, Genji warriors followed imperial forces in an invasion of mainland China. They landed at Shanghai, ready to show the old Cathayans exactly what this new clan's capability was. The Genji grabbed some early victories in the shadow war, but were halted by arhats from the Flesh Court, whose advanced magics proved far too powerful for this band of island aggressors.

The ensuing stalemate continues to the present night. Although the Genji have not been able to dislodge the Cathayans from their positions, neither are the native Chinese vampires' methods updated enough to rid the city of its Japanese rampagers. Neither side shows any sign of letting up in this shadow war, which is now over 60 years old.

The Genji have also lost ground at home. Japan's defeat in WWII knocked influential Genji out of their posts; for a second time, the Bishamon returned from their self-imposed exile to reclaim ancestorships in several major cities, including the capital Tokyo. Young and old Bishamon alike took advantage of the postwar boom lo reinvent themselves and their *uji*, and assumed vital positions in zaibatsu conglomerates and criminal syndicates.

Simply put, the modern world no longer remains House Genji's exclusive playground, and that fact alone scares the hells out of many Genji families. Genji safeguard themselves by throwing up a host of scarlet screens from among mortals and other *shen*. Finance, fashion, technology and even Yakuza enterprises provide buffers and readily available wealth for *uji*. Yet even with these shields in place, the Genji nightly walk a tightrope. The imminent Age of Sorrow can make a Kuei-jin do desperate things, after all, and no Genji wishes to be on the receiving end if a pack of fanatical Bishamon decides to pick up where its historical predecessors left off.

Thus to cement their own power base and protect themselves from a potential Bishamon-led purge, many Genji

form alliances and partnerships with the growing population of Cainites. Sabbat packs, in particular, are a boon to Genji. Besides drawing Bishamon attention away from the Genji (thus giving the latter room to maneuver), Sabbat vampires possess a host of powers, such as Vicissitude, that are very appealing to younger Kuei-jin. Moreover, Cainite vitae is free of the tainted Chi that poisons all Kuei-jin on the island. Although no Genji would dare admit this - certainly not to a Sabbat vampire's face at any rate - keeping a few undefiled vessels within reach never hurts.

Iga and Koga

Modern *uji* are molded and tested by the fiery travails of the Fifth Age. The protracted shadow wars across the Middle Kingdom constantly upend the normal relationships among Kuei-jin. Necessity often throws together Kuei-jin from completely disparate backgrounds and Dharmas, who are compelled either by duty or happenstance to perform specific tasks.

The Iga and Koga are two such *uji*. Both sects originated in the wake of the Black Kites purge, as subchapters of the Bishamon. Despite the Bishamon's staggering decimation of the Genji, common sense dictated that the danger to the *gaki* was by no means over. The intensity of the purge precluded the Black Kites from keeping their actions secret. Hunting down and massacring Genji trespassers - and whatever mortal villages and shapeshifter caerns were in the way - roused the ire of other *shen* and a number of mortal witch hunters.

Thus to ensure that they would not be the next candidates for a winnowing, the Bishamon designated two of its most proficient warrior *uji* to don the mantle of a preemptive defense force: the Iga and Koga. Originally, the Iga and Koga had very separate duties. The Iga thwarted mortal hunters in Middle Kingdom Japan, while the Koga fought other races of *shen* who sought to strike at the Bishamon. Both sects also helped rid the island of unwanted *gaijin* elements in the wake of the "closing" of Japan in the early 17th century.

The Age of Darkness has altered the agendas of these *uji* exceedingly. Although each group remains more or less faithful to their original mandates, the Iga and Koga no longer exist as the militant arm of House Bishamon. Both sects have left the nest, and evolved into totally independent families, ultimately answerable to no one but their own *daimyo*.

Iga and Koga hunt enemies from every direction, whether they are *shen*, mortal or fellow Kuei-jin. Members have a wide latitude in which they operate; an Iga or Koga *wu* can accept any job and complete it by any means at their disposal, as long as the *wu* has the approval of its *daimyo*. Both the Bishamon and Genji avail themselves of these sects' services, which infuriates many older Bishamon to no end. Yet the Bishamon's relative newness to the vagaries of Fifth Age shadow war leaves them no choice but to utilize the services of the Iga and Koga, even going so far as to designate some of their own younger *wu* to learn techniques from the two *uji*.

Such "services" run the gamut from sabotaging industrial concerns in which Kuei-jin have investments to destroying both hideouts of Cainite allies and caerns of troublesome hengeyokai. Many Iga and Koga Kuei-jin are scattered throughout the ranks of the Yakuza, police and armed forces; they use these positions both for the cover and the resources they provide. After all, there's little point in charging straight into a nest of cornered Brujah when you can order a detachment of armed-to-the-teeth soldiers, riot police or other cannon fodder to do it for you.

But the Iga and Koga do not exist simply as a pair of supernatural brute squads. The sweeping changes of the past century have forced the two families, on occasion, to put their own brands on Kuei-jin politics. The effects of destroying the right target ripple throughout the entire Kuei-jin population, and remind powerful ancestors that these *uji* are not to be dismissed out of hand. The assassination of the ancestor of Shanghai's Flame Court in 1938, for example, remains the most impressive act of this kind, but other attacks on a few influential scarlet screens and shapeshifter lairs serve as similarly severe warnings.

Sotogawa No

Cappadocian, Lhiannan and Lamia notwithstanding, the Western Kindred do not hold the monopoly on "extinct" tribes of vampires, i.e. those groups that died out, were subsumed into modern clans, or were (and in the case of the Salubri, still are) hunted down. The history of the Kuei-jin also teems with courts and Dharmas ground under the Wheel of Ages.

Sotogawa No comprises one such *uji*. The "closing" of Japan to foreigners in the early 17th century gave rise to a proliferation of nontraditional sects and Dharmas. Built upon the foundations of mortal faiths such as Shintoism, the tenets of these sects deviated considerably from those set down by the Grand Arhat Xue. In Japan, particularly, bands of Kuei-jin fascinated by Shinto's teachings on communion with the spirits incorporated such teachings into a new Dharma, called the Spirit of the Living Earth.

Living Earth *uji* plunged themselves into reflection upon and communication with the earth spirits. In order to develop this new Dharma more fully, Kuei-jin disciples and jina sought knowledge and advice from the various hengeyokai breeds living on the island. This spiritual relationship soon turned political, as Kuei-jin entered into mutual alliances with groups of shapeshifters, including several Hakken and Kitsune tribes.

The spread of the Living Earth Dharma rankled the more traditionalist sects. The Bishamon, who assumed power after the foreign expulsion, bristled at the sight of the Living Earth Kuei-jin, both for their heretical teachings and their open relationships with the shapeshifters. Hardliner ancestors pejoratively dubbed the Living Earth Kuei-jin sotogawa no, vampires "outside" the realm of normal paths to fulfillment. The original Living Earth *uji* proudly accepted this label as a badge of honor, and renamed themselves accordingly.

Although Bishamon and Sotogawa No coexisted for more than two centuries without serious incident, neither sect totally trusted the other. The Bishamon looked with acute suspicion on the growing fealty between Sotogawa No and hengeyokai, while Sotogawa No worried about the possibility of a holy war erupting between them and the more powerful Bishamon.

That war erupted with the arrival of Commodore Matthew Perry and a United States delegation in 1853. As the Tokugawa shogun fell increasingly under the spell of the *gaijin*, Bishamon worked frantically to preserve the ancient ways and stave off the inevitable "opening" of Japan. They started by cracking down on all "independent" sects - and targeted the Sotogawa No *uji* specifically. For the next several years, Bishamon and their Koga associates actively suppressed these "heretics," laying waste to key dragon nests and going after Sotogawa No's hengeyokai allies.

Although the Bishamon knew they were doing irreparable damage to Chi reservoirs in the long run, they justified their actions as part of the necessary struggle to keep Japan free of detrimental heterodoxy. The resurgence of a new House Genji temporarily stalled hostilities, but pro-modernist Genji resumed attacks on the Sotogawa No soon after, claiming that such Shinto-inspired teachings were outdated in the "new" Japan.

The Burnings pounded the final nail into Sotogawa No's coffin. Already weakened by decades of persecution and plundered dragon lines, the destruction of the Chi deposits



beneath Hiroshima and Nagasaki severed whatever connections to the land remained for these Kuei-jin. The psychic toxins quickly infected those few remaining pure sites shared by hengeyokai and Sotogawa No. The handful of surviving Sotogawa No either fled to the outermost reaches of the island chain, or left Japan altogether for more welcoming havens in the Pacific Rim.

Recently, however, Kuei-jin from the Sotogawa No have begun to make their way back to Middle Kingdom Japan. The mortal populations, fast in the grip of a growing spiritual malaise, look more frequently toward age-old faiths like Shinto for some sort of center. Cults spring up almost daily in the Fifth Age, feeding off this spiritual vacuum. Patchwork "faiths" mixing doctrine from Eastern and Western sources try to provide all answers for all people. This polyglot of religions encourages Sotogawa No expatriates to return to Japan and reach out to old allies, in hopes of regaining their former havens.

Caution remains the watchword for Sotogawa No vampires. Old allies disappear or switch allegiances for selfpreservation's sake; trusted retreats and hideaways vanish or are occupied by enemies. Sotogawa No Kuei-jin often find themselves alone on the island, a perilous position by any standard. Any measure of safety is hard to come by, and Sotogawa No go to extreme lengths to keep foes at bay. Some of these Kuei-jin actively become *heimin*, using the freedom of movement to search for old associates and new allies. Others set themselves up among the mortal populations as "cult leaders" in remote locations, and hope that the out-of-the-way locale and relative innocuousness of their "religions" is enough to keep Strike Force Zero disinterested.

THE GREEN COURTS: DEATH AND JADE

Trapped between the powers of the Quincunx on one side and the *gaki* on the other, the vampires of the Green Courts have learned to distance themselves from both sides and attend to their own dark affairs to protect their precious neutrality. Centuries of laying low and blending in - as well as their obsessive focus on the Yin world - has stolen from the Korean Kuei-jin much of the character that once made them the focus of much admiration and fear as part of the Azure Dragon Court.

The ancestors here have very little time to spare on the ostentation and empty formality of the Quincunx and less still for internecine power struggles like those between the Bishamon and the Genji. There is little pageantry in the Green Courts - no great halls, no grand Spectacles, no ornate dress. Simplicity and parsimony are more conducive to business; art and spectacle are seen as distractions, resources poorly spent. Beauty merely highlights how hideous many among the Green Courts have become: No other Court has so many *ch'ing shih*. The sight of the

In addition to being the preeminent necromancers of the Middle Kingdom, the vampires of the Green Courts are also salesmen, diplomats, and cunning *agents provocateurs* playing their enemies against each other to fortify their own positions; they deal primarily in safety (in the form of a complex array of shelters and safe-houses referred to discretely as the Parallel Path) and jade (usually in the form of trinkets, though talismans of spectacular potency regularly come from the Green Courts).

Safety is a rare commodity in the Middle Kingdom, and those Kuei-jin who can provide it are amply rewarded. Vampires of the Green Courts have established a very carefully protected network of safe houses accessible to anyone with enough jade, cash, or valuable information. Kuei-jin and Kindred alike are welcome provided they can pay for the hospitality (and Westerners are inevitably ripped off)- Many Kindred who have needed to thoroughly disappear from the West have found their way to the palaces, hovels and caves along the Parallel Path.

Some in the Green Courts claim that the open-door policy of the Parallel Path makes Korea a haven for *akuma* fleeing the other courts. While minor witch hunts for the devil-ridden break out every now and again, the ancestors of the Green Courts seem uninterested in taking any decisive action so long as the jade keeps flowing in. The most paranoid among the Cathayans claim that this is because the ancestors themselves are corrupted.

Travelers along the Parallel Path are directed to each link in the chain of safe houses by wu comprising Kuei-jin early on their Dharmic journey (who expect a "tip" in exchange for their silence on the vampire's whereabouts). The Green Courts enforce a strict non-intervention policy toward those traveling the Parallel Path, so aside from draining as much jade and cash as possible from their charges, the Kuei-jin performing these duties are strictly businesslike and will not directly hinder, help or involve themselves in any way in the affairs of those they guide.

The Green Courts' other commodity is the one after which it was named. Jade, with its unique ability to hold Chi, is the standard by which all things of value are measured in the Green Courts. The jade market, based out of the It'aewon market in Seoul, is what funds the Green Courts' political machinations. By selling low quality jade to the west and high quality jade talismans to powerful Kuei-jin from other courts (in exchange for "favors to be named at a later date, if ever"), the Green Courts have amassed a great deal of wealth and influence with which to buffer itself from the constant strife between the *qaki* and the Quincunx.

Korea is home to the largest population of jade-working Kueijin artisans in the Middle Kingdom. There are entire *wu* whose sole reason for existence is the creation of more and more potent talismans, and the abilities they can awaken in the jade are most formidable.

While jade is the Green Courts' trump card, the Kuei-jin of the Korean Court may have played out their hand. In amassing the jade necessary to insulate themselves from incursions of the Kuei-jin of the other courts, the vampires of the Green Courts endanger their relationship with the shen of their own nation. The land that was once among the most peaceful places for Kuei-jin and hengeyokai to interact is rapidly becoming a site of great discord due to the Kuei-jin's rapacious jade gathering missions to the local Dragons Nests. The days of plentiful jade are gone, and the vampires of Korea now work diligently to maintain the appearance of controlling plentiful stores of the stone. The truth is decidedly inauspicious: The jade they once found everywhere and took for granted is nearly impossible to obtain as dragon nest after dragon nest is desecrated and dries up. Some wu have even resorted to stealing homeless from the cities, especially Seoul, and forcing them to mine for jade. The Green Courts must now take extreme action to find even humble quantities of the fine green stone, and this they do by sending vaguely diplomatic ransacking missions to the peninsula's remaining dragon nests. Bodhisattvas claim that these sacred sites, not the jade itself, are the Green Courts' true treasure, but no one is listening. These dragon nests, however, are the sacred places of the shape-shifting hengeyokai who will be, perhaps, more difficult to ignore.

Korea, until very recently, has primarily been home to the chatty (and relatively less aggressive) raven-folk, making the hengeyokai a less daunting enemy than they are elsewhere. For many decades, the Green Courts' vampires have been manipulating and brow-beating the tengu into giving them nearly unlimited access to their "caerns," but the tengu grew tired of the Kuei-jin's depredations and have lately been spreading tales to the other hengeyokai. While the Kuei-jin have been distracted by events in the Yin Realm, an influx of more aggressive protectors, particularly the Khan, Hakken and Stargazers, promises to make plundering jade from dragon nests decidedly more dangerous, as they are notably disinclined to grant visiting privileges to thieves and desecrators. The honey-tongued Kuei-jin, in the meantime, will no longer be able to go to the sacred sites of the hengeyokai again and again to steal the jade they need. It remains to be seen how the Kuei-jin of the Green Courts will respond to this new development.

Overall, Korean Kuei-jin remain at least amicable with the other *shen*, especially wraiths, and they may enter into bargains with them when circumstances warrant doing so.

The Kuei-jin would like to deal with the *hsien* much more than they do, primarily because the *hsien* are veritable banquets of Chi. Most clever *hsien* take pains to stay clear of the predatory Kuei-jin, but there are some Tanuki who harbor an unyielding hatred of the Kuei-jin and take every opportunity to lead the vampires into vicious (and frequently lethal) traps. Green Court Kuei-jin themselves, however, avoid the Chi'n Ta. In the Fourth Age, it is said, the Wan Xian were broken by Heaven, and the Lightning People were Heaven's tool. For the better part of that age, the arrogant wizards carried out the sentence of Heaven and punished the wayward Wan Xian. Those few remaining ancestors who remember the damage wrought by the Lightning People to the Azure Dragon Court still counsel a course of subtlety and avoidance where the magi are concerned. The technology-obsessed Subtle Thunders in particular seem to have a vendetta against the Kuei-jin that is remarkable in its (Western flavored) zealotry.

Undoubtedly, the *shen* with whom the Green Courts deal the most are the spirits of the dead. Those Disciplines deemed most useful are the ones that attune the Kuei-jin to the Yin world. Next to Bone Shintai and the Chi Arts (which are necessary to work jade), Yin Prana is the most studied Discipline in the Green Courts, and those who master its postures act as emissaries between the land of the living and the lands of the dead. The Song of the Shadow is by far the most followed Dharmic path in all of the Green Courts precisely because it leads so clearly into the Yin Realm. In many ways, Yin spirits are the Green Courts' greatest (some would say only) ally.

Nowhere else in the Middle Kingdom do Kuei-jin and spirits of departed ancestors interact so closely. This is to the advantage of the dead on both sides of the Wall. Throughout the Middle Kingdom, the spirits of the dead go to the Yellow Springs. Yu Huang, the Emperor of the Yellow Springs, was Chinese when he lived and treats wraiths from outside China like barbarians and slaves. Having an agent in the living world who can protect or destroy those cherished objects that tie a spirit to the world gives a wraith an incalculable advantage over those who might be captors. Likewise, wraithly companions have proven to be valuable assets to the deal-making Kuei-jin of the Green Courts on numerous occasions by performing acts of espionage that have been of great benefit to the Court.

The Green Courts' power in the Yellow Springs recently blossomed like an unexpected lotus; good fortune smiled on the Green Courts when a tiny sect of Cainite death-sages with tremendous abilities to interact with the dead - and decidedly unsettling feeding practices - arrived from India asking the Green Courts' emperor for asylum. When, after three nights of deliberation, he granted it, the outlanders presented him with a disconcerting report of the activities of the necromancers of the West. This news was deemed most inauspicious, but the information was suitably valuable that the gweilo were granted sanctuary. The ancestors of the court have been most active in the Yin Realm since receiving this troubling report, but none has surmised what they are doing. Since it has distracted them from gathering jade (and monitoring the growing hengevokai population), one might suspect that it is an enormous endeavor. It has been suggested that a strike against the necromancer family of the west is imminent, but only the bodhisattvas of the Green Courts truly know.

THE GOLDEN COURTS: QUEENS OF THE BLOODY JUNGLE

Mandarins of the Quincunx almost need a second vocabulary to contain the wealth of derogatory terms that they use solely to describe the savage Golden Courts of Southeast Asia. "Barbarians," "heathens," and "degenerates" are their most common descriptors for the proud matriarchal remnants of the Scarlet Phoenix Court, but under their breath they whisper words like "dangerous," "terrifying," and "unnatural."

Whatever the legends may say of the Golden Courts, the truth is that these Kuei-jin have carved a niche for themselves in the hengeyokai-infested jungles and survived wars, Kin-jin incursions, and the machinations of the Yama Kings. That they did so by becoming more vicious and cunning than their enemies is only cause for pride among these vampires.

Secrets of the Penangallan

Once a female Kuei-jin in the Golden Courts has mastered herself sufficiently (indicated in game terms by at least three levels of Flesh Shintai and three levels in one other Discipline, generally either Jade Shintai, Storm Shintai or Yang Prana), she can officially petition her ancestors to take her place among the Penangallan. She formally petitions the nearest Penangallan ancestor and demonstrates her abilities (Disciplines) for the ancient. In return, the ancestor queries the petitioner about the insights she has gained by following her chosen Dharma (and the vast majority of Penangallan follow either the Howl of the Devil Tiger or Dance of the Thrashing Dragon); she is then strongly encouraged (i.e., forced) to undergo a "rite" designed to reveal vassalage to the Yama Kings (while there is no rite that can actually reveal an akuma, there are plenty of ways to determine if the petitioner is lying; the famous "akuma-revealing rite" consists of a series of over a hundred different ways of asking if the petitioner if she is, thinks about, wants to, or is otherwise tempted to work for the Yama Kings). If she is akuma, she is executed within the hour, keeping the true nature of the "rite" a secret; otherwise, a mad festival is planned for the next week. At the celebration, enormous quantities of blood are provided for the new Penangallan and her wu, who are congratulated for helping her achieve her new status. Drumming, ecstatic dancing, and unspeakable perversions entertain the assembled Kuei-jin until just before dawn. The new Penangallan is entitled to begin dressing in suitably outrageous garb the next night.

The Golden Courts extend from the jungles of eastern India, throughout Bangladesh, Myanmar, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Viet Nam, Indonesia and Malaysia. The borders of the Golden Courts are constantly in flux, but at various points in its history, the influence of the Golden Courts has extended as far as Micronesia, Polynesia (including Hawai'i), Samoa, Fiji, the Marshall and Solomon Islands, and the jungles of northern Australia. No other Kuei-jin Court can approach the Golden Courts' range of cultures, and it's questionable whether the Chinese Courts would even want to. At least some of the allegations of barbarism made against the Golden Courts stem from the xenophobia of the Quincunx.

By far the most shocking element of the Golden Courts, as far as the Chinese Courts are concerned, is its matriarchal tribal structure. Yang-aspected Kuei-jin women who have mastered Flesh Shintai are called Penangallan as a title of respect. While a male may have the same degree of proficiency with Flesh Shintai, he may never be called Penangallan.

Throughout the Golden Courts, with the exception of authoritarian Singapore, the Penangallan dress in as garish



and lurid a fashion as possible to distinguish themselves from everyone else. They ornament themselves with anything that strikes them as loud or outrageous, from finger bones and peacock feathers in the jungles of Laos to rubber dresses and chrome cockrings in the teeming streets of Bangkok. The warped carnival atmosphere that follows around a Penangallan is both her protection and her badge of office.

Males are free to take part in the culture of the Golden Courts, but they may not call into question the queen or any female ancestor. One violation results in a stern warning, two violations will result in an unsubtle suggestion that the violator leave the court (or at least flee to Singapore), and a third violation ends in the highly ritualized execution of the insolent party. These executions are typically occasions for much revelry among the Penangallan and their attendant *wu*.

When the Kin-j in began arriving en masse, the Penangallan were at the peak of their power. Kindred who ran afoul of these potent Cathayans in the jungles and villages of the Golden Courts disappeared or fled shortly after the encounter. Until recently, when the akuma once more became an urgent threat, the Kin-jin were dealt with by the queens of the Golden Courts within a week of their arrival. Robert Pedder himself lost several childer to the jungles and those who lurked in them. Now that the courts are reeling under the assaults of the *akuma*, the few Kin-jin who arrive have a moderately longer unlife expectancy.

Perhaps the Golden Courts' greatest strength is its remarkable diversity. The Kuei-jin of the Golden Courts have at their disposal the wisdom of several cultures: Indian, Chinese, Polynesian, Aborigine, and myriad others all contribute to the Court's hybrid vigor. The Golden Courts have absorbed numerous cultural elements from the islands that have, at times, been under their sway. The Devil Tigers, in particular, have been known to use the islanders' bone fish-hooks to particularly gruesome effect, challenging the hooks' reputation of bringing good luck.

Nothing has contributed to the Golden Courts' spread like the Penangallans' frequent mastery of the Jade Shintai Discipline. A *wu* of Penangallan can easily run across the ocean to a neighboring island to feed. If the voyage is too long for one night's journey, the Kuei-jin can sink to the ocean floor and spend the day beneath the mud and rise again once the sun is down. In this way, the wild queens of the Kuei-jin have amassed a territory larger even than that of the Blood Court.

Island travelling, even on top of the water, is particularly risky for the Kuei-jin of the Golden Courts because they, of all the inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom, have earned the unending enmity of the Same-bito. While the actual origins of the hatred between the two *shen* are lost, it is most commonly speculated that Devil Tigers from the Golden developed a taste for the Chi (and attendant flesh) of Samebito kinfolk. Throughout the oceans off the coast of Southeast Asia, the Same-bito infest the waters and watch for any Kueijin running along the surface. The wrath of the sharkchangers is unrelenting.

The greatest shame of the Golden Courts is that they are constantly on the brink of falling to the akuma. No other court has been so plagued by the devil-ridden. The Yama Kings, most notably Rangda, Mistress of Pestilence, appear to have an absolute compulsion to control the Golden Courts and have made the region a base of sorts, from which to work their will. The string of wars and atrocities that has plagued Southeast Asia for most of the last two-hundred years has left a tangible sense of desecration in its wake. Even in the Fourth Age, however, the Yama Kings were obsessed with toppling the Scarlet Phoenix Court and using the Kuei-jin of the area, once they all became akuma, as their weapons against the other courts. While the Scarlet Phoenix Court did fall, the pawns of the Yama Kings were decimated by the most august bodhisattva Piyau Payung and her Devil Tiger Penangallan associates. The first use of the Flesh Shintai Discipline was during that tremendously violent battle. For 11 nights the jungle was the scene of some of the grisliest atrocities ever seen by Kuei-jin. On the 12th night, Piyau Payung and five of her Penangallan ripped apart the last of the akuma. That most formidable ancient returned to her contemplations in the jungle leaving only the first Penangallan to rebuild the Court.

The Blood Court eagerly stepped in to "help" bring a respectable court system to the jungles, but after losing nearly a score of ancestors to the headstrong Penangallan, they stepped back and allowed the Golden Courts to take shape according to its own directive.

For many years, the Yama Kings almost gave up on Southeast Asia, but the past two-hundred years have provided the devils with no shortage of unwise Kuei-jin willing to do their bidding in exchange for power. It doesn't help matters that organization of the Golden Courts is exceedingly loose and informal. The only Kuei-jin who are ever tested for devil-taint are the Penangallan. Outside of their ranks, akuma are becoming more prevalent. Provided that nothing is obviously amiss, those pawns of the Yama Kings can pass undetected for centuries, rising through the social strata, working the will of their masters and undermining the courts like termites eating away the foundations of a temple. Now, after nearly a millennium of absence, the akuma are numerous enough to shake the foundations of the Golden Courts. Their attacks on, and seductions of, the ancestors are taxing the abilities of even the Penangallan queens.

Key figures in the Golden Courts have repeatedly fallen to the Yama Kings; this has become frequent enough that it is almost a dark joke among the Quincunx. While the fallen are inevitably caught - either by showing inappropriate abilities, like the Discipline of Hellweaving, or by the keen insight of the bodhisattvas - the damage they do to the court and to the souls of those around them befote their masquerade is revealed is incalculable. The Golden Courts have responded to the attacks of the Yama Kings in much the same way that they respond to most opponents: They have become more savage than their enemy. Nowhere in the Middle Kingdom is the Howl of the Devil Tiger Dharma so prevalent as in the Golden Courts. By adopting, adapting, and improving upon the Yama Kings' own strategies, the Golden Courts hope to become greater devils than the devils who threaten them. Regrettably, they may succeed.

STRANGE JOSS: THE SMALLER COURTS

The grand and well-known courts of the Middle Kingdom are by no means the only ones carrying out the night-to-night schemes of the Kuei-jin. Smaller courts regularly flicker into existence, mature, stagnate, change hands and fade away as the tides of the mortal world ebb and flow. Included under this ragtag rubric are the courts of Singapore, Hong Kong, and the Infinite Thunders Court of Sri Lanka and India.

Events in Hong Kong

Hong Kong is a city in transition. Where once the Kin-jin held sway here, under the leadership of the charismatic Robert Pedder, it is no longer so. Since Hong Kong reverted back to Chinese control, Flame Court shocktroops have surged in like waves before a typhoon. Most recently, mandarins have been interrogating random Kuei-jin in an obsessive hunt for Asian Kin-jin, that is, childer of the Cainites who were drawn from the native Chinese population. The Flame Court has declared them akuma en masse (as though they somehow chose to be Embraced). Most of these so-called "lotus cankers" are clever enough to avoid using obviously Cainite Disciplines in front of others, and some Western Disciplines can, if the witnesses are squinting, be made to look like certain Eastern Arts - though actually using a Cainite power near a Kuei-jin risks the problem of disharmonious Chi flow. Most fortunate (and rare!) are those who have some knowledge of Obeah, for they (both of them) can easily pass as practitioners of Chi'iu Muh.

For the specifics of who's vying for power with whom in the city of Hong Kong, check out **World of Darkness: Hong Kong**.

Singapore: The Sub-Court

The dim-witted frequently compare Hong Kong and Singapore, but these two great cities of the Middle Kingdom could hardly be more different. While Hong Kong is rapidly falling under the control of the Chinese Courts, Singapore remains the central jewel of the Golden Courts, although a freakish one. Often called the Golden Lion Court to distinguish it from the Golden Courts proper, Singapore is the one place where the Penangallan ever show any interest in the affairs of the modern, urban world. When the British took over Singapore in 1824, the war between the native Golden Courts Kuei-jin and the invading Kin-jin was especially fierce. The (mostly) Ventrue and Tremere Camarilla colonists were horrified by what they perceived to be the sheer bestiality of the native vampires. In standard imperialistic fashion, they did everything in their power to rid themselves of the native savages, including importing mercenaries (in the form of Assamite assassins) to secure the new colony. The cost in blood was staggering. The Camarilla conquest of Singapore was to be an enormous feather in Robert Tedder's hat, for which the Camarilla rewarded him years later with the princedom of Hong Kong.

Because of the extremely high price paid for control of the region, the British Kindred were loathe to give it up when England pulled out in 1965, but without their precious influence and connections, the Ventrue could do little but beat a hasty retreat. Some xenophile Kindred remained and exist there still, sharing the warm nights with the native Kueijin they once branded as "barbarians," and of all the denizens of nocturnal Singapore, they alone have a modicum of freedom.

More recently, Singapore has been described as "Disneyland with the death penalty," and the whole city is a tribute to just how much the human spirit can be maimed and still function in a friendly, orderly manner. Those with only a shallow understanding of the workings of the Golden Courts are at a loss to explain how the savage queens of the jungle night can revel as fully in Singapore's lockstep civic-mindedness. The answer is simple: They don't. The male Kuei-jin of the Gold Courts rule Singapore. Most Singaporean Kuei-jin are there because they were "banished" to the city once they grew powerful enough to challenge the rule of a local Penangallan. Their hatred and resentment of the chaotic jungles and the Penangallan who rule them has turned into an obsession with order and control. No wonder, then, that the Way of the Resplendent Crane is the most practiced Dharma in the city. Many of the more recent Kuei-jin, or those not in positions of authority, also follow the Path of a Thousand Whispers.

The ancestors of Singapore, who refer to themselves as the Lion Court Emperors, have been contemplating secession from the Golden Courts for decades, but given that Singapore is almost at the center of the Golden Courts, their position is not strong. Were they to claim imperium over Singapore, they believe, the Penangallan would sweep over their city like an unending storm surge. They're right. The Penangallan want the males to manage the night-to-night administration of the city because doing so would bore them, but Singapore is too important a city to lose, and they are determined to retain it at any cost.

Ironically, the ruling Kuei-jin of Singapore have adopted the Kin-jin's habit of ruling through business influence. The Soul Art of Obligation, therefore, is by far the most common Discipline practiced in Singapore. The Chi Arts are also seen as most worthwhile.

Because of the emphasis on order and control, the *wu* of Singapore are engineered in such a way that obedience to the *wu* leader precedes all other concerns. Because these policies are enforced so aggressively, paranoia is a common state for the Kuei-jin of Singapore. While the Golden Lion Court likes to think that it is inching toward freedom from the jungles that surround it, it is really strangling itself with vines of intrigue and authoritarianism. Something is going to give soon, and it is unlikely to be the Penangallan.

The Infinite Thunders Court

The Bijali, "Infinite Thunders," Court is based on Sri Lanka, but its power extends along the eastern coast of India and into Bangladesh. These Kuei-jin are among the least demonprone in all of the Middle Kingdom. How ironic, then, that they too should be considered barbarians by the Courts of the Quincunx. By far the most prevalent Dharmic paths followed in this court are the Way of the Resplendent Crane and Flame of the Rising Phoenix. As much as there is such a thing, the Infinite Thunders Court is the center of the Rising Phoenix Dharma. The few extant sacred writings of this Dharma, most of which are written in Sanskrit, are kept here. When a new Disciple is welcomed into the Brahmin priesthood, the texts are laboriously copied by hand in carefully formulated blood inks and passed on. The attitudes of the Quincunx toward the popularity of this heretical Dharma are unflinchingly dogmatic, as one would expect. The widespread practice of Flame of the Rising Phoenix Dharma is but one of many elements that will prevent the Infinite Thunders Court from attaining any but the most cursory acknowledgement from the primary Chinese courts. Regrettably, the serious Kuei-jin of the Infinite Thunders Court cannot tolerate the akuma of the Golden Courts (or the Penangallan, for that matter), the only court with which it shares a border. Thusly isolated, it is no wonder that these Kuei-jin nurture and cherish their differences from the other courts of the Middle Kingdom. In its philosophies, attitudes toward the west, and even its prevalent Disciplines, the Infinite Thunders Court makes its own way.

Religious beliefs in Sri Lanka and along the Indian coast differ markedly from those of China and Japan. Islamic, Buddhist, and Hindu spirituality mingle and thrive along the densely populated east coast of India, resulting in a fundamentally different approach to both life and unlife. Petty intrigues are rare here, unlike most other courts. Philosophical disagreements are the primary source of conflict in the Bijali Court, and these are adjudicated by the Brahmins, or warrior-priests.

Isolated as they are from the other Kuei-jin courts, and being situated at the far western edge of the Middle Kingdom, the Infinite Thunders Court has little choice but to traffic with the Kin-jin. Kindred of the Ravnos, Assamite, and Setite clans have had a major presence in the region for centuries, and for the duration of the English occupation of India, the Ventrue were fairly common as well. While they were not friendly, the Thunders did not go out of their way to antagonize the Western vampires either, and a silent and mutually comfortable reciprocal ignorance has been allowed to linger, mostly peacefully, for millennia.

The key strength of the Infinite Thunders Court is its philosophical nature and its stability. Newly risen Kuei-jin are instructed along the Dharmic paths much more assiduously than elsewhere, and while the Infinite Thunders Court is one of the less populous courts, it has a surprisingly high proportion of ancestors who are quite willing to intervene should their much-cherished stability be threatened.

The curse of this court is the sadness that lingers like the Calcutta smog. The Rising Phoenix Dharma centers around the desire for mortality, and most adherents attempt to return to their lives as though their deaths had never happened; they are then forced to watch as their families age and die while they linger night after night, fighting an unending battle against their P'o. Violence and intrigue are not the vices of this court; despair is. The Kuei-jin of the Golden Courts call the Bijali Court the Court of Infinite Tears.

The Disciplines favored by the Kuei-jin of Eastern India include Kiai, Yang Prana, Chi'iu Muh, and Mibasham, which certain bodhisattvas claim originated in the Infinite Thunders Court.

The Warrior-Priests of the Bijali Court

No other court in the Middle Kingdom is so aggressively elitist as the Infinite Thunders Court. Advancement is based strictly on merit and the mastery of a series of traditional and exceedingly difficult - tasks. Those who excel are given access to wiser ancestors and more esoteric writings; those who do not excel must make their own way.

Kuei-jin who master themselves, learn their Dharma quickly, and excel at tasks given to them by the warrior-priests are allowed to enter into didactic dialogues with a series of progressively more learned ancestors. Those who pass a series of four tests or "gates" are assumed to have been sent to the court for the ineffable purposes of Heaven and are accepted into the court as a Brahmins, with all the rights and privileges pertaining thereto.

The first task is the mastery of social customs. Diplomacy, tact, and social graces are necessary to the Brahmin who must interact with a variety of Kuei-jin, mortals, Kin-j in, and odder things. Upon completion of this task, the Kuei-jin is granted the title of Child of Clay.

The second of the four gates is mastery of the rituals used in Kuei-jin culture as well as the determination and unshakable will required to use them.

The third task is the development the formidable physical prowess necessary to fight for one's beliefs, should that necessity come to pass. Passing through this gate earns the Disciple the title of Warrior of Jade.

After attaining all of these, the fourth and final challenge to those who would be the nobility of the Bijali Court is the cultivation of the compassionate soul. Upon fulfilling this final requirement, the Disciple memorizes one of the great texts of his Dharma, and he is granted the title of Priest of Diamond and takes his place among the great warrior-priests of the Infinite Thunders Court.

	he Steps of the Brahmin	
5 in Etiquette	Child of Clay	
5 in rituals and 7+ WP	Scholar of Stone	
5 Stamina OR Dexterity	Warrior of Jade	
4+ Dharma	Priest of Diamond	



HUNDRED CORPSE FAMILIES

The basic social structure of the Kuei-jin is the wu. While the individual is considered to be impermanent and unreliable, the wu is seen as having a stability that is desirable and necessary for the continued success of the immortal courts.

Because the wu is the traditional family structure of the Kueijin, the courts, especially those of the Quincunx, push Kueijin together into these groups in the name of "tradition" and "stability." Those few Kuei-iin unwise enough to question the ineffable will of Heaven suffer sanctions of varying degrees of subtlety until they submit to the mandarins and enter into guanxi with suitable others determined by the ancestors.

Kuei-jin who absolutely refuse to become part of a wu are heckled, persecuted, labeled "immature," "selfish," and "proud," and ultimately relegated to the status of third-class citizens. Mandarins will only allow a Kuei-jin to become one of the heimin as a last resort, a way of avoiding further conflict and allowing a foolish Kuei-jin to save some moderate amount of face by continuing to serve the court in her own small way until she matures enough to be placed into a wu.

The Middle Kingdom is a chain forged of many links, and getting Kuei-jin to work together in a wu can sometimes be extraordinarily difficult. Vampires of the Quincunx, for example, would be unspeakably insulted to be asked to work with the backwater Kuei-jin of the Golden Courts; likewise, Green Court Kuei-jin would be hard-pressed to find any areas of commonality with Kuei-jin from the Bijali Court. Most ancestors are quick to point out that the strengths of the different courts are a great help to a wu, not a hindrance. Without guanxi, however, many hin would never see beyond mere "liking" and "disliking." Just as individuals differ greatly throughout the Middle Kingdom, so too do wu.

Ancestors construct wu according to ancient formulae. Properly constructing a wu is an art and a science the nuances of which can be studied for centuries. Some ancestors call it "Feng Shui of souls." The ideal wu, according to the Quincunx, is one that allows each member to do that which Heaven wants her to do, and for which it has best prepared her. Each direction should be attended to, and ideally, by a Kuei-jin following the Dharma associated with that direction. Five is, therefore, the ideal number of Kuei-jin in a *wu*; any other number is most inauspicious. Numerology plays an important part, as do astrology and, frequently, readings of the I Ching. The only thing more difficult than putting a wu together, some ancestors say, is taking one apart.

A functioning wu that falls apart or loses one or more members is a walking wound. The idea behind a wu is that it is one body with five limbs, and if a member of the wu leaves or is killed, then the body has had one of its extremities sawed off. This is an occasion for great sorrow. When this

happens, a gau-hoi, or assisted grieving, is called. The remains of the *wu* are split up and are sent away to spend time completely alone. This can take the form of a mission to a foreign city or simply one night of consuming no Chi as a way of understanding the emptiness. After a period of gau-hoi, a suitable new Kuei-jin is found to act as the missing limb, the Reciprocity is performed, *guanxi* is established, and the body is made whole again. Speaking of the lost limb, thereafter, is considered to be most inauspicious.

Breaking Guanxi

Certain inauspicious circumstances require a Kuei-jin to break free of the *guanxi* that binds her to her *wu*. Most of these circumstances are, to say the least, highly suspect. The most common reason *guanxi* is broken is that one or more members of the *wu* has fallen prey to the temptations of the Yama Kings. When that is the case, the ancestors bring all members of a wit together (if the *akuma* have not yet been executed), and a highly disturbing ritual is performed incorporating the torture and execution of the *akuma* in front of his *wu* as an object lesson in the dangers of infernal temptation.

If it is discovered that a Kuei-jin has secretly broken the *guanxi*, he will be assumed to be *akuma*, and dealt with accordingly. The disappearance of a *wu*'s nushi is deemed most inauspicious because it could be the first step in the dissolution of the *wu*. Such an occurrence often sparks an investigation of the *wu* in question.

(In game terms, breaking guanxi is simple. The player spends one permanent willpower point and performs a willpower roll against the difficulty of her character's guanxi rating for each member of the wu, with two successes required. The player adds one to the difficulty for every full 50 years that the character's been in the wu. The existence of a nushi spirit adds one to the difficulty for each point that the character has in the nushi Background. Clearly, it's easier for a new wu to be broken up than an older one. Guanxi in an older wu can only be broken by powerful ancestors or by an act of a Yama King. If the breaking of *guanxi* is done by an ancestor (or a Yama King) the willpower expenditure is not required, and the difficulty goes down by five. Ancestors will dissolve guanxi only in rare and urgent circumstances. Yama Kings, on the other hand, will do it for any reason at All to exchange for "favors" from the character, but that way lies trouble....)

Mandarins see the *guanxi* as the connective tissue holding the courts together. Comprising a bonding ritual, a spiritual linking and a bit of self-hypnosis, *guanxi* is likely to be one of the more powerful emotional experiences of a Kuei-jin's unlife. Traditionally, the Kuei-jin are taken through an extended ritual cleansing, sprinkled with powdered jade and then tied together with silk bonds while the ancestor speaks the binding ritual. The nushi, if there is to be one, is summoned at this time and bound to the members of the nascent *wu*. Finally, vows of mutual support are sworn and the whole occasion (theoretically) acts as a focus to bring the *wu* together with one cause.

While *guanxi* is comparable to the Sabbat's bond of Vinculum, the feelings are rarely as intense. Guanxi, after all, is a tool to help stabilize the courts, not to threaten them with inappropriately strong feelings. Breaking *guanxi*, should it prove necessary, is also a simpler proposition than breaking the Vinculum. Many *akuma* are able to break their *guanxi* even without the help of their infernal masters. A large part of what gives *guanxi* its power is the desire to like the members of one's *wu*; there's a definite element of self-hypnosis involved, though no Kuei-jin would ever admit as much. The nushi is the best gauge of the state of a *wu*. To break the *guanxi*, the nushi must be killed, its form drained entirely of Chi. If the departing Kuei-jin does not destroy the nushi, it will always be a link between the Kindred and her former *wu*.

The nat (or nushi) is a vital element in any *wu*. More than just a resource for a *wu* to fall back on, the nushi is literally the spirit of the *wu*. A Japanese war *wu* could well have Raiden, Duke of Thunder, as its nushi, whereas a *wu* from the Green Courts is much more likely to make use of the spirits of the dead, perhaps an ancestor. In any event, the nushi will be appropriate to the function and Dharmic paths of the *wu*.

There are wu in existence that have never undergone the Reciprocity: Independent wu have existed for centuries, albeit at the edges of Kuei-jin culture. With no jina or ancestor to support them and conduct the Reciprocity, independent wu do not have the blessings or the nushi that formal wu have; these odd collections of hungry ghosts are held together by nothing but their own choice. The Quincunx pities them because they are the mad who do not know that they are mad. After all, what kind of pathetic wu provides no spirit, no sense of obligation and no reassurance that one is mystically connected to one's comrades? Kuei-jin who are involved in an independent wu sometimes find consolation by telling themselves that a wu of free souls is better than an official wu that is created by artifice and sorcery. What kind of bond can it be, they ask, that needs spirit magic to hold it together?

Independent *wu* are often a way for *heimin* to band together for protection and political power, although the courts see them as unwashed rabble trying to take privilege they've not earned through service to the courts. The farther from the Quincunx one goes, the less the independent *wu* are persecuted. In the outer courts, *wu* may be considered a good idea, but they're not the basis for social acceptance.

Over the centuries of Kuei-jin history, many *wu* have conducted themselves in such an extraordinary fashion that the eye of fame (or infamy) has fallen upon them. The education of hin is such that the names of certain Kuei-jin can be a shorthand way for a jina or an ancestor to refer to a well-known lesson, "Were you to be in the *wu* with Chou Deng it would be like the Flashing Carp, and much more auspicious." or "What are you saying? Do you want your *wu* to wind up like the Gnashing Dragon?" The *wu* listed here are but a handful of the better known *wu* from Kuei-jin legendry.

The first *wu* nearly any Kuei-jin will hear of is the Flashing Carp *wu*. The Quincunx puts forth the great Flashing Carp as its ideal and suggests quite strongly that there is no higher goal a *wu* can aspire to than emulating that most worthy body. Comprised of one follower of each respectable Dharma, the Flashing Carp *wu* began humbly enough and attained a place in Kuei-jin history by developing such an intense sense of camaraderie and protectiveness of its other members that it was able to master any task it was assigned.

The differences between the members of the *wu* were constructive - each understood that the others in the *wu* had different beliefs and different strengths; by developing a keen understanding of what those strengths and weaknesses were, they were able to function together as no random band of Kuei-jin could. It was clearly an auspicious sign that each member of the *wu* was, for his or her young age, a paragon of his or her Dharma even before the *wu* formed. Indeed, separately, each would have been known throughout the Middle Kingdom, but together they were able to function as five limbs of one body, and in so doing they assured their fame.

Most Kuei-jin, at least those from the Quincunx, can rattle off by rote the reasons the Flashing Carp мой was the ideal unit. The Flashing Carp *wu* was carefully chosen, assembled and blessed by the venerable ancestors of the Flesh Court, its first important step in attaining fame. Secondly, the members quickly grew to respect each other, despite not taking an instant liking to one another. Thirdly, each member had an unusually strong *guanxi* to each other member. Fourth, the *wu*'s nushi was of legendary power and granted many blessings to the Flashing Carp *wu*. Many modern Kuei-jin are so tired of hearing about the damned Flashing Carp and what made them so damned special that the memory of this august *wu* is frequently shown great disrespect. This is alarming to the jina, as it is likely to inflict bad joss upon the unwise Kuei-jin making the remarks.

The Flashing Carp *wu*, it is said, still acts as an agent of the Flesh Court (another good sign), although the members are all sufficiently advanced upon their Dharmic paths that they are all most revered ancestors and only gather infrequently when some great need pulls them from their meditations. Some disrespectful rumors claim that the Flashing Carp *wu* were ultimately seduced by the Yama Kings, defiled by their own arrogance, but of course only the young would ever be so disrespectful to suggest such a thing.

The terrible Flayed Monkey *wu*, on the other hand, is never spoken of by the jina of the Quincunx because no greater aberration exists in their eyes.

When the Golden Courts were about to fall to the *akuma* nearly a millennium ago, Piyau Payung, a bodhisattva of the Thrashing Dragon path, came out of the jungle with five

Penangallan and annihilated scores of *akuma*. According to the Quincunx policy on *wu*, nothing could be worse. A bodhisattva lowering herself to work in a *wu* with the much less enlightened? Who can believe such a thing? Worse, the number was off; every Kuei-jin knows that a *wu* contains five members; anything else is inauspicious; a six-member *wu* is nothing but a vehicle for disgrace. The *wu* was terribly out of balance as well; four Thrashing Dragons is bad enough, but tempering them with two Devil Tigers? It's a clear violation of the will of Heaven and an invitation to foul joss.

But the fact remains that the Flayed Monkey *wu* acted as a spectacular example of a war *wu* and, working in concert, destroyed *akuma* after *akuma*. Four of the Penangallan of the *wu* still reign over their courts, and they come to each other's aid when the *akuma* problem reaches crisis level (which has been most of the time, of late).

As an example of a *wu* gone awry, the Quincunx typically tosses out the example of the Gnashing Dragon wu. The most reviled wu in Kuei-jin history, the Gnashing Dragon wu did everything wrong and suffered the grave consequences. The ancestors of Beijing were lax, and allowed this wu to form of its own accord, free of their wisdom or assistance. "How could it not have gone bad?" ask the mandarins. The seven Kuei-jin who formed the wu knew there were too many for a practical wu, but joined together anyway because "they liked each other." Slipping through cracks in the system, the seven ran away and performed their own guanxi and thereby doomed themselves. Almost immediately, the two Thousand Whispers began holding themselves aloof from the wu, claiming to be the leaders because only they could balance all the elements of leadership. This created resentment. When Far Lau, the Resplendent Crane, tried to meet with them to explain their folly to them, they bound him in chains and buried him, still struggling, in the earth. As the ancestors of Beijing began uncovering the pieces of this tragedy, the two traitors knew their deed would be discovered and so they bargained with the Yama Kings for protection. The price the Yama Kings charged for this rescue was, of course, servitude. The two agreed to hand over each member of their wu, one by one, until the Yama Kings had fed on the souls of four of the wu. By then, the ancestors realized what had happened, and the Yama Kings watched, laughing, as the two akuma were executed. Only months later did they find the body of Far Lau, devoid of Chi, his soul long since gone screaming into the lacerating winds of Yomi.

The Shiva Lingam, a *wu* from the Infinite Thunders Court, bears little in common with what the Quincunx would call a *wu* and yet embodies the ideal perfectly. Three male Kuei-jin following the Rising Phoenix path joined themselves together in *guanxi* and together swore allegiance to a nat (or nushi) of the hearth. The three of them were scholars of the night, teaching wisdom to those who would stay up to hear them; they existed largely as they did when they were alive, simply avoiding the sun and begging at night for blood-alms from those they taught. They challenged each other to strengthen their H'un and fight their P'o, and become Brahmins, which, one by one, they did. It was shortly thereafter that the three disappeared. Rising Phoenix scholars insist that this is proof of their Dharmic path, but none can say for sure.



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CHAPTER TWO: THE DEMON PEOPLE

I do not think about hunger.

I hear my grandmother, old and shrill, telling me one more time the story of the greedy old woman. "And do you know what then? She watched her husband lie upon his mat and die, all because she would not share one rice cake. You may think about this story now."

And she would leave me to kneel on the woven tatami for hours while she prepared the tea and the food for my father. I became used to hunger then, and waiting.

It is a good thing that I am patient. The gaijin will die in the proper way, at the proper time. I will wait.

The father who does not teach his son his duties is equally guilty with the son who neglects them.

- Kung-fu Tzu (Confucius)

Although the Kuei-jin claim recognition as the sole vampires of Asia, they are not the only inheritors of the powers of unlife. Their curse, found throughout all the lands of the Middle Kingdom, is a legacy that conceals the other shen that roam the nights. While most Kuei-jin cling to their courts and their heritage, the outsiders of vampire society wait on the fringes, engaged in their own games and plots. These pretenders are widely dismissed, even considered nothing more than fanciful rumor. Such an image, of course, allows the other shen to bide their time, working in the hidden corners where even the "civilized" Kuei-jin fear to tread.

KUEi-JiN

Much has already been said of the Kuei-jin in Kindred of the East. They are the most pre-eminent among the unliving in the East, though they are not the only vampires among the shen. Some of their capabilities bear clarification.

Demon Arts and Shadow Soul

Kindred of the East p. 107 calls for a shadow nature roll whenever a Demon Art is invoked; Black Wind, on p. 108, requires a roll to resist falling to fire soul. Both of these are correct: The Kuei-jin must resist the temptation of the Demon, and then, upon using the Black Wind, must fight against berserk rage. For that matter, despite the flavor text, Black Wind costs Demon Chi. The expended Chi does not automatically return.

Incidentally, reactive uses of Demon Arts (such as Iron Mountain) do not require a roll for shadow nature.

