

LEGENDS
WALK!



PANTHEON: CHINA



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Legends Walk - Truth & Justice Edition only includes three pantheons, in the interests of keeping the book a manageable size, but of course there are many others from cultures around the world. So welcome to the first in a series of add-ons detailing some of these, with compact descriptions of the mythic entities and power programmes for your LWTJ game.

We're beginning with the Chinese pantheon, adapting a product called *Jade and Ink* that came out for *Legends Walk Original Edition* in 2006. As it's likely to be less familiar to most readers there's quite a lot of detail for these programmes.

PANTHEON: CHINA

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CHINA

It's a country large enough to swallow all of Europe, with a variety of peoples and languages, containing one fifth of the people on the planet. So it's only proper to pay some attention to its mythology.

The Chinese name for China is *Zhong Guo* (*jawng gwaw*), "middle kingdom/country", from the days when it saw itself as the centre of the world. The western name "China" comes from the Qin (*cheen*) dynasty of emperors, under which the lands were first united in the 3rd century BCE. From then until 1912 it was a centralised state ruled by an emperor, the "Son of Heaven", and administered by a bureaucracy of officials who passed public examinations based on knowledge of the philosophical classics. The provinces had greater or lesser degrees of autonomy as the strength of the centre varied. The emperor's right to rule was said to be granted by the gods, known as the Heavenly Mandate, and could be withdrawn if a ruler were not virtuous.

China's historical and literary traditions have been written in essentially the same language for over 3000 years. In ancient times there were cults of the ancestors and a great variety of deities. These were influenced by the philosophical systems of Confucianism, founded by Confucius (551-479BCE), and Daoism, said to have been founded by Laozi (*laow-dzuh*) at roughly the same time; and later by Buddhism arriving from India. The Chinese also incorporated elements from the lands into which they expanded. This provides a fascinating mixture of beliefs. The official religion was Confucianism, but most of the mythology's deities are of Daoist origin, or of folk religion organised by Daoism. As well as communicating with the representatives of various departments of heaven the household could report to their ancestors' tablets at the household shrine and these could intervene with the bureaucracy on the family's behalf.

Between 1949 and the 1970s the government of the People's Republic of China took a hostile attitude to religion, seeing it as backward. Religious buildings were converted for secular use or even destroyed.

The new constitution of 1978 guaranteed freedom of religion with certain restrictions, and recently there has been a big programme to rebuild Buddhist temples. The Communist Party reacts against any group it perceives as challenging its power, and will not allow its members to practice religion (and membership is required for high level posts). Most modern Chinese report no religious affiliation, but hundreds of millions believe in folk traditions, ancestor worship, feng shui and suchlike, and there are still Buddhist and Daoist communities. (There are also significant numbers of Christians and Muslims.) So while the mythic traditions of China no longer have such a central place in the country's life, they do live on.



Hierarchy and order

Despite the long and literate history we do not have much clear material on the mythology. In 213BCE a government minister persuaded the emperor to have all books burned, apart from technical works on agriculture, medicine and such, on the basis that scholars' fixation on the past stifled innovation. Twenty years later the decree was lifted and the scholars of the time reconstructed the literature, adjusting it to support their own viewpoints and bring the old sources into line with Confucian theory. Much was lost.

The product was a pantheon organised just like the imperial administration on Earth, with departments to control every aspect of the world and human activities. Hierarchy and order were the guiding principles. The gods kept comprehensive records, made reports and issued directives. Depending on how well they perform their duties they might be promoted, lowered in rank or even dismissed, to be replaced in post by another. Earthly emperors, too, could issue decrees changing the rank, status and

The most common form of the Chinese language today is *pu tong hua*, Mandarin. There have been various attempts to render Chinese sounds into the Roman alphabet for the benefit of Westerners; the official one used in China and generally accepted elsewhere these days is *pin yin*. I have used this for names - or tried to, anyway. Older mythology books use other romanisation systems that make names look quite different to our eyes and put them in different alphabetical orders. For instance the moon goddess Zhang E (*jahng uh*) is often Heng-o or Ch'ang-o.

Based on a rudimentary knowledge I've tried to give pronunciations in italics - an inexact science involving attempts to write syllables that don't all exist in English. Hyphenated bits should be run together; they're only there to make the syllables clearer. I haven't even attempted to render the different tones that alter a syllable-word's meaning. Apologies to native Chinese speakers!

titles of deities. So the details of who did what in the pantheon changed over time - and different localities also had their own versions. The whole sweep is large and confusing, and only a few popular entities will be covered here.

Artisans usually chose a figure who'd been an inventor in their industry to be their patron, or even just a famous figure who'd practised it at all. So Cai Lun who invented paper became the god of stationers. Fan K'uei, a humble dog-skinner (!) who became the right arm of the founder of the Han dynasty, became the patron of butchers. These figures aren't important enough to be detailed here.