Demon Chi

Demon Chi is not true "animating" Chi energy; it is the demonic energy of Yomi itself. As such, it cannot be used for many of the functions of typical Chi: It does not count when determining whether a Kuei-jin survives Final Death, and it cannot be used to rise for an evening. Conversely, it is not subject to the Chi expenditure limits of Dharma; it is limited only by the user's Stamina Attribute.

Bushi, Gaki And Kindred of the East

Previous Vampire supplements - the first edition of A World of Darkness and Dark Alliance: Vancouver - showcased some early interpretations on the vampires of Asia from a Western context.

Think of these descriptions as how a Kindred of the Camarilla might describe a Cathayan, and how that reflects the Kindreds' perception of themselves; in their arrogance, most of the Kindred presume that the Cathayans are simply another bloodline. They are, of course, quite wrong.

Converting characters of this sort is simple - Attributes, Abilities and Backgrounds remain largely unchanged. The Rift Discipline can be exchanged for the Discipline of Tapestry or Cultivation; the Kai Discipline can be replaced with Kiai (in this book) or Obligation (in **Kindred of the East**). Humanity becomes Hun; Self-Control/Instinct becomes Yin Chi; Courage becomes Yang Chi; P'o equals 8 minus Conscience/Conviction.



DHAMPYRS

Like the sun on the horizon, bloated and waning, dhampyrs exist in the boundaries between life and death. Born with dead blood in their veins, they must walk a delicate road, unable to fit in mortal society due to their unnatural hungers and capabilities, but also unaccepted among the Kuei-jin because of their status as half-people. This lonely path leads to great yearning and frustration, to a life spanning generations, combining the frailties of humans with the despair of immortals.

The Kuei-jin, as dead creatures of stolen Chi, are capable of simulating life with Yang energies. This is little more than a simulacrum, though; even their children are tainted by death. Whether born of a human parent and a vampiric parent, or by the union of two vampires, dhampyrs are sustained as much by the mortuary forces of undeath as by any half-living tissue. As a result, dhampyrs can survive like humans, but they share the passions of their parents and the risk of falling to karmic corruption.

Gifted with superhuman resilience, dhampyrs can expect to live hundreds of years. Some survive as many as three centuries, and a few are rumored to exceed even that lifetime. Given this slow maturation, it's no surprise that they often share the outlooks of their vampire parents. Of course, for people surrounded by life and forced to watch it all die (able to interact without the curses of shadow or sundeath, but still far beyond other humans) this span can be an agonizing period of grief and dehumanization. It is little wonder, then, that the eldest dhampyrs are remorseless creatures of no compassion, and that even young ones relate to humankind with difficulty.

The powers of vampiric heritage are no mean matter, though. A dhampyr draws upon Chi energy much like his parents, able to shape and use his body's forces in ways that most humans master only with rigorous training and self-discipline (if at all). Although these talents pale in comparison to the greater Disciplines of the Kuei-jin, they are nonetheless a potent edge in the centuries of conflict and alienation. Additionally, dhampyrs can steal the Chi of other creatures, just like their parents, though such "feeding" carries moral repercussions.

Dhampyrs in Kuei-jin Society

Much like their Western counterparts, the revenants and ghouls, dhampyrs are outsiders, servitors and occasional foes to the Kuei-jin. Unlike the sad and frangible servants of the West, though, dhampyrs do not require the grace or sustenance of their Kuei-jin progenitors. Once he comes of age, a dhampyr is as free as any mortal - shackled only by the obligations that he chooses to accept and by the threats that his contemporaries may level. As a result of their relative freedom to walk in both the shadow world and the mortal one, dhampyrs are valued as ambassadors and go-betweens. Often, a court will grant a dhampyr the status of heimin, considering the nominal outsider a half-person, figuratively as well as literally. In this fashion, the court can properly call upon the dhampyr for services, while recognizing his contribution to Kuei-jin society. Of course, not all dhampyrs choose this route, and the rogues and vagabonds of this nature rarely have any positive interactions with the courts. Indeed, some particularly recalcitrant dhampyrs have had the misfortune to find themselves akuma, shunned and hunted by the Kuei-jin.

Raising a dhampyr is a difficult undertaking at best for a Kuei-jin. After all, the dhampyr lacks many of the definitive weaknesses of the Kuei-jin. The prospect of carrying a half-dead child to term is also a rather disturbing one for most Sunset People. The potential rewards do lead some Kuei-jin to this course in any case. The prospect of a nigh-immortal child, well trained and positioned to fulfill obligations in both human and vampire society, has a definite appeal. Raising the child is a daunting prospect, especially given the Kuei-jin



problems of fire soul, and strictest secrecy is required; it would not do to have one's offspring taken by the government or influenced by other members of the court, after all. Kuei-jin rarely, if ever, sire dhampyrs without some sort of agenda - and this agenda always shapes the dhampyr's formative years. A dhampyr may be a pawn in a political game, a half-human filling a needed role in crossing societies, even an object for affection that was never received in life, but dhampyrs are rarely accidents. Whatever their functions, dhampyrs are tools first, not children. As a result, maturation for dhampyrs is... intriguing... to say the least.

Growing up is difficult for dhampyrs. Their passions set them apart from their human relatives and friends. Their Kuei-jin parents use them as objects without consideration to their dreams and ambitions. A dhampyr must either accept a perpetual role as a servant and functionary, or else break with his parents to determine his own role; he must build his own direction and life out of individual choice. Conceived as a tool, hi' must become a person.

Once the dhampyr leaves his parents' mold to build his own life, he occupies an uncertain place in Kuei-jin society. He is not returned from the grave to fulfill karma, and so he is abjured from participation in the courts. At the same time, his slowly aging body, unusual powers and subhuman thirsts often drive him out of mortal contact. He may choose to travel between courts, or to hide amongst the fringes of mortal society - but he will not be accepted in either world. No wonder, then, that many dhampyrs are loners and wanderers by choice and by nature. Selling their services to the highest bidders, the Shade Walkers are free to forge π destiny unfettered by Dharma or mortality.

Dhampyr Characters

Creating a dhampyr character proceeds much like a mortal. Of course, with their half-natures, dhampyrs are more complex than most mere humans. Although fantastic, they are still mortal, and dhampyrs are rarely a match for experienced Kuei-jin - though there have been notable exceptions.



Kuk's Story

In my passion, I had failed.

I took a lover, it is true, from the mortals around me. I had been around them too long I felt my balance shift toward the exuberance of life and away from the staid, cold yoke of undeath. It was weak; I was weak. What I had thought was lust was something less. Something foreign to one such as I.

I told you before, how I kissed him good-bye afterward How we made love among the bones How he fucked a corpse m a graveyard I thought myself so much superior - I took pride m letting him live, tweaking the Strings of this mortal puppet's life.

He gave me more than I had bargained for. He gave me a child.

From the first night I awoke with the extra hunger, I knew my transgression. As my belly swelled with the dead fetus growing in my cold womb, I felt the pain of failure. I could not bring this to be.

On the sixtieth night, under the watchful eye of Black Dragon's Moon, I returned to that graveyard.

With a knife, I cut myself open, pulling out the cursed child that lived and died within me. My blood, its blood - our bloodwashed over me and I laughed and cried together. Neither of us deserved the fate this monster-child would have brought us.

Out of mercy and hate, I snapped its frail neck I buried it beneath the bones where it had been conceived. And I have not taken another lover since.

Concept

Dhampyr's lives (such as they are) are defined by their parents. The unusual circumstances that lead to the birth of a dhampyr are rare enough to merit exploration. After all, the Kuei-jin parent must be Yang-imbalanced to sire a dhampyr. If female, she must make an effort to keep the child viable. He is likely to have an insightful view into vampiric society and a disdain for most mortals unless the dhampyr was somehow raised solely by a mortal parent and remained unaware of his true nature, As a result, few dhampyrs "fit in" to human society. Most are drifters, eccentrics or vagabonds who seek employment where they may, and rely upon their special skills and the patronage of Kuei-jin to survive.

Nature, Demeanor and P'o Nature

Torn by two sides of a paranormal world, dhampyrs are far from cardboard caricatures. They are just as prone to extremes of personality and belief as any other mortal with a passionate connection to the supernatural - perhaps more so, due to the fiery extremes of their dual souls. Dhampyrs rarely have Natures that fit into society and tradition; as perennial outsiders, they are more likely to be Visionaries, Rebels, Deviants, Loners and the like. Of course, the face that a dhampyr puts on when dealing with the mortal world is subject only to the whims of the dhampyr. Dhampyrs can select from the full range of Natures and Demeanors, though some (Traditionalist, Conformist, Follower, Conniver, Bon Vivant) are rarer than others.

Because dhampyrs have Demons just like Kuei-jin (albeit much weaker), they must also choose P'o Natures. The P'o Nature, however, does not determine when the P'o can test for shadow nature. Indeed, the Demon is incapable of such dominion over a dhampyr in any case, one of the benefits of the weakened immortal blood.

Attributes

Dhampyrs are mortal, and subject to many of the same limitations as other humans. However, the circumstances of a dhampyr's creation almost guarantee that the parent or parents take an active hand in forming the dhampyr's life. As a result, most dhampyrs are exceptional specimens in terms of their capabilities - dhampyrs gain 7/5/3 Attribute points to spread among their primary, secondary and tertiary Attribute groups, much like their inhuman parents. The limits to dhampyr abilities reflect their mortal heritage; a dhampyr is limited to five dots in any Attribute.

Abilities

With long life spans and access to unusual training from Kuei-jin, dhampyrs have exceptional capabilities. Though not necessarily as well trained as a jina or even a mortal shih, the dhampyrs are forced to develop their abilities just to survive the constant shadowy struggles of the shen, even if they choose to avoid such battles. Dhampyrs have 13/9/5 Attribute points to split among their Talents, Skills and Knowledge, and are subject to the usual limitations: no more than five dots in any Ability, and no more than three dots in any Ability during the Ability assignment step of character creation.

Disciplines

Mastery of Kuei-jin Disciplines comes only with long and difficult training for dhampyrs. A dhampyr character has one, and only one, Discipline at the beginning of play - a single trick mastered through excoriating practice. Dhampyrs may learn only Shintai Disciplines and Demon Arts; the Soul Disciplines and Chi Arts are beyond their ken (except for Feng Shui and Tzu Wci, which may be learned by dhampyrs just as they may be learned by any mortal).

Learning a new Discipline is a taxing undertaking for a dhampyr. Like ghouls, dhampyrs are not completely skilled in the development of vampiric Disciplines. The first dot of a new Discipline costs 20 experience points to develop; additional dots (if the dhampyr is so fortunate and skilled) cost 15x the current rating in the Discipline. Dhampyrs reach their peak in Disciplines with age. A dhampyr's maximum Discipline rating is equal to his age in centuries (rounded up), so a 276-year-old dhampyr can have up to three levels in all of his Disciplines (and is likely quite decrepit and ready to fall over and die). Since all dhampyr characters entering play are assumed to fall into the range of 25 to 50 years of age, they are effectively limited to the first dot in Disciplines, although the Storyteller's dhampyr characters may be old enough to show exceptional prowess.

Backgrounds

Although dhampyrs rarely partake deeply of mortal society, they do not shun utility. Mortal ties are not paramount in the half-lives of the Shade Walkers, but neither are the dhampyrs bereft of such connections. A dhampyr may use any of the Backgrounds that a Kuei-jin may use, and has 5 points to distribute among those Backgrounds. Similarly, Backgrounds that are barred to Kuei-jin are not allowed to dhampyrs.

The Salutary Question: Dhampyrs and Kin-jin

Dhampyrs, because of their unique half-state as living vampires, do not interact well with the Children of Caine. A dhampyr cannot be ghouled; drinking the blood of a Kin-jin (which a dhampyr would probably never do willingly) simply restores Chi energy to the dhampyr (one Chi per blood point). Similarly, dhampyrs cannot be Embraced. If drained of all blood or killed and then fed vitae, they remain dead.

Dhampyrs can be born to any human and Yang-imbalanced Kuei-jin parent, or even as the offspring of two Yangunbalanced Cathayans. Dhampyrs cannot result from a crossbreed between a Kuei-jin and a shapeshifter (as if that would ever happen!), since the spiritual nature of the shifter and the dead energies of the Kuei-jin combat one another.

In a similar vein, dhampyrs cannot be Kinfolk or shifters; the half-dead blood kills whatever spiritual component may have been passed on by the dhampyr's parents. As already Awakened entities, dhampyr cannot use True Magick, although a dhampyr could use sorcery (just like a ghoul or revenant). Dhampyrs also can't be Kinain to changelings; the banality of their half-dead blood prevents this.

Humanity

Because they are still somewhat mortal, dhampyrs have a tenuous tie to humanity. However fragile, this slender thread is still a representation of the dhampyr's sanity and connection to his living side. Calling upon this human heritage gives the dhampyr some ability to combat the darker urges of his vampiric half, but the man within the Shade Walker is also vulnerable to the pain, loss and suffering of human compassion.

Like other mortals, the dhampyr cannot lose his last vestiges of Humanity, no matter how far he descends - only madness lies in that direction; actions that would lead to the loss of the last point of Humanity instead give the dhampyr a Derangement. Dhampyrs have P'o ratings just like their Kueijin parents, though, and must be careful to avoid awakening the fitfully sleeping Demon.

Dhampyr characters do not use Dharmas - the salvation for the reborn is not the path for those once born in shadows. Of course, some dhampyrs still espouse the particular virtues of a given Dharma, but they must abide by their Humanity as well, just as dictated by Heaven. It is unheard of (but not impossible...) for dhampyrs to follow Paths of Enlightenment no dhampyr would ever admit to stooping to such conduct. Then again, coming in contact with a Path of Enlightenment enough to learn it should be ludicrously rare for a dhampyr.

Unlike vampires, dhampyrs do not suffer from drowsiness' during the day, though most are, in fact, nocturnal by choice. Sunlight is uncomfortable to dhampyrs. As a result, dhampyrs only suffer Humanity limits to dice pools while in direct sunlight; if under shelter or, otherwise, in shade or darkness, a dhampyr functions with full efficiency even during the day. However, dhampyrs still suffer the social consequences of low Humanity (see Vampire: The Masquerade, pp. 134-136), and a given dhampyr's appearance becomes noticeably more monstrous and bestial as his Humanity ebbs.

A dhampyr's beginning Humanity rating is equal to his Conscience and Self-Control virtues added together. Additional Humanity costs one freebie point per dot. Improving Humanity costs twice the current rating in experience points; additionally, the dhampyr must show some true connection to his human nature in game play, a task generally requiring exceptional and long-running roleplaying.

P'o

Though the Demon rests just below the surface of the dhampyr's consciousness, it is a lethargic counterpart. Not quite as fierce as the Demon riding a Kuei-jin, a dhampyr's Demon is less of a subtle tempter and more of a barely felt urge toward monstrosity.

All dhampyrs begin with one point of P'o - this is the heritage of the Demon. Dhampyrs risk increasing P'o energies if they stray from their human ways too often and too heinously. Any time that a dhampyr botches a roll of Conscience (see Virtues, below), he gains a point of P'o. Each permanent P'o point reduces the character's maximum Humanity by one, so no dhampyr can have a humanity rating above nine (due to starting with a P'o of one).

Unlike Kuei-jin, dhampyrs are not susceptible to shadow soul. Still, the Demon makes whispered threats and promises, and all dhampyrs must learn to contend with it. Any time the dhampyr makes a Virtue roll of any sort, the Storyteller rolls the dhampyr's P'o rating (difficulty 6); each success removes one success from the Virtue roll.

Dhampyrs do gain Demon Chi from their P'o, just like Kueijin, and can use it for all of the same purposes: increasing speed or strength, growing fangs, powering Disciplines, etc. As always, a dhampyr may not spend more Demon Chi in a turn than his Stamina rating. Also, since the Demon is not as strong in dhampyrs as it is in Kuei-jin, dhampyrs only roll one die to regain Demon Chi at the beginning of a new evening, regardless of P'o-the dhampyr's demonic energies return slowly and erratically. This roll is always made at sunset.

Dhampyrs who die with P'o ratings of three or more come back as full Kuei-jin. This is rarely a blessing of any sort.

Virtues and Chi

In conjunction with their humanity, dhampyrs have the virtues of Conscience, Self-Control and Courage. Any given dhampyr's Conscience resists the seductive whispers of the Demon and keeps the dhampyr true to his human nature; his Self-Control allows him to resist fire soul; and his Courage allows him to resist wave soul. These actions are taken as if the dhampyr was a Kin-jin. (See **Vampire: The Masquerade**, pp. 133-134.)

However, a dhampyr is more than just a mortal- the dhampyr is a creature of burning, writhing Chi energy. Like the demonhunting shih, dhampyrs can use their Chi energy to perform incredible feats. The amount of Chi a dhampyr has access to is determined by his Self-Control and Courage; Yin Chi equals Self-Control, while Yang Chi equals Courage. Of course, the dhampyr normally has 10 points of Chi in his body; being only half-unliving, though, he cannot channel it as effectively as a true Kuei-jin. Thus, a dhampyr with Self-Control 3 and Courage 4 finds himself able to use only seven of his Chi points, despite his body's pool of 10 Chi.

Using Chi energy taxes a dhampyr, just as it does a mortal. For every two points of Chi energy used, the dhampyr suffers one health level of bashing damage. The dhampyr may not use Chi in excess of his appropriate Virtue ratings unless a successful Stamina roll, difficulty 9, is made - each success allows the dhampyr to access one additional point of Chi, but also costs a health level (of non-soakable lethal damage) and forces a Conscience roll (difficulty 8) for loss of Humanity as the dhampyr burns out her very spirit. Dhampyrs may only call upon one point of Chi energy in any given turn; the Kueijin capacity to direct large quantities of Chi is beyond the capacities of dhampyrs' mortal husks.

Dhampyrs are not limited to restoring their Chi energy with rest, though. A dhampyr may also feed on the Chi of others, gaining stolen sustenance just like a vampire. To do so, the dhampyr must eat flesh. Dhampyrs cannot absorb Chi from blood, breath or dragon nests, as they lack the Dharmic enlightenment to do so. Each health level "eaten" from a victim returns one point of Chi to the dhampyr's Chi pool, and restores the requisite health. However, such an act almost certainly mandates a test of Conscience.

The normal uses of Chi energy besides Disciplines animation, Ghostsight and the like - are not available to dhampyrs. Since a dhampyr is not a damned soul housed in a dead body, the ghostly powers of Lifesight and Ghostsight are not accessible. Dhampyrs require food, water and sleep, just like normal humans; Chi energy is not required to animate them, although a dhampyr may elect to spend a point of Chi energy (either type) to stave off hunger, thirst and fatigue for one day.

Dhampyr Character Creation						
	Trait	Starting Values	Freebie Cost	Experience Cost		
	Attribute	7/5/3 dots	5 per dot	Rating x4		
	Abilities	13/9/5 dots	2 per dot	Rating x2 (3 for new)		
	Disciplines	1 dot	10 per dot	Rating x15 (20 for new)		
	Virtues	7 dots	2 per dot	Rating x2		
	Humanity	Conscience + Self-Control	1 per dot	Rating x2		
	Willpower	Courage	1 per dot	Rating x2		
		<u> </u>		16		
		Starting	g freebie points: 15			

Dhampyrs do not suffer from Chi imbalance in the fashion of Kuei-jin, though they are certainly just as vulnerable to artificial Chi imbalance (through Disciplines or other effects) as anyone else.

Willpower

A dhampyr character's starting Willpower rating equals his Courage Virtue rating. Willpower can be improved with freebie points or experience points at the usual costs: one freebie per dot or twice the current rating in experience points. Willpower can be used for all of the functions -Disciplines, resisting mental intrusion, improving physical performance - that Kuei-jin can use.

The mental fortitude of a supernatural creature is part and parcel of the dhampyr, and as such, dhampyrs can resist various supernatural powers on par with vampires, witches, ghosts and their ilk. Any power that finds supernatural targets more difficult to affect, or that can be resisted by supernatural subjects, is limited similarly when used against a dhampyr.

Merits and Flaws

Obviously, many of the problems and benefits specific to Kuei-jin are not relevant to a still (mostly) living dhampyr. In particular, dhampyrs cannot have the Kuei-jin Flaws: *Defiled*,

Different Body or *Vengeful Ancestors*, nor should they take Merits or Flaws from the lists of those barred to Kuei-jin.

The Flaw: *Akuma* may be taken. In this case, the dhampyr has been branded a traitor and outcast, although few dhampyrs survive long after such a sentence.

Health

Dhampyrs have the same number of health levels as a regular human or Kuei-jin. However, the hardiness of their perpetually dying bodies fortifies them with resilience beyond a human's. In game terms, dhampyrs gain a full soak roll against lethal damage as well as the usual soak-versusbashing damage. Unlike true vampires, dhampyrs do not take half damage from bashing attacks. Also, dhampyrs have difficulty with fire and mystical attacks, just like Kuei-jin; such attacks are aggravated and cannot be soaked without special powers. Sunlight does not inflict damage on dhampyrs, though many find it uncomfortable and are, thus, nocturnal by choice.

The half-living flesh of dhampyrs does heal with time. A dhampyr can heal just like a mortal (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 219), although this process is rather lengthy. Using Chi to heal is more efficient. A dhampyr may use Chi to heal wounds like a Kuei-jin: One point of Chi heals one level of damage, while five points of Chi can repair one level of aggravated damage. Of course, the dhampyr may still

suffer the usual health-level injury from using this Chi, but such fatigue is easily overcome with rest. Thus, the dhampyr's wounds close and knit, and he finds himself exhausted for a short time but miraculously recovered.

Once a dhampyr drops below Incapacitated, the character fades quickly. As with any mortal, the dhampyr can and will die from blood loss, shock and major organ damage. However, the dhampyr may survive trauma that would immediately kill most mortals. If the dhampyr is reduced below the Incapacitated health level with lethal damage, make a Stamina roll (difficulty 9) success indicates that the dhampyr amazingly hangs on to half-life at the Incapacitated level. Aggravated damage beyond this point kills the dhampyr automatically, of course, and a foe who suspects the dhampyr's resilience can take measures to insure the death of the Shade Walker. Still, if a dhampyr is filled with bullets and left for dead, he may well survive to wreak vengeance on his unsuspecting tormentors.

Dhampyrs do not suffer from the rigors of old age as readily as mortals. Once mature, dhampyrs nearly stop aging; barely a year of subjective age affects a dhampyr each decade afterwards. It is not unusual for a dhampyr to have a productive life for one to two centuries, barring accident, injury or the lassitude of eons; indeed, some dhampyrs are rumored to be more than 300 years old. However, for game purposes, dhampyr characters are considered to be between 25 and 50 years of actual age (an apparent age between 18 and 23, in most cases).

The Little Details and Mechanica

Although the new character types are included for the purposes of making the Middle Kingdom a more cosmopolitan and diverse place, not everyone will take them in the spirit with which we offer them. You know these people - they're the scapegraces who want to play Embraced werewolf mage faeries with True Faith. To that end, and for the purpose; of keeping the Middle Kingdom mystical instead of downright weird, please be aware of the following guidelines.

Hengeyokai and other shen may not become Kuei-jin. Hengeyokai, though they may (rarely) go to Yomi when they die, are not reanimated in their former bodies. They are already creatures of as much spirit as flesh, and are far more likely to rejoin the cycle as a new (and therefore "normal") Hengeyokai than they are to spend much time in the world of the Yama Kings. As always, returning from the dead shatters a mage's avatar: While it is possible to have a Kuei-jin who was once a mage, he's not going to be wielding any spheres. Obviously, wraiths are already dead, and if they somehow get stuck in π mortal body as a Kuei-jin, they fit the definition of Kuei-jin, and lose Arcanoi for Disciplines. Hsien, like hengeyokai, are already creatures of spirit, and are likewise destined for other purposes than eating flesh under the blood moon of Tokyo.

While a dhampyr may become a "vampire hunter," we find it difficult to imagine that any Shih would be too enthusiastic IO instruct the child of a monster in the esoteric ways of her righting arts. Unless your Storyteller is completely deranged, dhampyr may not learn Qiao or begin play with an 8/6/3 Attribute spread. It's not physically impossible, but the sort of training required (not to mention the willingness of the teacher to do it) has made certain that no dhampyr Shih has walked the Earth in the course of history. (Storytellers, we're willing to lay 10-to-I odds that at least one of your players asks for your permission to be "the only one," since it's not technically impossible. Just say no, unless you're playing a very, very cinematic game.)

YULAN-JIN

Not all souls that escape Yomi have the resilience to return to their own bodies. Shredded by the winds of Hell, some souls find that they cannot hold fast to the physical world. These wandering ghosts must return to bodies not theirs in order to fulfill their roles among mortals.

The Yulan-jin are body-hopping Kuei-jin. Due to a lack of spiritual fortitude or to the demands of Hell, the Yulan-jin find themselves in a constant cycle of death and rebirth. When a Yulan-jin "dies" (or "passes on"), his soul moves out to find a new host. The former body, tainted with the residue of the Yulan-jin's leaving soul, is unsuitable for further use. The Yulan-jin has no real control over the choice of the new body; indeed, some tales attribute the Yulan-jin with a disturbing possibility of finding themselves in the bodies of gaijin. The P'o, enraged and seeking a home, simply picks a likely corpse, and the Yulan-jin slides into animation once more. Personality, memory and identity pass into the form with the soul, but the Soul Jumper often finds his memories clouded and fragmented. Old friends and allies may be many hundred miles away, and the trappings of the material world are nor taken with the spirit when it claims a new body. Thus, each new life requires that the Yulan-jin begin anew.

Few Yulan-jin rise above the perils of their condition to fulfill their Dharmic paths. Indeed, as they pass through multiple unlives, their memories blur and their personalities become lost in the wash of time. Only through the most extraordinary effort can a Yulan-jin maintain a hold on who he is and what he is doing; for the majority, though, unlife is an eternity of moving from role to role without understanding, or hope of salvation.

Yulan-jin Society

At first glance, it is impossible to tell a Yulan-jin apart from a Kuei-jin. Outwardly, both are animated dead, both are souls returned from Hell to pay for a karmic debt. Indeed, a newly returned Yulan-j in is essentially identical to a Kuei-jin in all respects, and may even be inducted into a court or wu.

Once a Yulan-jin "dies," though, her true nature becomes apparent. Instead of hovering near the body to return from the Little Death, the Yulan-jin's spirit wanders until it finds a new and suitable host. Obviously, at this point, the Yulan-jin's nature becomes apparent. Although many young Running Monkeys and disciples have never heard of Yulan-jin, some elder will doubtless take die opportunity to bring up the lesson, and the Yulan-jin will find himself removed from his position in court and wu - one cannot have respectable and responsible duties if one does not have a stable body, after all.

Since they cannot reside among die courts, Yulan-jin form their own sorts of societies. Generally, a Yulan-jin takes a particular use name - a name that remains constant from life to life - while otherwise adopting the trappings of the new body. So that one Yulan-jin can recognize another, they refer by their use-names when among other undead (often prefaced with "Yulan" so that a Soul Jumper can be distinguished from a Kuei-jin - "Yulan-Ho or Yulan-Shin") . Armed with an identity that passes from body to body, the Soul Jumpers keep some sort of contact. Unfortunately, when a Yulan-jin passes on, there is no way to determine what body will rise or how far away it will be. As a result, a Yulan-jin could easily find himself in a new form several miles from his old compatriots. Given this problem, it's no surprise that Soul Jumpers don't form close ties or settled societies, but rather have nomadic unlives where reputation counts for



more than personal interaction. Stories told about a given Yulan-jin are passed through other Soul Jumpers as they move and interact; those who accomplish great deeds or hold on to their forms for extended periods of time are accorded respect.

Yulan-jin Character

Since Yulan-jin are effectively Kuei-jin who simply change bodies from time to time, character creation is straightforward. It's the changing of bodies that leads to the complexities of character. A Yulan-jin character in built just like a regular Kuei-jin, with only minor exceptions. Unless stated otherwise below, assume that character creation and abilities function for a Yulan-jin just as they do for Kuei-jin.

Detecting Yulan-jin

Outwardly, a Yulan-j in seems like any other Cathayan there is no visible difference from other Kuei-jin unless one actually watches a change of bodies.

However, the soul of a Yulan-jin is marked and starred by its passage through Hell and its subsequent traumatic trips through varying bodies. Indeed, each time the Yulan-jin changes bodies, a piece of the soul is left behind. As a result, the various Soul Arts can sometimes tell a Yulan-j in from a normal Kuei-jin. The Cultivation power Scrutinize, the Obligation power Soul Bridge, and the Chi'iu Muh power Purification can all determine the true nature of a Soul Jumper, as long as three or more Successes are scored on sensory rolls with the appropriate Disciplines. Whether or not the Soul Jumper is recognized as something different depends upon the occult knowledge of the scrutinizing Kueijin in guestion.

Concept

A Yulan-jin's concept does not necessarily differ markedly from a Kuei-jin's. The separation lies in the additional thought required to flesh out the character's background. Did the Yulan-jin have other lives before this one, or is this the character's first Second Breath? What settled the Yulan-jin upon his particular Dharma? Does the Yulan-jin have a place in Kuei-jin society at present, or has his nature been uncovered? Did the Soul Jumper leave friends and family behind, or has he decided to sever all such attachments? Ultimately, the unavoidable exigency of passing on forces all Yulan-jin to think about these questions.

Willpower

Lacerated by the winds of Hell while escaping Yomi, a Yulanjin's soul rarely has the spiritual fortitude common to Kuei-jin. As a result, starting Soul Jumpers must have a Willpower rating between three and five.

Dharma

Soul Jumpers can choose any of the Dharmas available to Kuei-jin, although the constant shifting of bodies precludes much development. As a special note, even the Thousand Whispers Dharma is difficult for Yulan-jin. Despite physically changing bodies, the Soul Jumper does not fill that Dharma's tenets well: The Thousand Whispers Dharma requires that the individual learn everything possible from a given life before discarding it. The Yulan-jin are often forced to discard incomplete lives.

Body Swapping

Regardless of skill or desire, all Yulan-jin find themselves changing bodies eventually. There are several circumstances under which a Yulan-jin may find his soul ousted from his current body. Although different events can trigger passing on, die result is always the same.

A Soul Jumper passes on when:

- His temporary Willpower rating reaches zero;
- His temporary Chi of either type is completely exhausted; or
- He suffers the Little Death.

A Yulan-jin suffering the Final Death does not return to claim a new body - the spirit is claimed by Yomi.

As soon as the Yulan-jin passes on, his body drops to the ground, truly and completely dead. The body suffers whatever sort of decomposition is expected for a corpse of its age. The soul then flees to the8 Mirror Lands, wandering the Underworld for days or weeks until it finds another suitable corpse. During this time, the soul undergoes the excruciating journey through Yomi until Fate finds another body for it. (Storytellers are encouraged to lead the player's character through the Thousand Hells if they don't mind taking a short break from the troupe's actions or for a little one-on-one roleplaying). Additionally, all of a Yulan-jin's guanxi break when she shifts bodies.

Because a Yulan-jin's soul has had a true body for some of its existence, it seeks out bodies of that sort. Thus, it is rare for a Yulan-j in to take up residence in a body of a different gender, or with wildly different physical characteristics. Thus, Yulan-jin characters do not change their Attributes or Physical Merits and Flaws when changing bodies, unless specified by the Storyteller.

The process of wandering the spirit realm and taking a new hose does impact a Yulan-jin's memories and personality, though. Often, upon taking a new body, the Soul Jumper experiences disorientation and loss of some memory; this may last for a day, or it may be permanent. When a Yulan-jin takes a new body, make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7). If less than five successes result, the Yulan-j in suffers some loss of memory; any Ability (but not Virtue or Discipline) rated higher than the Yulan-jin's Willpower loses one point. If less than three successes are scored, the Soul Jumper loses a permanent point of Willpower - the downward slide into oblivion accelerates as the soul remains unable to keep a hold on the material world. If a botch is scored, the Yulan-j in not only loses some Abilities, but also returns to die living lands completely amnesiac for at least a night-perhaps longer, if story circumstances so mandate.

Changing bodies has an undeniable impact on Dharmic development as well as memory. Whenever a Yulan-jin passes on, he automatically loses one point from his current Dharma. (If his Dharma rating is already zero, his soul is blasted from the Earth and destroyed.) A Yulan-jin does not necessarily return in his new shell under the thrall of shadow soul; die player gets a normal roll for shadow nature to determine whether the P'o or the Hun is dominant when the Yulan-jin returns.

Comming Home

According to the annals of the Sunset People, it is possible, albeit difficult, for a Yulan-jin to find a final home. Indeed, Park Yulan Mi-jo, formerly of the Green Courts, supposedly managed to revitalize her soul through a regimen of Soul Arts and an "ascetic lifestyle, after bathing in a sacred spring. No longer a Soul Jumper, she took up residence in Singapore up until her untimely Final Death at the hands of a jealous rival.

Storytellers can, of course, use such stories as motivation for Yulan-jin characters in a variety of chronicles. Although body swapping has advantages (such as leaving behind old debt and enemies), the constant dulling of memory and the price of losing friends should grate on Soul Jumpers after a while. The lure of healing the spirit and finally becoming a true Kueijin can be a draw as big for Yulan-jin as the promise of Golconda is for the Kindred.

ΔΚυΜΛ

Shunned and reviled by all proper Kuei-jin, the akuma are the true demons of society-those so corrupt and depraved that salvation is denied them, that they have forsaken any role they may have had under Heaven, At least, this is the popular view promulgated by the ancestors of the courts. The label of akuma is, in many cases, simply a convenient designation by which to brand any foreigner or Kuei-jin who does not suit the whims of the court. However, the true meaning - that of a Kuei-jin who has chosen damnation over enlightenment, and forsaken Dharma for the whispered promises of the Yama Kings-is still sometimes true.

Those akuma who are political unfortunates are the unhappy few that arrive in courts far from their homelands, or who otherwise anger the traditionalistic elders. Often, no real blame can be laid upon the akuma in question, though the individual may be marked for his rebelliousness, injudicious behavior or simply for having defiled Chi. As a result, the ancestors call upon the traditions and laws of the court, citing varied precedents and ancient beliefs, in order to justify the declaration of akuma against the victim in question. Never mind that the vampire may be guilty of nothing more than angering the elder or offending his sensibilities - the newly declared akuma finds himself the target of hostility and violence, and will likely die at the fangs of another Kuei-jin if he does not leave die court posthaste.

The servants of the Yama Kings, though, are the true akuma. Where the Kuei-jin once served the will of Heaven, they are now demons trapped in dead forms and forced to survive on stolen Chi. Since Heaven has turned its face from the Kuei-jin, the damned reason, it is only right that the Kuei-jin similarly turn from Heaven. Other akuma are those who take up servitude in exchange for power, prestige or other things that they could not achieve for themselves - even immortals in search of enlightenment can fall prey to greed and pettiness. By bartering their services and souls, the akuma gain the favor of Yomi's lords, and those ancient spirits are mighty patrons indeed.

Though powerful, a demon-tainted akuma is not without flaw. Ultimately, service to the Yama Kings gives up the akuma's freedom. An akuma may have great powers; he may have no fears of enlightenment or damnation; he may have dominion over men and vampires, but ultimately, his will is not his own. An akuma must serve the needs and desires of his Yama King; the one who fails simply becomes the next example, the better to motivate the others.


Pacts and Servitude

Entering service to a Yama King is no mean feat. Although the Yama Kings are always eager to corrupt the Kuei-jin (the irony of turning the Sunset People against their original office never pales), not all vampires have something to offer the Lords of the Hells. Powers? The Yama Kings and their minions are already more powerful than any Disciple could ever comprehend. Souls? The Kuei-iin's soul was a prisoner of Yomi once already; the Yama Kings consider such souls theirs by right. Service-the Kuei-jin must be in a position to offer to the Yama King that which the Lord and its servants cannot easily accomplish. So are pacts made: The Kuei-jin beseeches the Yama King or its intercessionary for aid, and in return promises to complete tasks for the demonic master. In many cases, both sides bring an initial gift to the bargaining table - the Yama King bestows some minor boon or favor upon the supplicant, who conversely offers up some deed or treasure already completed or acquired. An agreement is made, a bargain is signed, and the Kuei-jin becomes akuma in truth.

In order to insure loyalty, the Yama Kings must be harsh and unequivocal. Thus, they never fail to fulfill their parts of hellish bargains. This promise of wish fulfillment continually brings disillusioned and greedy Kuei-jin to the ranks of the Hells. Conversely, the Yama Kings are unstinting in their punishments for failure; no miserable akuma can be allowed to think that he might escape servitude while retaining the gifts of Hell. Whatever a Yama King promises, it delivers though what it appears to promise may be another matter entirely.

Since many akuma are simply called upon to provide a particular service, the Yama Kings carefully fashion their blandishments to entice the vampires back for more. Most pacts include some time factor - granting a particular boon only for the duration of a mission is common, as are one-use investments and pacts for a year and a day, or even for 99 years, (Kuei-jin scholars aware of these trends tend to look askance at the treaty of Hong Kong.) Because of these "limited use" clauses, Kuei-jin who rely upon the assistance of Hell become dependent upon these powers and gifts, and must return the favors with new contracts and services. In theory, an akuma could back out after "freelancing for Hell," but the circumstances that drive one to make a pact in the first place - the desire for something otherwise unattainable make this unlikely at best. Once addicted to the rush of Hellish power, there is no turning back.

A typical pact involves the would-be akuma seeking out a means of contacting the Yama Kings - in this foolhardy endeavor many Kuei-jin die at the hands of unthinking spiritminions. From there, the Kuei-jin must demonstrate his worth and usefulness to the Lords of the Hells; this "interview" might simply be a look at the impressive achievements of an already-infamous Kuei-jin, or (more likely) a careful process of evaluating the potential usefulness of the recruit. If the Kuei-jin is deemed to possess the proper skills at an efficacious time and place, then a contract may be offered; otherwise, the vampire's Chi feeds the hungry slaves of the Yama King and his soul returns to the Thousand Hells. Should the vampire supplicant survive this stage, there is no return - he becomes one of the akuma.

Spreading the Taint

Frighteningly, there is no reliable-way to determine whether a given individual is a true akuma. The pacts and services of the Hells do not damn a vampire's soul; rather, it is the actions freely taken that do so - and many of the older vampires are as foul in their habits and practices as any young servant of Yomi. As a result, it is a simple matter for an akuma to infiltrate a court and a wu for a time, and this is exactly the first mission that most akuma are instructed to undertake.

By entering a wu and a court as a respected disciple, the akuma positions himself subtly to gather information and influence for the benefits of the Yama Kings. Instructors who carefully guard themselves against hostile spirits can be spide upon through earnest young Kuei-jin students. Courts that declare open warfare against the demons of Yomi can be brought low by the single traitor within. In this fashion, the Yama Kings gather information about their enemies, and place pawns to hinder the Kuei-jin who would fight for enlightenment. After all, the enlightened Kuei-jin serve the mandate of Heaven, and part of that mandate is (or was) to combat the Yama Kings; why should the Lords of the Hells not take the first strike against such potential threats?

Outside the courts, though, are the wandering akuma, those who deliver knowledge or services beyond the screens of Kuei-jin society. Such akuma are rare indeed: There are only so many hidden temples, lost artifacts and buried secrets to discover. Thus, these "wandering demons" often strike a bargain of mutual assurance, gathering arcane lore and sharing the knowledge with a Hellish patron in exchange for the powers necessary to complete the task of acquisition. After all, hidden knowledge of secrets and weaknesses may be as easily exploited by the finder whether hoarded or shared; garnering additional favors and powers out of the bargain is "blood on the baby." As these akuma rarely spend much time in own place, they avoid staying in any court long enough to rouse suspicion (except inasmuch as any wandering Kuei-jin is treated with suspicion).

Of course, the ancestors and mandarins are all too clever no akuma can remain hidden forever. This, too, works to the advantage of the Yama Kings: An akuma fleeing the courts must turn to whatever assistance he may find. As such, these running demons are easily enticed into new bargains and services. Should an akuma fail to have any further use, then of course, there is no cost in letting the worthless servant falland so are the courts' fears assuaged, even as the Yama Kings set about the recruitment of additional tools.

Akuma Characters

As with other servants of the Infernal, akuma are not good roles for players - the challenges of seeking enlightenment and of overcoming the demonic curse of Yomi are lost for such souls. A character may be tempted by the minions of the Thousand Hells, but a Kuei-jin who makes the final pact casts aside any hope at redemption.

The obligatory warning aside, akuma call upon a wide range of powers. Typically, an akuma barters with one specific Yama King; familiarity, after all, allows the akuma to draw upon experience and to work toward consistent goals. In return, each Yama King offers a host of different powers; the individual powers may vary, though in general, they fit the moods of the particular demon lord: Mikaboshi, King of the Wicked City, may offer technology-oriented abilities, while TouMu, Queen of the Hell of Being Skinned Alive, often gifts servants with powers of pain and torture. Individual powers are left to the Storyteller's discretion; there is no single template for "generic akuma" - every such demon is a unique and dangerous opponent.

Almost all akuma, though, unearth the ways of the Hellweaving Discipline. With the proper obeisance, a Kuei-jin can propitiate the Lords of the Hells, calling for their aid or succor in times of desperation. These simple rituals form the core of a Demon Art reviled by all proper Kuei-jin. Still, instruction in Hellweaving is almost always part of any firsttime pact, and unlike invested powers, the knowledge of this Discipline comes without any time constraints. Indeed, once learned, this Discipline can be studied and improved normally; akuma sometimes teach the rudiments of this Discipline to others, as the powers require the proper service to the Yama Kings regardless of the practitioner.

Storytellers are advised to use akuma characters sparingly and carefully. The relative scarcity of Kuei-jin means that, with only a small portion of them tempted into akuma status, the demon-touched are a distinct minority. An akuma is not a villain to be bested before proceeding to the next enemy; rather, akuma are a hidden menace, the festering, cancerous abscess that goes unrecognized until it's too late. An entire story can easily be built around the process of uncovering and foiling a single akuma.

HERETICAL DHARMAS

Although one Dharma traditionally corresponds to each direction in the annals of the Kuei-jin, not all vampires follow the forms and traditions of Xue. Indeed, far from the centers of Kuei-jin civilization in China and Japan (and even in some places within those August Courts, though the mandarins would deny it), vampires practice beliefs handed down from other cultures. Guided by philosophies codified in ages past, these vampires practice esoteric rituals and cultivate unusual powers. To the settled Kuei-jin, they are a dangerous menace, espousing heretical beliefs. When discovered, they

Learning the heresies is no simple matter; a Kuei-jin must have the proper predilections and instructors. The relative scarcity of the heresies means that happenstance is the most common tutor for Running Monkeys. A recently arisen disciple may find himself instructed in the alternate Dharmas by a nearby heretic if no other representative of Kuei-jin society presents herself. Trained in thinking and customs outside of the courts, heretical disciples often find themselves in for rude shocks when meeting Kuei-jin society.

Systems for Heretical Dharmas

Many of the heresies are founded upon compound virtues, such as a balance between Hun and P'o. In such cases, all Dharmic path rolls are made with the average between the two scores; round halves upward.

Heretical Dharmas do not have lucky numbers; as such, Kuei-jin following these paths gain only their direction numbers for their Horoscopes. Such is the price of following a path outside the confluences of the courts' astrology.

Advancement along the heresies proceeds much as with any other Dharma: The Kuei-jin is subject to the vagaries of den. However, the lack of large followings among these Dharmas means that there are few ancestors along these paths. As a result, heretics cannot often rely upon training, but instead must forge ahead from the pieces of enlightenment that they can scavenge from history.

THE FLAME OF THE RISING PHOENIX

Virtues: Hun and Yang

I walked through the door of death And came across as a monster; I walked through the threshold of life And returned across as a man.

- Ki Yuen, Rising Phoenix poet

Kuei-jin were once humans; acutely so: unfinished tasks, unpaid debts, unfulfilled karma draw them back to their bodies. In their own corpses, they find new places under the Cosmic Wheel. They leave behind their old lives, to pursue an eternal existence of philosophy and enlightenment.

But what guarantee is there that the Cycle has placed these Kuei-jin back in the mortal realms to fulfill a new purpose? Indeed, argues the Rising Phoenix, the true purpose of a Kuei-jin is to finish the tasks left undone in life, to pay the karmic imbalance by retaking one's former role and balancing the acts that brought damnation. By repaying the debt, the Kuei-jin completes his interrupted life cycle and pays his karmic debt, and is, thus, freed from the karmic cycle.

Obviously, this Dharma is reviled as heretical by the Quincunx and the scholars of the Ki Chuang; the undead, they say, have been returned by Heaven with a new purpose and a new mandate. Yet the Rising Phoenixes argue that they have simply been sent back with new powers and a second chance to finish their unresolved lives; the abilities of the Kuei-jin, they assert, are tools to assist in fulfilling one's karmic destiny, while the Demon is nothing more than punishment for failing during one's lifetime. Overcome the urges of the Demon, master the powers of the reborn body, and complete the task of one's mortal life, urge the Phoenixes - and be freed of the cursed Cycle.

Strangely, few Kuei-jin ever achieve great age or status while following this Dharmic path. Many scoff that this is simply due to the fact that the Kuei-jin of this path are incapable of spiritual development because their philosophy is flawed. Yet others note that the most vibrant and most enlightened of the Phoenixes will suddenly disappear from Kuei-jin society, never again seen; even, powerful divinations cannot confirm their deaths. The fate of these elders is a mystery - but in the meantime, the Phoenixes suffer persecution due to their lack of political authority just as much as from philosophical divergence.

The typical Rising Phoenix is, for a time, a bastion of hope and. compassion; driven to regain mortality, they revel in the feelings a senses of their once-living days. Each one struggles to find his true place in the scheme of Heaven, and to fill that place; inevitably, they return to their homes and



families, to take a role on the periphery of their old lives in an attempt to fulfill their desires for completion. Indeed, many form small followings among their immediate family, drawing sustenance and support from their relatives while seeking the means of transcending the curse and returning to mortality. Unfortunately, the driving hunger and false life of the vampiric condition inevitably lead to conflict and tragedy.

Training: Rising Phoenixes don't have a typical training regimen, probably due to the lack of true bodhisattvas on this path. Most develop their insight and mysticism, in order to get in touch with their needs and drives and find out where they went wrong in life. Ancestor veneration is common as well, as the Rising Phoenixes seek wisdom from old relatives.

Each Rising Phoenix must find his own inner nature and satisfy it in order to reclaim his place in mortal life. However, some platitudes remain useful to all Phoenixes. Students of the Rising Phoenix are counseled to seek out their mortal relatives and friends, to remain tied to their humanity. The Phoenixes also develop their self-discipline to avoid the temptations of the Demon, while honing their Yang energies to bring themselves closer to the semblance of life.

Weakness: Rising Phoenixes, obviously, lead tragic unlives; the Demon, the imbalance of the soul, and the undying hunger all lead eventually to destruction of one's friends, family, and allies. Attempts to retake a true place in mortal society are doomed by the limitations of the Kuei-jin form. Many give up hope and change their beliefs later in their existence, after destroying their own families. Worse still, the fact that there are very few bodhisattvas on this path means that Phoenixes are easy targets for persecution; courts are quick to proclaim them outcast, and point to this lack as "proof that the path is fundamentally flawed.

Affiliations: Mankind, the color gold and the east direction.

Auspicious Omens and Symbols: Birds of paradise, clear skies, celebrations of birth, spinning tops, kites.

Concepts: Shopkeeper, public servant, professor, student, poet, artist.

Quote: Even in death I'm very good at that I do. Very good.

Tenets

- 1. Return to the world from which you came.
- 2. Repay the debts of your human life.
- 3. Help others to find the unique value of humanity.
- 4. Fight the Demon and deny monstrosity.
- 5. Live not with extremes or balance, but simply well.
- 6. Wake the sleeper who shuns experience. Life is the arising of experience.
- 7. Never deny the joys and sorrow of life.
- 8. Return to your mortal ways; seek your human state.

Rival Path

Devil-Tiger: They would be monsters. In so doing, they deny their human souls.

Resplendent Crane: Mistakes are tools for learning, not reasons for punishment.

Song of the Shadow: The dead hold no secrets that do not spring from the living.

Thousand Whispers: To be a thousand shallow lives is nothing, when they cannot be one life of meaning.

Thrashing Dragon: Feigning humanity is not human.

Kindred: No remorse, no return. They must die that they may live again.



THE TEMPEST OF JNWARD FOCUS

Virtue: Balance

Is the eye of the storm any less for its peace? Is the emptiness not defined by its surroundings? In the wind, be still. In the calm, be free.

- So-i Wenli, Tempest chronicler

Pull and twist, push and tear: The fire of Yang and the void of Yin thrash at the Kuei-jin, even as the drive for redemption fights the Hell-winds of Yomi. The Tempests understand all too well the forces that spin through every vampire; pitting these forces against each other, the Tempests seek the calm in the midst of the chaos.

Driven by the warp and woof of soul and Chi, the first bodhisattva of this Dharma supposedly crystallized enlightenment through the principles of negation. Unable to find solace in any of the manifold teachings of Xue, she sought exotic learning from distant lands. Gathering knowledge revealed by both spirits and demons, she fought for an understanding that always eluded her grasp. At last, she abandoned all Dharmas, existing only as her needs dictated, reacting to the world around her. Confronted by demons who taunted her with the emptiness of her soul, she recognized the void at the center of all of her learning and experience, and she awakened.

Surrounded by swirling chaos, the Tempests bask in the calm within. Every carefully placed element becomes part of a circle; the circle holds all of creation. No one truth leads to enlightenment; illumination throws shadows that bring understanding. By watching the synergy of opposing forces, the Tempests learn what lies outside of those forces. Yin flows into Yang and twin souls war, but in the spaces between them, the Tempests find solace.

A Tempest exerts moderation and learning. All things are worth study, but only in forbearance. To follow the straightened path completely is to fail in the pursuit of diversity. As a result, Tempests dabble in many things, seeking to find the contradictions and paradoxes of existence. Through such conundrums, they develop a detached point of view, seeing the truths in disparate parts.

This is not to say that Tempests are dilettantes without dedication. Finding the center point from which all of creation is visible certainly taxes endurance. Indeed, Tempests strive to master many arts at once, since only the highest excellence brings full knowledge. However, a practitioner of the Inward Focus always moves deliberately, seeking to internalize every component of study completely (along with



its complements and opposites) before moving on. Thus, the Tempests manifest skill and knowledge in many fields and endeavors, but only the truly ancient ever become adept.

Broad study requires suitable instruction. Tempests move from teacher to teacher, always seeking new mentors. Anyone who brings a new perspective or an opposing philosophy, whether human spirit or vampire, may be an instructor. Once a new skill or art is learned, it is never discarded. Instead, the Tempest seeks out more differences and opposites, adding to the tumultuous whirlwind of conflicting ideologies that lend a viewpoint above them all. Mundane abilities, occult knowledge, and varied Disciplines are all keys to passing through the illusion of conflicting truths.

Spirits and men are opposite sides of the same world. Shadow and wind compete for dominance, but both teach important lessons. Instead of focusing on any of the elemental powers of the Kuei-jin, Tempests turn their attentions to arts that move mind and soul. Ultimately, the storm tossed seek to become more than man or vampire, spirit or flesh. What lies beyond the gateway of enlightenment, they say, is nothing short of the universe itself - and so they seek to become the universe.

Training: Tempests seek to tame their fiery demon natures with meditation, physical exertion and discipline. Flagellation and self-mortification are common on this path, though excesses are discouraged. Conversely, the Tempests try to understand their demon natures even while cultivating the Hun; they recognize the need to unify all parts of their unliving souls. Yin and Yang energy in equal measure see the through the flesh and bones of the Tempests, who seek to balance the clashing opposites, bringing each to greater heights of counterstriking energy.

Moderation is the watchword of the Tempests: Tightly bound and controlled, they indulge in all experiences, but drink deeply of none. Some outsiders consider such dalliances shallow, but the Tempests know that any excess leads eventually to weakness and, thence, to corruption, as exemplified by the fall of the Wan Xian due to their lust for Chi. Additionally, Many Tempests learn the Discipline of Chi'iu Muh, using the Dragon Tears to douse the flames of the Demon.

Weakness: Pulled in many directions at once, the Tempests pull inward and refuse to commit to any. While this moderation serves its purpose, the Tempests often find themselves indecisive or wanting in conviction. Instead of embracing change and extremes, the Tempests fight for stability and tranquillity - but at the cost of true inspiration.

In truth, the Tempests lack dynamism. Unable to fully embrace anything new, different or visionary, they remain a step behind the rest of the world; their ascetic practices and primitive lifestyles are simply outward manifestations of this problem. Playing off opposing energies prevents mastery of any one force. Without focus and drive, the Tempests cannot evolve.

Railing against the extremes espoused by the radically different Path of a Thousand Whispers, the Tempests seek an alternate form of balance. Unfortunately for them, this form is handicapped by the fact that true, world-shaking vision is disdained by the demands of Inward Focus. The Centipedes express themselves eloquently and with force; the Temper can only assert themselves with minimalism and negation.

Affiliations: The material world, the color gray and the center point direction

Auspicious Omens and Symbols: Cyclones, mandalay spiral helixes, exploding fireworks, ripples in water

Concepts: Ascetic, monk, teacher, servant, philosopher laborer, poet, lunatic

Quote: I am the calm of the moonsoon and its greatest gale.

Tenets

- 1. Pull all things near and make them part of yourself.
- 2. Balance the needs and desires on all poles, that they strive against each other.
- 3. Never stray from the core of your nature.
- 4. Realize the potential to learn from all people.
- 5. Remember the lessons of the past; apply them to the future.
- 6. Be consistent in your rewards and punishments.
- 7. Teach others the virtues of peace and moderation.
- 8. Bring harmony to the spirit worlds through balancing the living realm.

Rival Path

Devil-Tiger: Their indulgence in damnation is eternal.

Resplendent Crane: A path so narrow cannot include the beauty of the wilderness.

Song of the Shadow: Once dead, twice fooled.

Thousand Whispers: Extremes of change bring only chaos. A life without a past contains no lessons.

Thrashing Dragon: The fire embraced is the fire that bums.

Kindred: Their very blood cries out with imbalance; spill it forth to return it to the cycle. Then bring them to awareness.



THE FACE OF GODS

Virtue: Hun and P'o

Even gods have their beginnings and their ends: To what end would you be put, godly one?

- O, The Celestial Nail

Certain theologians speak of the Wheel of Reincarnation, of moving from one existence to the next in response to karma. For the impious, this migration leads downward, until the soul is nothing more than a beast. For the pure and focused though, the reward is godhood. Even gods are subject to karma, though, and may fall again, returning once more as men - or monsters.

Divine revelations of the mad poet O tell of the gods of the Thousand Hells, and of the great entities of the celestial realms. In his Red Bonk of the Iron Bridge, O draws upon an intimate knowledge of Yomi; in The Celestial Nail, he claims memory of divinity itself. Sparked by such works as this, some Kuei-jin see their state not as accursed, but as blessed: Halfway between man and god, the Godlings strive to return to their rightful place in the Heavens.

Twin souls are more than cleaved demons, according to the Godlings. Instead, the Hun and the P'o are remembrances of a divine state once achieved Cast back into human form for a lifetime, the Codlings return from death as blessed immortals, gifted with superlative powers but also with infinite desire. To return to the godhead, one must find the seat of divine power-and this means mediating between the lusts of divine passion and the awareness of incipient omnipotence. Calling upon the universal energies of Yin and Yang, the Codlings shape the universe around themselves, seeking to hone their forms back into the sublime.

Not surprisingly, mortal cults often spring up around Divine Faces. The Godlings encourage such activities, going so far as to raise dhampyr offspring and to exert their supernatural abilities on behalf of their servitors. After all, such followers are rich sources of Chi; some Codlings even find that the followers' faith itself refines to a more ethereal and sustaining Chi than their lifeblood. Ultimately, though, these cults are a means to an end - the end of harnessing enough Chi and cultivating enough of a following to ascend once more to a heavenly throne.

While walking among mortals, the Divine Faces surround themselves in mystery and grace. Gods among men, indeed - the Codlings have no time to pretend at hiding their natures. Instead, they command, they rage, they succor; humans are sustenance, lovers, servants and aides. In return for obedience and obeisance, the Codling provides stability, prestige and power to his cultists. What god can be more



compelling than the one that walks directly among his worshippers, bestowing favor and grace?

Training: Indoctrination of a new Divine Face comes when an existing Godling takes it upon himself to reveal the truth of divinity to another. The Divine Faces favor philosophical and occult knowledge, mastering the energies of their transient bodies. Courtly graces and etiquette are also taught, as the Codlings must properly attend to their mortal followers.

Weakness: Arrogance and whimsy mark the Codlings. Convinced of their superlative destiny, they find the notion of living as cursed beings repugnant. Followers of other Dharmas are seen as deluded mystics who miss the opportunity for true greatness, so no small amount of friction results. When a Divine Face feels generous, bounty flows from his hands; when enraged, though, his godly wrath tumbles down ally and enemy alike. For this reason, few trust or willingly associate with the followers of this Dharma. Other Kuei-jin even secretly fear that the Codlings may be right....

Affiliations: The heavenly realms, the color violet and the south direction

Auspicious Omens and Symbols: Temple ceremonies, stands of burning incense and candles, shooting stars

Concepts: Priest, cultist, criminal, magician, psychologist, traditionalist, venerated ancestor

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Quote: Have you come to bask in my glory or test my wrath?

Tenets

- 1. Develop your divine nature.
- 2. Expand both godly and demonic consciousness.
- 3. Accept the veneration of mortals, but answer their payers in return.
- 4. Harness Chi to bring divinity back to your dead form.
- 5. Act according to the tenets of your Godly Voice, and your Godly Desire shall be fulfilled.
- 6. Visit the Heavens to remember what you have lost.
- 7. Practice ritual and tradition to empower your own essence.
- 8. Commune with the spirits; learn of their messages from Heaven.

Rival Path

Devil-Tiger: The shackles of terror enslave the monsters as readily as the victim.

Resplendent Crane: Why be an agent of Heaven when one can be a god?

Song of the Shadow: The province of the undying lies not in death.

Thousand Whispers: There may be thousands of gods, each is an individual.

Thrashing Dragon: Indulgence comes only with responsibility.

Kindred: Cursed by gods, they a damned, not exalted.





THE SPIRIT OF THE LIVING EARTH

Virtue: Yin and Yang

Spirits clothed in flesh, spirits in the floating world; How can we surpass ourselves if we are chained? Passing fire, breathing nothing, Spirit eternal.

- Mantra of the Living Earth

Returned from the wall beyond death, given sight and sensation to the will of ephemera, the Kuei-jin are intimately tied to spirits. To the proper sight, all creatures and things have spirits: trees, rocks, houses; birds, foxes, lizards; rivers, groves, mountains. The Earth itself is a spiritual entity, a being of surpassing radiance that gives life to an otherwise humble ball of dust. Only by propitiating these spirits can one expect their aid and compliance.

Drawing heavily upon animistic religions and Shinto teachings, the Spirit of the Living Earth asserts that Kuei-jin must awaken to the spirits around them. The world is a vaporous illusion, one that parts to reveal the true power of spirit beyond. By listening to the spirits and performing the proper rituals, a Kuei-jin can escape the trap of dual souls in dead flesh. Honor the spirits and pay them homage; later, learn from them the ways to overcome the material in favor of the eternal.

Insightful, precise and introspective, the Cerulean Veils are careful in all of their dealings. The spirits insist that each action has a proper form and that every rule has a reason. As a result, the Veils dress, speak, move and behave according to the words of their spirit mentors. For most, this involves special prayers, rituals and supplications at every stage of life: Before ingesting Chi, after killing a foe, when rising in the evening, even when facing the sun. Once properly appeased, the spirits are more likely to assist a Kuei-jin, or even to show her tiny pieces of the secrets that lead to escape from death.

Because the soul is nothing more than Chi tied to the body, the Veils cultivate life-force and an understanding of the flows of Chi throughout the Middle Kingdom. Once strong enough, say the elders of the Living Earth, the soul can be free of its dead chains. Yin and Yang drawn together from the basis of all energy and all life, and so the Veils use these energies freely to develop their spirituality in hopes of moving beyond the pathetic thiefly existence of the Kuei-jin.

Among mortals, the Cerulean Veils are careful and dignified. They do not indulge in food, drink or sex; indeed, as most mortals lack the capacity to deal with spirits at all, most Veils consider them transitory and of limited importance. Only when the spirits direct do the Veils break from their ordered routine to interact with the evanescent world.



The taboos and rituals of spirituality vary from Veil to Veil; each Kuei-jin seeks out spirits to tell him of the proper form for her works. Since each soul is unique, reason the Veils, every individual must have a similarly unique road to enlightenment. Thus, each Cerulean Veil discovers the proper way to expand her own spirit, whether alike or different from her mentor's.

Training: Elaborate ritual and ceremony accompanies induction into this Dharma. Each initiate undergoes a special rebirth before taking on the smallest of duties. Daily chants, mantras and purifications must be learned, and executed with precision. No wonder, then, that followers of this Dharma are rare - the complex forms that please the spirits are taxing to learn and execute.

Weakness: Precision and ritual, counterpoint and tradition: Hobbled with such taboos, the Veils often have very strict rules about what they can and can't do. Most Cerulean Veils have significant rituals for major events (like a experiencing moment of insight or crossing into the spirit worlds) and, also, short prayers and invocations for more common happenings (like slaving a foe or awakening in the evening). If a Cerulean Veil neglects these, a fall from Dharma is assured. By studying the habits of a particular Veil, it is often possible to see how the particular Kuei-jin conducts her unlife, and to find a means of using or destroying it. To better learn the will of the spirits, many followers of this path travel into the Yin and Yang worlds, there to speak directly with their patrons. Though risky and sometimes offensive, this course yields fruit to the polite and persistent Kuei-jin. Mentors take students into the Mirror Lands to show the effects of physical change on the spirit landscape, and to introduce students properly to the spirits.

Affiliations: The spirit realms, the color blue and the west direction

Auspicious Omens and Symbols: Shrines and statuettes, tea ceremonies, *torii* arches, sacred groves and ponds, parades

Concepts: Wanderer, ritualist, competitor, counselor, fang shih

Quote: You would do well to listen to the voices your feet leave in the dust, as they tell others a great deal about you.

Tenets

- 1. Obey the will of the spirits.
- 2. Perform the proper ceremonies to remain pure.
- 3. Shun the defiled.
- 4. Tread across the Earth to absorb its full glory.
- 5. Pass wisdom to, others freely.
- 6. Help others to surpass the shortcomings of the flesh.
- 7. Renew your thanks and commitment to enlightenment each day.
- 8. e your taboos rigidly, that you may overcome your curse.

Rival Path

Devil-Tiger: Even the spirits of evil must be appeased, ' but not emulated.

Resplendent Crane: Why so rigid? Listen, and the spirits will tell what is proper.

Song of the Shadow: The Earth is alive with spirits, not dead.

Thousand Whispers: Tradition and repetition create meaning; to be without roots is to have no home.

Thrashing Dragon: Excesses of indulgence lead to unclean living.

Kindred: Without soul, without salvation, without hope.



CHAPTER THREE: TEN THOUSAND TERRORS

Sunanda said: We live, then die. We starve, then die. We hurt, then die. We work, then die. And that is why we earn what comes after death. Can the living do such as this?

It happened one day that a Zen master and his disciple were walking through a field. Suddenly, a pheasant, startled by their passage, arose in flight and flew clumsily into a thicket. Seeking to impress his master with his powers of observation, the student said with the sarcasm of youthful wisdom, "Birds are so weak and defenseless."

In reply, the Zen master rapped the student sharply across the shins with his staff. "Fly," he commanded.

- Traditional Zen koan

All in life is change. Yin flows inexorably into Yang, and back again to Yin, as ceaselessly as the flowing of a river or the rush of wind from the mountain tops. The very fabric of existence changes, too, as the Great Cycle continues its never-ending rotation. Those who try to resist change, to stop it, inevitably find themselves ground to dust beneath the wheel. To survive, one must be able to grow along with, and adapt to, the changes that take place around one's self. It is only those who can take advantage of the moments of change - who can exploit the fluidity of circumstances as they shift from one state to another - who emerge triumphant at each night's end.

The Kuei-jin are no different: They, too, change, and the greatest of them make use of those changes. They learn from them and, when possible, employ them to their own benefit. Thus, it is over the course of centuries, the Disciplines of the Kuei-jin expanded, grew, and changed. Bodhisattvas, arhats, and even some lesser Cathayans displayed new supernatural powers, or greater prowess in existing abilities. Indeed, it is a truism among the Kuei-jin that even the weakest bodhisattva has a proficiency in the Disciplines, which surpasses that of even the most enlightened Running Monkey.

So it is that the Disciplines of the Kuei-jin - Chi Arts, Demon Arts, Shintai Arts, and Soul Arts alike - have all blossomed, growing into mightier and more awesome power as the years have passed, and enlightenment has occasionally dawned in the mind and spirit of one of the Demon People of the Middle Kingdom. Although these greater (or, sometimes, simply newer) powers are most often possessed by the wisest Kueijin - the mandarins, ancestors and bodhisattvas - an especially enlightened jina or disciple may display them on rare occasions as well.

THE PLACES OF LEARNING

In many cases, the Disciplines a Kuei-jin has learned, and even the amount of skill he possesses with them, depend on where he trained - where he underwent his re. Not all courts or Cathayan communities teach all Disciplines to their hin.



Indeed, some Disciplines are distinctly favored or disfavored by various courts and communities; the outskirts of the Middle Kingdom are particularly given to such favoritism. For example, despite its Japanese name, Kiai is more likely to be found among the Kuei-jin of the Golden Courts and other southeast or western Asian vampire communities. Similarly, those groups favor the Smoke Shintai to an extent deemed uncouth by the gaki, who rarely learn the "barbaric" powers of Fire's Child. On the other hand, Japanese Kuei-jin often exhibit the powers of the Ghost-Flame Shintai, the Flesh Shintai and Storm Shintai. Chinese Kuei-jin are the most likely to display prowess with Feng Shui and Tzu Wei, though they are not by any means the only Cathayans to learn those arts.

The Storyteller should keep these differences and preferences in mind when designing Storyteller characters for the players' characters to interact with. They are guidelines only, not straitjackets, but because they form some of the basis of the reputation of each of the courts, they are best followed when it is reasonable to do so.

It is not unheard of for certain courts or communities, of even powerful wu, to develop their own esoteric Disciplines that are known by no other Kuei-jin. They hold these powers to their breasts as well-kept secrets, for a power that an enemy knows little or nothing of offers an advantage. Storytellers who are daring may, if they wish, make up their own Disciplines for the Kuei-jin communities in their stories.

CHI ARTS

The higher, more advanced, or more enlightened (take your pick) levels of the Chi Arts expand and refine a Kuei-jin's ability to manipulate his Chi and, perhaps more importantly, ambient Chi or the Chi of others. Masters of the Chi Arts can weave the fabric of internal and external Chi the way a tailor weaves a fine garment.

EQUILIBRIUM

The higher levels of Equilibrium reflect an enlightened Kueijin's greater capacity to affect the balance of Chi in other beings. Whereas the beginning levels of this Discipline concentrate on regulating one's own Chi flow, the higher levels focus on manipulating the Chi of others. These higher levels are potent tools and weapons in the hands of a properly trained Cathayan. However, like the lower-level powers, these abilities require the Kuei-jin to touch his target. (Flesh-to-flesh contact is not required, though.) If the target cannot be touched (if, for example, it is intangible, like many spirits), it cannot be affected with Equilibrium.

COCOCOCOSoothing the Soul

A master of Equilibrium can smooth out inconsistencies and eddies in the Chi flow of a subject. Like a gentle breeze

System: The Kuei-jin touches the subject and the player expends a point of Willpower, rolling Manipulation + Meditation (difficulty 8). Each success garnered causes the power to last for one turn.

by this moment of sussurating stillness.

While this power affects the subject, the character is clearheaded and calm. Individuals in the throes of frenzy (including Kuei-jin in wave soul or fire soul, but not shadow soul) immediately make another roll to overcome the frenzy, using Yin, Yang, Self-Control/Instinct, or Courage, as appropriate.

When used on mortals, the subject may be stricken with lassitude and an overwhelming sense of peace. If the Kuei-jin scores more successes than the mortal has permanent Willpower, the mortal is rendered insensate with the strength of peaceful calm. This effect is similar to, though less intense than, the Kiss caused by the bite of a Kin-jin. While a mortal is rendered helpless like this, the Kuei-jin may feed freely and without resistance, just as the Kin-jin rely upon the ecstasy of the Kiss to sup from mortals.

000000000 Accentuate Chi

By heightening the Yin or Yang energies in a subject, the Kuei-jin causes the target to experience extreme swings in mood and energy. Yin-energies cause the victim to become languid, dull-minded and slow, while Yang energies make the subject restless and agitated. The Touch of a Summer's Day accentuates the target's Yin energies, while its opposite, Eight Burning Dreams, enhances the flow of Yang Chi.

Unlike Touch of a Summer's Day, which is almost exclusively used to render victims slow and helpless, Kuei-jin often use Eight Burning Dreams on themselves, particularly right before going into battle. Those who follow the Devil-Tiger Dharma find it particularly invigorating. Conversely, Bone Flowers sometimes use the Touch of a Summer's Day to render, victims helpless for special ceremonies of death.

System: The Kuei-jin must touch the victim. The player spends a point of Willpower, and then rolls Stamina + Medicine (difficulty 7). The results vary according to whether the power is used for Yin or Yang enhancement.

The Touch of a Summer's Day results in slowed motion and cognition. The victim loses one success from all Mental feats and Dexterity-related rolls. The subject also loses one point from all initiative scores for each success scored on the roll to activate this power; this lasts for the entire scene.

Furthermore, the victim becomes generally torpid, slow, rumble-fingered, and thick-witted, displaying many of the classic symptoms of someone who has gone days without sleep or rest.

When affected by Eight Burning Dreams, the target becomes quick and jumpy. For every success obtained, the subject adds one to the subject's initiative scores for the rest of the scene. The Storyteller may also add one die per success to some other rolls, such as dodges, certain Dexterity-based rolls, or any other roll involving the need to move or act swiftly. The subject is also jittery and distracted, as if using coffee and amphetamines to stay awake.

This is one of the most fearsome powers displayed by any Kuei-jin, The Kuei-jin forces open the "dams" that hold the victim's Chi in check, causing the energy to flood the victim's body uncontrollably and burn his flesh from the inside out.

System: The Kuei-jin must touch the victim and spend two points of Yang Chi. The player then rolls Strength + Meditation (difficulty 8). If he is successful, the victim suffers one health level of damage for every point of current Yin and Yang Chi that he has (for other beings, substitute Blood Points, Gnosis, Quintessence, Pathos, Glamour, Sekhem and so forth). This damage is aggravated and cannot be soaked.

Most mortals simply die if affected by this power, unused to the ebb and flow of their internal energies. Certain mortals, like Shih and, perhaps, dhampyrs may resist at the Storyteller's discretion.

000000000000 Adjust the True Balance

Even more feared than Opening the Gates is this power, which represents a Kuei-jin's ultimate control over Chi flow. It



allows him to create a lasting imbalance in the victim's Chi, with all the attendant difficulties inherent to that regrettable state.

System: The Kuei-jin must touch the victim and spend a point of Willpower. The player then rolls Stamina + Meditation (difficulty 7). If successful, be immediately knows the exact number of points of permanent Yin Chi and Yang Chi possessed by the victim. For every success scored, he may adjust the victim's permanent Yin Chi or Yang Chi totals by trading one point of Yin Chi for a point of Yang Chi. (Thus, for example, with three successes, three points of Yang Chi could be converted into Yin Chi.) Typically this is done to create a Chi imbalance (see **Kindred of the East**, pp. 139-140), but it has other effects well.

When used on another Kuei-jin, this power automatically causes him to enter fire soul or wave soul, depending upon his highest permanent Chi rating after his True Balance is adjusted. Thus, if a Kuei-jin is adjusted with this power to have ratings of five Yin Chi and three Yang Chi, ho filters fire soul immediately. If the Kuei-jin's True Balance limits in equal values for Yin Chi and Yang Chi, he must instead make a Moment of Blindness check (see Kindred of the East, p. 54), as his sudden pure tranquillity causes him to question his previous actions and Dharma. Kin-jin affected by this power automatically enter Rotschreck.

If used to balance an otherwise unbalanced being, this power removes or erases the effects of Chi imbalance. If used on a mortal, it cures any disease or infection, even such illnesses as cancer, leprosy or AIDS, at the Storyteller's discretion. (Some Kuei-jin use this power solely to heal afflicted mortals - or to blight them with debilitating ailments.) In either case, balancing the victim's Chi with this power also cures any Chi infection caused by Chi Mastery.

FENG SHUi

The ancient art of *feng shui* ("wind and water"), or Chinese geomancy, is mentioned in several places in Kindred of the East (primarily p. 169) and in World Of Darkness: Hong Kong (p. 39). To mortals, feng shui is the art of the proper placement, construction, and arrangement of buildings, interiors, and graves. Feng shui practitioners, known as fang shih, study the lay of the land and the influences upon it so that buildings or graves may exist in harmony with established dragon lines and nests and will not offend spirits or celestial beings. Similarly, fang shih counsel people on the layout of building interiors and offices to ensure good fortune and prosperity.

To the Kuei-jin, Feng Shui - also known as Tso Tao, the "Black Way" - means something more. It means not only the power to detect dragon lines and arrange areas to be in harmony with them, but the ability to cleanse areas of evil influences, disguise or alter ambient Chi, and even to interfere with a Kuei-jin's ability to draw ambient Chi from an area. By manipulating special talismans, the fang shih can direct energies to control and corrupt. Some Cathayans even make themselves available to mortals for employment as fang shih; they tend to command very high prices due to their skills.

Wind-Water Eye

With this most basic of Feng Shui arts, the Kuei-jin can evaluate an area's dragon lines. He knows exactly what type of Chi is in the area, and how best to arrange the buildings and offices in the area to take advantage of it. With this skill, Kuei-jin tombs and lairs can be properly constructed and aligned, and sacred sites can be located - or a site can be misarranged to bring unluck to those who dwell there.

System: By making a Perception + Occult roll (difficulty 6), a Kuei-jin can sense all ambient Chi in an area, including what type of Chi it is, where it gathers or pools, where the dragon lines lead, and what (if anything) has been done to interfere with it. (Think of this as an advanced and more accurate form of the Trace the Dragon's Blood rite [**Kindred of the East**, p. 126].) Furthermore, a Kuei-jin with this skill knows how to arrange the area to take advantage of the good joss that comes from proper alignment. This reduces the difficulties for one sort of professional task (such as blacksmithing or herb gardening) that the owner attempts in the area by one, and also reduces the Wall in the area by one. Conversely, a site can be misarranged, resulting in a +1 difficulty for a particular type of task and an increase of the Wall's strength by one.

Broom of Heaven

A skilled Kuei-jin fang shih uses this power to cleanse an area of evil influences or defilement. Many mortals pay top dollar (so to speak) to have this power used on their homes or buildings.

Systems: The player rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 6); each of his successes cancels out one success used to "defile" the area. Broom of Heaven can be used to oppose Chi-Shaping or Hand of Darkness this way (but not to repair a Chi Rift), or to "rebuild" the Wall if it has been weakened to let evil spirits slip through into the material world. It can also be used to remove the defilement caused by feeding too heavily from an area's ambient Chi. (See **Kindred of the East**, pp. 138-39.) A Kuei-jin who repeatedly defiles an area and then calls upon the spirits to cleanse it again may find himself in for an unpleasant surprise, though, as the spirits of the natural order take a dim view of such activities.

BBBHand of Darkness

Hand of Darkness is a potent form of curse whereby the Kuei-jin deliberately interferes with or attacks an area's feng shui. By directing harmful influences toward an area or interfering with good feng shui, the Kuei-jin makes life difficult indeed for that area's residents.

System: The Kuei-jin must be in the area to be affected, or be within unobstructed naked eyesight of it to affect it with this power (using binoculars doesn't count). He rolls Manipulation + Portents (difficulty 7); if successful, bad joss immediately afflicts the area. The difficulty of any tasks attempted in the area increases by two, and when rolling, any roll of 1 or 2 is considered a botch. Anyone living or working in the area is almost certainly doomed to failure and lack of prosperity.

The number of successes on the roll to activate this power indicates its effects' duration.

12 hours
24 hours
One week
One month
One year
Permanent

2000 Inharmonious Aligment

The bane of mandarins and ancestors everywhere, this Feng Shui power allows a Kuei-jin to interfere with an area's ambient Chi to such an extent that others cannot draw ambient Chi from that location. Use of this power is often outlawed; it can be enough to have a Kuei-jin declared akuma in some situations.

System: The Kuei-jin rolls Manipulation + Feng Shui (difficulty 8). If successful, no Kuei-jin may take ambient Chi (of any type) from the area (see **Kindred of the East**, p. 138); similarly, other shen may not regain or take Gnosis, Quintessence, and the like while in the area.

The number of successes on the roll to activate this power indicates its effects' duration.

1 success	One day
2 successes	One week
3 successes	One month
4 successes	One year
5 successes	10 years

Chi Ward

Feng shui can be arranged to offer protection, rather than simple good luck, to the inhabitants of an area. When a Kueijin uses this power, he establishes a ward that prevents spirits (good or bad) and other shen from entering an area (or leaving it, if they are inside the ward when it is erected). Most shen tend to shy away from a warded area, but occasionally, some are angered by the ward, and wait outside it eagerly to attack those it protects once it falls.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 8); success indicates that a Chi Ward has been established. The ward lasts only eight minutes unless he spends Chi is spent to maintain it; for every point of Yin or Yang Chi spent when the ward is created, it lasts for 1 hour. (Points can also be spent later if the Kuei-jin decides it would be advisable to keep the ward up longer.) However, the ward falls at the next dawning of the sun, regardless of the amount of Chi spent. No spirits or other shen, no matter how strong, can pass in or out of this ward until it falls. Furthermore, Kuei-jin cannot absorb ambient Chi (of any kind) from the warded area or transport themselves across it using Tapestry powers such as Ride the Dragon. (Likewise, Lupines cannot use a Moon Bridge that passes through a warded area.)

Cool Contraction Celestial Mirror

When a Kuei-jin reaches this level of power with Feng Shui, his control over the forces underpinning reality is so great that he can create changes in the spirit worlds by altering the flow of Chi in this world. By precisely aligning an area's Chi, the Kuei-jin creates a "reflection" of that area in the Yin and Yang Worlds, and opens a door that he, and others of his choice, can use to enter that reflection.

System: The Kuei-jin must spend eight minutes (or more depending upon the amount of stress and other difficulties facing him) manipulating the magic geographical threads of the area, and the player rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 8). The results depend upon the number of successes achieved:

1 success: The Kuei-jin can perceive the Mirror Lands, Yang World, and Yin World.

2-3 successes: The Kuei-jin can create a refuge or haven in the Yang World or Yin World, as he chooses. This refuge can look like whatever he wishes it to, though it most often resembles an idealized or decayed version of the Middle Kingdom area he is in when he uses it. He and anyone he chooses, can pierce the Wall and enter this refuge (but no other parts of the spirit worlds). The refuge remains in existence for eight minutes, plus an additional eight minutes for every success beyond two. While in this refuge, the Kueijin and others cannot be attacked from the Middle Kingdom (unless potent mystic powers are invoked), and can easily replenish Chi of the appropriate type (collect 1 Chi per 5 minutes, up to a maximum of 10 per person). Most residents of the Yang and Yin Worlds will leave the residents of such a refuge alone, but some will actively seek to enter it (which can usually be done with ease) and prey upon its residents. A refuge of this sort is small, usually no more than the size of a tiny room (perhaps a cell 10 feet across).

4-5 successes: By controlling the ebb and flow of Chi, the Kuei-jin reshapes a particular area of the Mirror Lands. Instead of simply walling off a refuge, as above, the Kuei-jin can tear apart and rebuild part of the spirit world. Buildings and "spiritual rubble" can be wiped away or reshaped, allowing the Kuei-jin to drastically change the spiritual reflection of an area. Each successful use of this power generally allows the Kuei-jin to reweave one or two objects, though large objects (trees) may take longer and small objects (piles of leaves) can be quickly manipulated. Wiping away a spiritual object merely requires the proper positioning of feng shui implements; changing an object into something else generally requires that the fang shih use a small model representing the finished product.

6+ successes: At this level of mastery, the Kuei-jin tears a hole beyond the Mirror Lands and into the deep spirit worlds. By creating a pulsing line of Chi energy heading to the depths of the spirit world, the Kuei-jin blazes a path to the far realms. The Kuei-jin (and company) can follow this path and tear to any area about which the Kuei-jin knows; it is impossible to visit the Realm of Fighting Spirits unless one knows how to set the proper Chi balances, but a Kuei-jin who has been there or learned of it can build a proper pathway. Note that this road does not actually cross the Wall - the Kuei-jin must already be in the Mirror Lands in order to follow this road. Kuei-jin have been known to use this power to head to the so-called "Deep Umbra" and beyond, or even to venture back into the Thousand Hells, though such fools rarely return.

OOOOOOOOODansing Spirits

Control over Chi lines allows a Kuei-jin to bend spirits to his will. Similarly, by altering the flows of Chi wrapping a "son's body, the Kuei-jin may manipulate the individual. Spirits can be called with this power, and directed toward a variety of tasks. Perhaps most nefariously, a spirit placed in a corpse can be manipulated like a marionette; onlookers see the Kuei-jin dancing and fighting in an empty parody of the corpse-slave's actions.

System: Moxa burning and carefully placed mirrors are required to attract or repel spirits with this power. The player rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 7); if the roll succeeds, the Kuei-jin can attempt to coerce spirits into coming to or leaving a particular place (difficulty is the spirit's Willpower), Spirits brought by this power are not necessarily friendly, but are usually curious. Unlike the lesser wards of Feng Shui, the practitioner may choose to include or exclude specific spirits or types of spirits in this ward. A ward or symbol of this nature can cover quite a large area, though preparing a 10-foot line generally takes a few minutes. Since the ward or symbol must be created all at once, tin' effectively limits the size of such manipulation to small buildings like houses or single apartments.

If the Kuei-jin wishes to use a spirit to animate a host, that spirit must be directed into a dead body. (This is generally

done through the use of a special symbol placed on the head and a stick of burning moxa in the mouth.) The Kuei-jin may then direct the minion to perform simple tasks, such as fetching wood or killing a particular person. The corpse retains the Physical Attributes it had in life, but effectively possesses no Social or Mental capabilities. Alternately, the Kuei-jin can "grab" the flows of energy binding the spirit to the corpse, and control the minion like a puppet, pantomiming the desired actions. This allows the Kuei-jin to use his own Physical Attributes and Abilities for the corpse (in activities such as climbing, shooting, etc), though all difficulties increase by 2 when used in this manner. Corpses animated in this fashion remain active only for a single night. Corpses that are already home to spirits (such as Kuei-jin or zombies animated with the Kin-jin Discipline of Necromancy) cannot be controlled with this power.

COCOOOOOOOVeil of Defiliment

When a Kuei-jin locates an area with good feng shui, it is important for him to do everything he can to hold onto it, lest others take it (and its power) away from him. Veil of Defilement helps him do that by disguising such areas to make them look barren and defiled.

System: The Kuei-jin must be in the area to be disguised and the player rolls Intelligence + Subterfuge (difficulty 7). Every success increases the difficulty of attempts to perceive the feng shui or ambient Chi in the area by 3; instead, the area appears to be barren of Chi or defiled, at the Kuei-jin's choice. This effect cannot be removed or cleansed by Broom of Heaven.

000000000000 Transcendent Portal

This, the ultimate power of the Kuei-jin fang shih, allows an area's feng shui to be manipulated to open a gateway to (or from) the Yang World or Yin World.

System: The player rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 7) and spends three Chi of the type corresponding with the world she wishes to enter. Success indicates that a portal to the desired spirit world opens for the Kuei-jin. She may take one person along with her for every success beyond the first. The gateway remains open until the Kuei-jin returns through it, or the next dawn occurs; hostile spirits may use it to enter the Middle Kingdom unless it is warded or guarded.

TAPESTRY

Advanced Tapestry, like advanced Feng Shui, reflects a character's greater understanding of the dragon lines and other forces of Yin and Yang Chi in the world, as well as the character's more precise attunement to them.

OOOOOOOCelestial Needle

What Tapestry creates, it can also destroy - or in this case, repair. Celestial Needle allows a Kuei-jin to close a Chi Rift opened by himself or another Cathayan.

System: The Kuei-jin must spend three turns in concentration near the site of a Chi Rift, and the player spends three Chi of the opposite type spent to create the Chi Rift, rolling Intelligence + Rituals against a difficulty equal to 4 plus the number of successes rolled when creating the rift (maximum difficulty of 9). While in the midst of the Chi Rift, the Kuei-jin suffers the standard effects from it (unless somehow protected) and may also be tormented by spirits and other beings who do not wish the rift to close, which may increase the difficulty. If the roll is successful, the rift slowly closes; this takes eight minutes, -1 minute per success after the first.

00000000 Dragon Chariot

Most practitioners of Tapestry must travel by themselves when riding the dragon. Masters of the Discipline can not only travel more easily, but they can take companions along for the journey.

System: This power is similar to Ride the Dragon (**Kindred** of the East, p. 104), but the difficulty of the centering roll is only 6. Furthermore, the character may allocate successes either to the distance traveled, or to carrying people besides himself along for the ride. For each success allocated to carrying others, the number of persons who can travel doubles (for one success, two people - the Kuei-jin and one other - for two successes, four people; and so on). The Kuei-jin invoking this power need not necessarily travel himself; more than one ancestor has "banished" troublesome Cathayans to other locales with the Dragon Chariot.

0000000000Chi Castle

Kuei-jin who cannot lair in a naturally occurring dragon nest can create one, after a fashion, with this power. Chi Castle allows a Kuei-jin to alter the dragon lines and Chi flow in an area to create a "pool" or reservoir equivalent to a dragon nest (albeit a relatively weak one). However, doing this tends to anger local spirits, shen and, sometimes, other Kuei-jin as well.

System: The Kuei-jin must find an area with fairly strong dragon lines (Storyteller's discretion as to what constitutes "fairly strong") and spend five turns concentrating. The player spends one Yang Chi and one Yin Chi and rolls Intelligence + Rituals (difficulty 8). Success indicates that the flow of Chi in the area has been redirected and remade to form a weak dragon nest. It's up to the Kuei-jin to hold on to his turf, though; there are many who will try to take it from him, or punish him for what he has done.

0000000000 The Dragon's Rapine

An enemy at a distance is better than an enemy close up. A Tapestry master can use this power to "throw" an enemy away from him down a dragon line.

System: This power is similar to Ride the Dragon, but it is used against a target as an attack. Typically, the Kuei-jin will spend the time to find an appropriate dragon line in advance. (Taking several minutes to locate one in combat is not advised.) She must touch the victim to affect him, and may "throw" her victim to any point along the dragon line, including inside objects that lay along those lines. The Kuei-jin chooses which direction to send the victim; this can be particularly unpleasant for the victim if he ends up, for example, far out to sea or trapped in the igneous rock wall of a volcano.

The effects of having something imbedded in a victim (or imbedding the victim in something larger than himself) are left to the Storyteller, but they're grim at best. This power is so rare that its use is more likely to be in the hands of a Storyteller character anyway, and should be used for dramatic effect rather than simple dice of damage.

XANG PRANA

Kuei-jin with Dexterity and Stamina scores of 5 or higher can use any Yang Prana power of Level Six or greater, subject to the usual Dharmic limitations. Thus, a Kuei-jin with a Dharma rating of 7 needs only Dexterity and Stamina scores of 5 to learn Yang Prana at Levels Six and Seven.

GGGGGGGYang Shield

With wild leaps, yells and acrobatic gyrations, a Kuei-jin with this power forms his Yang animus into a defensive field around his body. The Yang Shield appears as a glowing nimbus, and sometimes burns brightly enough to temporarily blind onlookers.

System: The player spends one Yang Chi and rolls Dexterity + Dodge (or Martial Arts, whichever is higher) against a difficulty of 6. Each success provides one point of armor (see Vampire: The Masquerade, p. 209) against all attacks, or two points against any attack based on or involving Yin Chi or energies. Unlike normal armor, however, the Yang Shield is destroyed once it sustains four times its protection in a single attack (though it may be activated again on the Kuei-jin's next action). A Yang Shield remains functional for one scene, or until the Kuei-jin chooses to relax it.

OOOOOOOOOOOYang Phoenix

This power is a deadly refinement of the Yang Mantle. It turns the Kuei-jin's animus into a field of lethal energy surrounding his body. Anyone who touches him, or is touched by him suffers horrible burns.

System: The player spends one Yang Chi to create the Yang Phoenix animus. Any person, creature, or being touched by the animus suffers a number of health levels of aggravated damage equal to the Kuei-jin's permanent Yang Chi level (which may be soaked only by methods that normally allow the victim to soak aggravated damage). The Kuei-jin may increase this damage by + 1 health level for each additional Yang Chi spent. The Yang Phoenix can affect spirits and other shen, even if the Kuei-jin could not normally touch them.

The Yang Phoenix may be "stacked" atop a Yang Mantle or Eightfold Yang Mantle, if the Kuei-jin is willing to pay the Chi cost for all powers used.

Yang energy is related to the element of wood, for good μ for ill. When a Kuei-jin uses this power, he siphons the Yang energy out of a wooden object, causing it to instantly rot and crumble.

System: The Kuei-jin must touch the object to be affected, and the player must roll Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 6). Each success destroys 500 pounds of wood. Thus, even one success is enough to cause most wooden doors to crumble into wood chips and dust, while a mere two successes may destroy a wilderness lean-to, or average-sized tree.

Additionally, the Yang Chi the Kuei-jin draws from his subject may be used to "refill" his Yang Chi reservoir. Small wooden objects (like a door) may have one or less Yang Chi within them, while mighty trees may have five or more, depending on the Storyteller's discretion. By using this power, some terrible, old Kuei-jin have stricken once-vibrant forests into desolate wastelands and existed for long periods of time without drinking the blood or breath of mortals.

At this level the Kuei-jin's body becomes so infused with Yang energy that it physically transforms into wood. This does not inhibit the Kuei-jin's ability to move or act in any way, though it can make it difficult to interact with others. On the other hand, it is a significant asset in combat, particularly against the Kin-jin.

System: The player spends three points of Yang Chi, causing his body to transform into solid, living, motile wood. This provides him with six points of armor (or an astounding 1 2 against Yin-based attacks), and he does Strength + 2 damage with his wooden fists and feet. Furthermore, his fingers are considered stakes for purposes of making attacks against Western Kindred. He also floats in water. However, he suffers a +2 difficulty on most rolls involving Social

Attributes. (At the Storyteller's discretion, however, the character may receive a bonus to such tactics as intimidation, etc.). Additionally, Kuei-jin using the Touch of Corruption power may steal Yang Chi from, and desiccate, a vampire using the Oaken Corpse.

ΥίΝ ΡRΛΝΛ

Kuei-jin with Perception and Stamina scores of 5 or higher can use any Yin Prana power of Level Six or greater, subject to the usual Dharmic limitations. Thus, a Kuei-jin with a Dharma rating of 7 needs only Dexterity and Stamina scores of 5 to learn Yang Prana Levels Six and Seven.

000000Yin Shield

With precise, delicate, graceful movements, the Kuei-jin forms his Yin animus into a protective carapace around his body. This shell sometimes appears as a layer of ice or frost, while at other times it takes the form of a black, crackling energy barrier. In one instance, a Kuei-jin invoking this power surrounded himself with a dense, brackish mist that slowed the attacks of the shih who pursued him.

System: The player spends one Yin Chi and rolls Stamina + Intimidation (difficulty 6). Each success provides one point of armor (see Vampire: The Masquerade, p. 209) against all attacks, or two points against any attack based on or involving Yang Chi or energies. The Yang Shield dissipates once it sustains four times its protection in a single attack (though it may be activated again on the Kuei-jin's next action). The Yin Shield remains functional for one scene, or until the Kuei-jin chooses to drop it.

888888 Yin Nihilus

This power creates a deadly halo of Yin energy. Burning with black power summoned from the vampire's soul, the Yin Nihilus inflicts a searing wave of negative Chi on those against whom the vampire uses it.

System: The player spends one Yin Chi to invoke the Yin Nihilus. Anyone who comes in contact with the Yin Nihilus suffers a number of health levels of aggravated damage equal to the Kuei-jin's permanent Yin Chi level (which may be soaked only by methods that normally allow the victim to soak aggravated damage). The vampire wielding the Yin Nihilus can increase this damage by + 1 health level for each additional Yin Chi spent. The Yin Nihilus affects spirits and other shen that come in contact with it, even if the Kuei-jin is unaware of them.

The Yin Nihilus may complement a Yin Mantle or Eightfold Yin Mantle, provided the Kuei-jin pays the Chi cost for all powers used.

000000000 Touch of Rust

Yin energy is related to the element of metal. When a Kuei-jin uses this power, he sucks the Yin energy out of a metallic object, causing it to instantly rust, corrode, and crumble.

System: The Kuei-jin must touch the object to be affected, and the player must roll Stamina + Occult (difficulty 6). Each success destroys up to 500 pounds of metal. Thus, even one success is enough to cause most firearms to crumble into wood chips and dust, while a mere two successes ravages a motorcycle.

In addition, the Yin Chi the Kuei-jin draws from his subject may be used to "refill" his own Yin Chi reservoir. Small metal objects (like a door) may have one or less Chi within them, while a car or subway train may have three or more, depending on the Storyteller's discretion.

0000000000 Olron Corpse

At this level, the Kuei-jin's body becomes so infused with Yin energy that it literally transforms into metal. (This does not inhibit the Kuei-jin's ability to move or act in any way, though it can make social interactions difficult to interact.) Of course, a metal body is a significant benefit in combat, especially against other shen.

System: The player spends three points of Yin Chi, slowly transforming his body to into rigid yet flexible metal. (The type of metal is up to die player, but it is typically iron, steel, or bronze.) This provides him with six points of armor (or 12 points against Yang-based attacks), and he does Strength + 3 damage with his metallic fists and feet. Furthermore, her fingers become razored claws, which do aggravated damage against Kindred and shen. While taking the form of the Iron Corpse, the Kuei-jin automatically fails all rolls involving Social Attributes (except for matters of intimidation and the like). A vampire activating the Iron Corpse triples her normal mass, and sinks like a rock if she falls in die water.

DEMON ARTS

The P'o is powerful - sometimes too powerful. Those who are willing to tap the energies of the beast within, whether voluntarily or not, can wield awesome powers with their Demon Chi. And as their lower self grows in power, so does their potency.

BLACK WIND

The higher levels of this Demon Art expand its powers beyond simply increasing the Kuei-jin's speed and fighting prowess. The advanced Black Wind powers - often known as the Black Tempest or Black Whirlwind - allow a Kuei-jin to become a fighter whose hands strike so fast that they are but blurs, or a runner who can cross the very waves themselves.

A Kuei-jin who reaches these levels of power must choose whether to proceed on the normal path of Black Wind - taking extra actions, running faster, and improving strength - or to buy the new powers listed here. The character may spend experience points to acquire the alternate ability. For example, if a Kuei-jin attains Level Six in Black Wind and opts for the standard Black Wind abilities, he may spend 48 experience points (the usual cost purchase a Level-Six Kuei-jin Discipline; see **Kindred of the East**, p. 142) to acquire A Thousand Cuts as well.

This power allows a Kuei-jin to focus his P'o so that he becomes a veritable whirlwind in combat. His arms a blur; his feet are as fast as lightning; he can strike a target (or targets) so many times that there is almost no way for it to avoid the blows.

System: The player spends a point of Demon Chi to activate this power. It grants the Kuei-jin a number of automatic successes equal to his Black Wind, plus two for every additional point of Demon Chi spent, which can be used to improve either his chances of hitting a target using Brawl, Martial Arts, or Melee, or his roll when determining the damage done to a target. The Kuei-jin may use all the automatic successes on a single target and a single roll, or he may split them up between multiple targets and/or multiple rolls, as he desires. They must, however, all be used in the same turn.

COOOOOOOOOOTreading the Tide Dragon's Back

Most Black Wind practitioners are fast, but some can run nearly as fast as thought. In fact, such Kuei-jin can move with such speed that they can run across the surface of the water without falling in!

System: The player spends a point of Demon Chi each turn to keep this power active. (Turning it off while in the middle of crossing a large body of water is not advised; Kuei-jin should be sure they have enough Demon Chi to cross an entire lake or river before they set out.) While it is active, every point of Black Wind the character devotes to increasing his running speed does not just increase it arithmetically, but by one-anda-half times for each point. Thus, for example, a Kuei-jin who devotes one point of Black Wind to increasing running speed would normally move 40 yards + (6 x Dexterity) when running (double the standard 20 yards + [3 x Dexterity]), but when using this power, he would move 50 yards + (7.5 x Dexterity). More importantly, it allows the character to run on the surface of the water. If the water is reasonably still, this requires no roll. If it is choppy, the player must make a Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 7) for the character to keep his feet; if conditions are extremely choppy or stormy, the difficulty increases to 9. If the roll is unsuccessful, the character plunges into the water. This causes no injury, but the character cannot climb back onto the Tide Dragon's Back he must swim back to shore.

0000000000Divine Whirlwind

For centuries, the martial artists of the East have strived to develop skills, even special powers, that would allow them to strike first in combat. The iaijutsu sword-drawing art of the samurai, the genshin "mind-fist" strike of the karateka, and even the kongjin power learned by advanced students of kung fu all have this aim. But none of them can hope to match the speed of a Kuei-jin who may call upon the Divine Whirlwind, since his very thoughts instantly become actions.

System: The player spends a point of Demon Chi to activate this power. It allows him to take the extra actions he gains from using Black Wind first, instead of having to wait until all other characters have taken their actions for the turn. The Kuei-jin may literally strike five times before the opponent can respond!



00000000000 Transcending P'o

At this level of enlightenment, even a Kuei-jin who has come to grips with the darker aspects of his nature has learned how not to let them get the best of him. By soothing himself with the calming energies of Yin Chi, he can keep a hold on his bestial side.

System: For every point of Yin Chi the Kuei-jin spends, he may use any Black Wind powers for up to two turns without having to roll P'o to determine if he enters fire soul. Furthermore, any rolls made to resist entering fire soul during this period are at -2 difficulty, but rolls to avoid entering wave soul are at + 1 difficulty.

DEMON SHINTAI

The masters of the higher Demon Shintai powers are even more terrible than their less "enlightened" brethren, but they are also more twisted and misshapen, both inside and out. With the abilities listed below, the rakshas are indeed a force to be feared.

For each level of Demon Shintai above the fifth, the character gains an additional two Demon Shintai Characteristics, rather than just one. Some new characteristics are listed below; as always, the exact appearance of a character's Demon Shintai form is left to the twisted imagination of his player, liven due attention to the character's P'o Nature.

The Trait bonuses outlined below apply only in the demon form, as normal.

COCOCOCOCOFIesh Mastery of the Demon Form

System: At this level of power, the character gains +1 Stamina. In addition, he can transform into his demonic shape in two turns, instead of the usual three.

System: At this level of power, the character gains +1 Dexterity. Furthermore, he learns how to disguise the visible manifestations of his demonic nature for brief periods of time. For every point of Willpower spent, the character may return to his normal form for eight minutes while still retaining the Physical Attribute benefits of Demon Shintai.

System: At this level of power, the character gains +1 Strength. In addition, he can transform into his demonic shape in one turn, instead of the usual two or three turns.

SOCOOOD Jade Mastery of the Demon Form

System: At this level of power, the character gains +1 Strength and +1 Stamina. He also gains the power to alter his demonic features at will. Every turn the character may exchange one Demon Shintai Characteristic for another; for example, perhaps the spikes on his body retract and wings grow from his shoulder blades. This change requires a full turn of the character's concentration, as old traits atrophy and shrink while new ones erupt. One common tactic is for the character to grab a victim with his arms, tail, or tentacles m one turn, then grow spikes the next turn, causing the victim to suffer Strength + 1 aggravated damage from impalement. The character need not possess the "permanent" Demon Shintai Characteristic she adopts through this power-she can emulate any of the characteristics. (Though only the characteristics she "permanently" possesses show up in her demon form without this power's use.)

New Demon Chintai Characteristics

Here are some additional Demon Shintai Characteristics for players to choose from. Note that юте of them require that other characteristics be taken as "prerequisites" - a character cannot have Wing Spines without first having wings. Some also require the character to have obtained a certain level of mastery of the Demon Shintai art before he can use them in his demonic form.

Antennae: The character grows insect-like antennae. These grant an extra die for making all Perception rolls.

Enlarged Body Parts: One of the character's body parts is much larger than normal. It is terrifyingly swollen, and often covered with sores or shot through with ugly-looking veins. The exact body part enlarged is up to the player; examples include head (+ 1 Perception), torso (+1 to soak), and legs (+ 1 Strength for jumping).

Eyes of Horror: The character's demonic eyes hold a suggestion of terror and madness for anyone who gazes into them. They can be any color the character wishes (fiery red, eerie green, ice blue, or pupilless black, for example) and any form (such as insectile, cat-like, or simply alien) but the effect is the same. Anyone with whom the character makes eye-to-eye contact must make a Willpower roll or succumb to the effects of extreme fear. Typically this means they will run (if possible) or cower or faint (if not).

Form of the Yamamatsu (prerequisite: Demon Shintai 4): The Kuei-jin's demonic body becomes rubbery and flabby, almost fluid in places, giving him a horrifyingly distorted appearance. To reflect the resilience of this form, the character may add two dice to all soak rolls to resist nonaggravated physical damage. Furthermore, the character may stretch his limbs (but not his neck) for up to one foot, and can squeeze through much smaller spaces than he could otherwise. **Hive Body:** Small sphincters on the demonic body release tiny, horrid animals. Snakes, spiders, bees and bats are all common manifestations of this bizarre power. Typically, the Kuei-jin with this power releases the equivalent of a small swarm of the creatures; for the sake of simplicity, it may be best to consider the swarm a single entity with five health levels, capable of inflicting a level of lethal damage each round. (Due to the number of creatures involved, no attack roll need be made.)

Horns: The character sprouts horns from his head. They can be short or long, smooth or jagged, straight or crooked, multipronged or single-pronged, as the character wishes. Regardless of their form or nature, the horns do Strength + 1 aggravated damage when the character performs headbutts, charges, or similar maneuvers.

Mandibles: The character has insect-like mandibles. His bite inflicts Strength + 3 aggravated damage.

Multiple Heads (prerequisite: Demon Shintai 5): The character grows one or more extra heads. (The limit is seven extra heads, one per level of mastery up to 7) For every extra head, the character gains one additional die to roll when making Perception checks.

Poisoned Fangs (prerequisites: Mandibles or Maw, Demon Shintai 7): The fangs in the character's mouth become especially large, sharp and caustic. The character's bite now inflicts Strength + 4 aggravated damage, and injects a poison into the victim's body. To use the poison, the character must spend one Yin Chi. The poison does Strength + 1 lethal damage. However, this poison does not work on victims who do not have normal, living circulatory systems - in other words, Kuei-jin and Kindred are immune to it, though other shen might not be.

Spikes: Other suggestions for spikes (i.e., bodily growths or forms that cause damage upon impact) include body hair as stiff and sharp as barbed wire; abrasive skin like that of a shark; fiery-hot or icy-cold skin; broken glass or similar objects embedded in the body.

Spurting Tendrils (prerequisite; Demon Shintai 4): Tentacles, tendrils, fingers, sphinctets or other apparatus disgorge gouts of acid or poison. Such sprays count as ranged attacks, inflicting four dice of lethal damage and spraying up to 20 feet.

Suckers (prerequisite: Tentacles, Form of the Yamamatsu or Foulness; Demon Shintai 7): The character's arms or other limbs are covered with suckers similar to tiny lamprey mouths. They can aid a character in climbing or grappling (+1 die to appropriate pools), and inflict 1 health level of aggravated damage per round to grabbed characters. (They latch on and leech blood; this requires skin-to-skin contact, however.)

Suppurating Pustules (prerequisites: Foulness, Demon Shintai 5): The character's demon body is covered with oozing sores and wounds. The pus that drips from them is acidic; it does two dice of lethal damage to anyone or anything it touches, including most attackers in hand-to-hand combat (Storyteller's discretion).

Tentacles: The character grows loathsome, slime-covered tentacles. At Levels One through Five of mastery, these tentacles replace the character's arms; at Level Six and above, the character grows one tentacle for each level of mastery above fifth in addition to his arms (which part of the body the tentacles grow from is up to the player). The tentacles are one foot long for each level of mastery. They are considered to have +2 Strength for purposes of grabbing, squeezing, and crushing; however, their ability to handle small objects, manipulate levers, punch keys on a keyboard, and the like is much less than that of normal arms and hands. If the tentacles are in addition to the character's arms, he gains two extra dice when grappling (to simulate extra attacks).

Wing Spines (prerequisite: Wings, Demon Shintai 3): The character's wings sprout spiny, finger-like spurs. This has two effects. First, they can be used as crude claws, doing Strength-1 aggravated damage. Second, they can carry small objects (nothing bigger or heavier than, say, a pistol or a full can of beer).

HELLWEAVING

All Kuei-jin know of the akuma, the servants of the Yama Kings - and all righteous Kuei-jin despise and fear them. As servants of the ones the Kuei-jin have sworn to oppose, the akuma are the basest traitors and vilest evil known to the Cathayans, for they have sold their darkling birthright to the powers of the Yomi World and betrayed their responsibilities.

In his great work, The Iron Book of the Red Bridge, the mad Kuei-jin poet O describes thousands of the realms of the Yomi World. What few Kuei-jin know, however, is that there is a second part to it, one rarely seen in the modern nights. For centuries, mandarins and ancestors have censored, banned, or suppressed that part of the Iron Book, which describes Hellweaving - the powers granted to the akuma by their demonic lords. The leaders of the Kuei-jin feared that knowledge of the so-called "Yomi powers" would tempt far too many Kuei-jin to swear fealty to the Yama Kings, so they outlawed it as best they could.

Despite the efforts of the mandarins, word of the Yomi powers occasionally trickles out to some Kuei-jin or other, and so knowledge of them spreads in a slow and insidious fashion. While most Kuei-jin remain ignorant of them, far too many are aware of them - sometimes from personal experience. Known colloquially as Hellweaving, these abilities represent gifts of power to select Kuei-jin from the Yama Kings and other demonic entities. Typically these powers involve terror, corruption, infusing the Kuei-jin's body with powerful Yomi energy, and the like. However, they come with a price: Each one requires a sacrifice by the Kuei-jin whenever it is used to whichever Yomi entity granted him the power. These sacrifices range from simple gold or incense to the Kuei-jin's personal Chi or the performance of some service. The burden that the akuma bear for their powers is, thankfully, not a light one.

Glimpse of Yomi

This power allows the akuma to infuse a victim's mind with images of the Yomi World and what occurs within it. It is a brave soul indeed that can withstand such an assault without running screaming into the night.

System: The akuma must make eye contact with his victim, while the player spends a point of Demon Chi and rolls Perception + Occult (difficulty 6). Success means the victim is tormented with visions of the Yomi World. The victim must make a Willpower roll (difficulty 7) and achieve more successes than the akuma did, to avoid the effects of the power. Failure means he will flee in terror from the akuma; weaker victims (mortals with a Stamina of 1 or 2) may die of heart failure.

Sacrifice: Gold (at least one coin's worth).

Razor Winds

The akuma opens up a temporary window into the Yomi World, releasing a tiny blast of the lacerating winds that howl through the Thousand Hells.

System: The player spends one point of Demon Chi and rolls Intelligence + Occult (difficulty 6). Success releases the Razor Winds to shred the target's flesh and soul. The player rolls Dexterity + Firearms or Archery (difficulty 6) to hit his target. Success indicates that the target suffers the akuma's Stamina + 2 dice of lethal damage; this can be soaked. The Razor Winds will do +1 health level of damage for every additional point of Yin Chi or Demon Chi the akuma spends.

Sacrifice: A point of Yin Chi or Demon Chi (in addition to the points spent to activate the power).

Favor of the Yama Kings

To their more powerful servants the Yama Kings and their greater vassals grant this power: a warping of joss to bring good fortune to those who work the Kings' evil will.

System: The player spends a point of Demon Chi. For the rest of the scene (or longer, at the Storyteller's discretion), all rolls he makes in direct furtherance of his and the Yama Kings' evil purposes are at -1 difficulty. Of course, it is up to the Storyteller to determine what tasks are involved in "furthering evil." Not everything an akuma does directly

furthers evil. For example, an akuma's hunting trips among the slums of Hong Kong probably would not qualify for a Favor of the Yama Kings bonus, since he is just seeing to his own physical needs (even though, arguably, anything that supports an akuma supports the Yama Kings and furthers their purposes). Conversely, hunting to find sacrifices for the Kings probably would qualify.

If the akuma has a Demon Mentor (see Kindred of the East, p. 94), then he derives even greater benefits from this power because of his intimate connection with a member of the Kings' courts (or even one of the Kings himself, perhaps). The reduction in difficulty should last longer (up to a night or more, in some cases), and if the Yama Kings see fit, may even be increased to -2 to all difficulties in crucial situations (for example, arranging and performing a ritual to open a gate to the Yomi World to bring forth an army of goblin spiders into the Middle Kingdom).

Sacrifice: A point of Demon Chi (in addition to the point of Demon Chi spent to activate the power).

OOORemembrance of Yomi

All Kuei-jin have a recollection of the time their P'o spent in the Yomi World - and that recollection is never pleasant. This power allows an akuma to bring those memories to the forefront of a Kuei-jin's mind and accentuate them, forcing him into depraved acts.

System: The akuma touches the victim (who must be a Kueijin) as the player spends a point of Demon Chi and rolls P'o (difficulty 8). If successful, the akuma immediately forces the Kuei-jin to enter shadow soul. (See Kindred of the East, p. 151.) The Kuei-jin spends at least one hour in this state, during which he may commit acts of unspeakable abhorrence. Thereafter, the Kuei-jin's player may roll once per hour, pitting his Hun against a difficulty equal to 4 plus the number of successes the akuma achieved on his roll (maximum 9). Success allows the Kuei-jin's normal nature to re-assert itself; otherwise, shadow soul continues. If it continues long enough, я Kuei-jin's Dharma may be imperiled.

Sacrifice: Jade.

This powerful ability allows an akuma to corrupt a dragon nest, defiling it and rendering it a source of dark, evil power and woe. Instead of being a source of power for all shen, it becomes an outpost of the Yama Kings in the Middle Kingdom, a font of energy that only akuma and others like them can tap.

System: The akuma must physically be in or on the site of the dragon nest to be corrupted, and concentrate for at least three turns. The player spends three Demon Chi and rolls

Manipulation + Rituals (difficulty 9). Success indicates that the dragon nest has been defiled. This defilement is permanent; thereafter, no energy can be drawn from the nest. Weaving the Yomi World may be counteracted with the Feng Shui power Broom of Heaven; otherwise, its effects may be cleansed and purified only by a great quest and noble sacrifice.

Sacrifice: A service, rendered to the Yama Kings, Demon Mentor, or other inhabitant of the Yomi World who grants the akuma the power to perform the ritual.

888888 Flood of Wickedness

Even those Kuei-jin who actively study or cultivate their P'o secretly fear it. Transcendence of the P'o, even temporarily, represents a loss of control and a giving in to one's most bestial nature and desires. However, some powerful akuma have learned how to harness their P'o so that they can release it more easily than a typical Kuei-jin, the better to exploit its powers.

System: The player spends a point of Yang Chi and rolls Intelligence + Meditation (difficulty 6). Success indicates that he has control over the release of his P'o for this scene. This means that all difficulties to invoke the P'o (see Kindred of the East, p. 91) are reduced by 2, and the akuma is considered to have two extra points of temporary Demon Chi. (These must be spent while Flood of Wickedness is invoked; after it ends, they dissipate automatically.) Furthermore, the difficulty of any of the akuma's attempts to resist being taken over by his P'o, or to make him enter fire soul or shadow soul, are also decreased by two. This power lasts for one night.

Sacrifice: A service, rendered to the Yama King, Demon Mentor, or other inhabitant of the Yomi World who grants the akuma this power.

OOOOOOOOOO Portal

At this level, the Yama Kings grant the akuma the power to summon and bind creatures from the Yomi World. This provides the akuma with a source of valuable servitors, assassins and terror-troops.

Systems: The akuma spends three turns concentrating while the player spends 2 Chi (Yin or Yang), and rolls Intelligence + Rituals (difficulty 7). Success indicates that the gate into the Yomi World has been opened, and the akuma may then call forth the creatures he desires. They heed his call, but may not be entirely pleased about it. (The more powerful they are, the less likely they are to enjoy having their free will curbed this way; lesser spirits are not as inclined to complain, since they are used to being ordered around by greater beings.) If necessary (Storyteller's discretion), the akuma must spend a point of Willpower to compel the being to serve him for a night. Alternately, this power can be used to bind Yomi spirits and similar evil powers that the akuma encounters. The player must spend a point of Willpower and roll Intelligence + Leadership (difficulty 8) to succeed.

Sacrifice: The akuma must provide the particular Yama King, Demon Mentor, or other being who gave him this power with a human soul. (A Kuei-jin's Hun or P'o would suffice.) How he obtains it, and from whom, is up to him.

COCOCOCOCOCOCI of P'o

When the akuma invokes this power, he calls upon a Yama King or his demonic mentor to grant him naked P'o souls from the Yomi World. He may then use these souls to create servants, or simply consume them for power.

System: The akuma spends two points of Demon Chi and rolls Intelligence + Rituals (difficulty 8). For every success obtained, the Yama Kings grant him one P'o soul to do with as he wills. He may fuse that P'o into a corpse, thus creating a primitive, yet powerful, chih-mei that serves him slavishly (but which can never advance beyond chih-mei state to greater enlightenment) for a night. Alternately, he can consume the soul, gaining two temporary Demon Chi for every soul consumed (maximum of 10 Demon Chi). These temporary points of Demon Chi remain for one night per success, after which they dissipate if not already spent.

Sacrifice: Eight corpses.

00000000000 The Red Bridge

Sometimes the Yama Kings wish for their most powerful servants in the Middle Kingdom to come visit them and pay fealty. If so, they grant them this power, which allows them to open a doorway to the Yomi World - and a means to survive there.

System: The akuma spends three turns concentrating and the player spends two Yin Chi and rolls Intelligence + Rituals (difficulty 7). Any success opens the door to the Yomi World; the number of successes indicates how resistant the akuma will be to the deadly Yomi forces, as follows:

1 success	1 hour
2 successes	6 hours
3 successes	1 day
4 successes or more	1 week

For every time interval, the player must roll Stamina + Survival (difficulty 9). Success means the akuma takes no damage; failure means he suffers one health level of damage. This cannot be soaked, nor can it be healed until the akuma leaves the Yomi World (or the Yama Kings rule otherwise). Sacrifice: Various. The sacrifice required depends upon the motives of the Yama Kings for allowing the akuma to come to the Yomi World, or the akuma's motives for asking to come. The Storyteller should choose something proportionately difficult and dangerous to obtain in relation to the powers or favors to be requested.

jron mountain

The Demon is strong indeed. With its strength, the Demon sometimes imparts resilience. By calling upon their inner Demons, Kuei-jin who know the arts of the Iron Mountain can withstand hideous amounts of damage. The Demon revels in pain, even its own; by drawing from its strength and rage, Kuei-jin practitioners of this Discipline ignore or resist injury, even from magic, fire and sunlight. Their ability to take damage and keep attacking is truly terrifying, even to other Kuei-jin.

System: The use of Iron Mountain improves a Kuei-jin's ability to withstand damage. The Demon absorbs injury and translates pain into fury. Each dot of Iron Mountain lowers the Kuei-jin's difficulty on soak rolls by one; when the difficulty drops to 2, further levels translate into automatically soaked damage. Thus, a Kuei-jin with Iron Mountain at Level Six lowers difficulty of soak rolls by 6; for a soak roll with a difficulty of 6, the difficulty drops to 2 and the Kuei-jin automatically soaks two levels of damage.

The Iron Mountain Discipline also permits a Kuei-jin to soak aggravated damage, although doing so is difficult at best. Each dot of Iron Mountain allows the Kuei-jin to use one Stamina-based soak die normally against aggravated damage, but without the concomitant decrease in soak difficulty. Therefore, with Iron Mountain Level Six, a Kuei-jin could claim up to six dice of soak against aggravated damage, if he possessed enough Stamina; if the Kuei-jin only had four dots of Stamina, he could soak four dice of aggravated damage (with Stamina) at a -2 difficulty (for the remaining levels of Iron Mountain).

Much like the Discipline of Black Wind, the powers of Iron Mountain grow in potency with mastery instead of manifesting different abilities. However, particularly skilled practitioners can learn alternate means of dealing with damage, instead of simply improving their ability to absorb injury. As always, the Kuei-jin must choose whether to improve her ability to absorb damage, or to discover new ways to resist injury with the Demon. Thus, if a Kuei-jin decides to learn Iron Mountain at Level Six she must expend 48 experience points if she also decides to learn Flaying the Demon (an alternate Level Six power) at a later time.

0000000Flaying the Demon

Pain and destruction are the hallmarks of the Demon. As such, they are no hindrance to a properly monstrous Kuei-jin. Using the Demon's power, the Kuei-jin can ignore injury and

push aside crippling agony. All of the punishments inflicted on the Kuei-jin are instead felt by her P'o, and the mortification of the mortal flesh is nothing compared to the previous tortures of Yomi.

System: The player spends one point of Demon Chi. For the remainder of the scene, the Kuei-jin suffers no wound penalties at all, unless Incapacitated.

Compared Compare

Absorbing wounds into the rage of the Demon, the Kuei-jin stokes his own fury with his injuries. Though the Kuei-jin can still be hurt, the force of the blows that he absorbs becomes fodder for the might of his P'o.

System: Whenever the character suffers damage, the player rolls soak dice normally, but for every two full levels of damage soaked, the Kuei-jin gains one point of Demon Chi. This cannot raise the Kuei-jin above his P'o, but in such



circumstances, the Kuei-jin is probably burning the Demon Chi as fast as he can get it.

0000000000 Striking the Fire

The fiercest masters of the Iron Mountain Discipline can resist the damning heat of fire and sunlight without flinching. To those who perfect their skills, resisting the flame is as simple as batting aside wisp of smoke.

System: With this Discipline, the Kuei-jin soaks aggravated damage just like any other form of damage - the Iron Mountain Discipline now applies modifiers to the difficulty of soaking aggravated wounds, while the player uses the full soak dice pool.

OOOOOOOOOOOExalted Resilience of the Heavenly Jade Mountain

Few indeed can claim this level of resistance, and it seems to nave been named with a sardonic consideration for the Yama Kings' rivals. The most sublime masters of Iron Mountain absorb damage that would rend the very flesh and bones of others. Indeed, the sages say that the very ephemeral substance of the soul is tethered to the body by the unyielding ferocity of the P'o. Though only a scant handful of akuma have ever exhibited this power, the reports from those who have are staggering: Surviving fire, explosions, even decapitating injury, these ancestors are among the most tenacious beings to walk the Earth.

System: When the Kuei-jin suffers enough damage to incapacitate him (or to inflict Little Death or Final Death), the player expends one point of Demon Chi and rolls Stamina + 'Survival (difficulty 9). The Kuei-jin remains active, conscious and fully capable for a number of turns equal to the successes 4-ored. At the end of this time, if the Kuei-jin has not yet healed the damage, the player must spend another point of Demon Chi and roll again. If the Kuei-jin runs out of Demon FbI while still suffering from incapacitating injury, he immediately collapses. This power must be consciously used (as a reflexive action), so a Kuei-jin rendered unconscious is unable to defend with this Discipline.

Kivi

The voice is a powerful thing. It is what sets mortals and shen alike apart from beasts. However, in the hands of a Kuei-jin with the proper training, the voice can become much more than a vehicle for expression - it can become both a weapon and a shield. The powers of the Kiai Discipline channel the Demon through the voice, turning one's voice into a weapon that can be taken anywhere undetected, a tool for accomplishing much more than just giving pretty speeches, and even a way to open pathways between worlds. Although it is often compared to the banshee-like wailing of ghosts, Kiai is far different. The haunting melodies of the dead, it is said, are used to evoke emotion and passion. Kiai is much broader than that. Though some of its powers do resemble ghostly abilities (and may, according to some sages, have been learned from other shen in some fashion), they can also do things that ghosts cannot: injure flesh, shatter stone, and warp the fabric of reality. No hungry ghost ever dreamed of doing so much with its wailing voice.

Kiai is not popular with all Kuei-jin. Those with strong Yin tend to dislike this Discipline for the most part, though a few do appreciate its powers. Yang-aspected Kuei-jin, or those with strong Yang energies in them, are much more likely to use Kiai. To mortals, the concept of kiai, the "cry that gives life," is one that involves a person harnessing his> breath to focus himself and his actions. Thus, Kuei-jin scholars speculate, Cathayans with much Yang energy, who play at being alive and even seem to almost breathe upon occasion, are more attracted to Kiai than the death-aspected Yin vampires.



Because Kiai requires the use of the voice, it cannot be used if the Kuei-jin is gagged or otherwise unable to use his voice for some reason. Similarly, Kiai powers are not for those who wish to be stealthy; anyone nearby can hear when a Kiai power is used.

Focusing Shout

This power allows the Kuei-jin to bring his body, mind, and souls into focus in one brief, transcendent moment marked by a loud shout. This makes the action he takes right after shouting (typically an attack or other physical action) much more likely to succeed.

System: The player spends one Demon Chi and rolls Intelligence + Portents (difficulty 7). If successful, he adds the character's current P'o rating to the dice pool of his next action, as long as that action is taken immediately after the shout (within one turn) and is a function suitable for the P'o - running, attacking, breaking something or the like.

Aspect of the Timid Sparrow

A Kuei-jin in combat uses this Kiai power to startle a foe in hand-to-hand or melee combat, thus gaming a temporary advantage he can exploit.

System: The Kuei-jin designates a target to be startled and the player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Strength + Intimidation (difficulty 7). Only a single target is affected, and the Kuei-jin must be engaged in hand-to-hand or melee combat with him in order to use this power. Every success achieved reduces the Kuei-jin's difficulty to hit the target in this round or the next round by one. This bonus applies only to the Kuei-jin; no other combatant may take advantage of it.

OOONgilai

From the steaming jungles of Malaysian legend comes this power - the shout of fear. Even more potent than Aspect of

the Timid Sparrow, this shout terrifies the person or shen at whom it is targeted, causing him to run away from the Kueijin as fast as he can.

System: The player must spend a point of Yin Chi and roll Stamina + Intimidation (difficulty 6). Every success fills the victim, which must be a single person or being, with overwhelming fear for one turn. This usually means he will make every effort to flee from the vicinity of the Kuei-jin (or anything associated with him) at top speed; however, weaker victims (mortals with a Stamina of 1 or 2) may instead die of heart failure. Kuei-jin usually must roll to resist entering wave soul (see **Kindred of the East**, p. 150) in addition to fleeing.

Victims may spend a point of Willpower to remain near the Kuei-jin after experiencing the Ngilai, but all rolls they make suffer a + 1 difficulty penalty for every two successes the Kuei-jin achieved on his Stamina + Intimidation roll. If a Kuei-jin spends Willpower to do this, he automatically resists entering wave soul.

OOOOThe Song of the Tormented Soul

A Kuei-jin with this power can pour out the torment and anguish that he feels over his undead state of being, inflicting it on his hearer instead. This tends to bring out and overwhelm the victim with his own negative emotions - fear, envy, anger, jealousy, sadness....

This power is not often used by Kuei-jin with high Hun ratings, or those who have, for one reason or another, accepted their unlife as a fate they were meant to experience, or a natural expression of the turning of the Great Cycle. Only those Cathayans who are truly disturbed about their state of existence can use this power to its full effect.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Perception + Expression (difficulty 7). The more successes he achieves, the longer the victim experiences negative emotions, and the deeper those emotions will be:

1 success	1 hour	Shallow; victim suffers + 1 difficulty to all Social Attribute rolls
2 successes	6 hours	Deep; victim suffers + 1 difficulty on all appropriate rolls
3 successes	1 day	Very Deep; victim suffers +2 difficulty on all appropriate rolls
4 successes	3 days	Extremely Deep; victim suffers +3 difficulty on all appropriate rolls
5 successes or more	1 week	Extraordinarily Deep; victim may enter a berserk rage, commit suicide or murder, or engage in other extreme acts. Victim suffers +3 difficulty on all appropriate rolls.

Because it accentuates certain negative emotions, this power generally will not work on wraiths, akuma, Yomi spirits (and many other types of spirits), and demons. "Appropriate rolls" include anything the Storyteller deems to be under the purview of the Kuei-jin's emotional state; a Devil Tiger may suffer a difficulty penalty if acting in another's interest, while a Bone Flower may suffer penalties on hunting rolls.

66666 Greater Ngilai

This power is similar to the Ngilai, but much stronger anyone within hearing distance, friend and foe alike, is affected. **System:** The player spends a point of Yin Chi and rolls Stamina + Intimidation (difficulty 7). Every success fills anyone who hears the shout (the Storyteller should call for Perception rolls, if appropriate) with overwhelming terror for one turn. This usually means they make every effort to flee from the vicinity of the Kuei-jin (or anything associated with him) at top speed; however, weaker victims (mortals with a Stamina of 1 or 2) may instead die of heart failure. Kuei-jin usually must roll to resist entering wave soul in addition to fleeing.

Victims may spend a point of Willpower to remain near the Kuei-jin after experiencing the Greater Ngilai, but all rolls they make suffer a +2 difficulty penalty for every two successes the Kuei-jin achieved on his Stamina + Intimidation roll. If a Kuei-jin spends Willpower to do this, he automatically resists entering wave soul.

At this level, the Kuei-jin's Kiai powers become so great that he can cause physical injury merely by raising his voice.

System: The Kuei-jin spends a point of Yin Chi and rolls Stamina + Occult (difficulty 7). Every success causes the victim to take a number of health levels of aggravated damage equal to the Kuei-jin's Dharma level. Wraiths, spirits, demons, and others who are not entirely corporeal are immune to this power.

At the Storyteller's option, characters who are near the Kueijin or his victim when Cry of Blood is used may suffer hearing damage, from temporary deafness (1-10 turns) to rupturing of the eardrums.

888888888 Tiger's Roar

This power refines a Kuei-jin's control over Kiai even further, allowing him to damage not just flesh, but physical objects - walls, weapons, cars, and even larger things.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Stamina + Occult (difficulty 8). His successes are added to his Kiai; the number derived is then compared to the Feats Of Strength chart (see **Vampire: The Masquerade**, p. 202) to determine what objects his Tiger's Roar is capable of breaking. For example, if the Kuei-jin achieves 3 successes on his roll and has Kiai 7, he can break a steel drum, cement wall, or three-inch lead pipe with his voice, or cause enough damage to the parts of a small car to disable it.

At the Storyteller's option, the value of the Kuei-jin's successes + Kiai may be reduced by 1 or 2 if he is a significant distance (10 yards or more) away from the object he is trying to break.

000000000Cry of the Phantasm

This power is similar to Cry of Blood, but can affect wraiths, spirits and their ilk.

System: The Kuei-jin spends a point of Yin Chi and rolls Stamina + Occult (difficulty 7). Every success causes the victim to take a number of health levels of aggravated damage equal to the Kuei-jin's Dharma level. Wraiths, spirits, demons and others who are not entirely corporeal can be affected by this power.

At this level of power, the Kuei-jin's voice becomes so potent that it can cause ripples and disruptions in the Wall. By properly attuning his voice, the Kuei-jin can, thus, open a small, temporary portal to the Yin World, Yang World, or Yomi World.

System: The Kuei-jin concentrates for three turns and the player spends a point of Willpower and a point of the appropriate Chi (Yang Chi for the Yang World, Yin Chi for the Yin World, or Demon Chi for the Yomi World). He rolls Intelligence + Portents (difficulty 4 + the value of the Wall in the area where the Kuei-jin seeks to open the portal; maximum 9); if successful, a tiny gateway opens into the world of his choice; only he can go through it, and it remains open for only one turn after the turn in which it was opened. This power offers the Kuei-jin no protection against the forces that will afflict him in those worlds, but he can use it to forge a pathway back to the Middle Kingdom.

CHINTAI DISCIPLINES

At the higher levels of mastery, Kuei-jin who are students of the Shintai ("god body") powers are able to demonstrate great control over the focusing of Chi through their bodies, turning them, in the words of one scholar, into "great lenses through which the power of Chi is magnified a thousandfold." While that may be an exaggeration, the fact remains that a Kuei-jin with great Shintai abilities is often able to use powers much, much greater than those of lesser practitioners.

Moreover, those who have studied the Shintai Disciplines closely have learned to extend their power beyond the mere body into the world around the body. These Kuei-jin have learned how to employ their Chi to manipulate the very elements around them. This allows them to develop new Shintai Disciplines, such as Beast Shintai, Smoke Shintai, and Storm Shintai, which do not correspond with any degree of precision to the five classical Chinese elements. However, these newer Disciplines are both difficult to master and infrequently practiced and, thus, have not reached the levels of power displayed by the more common Disciplines. It remains to be seen whether the exigencies of the Fifth Age will force the development of such greater abilities, though many suspect these "lesser" Shintai to be imperfect, and limited only to the Fifth Level of mastery.

KINDRED OF THE EAST COMPANION

BLOOD CHINTAI

COCOCOCO Blade

Like the feared Bloodlash, this power allows the Kuei-jin to create a weapon out of his own blood - in this case, a dagger or sword. The weapon may have any appearance the Kueijin desires: It can resemble the straight-double edged blades so favored by Westerners, the curved dam dao saber of China or katana of Japan, the butterfly swords or hook swords of kung fu, or anything else the Kuei-jin can conceive of that resembles a blade. Some Cathayans have even refined this power to create blades of a lethally artistic shape - swords shaped like flames or dragons, or daggers that resemble demon's claws, for example.

System: The player spends a point of Yin Chi or Yang Chi, then slits his wrist or opens some other wound on his body (or, perhaps, takes advantage of an existing wound). The blood he releases coagulates into a sword or dagger, as he desires; it lasts for one scene (or longer, at the Storyteller's discretion). The weapon can be used to strike at targets for Strength + 3 aggravated damage.

OOOOOOOOOBlood of the Scorpion

The Assamites of the Kin-jin are not the only ones who can spit blood; some powerful Kuei-jin can, too. Even worse, their blood is poisoned with Yin energy, making it deadly to the very touch. Using this power is a particular delight for Kuei-jin who follow the Song of the Shadow or Howl of the Devil-Tiger Dharmas, who appreciate not only its lethality, but its horrific qualities as well.

System: The player spends a point of Yin Chi to "poison" a quantity of the Kuei-jin's blood with life-sapping Yin energy, who then spits it at his target. He can spit the blood up to one yard per point of permanent Yin Chi that he possesses. He rolls Dexterity + Firearms or Athletics, whichever is higher (difficulty 6), to hit his target; if successful, the Yin-poisoned blood does a number of dice of aggravated damage equal to the character's permanent Yin Chi +2. The victim does not suffer this damage if the poisoned blood cannot touch him. For example, if he is wearing a sealed environmental suit or is completely swathed in thick furs. (Ordinary clothes normally will not suffice to protect him, however.) Wraiths, mummies, and any targets with higher permanent Yin Chi ratings than the Kuei-jin are immune to this power.

Corruption of the Blood

This is one of the most feared Kuei-jin powers - the ability to turn another Kuei-jin's, or Kin-jin's, own blood against him. With the merest touch, a Kuei-jin who knows this ability can cause the victim's blood to become as poison to him, or to boil with Yang energy. Either way, the typical result is a quick, but extremely painful, death. **System:** The Kuei-jin must touch the victim (skin-to-skin contact is not required, however) while the player must spend a point of Yang Chi and roll Manipulation + Medicine (difficulty 7). Each success means that the victim takes one die of aggravated damage from boiling and corrupted blood. Furthermore, this blood is rendered poisonous and useless, or burned away. Kin-jin lose a blood point for each success. The roiling Yang energy similarly drains the powers of other creatures, sapping their vitality (Storyteller's discretion).

000000000000000 Leeching

An extension of Corruption of the Blood, this power allows a Kuei-jin to steal blood (or, more accurately, Chi) from another being, be he mortal or shen. The Kuei-jin simply has to touch the victim, and the victim's blood bursts out of every pore, injuring or killing him while simultaneously granting the Kuei-jin more Chi to use. Particularly sadistic Kuei-jin often enjoy "feeding" by means of this power. Using Blood Leeching on another Kuei-jin is often regarded as a gross insult to his wu



or court, one that must be repaid in kind, or by declaring the offender akuma.

System: Like Corruption of the Blood, except that the Kueijin gains one point of temporary Yang Chi or Yin Chi (his choice) for every health level of damage the victim takes. The Kuei-jin stealing Chi in this manner may not raise his Chi reservoirs past their permanent levels with this power, however.

BONE CHINTAI

The higher levels of the Bone Shintai art concentrate on even more bizarre and freakish mutative powers. Not all of them alter the Kuei-jin's appearance, but most alter his body in some way. Even more fearsome, some of them allow the Kuei-jin to work his body-shaping magic upon others, whether they agree to it or not.

OOOOOOIkehone

Its name is a whimsical reference to the Japanese art of flower arrangement, this is the ability to rearrange a victim's flesh and bones, turning him into a distorted version of himself. While this is usually done as a form of attack, some Kuei-jin turn this power on themselves (to become stronger and tougher) or on their followers (to create powerful servants or warriors). In the more debased courts, some Kuei-jin specialize in using Ikehone as an art form; captives' bones and flesh are transformed into "artistically pleasing" shapes to amuse other Cathayans before the victim is consumed.

System: The Kuei-jin touches the victim as the player spends two points of Yin Chi and rolls Manipulation + Crafts (difficulty 6). If successful, the Kuei-jin may alter the subject's Attributes by up to six points. Thus, he could subtract two dots from three Attributes, increase one Attribute by two dots and one by four, and so forth. No Attribute may be reduced below 1 or increased above 5. These changes are accompanied by appropriate physical changes as well: A victim whose Appearance is decreased becomes a twisted, wretched wreck; one whose Strength or Stamina is increased becomes huge and impossibly muscular; one whose Dexterity is decreased becomes wizened and palsied.

If the power is used as an attack, Attributes are typically decreased. If used on the Kuei-jin himself or one of his allies or servants, Attributes are increased. The changes last for one scene, plus one hour per additional point of Yin Chi expended. Only Physical Attributes and Appearance may be manipulated in this fashion.

Ikehone has no effect on beings that lack skeletons.

OOOOOOOOSkeletal Sculpting

A refined form of Ikehone, and not dissimilar to the ancient Kin-j in Discipline called Vicissitude, this power allows a Kueijin to affect another character's bones without similarly affecting the attached flesh-except, perhaps, to rend and tear it. Like Ikehone, Skeletal Sculpting is sometimes regarded as a form of art by more degenerate Kuei-jin. It is also often used as a form of torture.

System: The Kuei-jin touches the victim and the player spends a point of Yin Chi and rolls Manipulation + Crafts (difficulty 7). For each success, he does one health level of aggravated damage to the victim as his bones tear out of their sockets, turn at right angles to themselves, and warp and rip their way through his body. Any extra health levels gained through various powers, Merits, etc. are ignored for



purposes of Skeletal Sculpting.

Alternately, instead of doing damage, the Kuei-jin may choose to inflict other debilities on the victim, as follows:

1 success Arthritis: The victim's bones and joints become extremely painful, even when not being moved. The victim is at -2 Dexterity, though he can overcome this effect for one scene by spending a point of Willpower.

2 successes Severe Arthritis: double the penalties and Willpower cost listed above.

3 successes Brittle Bones: The character's bones be-come extremely frail. Every hit he suffers that does physical damage breaks at least one, causing one point of lethal damage per broken bone. Furthermore, every time the character has to make a roll using any Physical Attribute, he must roll Stamina (difficulty 8) or break one of the bones involved in the activity.

4 successes Blood Rot: The Kuei-jin inflicts his victim with an extremely potent, rapid-acting form of blood infirmity. The victim spends a week in intense pain before dying, losing one point from each Physical Attribute per day until reaching zero. Conventional medicine offers no cure for this affliction; advanced Disciplines, such as Adjust The True Balance, may or may not cure Blood Rot, at the Storyteller's discretion.

Skeletal Sculpting has no effect on beings that lack skeletons.

000000000Corpse Awakening

Corpse Awakening is a form of Kuei-jin necromancy. It allows a Cathayan to invest a corpse with Chi (in a crude fashion), thus creating a sort of zombie that will follow his orders as best it can. "Living dead" created by Corpse Awakening are neither powerful nor intelligent (except in rare cases), but are usually suitable servants for at least some tasks.

System: The Kuei-jin must first obtain a corpse, which he takes to a graveyard at midnight. There he lays the corpse on a specially prepared reed mat. (Creating this mat requires an appropriate Dexterity + Crafts test by the Kuei-jin or the person hired to make it for him.) The Kuei-jin performs an elaborate ceremony, involving incense, candles, and written and spoken prayers. During this ceremony, the Kuei-jin infuses the corpse with a minimum of 2 Yin Chi and 2 Yang Chi, and the player rolls Intelligence + Rituals (difficulty 7). After the ceremony, the corpse is wrapped in the mat and buried for eight nights. If the ceremony was successful, at the end of the eighth day, the corpse comes to "life" and digs itself free; its creator had best be there to take charge of it, lest it wander away on its own.

The corpse, now known as a *sizou*, possesses 1 dot in each Attribute, plus an additional dot in its Physical and Mental

Attributes for every additional Yin Chi and Yang Chi that the Kuei-jin "gave" it during the ceremony. (Thus, if the Kuei-jin invested 3 Yin Chi and 3 Yang Chi in his potential creation, the *sizou* would have 2 dots in all Physical and Mental Attributes, and 1 dot in all Social Attributes.) A *sizou*'s Social Attributes can never be increased beyond 1 dot, and its Mental Attributes cannot be increased beyond 3 dots, no matter how much additional Chi is spent. A *sizou* has a normal health level track.

A sizou is under its creator's command, and will do whatever it is told to the best of its intelligence and ability However, it loses one health level per night unless fed an additional point of Yin Chi and Yang Chi If its health level ever drops to Incapacitated for any reason, it crumbles to dust.

0000000000 Form of Infernal Favor

This power, like the lesser power Ch'ing Shih, floods the Kuei-jin's body with Yin energies, transforming it into a horror that makes even the Ch'ing Shih pale in comparison. Although the changes vary from manifestation to manifestation and from Kuei-jin to Kuei-jin, typically the character becomes much larger (both taller and broader). His teeth and nails distend into black fangs and claws that are coated with a slimy poison, his skin takes on terrifying hues (typically red or black), spikes and tentacles sprout from his body, and so forth.

System: Transforming into the infernal form requires no roll, but does take eight turns and requires the expenditure of four points of Yin and/or Demon Chi The effects last for one scene (and possibly longer, at the Storyteller's discretion). While in Infernal Form, the character may choose any five Demon Shintai Characteristics (See this book, p 70, and Kindred of the East, p 109) to represent his demonic body and its powers. In addition, all of the character's Physical Attributes increase by two. Otherwise, the effects are identical to Ch'ing Shih (See Kindred of the East, pp 112-113).

JADE CHINTAI

The greater adepts of the Jade Shintai, sometimes known as *wangyu* ("Kings of Jade"), turn their powers in two directions. The first is a greater mastery of the element of Earth. *Wangyu* learn how to move through and manipulate the very stones themselves to do their bidding. Second, they become so aware of the flow of ambient Chi that they can weave it and work with it to an even greater degree than before.

COOOOOOStone Fish

At this level of power, a Jade Shintai practitioner learns to become one with the earth - literally. He can sink into it as effortlessly as a man walks into a pool of water. What's more, he can actually "swim" through the soil itself, which provides an easy way to escape from - or ambush - attackers. **System:** Stone Fish is similar to Placate the Earth Dragon, but allows the character to move through the earth itself, provided it is relatively loose. He may travel through ordinary soil clay, or mud, but not through rock or densely packed earth (Storyteller's discretion as to when soil is too hard for the character to move through). Moving through the soil costs one point of Yang Chi per turn. If the Kuei-jin decides to start moving after he has sunk into the earth via Placate the Earth Dragon, he still must spend the point of Yang Chi.

While moving through the earth, the Kuei-jin moves at the rate of four yards per turn - sort of like a person trying to walk through a snowdrift. He can see in front of himself, but only for abut 10 yards, and dimly, as if he were looking through smoke or fog. If he encounters obstacles he cannot move through - cement foundations, stones, large pipes, and the like-he must find π way to go around them or emerge from the earth to walk upon it instead.

If the character chooses to ambush a target by springing up from the earth beneath him, he receives the usual bonuses for a surprise, rear attack.

OOOOOOOOOBlade of Stone

This power is used to create weapons of stone - not just blades, but any sort of melee weapon. Most vampires have their favorites, while many prefer katanas or other swords, larger ones often favor tetsubo or other crushing weapons, and more than one vampire has made a name for himself with his stone staff.

System: The Kuei-jin must touch a quantity of stone (at least one cubic foot). This stone need not be m natural form, the stone walls of a building or a tombstone would be sufficient, for example. The player then rolls Manipulation + Crafts (difficulty 8), success indicates that he has reshaped the stone he is touching into the weapon of his choice. (Note that taking the stone away from a wall or large rock may cause instability or collapse, though this is not the power's primary purpose, the Storyteller should decide whether the damage to the stone is sufficient to cause any further events.) The stone weapon may be used in melee combat, it does a number of dice of aggravated damage equal to the normal damage for a weapon of its type, plus two.

000000000 Taste of Jade

A wangyu with this power may attempt to attune a piece of ordinary jade to Chi energies, turning it into a piece of true jade for a time. Kuei-jin who have mastered this power are frequently adorned with jade from head to toe, and each piece of green stone is a focus for powerful Chi energies that they can call upon with only a thought.

System: The Kuei-jin concentrates for an hour as the player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Perception + Meditation (difficulty 9). If successful, the Kuei-jin has attuned the jade, turning it into a piece of true jade for a number of nights

equal to the number of successes rolled. This true jade functions like a Level Two Jade Talisman (See Kindred of the East, pp 86-87.) Like a Jade Talisman, its creator may keep it, give it to another, use it as a gambling stake, lose it to thieves, etc. However, if anyone using the Chi from a Taste of Jade piece of true jade botches the roll involved with using the Chi, the piece of jade explodes, doing two dice of lethal damage to the person using it.

0000000000Augment

The ultimate power of the wangyu is not only being able to attune himself to the ambient Chi in an area, but actually to improve it and increase its power. Because of this power, only a fool or a desperate man attacks a Jade Shintai master while he is standing in a dragon nest.

System: The Kuei-iin must spend three turns in concentration and the player must spend two points of Willpower to activate this ability. For the next eight minutes, whenever the Kuei-jin absorbs ambient Chi from the world around him (see Kindred of the East, pp 138-39), he may augment the Chi he absorbs with one extra point of "phantom" Chi of the same type for every point absorbed. Thus, if a Kuei-jin using Augment absorbs four Yin Chi, he also gains four "phantom" Yin Chi. These phantom points of Chi may be spent or used in the same ways normal Chi can. They are always spent before any normal Chi that the character currently possesses. If not used by the end of the phantom Chi points eight-minute period, dissipate automatically.

FLESH CHINTAI

Up until this level of mastery of Flesh Shintai is reached, Kuei-jin, even the penangallans, are generally limited to changing their bodies into shapes of roughly the same size and mass as their "true" form. Now they can transcend that restriction. With Body of the Mouse, they not only can alter their shape, they can become smaller in the process. Many Kuei-jin find this power extremely useful for sneaking into forbidden areas, spying on their rivals, and so forth.

System: The player spends a point of Yang Chi and rolls Stamina + Athletics (difficulty 7). For every success, the Kueijin may reduce his size by half, to a maximum of one inch tall. (Thus, two successes means the Kuei-jin is one-fourth normal height.) The Kuei-jin may also change shape, just like the power Ten Thousand Forms (**Kindred of the East**, p. 117).

This power makes the Kuei-jin's entire body flexible, as if it were made out of rubber. He is able to stretch his limbs or



torso, bend them at impossible angles, squeeze through small spaces, and resist most forms of physical damage.

System: The player spends two points of Yang Chi; no roll is required, and the Kuei-jin remains in Body of the Serpent form until he chooses to return to normal form or the next dawn occurs. While in Serpent form, the Kuei-jin may stretch his limbs and/or body up to one foot per point of permanent Yang Chi that he possesses. Unlike Long Neck, the skin stretches along with bones and muscles. While he is stretching, his body and bones have the consistency of firm rubber. The Kuei-jin can, for example, bend in ways that a body is not supposed to bend. He can fit through spaces as narrow as three inches wide, though the smaller the space, the longer it takes him to ooze through; his body is not fluid

enough simply to "pour" through. While using Body of the Serpent, the Kuei-jin is considered to have three points of armor against all physical attacks such as punches, kicks, knives, and bullets; this armor does not apply against damage such as fire or Discipline powers.

©©©©©©©©Bloat

Despite its distasteful (to some) name, this power is actually a favorite for many Flesh Shintai masters. It allows them to absorb enormous amounts of Yang Chi from the surrounding area, which causes them to grow and expand their bodies, thus increasing their combat abilities.

System: The Kuei-jin concentrates for a turn and the player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Stamina + Athletics (difficulty 7). He gains +1 Strength and +1 Stamina for every success rolled, with a minimum of +3 to each Attribute; this effect lasts until the Kuei-jin chooses to return to normal size, or the next dawn occurs. The Kuei-jin's Appearance decreases by one point for every point of Strength and Stamina he gains (to π minimum of 1). Although π Kuei-jin using Bloat becomes grossly obese as well as extremely tall, while under the effect of this power he does not suffer any reduction to his Dexterity or ability to move. However, his size may prevent him from walking through normal doorways (unless he is willing to damage them), fitting into cars and other vehicles, riding horses, and similar activities.

Because this Discipline depends on ambient Yang Chi, it may not work well, or at all, in areas that are extremely Yang-Chi deficient. If, in the Storyteller's estimation, the area has little Yang Chi, the difficulty of the roll should increase by one or two. If there is no (or almost no) Yang Chi available, it cannot be used at all. Under no circumstances can this power be used in the Yin World.

000000000000Unchaining the Form

This level of Flesh Shintai mastery allows a Kuei-jin to change his form with little regard for his mass. He can assume any shape he wishes, of any size or mass, from a half-inch tall and about a quarter kilogram, to hundreds of feet tall or wide and several tons. The most disgusting or terrifying forms imaginable can be assumed with this power.

System: The Kuei-jin concentrates for a turn while the player spends a point of Willpower and two points of Yang CbI, and rolls Perception + Athletics (difficulty 6). If successful, he can change his shape as described above. This change does not occur instantly; it takes a few seconds to add or subtract each foot of height or breadth. Thus, while a Kuei-jin can make himself as large as a skyscraper with this power, should he for some reason wish to do so, it will take him a long time. While changing shape in this way, the Kuei-jin cannot move more than a foot or two, thus, rendering him vulnerable to attack or discovery.

If the character wishes to add strange or unusual features to his body, he may choose them from the list of Demon Shintai Characteristics, or with the Storyteller's approval, make up his own features (and related effects).

GHOST-FLAME CHINTAI

At these levels of mastery, Ghost-Flame practitioners, sometimes called hiken ("Blades of Fire") may alter the color of their ghost-flames as they see fit. Thus, bright Yang flame may be made to resemble the icy-cool Yin flame, or the Kueijin can even make the flames his own, distinctive, color.

Ghost-flame springs from the Kuei-jin's hands, forming a sword-like fiery weapon that damages both body and soul.

System: The player spends a point of Chi (Yang Chi for a Yang-flame sword, Yin Chi for a Yin weapon). This is sufficient to create the Goblin Sword; no roll is required. The sword can be of any shape or size, as the Kuei-jin desires, so long as it is sword-like. Either type of sword is used as a melee weapon, but the Kuei-jin may roll an extra two dice when attempting to hit his target.

A Yang-flame sword does Strength + 4 dice of aggravated damage. Even if the victim is somehow able to soak or heal the damage, the touch of the sword leaves burn scars on his body forever. Furthermore, each hit automatically "burns up" a point of the victim's temporary Yang Chi, and if he is a Kuei-jin, he must immediately roll to resist entering fire soul.

A Yin-flame sword twists a Kuei-jin's enlightenment against him by forcing on him the awareness that he is dead and cursed. The victim takes one die of aggravated damage per Dharma level he has attained. In addition, the touch of the Yin sword automatically "burns up" a point of the victim's temporary Yin Chi, and if he is a Kuei-jin, he must immediately roll to resist entering wave soul.

Either type of Goblin Sword can affect wraiths, spirits, and other noncorporeal beings. A Yang sword damages such beings, but does not burn up any additional energy. A Yin sword does no damage to such beings, but burns up one die worth of points of the equivalent of Yin energy (e.g., Pathos).

000000000Goblin Portal

With this power, a Kuei-jin can "ride the paths of flame" just like other Cathayans can travel via dragon lines.

System: For this power to be used, a flame that is at least one-foot wide or deep must be available. (The Kuei-jin may set this fire himself if necessary.) The Kuei-jin concentrates for a turn, spends a point of Chi (either type), rolls Perception + Ghost-Flame Shintai (difficulty equal to the local Wall), and then steps into the flame. He may then "teleport" to any other flame (of similar size) within range.

1 success	2,500 feet
2 successes	1 mile
3 successes	10 miles
4 successes	100 miles
5 o more successes	500 miles

Once a Kuei-jin steps into the first flame, he can automatically sense all flames within his range large enough for him to step out of, though he only knows their general size and general location; he cannot see out of them or know exactly where they are until he chooses to use them. However, he knows the exact location and size of any fire set by himself or any member of his wu.

A Kuei-jin with this power can call ghost-flame spirits from either the Yang or Yin World, as he chooses. The flame-spirit serves him faithfully for a short time, then returns to its home.

System: The Kuei-jin concentrates for three turns as the player spends a point of Chi of the appropriate type, and rolls Intelligence + Rituals (difficulty equal to the Wall in the area where the summoning takes place). If he is successful, the flame-spirit appears, and performs one service or stay for one hour; for each additional success, it performs another service or stay in the Middle Kingdom for another hour. Although the flame-spirit serves the Kuei-jin loyally, it may not agree to do foolish or suicidal tasks; it keeps its own dignity and safety well in mind. If necessary, the Kuei-jin must roll Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty 7) to persuade the spirit to do as he wishes.

The typical flame-spirit is Wilpower 6, Rage (P'o) 6, Gnosis (Hun) 6, Yang (or Yin) 6, and Chi 20; its usial Charms include Armor, Blast Flame, Create Fires, Dragon Sight, and Materialize.

Ghost-Flame masters say that within each of us, there lies a flame. This power allows them to stoke that flame to the point where the victim is immolated.

System: The player spends a point of Chi (of the appropriate type) and rolls Dexterity + Occult (difficulty 7). If successful, the victim bursts into flames and takes one die of aggravated damage for each point of permanent Yang Chi or Yin Chi he possesses (depending upon what type of Chi the Kuei-jin spent to activate the power). This damage cannot be soaked.



The Kuei-jin may spend another point of Chi to keep these flames burning for another round if he so desires, until he runs out of or the victim is consumed.

BEAST CHINTAI

This Shintai Discipline calls upon the power of a Kuei-jin's P'o to allow him to dominate, control or make use of the beasts of the field. At higher levels, Beast Shintai actually provides the character with a link to a sort of "totem spirit" that grants him special powers similar to those of other shen.

Chi Attunement: Strenght.

Cower Before the Beast

By staring the into the an animal's eyes and releasing his P'o for the briefest of sounds, the Koei-jin is able to intimidate even a the fiercest animals, forcing them to calm or flee in fear.

System: The Koei-jin must make eye contact with the target animal. The player must spend a point of Willpower and roll Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty equal to the animal Willpower, which is usually 5 or less). Success indicates that the beast is filled with fear. Occasionally, this prompts fierce creatures to attack in blind panic, but it is more likely that the target will cower or run away at top speed.

Animal Spy

With this power, the Kuei-jin can "possess" an animal, forcing it to act as his spy for a brief time.

System: This power is similar to the Kin-jin Animalism power, Subsume the Spirit (Vampire: The Masquerade, p. 148), but it only allows a Kuei-jin to force the animal to act as his spy. The Kuei-jin must stare into the animal's eyes for a turn while concentrating, spend a point of Willpower, and roll Manipulation + Animal Ken (difficulty 6). Success means that the Kuei-jin has temporarily linked his spirit with that of the animal. Although his body must remain unconscious and motionless during this time, he can force the animal to go where he wills and can use its senses. Thus, it makes an excellent spy, since few people would suspect an innocent songbird or cat of being an enemy agent.

This power requires that the animal have a relatively highorder brain; it will not work on insects, crustaceans, many types offish, and similar creatures. Mammals and birds have consistently proven to be the best subjects for Animal Spy.

Conjuring the Animal Kami

A Kuei-jin with this power has the ability to send out a callnot a vocal call, but a sort of mental compulsion - that summons to him a specific type of animal. The character may specify a desired species (tigers, birds-of-paradise, rhinos) or a more specific subject (Siberian tigers, alpha-male wolves). The animals summoned only come if they are within a twomile radius of the Kuei-jin's location when he makes the call and if they are physically able to do so. This power does not grant control over animals, but those summoned by the call

- 1 success One animal responds.
- 2 successes One guarter of the animals who hear the call respond.
- 3 successes Half of the animals respond.
- 4 successes Most of the animals respond.
- 5 o more successes All of the animals respond.
- **COOOS** Sway the Beast

Considered by some Kuei-jin to be an extension of Cower Before the Beast, this power allows a Cathayan to infuse a tiny spark of his will into the mind of an animal, forcing that animal to do his bidding. The animal can be forced to do anything, including suicidal actions; the Kuei-jin's control overrides its normal fear and self-protection instincts.

System: The player must spend a point of Willpower and roll Manipulation + Intimidation (difficulty equal to the animal's Willpower, which is usually 5 or less); the Kuet-jin must make eye contact with the target animal. Success indicates that the beast is brought under the Kuei-jin's control for the duration of the scene. The player may spend additional points of Willpower to extend this control - one point of Willpower for each additional hour, but in any event no longer than the next dawn. Sway The Beast does not give the Kuei-jin the power to sense what his servant perceives or experiences; that requires him to use Animal Spy as well. generally seem predisposed toward the Kuei-jin, and may fight for him if he appears to be in trouble.

System: The player rolls Charisma + Animal Ken (difficulty 6); the number of successes achieved indicates how many animals heed the character's call:

COCOCOUnleash the Beast Spirit

This power creates such a great connection between the Kuei-jin and nature that the Kuei-jin's own animal spirit manifests itself in physical form. The Kuei-jin undergoes changes similar to those experienced by shapeshifters, becoming a sort of half-man, half-animal, with appropriate abilities.

System: The player must choose a "totem animal" for his character as soon as the character is able to use this power; the character's totem can never be changed. To manifest his totem powers, the Kuei-jin must concentrate for three turns and the player must spend a point of Willpower. The Kuei-jin then changes into the form described above, which is similar to the legendary wolf-man forms of the hengeyokai. The character receives 6 dots that he can use to increase his Attributes, as appropriate, to reflect this form. Additionally, his senses sharpen to reflect his animalistic nature, and at the Storyteller's discretion he may gain other abilities based on his new form - for example, a Turtle totem might gain points of armor, a Shark totem improved swimming abilities and sharp teeth, and a Tiger totem claws. Use the Demon Shintai Characteristics as guidelines for the level of power these changes should have.

Sample Beast Spi			
	Carp	+1 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +3 Stamina; gills	
	Crane	+3 Dexterity, +2 Stamina, + 1 Appearance; wings	
	Fox	+1 Strength, +3 Dexterity, + 1 Stamina, +1 Perception; claws and teeth	
	Squid	+3 Strength, +1 Dexterity, +2 Stamina; tentacles	
	Tiger	+2 Strength, +2 Dexterity, +2 Stamina; claws and teeth	

SMOKE SHINTAI

The roiling smokes of the volcanoes of the Ring of Fire, the hazy smoke of New Year's firecrackers on the streets of Shanghai, the cordite-laced smoke that lingers in the wake of a Triad gunfight: These are the essence of the Smoke Shintai.

The Kuei-jin use the disciplines of the Smoke Shintai to misdirect, conceal and obfuscate. A skilled practitioner of Smoke Shintai can use even the tiniest amount of smoke to conceal himself, and can tell lies so convincing that even the most jaded cynic believes him. At higher levels of power, Smoke Shintai provides some control over actual fire.

Chi Attunement: Dexterity.

Smoke Without Fire

The name of this power is misleading to many younger Kueijin, since it does not literally allow a Cathayan to create smoke in the absence of fire. What it provides is the power to enhance the volume and thickness of the smoke created by a fire. With enough control, the smoke from a single cigarette becomes enough to conceal many men.

System: This power works only in the presence of a flame that gives off smoke. The player spends a point of Yang Chi and rolls Manipulation + Stealth (difficulty 6). Every success doubles the volume and thickness of the smoke being created (and, thus, any negative modifiers to Perception for attempting to see through the smoke), without increasing the size of the flame or consuming any additional fuel.

Words of Smoke

A Kuei-jin employing this power becomes one of the world's most consummate liars. Anything he says, no matter how outlandish, tends to seem believable and sincere.

System: The player spends a point of Yang Chi. For the duration of the scene, he receives two extra dice for all Subterfuge and Fast-Talk rolls he makes that involve telling lies (or just exaggerating the facts).

OB The Hampering Smoke of Chou Zheng

This power gives a Kuei-jin the ability to "cast smoke" into the eyes of another, temporarily blinding him.

System: The player spends a point of Yang Chi and rolls Dexterity + Survival (difficulty 6). The victim, who must be within 10 yards of the Kuei-jin when the power is used, will be blinded for one turn for every success achieved. While the victim is blind, his Dexterity and Perception are reduced to 0 for purposes of trying to hit other characters in combat or attempting to dodge their attacks. The blind character may be able to use other skills or supernatural powers of his own to compensate for his blindness, however.

COCOO Wisp Mayd

Among the most arcane of the Smoke Shintai powers is this one, which allows a Kuei-jin to weave subtle panoramas and images out of simple smoke. In the hands of a skilled practitioner, the smoke from even a small fire can be formed into the shape of men, animals, and other objects that are virtually indistinguishable from the real thing - at least to the naked eye.

System: A Kuei-jin must spend a turn concentrating and the player spends a point of Yang Chi and rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficult 7) to form his smoke illusions. Every success achieved imposes a +1 difficulty on all rolls to detect that the illusions arc unreal. However, this only applies to attempts to see through the illusion; to the sense of touch, they are obviously insubstantial and unreal. The Kuei-jin must have a sufficient volume of smoke to work with in order to form these illusions; small amounts of smoke can be used only to create small objects.

00000Volcano's Fist

This power allows a Kuei-jin to concentrate the fires of the Pacific volcances into one of his hands. The hand becomes so hot that his merest touch can set flammable objects on fire, and his punches and strikes cause grievous damage.

System: The player spends a point of Yang Chi, causing one of the Kuei-jin's hands to glow red-hot, as if it were made out of lava. Flammable objects catch fire when he touches them; consider his touch as doing 3 dice of fire damage. If he strikes or punches another character with his burning hand, he does his normal damage for that attack, plus three dice, and all of the damage is considered to be aggravated. Volcano's Fist remains active for an entire scene, or until the Kuei-jin voluntarily turns it off.

STORM SHINTAI

This Shintai Discipline reflects the Cathayans' links to the storms of the Pacific and Indian oceans. Most of the Middle Kingdom is subject to terrible storms, even monsoons, during the course of every year. Some Kuei-jin, particularly those with strong P'os, revel in this extreme weather. Thus, they have learned to invoke the powers of the storm by attuning their Chi energies to the flows of weather.

Chi Attunement: Stamina

Conjure the Duke of Wind

This power allows a Kuei-jin to raise fierce stormwinds. These can be used to make a sailboat travel more quickly, to
interfere with the flight of birds or Cathayans using certain Disciplines, and so forth.

System: The Kuei-jin's player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Stamina + Portents (difficulty 6). The Cathayan can generate a wind that moves at 10 miles per hour for every success achieved; thus, for five successes he creates a 50 mph wind. Every five miles per hour worth of wind subtracts 1 mile per hour of flight movement that flying or sailing characters can make, or adds a similar amount to their speed if used to push them in their chosen direction. The Storyteller is free to create other effects for extremely strong winds (70 miles per hour or more); they can blow over stationary objects (or people), cause damage to structures, and wreak havoc over wide areas. The Kuei-jin may alter the direction the wind blows every turn if he so desires, but the wind always emanates directly from him.

Thunderbolt's Kiss

Many men have dreamed of holding the lightning in their hands, but the Kuei-jin can actually do it. When a Cathayan uses this power, his very touch inflicts the power of the thunderbolt on his foes. A Kuei-jin using this power may hold the lightning quietly and invisibly, waiting to be released, or may cause it to arc and thunder about his hands and body.

System: The Kuei-jin's player spends a point of Yang Chi. The energies summoned are discharged when the Kuei-jin physically strikes an opponent. The player rolls damage dice equal to the Kuei-jin's permanent Yang Chi rating when a victim is struck with this power; the damage is considered lethal. If the Kuei-jin attacks and misses, the power remains unused. Other characters may touch (hit, tackle, you name it) the Kuei-jin without suffering this effect; Thunderbolt's Kiss only affects those whom the Kuei-jin consciously touches of his own volition.

O Contended C

This power is similar to Thunderbolt's Kiss, but the Kuei-jin need not touch his victim - he can actually "cast" the lightning bolt at targets a short distance away from him. Depending upon the character's desires, he may appear to throw the lightning bolt at his foes, or it may simply jump from his hand (or eyes) and strike them.

System: The player spends a point of Yang Chi. He must roll Dexterity + Firearms (difficulty 6) to hit his target. If the bolt hits, it does a number of dice of lethal damage equal to the throwing Kuei-jin's permanent Yang Chi. The lightning bolt has a range equal to permanent Yang Chi + Storm Shintai, in yards.

Cloud Chariot

This power creates extremely strong, localized winds that actually lift the Kuei-jin and fly him wherever he wishes to go.

System: The Kuei-jin spends a point of Willpower and rolls Stamina + Meditation (difficulty 7). He can fly at a rate of 20 miles per hour, plus five miles per hour for every success achieved on the roll. This power cannot be used on other characters, only on the Kuei-jin himself.

Comparison of the Oragons

This most awesome of Storm Shintai powers allows a Kueijin to channel Chi through his body and into the world around him to affect the local weather patterns. Depending upon the amount of power he can muster, he can even cause terrible storms.

System: The Kuei-jin spends a point of Yang Chi and rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 6). The extent of his affect upon the local weather depends upon the number of successes achieved; successes are split up as desired to garner area and effect, as shown:

Successes	Area	Effect
1 success	1 mile radius	Trivial changes (raise/lower temperature up to ten degrees, create/ disperse a few clouds)
2 successes	2 mile radius	Minor changes (create/disperse ram showers or light snow)
3 successes	4 mile radius	Major changes (create/disperse a powerful thunderstorm or minor blizzard)
4 successes	8 mile radius	Extreme changes (create/disperse a mild hurricane or tornado or major blizzard)
5 or more	16 mile radius	Very extreme changes successes (create/disperse a monsoon- or typhoon-like storm)

The Kuei-jin may "buy" additional successes by expending further Yang Chi, at the rate of two Yang Chi per automatic success.

It takes time for these changes to occur - about a half-hour per success. The Kuei-jin must concentrate during this time.

Once the changes have been made, they dissipate naturally, which may take hours or days.

For more information on the climate and weather in some parts of the Middle Kingdom, refer to **World of Darkness: Hong Kong**, p. 32.

SOUL ARTS

The higher powers among the Soul Arts Disciplines focus on the very fundaments of Kuei-jin existence - the nature and uses of Chi and P'o, interpreting and influencing joss, and the harmony of a Kuei-jin and the greater reality in which he exists.

CULTIVATION

Kuei-jin masters of Cultivation are thought to possess more insight into the nature of the P'o than any other Cathayans. Certainly they have displayed the power to manipulate their own (and more frighteningly, others') bestial natures when the need arises.

COCOOOOOOOOCation of Madness

This power forces another Kuei-jin to give in to his P'o Nature for just a short while - the briefest of moments, perhaps, but always long enough to warp the victim's mind.

System: The Kuei-jin spends a point of Demon Chi, touches the victim, and the player rolls Manipulation + Expression (difficulty 7). If he is successful, the victim immediately plunges into shadow soul. The victim may roll his Hun to resist, but the difficulty of the roll is equal to his P'o plus the number of successes achieved on the roll. If he fails to resist, he succumbs to shadow soul until such time as the Storyteller sees fit to grant him another Hun roll. (This should be at least an hour later, if not longer.) Once he recovers, the victim may still suffer from a Derangement - often a particularly debilitating or horrifying one - at the Storyteller's discretion, depending upon what sorts of things he did while under the influence of the shadow soul. (See Kindred of the East, p. 15 1 for more on shadow soul, and Vampire: The Masquerade, pp. 222-224, regarding Derangements.)

88888888 Begradation

Reserved only for a Kuei-jin's most hated enemies and rivals, Degradation forces another Cathayan to act as if he had given in to his shadow soul. Even worse, although he is unable to stop himself from performing these actions, the victim still retains full awareness of what he is doing. Many Kuei-jin regard the use of this power as a terrible sin and grounds for declaring the offender akuma.

System: The Kuei-jin spends a point of Demon Chi, touches the victim, and rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty 8). If successful, he forces the victim to act as if he were under the influence of his shadow soul, even though he is not - the victim remains fully in charge of his faculties, he simply cannot stop himself from committing acts his P'o Nature would delight in. This state lasts for eight hours per success. At the end of this period, the victim regains full control of himself, but now suffers from a permanent Derangement.

OOOOOOOOOOStrengthening the Demon

As with Degradation, calling on this power is often considered to be the sign of an utter surrender to evil and madness, the ultimate form of sin for a Kuei-jin (if such concepts apply to Kuei-jin at all). When it is used, the Kuei-jin artificially "stokes" the soulfires of his P'o so that he can access more Demon Chi. In essence, he briefly cultivates the darkness within himself, the better to take advantage of the power of darkness.

System: The Kuei-jin concentrates for three turns and the player spends a point of Willpower and rolls P'o against a difficulty of 6. For every success, he temporarily (for one turn per success) increases his Demon Chi by two, to a maximum of 10. These new points of Demon Chi must be spent during the duration of the power; otherwise they fade away (unless the Kuei-jin had previously depleted his pool of Demon Chi, in which case the Kuei-jin's reservoir of normal Demon Chi is replenished). When the power fades, the Kuei-jin must roll Hun against a difficulty equal to his P'o; if he fails, he receives a Derangement. Otherwise no ill effects result from using this power.

66666666666 Mirror

Thought by most Kuei-jin scholars to be an advanced form of Cleave the Demon, the Darkling Mirror allows a Cathayan to split his P'o apart from his Hun and body for use as an evil servant.

System: This power is essentially the same as Cleave the Demon (see **Kindred Of The East**, p. 120), but with a few important changes. First, it is always the P'o that separates from the Hun and body, and no roll is needed to accomplish this - the Kuei-jin need only spend three turns in concentration and the player must spend two points of Chi (any type). Second, both souls can use the Kuei-jin's basic Chi powers during the same turn. Third, the separated P'o may travel up to one mile from the Kuei-jin.

CHI'IU MUH

The powers of the Third Eye are deep and mysterious, the more so at the higher levels, which possess greater esoteric qualities. Masters of these arts rarely attempt to explain them; experiencing them, they say, is by far the better teacher.

0000000Shield of the Soul

One of the first things the Chi'iu Muh masters learned to do was protect their own souls from each other, and from other enemies.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Wits + Subterfuge (difficulty 6). For the rest of the scene, the

difficulty of any attempt to affect, steal, transform, alter, or attack the Kuei-jin's souls in any way is increased by four (maximum of 9). If the attack is a success despite the shield, the Kuei-jin's efforts to resist it (if allowed) are at -2 difficulty.

222 222 Banking the Fire, Calming the Waves

Although many Chi'iu Muh powers are feared and disliked, this one is not. With but a touch, the Kuei-jin can bring one of his brethren out from under the unbundled control of his souls, restoring his balance.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and the Kuei-jin touches the Cathayan to be affected. (This may require a Dexterity + Brawl or Martial Arts roll in some circumstances.) The target, if in fire soul, wave soul or shadow soul, is instantly returned to his normal self, with no ill effects - no Derangements, no nightmarish memories. (He will remember what happened, but with understanding, not guilt or regret.) In some cases, increases in Dharma have resulted when Kuei-jin are subjected to this power, but this is exceedingly rare. This power may also ameliorate Chi imbalance and calm the fires of frenzy in Kin-jin or other shen.

000000000 Soul Taint

The Third Eye provides few powers that are considered to be attacks, but this is one of them. By touching a victim and subtly tainting his souls, the Kuei-jin renders the victim displeasing and distasteful to everyone, even his family and close friends. Soon the victim is a pariah, ripe for plucking now that he lacks the protection of the group.

System: The Kuei-jin spends a point of Chi, touches the victim. The player rolls Manipulation + Empathy (difficulty 6). Every success achieved is allocated to one of two things: making the victim displeasing to others, or extending the power's duration. Every success spent on the former adds +1 to the difficulty of all rolls based on Social Attributes that the character makes for the duration; in addition, everyone, even strangers, finds him to be somehow annoying, disgusting, or displeasing, and will do their best to keep away from him. Every success spent on duration (at least one must be so spent) causes the power to last for one night's time.

00000000000 Soul Exchange

This power allows a master of Chi'iu Muh to do the unthinkable - switch two peoples' souls. Typically this is done to torment a particularly evil (or good) person by combining one of his souls with one from someone of an opposite nature; in combat, it also serves as the ultimate form of disorientation.

System: The Kuei-jin must touch both persons whose souls are to be switched and the player must spend a point of Chi

and roll Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 8). If successful, he may switch his subjects' souls. He may choose to swap Hun for Hun, P'o for P'o, or both souls. Either way, each character's Demon Chi and other abilities may have to be recalculated. Regardless of whether this is necessary, both characters are completely disoriented and unable to act for a number of minutes equal to the number of successes rolled.

Each victim finds himself in a body whose qualities, skills and memories are unknown to him; his own skills and memories remain with his true body, though he does have a dim recollection of them. For a number of nights equal to the successes rolled, each will be at + 2 difficulty to perform all skills and abilities that his new body knows but his old body does not.

The only way to reverse a Soul Exchange is to use the power again to restore things to the way they should be. At the Storyteller's discretion, extremely holy men (or sites) may be



able to effect a change, or the characters may perform a great quest together to restore their souls to their own bodies.

jNTERNALIZE

0000000Reaping the Dragon's Road

A Kuei-jin with this power can take Chi straight from dragon lines and nests by sheer force of will. The Kuei-jin does not drink in the Chi energies as usual - instead, he centers his awareness deep within and joins his consciousness to the wellspring of energy, pulling the Chi energy into himself with the strength of his will.

System: The Kuei-jin stands on or in the dragon line or nest from which he wishes to absorb Chi. For every point of Willpower spent, he may absorb four Chi, either Yin or Yang. (The choice is left up to the player, but it may be constrained by the nature of the source - Yang Chi cannot be absorbed from a dragon line composed entirely of Yin energies.)

000000000 Steel Soul

An advanced form of Iron Soul, this power allows a Kuei-jin to perform even greater and more prodigious feats. Some scholars believe that these abilities were the genesis for many of the stories of martial artists and Taoist priests who supposedly have fabulous powers.

System: This power is like Iron Soul (see Kindred of the East, p. 1 24), but is more versatile. The Kuei-jin spends one turn in concentration, then the player rolls Hun (difficulty 7). Each success counts as an automatic success for any actions taken in the round Steel Soul is used, or the next round (after which they vanish). The Kuei-jin may use some of his successes this round and save some for the next round; he need not use them all at once (as he must with Iron Soul).

Alternately, the Kuei-jin may decide to use his successes to boost his Attributes - +1 to any Attribute for each success rolled. This boost lasts for the remainder of the scene.

888888888888 Barmor of Enlightenment

A Kuei-jin with this power is so enlightened, so in tune with his inner self and the world around him, that he can resist all attempts to injure him.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower. For the rest of the scene, he may add a number of dice equal to his Dharma level to all soak rolls.

The most amazing feat of will performed by masters of Internalize is the ability literally to delay or defer their own death. When "mortally" wounded, the Kuei-jin is able to hold his souls within his body, keeping himself in this realm until help can be provided.

System: When the Kuei-jin is Incapacitated or unconscious, the player may spend a point of Willpower and Chi (either Yin or Yang) to keep his souls in his body and, thus, his body "alive" until he can be healed. No matter what injuries are inflicted on the body after the Kuei-jin becomes Incapacitated, the Kuei-jin will remain alive and "revivifiable" through healing powers. Only if the body is completely destroyed (by burning, sunlight, or chopping it up into tiny little pieces, to name but three methods) will he cease to live. The fact that the Kuei-jin remains "alive" is not apparent to observers, though the body's failure to crumble into dust is an important clue that its owner is not yet through with it.

OBLIGATION

Often thought of as one of the "highest" or "purest" Disciplines used by the Kuei-jin, Obligation is even more potent (and, some say, pure) at the greater levels of mastery. Obligation masters often exude both a serenity and a force of command that is difficult for any, even shen, to resist.

0000000 Taming the Fire

Normally, Kuei-jin who are suffering from fire soul or wave soul are uncontrollable. They go berserk, attack in a blind panic, and give in to a state of frenzy. However, an Obligation master's powers of command are so potent that even a Kuei-jin so crazed is subject to them.

System: This power only works on Kuei-jin who are in fire soul or wave soul. The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Charisma + Leadership (difficulty equal to the victim's permanent Yin Chi [if he is in fire soul] or permanent Yang Chi [if he is in wave soul], plus one). If he succeeds, he can take control of the victim, as if he had him on an invisible leash. The victim does not come out of fire soul or wave soul, but his manic attentions can be directed as the Kuei-jin sees fit - usually against some enemy of his. This control remains in effect for one hour per point of Chi spent to maintain it; these points need not all be spent when the power is first used, but can be doled out, one each hour, as long as the Kuei-jin feels it necessary to maintain the control. However, for every hour past the first in which such control is maintained, the victim gets to roll to come out of fire soul or wave soul, as normal; if he succeeds, Taming the Fire is severed and he has control of himself in all respects.

Corrupt the Will

Those who would oppose a master of command must first reckon with this power, which turns their very willpower against them. Those actions that they try the hardest at seem to go awry, though they do not comprehend the cause.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Manipulation + Subterfuge (difficulty 7). The power lasts for one turn per success achieved. During that time, every point of Willpower spent by the target of Corrupt the Will counts not as an automatic success, but rather, as an automatic failure - just like a roll of 1 on the die. The victim will not be aware that this is occurring, though he may become suspicious when he fails at actions in which he should easily have succeeded. If possible, the Storyteller should describe the situation so as to disguise the effects of Corrupt the Will. Note that this may create a botch situation for the character in question.

0000000000 Oke of the Emperor

With this power, a Kuei-jin can sway the opinions and actions of a crowd of mortals - as many as can hear him (without the aid of any electronic amplification equipment). Those who listen to the Kuei-jin believe whatever he says, and will be strongly inclined to do as he commands.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Charisma + Leadership with a difficulty determined by the chart on p. 125 of **Kindred of the East**. Success indicates that everyone who hears him does as requested. The same order must be given to everyone listening. Although this power has the potential for great destructiveness, most Kueijin have found that it works best to manipulate people subtly, over time, rather than in quick, gross steps.

000000000000 Divine Fetters

The commands of the most powerful masters of Obligation are irresistible - even by other shen. This power gives the Kuei-jin control over his supernatural brethren.

System: This power is identical to Authority (see **Kindred of the East**, p. 1 25), except for three key points. First, it works better on mortals than does Authority; reduce all difficulties by 2. Second, it can affect shen (of any type) in the same way that Authority affects mortals. Third, shen are no more likely than mortals to realize that Divine Fetters has been used upon them; they will attribute its effects to the natural charisma and persuasiveness of the Kuei-jin - at least until they have been out of his presence for a few hours or someone else talks some sense into them.

Мівлянлм

This Discipline, whose name derives from the Farsi (Persian) word for "to be," is concerned with the very nature of

existence itself. Kuei-jin who study it are seeking answers to the mysteries of how the Kuei-jin came to be and what their purpose in the world is. In so doing they become the ontologists of the Middle Kingdom. Mibasham is a rarely practiced art; it is most suited to Kuei-jin with high Hun scores, or who are of high Dharma, or who otherwise tend to be of philosophical bent. So far as is known, no Devil-Tiger has ever chosen to practice this Discipline.

Scholars can find no record of the use of Mibasham prior to Ming Dynasty. Some believe that the art was taught to the Kuei-jin by certain renegade sorcerers calling themselves the "Ahl-i-Batin," but so far no proof in support of this theory has been uncovered.

No Mibasham power may be used successfully on a Kuei-jin who is of higher Dharma than the one using the power.

The Lens of the Self

Even the least-proficient Mibasham practitioners are able to stare deep into the soul of a Kuei-jin, Kin-jin, or shen to learn what truly motivates and excites her. Many shen hate this power with a passion, and will attack anyone who uses it on them.

System: The player spends a point of Chi (any type) and rolls Perception + Empathy (difficulty 6). If successful, he learns the target's Nature or P'o Nature (at the option of the player using the ability).

Pors'dan

Known to younger, more irreverent, Kuei-jin as "Combat Koan," this power represents a Mibasham practitioner's ability to exploit others' lack of understanding of reality for his own advantage. He poses a seemingly simple question or philosophical dilemma to the victim who, struck by the mysteries the statement hints at, is unable to maintain his concentration on anything else.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Charisma + Enigmas (difficulty 7). For every two successes achieved, the victim loses one die from his dice pools for the remainder of the scene. Despite the younger Kuei-jin's' name for it, this power is better suited to negotiation, conversation, or other such subtle activities than to combat. If a Kuei-jin attempts to use it on another character during combat, increase e the difficulty of the roll to 9.

The Kuei-jin must be able to speak clearly and calmly to his victim in order to use this power.

Stepping Stones

At this level, the Kuei-jin understands the nature of reality so well that he also comprehends the Higher and Lower Worlds

enough to travel to them with little trouble.

System: The player must spend a point of Willpower and roll Intelligence + Occult (difficulty equal to the Wall at the location where the power is used). If he succeeds, he may enter the Yin World, Yang World, or Yomi World, as he chooses, but this power offers him no special protection against the forces and beings that inhabit those worlds. At the Storyteller's discretion, a Kuei-jin of Dharma 7 or higher who rolls at least six successes may step straight into the Heavenly Realms themselves.

OOOOA Stumble on the Path

This, one of the most insidious of the Mibasham powers, allows a Kuei-jin to cause another Kuei-jin to question his role and purpose in unlife - in short, his Dharma. By posing certain questions and riddles to the other Kuei-jin, the Mibasham practitioner infects him with doubt, causing a temporary fall from grace.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Wits + Subterfuge (difficulty 7). If he succeeds, the victim must roll his Dharma against a difficulty of 8. The victim temporarily loses two points of Dharma, - 1 for each success on his Dharma roll. The loss of Dharma lasts for about a night, at which point a character's true thoughts and feelings will re-assert themselves. Sometimes the victim even ascends to a higher Dharma as a result of experiencing this power, but that is rare. While under the effects of this power, a Kuei-jin is subject to all limitations and penalties of his "new," temporary Dharma score.

The Kuei-jin must be able to speak clearly and calmly to his victim in order to use this power.

COCOO CORyddle of Maya

Not everyone, or even every Kuei-jin, is able to handle revelations about the truth behind maya, the veil of illusion that hides true reality from the denizens of the Middle Kingdom. With this power the Kuei-jin parts that veil for just a moment, revealing such truths to the victim as to cause him to doubt that reality exists as he has always believed it to be.

System: The player rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty equal to the Wall in the area). Every success achieved saps one temporary point of Willpower from the victim for the duration of the scene.

88888 Veil of Maya

Veil of Maya allows the Kuei-jin to play tricks with the very fabric of reality, making things appear to be other than as they are. Potent illusions, ones that can even be smelled, felt, and tasted, are the result. System: The player spends a point of Yang Chi and declares what illusion the Kuei-jin wishes to create. Typically, subtle ones are best; an illusion of soldiers charging over the hill where there were none a moment before is rarely very believable. He rolls Manipulation + Occult (difficulty 8). Every success equals a +1 difficulty on all tests to perceive that the illusions are, in fact, illusions. The Storyteller may further modify the difficulty (up or down) to reflect the believability of the illusion; Kuei-jin who work their illusions artfully or choose them with an eye toward their victims' Natures are most likely to succeed.

The victim may roll Perception (base difficulty of 6, modified as above) to perceive that the Veil of Maya has been drawn over his eyes; he may reroll every turn if necessary. If he fails, he interacts with the illusion as if it were real. He can sense the illusions with all his senses, and even feel "pain" and be knocked unconscious by them, but cannot be killed by them or suffer true injuries because of their actions unless, for example, the illusions cause him to walk off a cliff or cut himself with a real knife. However, using illusions to trick someone into hurting herself tends to be difficult indeed - typically the difficulty to see through such illusions is decreased by two or more in these circumstances. Illusions are better used to trick someone into giving up valuable information, or to obtain some sort of strategic advantage in a larger power play, than to cause physical harm.

BOOOOOOOOOBaku's Quandary

This power is a more intense, focused version of Pors'dan or A Stumble on the Path. It presents the victim with a philosophical question so intriguing, and so unsolvable, that he becomes a drooling idiot who thinks of nothing but trying to answer it.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Wits + Enigmas (difficulty 8). For every success achieved, the victim spends one night enraptured by the mystery presented to him, minus one night for every success achieved on an Intelligence roll (difficulty 8) made to resist the quandary. He takes no other actions except in direct defense of his own life; his haven could crumble around him and he'd barely notice unless a piece were likely to fall on his head.

The Kuei-jin must be able to speak clearly and calmly to his victim in order to use this power.

66666666 Beyong the Door

An old philosophical lesson, it is said, involves a student asking what lies beyond a certain door. Once the student crosses the threshold into the empty room beyond, he is then asked what now lies beyond the same door. Through any portal is the entirety of the world, and the power to "step through the door" allows the Kuei-jin to travel from inside that empty room to the multitude of other places beyond the door. **System:** The player must expend a point of Willpower and roll Perception + Portents to step Beyond the Door. Each success scored on the roll allows the vampire to travel up to one mile without passing the intervening space - in effect, the vampire seems to disappear from his previous space and reform at the destination. Strangely, the Kuei-jin must actually take a step (or fly forward, or otherwise move ahead) in order to use this ability, and automatically disappears and reappears in a straight line ahead from his point of departure. Since the Kuei-jin does not actually cross the intervening space, walls, doors and the like do not stop him, although magical or Chi wards will cause him to reappear at the edge of the ward, halted.

00000000000 Revisionist Reality

There is no Kuei-jin in the Middle Kingdom who has heard of and does not fear this power. A Mibasham practitioner who has mastered it has such profound insights into reality that he is able to call another Kuei-jin's Dharma into question, forcing the victim to take another view of his role in the Great Cycle and, thus, forcing him to start anew on another Dharmic path.

System: The Kuei-jin must concentrate for three turns in the presence of the victim. The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls the Dharma Kuei-jin's (difficulty 8). If he succeeds, the victim may roll his own Dharma (difficulty 9) to resist; if he is successful, this power has no effect, and that Kuei-jin will never be able to use it successfully on that victim. If his resistance roll fails, the victim must surrender his Dharma and begin on another path, just as if he had failed four successive Dharma rolls. (See **Kindred of the East**, p. 52.)

TZU WEi

Much like Feng Shui, the arts of Tzu Wei grew out of Chinese hedge magic and folklore - or is it the other way around?

Tzu Wei, as practiced by mortals, involves the use of Chinese astrology and horoscopes to determine what the future holds for an individual, what days and symbols are propitious ones for him, and when the best times are to undertake certain actions. In conjunction with feng shui, it provides what is sometimes an almost comprehensive guide to living one's life. But Kuei-jin, who know more about the fates than mere mortals, and who are sometimes able to manipulate the very stuff of reality itself, take Tzu Wei many steps beyond that. While they are able to do simple things like casting horoscopes, they are also able to grasp hold of joss and make it do what they want. Rather than simply reacting to the omens they see, they make joss conform to their desires.

Fate of the One

At this most basic level, the only one reached by most mortal practitioners of tzu wei, the Kuei-jin may cast a horoscope for a single person, and advise him accordingly. If the individual follows these words of wisdom, joss will favor him.

System: The player rolls Intelligence + Rituals (difficulty 6) to cast the horoscope. If he succeeds, he learns what omens are lucky for, and days and times are auspicious for the undertakings of, one person. If he correctly advises the person on what to do, that person is assumed to have the Background Horoscope at level one for that day and time (if the character already has Horoscope, he may use it twice in the story, instead of once). If the Kuei-jin advises the character poorly (as a way of "cursing" him) or the character chooses to ignore (or for some reason is unable to follow) his advice, the character will have bad luck for that time period. (The character is not allowed to roll his Horoscope dice at all; or he has a + 1 difficulty on one important task.)

Joss Weaving

With slightly more effort, the Kuei-jin can bend the forces of fate even more in favor of a single person. Through elaborate ceremonies, he actually "rechannels" joss so that it is "behind" the person, favoring him and driving him forward, rather than "before" him, pushing him back and retarding his ability to perform his role in the Great Cycle.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Intelligence + Portents (difficulty 7). If successful, the subject will be at -1 on all difficulties for up to one night (or at +1 if misadvised, or if he ignores or cannot follow the advice). If the individual has Horoscope, he may instead use his Horoscope dice three times during the story.

COCO Fate of the Wu

As his understanding of joss and the alignment of the stars progresses, the Kuei-jin is able to cast a horoscope for a small group, such as a wu or everyone who works for a small business.

System: This power is just like Fate of the One, but applies to groups of no more than a dozen people or shen. Every member of the group receives the benefits (or penalties), but only if they are acting to further the purposes or goals about which the horoscope was cast. For example, if a Kuei-jin casts a horoscope to find out if his wu will triumph over another wu in a coming conflict, the benefits apply when striving to overcome the other wu, but not for other activities.

COOOGrand Duke's Theorem

According to the tenets of Tzu Wei, the Grand Duke - the planet Jupiter - has great influence over joss. Characters who know this Discipline and take actions when facing in the proper direction have good luck; those who take actions when facing the opposite direction have bad luck. **System:** No roll is required to use this power. If the player spends one Chi, for the next night, whenever the character is facing the proper direction (see below) when taking actions - whether fighting, negotiating, attempting to seduce someone, or any other activity - all difficulties will be reduced by one. On the other hand, any time he is facing the opposite direction, all difficulties are increased by one. (The player may pay another point of Chi to cancel this bad joss.) If the direction in question is also the character's personal direction, all bonuses are doubled; if it is opposite the character's direction (for example, the Grand Duke's direction is south, while the character's is north), any penalties the character suffers are doubled.

Year Gra	Ind's Duke	Direction	(lucky)
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1998	East Northeast
1999	East
2000	East Southeast
2001	South Southeast

- 2002 South
- 2003 South Southwest
- 2004 West Southwest
- 2005 West
- 2006 West Northwest

OOOORealigning the Stars

Some say the astrologer is servant to the stars, but not so with Kuei-jin who know this power; instead, the stars are slaves to them-figuratively, at least. This power allows the Kuei-jin to perform a ceremony that "realigns" a person's horoscope temporarily (for about a night), granting them luck where they would ordinarily have none.

System: The player spends a point of Willpower and rolls Intelligence + Rituals (difficulty 8). Each success grants the character one dot worth of the Horoscope Background; this benefit lasts about a night, and must be used during that time, before the character's normal astrological influences reassert themselves.

Alternately, the Kuei-jin can perform this ritual to align the stars against someone - to reduce their luck. This increases the difficulty to 9; every success reduces the victim's Horoscope rating by 1 (if he has no Horoscope, then there is no effect).

OOOOPantheon of Ancestors

While Chinese astrology is most often used to foresee the future, the truth is that everyone's past lives are also written in their stars. With this power, the Kuei-jin knows how to read that tale.

System: The player spends a point of Chi and rolls Perception + Portents (difficulty 7). For every success, he can find out information about one of the character's past lives, starting with his most recent and working backward. Generally, the information learned is broad - the character's race/ species, home, profession, and general karmic balance. This is a good way for characters to learn about past misdeeds they have committed that still have gone unaccounted for, so that they can redress their past wrongs and right their overall karma.

OOOO OO OO Fate of the Court

By the time he reaches this level of understanding, the Kuei-Opposite Directions (unborcky) pes for entire courts, regions, mations, or peoples.

Weststem: This power is similar to Fate of the Wu, but has a West and the way of the advice it provides is similarly broader - it does not provide information about nightly matters, but about North Jershoren general interest to the group. (For example, North Jershoren action be advisable?)

Not the Celestial Curse

East Northeast

East Weave a terrible curse on the victim.

Systems: The Kuei-jin must declare what curse he wishes to inflict on the victim. Then he concentrates for eight turns and the player rolls Intelligence + Rituals (difficulty 9) - but he can only perform the ritual when the stars are right. The Storyteller determines exactly when the stars are right to cast a Celestial Curse. If it will help move the story along or be dramatic, then Io and behold! the stars will come aright in just a night or two. If the Storyteller does not approve of the Curse, or needs to make things difficult for the characters, it may be weeks, months, or years (Kuei-jin can afford to wait, of course) until they come into proper alignment. For added drama, the Storyteller should determine when the stars will be right before the characters ask, or even when the campaign begins, and let them know.

A Kuei-jin who knows this power can perform a ritual that rewrites a character's celestial destiny. If the character was born on an inauspicious day or under a bad sign, this power allows him to be mystically "reborn" so that he has better joss.

System: This power has two functions. The first is the same as Realigning the Stars, but provides double the benefits (two dots of Horoscope per success, maximum of five dots). Second, it can be performed to allow a character to buy the Horoscope Background. Ordinarily, Horoscope must be bought when the character is created, and cannot be purchased with experience points. However, if the character is "reborn" through this ritual, he can buy Horoscope with experience points, at the same cost as an Ability (3 points for the first dot and 2x current rating beyond that).

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CHAPTER FOUR: WANDERING DIRECTION

This thousand year screen shattering in rainbow light takes grace from the dead

The greatest thing in the world is to know how to be one's own self.

- Montaigne

When death claims the mortal body, most people believe that the soul that dwells within the shell dies as well. In the Middle Kingdom, however, nothing is so simple. Departed souls have three possible destinies: rebirth as a mortal, reincarnation as an animal, or rising phoenix-like as a shen. This moment of great change is a confluence, a time where the forces of 1 leaven come to bear on the soul and guide it to its next path.

Clawing out of Hell and returning to bloated, rotten bodies under the malevolent moon, some of the doomed return as Kuei-jin. Whether they suffer from the sin of unrestrained desires or have strayed from the path of enlightenment, these damned souls return to the Middle Kingdom as demons, cursed with hunger. In that rebirth, the Kuei-jin has one final chance to overcome its debts and its imbalances, to bring itself into auspicious harmony with the universe. To do so, the vampire tin Js its proper place in the society of the unliving, as governed by personality, Dharma, and direction.

An astrologically based influence that governs a Kuei-jin's personality and duties, direction determines the societal place of an individual Cathayan among the ranks of the unliving. This is not to say that the stars determine a given Kuei-jin's link or worthiness; rather, the time, place and circumstances surrounding a person's death give subtle clues to the nature of the karmic debt that must be repaid. By working toward the goals of direction, the Kuei-jin fulfills the needs of his karma and advances himself along the cycle of rebirth.

Although Dharma and direction may compete in the affairs of individual Kuei-jin, direction has far-reaching consequences beyond personal philosophy. Whereas Dharmas are chosen as young koa decide upon the courses of their unlives, direction is not a matter for debate, but rather a casting of fate. Even with the rebellious Running Monkeys, direction carries a traditional weight, and many newly arisen disciples find themselves pulled by the heavenly threads, filling roles espoused by their directions. Beyond individuals, directions are held also by wu and by courts; purpose and identity come from direction, which defines what a group does - and what it does not do.

The paths of direction follow the points of a compass: north, east, west, south and center. Knowing one's place in the order of the world is paramount to the structure of Kuei-jin society. The forces of nature and the stars say much of the path a Kuei-jin should follow. Thus, the courts determine the direction and the appropriate role for each Kuei-jin as part of the early training that sets the Kuei-jin on the path to civilized unlife. With powerful rituals, the elders of the courts pull forth knowledge of the darkest secrets of the individual vampire, laying bare the winds that pull at his soul. From this knowledge, the koa is placed in proper society, there to fill his role - whether that role is judge, defender, scholar, outcast or renegade.

THE NORTHERN DIRECTION

From his position in the shadows, the magistrate listened disinterestedly to the whimpering pleas of the interloper. His pebble-hard eyes gazed past the transgressor's tears and the promises to never again displease the court. Finally, as the fool ended his soliloquy, the magistrate shifted his position on the carved stone chair. Assured of the conclusion of the dramatics, he spoke, his soft voice carrying through the hall.

"Truly a brilliant performance. It is not often that I have a chance to appreciate good theatre. You have an ability that shall be envied as much as it is missed." The magistrate made no motion; his words echoed off the stone floor like the sound of falling coins.

The accused's head jerked up at the last word.

-"Surprised? Tell me, what fate had you anticipated for your transgressions? Not only have you dishonored this court, but you have also compromised us all with your dealings with die graceless Km-jin. That alone would have been enough to ensure your death - but this final disgusting weakness, this display of cowardice... There is no place for you here."

The magistrate rose and the hems of his black robes settled to the floor soundlessly. "Had you only thought as much to your actions as to your apologies, perhaps there would be yet another sunrise for you. Let you weep to your ancestors now."

With judgment rendered, the magistrate left the room. The guards dragged the transgressor away, his execution to be handled by others. His wailing echoed in the large room. The magistrate let the fading screams soothe his thoughts, taking him away from the dishonorable spectacle of the ignominious fool. With his judgment, the magistrate had placed every thing into its proper order, from Heaven to the courts to the condemnation of Hell.

The wind that blows from the north is cold and bitter. It is sharp and stings deep on weakened flesh. Water turns to ice and the earth grows hard to avoid its kiss. Kuei-jin with northern direction are unwavering students of law and order. Impervious to emotions and able to withstand the weakness of spirit in others, but never to accept it, they thrive on adversity. Strongheaded or stubborn, the north does not accept defeat. Northern Kuei-jin set their goals high and attain them with honor and precision. One who spent most of his mortal life denying the structure of authority may find himself in the Second Breath being expected to not only support the laws, but to uphold them - even if he has yet to learn them all.

The northern direction is straight and narrow, accepting no deviations from its purpose. It is steep and unforgiving and its child must be strong as well. But it is also lonely. The world fears the northern Kuei-jin. Secluded by their belief in tradition, Kuei-jin of die north direction see change as a threat. Honor is paramount. Justice is God. Laws are to be obeyed. Those who break them are to be punished. There must be order.

Kuei-jin of northern direction are expected to carry out the judicial duties of the court. From the lowly Steward of the Mist Serpent to the esteemed Minister of White Jade at Midnight, all north-aligned Kuei-jin must be impartial in their steadfast natures. Emotions cannot enter into their decisions, even when sentencing another Kuei-jin to the Final Death. To others they seem dispassionate or unfeeling, but in reality they simply keep their emotions to themselves, behind austere and officious facades. They honor their courts with their resolve and have a deep and abiding love for stability and tradition. Failure is disgraceful and a Kuei-jin of the north never gives up; only by overcoming adversity can one strive for enlightenment. It is with the north that the elders of the courts place their trust.

The number six symbolizes Kuei-jin of the north direction. Signifying the sixth stage of the Zodiac, the number six points to the snake, which is affiliated with resilience, will, and a strong focus; enigmatic power and conciliation flow from its stars. The number six also corresponds numismatically to a strong sense of responsibility. These connotations remind the north Kuei-jin of his duties; rare is the northern Kuei-jin who shirks his place in society or falters from his tasks.

THE EASTERN DIRECTION

The air was sweet with jasmine, and Heeyun's damp hair draped possessively over Ju-Kan's shoulder. Ju-Kan felt the rhythm of her heart beating. He had become so lost in it that he did not hear her question.

"Are you with me?" Heeyun inquired playfully, her voice a throaty chuckle as she tugged at his chin. Ju-Kan smiled info her eyes. She was a perfect picture of beauty, her hair strewn upon the blue silk sheets of his bed. If only his heart



could beat, it would have ached at the sight of her.

"Always, what is it?"

"I was just wondering what good deed I must have done to have won such favor from you." Ju-Kan held her closer to him, treasuring her living warmth, her fragrant scent, her fragile beauty.

"You are the blossom on the trees in Spring. That is all I ask for my favor." Ju-Kan wondered briefly if Heeyun guessed his true nature, or if she even cared. All that he knew was that once he saw her, he had to have her. She was more than a mere lover: She was something to be savored and protected. None of the other mortals he had known mattered to him as much as she did. When he first came to dwell among the living, he had been certain that he would not find any peace. Then came the first moment he saw her. He knew that she was an Urn, that one day she would leave behind her mortal existence and be like him. The feeling of love and happiness that had been denied to him in life was granted to him in his death.

"You feel so cold."

"It is you who feels warm." Ju-Kan's hand traveled down the smooth texture of Heeyun's skin. He felt her life glowing within her.

Perhaps it was simply the fact that he no longer felt such things that compelled him to stay so close to the living. Hunger was empty - always empty, always needing fulfillment - but the look in her eyes soothed his softly aching demon. He knew that eventually she must leave her mortal world behind. Would that change their feelings for each other? Could they still share what they had after she no longer was mortal? He had no idea. And then, he did not care. He treasured his blossom, and from her grace and life he remembered the days of his own breath.

The sun rises in the east, signifying the beginning of the new day. A new life and a rebirth comes with each rise of the sun. The Kuei-jin of the east are, thus, anchored to the world of the living and to the powers of creation. Of all the hungry dead, they are the most comfortable with the mortals. Many Kuei-jin of the eastern direction continue to live among mortals, guiding and watching over them. The vibrant Chi of the living is to be treasured and guarded; the Kuei-jin of the east live in the midst of the ebb and flow of life, taking what they will and feeling again the sensations lost with their heartbeats.

Mingling among mortals, a Kuei-jin forms attachments. They may be descendants, lineage or a loved one left behind. Some form relationships that remind them of their mortal passions and while others merely consider the living as pets or playthings. But it remains constant that they remain close to those who are able to walk in the light. The eastern aspect draws its followers back to the flame of life like moths. Of course, tragedy often follows in this wake; the Demon makes sure that the Kuei-jin fights and kills the beloved. Still, this doesn't stop many Cathayans from trying to recapture the lives they once lived, if only vicariously.

The role of the eastern Kuei-jin is to walk among the mortals. They gather and guide them. Unlike the Cainites of the West, the Kuei-jin do not follow the rules of the Masquerade for fear of destruction. It suits their nature to be unknown to the mortals, all the easier to dwell among them. These Kuei-jin are the shepherds that watch over the sheep. Of their fellow Kuei-jin, those of the eastern direction often have the most compassion and the most humane demeanor.

The favored color of the east is blue. Memory of the world denied to them in this new existence, blue is symbolic of the sunlight sky. Both water and sky, the essences of freedom, have always been presented by the color blue.

The number eight appears in many things that they do. The symbol of the number is a constant state of motion, as is life. Also, it is the symbol of infinity. There is no end or beginning, only rebirth and a return to the cycle. In the stars, the number eight associates with the sheep, which brings both purity of heart and aesthetic sense. Focused upon the satisfactions of the material world, the number eight guides the vampires of the east (and the eastern direction) to learn from the lives of mortals, so that they may overcome their mistakes - though too often the Cathayans fall to the vice and depravity of mortal pleasures.

THE SOUTHERN DIRECTION

As with many cycles before, Liu Djan found himself instructed to elaborate to the young Running Monkeys the heritage of the courts. It had happened before, so Liu Djan was prepared; he gathered she young ones about him to tell them the same tales that have been repeated since his own Second Breath. He explained that their world had existed for centuries and thrived while the Western world destroyed itself. Fear of discovery and destruction made the gweilo weak. Their petty excuse for order was nothing compared to the strength that is the center of the Middle Kingdom. They denied what they were and pretended to "exist," but it is no existence. It was a masquerade.

"So you see that they have no place here. We must always keep the Kin-jin away from our world."

"Why?"

Liu Djan did not have to see who asked. He knew. He ignored the question.

"Our society has existed successfully fur many centuries. Our structure and order is what keeps us whole."

"Why do we not interact with the Westerners?"

"Enough, Min."

"I am simply asking a question."

"If you were listening you would understand and would not have to ask."

"If our world is so strong, then couldn't we withstand their influences?"

"Even the slightest drop of filth renders the well waters undrinkable. We must keep our world pure."

"But Master," Min spoke clearly, with no fear of the look he shot at her, "There is so much that is out there. So much that we could learn from."

"Learn? What would you learn? Greed? Corruption? There is no unity among them. They live and die and no one learns. You are a child and have no understanding of the world."

"It is you who have no understanding of the world."

"You insolent rat..."

The younger Kuei-jin laughed.

"You sit here and teach us the same as was done a thousand years ago, but the world is not the same. Do you have any idea what is out there? Have you ever strayed from your world here? I have seen the outside I have listened to music from the tiniest little box, I have watched the sunrise and lived to tell the experience." Around her, Min's peers listened to the intrigue. Her eyes were bright as she spoke of the technologies of the modern age. In the youngsters the master could see already the seeds of corruption of the West.

"Enough!"

Slowly Min rose to her feet. Her eyes flashed in defiance.

"You may close your eyes to the changes of the world, but I cannot. I will not."

"What you call change is destruction of the serenity of our existence."

"Everything dies .It is in its death that creation begins anew. It B the Great Cycle." As Min walked away, the children of the modem age walked with her.

From the southern realms comes warm air and promises of rebirth. There is also a price for the new unlife, though - as always, the old must give way to the new. Nature creates in its womb massive powers of Heaven and Earth. The ground must thaw for things to grow. Warm winds also bring rain and

storms, thunder and lightning. The wind of the south is a tempest of creation, and the Kuei-jin of the south is no different. The air around her is warm and inviting, but it is also dangerous.

Kuei-jin of the south direction are comfortable with their new unlives. They accept their existence, but recognize the need for change. They provide insights to their elders. They give advice on adversity. Easily bored and constantly searching for newer, more exciting activities, the south-oriented Kuei-jin breed excellence through conflict, by discarding the old ways to make room for newer, better paths. Although ambition is definitive to their character, they do not make good leaders; the constant demands of change and growth cast aside the forms and structures of rulership and hierarchy. Southaligned Kuei-jin are more likely to be in positions of change. Conquest is the nature of the southern wind - destroying that which has no purpose, ushering in the new ways - but these vampires are forever on the horizon, seeking new places to bring change.

Mystery and excitement are the passion of vampires of the south direction. These vampires exult in the differences between people, places and ideologies, taking those elements that are pleasing and active, and burying the detritus of useless matter. Conflict inevitably follows in the wake of such actions. Cutting loose the chaff of society, the southern winds bring uncomfortable but necessary chaos, so that new forms may rise.

Scarlet splashes color the southern wind. Blood is red. Fire's embers glow red. Red is movement and the need to be in motion. Anger and passion are elements of southern winds, and lust and rage give rise to revolution. For this reason the southern directions adorn themselves with tokens of their commitment to motion; decorations and clothing prominently speak of flames that purify and renew.

THE WESTERN DIRECTION

When Shou was first reborn, the voices of his ancestors were only soft hisses in his mind. He did not understand them at first. All he felt was emptiness and the need for vengeance. His family had been traveling to the city, all their belongings strapped down into the wagon. They believed in the goodness of the world. They rode tight into the ambush.

In the middle of the road lay a horse and a man Shou's father had rushed to their aid. The man revealed his treachery and pulled a blade on Shou's unarmed father, killing him. Then the air was wild with howls as the rest of the brigand's band descended from the concealing trees. Greedy robbers took every worldly possession, and when that was gone the brigands took their innocence. Shou's younger sister was violated, as was his mother. Even after both women died, the robbers continued to defile them. Once they had sated their appetites, the robbers turned to him. Long into the night they tortured him. When the final darkness came it was with the burning shame that he had failed to protect his family or himself. Their bodies were cast down an embankment, with no one to mourn them.

Shou returned to the world in a haze of ignorance. Wandering at first to prey upon the living, he did not understand what he had become. Remembering death and Hell, he sought to assuage his burning hunger, but he could not stifle the whispers. He found his way to others of his kind, and they told him that the sounds he heard were the voices of his family, demanding vengeance. Only through proper training and preparation could he overcome his ignominious beginning; thus could he avenge his family. He listened to the voices, and with time and experience, the spirits of his family showed him where he had to go.

The bandits were enjoying the conquests of another poor family when Shou found them. He approached them dressed in white clothing to symbolize his purity of spirit. When they looked upon the boy garbed in white they laughed. Some thought there was something familiar about him, but ignored it; there had been many boys.

As the first killer descended upon the boy it seemed as if the child hugged the man. The bandit died easily, with an astonished expression on his face as his heart was torn from his chest; blood stained Show's white silk with crimson /lowers. The boy turned to the rest of the killers, a deadly gleam in his eyes. Fear vanished away at the knowledge that this boy had just killed their leader; the others fell upon him and he heard his sister's voice urge ten on to triumph. Foolhardily, clumsily, the mortals died. The taste of their blood, their /ear, was what Shou needed to survive. It was that flavor he would always need.

Death is the world of the Kuei-jin. Of the directions, those of the west are closest to the dead. The spirits of those who have passed on whisper into the ears of the western child. Dancing with the dead clouds in their minds, they are feared by, and distant from, the other Kuei-jin. Although made separate by their own design or by the fears of the others, the western faces do not walk alone. The west wind constantly carries the voices of the spirits. Whatever the cause, the path of the west is mysterious. The sun sets in the west and it is there that the kingdom of the dead begins.

The west aspect often leads into rectifying wrongs. While the Kuei-jin of the north pass sentence and weigh justice, the west vampires are the executioners. They must listen to the voices of those who have not returned. They also guide the court to its destiny to fulfill the tasks that are required of them by the dead. Memories and broken promises are presented to these Kuei-jin, which they relay to the court. By learning from the wisdom of the ancient dead, the Kuei-jin of the west exercise restraint and terror in equal measure.

White is the favored color of the west because it symbolizes the spirit. Clear and clean of guilt and impurities, white is as innocent as only those newly born can be. Often the western child wears robes of white or a simple white scarf. Additionally, white is the color of mourning in many Asian countries - no coincidence; the Kuei-jin of the western direction do not hesitate to show the ties between white color and spirituality.

The nine dragons of the east symbolize the respect and honor of the ancestors. The monkey, practical but innovative, is the holder of the ninth place in the constellations, and so the number nine is associated with good luck for the west.

THE CENTER DIRECTION

The moon was yellow and full. The moon was all that she knew. She Stared up at it while the body of the boy cooled in his death. She did not hear who approached but felt them. Fearing attack, she spun around and hissed.

"Easy there little one," the other woman dressed in the color of gold held her hands open in front of herself. "I will not hurt you,"

"Who are you?"

"I am a friend." The woman moved slowly and circled around the newly risen Kuei-jin. "There are a great many things that у ом do not know. I can help you. Let me show you."

She spoke as the other woman listened. The circle the woman wove brought her closer and closer. Finally, she was within striking distance, but she had no fear.

"We will go now to my people and you will understand everything. You have been reborn my little one... on the night of the yellow moon."

"What am I? A demon that preys upon the weak?" She looked upon the body of the boy she had killed.

"If you so choose, but there are many paths you may walk. Many steps that have to be taken to arrive at what will be your destiny. You have returned to this world to fulfill a purpose, we will find out what that is, together."

The two moved away from the dead boy until it seemed they disappeared into the night itself.

In the eye of the hurricane there is calm. The winds are quiet and there is an oasis that can soothe the tempests that swirl through the Middle Kingdom. All forces circle around the calm center and in that one place there is peace. Those who follow the center direction are the anchors to the society of the Kuei-jin. They are the ones who gather the wayward and bring them home, teaching and supporting those who are newly returned into unlife, supplying information and understanding to those whose demon threatens to destroy them. Center-aspected Kuei-jin uphold the virtue of Balance.



Respected and understood by all others, compassionate to the ways of the other directions, they are the mothers" and fathers to the children of darkness.

At the center there is also the greatest responsibility: holding tight to keep the others from flying apart. The pressures are strong and not without their price. Children of the center are expected not to have needs or desires for themselves. Their duty is for the good of the court. They must strive to maintain harmony. Sacrifice is not a question; it is an obligation. If the center loses its grip, all of Kuei-jin society would be rent asunder.

As the Sun calls to the plants, or as gold catches the eye, the center child wears yellow as a beacon to the court around them. Warmth to those who are cold and light to those in darkness they wear their golden adornments as a symbol of what is required of them. The number is five. As the hand

has five fingers it is that hand that they extend to their kin and hold them close to the center of the storm.

CONFLICT OR CONJUNCTION?

As the Yin and Yang strain against each other, it is possible (and even likely) for direction to challenge Dharma. A Devil-Tiger with a northern direction may find her cruel, capricious Dharma at odds with the demands for stability and justice. Balance between spirituality and indulgence tears at a westfacing Thrashing Dragon. Perhaps the Devil-Tiger embraces the Howl simply to flaunt spontaneity to her elders, or the Thrashing Dragon is forced to undertake onerous duties before seeking the gratification of flesh. Duty and enlightenment do not always coincide. To choose duty is to fall from grace, but to choose enlightenment is to be remiss in one's tasks - neither is acceptable. When direction and Dharma clash, the elders watch closely for the inevitable hand of forces at work. Pulled in conflicting directions, a Kuei-jin must find a way to reconcile her disparate natures or be torn apart. The stress of such choices is obvious, but the outcome is not - a Kuei-jin so directed can fall to a failure to either (or both) direction or Dharma, or, in a burst of creativity, energy and diligence, can find a way to harmonize the disparate pieces of her nature.

Conversely, the combination of direction and Dharma can coincide: The Singer of Shadows who is also a child of the west, or the Thousand Whispers whose spirit wind blows from the east. Is it merely for sake of convenience that they have chosen their Dharmas, or is it a greater force that guides them? The elders say it is destiny. The youth say it is just chance. Undeniably, though, the combination of direction and Dharma can lead to harmonious duties-but also to a lack of depth, a failure to address other philosophies and approaches.

The interplay of direction and Dharma creates intriguing story elements for young Running Monkeys embarking on their first steps to spirituality. Challenges between the two force the Kuei-jin to use cunning and imagination to find a middle ground, while combinations drive vampires to extremes. Because direction is a prominent part of courtly affairs, the elders can easily push and pull Disciples through the auspices of their directions.

A west-facing Thrashing Dragon may find that Tantric practices and ecstatic dancing lead to communion with the spirits; a north-aspected Devil-Tiger reinforces his role by playing the monstrous outcast. Look carefully at all sides of the direction-Dharma struggle and allow for unique solutions....

- A Thousand Whispers vampire following the north direction finds his constantly changing persona in conflict with his need for stability. Per-haps he changes personality on a strict schedule, or maybe he always acts as an arbiter within a larger concentration (for a union, for a criminal syndicate, for a lawyer).
- A Devil-Tiger of the center direction has trouble with the demands of propriety within his courtly position. He can take the position of bringing pain politically and socially or, perhaps, he serves as an example through self-injurious practices, pushing himself constantly beyond his physical limits.
- The east direction meshes with the Flame of the Rising Phoenix to yield a Kuei-jin who exists among humans, attempting to regain his lost mortality. Overly focused, he may fail to develop his supernatural abilities, and his lack of Chi development can lead to imbalance or frenzy; his P'o may become ascendant if he does not learn to control it, forcing him to deal with his vampire nature.

- The west-facing Bone Flower concentrates on spirits to the exclusion of all else. What happens when she finds herself forced into a situation where she cannot call upon their aid? She must break out of her limitations and learn to deal with other vampires. Her lack of courtly skills may place her in an unfavorable political position, or she may discover that her reliance on the spirit world has stripped her of the ability to comprehend the important and dangerous elements of the physical world.
- The doctrine of change called with the south wind flies in the face of the orderly Resplendent Crane. How can a Shining Ice Guardian remain upright while still espousing new ways and violating old traditions? A wandering destroyer, uprooting those who sink to the ways of depravity, finds new avenues of exploration while fulfilling his Dharma. The Crane could also work as a herald, bringing messages of change to many places.

In the struggle to find answers in the Middle Kingdom, direction helps or hinders as a result of belief. Is it truly a means of understanding the nature of the reborn, or is it just a way of controlling that nature? It is up to each individual to decide. There are signs all around pointing the way but the choice of taking the path is up to each of one, separately. There are those who state that there are no choices, that there is only destiny. But even in that there is a choice: destiny's acceptance or refusal.

DIRECTION AND DICE

Aside from the Horoscope background, direction doesn't have much direct effect on the systems of play. After all, the lucky numbers really only affect that background, don't they?

A Storyteller intent upon adding more depth to direction can influence Kuei-jin with it in additional ways. Aside from the usual pull of duty and political ramifications, direction can certainly influence a Kuei-jin's luck in certain endeavors, as he strives with or against his predestined position. Any or all of the following systems can make direction a slightly more important element in the game, though Storytellers need to be careful not to overbalance the importance of direction.

- Any time a "lucky number" comes up on a Hun roll of den, count it as an automatic success (on the roll, not the enlightenment check). Guided by her direction and role in unlife, the Kuei-jin finds enlightenment more readily. Conversely, such numbers count as successes for the P'o during a Moment of Blindness; concentration on a narrow path, or one contradictory to Dharma, can have unfortunate consequences.
- When the character performs a task deemed appropriate to her direction, the Storyteller may allow the player to roll one extra die for the task, as

long as one of the original dice rolled came up with the direction's lucky number. This should apply to extended tasks; the character does not automatically get extra successes on a Melee attack for punishing a heretic while following the northern direction, but the player could claim the extra roll if the character were instructing pupils in the ways of the courts while following the center direction.

 Mystic forces align around a character according to his direction. Feng Shui and Tzu Wei, in particular (see pp. 63-65 and 90-91), rely upon the auspices of direction. When casting rituals of either Discipline, or when the target of their effects, the character can claim a -1 difficulty modifier for "auspicious circumstances": The character/room is completely covered in the direction's signature color; the caster performs the appropriate rituals a number of times corresponding to the direction's lucky number; etc. In such cases, the time and expense of activating the powers will generally extend to ritual lengths instead of taking a single turn; playing out the ritual should require a full scene.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE BREATH

F GODS

Han-Wu

at a small altar beside his roost, wafting thin ribbons of smoke between us. "What question may I answer for you, Fei?" Han-Wu, Third Dragon of Still Black Water, asked me. Were I still alive, I would have blushed.

"I aw ashamed to ask, Han-Wu."

"Shame has no meaning in the eyes of the holy, Fei. Now ask your question."

"It is just that, great Han-Wu," I stammered. It was all or nothing now. "We are dead and returned, you much longer than I. And you sit on billows made from silk harvested by starving peasants, smelling incense traded in the most expensive markets in all of China. How can you be a holy man?"

I expected him to roar, to take on the demon's shape and strike me down. Instead, he smiled. "We are holy by our thoughts and deeds, Fei. In the eyes of any god, a rich man is a poor man's equal, bettered by a life of virtue and an unlife of joss weathered. To judge is not your role."

By nature, men are nearly alike; by practice, they get to be wide apart.

- Confucian Analects 17:2

It is rare for the inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom to feel that they belong to one particular religious faith. For centuries, the region has been dominated by three or four major faiths -Buddhism, Confucianism, Taoism and, in Japan, Shinto - all of which combine in daily life to constitute the spirituality of millions of people. Individuals take various aspects from all of these religions and use them as doctrine in π manner completely foreign to the traditional Western understanding of religion. In modern times, there have been a number of Middle Kingdom converts to Christianity and Islam, both of which teach that there is only one true faith and one true God. But often these converts are regarded by their family, friends and neighbors as foolish and rash. A great number of people, due to the pressures of the modern world (i.e. increasing industrialization and the Communist Revolution in China), have abandoned religion altogether. But for millions of people (and the Kuei-jin lurking among them), religious faith is a vital part of life.



BUDDHism

The Life of Prince Siddhartha

The infant had barely left Maya's womb when it stood up on its own chubby newborn legs and looked around the wooded grove of its parturition with clear, cognizant eyes. Maya's attendants, who had all been so abuzz with activity the moment before, fell into an awed and reverent silence as if a great ethereal wave had passed over them. The babe then strode forward seven paces without a single misstep. When it had taken the seventh step, it planted its feet firmly on the soft soil and said in a loud and clear, but still childlike voice: "Let it be known that this rebirth is to be my last. In this lifetime, I am destined to attain nirvana."

This infant was named Siddhartha, which is Sanskrit for "He who has achieved his goal." During his childhood, his father (the king) secluded him from the sorrows and suffering of ordinary life. Only pleasant and joyous things surrounded Siddhartha during his formative years. However, when he had grown into a young man, he went outside the royal gates on a series of chariot rides. While on these excursions he was first exposed to the pains of old age when he saw a decrepit old man, disease when he saw a sick man, death when he saw a corpse and, finally, the suffering of laborers when he witnessed peasants plowing the fields. He was even grief stricken at the sight of the peasant's oxen hard at work, and at the thought of worms and insects being slaughtered under the blade of the plow.

After much meditation, and against the wishes of his father, Siddhartha decided to leave the riches and splendor of his life behind to become a mendicant. He studied under two wise men and quickly attained their levels on their respective paths to enlightenment, but found himself no closer to his goal. He then abandoned the paths and went to become an ascetic. He practiced stopping his breath and deprived himself of food periodically during five years, but again found himself no closer to enlightenment. In a flash of insight, he remembered a time in his childhood when he'd been perfectly tranquil under a shady tree and had entered into a state of dispassionate equilibrium, and then had quickly gone into his first trance. The mendicant (now known as Gautama) realized that extreme paths never lead to enlightenment. At this realization he took his first step on the Middle Way (or Middle Path), which quickly lead him to his goal. This is essentially a Way that rejects both sensual indulgence and bodily deprivation, and focuses on a "happy medium" as the best way to achieve the proper mind set for enlightenment.

On the night Gautama achieved nirvana, he sat beneath a bodhi tree and decided not to rise until he had become enlightened. Through the course of the night, Mara the Evil One tried to prevent Gautama from reaching his goal by sending demons and beautiful women, and finally tried to intimidate Gautama himself. None of this worked, and soon Gautama had a series of revelations that led him to nirvana. He realized the Four Holy Truths, the Twelve Preconditions, and outlined the Holy Eightfold Path. He also gained six "superknowledges": mystic powers (levitation, walking on water), the divine ear (the ability to hear heavenly voices, and all other sounds near or far), the ability to read other people's minds, the memory of his former lives, the divine eye (like the divine ear, but dealing with sight), and the extinguishing of desire and ignorance.

After reaching nirvana, the new Buddha remained on Earth for a time to teach the Middle Way to others. He later ascended to Heaven, where he joined the ranks of the other enlightened beings.

The Buddhist World View

There is a difference between Buddha, the founder of Buddhism, and a buddha, which simply is one of the enlightened beings. These enlightened beings are different from humans in that they see the true nature of reality. Life in the Buddhist conception of the universe can come in one of six forms. Gods, demigods and human beings are in the upper echelons, while animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings reside in the lower rungs of the life hierarchy. Buddhist gods are mortal. They lead lives of absolute pleasure in the Heavens, and are almost always reborn into the lower ranks, after existing for an incredibly long time. The gods' home in the Heavens is not the same place as the paradise where the buddhas reside (called the Buddha-Land). It is possible for the gods to reach enlightenment while in the Heavens. In fact, it is theoretically possible for beings at any level of the hierarchy to attain nirvana.

When a person becomes enlightened (or cursed, as the Cathayans know all too well), she escapes from this hierarchy. Buddhists believe in reincarnation and karma. Karma dictates in which rung of the hierarchy one will be reborn. If a human has committed evil deeds in his lifetime, he will be reincarnated as an animal, a hungry ghost, or a denizen of Hell, depending on the severity of the deeds. A good Buddhist, who follows the Eightfold Path, but does not reach nirvana during his lifetime, has the chance to be reborn as a demigod or even a god.

Life as a Buddhist

Followers of Buddha can choose to become either monks or nuns, or laypersons. Monks and nuns live in monasteries and devote their lives to the attainment of enlightenment. Laypersons have the chance to attain the third level of enlightenment (there are a total of four) and are guaranteed a good rebirth as long as they follow the Five Precepts for Laypersons. They are:

- 1. One must never kill a living being. This includes animals of all types, those things that "have life breath," but not plants.
- 2. One must refrain from taking what has not been given.
- 3. One must not engage in sexual misconduct.
- 4. One must never use lying or flattering speech.
- 5. One must abstain from drinking alcohol.

The Road to Nirvana

People often begin the journey toward enlightenment when they realize the Four Holy Truths. The first is the truth of suffering, which is birth, decay, illness, death, separation from loved ones, and association with the loathsome. The second is the truth of the source of suffering, which is the desire for sensual gratification, and the desire for existence and for the end to existence. The third is the truth of the cessation of suffering - suffering will cease when one stops desiring material things. The final truth is the path leading to this cessation of suffering, which is the Holy Eightfold Path.

The traveler on the road to enlightenment must follow the Holy Eightfold Path, which is also known as the Middle Way. The seeker must have the right views, the right intention and the right speech, perform the right action, follow the right livelihood, put forth the right effort, possess right mindfulness, and achieve the right concentration. The Middle Way also encompasses moderate living, which avoids extremes of luxury and self-denial.

Buddhists believe that each human's true nature is divine and eternal, but that the personality and all the other trappings of the body are transitory. The personality may last for a few cycles of rebirth, but it eventually disappears. The only way to prevent this, and to escape from this cycle, is to follow the Middle Way to enlightenment.

Buddhism in the Middle Kingdom

Buddhism came to China in the first century A D, during the Han Dynasty, where it was called Fo-jiao. This was a time of great strife among the Kuei-jin, when many of the Eastern vampires allowed their P'o to become more dominant, and infighting among the Hundred Corpse Families increased. The Buddhist doctrine of kindness and moderation as the way to enlightenment was very appealing to some vampires, especially those who remembered more peaceful nights. Others scoffed at the missionaries and the newly converted who claimed that "life is suffering." "How can mortals possibly begin to grasp true suffering?" the cynics sneered, shuddering almost imperceptibly as images from their time in the Yomi World came unbidden to their minds' eyes.

Nevertheless, Buddhism gradually took root among mortals and Cathayans, and slowly spread to other parts of the Middle Kingdom. It became one of the dominant religions m this area, sharing the spotlight with Confucianism, Taoism and Shinto. Buddhism eventually split into two main sects, Therevada and Mahayana. The major difference between the two is that the former describes enlightenment as "peace and tranguillity," while the latter sees it as "the emptiness and the unchanging essence of the Buddha," and the "ultimate reality." The Mahayana sect was responsible for the creation of the belief that there are bodhisattvas (beings who are nearing the state of total enlightenment) who have reached nirvana, but have not passed into the blissful Buddha-Land These enlightened beings remain in the world out of pity for humankind and make a solemn vow to help all of humanity attain nirvana before they will themselves journey to the land of infinite peace Indeed, many Buddhist Kuei-jin find themselves associated with the east direction, and may even travel the lands of the Middle Kingdom as itinerant monks.

Modern Sects

Some popular sects in the Middle Kingdom are Zen or Chan Buddhism and Pure Land Buddhism Zen (Japanese) or Chan (Chinese) Buddhism centers around the belief that every living creature has a Buddha nature and, therefore, a person must not look for enlightenment Instead, humans must listen to their hearts to realize the Truth Of course, people still must prepare themselves to do this listening under the guidance of a wise instructor, and through discipline and meditation When the student appears ready, the instructor will often try to "shock" her pupil into awakening This can be performed in a variety of ways, including asking the pupil a series of thought-provoking questions, then striking or shouting at the pupil to jolt him into enlightenment.

Pure Land Buddhism concerns the Amitabha Buddha, the Buddha of Boundless Light Followers of this path believe that eons ago, a very powerful man on the threshold of enlightenment vowed that he would not enter the Buddha-Land until he was certain that anyone who called his name, with perfect faith, especially at the moment of death, would be reborn into Amitabha's paradise and taken out of the cycle of reincarnation. Amitabha's paradise is known as the Pure Land, and lies in the west. (It is also known as the Western Paradise.) Some believe that even those who have committed evil deeds during their lives can call on Amitabha at the moment of their death, and if they have perfect faith, they can be transported to the inside of a closed lotus bud in the Pure Land. They will remain in this lotus bud until they have atoned for their sins by understanding the Buddhist doctrine and taking the road to enlightenment.

The Way of the Seven Lakes

There is a small but dedicated Cathayan sect, called the Way of the Seven Lakes, centered solely around the belief in the Amitabha Buddha and His Pure Land. The vampires of this sect spend much of their unlives doing what other Kuei-jin do - they are generally neither more nor less moral than other Kuei-jin, and they do not have to worry about following the Precepts or the Eightfold Path. However, they spend a small portion of each night meditating on the Amitabha Buddha, trying to achieve perfect faith in Him. If they should meet their Final Death, members of this sect call out His name, and journey into the unknown with complete confidence that they



will be transported to the Pure Land. If a member of the Way of the Seven Lakes believes that she has attained perfect faith in Amitabha, it is customary to watch the next sunrise: The Cathayan allows herself to rot away with great joy and resignation, and calls out the sacred name during her last moments of consciousness. This is a very rare event. Not surprisingly, very few Kuei-jin ever feel that they have perfect faith in anything, until they are at the threshold of an unanticipated Final Death.

The Origins of the Bodhisattva

A controversy rages among Kuei-jin scholars regarding who came up with the concept of the bodhisattva - the mortal Mahayana sect or the Cathayans. There are those who claim that this idea originated with the vampiric legend of the Eight Most August Immortals. The legend teaches that eight of the Wan Xian did not turn from their duties as protectors of humanity and, instead, struggled to remind their greedy brethren of their responsibilities. When Heaven cursed the Ten Thousand Immortals, the Eight fell under the curse, but the Ebon Dragon and the Scarlet Queen took pity upon them, and sent a wise dragon-spirit named Jiao Shou to tell the Eight of a way to remove the curse and ascend to Heaven. The grateful Wan Xian immediately set about following the dragon's prescribed path. After a long and arduous journey, the Eight finally stood on the brink of Heaven. But just before they took the final step, they paused and reflected upon the wretched unlives of the Kuei-jin, and felt compassion for them. The Eight decided to remain in their near-blessed state and help those Kuei-jin who are dedicated to the Path of Redemption

Some Cathayan historians claim that this story predates the mortal concept of the bodhisattva. They say that this circulated among mortals in India around the time the Mahayana sect was created, and that humans only fabricated the name. (Which, in turn, was adopted by the Kuei-jin to denote the most wise and revered among them.) Others insist that the Cathayan legend was heavily influenced by Taoist and Buddhist beliefs and was created by Buddhist Kuei-jin during the Sui Dynasty as a tool with which to convert other vampires to the Eightfold Path.



Kuei-jin and the Eightfold Path

With the exception of the members of the Way of the Seven Lakes, Cathayan Buddhists rarely follow the doctrines of their religion to the letter. Because of the influence of their P'o and the need for Chi, the Kuei-jin find it difficult to follow even the Layperson's Precepts. Chi that is "freely given" is very difficult to come by, and lying and flattery are necessary parts of nightly unlife in the Middle Kingdom. The major appeal of Buddhism for many Kuei-jin is the doctrine of moderation. It means that those vampires who try to follow the Middle Way do not have to worry about mortifying their dead flesh or depriving themselves of Chi, as some other faiths require. But it also means that a Buddhist vampire must avoid succumbing to her P'o. Consequently, there are few Cathavans who follow the Eightfold Path with much success. Those who manage to remain faithful for longer than a few decades have the tendency to endure great episodes of despair and sorrow as they repeatedly fail to conquer their dark natures.

A mortal Buddhist who returns as one of the undead is a miserable creature indeed. Upon regaining some semblance of sanity, the new vampire is often haunted by memories of the Hell he has just escaped from. His experience in the Yomi World affirms much of what he was taught in his mortal life, but the fact that he is now back on Earth (in his old body) is very confusing, and challenges the Buddhist doctrines of rebirth and karma. New Buddhist Kuei-jin often refuse to believe that they have returned from the dead, and instead presume that they are in another area of Hell. Some of these poor souls secretly retain this belief for decades. Others discard, or seriously modify, the tenets of their mortal lives almost immediately.

The Burning-Mouth Hungry Ghost

Shi Bi-kok was walking home from the city after a hard day's work at the new factory. It was getting dark, but he decided to take the path by the river instead of his regular route. The river's sounds always soothed his nerves and made him think back to the happy days of his youth when he had fished with his friend Lo Bu. His mind drifted back to a particularly pleasant afternoon and he was smiling to himself, all the worries of the day forgotten. Suddenly, he thought he saw something on the riverbank a few yards ahead of him. It was gray and misshapen, and at first Bi-kok thought it was a dog. But as he approached it, it took on a more humanlike shape. It slowly rose up before him, revealing a body so emaciated that Bi-kok was reminded of the corpse of an ascetic he'd seen as a boy. Now, as then, its flesh was stretched so tightly over its bones; he half expected its skin to split open at the ribs every time it moved. The eyes of the hideous creature were so sunken that they looked like shiny black pebbles. The figure hunched over with every vertebrae strikingly defined. Its hair hung limply around its shoulders, and Bi-kok could see that it had fallen out in patches. The ends of its hair looked singed, and when Bi-kok breathed, the scent of burnt rice filled his nostrils. It reached out to touch him with its gnarled claw-hands. Bi-kok tried to shrink back but he found that he was too terrified to move. The creature's hand passed through Bi-kok's arm and he felt a cold, tingling sensation creep up his arm and spread slowly through his chest. The creature opened its mouth, revealing a white-hot flame that burst past its lips when it croaked: "Don't you recognize me, Bi-kok?" Bi-kok's eyes came to rest on the creature's long knife-blade teeth wreathed with flame. He tried again to flee but his body still refused to respond. It croaked again: "It's me, Lo Bu."

CONFUCIANISM

The Wise Master K'ung

Confucianism is really more of a political and social system than an organized religion, per se. However, it has been practiced in the Middle Kingdom for about 2,500 years. This system's mythology tells us that in the late-sixth and early fifth century B.C. there lived a man named K'ung Fu-tzu, or Master K'ung. (The word "Confucius" is a Latinized version of this name, given to him by the first European missionaries to China.) He was very devoted to learning and especially appreciated the Five Classics - those of History, Poetry, Rites, the Book of Changes and the Chronicles of the Spring and Autumn Period. K'ung Fu-tzu held a position as a specialist in the governmental and family rituals in his native state of Lu (now known as Shantung), an eastern province in China. The time period during which Master K'ung lived is now called the Warring States Period, and is rightly called thus. He witnessed the hardships caused by war and grew disgusted by the discordant society, the neglect of duty, and the disregard for the rites that had previously held his country together.

Master K'ung, thus, did as many do in our own discordant world - he looked to the past for a model of the ideal society. He found this model in the stories of the Age of Legends, in the wise reigns of the legendary sage-kings Shun and Yao, and in the leadership of the Duke of Chou, the reputed founder of Lu. He used the sage-kings and the duke as archetypes for his system. Studying these histories, Master K'ung taught that the virtues of the ruler should correspond to the values that each of his subjects must cultivate. These include compassion toward others, loyalty and perseverance in serving one's superiors and a general feeling regarding what is morally right. This value system accompanies a system called *li*, which is based on the rituals of the ancients, and is purported to be a miniature version of the perfect pattern by which Heaven's favor was attracted. It outlines rituals for everyone, depending on gender, age, social standing, and context. Master K'ung believed that these rituals had a disciplinary effect on those who practiced them. Li, he reasoned, stopped depravity before it started and influenced people to move daily toward good conduct and away from wrongdoing.

The Four Books of Confucianism

Master K'ung did not write any of his philosophy down, but he accumulated quite a few followers, mortal and otherwise, during his lifetime. They collected his wisdom in a book called Analects, and in two shorter treatises called "The Doctrine of the Mean" and "The Great Learning." These texts influenced subsequent generations of philosophers, who added much to what we now know as Confucianism. An important contributor was Meng-tzu (known to the West as Mencius), who is called the Second Sage. He wrote of a program for perfecting the individual, in which the condition of sageliness could be achieved by gently cultivating one's innate tendencies for inner goodness and integrity. His text was later added to those of Master K'ung to form the Four Books of Confucianism.

The Spread of Confucianism

More than two centuries passed after the death of Master K'ung before the mortal rulers of China took any notice of Confucianism, which in the Middle Kingdom is called the "Scholar's Doctrine," or the "Teaching of the Sages." A few Cathayan scholars, contemporaries of Master K'ung, recorded much of his teaching for use by their own undead courts. Kuei-jin response to the Scholar's Doctrine was mixed at this time. Some had been greatly disturbed by the recent mortal attacks upon the Kuei-jin and hoped to implement this new way of governing in both mortal and vampiric spheres. Others called it the "Fool's Doctrine" and claimed that its idealistic philosophy had no place in Cathayan politics. The debate was cut short with the rise of the Qin Dynasty. The Kuei-jin were once again under attack, this time by the Shih. They were forced to abandon all philosophical discussion in favor of the need to survive.

During the Han Dynasty, Master K'ung's ideas and teachings started to receive support from the mortal emperors and the upper class. The Five Classics, which had been a basis for much of K'ung's philosophy, became required school texts. The emperors sponsored shrines honoring Master K'ung, which were very popular pilgrimage sites for scholars throughout the Middle Kingdom. Confucianism soon spread to countries like Korea and Japan, where it took firm root and was highly influential in the development of their respective political systems. The Kuei-jin who received their Second Breath during and after this time had Confucianism ingrained into their psyches. Soon the Hundred Corpse families began to adopt certain Confucian methods of governing almost unconsciously, as ever-increasing numbers of their ranks had spent all of their mortals lives under its guidance.

CONFUCIAN JDEOLOGY - THE GREAT HARMONY

The Wise Ruler

For Confucianists, three elements are important to a harmonious way of life. The first is a benevolent, orderly government that rules mainly by virtuous example. In "The Great Learning," Master K'ung outlines the way to be an effective ruler. In essence, the person who wishes to rule effectively must first regulate her own family. But to regulate the family, she must first cultivate her own character. To do this, she must set her heart right. To set her heart right, this person must make her thoughts sincere. To make her thoughts sincere, this individual must increase her knowledge to the utmost. In order to increase her knowledge, she must investigate the true nature of all things. This philosophy is based on the lives of the ancient (mortal) sage-kings, who had ruled effectively, yet almost effortlessly in the Age of Legends. It can also apply to the average person's life. To order her life and her family, the Confucianist must begin by investigating the true nature of things, and follow the path laid out by Master K'ung.

The Kuei-jin have a modified version of this doctrine. In order to become reconciled with the Great Cycle, a vampire must first help harmonize Cathayan society by being a good leader. But to do this, the Kuei-jin must first harmonize the members of her wu. To do this, she must first reconcile her Hun and her P'o. To reconcile her Hun and her P'o, she must first cultivate her mind and body by beginning her Dharma path. But to properly begin her Dharma path, the Kuei-jin must first investigate the nature of her existence and the nature of the Great Cycle.

The Loving Family

The second ingredient for a harmonious life is a concordant family in which the proper familial relationships are observed.

Children must show respect and reverence for their parents, and parents must bestow love and kindness upon their children. Master K'ung believed that the loving example of a family is reflected and radiated throughout the rest of society. Parents must be stern when dealing with their children's faults, but should be discreet about doing so. K'ung spoke of the concept of filial piety, involving both respect for one's parents and respect for oneself. It is a child's responsibility to obey her parents in all things (with the exception of when the child is asked to do something morally wrong by a corrupt parent), but the child must also take care of herself, since her body is a gift from her parents. This includes staying healthy and cultivating her mind. Many Kuei-jin adhere to this tenet in their unlives without making a conscious choice to do so. A Kuei-jin's wu becomes her family, and her superiors become her parents. But as the Sixth Age approaches, many newly arisen Kuei-jin are abandoning this way of thought, preferring to live more hedonistic lifestyles.

The Great Principle

The final ingredient for harmony is a peaceful empire. This, of course, means the lack of war and infighting among the individual states. But it also refers to the concept of Ta Ting a world commonwealth governed by the Great Principle. Under the Great Principle, only those of great wisdom and ability may lead. These leaders promote mutual confidence and good neighborliness between their nations. The citizens of these empires treat everyone as though each individual was a member of their own family, even the citizens of other nations. Within the nations, the aged and the downtrodden are cared for. Every person has a job and a home, and spends their free time for the benefit of others. Many aspects of this particular tenet are too idealistic for use in Kuei-iin society, so the Cathayans have modified the Great Principle. In the Commentary on the Great Doctrine, it is written: "Under the Great Principle, only those of the greatest mind, body and soul may lead. All others must follow the Fivefold Path."

In mortal society, the threefold formula, along with li and the cultivation of one's inner goodness, should repress the schemings of selfish individuals, eliminate the need to steal and commit other lawless acts, and allow everyone to live without fear. Master K'ung called this way of life "The Great Harmony."

The Path of Jen

Followers of Confucianism know that each person is the master of her own fate and is, therefore, responsible for her actions. They spend their lives cultivating their inner selves, trying to become what Master K'ung's doctrine calls the Superior Person. To become superior, one does not need to be a saint, a politician or an intellectual. One needs only to practice *jen*, which translates roughly as humanity or love, but encompasses a wide range of ideals. The Superior Person must control her desires, but help everyone else obtain what they desire, bring out the best in others, and be

poised and at ease in all situations. She is never selfconscious, thinks only of what is right, understands the broad issues and always take everything in stride. She must think before she speaks or acts, but must act quickly when the situation dictates. She always demands the best from herself, cultivates the qualities of generosity, modesty, industriousness and kindness, does not allow herself to be used and does not compete with others. (Sports are the exception, but the Superior Person is always humble when she wins, and good-natured when she loses.)

Furthermore, someone on the path to superiority must practice virtue (another part of *jen*). Master K'ung taught that a virtuous person's mind is like a tranquil mountain, while an ordinary person has an active, chaotic mind, akin to running water. He focused especially on five virtues: altruism, uprightness, sound judgment, sincerity and kindness, of which kindness was the most important. Kindness is the source of all the other virtues, and is also the main goal of both individual and social institutions like the state. Other important virtues include loyalty, reliability, and a sense of justice.

The Scholar's Doctrine and the Kuei-jin

Many Kuei-jin, especially those who have been around for a more than a few decades, adhere to modified principles of Confucianism out of habit. Others follow the tenets that apply to Cathayan society because they have been useful for decades in creating a less violent and chaotic environment. Those of the Resplendent Crane and the Song of the Shadow Dharmas, especially, use the Scholar's Doctrine as a stepping-stone along their own paths to enlightenment.

TAOISM

The Teachings of Lao-Tzu

Those who know say that when Lao-Tzu was very old, he seated himself on an ox and rode toward the west. When he reached the border, the guard posted there, having recognized him as the Old Master who knew so many things about the Way, begged him to write down his wisdom. Lao-Tzu agreed and wrote the book we call *The Classic on the Way and Its Power*, or the *Too Te Ching*.

Lao-Tzu lived in the seventh century B.C. Not much is known of his life, only that he might have been a secretary and archive keeper for the royal court. We do know that two movements were founded using the Too Te Ching: Philosophical Taoism and Religious Taoism. The philosophical branch inspired many to leave their material lives behind and to live m nature, trying to achieve harmony with the Tao, or to write philosophical discourses expanding on Lao-Tzu's thoughts. Religious Taoism began in the second century A.D. and continued as a series of religious movements up to modern times. It was, and is, an organized religion, and has rituals, doctrines, and a pantheon of gods. Its ultimate goal is immortality - in the Heavens or on Earth.

The Beginning of Religious Taoism

One of the first religious movements was known as The Way of the Celestial Masters, which claimed that the Most High Lord Lao (who was a deified form of Lao-Tzu) appeared to Zhang Taoling. The Most High Lord Lao explained many of his teachings to Zhang, and then gave him the title of "Celestial Master." The later Taoist movements followed this model of an increasingly more exalted Taoist deity who appeared to the movement's founder and bestowed upon him wisdom and titles. Religious Taoism is still popular today in the Middle kingdom. Taoist Masters have hereditary positions, and perform complex religious rituals using classical Chinese. Taoist shrines are homes for the many deities who bless and protect their worshippers, and who guide the religion.

Taoist Doctrines

The word "Tao" means "The Way" - the natural way of all things, that which cannot be put into words. The goal of Taoism is to achieve a perfect emptiness - free of desire and



resistance to what is natural. This perfect emptiness allows the believer to have a sort of mystical intuition of the Tao. To achieve this emptiness, one must be humble, gently yielding and serene. The good Taoist must practice wu-wei, nonaction. This is doing only that which is completely spontaneous. Each action must come in response to a need that has naturally arisen. Actions must never be calculated, and each effort must never exceed what is minimally required for attaining results.

The Taoist must be still and listen to the Tao's prompting, so that she may act effortlessly and efficiently. All actions create their opposing reactions, so those who follow the Way seek action in inaction. The Religious Taoist must also be moral. She must not steal, lie, or kill, because that is not the Way. She must be affectionate and kind, sympathetic to others' suffering and joyous when they have good fortune, practice the Golden Rule, and never be prideful. Heaven itself follows the path of virtue, and so must the faithful.

The Kuei-jin have a much looser interpretation of the way to achieve a mystical intuition of the Tao. The Cathayan Taoist practices wu-wei, acting without effort and only in response to what is needed. Taoist morality for the undead is more flexible than for the living, however. The *Book of the Ninth Immortal* says: "The Way encompasses what is good and what is evil. The celestial beings are as much a part of the Way as are the Yama Kings. It is in our nature to steal, lie and kill. Cultivate the Hun, but embrace the P'o when it tries to dominate. This path will lead to enlightenment." Many Kuei-jin Taoists find themselves on the Path of a Thousand Whispers, but some Devil Tigers claim to be Taoists as well.

Taoist Alchemy

A major Taoist goal is immortality. In the beginning there was the Tao, the perfect primordial chaos. The Tao brought forth the One; the One brought forth the Two; and the Two gave birth to the Ten Thousand Things, the imperfection. This model is recreated in mortal birth-the One is spilt up into the Ten Thousand Things of the imperfect body. It is also recreated in the Second Breath. The perfect soul is split into the Two - the Hun and the P'o - and the Two once again becomes the Ten Thousand Things of the undead body.

In order to become One with the Tao, the believer must unify the body's Ten Thousand Things, and the Cathayan believer must unify both her body and her soul. This unity results in bodily and/or spiritual immortality for mortals, and redemption for the Kuei-jin, the legends say.

Internal and External - the Hard and the Soft

There are two types of alchemy: inorganic, material, external alchemy; and organic, internal alchemy. The latter is concerned with transformation into the True Self, the Self that lives in harmony with nature and the Way. Internal alchemy's goal is the acceptance of Nature's way, a serene and The alchemist must follow the same moral code as other Taoists, but he also must be sure to carefully avoid any excess. This includes too much sorrow or joy, sleeping too late or not sleeping enough, drunkenness, celibacy, exercising too much or too little, overeating or starving oneself, having long conversations and telling pointless stories. The proper internal elements of morality, moderation, and wu-wei could be combined with the proper external elements (which make up an elixir), to confer immortality. The external elements could be as simple as a proper diet, or as complex as an elaborate mixture of herbs or minerals. There are countless stories of Cathayan alchemists who spent much of their unlives as hermits, scouring the Middle Kingdom and beyond for secret ingredients with which to formulate their elixirs of immortality. Nearly every wu claims to have one older member who either went insane looking for the magical elixir or succeeded and was released from her cursed existence.

Achieving Immortality

The Taoist immortal is called a *hsien*, and has many powers, such as the ability to appear in many places at once, to penetrate solid objects, to walk on water or move effortlessly into the earth, to read others' minds, and to hear the sounds of Heaven and of Earth. There are a few different types of hsien. One is the shih chieh hsien, who, after death, leaves no corpse and ascends to the Heavens. Another is the ti hsien, whose body has become so refined it transforms into pure essence. This type of hsien remains on Earth, reveling in the beauty of nature and occasionally interacting with the faithful.

Some Kuei-jin speculate that the hsien of the Tao are one and the same as the hsien who manifest as animal-spirits or spirits of nature. Scholars of the matter claim that the refined Taoist spirit acts out the way of the Tao through a borrowed body, manifesting the will of nature. Other students of the Tao claim that the two are distinctly different creatures, and that the spirits in mortal form are not true Taoist hsien. Only a person who is one with the Tao could possibly know for sure.

Taoist Yoga and Kuei-jin

A Cathayan practicing Taoist yoga or tai chi chuan can sometimes spend long periods of time between feedings. This should be handled per the Meditation Ability outlined on pp. 83-84 of the Kindred of the East sourcebook. To see how long the character can go without feeding, roll Stamina + Meditation, difficulty 9. Each success allows the diameter to go one night without feeding.

Taoist Yoga

The alchemist could also forgo the material elements altogether and, instead, practice Taoist yoga. This type of yoga is concerned with controlling chi, the life breath or vital breath of the universe. When chi is condensed, it causes life, but when it is dispersed, death results. Taoist yoga controls the chi in the body and sets the internal alchemy in motion, leading to immortality. Alchemists practice tai chi chuan, massage, breathing exercises, and are even concerned with sleeping in the proper, natural position. The proper position imitates the sleeping postures of animals, like the curled position of a dog or a coiled, sleeping dragon. Cathayan yogi are rumored to retain Chi longer and use it more effectively.

A Taoist yogi may eventually attain marvelous powers, the "me marvelous powers that can be attained by dedicated Buddhists. These include the ability to increase or decrease in height, to become invisible, to be able to touch distant objects and manipulate them, to have every wish fulfilled and to control the body completely and perfectly. Also, yogi are sometimes able to change anything in nature, to be anywhere in the universe at will, to know the past and the future, to understand the language of animals, and to communicate with the dead. This path also leads to hsienhood, and is the more popular type of alchemy in the modern nights.

Taoist Mythology

Aside from the myriad of gods who are each a personification of the Tao, Taoists believe in the Eight Immortals. These figures were once human, but became immortal through one means or another. Chung-li Ch'uan is the founder of the group, depicted as a scantily clad, fat and bearded old man with a feathered fan and a fly-whisk. He was an alchemist who used material alchemy to change certain metals into silver and gave the end product to the poor, thus saving many lives. He found the secret of immortality through meditation and through taking a special elixir.

Another of the Great Immortals is Chang Kuo, a hermit with a miraculous white donkey that could cover great distances in a day. When he dismounts from his donkey, it folds up like a piece of paper. To ride it again, he spits water onto the folded-up piece of paper and it is restored to its original state.

A third is Li T'ieh-kuei, an ugly beggar on a crutch who was once a handsome man. His spirit used to leave his body to go wandering quite often. Once, people found his spiritless body and thought that he was dead, so they cremated it. When Li returned, he had to enter the body of a beggar who had just died by the roadside. Li rides the crane of immortality and carries a gourd-bottle. At night he leaps inside the bottle to sleep.

Han Hsiang Tzu was born with the marks of a hsien, and devoted his life to alchemy and the Elixir of Life. He fell from the Peach Tree of Immortality and died, but immediately was transformed into a living, immortal Taoist priest. The other four Immortals have equally remarkable powers and stories. Taoists revere and love the Eight Immortals, and call on them for guidance and protection whenever they are in need.

The Taoist Paradises

Taoists believe that when a person becomes one with the Tao, she can either remain on Earth to help others find the Way, or go to one of the many paradises. There is the Earthly Paradise, which has neither wind nor rain, but has a "divine spring" that provides water for a variety of exotic plants and animals. According to Taoist doctrine, this paradise is on the north shore of the Northern Ocean on Earth. Its inhabitants are gentle, with kind hearts and delicate bodies. They follow the Way without strife. They are moral, and have no trace of arrogance or envy. Another paradise is known as the Western Paradise, and is very similar to the Buddhist paradise by the same name. The Queen of Heaven, Hsi Wang Mu, rules the Taoist Western Paradise. A Peach Tree of Life grows in the center of this land. The paradise is paved with gold, silver, jade, pearls and crystal. There are seven lakes with shores of golden sand; exotic, beautiful birds and magnificent flowers. All manner of spectacular creatures and virtuous souls live here. Most Religious Taoists aspire to be transported to one of these paradises upon death.

The Eight Most August Wan Xian

The Taoist Immortals are based on the Cathayan myth of the Eight Most August Wan Xian, vampiric scholars claim. Some of the Immortals have direct parallels to the August Wan Xian. Chung-li Ch'uan, the leader of the Taoist Immortals, has many of the same characteristics as Zu Xiong, the most powerful and virtuous of the August Wan Xian. Xiong, like Ch'uan, was a mortal sorcerer or alchemist who used his magical powers to help the needy. One legend says that Xiong could create silver out of thin air, while another says that he used his magic to befriend many fox spirits, who showed him where countless treasures 'were hidden. He was very old when he first crossed into the spirit worlds to become a Wan Xian, but was also one of the first Ten Thousand Immortals. There are many other Taoist Immortal/Cathayan Wan Xian parallels, most of which are recorded m the Book of the Ninth Immortal.

The Kuei-jin and the Way

A Kuei-jin who was a true, devout Taoist in her mortal life usually does not suffer a lapse of religious faith after her Second Breath. Instead, she accepts that this is part of the Way, and quickly adapts herself and her belief system to her new unlife. However, it is exceedingly rare for a true, devout Taoist to meet any of the criteria needed to claw her way back from the Yomi World.

It is more often the case that a Taoist receiving the Second Breath only loosely followed the Way in her mortal life, and reawakens in a very confused and anxious state (to put it mildly). A fair-weather Taoist usually formulates one of two theories during the first months of her unlife. The first theory is that the fledgling Kuei-jin did something so incredibly heinous during her mortal life that the Tao itself rejected her, and flung her out of the Great Cycle. The second, and more popular, theory is that the Kuei-jin is still part of the Tao, but paradoxically, is no longer part of the Great Cycle. Those who support the first theory tend to snap within the first months of their unlives and go on a suicidal rampage, resulting in a quick, merciful Final Death at the hands of their ciders. Those who embrace the second theory range from the elated to the despondent, but most lie somewhere in the middle of these extremes.

SHINTO: THE WAY OF THE KAMI

From Chaos into Order

Before the First Age, chaos and turmoil reigned. But then Ame-no-mmaka-nushi-no-kami, the Kami of the Center of Heaven, came into existence, and with this kami came the beginnings of harmony and order. Other kami followed, and the chaos further refined into order. Finally there was Izanagi-no-mikoto and Izanami-no-mikoto. Together, these kami descended from the High Plain of Heaven and gave birth to the Great Eight Islands , which those in the West know as japan. Since the Great Eight Islands by themselves were quite lonely and barren, Izanagi and Izanami brought forth all the other things of the world. Lastly, they gave birth to many other kami to watch over their creation. Included in this new group of kami were Ama-terasu-o-mikami, who is the Sun Goddess, and her brother Susa-no-o-no-mikoto, who is the god in charge of the Earth. Under the guidance of the Sun Goddess and the other kami, humanity brought itself out of the chaos left over from the time before the First Age. Because of the infinite blessings of the kami, the people of Japan prospered, and were able to work toward harmony with each other and with the things of nature. This is why we daily give thanks to the kami through our offerings and our prayers. This is why we continue to honor the kami with our shrines celebrating their divine presence. This is why we must remember the kami, and strive to be in accord with their benevolent will, even though they no longer speak to us as often as they once did. Even though they no longer reside in the shrines we have built for them. Even though...

Shinto could be considered a "racial" religion, meaning that it deals very specifically with a group of people sharing a similar ancestry. It is not likely to be found outside of Japan. This religion involves the worship of a great many things Japanese: from the physical features of Japan, such as rivers, rocks and trees, to natural phenomena, such as the rain falling on the Japanese soil or the wind blowing through Japan's trees, to the ancestral spirits of the Japanese people. Followers of Shinto believe that foreigners, even those born in nearby China or Korea, cannot possibly have the proper connection to Japan's land and history in order to truly understand the way of the kami. Thus, there is no attempt by Shintoists to go on missions to foreign countries in order to convert the masses, just as there is no attempt by the Chinese or Koreans to convince foreigners to worship Chinese or Korean ancestors.

The Shinto World

The word Shinto literally means "The Way of the Kami" or "The Way of the Gods." Unlike most other organized religions of the Middle Kingdom, Shinto has no founder or sacred scriptures. It seems to have developed from a mixture of



ancestor worship and animism, as well as from a deep respect for the natural world. There is no supreme deity who is responsible for creation or who rules over all others. In Shinto mythology, the creation of the world was a result of cooperation and harmony between two gods. Even the most august of Shinto's gods, the Sun Goddess, is not an absolute ruler. She is known to consult with other gods and spirits on certain matters and to call on the others for help in difficult situations. The universe, from the Shinto point of view, is filled with sentient, benevolent life, and itself is an active, sentient organism.

Kami Tonight

Ironically, because of events like the bombing of Hiroshima and; Nagasaki (known to the Middle Kingdom's shen as The Burnings), the majority of Japan's true kami spirits have fled the country. True kami do, however, exist in many other parts of the world, but are only recognized by those who are genuinely in tune with the spirit world. Although most of Japan's mortal population is unaware of it, other, opportunistic shen have been "impersonating" the kami since their mass exodus in 1945. Many Kuei-jin have taken residence in the vacated Shinto shrines and use their powers to trick mortal Shintoists into worshipping them as kami. The kamuii - Eastern changelings who fall under the banner of lesser kami - are, essentially, the only true kami left in Nippon. These beings are greatly coveted by the Kuei-jin because they are excellent sources of Chi.

The Kami

In modern times, the Japanese people have no set idea of what the kami are. The term "kami" denotes a wide variety of supernatural beings: from gods and nature spirits to animal and human spirits. Generally, a kami is any noble, sacred spirit revered for its virtues and authority. In a sense, all beings possess such a spirit, so living, sentient beings (even humans) can be considered to be kami. In practice, however, the only humans worshipped as kami are long-dead ancestors or heroes of the distant past. In ancient times, the idea of the kami included natural phenomena (like the wind, thunder, and rain), natural objects (the sun, mountains, rivers, trees and rocks), certain animals spirits and ancestral spirits (mainly the Imperial ancestors and the ancestors of Each kami possessed its own special nobles). characteristics, abilities, and mission. They could be entities who guarded the land, a founder and patron of a certain trade, the guardian of a specific object or phenomenon, or the protector of a certain social group (a clan or the inhabitants of an area), to name a few.

The kami could also include the spirits of fallen human heroes, or of persons of outstanding deeds and virtues, of contributors to Japanese civilization, culture, and welfare, or even of those who died tragically or pitiably. Today, many have forgotten these distinctions and simply think of the kami nonspecifically as noble spirits. Believers know that all natural things, both organic and inorganic, come into existence because of the kami, and that the kami's limitless blessings will ensure that all remains well in the world. This belief has been sorely tested in recent times, because all is not well in the Middle Kingdom. Increasing industrialization and urbanization, along with the nuclear detonations in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, have dramatically reduced the pure lands where the kami historically dwell, as well as the natural objects and phenomena produced by the kami. There is less evidence of the kami's boundless blessings as the Sixth Age approaches, causing many mortal believers to question their understanding of the world.

The Shinto Belief System

The follower of Shinto worships the kami, and tries to live her life in accordance with the kami's will. The believer can attain a higher spirituality by worshipping and communing with the kami. Shinto is more than simple faith in superior powers, however. It is a way of living one's life and a conglomeration of attitudes and ideas. In the past, this religion has traditionally been both a personal faith and communal way of life. It has always been a very optimistic faith, which professes that the world is an inherently good place. It has slowly been progressing from chaos, confusion and contradiction to a state of order, harmony and unity. This has been aided by the kami and by the accord between humankind and the kami's will.

The Yomi-no-kuni

People are also considered' to be inherently good, and Shintoists regard any evil that a person does as something akin to a sickness. Because both the world and humanity belongs to the always-virtuous kami, evil therefore cannot originate from either this world or from humans. Evil comes from what the ancients called Yomi-no-kuni, or the Darkness World. Evil spirits, called magatsuhi, originate in the Darkness World, and often sneak into our world with the intent of corrupting humankind. While the human soul is good, the body is weak and can easily succumb to the beguiling whispers of the magatsuhi. These evil spirits can also cause natural disasters, pollution and misfortune, disturb the social order, create strife between peoples and just generally plague humanity. One can rid oneself of a magatsuhi by using one's willpower and by ritually removing the pollution caused by the magatsuhi's depraved influence. In the modern world Shintoists increasingly see evidence of the magatsuhi's influence on humankind. This has lead many to wonder if the door between this world and the Darkness World has somehow been left wide open. It seems to many that the magatsuhi are taking over this world by increasing chaos and discord, while the kami retreat into Takama-gahara (the High Plain of Heaven) or, worse yet, are destroyed.

Some Kuei-jin marvel at how accurate the Shinto view of spiritual things is at times. It is living proof of the Kuei-jin's influence on humanity during Shinto's formative years, many say. Of course, any record that affirms or denies this has been lost.

Shinto Morality

What is good and what is evil is relative in modern Shinto, and the moral value of an action depends on motivation, the specific circumstances involved in the act and the outcome of the action. If an action is committed with an evil heart, selfish desire or hatred toward another, it is unconditionally considered to be evil. In general, a follower of Shinto should have courteous and proper conduct, be sincere, practice conciliation, cultivate feelings of goodwill, cooperation and affection and try to live in accordance with the mind of the kami. While some Cathayans chuckle at the idea of trying to accord with the mind of something that no longer truly exists in the Middle Kingdom (and that their brethren easily impersonate), others put a more idealistic spin on the idea. The kami of Shinto include the Scarlet Queen and the Ebon Dragon (known as Izanami and Izanagi to the Japanese), who created the Wan Xian and cursed them to become the Kuei-jin. To live in accordance with the minds of the Most High Kami might be a way for the Kuei-jin to redeem themselves and to return to the Great Cycle.

Worship of the Kami

Daily life is ideally spent in service to the kami. This mostly means that followers of Shinto are trying to live according to the general moral code outlined above. It also means daily worship at a shrine, whether it is at a gala ceremony celebrating a major event, at a local public sanctuary or in front of a home altar. Worship of the kami through rites and ceremonies ensures that the believer and her community will remain in the kami's good favor, and wards off possible misfortune by keeping away the magatsuhi. Some of the rites include offering one's whole life to the kami, prayers for divine protection, reports to the kami about the affairs of one's daily life, communion with the kami and praising the kami's virtue.

Followers of Shinto generally have a home altar, which is located either in a private garden or on a high shelf (called kami-dana) inside of the home. The faithful should spend time every morning worshipping the kami at this miniature shrine. But this is the ideal for a follower of Shinto. In reality, daily life in modern Japan is often too hectic for even a simple act of worship. The most dedicated Shintoist may go for weeks with only a perfunctory nod in the direction of their miniature shrine as they hurry out the door. Some blame the modern believer's lack of dedication for the growing silence of the kami.

The Kuei-jin and the Kami

The Cathayan interpretation of Shinto is a source of hope to many vampires. The flexible morality of this religion is very suited to the life of a Kuei-jin in the Fifth Age. The idea that accordance with the mind of the Most High Kami, the Ebon Dragon and the Scarlet Queen, will lead to redemption is a source of inspiration to many. Those who were followers of Shinto in their mortal lives find no great discrepancy upon their return from the dead. The Yomi World is usually as the Shintoist expects it to be - a world filled with horror beyond imagination, demons and darkness. Since Shintoists see evil as pollution and unnatural, it logically follows that the human soul would reject the Yomi World and struggle violently to return the Earth. The P'o is seen as pollution - it is a magatsuhi that attached itself to a human soul in order to sneak into our world. The Shintoist who returns as a Kuei-jin will normally devote many hours a day to ritually remove the pollution caused by her P'o, at least in the first months following her Second Breath. There have been cases where a Shintoist returns as a Kueijin, and, appalled and inspired by his experience in the Yomi World, devotes his unlife to fighting the magatsuhi.

Shinto and the Cathayan

There is an ongoing debate over the state of the Cathayan soul from a Shintoist perspective. Many followers of Shinto insist that the P'o is an evil spirit and parasite, using the Kueijin's body to remain in our world. Others believe that the P'o has merely been tainted by the soul's experience in the Yomi World. They argue the P'o half of the soul is sick, and needs to be purified through rituals and deeds that please the Most High Kami.

Hinduism

The Oldest Religion

To find the origin of Hinduism, one would have to search far into the distant past, beyond the beginnings of recorded history. It has no founder and no date of founding, and is considered by many to be the world's oldest living religion. As would be expected from such an enduring religion, it encompasses a great many beliefs, and allows for much flexibility in worship. The main focus of worship is the Supreme Reality, which is called by many names. It is each soul's ultimate goal to realize Truth (which has many forms). A soul may be reincarnated countless times until it has achieved understanding, and then it will finally merge with the Truth that has been understood.

The Truth, of course, is that God (called by many names) lives in the heart of every human, and in every thing in the universe. God is often called the Self, because God makes up every human's personality. Hatred, envy, greed are all worthless emotions, because everyone is interconnected through God. It is easy to believe these things, but it is immensely difficult to truly realize your Oneness with all things, and especially with God. Therefore, countless rebirths are necessary. Each life is either a valuable lesson learned or an opportunity for the soul's betterment lost.

Hindu Karma

The belief in karma is a fundamental aspect of Hinduism. If the person has lived a good, moral life, she is reborn in better circumstances and is allowed to go on from where she left off in her spiritual life. But if she has lived an immoral life, her rebirth will be in a degraded form or in lowly circumstances and the person is sent back a few steps spiritually. This is an explanation for why some mortals are born into unfortunate, unhappy lives and others are healthy and gifted. As Hindu Kuei-jin know all too well, if a person has lived an abominable life, she will be taken out of the Great Cycle completely, until she has paid her karmic debt. Hinduism teaches that there is no single path to enlightenment and salvation, and that all true religions are facets of God's Light. Thus, all true religions deserve understanding and tolerance.

The Dividing Line

There are three main denominations in Hinduism, and many liberal, non-sectarian groups. They each have their different ways of realizing the Truth. Saivism, which teaches that the soul's final destiny is to merge with Shiva, the destroyer, has four stages to enlightenment. The soul must first move through reincarnation and karma to a state of instinct and intellectualism into morality and virtue. It moves into devotion and temple worship and then to yoga, internalized devotion, and meditation. Finally union is achieved with Shiva, and the soul reaches a state known as jnana (wisdom).

The Dharmic Origin

Saivism and the Devil-Tiger Dharma both grew out of an ancient Cathayan Dharma, the Way of the Ten Thousand Screams. This path to enlightenment was the first to advocate embracing the P'o in an attempt to achieve a perfect union with the Yama Kings. The reasoning behind this was that the Creator made "yd for a purpose - to keep the Great Cycle in motion. The Yama Kings corrupt and destroy so that the Creator may renew. The Wan Xian became Wan Kuei not because they had been cursed, but because the Creator had a new purpose for them. This was why all the newly created Wan Kuei had to journey through Hell before returning to their bodies. Those of the Ten Thousand Screams Dharma chose one of the Yama Kings to emulate and spent their unlives fulfilling their terrible purpose.

Saivism was created by a group of Kuei-jin who had become disgusted with the depravity of their fellows. This group declared that the true Creator was also a Destroyer, and took the Yama Kings and the concept of evil out of the equation entirely. The members of this group began to emulate the Creator and tried to achieve a balance between destruction and creativity. This tenet was soon spread to mortals, who adapted it to fit into their own belief system.

Another Hindu denomination, known as Vaishnavism, teaches that one can reach unity with the Lord Vishnu (the

preserver and guardian of life) through temple worship, practicing different types of yoga, and chanting the holy names of Vishnu's incarnations. One must ultimately surrender oneself completely to the Lord Vishnu to attain total liberation.

Hindu Yoga

The word "yoga" means "uniting" - the joining of mind, body and spirit in order to be at one with God. Before yoga can be truly effective, the yogi, or yogin, must free his heart of desire, anger, fear and malice toward other living creatures. He must also learn to control his thoughts by turning them inward and concentrating on his sole purpose (unity with God). He must lit cross-legged with his back and neck relaxed but erect, and train his mind to shut out all distracting thoughts. This can be learned by concentrating on one aspect of God or repeating a holy name until all other thoughts are banished from the mind. It can take years to be able to do this correctly, and only the most dedicated, or the very gifted, can fully reach the proper state of mind (called the "highest state").

The person who practices this type of meditation intensively and for many hours may allow her to tap into mental and physical faculties unknown to regular people. The dedicated yogin may enter into a state the Hindus call samadhi, "immeasurable bliss," or a cosmic consciousness. This is a state in which individuals may come to realize the Truth, and enter into their unity with God. Hindu yoga is very popular among the Kuei-jin. (See the Meditation Ability in Chapter Three of the Kindred of the East sourcebook.) It has been used for centuries as a means to move further along one's Dharma path.

Four Roads to Enlightenment

There are a few different types of yoga, all of which lead to enlightenment. Bhakti yoga is the way of love and devotion, and is usually directed toward a singular manifestation of the god called Brahman, the original god of creation. The practitioner of bhakti yoga disciplines her mind, body and spirit, and directs intense love and longing toward the beloved manifestation. The proper intensity can carry the devoted to the state of samadhi. Karma yoga is the yoga of action and of work, and can easily be practiced by the average householder just by living his daily life. This person offers all of his work and all of his actions to God and does not think of rewards or results of his deeds. Extraordinary people, such as great warriors and kings, can also be (and have also been) karma yogins.

Two other types of yoga, called raja and jnana yoga, are less commonly practiced. This is because they are disciplines of the intellect and the state of samadhi must be reached through the intensity of thought alone. One cannot just buy a book on yoga, practice what it teaches, and expect to reach enlightenment. Hindus must find a guru who can impart to them centuries of wisdom and provide them with invaluable personalized help. The guru can also guide her student if and when he taps into a hidden power through his meditation. If the student were to tap into this power without guidance, serious damage can be incurred upon both the student and upon others around him. Kuei-jin must also find a guru if they wish to practice the art of yoga. Sometimes a vampire is lucky enough to have an accomplished guru in her wu. If this is not the case, she might have to spend years searching for a true teacher, as they can be quite reclusive if they are genuine.

Hindu Gods - The Many are One

A great rishi (a Hindu wise man), named Yagnavalkya, was once asked, "How many gods are there in the universe?" He replied, "Three and three thousand, three and three hundred." But the other, wishing to prod him, said, "Yes, but, how many gods are there really in the universe?" "Thirty three," the rishi said. "Of course," the other said, "But how many gods are there truly in this universe?" "Three," Yagnavalkya replied. "Certainly," the other said with a twinkle in his eye, "But for the last time, how many gods are there in the universe?" "One," the wise man said simply.

All of Yagnavalkya's answers are true, in a sense. All deities are aspects of the Supreme Being, since the Supreme Being is in the essence of every thing in the universe. Many say that Hinduism has millions of gods. This is because each Hindu household has a shrine dedicated to whichever god the family chooses and each village has a specific deity, which is only known to residents of, and only resides in, that village. There is a multitude of temples, festivals, and holy places dedicated to a multitude of gods. But there are also gods who are common all over India.

Shiva is one such god. He is the destroyer and the creator, the dancer whose primal energy brings the universe into existence, permeates it in its entirety and then brings about its destruction, only to bring it back into being. He has four arms, which represent his four powers. Shiva holds a drum in one of his right hands, which calls the universe into being. His other right hand, the uplifted one, protects the universe. The fire in one of Shiva's left hands destroys it, and his other left hand points downward to his raised foot, which releases the soul from false beliefs. Vishnu is another god known throughout India. [He is the preserver of life. He has saved the world countless times from disasters, and is born as a wise man whenever humanity is in need, to show by his wisdom and teaching the way out of adversity. The more callous Kuei-jin scoff at this myth, muttering that all of the preservers of life are now its destroyers. Others, troubled by the coming of the Sixth Age, secretly hope that a Vishnu will arise to lead them out of the impending Age of Sorrow.

Hinduism Tonight

There is no set organization for the Hindu religion. The only authority is that of the scriptures, known as the Vedas, and e Brahmins, a caste of people who have dedicated their lives to There is no fixed degree of belief in Hinduism. To some, the gods are quite real and many go to the temples and pray at their private shrines in order to meet their spiritual needs. But to others, the gods are symbols and their representations in the temples are enjoyed as lovely works of art. Still others do not believe in any gods or God, but nevertheless seek enlightenment by following the many Hindu paths.

The Sacredness of Living Things

personal affair.

Vegetarianism is an important aspect of Hinduism. This stems from the belief that God is in all living things - in all animals and insects - and, therefore, it is wrong to kill these creatures. (It is acceptable to kill plants, however.) Cows are special animals in Hinduism. They have been worshipped for their generosity in giving milk and milk-products to humans, and are never killed for their meat. Of course, Hinduism is a multifaceted religion, so not every Hindu is a vegetarian.

Hinduism and the Kuei-jin

A mortal Hindu who is reborn as a Kuei-jin is faced with a troubling revelation - he has been removed from the Great Cycle, and is cursed to live in his mortal body in a wretched, degraded existence. But soon, the fledgling vampire remembers the basic tenets of his religion-that life is an illusion, and that each life, or unlife, is a lesson to be learned. A Kuei-jin who was a Hindu in her mortal life tends to embrace her unlife as a revelation. Reality is not definite, because it is illusory. What a person knows in one life is not necessarily true in the next. This realization usually inspires the Hindu Kuei-jin to pursue her Dharmic path with great zeal. Revelations like these are the reason that many non-Hindu Kuei-jin often come to this religion and use it as a jumping-off point for their Dharmas.

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Islam's introduction into the Middle Kingdom

No one knows when Islam was first introduced into the Middle Kingdom. There is a long history of contact between the peoples of northern China and ancient Arabia via overland trading routes, and Arabic traders had long frequented the ports in southern China. Many of these individuals settled in the port cities, like those of Canton and Hangchow. The earliest known Chinese mosque was built in Canton in the early seventh century. Emperors of the T'ang and Yuan Dynasties employed Muslims in positions such as

governors of provinces, or posts in such fields as astronomy, literature, medicine and military affairs. Muslims were allowed to freely practice their religion in China throughout these earlier centuries. But there were not many conversions of the inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom. Muslims from foreign lands tended to keep to themselves and did not try to spread the doctrine of Allah to their new neighbors.

During the Qing Dynasty, which lasted from the seventeenth up until the early twentieth century, the government suddenly became hostile to the Muslims. They were segregated and intermarriage between the Muslims and the Chinese was forbidden. In the mid-twentieth century the Chinese government adopted a more lenient policy toward Islam and even made the study of Muslim culture part of the curriculum m Chinese Universities. In Korea, Islam was not noticeable until 1960, when the Korean Muslim Federation was inaugurated. Since then, there has been a steady stream of conversions due to the large number of Korean engineers and laborers who have served in the Middle East on construction projects funded by Korean companies.

A Culture Within a Culture

The Muslim community in the Middle Kingdom tends to keep itself separate from the other inhabitants. There is often no centralized religious authority for Islam in the countries of the Middle Kingdom, and so Muslims organize their own religious affairs, which includes electing their own religious officials. The Islamic religious duties also set the Muslims apart. These include turning toward Mecca to pray five times each day, fasting during the daytime for the month of Ramadan, using Arabic in their religious ceremonies and paying tithes and giving alms as prescribed by the Koran.

Islamic culture in the Middle Kingdom also has specific burial rites in separate Muslim graveyards, wedding ceremonies with marriage certificates written in Arabic, and ways of dress that stand out from the clothing indigenous to the Middle Kingdom. Muslim parents name their children from the Koran, thus creating a further cultural distinction. Boys are

allowed to many non-Muslims, but girls must always marry within their own faith. Despite the early tendency for followers of Islam in the Middle Kingdom to keep to themselves and regard themselves as tributaries in foreign lands, and despite the persecution they endured, Islam has become widespread in recent years, especially in Malaysia and Indonesia.

Kuei-jin who try to follow Islamic tenets tend to keep their distance from Cathavan culture. These Kuei-iin will try to distinguish themselves by wearing Middle Eastern styles of dress and observing modified Islamic religious duties. Some regard the rest of the Kuei-jin as akuma, and the masochists of this group include themselves under that banner.

The Path to Heaven

Islam was started about 1400 years ago in Arabia, by the prophet Mohammed. Mohammed received the Word of God through the angel Gabriel, and wrote it down in the sacred scripture called the Koran. The word "Islam" means "submission," to the will of the Supreme (and only) Deity, Allah. The ultimate goal of Islam is to attain eternal life, physically and spiritually, in Heaven. Heaven is a place where joy and pleasure abounds, where there are beautiful gardens and fountains, the finest foods and only the most beautiful people - in other words, paradise. Humanity is regarded as Allah's most noble creation, and is prized by Him above all others (even His angels).



Islam and Kuei-jin

Few Kuei-jin follow Islamic doctrine, but the ones who do have raging debates over how Allah regards them. If humanity is Allah's most noble creation, then the Ten Thousand Demons must be His most reviled, some say. Others believe that the Kuei-jin fall under the category of "human," and thus still have a chance for redemption. They reason that Allah has given them a second chance. After all, He gave each Cathayan a taste of Hell, and in His wisdom He allowed each to return to her original body to right the wrongs of her mortal life. The Muslim Kuei-jin who subscribe to the latter opinion tend to follow the heretical Flame of the Rising Phoenix Dharma.

The Five Pillars

To get to Heaven, the believer must totally submit herself to Allah's will. Even this act may not guarantee admission to Heaven, since Allah may desire even the most faithful souls to suffer for Him. To submit, one banishes pride from one's psyche (the worst sin a Muslim can commit is feeling pride), and follows to the letter Allah's will as written by His greatest prophet Mohammed in the Koran. The faithful must believe m the five doctrines and observe the Five Pillars of Faith. The first pillar is perfect faith in Allah, who is the only God, and the belief that Mohammed was Allah's last and greatest prophet. The second is to pray five times each day, kneeling and facing the direction of Mecca, which is the holy city. The third is to give alms. This is a certain percent of each believer's income, and is used to support the building and upkeep of mosques and to feed the poor. The fourth is to fast during the ninth month of the year (Ramadan) from sunrise to sunset. The final pillar is that of pilgrimage. Each Muslim must journey to Mecca at least once in her lifetime, wearing a seamless white garment. Allah is greatly pleased when his Faithful follow the Five Pillars.

The Kuei-jin who chooses to can easily modify the Five Pillars to fit his unlifestyle. He prays five times every night, facing Mecca. He devotes a set amount of his liquid assets to the upkeep of mortal mosques. Through careful planning and discipline, he endures a modified fast every night for the month of Ramadan. And, because of modern conveniences, it is easier than ever for a vampire to travel to Mecca. All that is left is perfect faith in Allah, which, for some Cathayans, is easier said than done.

Muslim Life

There is no difference between religious and secular life in Islam - to live is to worship Allah. Therefore it is vital that followers of Islam lead virtuous lives. They must be truthful at all times and in all circumstances - even if the truth brings pain or injury. They must always be humble before Allah, and temperate in all things (especially alcohol).

One must obey Allah's laws at all times and practice good conduct every day, especially refraining from usury and gambling (two more terrible sins). Virtues are especially important because Allah is the Supreme Creator and Sustainer of all things, is all knowing and transcendent, and is the final judge of all humanity. If Allah judges a soul to be unworthy, that soul will be sent to endure the terrors of Hell for all eternity. It is particularly necessary to live a virtuous life in Islam, because the soul only gets one chance at embodiment (unless, of course, Allah deems it otherwise), and then both body and soul are sent to either Heaven or Hell.

Each person communes directly with Allah, so priests are not needed. Furthermore, all are equal in Allah's eyes, so each person may act as her own priest. Allah forbids the worship of idols, even if they are meant to be representations of Him. Besides, no person could possibly imagine or describe Him, because He is transcendent and beyond the human imagination. During the Last Judgment, the faithful will stand in front of Allah to be judged, and the good Muslim will have only humility, awe and fear of His wrath and vengeful power. No matter how virtuous and humble a life the follower of Islam leads, salvation is entirely dependent on His Grace.

Welcome to Hell

One notable Hell-realm listed in the Iron Book of the Red Bridge is the Hell of the Bitter Truth. This Hell is populated with the souls of some of the most fervently devoted religious zealots found lit the Middle Kingdom. Because of some trick of Fate, or an oversight by the ;One, these souls were pulled into the Yomi World upon their untimely demises. At first glance this appears to be a rather tame Hell - there is not much physical torture to be found. But the mental anguish (the contrivance of Hen Tian, this Hell's Yama King) is unparalleled. 'Each instant is a savage reminder of the distance between the Yomi World and Heaven. The demons in this Hell constantly remind these disconsolate souls that they will never, in all of eternity, be able to see the God or gods they worshipped so passionately during their mortal lives. A further torture is tricking these souls into believing that they can somehow redeem themselves and become closer to their God/gods. Of course, just when the souls think that they are on the road to redemption (doing Hen Tian's bidding, of course), the truth is revealed, sending them spiraling even further into despair.

Islam's Thoughts on the Kuei-jin

Not surprisingly, Muslims revile the Kuei-jin, especially those of the Hungry Dead who try to follow the doctrines of Islam. These creatures are unquestionably evil, and the Cathayans who purport to bend to Allah's Will should be slain on contact for such a grievous offense. Luckily for the Kuei-jin (and for the Muslims), not many followers of Islam are aware of their existence.

The Kuei-jin and the Doctrines of Islam

As stated above, it is rare to find a Muslim Kuei-jin. Those who do follow Muslim tenets ordinarily fall into two categories: the self-loathing and suicidal akuma-hunters, and those who rationalize their faith. Members of the former group are generally put out of their misery through conflict with the akuma (all other Kuei-jin) they hunt. Members of the latter group adapt Muslim beliefs to suit their unlifestyles and use their new ideology as the genesis for their Dharmas. Some, especially during the years immediately following their Second Breath, fall somewhere in the middle of these two extremes. They are at times tormented by their existence, at others they are filled with hope that Allah has a special plan for them. Sooner or later, though, all Muslim Kuei-jin make a decision about the nature of their existence and gravitate toward one group or the other.

CHRISTIANITY

Christian Missionaries Travel to the East

Over the centuries, Christianity's various sects have made several, largely unsuccessful, forays into the Middle Kingdom. The earliest missionaries to China arrived around the sixth century A.D. These missionaries were part of a Christian sect known as the Nestorian Church. The Nestorians enjoyed a small degree of success at first because they tried to express Christian concepts in Confucian terms, in an attempt to create a truly "Chinese" gospel. However, the church remained fairly foreign to the Chinese and was popular mostly with the non-Chinese trading community. It slowly began to absorb Buddhist and Confucian ideas until it only vaguely resembled the original Nestorian dogma. It managed to survive, even in its corrupt form, for at least eight centuries after its initial introduction to the Middle Kingdom.

Catholic missionaries arrived in the early fourteenth century, but were soon cut off from the West due to the onset of the Black Death. Both the Catholic and the Nestorian movements were wiped out by the Muslim conqueror, Tamarlane, by the latter half of the century. Tamarlane was responsible for destroying the Mongol Empire, which had been tolerant of foreign religions and had allowed both sects to preach their doctrine freely. The Muslim conqueror did not sanction the worship of foreign gods, and Christianity's foothold in the Middle Kingdom was lost for a few more centuries.

In the late-eighteenth century, Catholic missionaries met Korean emissaries in Peking. Although the missionaries did not travel to Korea directly, the Korean emissaries returned to their homeland with knowledge of this foreign religion, and managed to convert some of the populace. Eventually some Catholic missionaries entered the country and ordained Korean clergy. The Christian movement grew in popularity and influence until the dogmatically Confucian government (with help from the Green Courts) began severe persecution of the Church. The government killed thousands of Korean Christians during this time, unwittingly feeding hundreds of hungry chih-mei and hin. But by the start of the twentieth century the government had adopted a more lenient policy toward foreign religions, and missionaries from many Christian denominations thronged to Korea. Today, Christianity is one of the most prevalent religions in this country.

Contemporary Success and Failure

After World War II, Catholic and Protestant missionaries flocked to Japan with the thought to convert the recently defeated populace to Christianity. Conversions were numerous at first, but then leveled off after a few years. Christianity has always been, and continues to be, popular only with members of Japan's intellectual and upper classes. Its sects also have the tendency to butt heads with each another, causing its policy of "brotherly love" to seem even more hypocritical to the masses. In China, Christianity has faced severe persecution during the bulk of the twentieth century. During the 1920s there was a slew of anti-Christian sentiment, which caused thousands of Christian missionaries to flee the country. When the Communist Revolution happened, the rebuilt Christian community was again disbanded. Recent changes in governmental policy have allowed for slightly more tolerance toward organized religions, including Christianity.

The Kuei-jin have a long history of opposition to Christianity's influx into the Middle Kingdom. With every new Christian "mission" to the Middle Kingdom has come a new annoyance from the West - from the Society of Leopold's "visit" in the sixteenth century and the subsequent Inquisition in Japan to the many attempts by Western Kindred to sneak into the East under the guise of missionaries. In the past, the wu have taken steps to keep Christianity from making much headway into their lands. Recently, their policies have begun to change.

Christianity in the Modern Middle Kingdom

Missionaries from the West, inspired by the success in Korea, still refuse to give up hope, and are making plans for the conversion of the masses of unbelievers in the non-Christian areas of the Middle Kingdom. Their belief is that the Church in the Middle Kingdom has been purified by its persecution. They have drawn parallels between the trials of the Middle Kingdom's Church and the struggles of the early Western Church. Missionaries say that in the areas where Christianity is repressed the most, worshippers of Christ are the most ardent. The Christians of these regions have no ulterior motives for joining the Church (such as material gain), and their highest calling is simply to show love and devotion to Jesus Christ.

There are stories of the power of prayer in these areas, which includes miraculous healing and demon exorcism. These repressed Christians must have absolute loyalty to one another, because one careless word could cause great ruin to one's fellow parishioners. Their mutual trust leads to a stronger (although secret) Church and a more zealous faith. The Church avoids becoming decadent in these areas because there is no time for such things.

Finally, the members of the repressed churches must profess their faith through actions rather than words, and, Church officials say, are distinguished from their neighbors by their love and compassion for one another and for their oppressors. On the other hand, in the areas of the Middle Kingdom where this religion is not repressed, the Church can easily fall prey to corruption and decadence (with or without the help of the Kuei-jin wu).

The Trouble with Proselytes...

A major obstacle to the conversion of the Middle Kingdom to Christianity is the religion's foreignness. Missionaries tend, either consciously or unconsciously, to give the impression that they think that Western culture is superior to Eastern culture, and that inhabitants of the Middle Kingdom should become thoroughly Westernized before they can truly be "saved" in the Christian sense. Another obstacle is Christianity's belief that there is only one religion that may be followed, a very foreign concept to most of the Middle Kingdom.

The White Christ

In recent times, the Kuei-jin have begun to welcome Christian missionaries from the West into their cities, for one simple reason: to learn everything they can about Western culture. The more they learn, the better chance they have of infiltrating the West. So far, they have been successful. The Kuei-jin have been able to use their powers to impersonate Western religious icons, such as angels or saints (just as they use their powers to impersonate the kami of Japan). They use the West's wildly heterogeneous populations to their advantage and can easily impersonate Western Kindred with little chance of detection. In a few years, many wu believe, the Kuei-jin will have an immutable foothold in the West.

Christian Ideology in the East

It is difficult to say exactly what doctrinal changes Christianity has undergone in the Middle Kingdom, given that missionaries over time have tried to make their message more acceptable to Eastern ears by putting their religion in terms of Buddhism, Taoism, and Confucianism. However, the basic goal of Christianity remains to achieve eternal life in Heaven after death. This eternal life is perfect because it is shared with God, and can be enjoyed differently by each individual depending on the merit of his good deeds during his earthly existence. A Christian can achieve eternal life in Heaven by having faith in Jesus Christ as his savior. He must prepare himself for the Final Judgment and live a life of virtue - practicing compassion, good "Christian" conduct and

Core Christian Beliefs

service to humanity.

Basic beliefs include the conviction that there is only one true religion. Christians believe that God created the universe and rules over everything contained within it. Humanity is God's most beloved creation, and He can be especially compassionate toward it, but can also be swift to punish the wicked. Each person is born as a sinner, but may be saved through belief in Jesus Christ and God's Love. However, humankind is intrinsically good and, therefore, each person is deserving of love and charity from the faithful.

The Christian soul is embodied for only a single lifetime, but is still immortal. This immortal spirit is accountable to God for all its thoughts and actions. Upon bodily death, the spirit will enter Heaven, Hell, or Purgatory. Heaven and Hell are semipermanent places, while Purgatory is considered to be a place of transition from bodily life to Heaven. Less worthy, but not truly wicked, souls can atone for their sins in Purgatory and be made fit for Heaven. Many Christians believe that the Holy Bible is historic truth, and most Christians revere the Bible as a sacred scripture and the highest authority on God's word.

The Church and the Kuei-jin

The Middle Kingdom's Church views the Kuei-jin in much the same light as the Western Church sees the Kindred. The Kuei-jin's existence is unnatural and goes against God's Plan, so they must be the spawn of demons. Believers in the East are often strongly influenced by popular superstitions, no matter how they try to avoid it, and thus use not only prayer, but also folk charms and rituals to try to banish these "demons" if they knowingly encounter them.

The Kuei-jin and Christianity

Before this century, Christian Kuei-jin were unheard of, due to the low conversion rates among the Middle Kingdom's populace. But due to its growing acceptance in the East, there have been a few Christian mortals who have become Kuei-jin in recent decades. These poor souls usually have a similar attitude to their Western counterparts - they are filled with self-pity and spend hours mooning over their fates. Sometimes one of these Kuei-jin is lucky enough to meet a vampire who was a former Christian, who can help her rationalize her fate as a sign from the ancestors that her conversion to Christianity was a dreadfully wrong decision. Often, these vampires rationalize this for themselves. In any case, Christianity is still poorly thought of in the undead circles, and so it is largely ignored by the Kuei-jin and their wu.

POPULAR RELIGION

The term "popular religion" in this case denotes beliefs the outside world does not see fit to officially recognize. Those who live safely tucked inside their concrete-encased apartment complexes or nestled in their cozy tract houses roll their eyes and call it "superstition" or "folk belief." After all, there are no creaky roof beams in a forty-story apartment building to house the Roof-Beam Spirit. With modern conveniences such as indoor plumbing, the Toilet Shed Spirit is a thing of the not-so-distant past. It has become a rare occasion to see cups of wine left throughout the house to quench the thirst of the other spirits who may pass through. But there are those who remain faithful to the old ways, perhaps because they are more observant than the rest, and notice the subtleties that others miss as they rush through their days at a breakneck pace. These beliefs are held mainly by those who live in rural communities and the elderly, but there are a few urbanites who burn incense sticks in homage to the old gods or blame the spirit of a fox for their troubles.

Although belief in them is no longer widespread in the Middle Kingdom, the old gods still exist to many, and still respond to the promise of a chicken or a pig's head sacrificed in their honor with a display of their power. These gods are traditionally organized into a bureaucratic structure with the Pearly Emperor and Supreme Ruler, Yu Huang Ta Ti, at the top and the Stove God, Tsao Chun, at the bottom. They are powerful, but not omniscient or omnipotent, and do not require regular worship. They watch over the humans in their charge, protecting them, punishing the wicked among them, and rewarding the virtuous - and, in general, looking out for the public's morality.

Worshipping the Old Gods

There are temples in many villages scattered throughout the Middle Kingdom, which are kept up by the faithful. People may worship the gods on a daily basis if they wish, or if they have a special reason to. More commonly, people go to the temples and make offerings when they need a favor. The gods do not punish a person for neglecting to worship them, and will only punish someone who has committed an offense against the public (as opposed to an offense against another person).

The worshipper will usually go to a god's temple with a small offering or gift, such as sieng-le, which is three to five pieces of unseasoned meat (duck, chicken, pork, squid or fish, to name a few), or a few incense sticks to burn. She will then ask the god for the favor she desires and promise to give a much larger offering if the favor is granted. This can be a complex process involving the divination of the deity's response to the small gift, and if he is willing to consider helping the worshipper.

If the god is undecided about the matter, the worshipper presents a more substantial gift and promises an even grander one. If the god decides to do what the worshipper requests, the promised offering is not delivered until she sees beneficial results. The gods' favor is finite, and just because they have helped a person before is no indication that they will do so again. They may refuse a request, even if the person has been a faithful worshipper for years and has made offerings every day. They could just as easily grant a request to someone who hasn't given a second glance to their temples since the day of their birth, as long as that person had lived a moral life.

The Supernatural Bureaucracy

Traditionally, Stove Gods live above every believer's stove. Since they are the lowest gods in the supernatural bureaucracy, they are the most plentiful. They are the eyes and ears of the greater gods. When the members of a family have lived virtuously, that family's Stove God will recommend them to its superiors for rewards and good fortune. But if that family has some immoral members who are causing disharmony in human society, the Stove God will make sure that the evil doers are punished. A family can bribe their Stove God to fudge a little on its report, or even to withhold its report for a time, by offering it glutinous rice cakes in the New Year. When children move away from home to begin a new household, they take with them a few hot coals from their parents' stove in order to invite a Stove God to live with them.

T'u Ti Kung are the resident gods of villages, and Ch'eng Huang are the gods of cities (and are a step above the T'u Ti Kung in the bureaucracy). A village's T'u Ti Kung has two functions. His first function is to act as a policeman to malevolent ghosts who may be wandering around the village. Those in the Middle Kingdom who believe in the old gods are well aware of the nasty things that vagabond ghosts can do to mortals, and welcome T'u Ti Kung's protection. His second job is to spy on the activities of the humans in his village. He covers the ground that the Stove Gods miss. Many families nowadays do not believe in the Stove Gods and therefore these gods cannot live in their stoves and spy on them. T'u Ti Kung can see all the goings-on in the village, and can see the evil deeds of the unbelievers to report to his superiors. Even the unbelievers in a village with a T'u Ti Kung do not escape punishment for their misdeeds! The faithful villagers usually build a temple to him, or use one that was built centuries ago in his honor.
Gods Among Men

All things considered, it would not be unusual for an opportunistic Kuei-jin to impersonate a village god in order "gain an easy source of Chi. After all, there are many mortal legends of a variety of creatures impersonating these gods. One such story involves a clever goat, which hid behind the curtain m a temple and fooled a man named Ji Ben into thinking that it was a god. The goat gave Ji Ben advice (apparently it was good advice) and reaped the benefits of bogus god-hood for years before its deception was discovered. If a goat can impersonate a god, a vampire certainly can.

But, for a variety of reasons, the Kuei-jin have historically avoided this sort of impersonation. One reason is that the Kuei-jin, as mortals, had faith in these gods, and in their unlives consider them to hold a status akin to a relative, or else regard them as friends. After all, everyone (at least before recent decades) asked their village gods for help from time to time, no matter what their religious affinities were.

Lately, as is the way of all things, a few younger Cathayans have broken with tradition and have tried to take up residence in what they think is an abandoned village temple. The result is invariably the mysterious "disappearance" of the young upstart. Sometimes the unfortunate young Cathayan is found wandering aimlessly a few villages away, in a near catatonic state. At other times, he is found rampaging around the countryside, held in thrall to his P'o until some outside source can calm him down. And there have been instances where the would-be god-impersonator has just vanished entirely.

Shih and Fu

The faithful who have an intimate knowledge of the old gods say that there are two types of these gods: bureaucrats and sages. The bureaucrats are called shih, the "officials," and include the T'u Ti Kung and their superiors. The sages are fu, individuals who, in their mortal lives, had particularly exemplary moral characters and performed exceptionally good works. The names of the shih are really just titles for positions on the supernatural bureaucracy, and can be filled by any god of the proper rank. (There have been instances when the human inhabitants of a village became dissatisfied with their T'u Ti Kung and ousted him from his position, calling him "unfit." They then went about the process of finding a new god to fill the empty T'u Ti Kung position.) The fu are very specific gods, who never change names or positions. In the temples, the shih are given space and living quarters for their supernatural families and servants. All of the gods in the supernatural bureaucracy are attributed with very human-like qualities, and their society is a divine mirror of human society.

The Kuei-jin and Old Gods

Older Kuei-jin lived their mortal lives believing in these gods and in the Supernatural Bureaucracy. Even today, it is not uncommon for new Cathayans to have held these beliefs during their mortal lifetimes. In the period following the Second Breath, vampires often learn that a few of these Old Gods were actually kami or kamuii. But it is tradition not to investigate too deeply into the true nature of the Old Gods, out of respect for the help that they gave to the Kuei-jin during their mortal lives. Even after they have discarded the passions of their mortal existences, most Cathayans still hold a deep affection for these benevolent beings.



CHAPTER SIX: ÇWEILO

pened, was-as y, and t to ma

As we approached, he made some sort of strange motions, but he stopped when he sew us. I ray to whatever gods he might have, but he just smi his mish-mash language, the bastard. Then he closed his eyes an

just floated up and away. I just stood there watching, even after we lost sight of him. Then

I left most of Leo's head in the alley, but I took his guns with me.

Warfare is the way of deception. Thus although you are capable, display incapability to them. When your objective is nearby, make it appear distant; when it is far away, create the illusion of being nearby.

- Sun-Tzu, "The Art of War"

Seeking prestige and influence, the vampires of Camarilla and Sabbat spread their arms across the ocean to the courts of Asia. Each sect draws on its own knowledge and resources to claim control over the millions of mortals of the East, and to take dominion over the vampires of that territory. In their wars, they bicker over cities. In their games, they fight for status. Neither side truly understands its ignorant helplessness in the face of the Cathayans.

Kuei-jin have little tolerance for the gweilo - the foreign assholes - who plague their lands. The rabid elders of Cainite society are nothing more than cursed madmen lost in the pursuit of temporal power. The godless youths have no respect and no understanding. Their very blood soils the earth and gives rise to wailing in the spirit worlds. Such menaces cannot be allowed to stand in civilized society- and so the Kuei-jin quietly remove them.

For some Kuei-jin, though, the Middle Kingdom is not enough. If the Cainites come even here, then do they not surely infest the very corners of the world? How can one defeat an enemy without knowing his ways? And so, for these reasons and others, the Cathayans finally spread from their traditional homes, at last taking stock in a world rapidly



falling toward the Sixth Age. The Great Wall is tumbled: Now, Kuei-jin and Kin-jin stand face to face, and the chosen of Hell must prove their places or perish.

Kin-jin in Asiл

The cursed brood of Caine do not understand boundaries. Unwilling to keep to their own lands, they pollute the Middle Kingdom with their disharmonious practices. Of varying temperaments and capabilities, they all share the common traits of crassness and a lack of enlightenment. Their very presence disturbs the Chi of the lands, and many Kuei-jin believe that the presence of the Kin- jin serves only to hasten the arrival of the Sixth Age.

Kin- jin are not hated only out of some cultural antipathy. Rather, their very blood - the means by which they survive and thrive - is an affront to the Cathayans. When a Kin-jin calls upon his blood, it creates unwholesome ripples and tears in the flow of Chi energy around him. This disturbance can be felt by any Kuei-jin within sight, and is particularly visible to those with knowledge of the Chi Arts. Convinced of the destructiveness of such graceless use of Chi, the Kuei-jin hunt down the unknowing Kin-jin and exile them from die Middle Kingdom - if the Kin-jin are fortunate enough to survive the meeting.

China

Perhaps the most impenetrable stronghold of Cathayan culture, the Kin-jin in China are few and hunted. Both the Camarilla and the Sabbat would give much to gain a foothold in the courts of China - but neither diplomacy nor force has yet succeeded, leaving both sects none the wiser.

Steeped in ancient traditions, the Kuei-jin of China are, perhaps, the most hateful to the Kin-jin. Cainites in the mainland can expect immediate hostility once they are discovered. With the network of spirit guardians and spies employed by the ancestors of the courts, there is little chance of evading notice. Thus, Kin-jin really have only one option for surviving in China: Hide. Drawing notice is invariably fatal as the conservative mandarins work to eliminate the "Chi defilers." Only by staying in the countryside, away from any other vampiric contact, can a Kin-jin hope to remain unnoticed.

Politically and financially, China remains a nightmare for many Kindred. The looming state socialist government heavily restricts free enterprise and commerce. The usual tools of finance are limited or barred from China, so influential Kindred cannot exercise some of their greatest weapons. The political hostility of China, vis-a-vis much of the democratic world, further undermines attempts at spreading influence. Kin-jin would gladly cut each other's throats to have access to the millions of people and the associated economies of China, but for now, the Kindred have no way of taking them.

Most recently, the Tremere clan has taken a renewed interest in southeast China. Here, they send neonate after neonate, following rumors unearthed from their recent purge of the clan's antitribu. Since the Tremere, in typical fashion, are not forthcoming with their plans, the vampires of the Camarilla generally assume that some sort of mystical secret lies in wait within the small country, something that drives the Tremere to expend their best and brightest in pursuit. Elders in the halls of Elysium mutter imprecations about the path of Saulot in the east, and of his childer... but know nothing more.

See **World of Darkness: Hong Kong** for more setting material about Chinese culture, as that city reverted to Chinese government. Remember, though, that the free enterprise of Hong Kong - indeed, of much of the Western world - is vastly weaker and different in China.

Japan

More "Westernized" than China, Japan would seem to be a perfect haven for Kin-jin in search of spreading influence. The international businesses are a lucrative front for financial control, and western customs and practices permeate much of the popular culture. It should be a simple matter for Kin-jin to blend in and take control. Unfortunately for the Children of Caine, Japan is as hostile to Cainites as China, The defiling of much of Japan's Chi (due to the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki) left many gold with decidedly anti-Western sentiments. Combined with the natural distaste that Kuei-jin possess for Kindred, and with the recent financial reversals that have crippled much of Japan's economy, Cainites find little solace in the "Westernized economy." As a result, those Kin-jin who try to break into Japanese businesses find their ventures stymied once their true natures are discovered, and Cainites edging into organized crime have even stiffer competition from the Yakuza and the bosozoku.

Camarilla projects in Japan have failed dismally. Even the Tremere, with the knowledge of spirit binding magic and blood rituals, cannot seem to insinuate themselves into the local supernatural community. Politically, the Camarilla is well able to manipulate the local scene, up until the Kuei-jin decide to oppose them, at which point all of their carefully hoarded connections seem to vanish. Sabbat fare just as poorly: Packs of neonates lack the coordination and power to fight against the well-organized and trained Kuei-jin; the Vaulderie has no effect on the gaki; even the rare Disciplines of the sect are of limited utility against an enemy that does not focus on the power of blood or the typical manifestations of the Cainite curse. Only a small contingent of Sabbat have made any progress at all, and only then with the youngest and most rebellious of Kuei-jin; the Running Monkeys of Japan seem to consider Vicissitude a magnificent and wondrous power, yet even this advantage does not bring the Cainites into the counsel of the Japanese courts.

About the only real connections between Kin-jin and Kuei-jin in Japan (other than the occasional killing fields) exist in tenuous ties between the Genji and the Sabbat. The modern, culturally independent youth of Japan's unliving monsters find the organized, violent and uninhibited vampires of the Sabbat refreshing when compared to the stale ancients of the Bishamon and the courts. From time to time, individuals of the Genji may strike such bargains as are convenient with Sabbat vampires - though such deals tend to explode rather spectacularly at their conclusions.

See **World of Darkness: Tokyo** for more information about Japan.

Korea

Antiauthoritarian and resentful, the Green Courts have no love for the Westerners who once subjugated them. Kin-jin in Korea are watched closely and hemmed in; once established in a particular field, they are surrounded, cut off from further influence, and trapped within their own small fields of commerce.

Because of Korea's trade in True Jade, the area remains hotly contested. Kuei-jin families fight one another for control of lucrative jade artifacts, while Kin-jin try to discover what's so important about some pieces of rock artwork. Of course, most Kuei-jin assume that the Kin-jin would disrupt and defile any jade that they touched, so a Cainite who stumbles across a trove of jade treasures generally gives it up with his unlife.

In spite of tension and strife, though, Korea remains an important crossroads to many areas of the Middle Kingdom. The Parallel Path opens the way for travel to both Kuei-jin and Kin-jin. Polite and suitably humble Cainites, who bring valuable information and treasures, may purchase safe passage through Korea to other parts of the Middle Kingdom. After all, if the Kin-jin are going to go bother the courts of China and Japan (frequent enemies of Korea), why should the Kuei-jin of Korea stop them? A Cainite who travels thus is well advised to move quickly and to be on his way out of Korea as soon as possible, though; laggards may find that the "safe houses" are not entirely secure for Kin-jin who look like they have an interest in the native lands.

India

Constant crossroads of East and West, India is home to both Kuei-jin and to Cainite families. The Ravnos' mortal ancestors have lived in the country since time immemorial, coexisting in an uneasy truce with the Kuei-jin due to their mutual search to penetrate the illusions of the material world. Other Cainites (or even other Ravnos Kindred) are not so fortunate; the claustrophobic cities and low-technology countryside are hardly to the liking of the more cosmopolitan Kindred of Europe and North America.

Clearly, the clustered and rancid city of Calcutta draws the most successful Kin-jin. Cainites who hide among the teeming throngs of diseased and poverty-crushed mortals have none of the handicaps of those who seek to build palatial estates or political ties (and who, thusly, draw attention to their actions). The typical Kuei-jin of India, though, is less antagonistic toward Kin- jin and more arrogant. The Cainites have certainly existed as long as the Kuei-jin, but they exhibit none of the grace or enlightenment of age. As such, the Indian Kuei-jin sneer at the Cainites and ignore them as petty trifles, turning back to their chessboards of human detritus.

For those Cainites determined to make headway in India, the Ravnos present the best allies and worst obstacles. With their fitfully waking Methuselahs directing them in the vicious Path of Paradox, the Ravnos have little tolerance for any Cainites from the West, even as they despise the Kuei-jin. Only those who comprehend the Paradox philosophy receive the opportunity to join the Ravnos in their activities, and even then such visitors never see the ancestral estates of the family? Thus, the process of contacting the Kuei-jin in India is a matter of properly communicating with and bestowing gifts upon the Ravnos, and then placing all trust in them something that no Cainites do without the burden of desperation. As a result, the Ravnos families of India somehow maintain tenuous ties to the Kuei-jin in a fashion inexplicable to all other Cainites, and only deign to share the fruits of such allegiances when well suited.

Southeast Asia

Indonesia, Thailand, Burma, Laos, Cambodia and Vietnam crushed by the Cold War economies, bombed in conflicts between Communist East and Capitalist West, the Kuei-jin of southeastern Asia have little to call their own. No wonder, then, that they harbor a screaming ferocity toward outsiders of all sorts. Kin-jin are no exception: Not one Cainite has survived more than a year within the bounds of these countries, excepting perhaps those so ancient that they were natives before the Dark Ages.

Cainites in Southeast Asia, then, face a double threat: The Kuei-jin of the area are quite unrelenting in their hostility, but the slumbering ancients of the place also call occasionally for the vitae of other vampires. Without strong economies, exports of magical jade, or lucrative technological and political scenes, these countries have little to offer to Kindred. Thus, the only gweilo who come here are those answering some esoteric call, seeking lost knowledge in the temples of Thailand or reclusive elders among the jungles of Vietnam. As often as not, such seekers enter the jungles and ruins,



never to be seen again.

Of all the vampires that deal with Southeast Asia, the most successful are the Giovanni of the della Passaglia family. Married inextricably into the local lines, these Giovanni manage to keep in touch with the customs, religions and economics of the area. Here, they manage trading concerns that touch on much of Asia, often dealing in covert supernatural business through the Parallel Path of Korea. Because many of them are kin to important figures in various towns and cities - indeed, some are even related to some Kuei-jin - the della Passaglia have the unique position of grudging acceptance. This isn't to say that the Giovanni wouldn't be wiped out if the Kuei-jin had a single reason to do so. For the moment, though, the Giovanni have managed to avoid giving such a reason. Here, Cainites can make deals with the local Giovanni in neutral matters, sometimes even brokering a deal with the Kuei-jin. For the most part, though, the della Passaglia treat family like any other Giovanni: Family comes first, business a close second. As a result, the della Passaglia take a dim view of outsiders seeking financial or other gains at the expense of locals. Since the mystic heritage of Asia has afforded them unprecedented developments in their Necromancy, gweilo are well-advised to deal with the della Passaglia strictly on the Giovanni's terms, lest they find themselves the spirits bound into the luck charms sold to the next visitor.

Surviving in Asia

The lures of power and prominence draw Cainites irresistibly to Asia. No Camarilla or Sabbat to command from on high, no clans against which to compete, no prohibitions about establishing a vampiric dominion over the frightened mortal herd: What could be better? Now if only one could survive those damnable Cathayans....

Much to their dismay, Cainites in Asia quickly discover that politicking, influence brokering, prestation, status and diplomacy are all worthless when dealing with the Kuei-jin. A show of force is sufficient only to bring retaliation. The most potent tools of the Western vampires mean nothing to the Cathayans.

In order to survive in Asia, a Cainite must maintain a low profile. After all, though the Kuei-jin revile the Kindred as unclean and imbalanced, the pressures of the approaching Sixth Age, diplomatic matters with other shen, and courtly intrigues all require attention. If a single lone Kin-jin isn't making any problems, then she can certainly be dealt with later.

Gweilo vampires cannot count upon any of their old strategies. A Cainite must instead build from the ground up, garnering mortal contacts through old-fashioned legwork. Kindred who use their Disciplines to control and subvert sections of the mortal populace rapidly draw the ire of the Kuei-jin; so, too, do those who engage in indiscriminate feeding, and even those who simply show a lack of respect By definition, though, a Cainite who moves slowly, resists expansion, and does not rely upon his Disciplines to control his mortal assets finds himself unable to expand his holdings and frustrated in his quest for power. Hence the rub: A sufficiently powerful elder might be able to defeat enough Kuei-jin to carve out a small domain - but eventually, some angered mandarin is likely to intervene, and such powerful elders often have long-held estates in the West in any case. The typical neonate (or even a recently formed pack or coterie) lacks the ability to fight off Kuei-jin hostilities, and cannot draw in enough support to make such a venture worthwhile while remaining under cover.

As a result of the many problems with Asian settlement, few Cainites actually choose to go East. Those who do learn quickly that the potential of Asia is far less than they originally expected, or die in the process. Only desperation - deadly enemies abroad, or a complete lack of any other resources or options - can drive a Cainite to immigrate to Asia while knowing of the potential problems.

Nevertheless, they do come

possible.

KUEI-JIN ABROAD

Political and religious unrest stirs across the Middle Kingdom; the Running Monkeys increasingly find themselves disposable pawns for the courts; the elders defy all advancement and progress in favor of hidebound tradition; persecution remains rampant for those too unconventional in Kuei-jin society. For these reasons and others, some Kuei-jin take it upon themselves to travel away from their homes in the Middle Kingdom. They find themselves thrust into a world possibly more dangerous (but also possibly more rewarding) than any in which they grew up.

While most Kin-jin avoid Asia like some sort of blood plague (those who know of Asia's dangers, anyway), Kuei-jin have less reticence about moving outward. The Kuei-jin who travel away from the Middle Kingdom are many: young Kuei-jin seeking to see the ways of the world, vampires in search of political influence or reputation, akuma spreading their particular brand of poison to unknown lands (either by conversion or destruction), young Running Monkeys enamored with the culture of the West, Cathayans fleeing persecution or punishment at home - any number of Kuei-jin can be found heading West.

For each Kuei-jin who leaves the Middle Kingdom, there is a personal reason. A Running Monkey may decide to prove his worth by doing battle in the barbarian lands. More sinister Kuei-jin may decide to take the battle against the Kin-jin to their homelands, fighting to stem the tide of Chi-defiled gweilo in order to halt the arrival of the Sixth Age. Conversely, the akuma find that the Yama Kings are unknown in the West; without such knowledge, the Kin-jin are forthcoming in their gullible acceptance of the Lords of the Hells. Even fashion and custom drive the Cathayans to explore; recently arisen vampires may take an interest in the West simply for its modern culture - with all of eternity ahead for unlife, why be bored? Still others travel for love, for revenge, or just to get away from the oppressive courts of Asia.

Rarer than the individual Kuei-jin in the West is an entire wu. While a heimin can get away with traveling like a vagabond, settled wu are expected to behave responsibly and to see to the needs of all of their members. No single member's motivations should drive the wu; rather, all must work together to further the purpose of the family. Thus, entire wu come to the West when driven by group needs. Perhaps a wu is charged with following or eliminating a particular Kin- jin or his associates. Maybe a wu seeks to make a name for itself so that it can return to the courts and seek a prominent place in Kuei-jin society. Since the members of the wu must all agree and travel together, they support one another in the strange lands, and work for a common cause - making them all the more dangerous to the unwary Cainites who would take them for simple expatriates like some of the individual heimin.

There's a tremendous world out there. With the Sixth Age

arriving soon, but an eternal unlife ahead, Kuei-jin have the perfect opportunity to see it all while it's still around.

The Middle East

Egypt, Saudi Arabia, Turkey - these are lands with ancient histories and buried secrets. The societies of the vampires in these lands are as old as the teachings of Xue. No wonder, then, that Kuei-jin tread only with the greatest wariness in these lands.

Religious schisms and terrorism make the Middle East dangerous territory in general, and especially for foreigners like the Kuei-jin. The many holy sites of the region mean little to most Kuei-jin, who rarely had any affiliation with Judaism, Christianity or Islam in life, and even more rarely keep such leanings in death. There's little to be gained by involving oneself in the wars between Iraq, Iran, Palestine, the Sudan, Jordan, etc.

Home to the Assamites and the Followers of Set, the domains of the Middle East are just too insular and dangerous even for Kuei-jin. Both clans of Kin-j in maintain strict internal ties making infiltration nearly impossible-due to harsh regimen and training in the former case, and religious cultism in the latter. Without any useful gains, a Kuei-jin only has a few potential reasons to involve herself in the area. Crusaders and akuma are the most common individual Kueijin in the Middle East; the warriors seeking to destroy the Kin-



jin before the Sixth Age see a consummate challenge in the assassin clan, while the demon-worshippers bring their cults with them to join the congregations of the worshippers of Set. Neither group meets with much success.

Fortunately for the Kuei-jin, Cathayan blood is useless to the Assamites. Unfortunately, the clan's members do not fear the Kuei-jin, and have sufficiently potent powers to cause great harm. As a result, more and more courts (especially in neighboring areas like India) are exploring the possibility of spying upon the Assamites with the aim of learning the enemy's strengths before the inevitable war begins. For their part, the Assamites consider the Kuei-jin outside of their holy crusade against the children of Caine, but that doesn't stop them from exterminating the occasional intrusive koa.

Only major cities play host to Kuei-jin in the Middle East; being a foreigner, and a strange one at that, is a sure ticket to trouble in the less cosmopolitan rural areas. Baghdad, Beirut, Riyadh and even (for the extremely brave or foolish) Mecca have enough of a modern atmosphere to allow a Kuei-jin to blend in to some degree. Beyond Gaza, though, the Kuei-jin have no luck: The Setites, with their nighcomplete influence in Egypt, are too adept at ferreting out the Cathayans in their cities. Since at this time, the Setites have nothing that the Kuei-jin want, Egypt remains relatively untouched.

When the Cathayans feel that they must subvert a particular area, religion becomes the key weapon. Religion drives much of the control for both Assamites and Setites among mortal groups. Since it's not too difficult to discredit a blooddrinking snake-worshipper or assassin among fundamentalist Muslims, the Kuei-jin don't bother with stand-up confrontations: Just let the local populace know of the silent heretic in their midst, and watch the resulting conflagration. Of course, as a foreigner, the Kuei-jin must be careful to evade drawing attention to himself as well, but a few conveniently placed words, combined with judicious use of Soul Arts, can sway enough fanatics to create a mob.

Europe

Haven to innumerable powerful elders and Methuselahs, Europe is dangerous ground indeed for the Kuei-jin. The aged Camarilla makes its bastions of strength here, and the potent princes of the European cities are harsh and unforgiving. A single misstep spells a quick demise.

Such features are the top attractions for Kuei-jin crusaders and thrill-seekers. Wandering warriors intent upon undercutting Cainite society find quite a challenge in destroying the elders of Europe. The destruction of even a single prince is well worth it, though, as much of European Cainite society has seen little change in centuries and the resulting chaos stirs up the surviving vampires like angry undead hornets. These same risks draw Running Monkeys bored by the stultified courts of Asia; while Europe's parlors and salons are just as traditional and hidebound, they are For a Kuei-jin traveler in Europe, though, the primary reward lies in prestige. Surviving among the paranoid ancients of Cainite society is no mean feat, despite the boastful claims of the Cathayans to the contrary. Old vampiric secrets have long been scattered across Europe, and Kuei-jin of a scholarly bent can find startling connections to the underpinnings of both Kuei-jin and Kin-jin society and powers. A truly daring Kuei-jin may even present himself at a Kin-jin court for an evening, making quite a stir and causing no amount of consternation before disappearing again, leaving all of the paranoid plots of the locals in disarray. For the Kuei-jin who hunts Kin-jin, the prestige in destroying an old and influential Cainite is substantial, too.

When causing trouble, the Kuei-jin in Europe do so by leaning on the Masquerade. Since Europe is primarily a stronghold of old Camarilla Cainites who have no desire to see their power bases eroded, the Masquerade is of paramount importance. A couple of isolated events, and the Kuei-jin can draw out local ancillae and elders by watching for reactions. Then, it's a simple enough matter to tip off Sabbat factions regarding the scurrying Camarilla vampires and their areas of control. Sit back, watch the fight, and move on to the next bit of volatile vampire politics.

Vienna and the Tremere: Conundrum in Chi

Although individual Kuei-jin sometimes visit London, Prague, Madrid, Berlin, Moscow and the other major cities of the continent, Vienna is the single largest draw - and danger - for Cathayans in Europe. The stronghold of the Tremere raises questions that make even the Cathayans uncomfortable.

For starters, the Tremere strongholds in Vienna are all situated on carefully bent and shaped dragon nests (which the local vampires refer to as "ley line nexuses"). Powerful wards are evident in many places, keeping out spirits and Western shen (though the Warlocks do not seem to have any sort of ward against the Cathayans themselves, yet). These and other telltale manipulations of the area's Chi and feng shui puzzle the Cathayans to no end, as the Cainites are supposedly graceless with their blood and incapable of turning Chi to their will.

Those Kuei-jin who study the sorcerous arts find the Tremere disturbing in the extreme. The Discipline of Thaumaturgy affords the Tremere with a flexibility that is frightening in its implications. More forbiddingly, the Thaumaturgy of the Tremere is a tightly controlled and dedicated use of the blood, unlike anything ever seen among the Kin-jin, and in some ways even close to the flowing and usage of Chi. Are the Tremere, perhaps, capable of learning to harmoniously balance their Chi energies to coexist in peace with the spirit world and with the Kuei-jin? Or are they demons among the Kin-jin, afforded hellish powers in mockery of the Chi of the Cathayans? Given that the Tremere have a reputation as perfidious even among the Kin-jin, the Kuei-jin suspect the latter - and fear the possibility that the Tremere may learn to control the forces of Chi with greater precision even than the children of Yomi.

For now, the Kuei-jin simply watch the Warlocks, waiting for a sign from Heaven or Hell. If the Sixth Age comes too soon, though, both sides will be forced to make difficult choices - and the Kuei-jin may find themselves arrayed against an enemy that can finally adapt to their unusual powers and destroy them.

North America

More than anywhere else outside of the Middle Kingdom, North America draws the Kuei-jin. The lax borders of the countries make immigration relatively simple; the chaotic antics of anarchs and Sabbat allow the Kuei-jin to gain a quick foothold in the vampiric power games. The broad cultures support a multitude of factions to control or subvert. Entire sections of cities are devoted to Asiatic architecture, inhabitants and customs, so there is no fear of blending in. Riches for the taking, the cutting edge of modern culture and the chaff of Cainite society all make North America an attractive demesne for traveling Sunset People.

With incursions already underway on the West Coast and with a few subtle influences on the Atlantic stage, the Kuei-jin have North America right where they want it. More than anywhere else, North America is situated for takeover deliberately. The mandarins and ancestors of Asia send their young and promising wu to infiltrate the industries of the coast, and from there to settle havens for other Kuei-jin who will follow. By eroding Cainite power bit by bit, the Cathayans seek to push out the vampires already in place, removing the weak and thin-blooded grandchildren of Caine and taking over the luxurious cities of the Western Paradise. Forget thrill-seeking or Kin-jin hunting; here, one can rule a fiefdom, just like an ancestor in the Middle Kingdom, completely unhindered by petty traditions or threatening Kin-jin. Money, position, influence and herds await harvest.

The disorganized Anarch Free States are the bastion of the Kuei-jin invasion in North America. Without any sort of formal resistance or powerful elder leaders, the Cainites of California have no way of coordinating defenses against the Kuei-jin. Even the hastily convened Camarilla groups of the West Coast - the newly Camarilla city of San Diego and the roving enforcer bands of California and Oregon - are not enough to stop the Kuei-jin, who remain an unknown quantity. Burdened by losses to the Sabbat on the East Coast, the Camarilla does not send assistance; busy consolidating its victories, the Sabbat does not press attacks against the Cathayans. In the cracks between the crashing giants, under the crumbling castle of anarchy, the Kuei-jin slowly sneak into the Free States, there to stay.

Other cities of North America away from the Anarch Free States are not necessarily safe from the Kuei-jin, though. As

a rule, most cities of substantial Cainite population host or have seen one or two Kuei-jin travelers. Of course, these travelers lie low; only the vaguest rumors ever herald their arrival in Cainite society, should they choose to remain secretive. When in the cities of middle America, the Kuei-jin rely on the barely contained threat of violence between factions to guide their strikes. Camarilla cities can be toppled by well- informed Sabbat; conversely, betrayal of a Sabbat haven to the Camarilla can lead to a purge in surrounding territory. The anarchs remain disorganized rabble, scorned by both factions. It is the simplest matter to make the Kindred war against one another, yet more proof of their barbaric ways. If a Kuei-jin finds a place that she likes, she orchestrates a bit of a distraction before settling in. A lone Kuei-jin will never be noticed when the Sword of Caine strikes at a Camarilla center, after all. In the stretches of desert and farmland, too, between the major cities but away from the wilderness, the Kuei-jin find isolated havens where security and remote fastness guard against discovery.

Perhaps the most notable and successful tactic in North America so far involves the simple process of subverting the scarlet screens. Relying on the subtlety of their Masquerade, the Kindred of North America build complex webs of control over mortal groups in order to enact their bidding. Reveal to the mortals the true nature of the master, and the ties of influence are severed, to be replaced with resentment, hatred



and fear. Indeed, this very tactic has already worked in several cities along the West Coast; more than one startled Cainite has discovered that his previously loyal connections have turned after discovering his true monstrous nature. Once the Kin-jin is out of the way, appropriating remaining influence and .position is not a complex matter. Since, oftentimes, the minions of the Cainites are themselves crude and useless to the Cathayan, there is no harm in letting them be destroyed in the process. A tool turns, a Kin-jin falls, and a comfortable opening remains for the enterprising Kuei-jin.

The Western Paradise

As the mortals of the West remain ignorant to the controlling ties of the Floating World, they are in many ways more pliable and amusing servants and toys than the superstitious populace of the Middle Kingdom. The challenge of building a herd and assembling a court of retainers is sweetened by the piquant nature of the foreign cultures. A Kuei-jin must he clever to construct a new and safe means of survival, but such cleverness is rewarding and satisfying.

Obviously, Disciplines are a sure means to establishing control. The Soul Arts, in particular, allow a Cathayan to feel out the intentions of people and to exert some measure of dominance. A few well-chosen mortal intermediaries and pawns can extend a web of influence across their entire areas of business and specialty. The cunning Kuei-jin does not exert his spiritual will across all of his mortal retainers; rather, he directs only the key element, allowing the rest to fall into place around the malleable will of that lynchpin.

For the younger Kuei-jin, especially without the use of powerful Disciplines, extended family presents a viable option for survival. Many families in Asia can trace at least some lineage to the West. By passing herself off as a relative (perhaps truthfully), a Kuei-jin can garner a safe place to stay and perhaps a small amount of influence. After all, such families must have jobs and places in the community, connections that can be exploited. A Kuei-jin without ties can



The ghettoed nature of many cities in the Western World of Darkness also affords Kuei-jin with a specific form of camouflage. Since many cities host clustered Asian communities and neighborhoods, the Kuei-jin need only establish residence within such an area to evade much notice. In larger cities or places with heavily established communities of this nature (such as San Francisco), the preeminent Cainites of the city often already have a policy of leaving the "Chinatowns" alone. The traditional and firstgeneration emigrants to such places retain many of the old ways from the homeland, too, so they are unlikely to acknowledge the presence of the Kuei-jin, instead upholding the unique Asian version of the Masquerade. A Kuei-jin need only take a short time to acclimatize herself to the Asian parts of a city in order to find shops and streets that form a confusing maze to outsiders. With command of the local language and customs, she can also draw upon assistance from the inhabitants if gweilo come calling unexpectedly.

For the most unsettled or desperate of Kuei-jin, there is always the possibility of blending into mortal society itself. A night-shift job at a factory is as much an option for a Kuei-jin as for a Cainite. Regular income, factory co-workers and industry contacts all become available. Since most Kin-jin consider such a pastime beneath their dignity, they overlook the possibility of others in that capacity, affording the Kuei-jin with some anonymity. With the right combination of supernatural powers, persuasion, ruthlessness and persistence, it's eminently possible for a Kuei-jin to rise rapidly in the hierarchy, until the Cainites suddenly realize that the leader of all local industry is actually a powerful foe.

KANBUJIAN

They have been encountered by puzzled and panicked Kinjin who know not what to make of them. In some cases, they have controlled their Demons long enough to establish what has become of them, but in many others, they have remained rampaging monsters until put down by other shen. These unfortunate Kuei-jin are those who have the soul and body of the Middle Kingdom, while living beyond its borders: the Kuei-jin who rise in the Chinatowns, Little Indias and other Asian communities across the world.

For the soul unfortunate enough to take the Second Breath outside of the Middle Kingdom, a harsh unlife indeed awaits. Without the assistance of the courts and other Kuei-jin, these Cathayans have little hope - if any - in taming the Demon and discovering the guiding principles of Dharma. These kanbujian -"unable to see," because they cannot see the way to Dharma - are therefore alternately derided and pitied in Kuei-jin society.

As with any other Kuei-jin, kanbujian most often arise under the influence of the Demon. Once bloodlust has been sated, though, the kanbujian may find himself able to throw off the shackles of the P'o. Horrified at their cursed state, more than a few kanbujian immediately end their existences upon achieving Wind Soul. Some, though, strive to understand their unliving state.

Kanbujian Characters

The appeal of kanbujian is obvious - Kuei-jin arising spontaneously in the Western lands, bereft of the ties and customs of the Middle Kingdom and able to interact freely with the Kin-jin. Many obvious story plots present themselves: seeking a mentor; allying with Kin-jin against invading Kuei-jin; adapting to the newly unliving state.

Playing a kanbujian character isn't all good joss, though. Firstly, without instruction, the kanbujian has no Dharma and no hope for enlightenment. Indeed, the only way that the kanbujian can retain his soul is by clinging to the last shreds of his humanity - a kanbujian begins play with a Humanity rating of 1 instead of any Dharma. Secondly, the kanbujian cannot learn any complex Disciplines, including Feng Shui, Tzu Wei, Yin or Yang Prana, Chi'iu Muh or Tapestry. Lastly, the kanbujian has no standing in Kuei-jin society and no knowledge of its functions, and so is usually treated as a non-person if other Kuei-jin are encountered. Because of this the kanbujian must learn the hard lessons of avoiding sunlight, channeling Chi and adapting to spirit senses.

Being kanbujian is a 4-point Cathayan Society Flaw. Kanbujian characters must abide by the strictures listed above until such time as a proper mentor can be found. The mentor must then teach the kanbujian the forms of Kuei-jin society, and set him upon his Dharma. Such events are certainly more than enough to form the basis of an entire chronicle, as the Cathayan spends the better part of several years in search of enlightenment.

A kanbujian who survives for more than a few weeks typically develops some knowledge of his condition, although this is obviously full of supposition and omissions. These Kuei-jin do often discover some of the Disciplines through instinct, though the Demon Arts are the most common manifestation of their abilities; arts that require special training-Tzu Wei, the Pranas, Feng Shui - obviously cannot develop spontaneously. Instead, the lost Cathayans often develop their ancillary skills, hunting and surviving through stealth and guile.

Inevitably, and kanbujian who lasts long enough to seek meaning in his condition runs across other Kuei-jin. Since kanbujian are not particularly distinctive, this can be quite disconcerting as the lost Cathayan finds himself thrust into a situation beyond his understanding. However, most Kuei-jin are aware at least of the possibility of kanbujian, and allowances are often quickly made to induct such unfortunates into the nearest court for proper training once they are discovered. Indeed, a complete wu roams the United States solely charged with discovering kanbujian and bringing them back to the Middle Kingdom for proper instruction.

RULES OF THE HUNGRY DEAD



The turning wheel heralds change, which sweeps across the Middle Kingdom to bring new ways of existence. Even the deathless Kuei-jin are not immune to change. The constant interplay of Yin and Yang forces them to adapt to a world accelerating toward the Sixth Age. None truly know what will happen then - but all prepare.

With the swiftly arriving Sixth Age, the Kuei-jin face more challenges than ever. Storytellers and players alike are just as hard-pressed to keep up. Of course, the ever-changing World of Darkness requires a degree of elaboration.

Integrating the Vampire: The Masquerade Revised Edition rules with Kindred of the East updates and clarifies many points of vampire existence. Getting all the rules to mesh seamlessly, though, can be a bit of a trick. Thus, this appendix covers many of the common conversions arid changes that Storytellers will experience.

Revised Edition Abilities

As of the revised edition of Vampire, certain Abilities have changed or moved. Kuei-jin characters sometimes use these new or altered Abilities for Disciplines, other actions, etc. Consider these Ability modifications to be Secondary Abilities.

Health, Damage and Dying

Kuei-jin, as animate corpses, garner the same bonuses as Kin-jin in warfare. Blows that would cripple or kill a mortal merely inconvenience the Hungry Dead. As such, Kuei-jin soak damage like other vampires. Bashing damage (punches, bludgeoning and short falls) is halved after soaking; lethal damage is, soaked normally. Kuei-jin may only soak aggravated damage by using armor or special Disciplines, most notably the Iron Mountain Demon Art. Yinaspected Kuei-jin also treat damage from firearms as bashing damage, though their Yang-aspected counterparts suffer normal, lethal damage from guns.

Kuei-jin meet Final Death from the same conditions as Kindred: suffering excessive aggravated damage, or even suffering additional damage when out of Chi.

Resisting Mental Intrusion

All Kuei-jin are resistant to mental control; their dual souls provide a powerful means of throwing off psychic chains. Thus, Kuei-jin always get a P'o roll to avert direct mental control, as noted on p. 91 of **Kindred of the East**. This applies even against the Dominate Discipline, though Presence and other emotionally manipulative Disciplines cannot be resisted in this fashion. Resisting mental influence with the P'o is a reflexive action, but Willpower cannot be used unless the Kuei-jin is actually aware of the attempt.

MARTIAL ARTS

The Martial Arts Ability (see p. 83 of **Kindred of the East**) can be problematic due to its complexity. Instead of charging extra points for the Martial Arts Skill, the Storyteller may choose to use the alternate rules presented here.

When using Martial Arts as a normal Skill, the character gains only one special maneuver at first. Gaming additional special maneuvers (**Kindred of the East**, pp. 140-142) requires mastery of the arts - the character must have four dots to gain a second special maneuver, and an additional maneuver is added for each dot gained beyond that.

Martial Arts cannot be used by a character in the throes of frenzy, fire soul or wave soul; such characters must rely on their Brawl Talents.

For players with a taste for customization, the Martial Arts Skill can represent specific styles of combat. The categories of "hard" and "soft" styles listed in Kindred of the East refer to styles primarily with aggressive, striking techniques versus defensive, blocking maneuvers. Particular styles may boast special maneuvers unknown to other styles, but conversely require training from an appropriate master. Also, given their varying nationalistic heritages, particularly tradition-bound Kuei-jin may spurn certain martial arts styles. The most dangerous stylist, though, is the one who studies several styles; a Storyteller may opt to allow a Kuei-jin to learn maneuvers of other styles as long as they remain within the character's primary form (hard or soft).

Hundreds of different schools and styles of martial arts exist in the Middle Kingdom, and for space considerations, the list ro io littlo m

here is little more than a cursory overview that broadly categorizes many arts (and often lumps several distinctive styles together). Interested players and Storytellers should do their homework - researching specific styles and deciding upon their own rules.		
2.3		

Martial Arts Styles	Technique	Typical Maneuvers
Aikido (Japanese)	Soft	Counter Throw, Deflecting Block, Joint Lock, Spinning Throw, Withering Grasp
Chin Na (Chinese)	Soft	Deflecting Block, Joint Lock, Mantis Strike, Reactive Strike, Withering Grasp
Hsing-I Chuan (Chinese)	Hard	Blow to Pressure Point, Damaging Block, Elbow Strike, Killing Blows
Judo (Japanese)	Soft	Cataleptic Grapple, Counter Throw, Joint Lock, Mantis Strike, Withering Grasp
Karate (Japanese)	Hard	Breaking Blow, Damaging Block, Elbow Strike, Killing Blows, Spinning Kick
Pa Kua (Chinese)	Soft	Counter Throw, Joint Lock, Mantis Strike, Reactive Strike, Withering Grasp
Pencak Silat (Malaysia)	Hard	Blow to Pressure Point, Damaging Block, Elbow Strike, Ground Fighting, Killing Blows
Savate (French)	Hard	Dragon Tail Sweep, Elbow Strike, Jump Kick, Killing Blows, Spinning Kick
Shaolin Kung Fu (Chinese)	Soft	Acrobatic Dodge, Counter Throw, Deflecting Block, Joint Lock, Withering Grasp
Tae Kwon Do (Korean)	Hard	Breaking Blow, Dragon Tail Sweep, Jump Kick, Killing Blows, Spinning Kick
Tai Chi (Chinese)	Soft	Counter Throw, Deflecting Block, Mantis Strike, Push Hands, Withering Grasp
Tiger Claw (Chinese)	Hard	Breaking Blow, Damaging Block, Ripping Strike, Killing Blows, Spinning Kick
White Crane (Chinese)	Soft	Acrobatic Dodge, Counter Throw, Deflecting Block, Mantis Strike, Spinning Throw

Additional Hard Techniques

Breaking Blow: Fists and feet hardened with rigorous practice, toughened by beating hot sand or water, and charged with concentration and Chi - the powerful strikes of a dedicated martial artist can break wood, brick and bone.

Performing a breaking blow requires a full turn of concentration, as the martial artist aims the blow and focuses his energies. The final strike (if it hits) adds one additional level of damage for every two full successes scored on the attack roil. (For example, the player of a character who achieved two successes on an attack roll would roll Strength +2 dice of damage instead of Strength +1.) The player should roll to strike even against inanimate objects, simply to determine the level of additional success. This is still bashing damage unless the martial artist also knows the Killing Blow technique (see below). Due to the force of the blow, though, the martial artist suffers bashing damage equal to half of the attack's damage (before soak rolls, rounded down). Thus, if the martial artist inflicts five levels of damage upon the opponent, he suffers two levels of bashing damage himself, though this damage may be soaked normally by both parties (and further reduced by half if the attacker is Kuei-jin).

Botching a breaking blow generally results in the martial artist crippling or breaking his own striking limb; the martial artist suffers a level of lethal damage. (So a mortal may break his hand, but a Kuei-jin's dead arm may not be discomfited overmuch.)

Ground Fighting: Exotic styles like Pencak Silat stress the need to fight effectively in any terrain, under any conditions. Instead of flailing about aimlessly, a skilled fighter can use prone combat to her advantage.

Skill in ground fighting allows a martial artist to attack and defend normally while crouching or prone; she suffers no penalties. Of course, the character must still be able to reach her targets.

Jump Kick: Leaping into the air, usually with a great cry or even a running leap, the martial artist plants a devastating kick upon the opponent. Such blows have enough force to crack skulls, crush ribs and destroy organs, all while carrying the martial artist across the room.

A jump kick inflicts bashing kicking damage plus two dice. However, the difficulty to block, dodge or otherwise counter such a maneuver is reduced by two.

Killing Blows: A study of anatomy and a careful use of chambering and force allows the skilled martial artist to inflict devastating injury on his opponents, possibly killing them with single blows.

Killing blows inflict lethal damage. No special roll or expenditure is required; the martial artist may simply decide to score lethal damage instead of bashing damage with his attacks-Killing blows may not be effective against non-human opponents, at the Storyteller's discretion. (After all, where are the vital spots on a bakemono?)

Ripping Strike: Used primarily with the Tiger Claw and Eagle Claw techniques, a ripping strike rakes across the victim with stiffened fingers bent into a claw-like grasp. The martial artist may strike with the palm of his hand, or even tear into the opponent's flesh.

A ripping strike inflicts normal damage. However, such attacks are quite painful if executed successfully, and thus, cause the opponent to lose one extra die from her dice pools for the remainder of the turn and in the following turn, due to the pain- At the Storyteller's discretion, a properly exempted ripping strike of significant damage (five or more health levels) may actually tear out ears, eyes or chunks of skin.

Additional Soft Techniques

Acrobatic Dodge: Leaps, gyrations and flips allow a fast martial artist to evade many blows. Back flips and elegant j umps are the hallmark of such stylists, and they deftly avoid the strikes of many opponents.

By jumping, flipping, bending and spinning, an acrobatic martial artist may evade many blows at once. The martial artist uses Dexterity + Dodge as normal, but may dodge a number of hand-to-hand or melee attacks equal to his Acrobatics rating while using his full Dodge pool for each.

Executing an acrobatic dodge requires the entire turn - a martial artist cannot split his dice pool or perform an acrobatic dodge in conjunction with powers such as Black Wind or Celerity.

Cataleptic Grapple: With a proper locking hold, a grappling martial artist can apply pressure to blood vessels, the diaphragm, lungs, or simply against specific pressure points. In any case, the results are similar - the victim lapsed into unconsciousness.

A cataleptic grapple requires a successful grapple first; the martial artist must have a secure hold on the opponent. Then the martial artist must roll Perception + Martial Arts (difficulty 7); this is an extended roll, with each success inflicting one level of unsoakable bashing damage. As long as the martial artist keeps the hold, he can continue to apply pressure, stunning the opponent and even eventually killing her. As always, once the opponent is taken to the Incapacitated health level, she lapses into unconsciousness.

A cataleptic grapple can be used against Kuei-jin (by blocking Chi flow with pressure points), but as always, the vampire takes only half bashing damage, so such an attack generally takes quite a while to incapacitate the unliving. Cataleptic grapples have no effect on Western Kindred. **Push Hands:** Practice in Tai Chi includes "push hands," a game wherein the stylists press against one another in special poses while trying to force the opponent off-balance. A skilled practitioner learns to read body language, anticipate motion and shift balance with subtle pressure.

When a stylist with push hands is attacked, the martial artist may defend with this technique. The player rolls a normal block, but with difficulty 7. If successful, the attacker is knocked to the ground, suffering a number of dice of bashing damage equal to his or her strength (automatic strength successes from Black Wind and Potence do count for this) while the Tai Chi master sidesteps and simply gives the foe a little nudge.

Reactive Strikes: Parrying, pushing and riposting in rapid succession, the martial artist seizes a brief opening to come in under the opponent's guard.

When using a reactive strike, the martial artist must split his dice pool or otherwise perform at least two actions in the turn. The first action must block the opponent's attack; failure on the block negates the reactive strike. However, if the block succeeds, the martial artist immediately counterstrikes; the reactive blow cannot be blocked or dodged.

Spinning Throw: By using momentum against several striking or grappling opponents at once, a master can turn a series of attackers into a mass of flying bodies. This defensive maneuver pits the weight and motion of each attacker against the others, so that they all assist in the task of flinging the aggressors away from the defending stylist.

A spinning throw is a reactive throw; the martial artist must be attacked or grappled to use this ability. Effectively, the spinning throw permits the stylist to throw multiple opponents without suffering a penalty for multiple actions. The opponents must attack first, but resolution of damage is delayed until the martial artist attempts the spinning throw. The martial artist then makes one roll to throw at the usual difficulty, with a +1 to the difficulty for each attacker beyond die first-difficulties exceeding 10 remain at 10, but each additional point removes a success from the final roll. The throwing player compares his successes with the attacks of the aggressors; if an attacker scores more successes, his attack inflicts regular results, while if the defender scores more successes, the aggressor is thrown normally. In the case of a tie, die attacker fails in his strike, but is not thrown.

For example, if five foolish Kin-jin attacks Hideo, he can declare that he is attempting a spinning throw, and then wait for the Cainites to attack. He rolls to throw once, at a difficulty of 6 (soft style) +4 (for the first four Cainites) and losing one success from the roll (for the last Kin-j in). Hideo's player rolls and scores four successes; one is removed for the extra attacker, leaving him with three successes. Any attacker with only two successes to strike is thrown; those with three successes fail to hit; those with four or more strike Hideo normally.

Reflexive Actions

Many Kuei-jin powers are considered reflexives, just like certain Kin-j in abilities. Such powers do not require an action and, thus, do not count against dice pools. These actions include:

- Resisting mental influence with the P'o
- Expending Chi to improve Physical Attributes (with the proper Shintai Arts)
- Healing damage with Chi
- Soaking damage

Blood and Diablerie

Outside of the use of certain Soul Arts, the Kuei-jin have no equivalent to diablerie. Draining the blood or Chi of another vampire is not sufficient to swallow the soul - only the mystic powers of the Disciplines can devour such ephemera. Likewise, a Kin-jin cannot diablerize a Kuei-jin; the process no more functions upon the Cathayan than it would on a mortal.

If, for some reason, a Kuei-jin drinks the blood of a Kin-jin, the Western vampire's blood is Chi-rich - each blood point drained is good for a point of Chi energy (typically Yinaspected). A Cainite can also drain blood from a Kuei-jin, though only to the limit of the Kuei-jin's Chi; each "blood point" stolen takes a point of Chi energy, but when the Kueijin runs out of Chi, the remaining blood is tarry, black, useless ichor.



LEARNING DISCIPLINES

Since Kuei-jin do not have "clans" or "clan Disciplines," they must rely upon mentorship and practice to develop their capabilities. This process is long and painful even for the most brilliant Cathayan.

To learn a new Discipline, a Kuei-jin must usually have a mentor - someone to teach the basic forms and practices of the Discipline. Often,, the mentor requires the Kuei-jin to rigorously study certain "mundane" practices, like the Rituals, Occult or Meditation Abilities, before moving on to the training of the Discipline. For young Running Monkeys, developing a new Discipline is a matter of a few weeks or months of practice; for older Kuei-jin, already set in their ways, it may take years to awaken new powers.

Improving existing Disciplines is a matter of continued dedication and training. Although younger Kuei-jin sometimes improve naturally, all but the most basic powers of the Disciplines develop only with focused effort. When gaining levels of Disciplines beyond the second or sometimes third, characters must constantly work to improve the power, exercising their Chi and soul abilities. Powers that are ritualistic in nature-Yin and Yang Prana, Feng Shui, Tzu Wei and high-level Shintai Arts - also require the Kuei-jin to study from masters or esoteric Cathayan texts in order to learn the new rites and postures.

Obviously, any of these developments can serve as an excellent motivation for a story, and Storytellers should not hesitate to send young and ambitious Kuei-jin on pilgrimages to hone their arts.

Discipline Effect Change

Vampire: The Masquerade Revised Edition uses a different initiative system than the Second Edition and the Kindred of the East core rules. Instead of adding Wits and Alertness for a dice pool, the system now derives from the sum of Wits and Dexterity for a simple score. This changes the effect of Yang Prana's Principle of Motion power - instead of adding three initiative dice, each point of Yang Chi spent adds three points the initiative rating.

THE POWERS OF JADE

Power comes in many forms, among them the ability to understand your enemy. The shen of Asia study a multitude of different ways to harness Chi; among the most efficacious is the use of jade. But that doesn't mean they know everything. The shen are secretive by nature, and history has taught them the error of being too blatant. Despite the knowledge of the elders, the shen still only comprehend a fraction of the truth. Perhaps some things aren't meant to be understood. Jade is a very special material in the Middle Kingdom. Jade is a "Soul Substance." Capable of protecting the soul from the various elements. It is generally considered to bring luck. Jade also preserves life, extends life, and purifies the male spirit. The color and quality of jade can make differences in how a shen can use the material as a defense or even as a weapon against her enemies. Below is a list of different types of jade, and what the stein can use them for.

Blue or Green Jade

Controllers of the (Blue) Dragon - In control of the Element of Wood, and associated with Wind, Jupiter, Spring, Liver and Gall. With Green/Blue Jade, one does homage to Heaven, and to the region of the East.

System: Blue Jade is used for defense, and when held out *as a ward it can repel many lesser demons. The holder must expend one Yin Chi in order to properly ward an entrance with blue or green jade. Any shen attempting to enter the warded area is repelled, though spending a Willpower allows them through. The warder instantly knows if any demon attempts entry into a warded area. Blue or green True Jade have a more pronounced effect on the Kuei-jin than on other demons. Kuei-jin take no damage from passing one of these wards, but they suffer considerable pain and can be incapacitated if they fail to make a Willpower roll (difficulty 8).

Yellow or Gray Jade

Gives homage to the Earth - Considered the perfect balance of all other forms of jade, yellow and gray jades are "controllers" (for lack of a better term). These jades are capable of mimicking or influencing the potency of other forms of True Jade.

Yellow and gray jade are the perfect fill-in- the-blank tools for the shen. Yellow jade can be used as a weapon, using Yin Chi, or as a defense against evil attacks, using Yang Chi.

System: Yellow and gray jades are good for one use only. Either color adds damage to a hand-to-hand strike against a shen, if the holder expends one Yin Chi. The attacker rolls Wits + Occult (difficulty 7); for each success the aggressor inflicts one health level of lethal damage. For defenses, the holder spends one Yang Chi and the player rolls Wits + Occult (difficulty 7). Each success negates one health level of mystical damage (Disciplines, the claws of shen, etc.) from one attack. Yellow and gray jade are especially effective against hsien, who suffer aggravated wounds when the jade is used as a weapon against them.

White Jade

Controllers of the (White) Tiger - Autumn, Wind, Metal, Lungs and Small Intestine. White jade is a powerful form of protection and, perhaps, the most potent form of jade. With a single small piece of white jade a ritualist can ward a room against entry by the shen. **System:** The player spends one Yang Chi and rolls Willpower (difficulty 7) to create the ward. No supernatural creature can enter the warded area without spending Willpower points equal to the number of successes. The Restless Dead take actual damage if they force their way into a room warded by white jade, as do all other forms of spirits - generally, one health level of lethal damage is inflicted for each turn spent in the warded area.

Black Jade

Controller of the (Black) Tortoise - Winter, Cold, Water, Mercury, Kidneys and Bladder. Black jade makes an excellent weapon against the shen. However, it must be shaped into a weapon before it is effective. Daggers, swords, clubs or even arrowheads made of black jade and held by a shen who empowers it with Yin Chi always cause aggravated damage.

System: The player spends one Yin Chi to awaken the black jade. Once awakened, the stone causes aggravated damage on all attacks against shen for one night. Items of black jade awakened by the user may be given to others to use. The hengeyokai are particularly susceptible to the effects of black jade. In addition to the aggravated damage the stone causes, each strike with a black jade weapon steals one point Gnosis from the werecreatures.

Red Jade

Controllers of the (Red) Bird - In control of the element of Fire, the Sun, Mars, Heart, Large Intestine. Red jade is especially powerful in the eyes of the shen, for once empowered by sacrificing one Yin Chi- and one Yang Chi, the red jade brings luck.

System: The character sacrifices one Yin and Yang Chi to empower the red jade. Once per story the character wearing empowered red jade can reroll a botch in either offensive or defensive combat. Empowered red jade remains "awakened" indefinitely though, at the Storyteller's discretion, it may need another sacrifice of life force in order to bring luck. Anyone wearing red jade has a defense against mages. Every piece of the Stone automatically grants the wearer one die of countermagick. This power works only against magick cast directly at the wearer, and has no effect on the vicinity around the wearer. Clever mages know about this and use their magick to cause coincidental injuries to the targets of their ire.

Yu Ying Jade

The Perfection of Jade - a rare form of Jade that bestows eternal life.

If a shen is lucky enough to find this nearly mythological form of jade, and is willing to expend 2 Yin Chi and 2 Yang Chi to dedicate the jade to her, it returns the favor one hundredfold. The Yu Ying Jade absorbs latent Chi from the world and can be used to replenish the individual's Chi from time to time. This is particularly useful after fighting in extremely dangerous situations where the user has expended a substantial amount of her Chi in Combat.

System: The player spends 2 Yin and Yang Chi and rolls Stamina + Occult (difficulty 8). Each success allows the Yu Ying jade to absorb one Chi for the character to use later. Yu Ying jade always absorbs one Yang Chi, then one Yin Chi, repeating the cycle until it has absorbed all that it can. The process is slow, and the shen must wait for one week before draining the Chi collected from Yu Ying jade after each use. Taking the Chi before then destroys the1 jade's ability to continue gathering ambient Chi. Yu Ying jade has no direct effect on the shen. Note that this differs from normal jade's Chi-absorption capabilities, for most forms of jade-can only store Yin or Yang Chi, not both.

CROSSOVER CONSIDERATIONS

Crossover games of Kindred of the East with Other genres can expand the opportunities for intriguing stories. After all, even the mages of the Akashic Brotherhood know little of the Kuei-jin. Adding a shapeshifter, ghost or changeling can



certainly change the dynamics of the game. For a chronicle centered in the mystic East, too, the unusual denizens of the West smack of strangeness and threatening ways.

Be careful not to leaven the bread too much, though. Remember, a Kindred of the East chronicle typically focuses on the journey of enlightenment and redemption. To add too many new and foreign elements may dilute these themes. Instead, try using crossovers to highlight the moral dilemmas of the Kuei-jin, and to point out the essentially inhuman and monstrous natures in spite of their efforts to seek Golconda.

Vampire: The Masquerade

As noted in the Gweilo chapter, the Kuei-jin and the Kin-jin don't usually get along in the least. The arrogant Cainites assume the Kuei-jin to be lesser, wayward brothers, while the Cathayans look down on the reckless and unenlightened Children of Caine, scarcely realizing the potential dangers presented by the Antediluvians and Methuselahs of Cainite society. Where the two meet, Chi flares up in bloody conflict.

The primary consideration when combining Western **Vampire** games with **Kindred of the East** lies in the interaction of powers and functions between the two groups. Storytelling considerations are shown in detail in Chapter Six, but the mechanics of the two systems can sometimes conflict.

- Controlling Disciplines compare levels of effectiveness to determine control. Thus, if Animalism, Dominate or Presence is pitted against Beast Shintai, Cultivation or Obligation, the character with the highest Discipline level wins. If both have the same level of Disciplines, then the players' successes on the rolls are contested; the player with the most successes wins, but only gets a level of effect equal to his own successes minus his opponent's successes.
- Although a mental power, the Dementation Discipline works as a catalyst on incipient instability. As such, Kuei-jin cannot use the P'o to defend against this Discipline; the P'o welcomes madness. Other mental defenses (Internalize, etc.) function normally.
- A Kuei-jin's soul, once separated from her body, can be affected normally via Necromancy. Thus, Kuei-jin who fall in battle may find their essences captured. However, since a Kuei-jin generally has a split soul, the Necromancer may discover that he has only the Kuei-jin's Hun or P'o, not necessarily both.
- The sharpened senses of a Kuei-jin can be used to detect an Obfuscated vampire. The Kuei-jin must activate sharpened senses (see p.90-91of Kindred of the East). The Cathayan, is then eligible to sense past any level of the Obfuscate Discipline up to his own Dharmic level, as his enlightenment allows him to penetrate illusions a Kuei-jin with only one level of Dharma can only contest a Kin-jin with one dot of Obfuscate, but a Kuei-jin with a Dharma rating of five can attempt to see any vampire with up to five levels of the Obfuscate

Discipline, Note that this applies against the Cainite's total Obfuscate skill; a Cainite using Unseen Presence (Obfuscate 2) is still invisible to a Kuei-jin of Dharma 4 if the Cainite actually possesses Obfuscate 5. This same procedure also applies against the Chimerstry Discipline.

- Thaumaturgical powers the Blood Walk ritual and the Inquisition of Captive Vitae power - can determine if an individual is a Kuei-jin (assuming that the caster is familiar with Kuei-jin blood), but cannot determine lineage or Dharmic rating. Thaumaturgical powers that detect blood bonds do detect bonds of guanxi, though.
- The Discipline of Vicissitude usually inflicts permanent deformities on Kuei-jin. However, these alterations can be removed through the use of Flesh Shintai. A character's demon form from Demon Shintai does not keep such scars, and indeed, if a demon form is twisted with Vicissitude, the form is unmarked the next time it manifests.
- The Sabbat ritus of the Vaulderie has no effect on Kuei-jin, just like the blood bond. Conversely, a Kuei-jin cannot cause a participant in the Vaulderie to gain Vinculum toward herself. Also, Cainites cannot be part of Cathayan wu (as if it had to be said).
- Ghouls cannot be maintained with Kuei-jin blood.

Werewolf: The Apocalypse

Kuei-jin usually detect as Wyrm-tainted to the senses of the Lupines - but not always. In particular, the Thrashing Dragon Dharma often seems to radiate Wyld energy, and the Resplendent Crane Dharma Weaver energy. However, almost all Kuei-jin (except those of great enlightenment-Dharma 7+) have at least a subtle hint of Wyrm taint. Naturally, this can be accelerated by the actions of the Kueijin in question - a Cathayan who indulges in flesh eating very likely smacks of the stench of the Defiler.

Werewolf Rage and Gnosis can be compared to Yang and Yin Chi energy, respectively. Typical Werewolves have effective Chi pools of 25 points, though, due to their incredibly strong life forces. Attacks that sap Chi energy can be assumed to drain Rage or Gnosis; the Lupine simply isn't able to channel all of its bodily Chi, and this excess can be drained by a Kuei-jin through the usual means (flesh eating, blood drinking or breath stealing).

The shifters of the West in particular have an affinity for dragon nests (which they call "caerns") and a hatred for vampires; such enemies make excellent (if dangerous) adversaries for a Cathayan wu, as they are ferocious, implacable, and quite often barbaric by the standards of civilized courtly society.

See **Hengeyokai: Shifters of the East** for information regarding the Hakken and other changers of the East.

Mage: The Accension

Kuei-jin can do little to resist the powers of True Magick. Obviously, since they are vampires, Kuei-jin are susceptible primarily to Life and Matter conjunctional effects, though clever mages can easily find other means to discomfit the Hungry Dead.

When True Magick is pitted against Chi energy, the Kuei-jin's Chi generally loses - the stolen life energies of mortals cannot withstand the reality-bending powers of True Magick. However, a Cathayan who can negate or smooth out flows of Chi may be able to resist magickal tampering to some degree; every two successes on such a power count as one countermagick success, partially muting the magickal effects.

Wraith: The Oblivion

As split souls in dead bodies, Kuei-jin obviously have much to do with the wraithly world. Combined with the ability to actually see into and enter the Underworld, the Kuei-jin may associate with wraiths more than with any other sorts of supernatural creatures.

As with any other wraithly matter, relics and artifacts of the Underworld cannot survive in the living lands. Should a Kueijin acquire such an object and return with it to the mortal realm, it quickly disperses in a puff of insubstantial plasm. A Kuei-jin's P'o can be affected by certain wraithly powers that normally work on Shadows - Castigate, Contaminate and other powers can suppress or enrage the P'o. Of course, the wraith must be able to interact with the Cathayan to exercise these powers, so a cautious Kuei-jin can evade such problems.

See **Dark Kingdom of Jade** for more information about the afterlife of Asia.

Changeling: The Dreaming

The Fair Folk have little to do with the Kuei-jin; living in dreams and escaping the banal concerns of thee undead, they do not cross paths often.

Still, a changeling in the East can use her Arts and die like normally; Wyrd cantrips in particular can have a devastating effect on unsuspecting Kuei-jin, who know nothing of the changelings. Conversely, the Glamour of changelings makes for rich Chi energy: A Kuei-jin feeding from a changeling can gain Chi not only by draining health levels, but also by draining Glamour (allowing the Kuei-jin to take two points of Chi per turn). Naturally, changelings dread such attacks, and would be quick to evade the Kuei-jin if they were aware of this deadly hunger.

See Land of Eight Million Dreams for more specific information regarding the unique changelings (called hsien) of Asia.

The Sixth Age is Heke In the junules of Malaysia, in the cluttered streets of

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In the jungles of Malapsia, in the cluttered streets of India, in the mystic ruins of China, they hunt. The Kueijin claim an orderly society of tradition and history, but they turn their faces from the strangers within their own lands. The abadowy subcultures of the unliving play their parts, too, and their secret powers and beliefs rival the wisdom of the ancestors.

And It Will Shake the Pillaks of Heaven The Kindred of the East Companion Journeys

The Kindred of the East Companion journeys into the lairs of the mandarins and the temples of their enemies, exploring the underground beliefs and binarie powers that even the Kuei-jin feat. Here are the lost legacies of the arbats, the writings that defy Xue, and the creatures just beyond the shroud of Asia's grand and corrupt courts.

The Rindred of the East Companion includes:

 Heretical Dharmas, unusual Asian undead, and hidden Disciplines

- History of the courts and development of Kuei-jin society
 - Detailed information about religions and philosophies and how they interact with the vampires of Asia









THE CHARTER