Creation

The most common story (added as late as the third or fourth century CE) says that the universe began as an egg of primeval Chaos. From the heavy elements of the egg came Earth, from its lighter elements came Sky, and there also appeared the being Pan Gu (*pahn goo*), shown as a dwarf clad in a bearskin or leaves.

For 18,000 years the gap between Earth and Sky grew ten feet a day, and Pan Gu grew to fill it in order to keep them apart. When he died the parts of his body became the various natural elements: rivers and seas from his blood, soil from his flesh, the wind from his breath, the sun and moon from his eyes, metal and stones from his bones.

The commonest version says humans arose from Pan Gu's body fleas. Another story says Pan Gu wanted a reasoning being to make the most of creation, so he made people out of clay. Those who got damaged by rain became the disabled. Earlier creation myths have people created from clay by the goddess Nu Gua, or as the offspring of the god of literature's attendants.

There are lots of different stories of how people gained skills like house-building, cooking, ploughing and irrigation. They usually involve mythical ancient rulers in the role of culture heroes, and when one being does something to cause disorder another restores balance.

The universe

There seem to have been different ideas about the structure of the universe. The oldest said **Earth** was square with a sea on each side, and the sky was like an inverted bowl that revolved around the Pole Star. The sky is tipped due to a monster called Gong Gong breaking one of its supporting mountains. The Earth tipped too, and this explains things like floods and the changing of the seasons.

Heaven was divided into different levels. Each deity had their own palace. Those in the more senior positions lived on the higher levels. At the top was the Jade Emperor Yu Huang, the supreme deity, and a court very like that found on earth.

Hell (or some variable number of hells) was controlled by ten law-courts, each presided over by one of the Shih-tien Yen-wang, the Yama Kings. Each king had jurisdiction for punishing a certain type of crime. The first among them, master of hell, was Yanluo Wang. He reported directly to the Jade Emperor and the Great Emperor of the Southern Peak who governed all human affairs. His Court was the first port of call for the dead. Hell was like a country of its own, with its own towns. The chief town was Feng Tu. The souls of the dead entered through the great Gate of Demons. Inside were the palaces of the Yama Kings, the Law Courts, the

places of torture and the dwellings of the various officials, servants and souls awaiting rebirth. Opposite the Gate the town adjoined a river, in which lived bronze snakes and iron dogs that preyed upon wicked souls who fell from the bridge.

Kun Lun Mountain in the far west was a mythical peak, but associated with the actual Kun Lun mountain range. It was the location of a Daoist paradise ruled by Xi Wang Mu, wife of the Jade Emperor. A jade palace of nine storeys was built on top of the mountain. Around it were magnificent gardens, including the orchards that grew the peaches of immortality. Those who became immortal, for instance by cultivation of the Dao or being allowed to eat a magical peach, spent their time here in amusements and banquets.

The Land of Extreme Felicity lay in the far west of the universe, past an infinity of worlds like our own. It was an enclosed place with trees made of precious stones and many-coloured birds praising the Buddhist virtues. The just souls who went here, free of the cycle of rebirth, spent their days contemplating Buddha, the Law and the Community.

Death

When the registers of Death and Life showed that a person had reached the end of their earthly life, two minor divinities were sent to fetch their soul. They were first taken before the local Cheng Huang, the God of Walls and Ditches, who checked that the right soul had been taken (and returned it to its body if there had been some error). He questioned them about their life for 49 days, possibly punishing them with the pillory or beating if they've been wicked.

The soul was then sent to the First Yama King. He consulted the register of all the good or evil actions in their past life and if necessary sent them to one of the other Kings for punishment. Good souls went to Buddha in the Land of Extreme Felicity in the West, or to Kun Lun Mountain where the Immortals dwelled, or to the tenth Yama King who supervises the Wheel of Transmigration to be reborn in another body.

Evil souls were sent before each Yama King in turn, who punished them for those crimes that fell under his distinction. Hell's tortures fitted their crimes: for example blasphemers' tongues were torn out and misers were forced to swallow molten gold; others

included boiling in oil and being ground up in mills. After each torture the soul reformed for the next. When the soul had been punished for all its sins it went to the tenth King for reincarnation as a god, demon, human or animal. If a human were to return as an animal it retained full human sensibilities though not the power of speech.

Those who died in accidents or by suicide before the date set in the Registers of Life and Death were sent to hell's town of Wang Su Cheng, ruled by the ninth Yama King. These souls had to live here like starving demons with no hope of rebirth unless they could find someone who died the same way to replace them. After three years they could return freely to the place they left their body on Earth, and do their best to arrange for people passing by to meet similar ends. The Chinese carefully avoided places where there had been a murder, suicide or fatal accident.

Sources

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'New Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology'; Hamlyn; 1959

www.wikipedia.org

www.pantheon.org



NOTES ON PROGRAMMES

Powers in the programmes are set out as follows:

- The name with no further marking denotes a power found in *Truth & Justice*, used just as described there;
- The name with an asterisk denotes a power described in the Key Powers section of *Legends Walk - Truth & Justice Edition* (including altered versions of T&J powers);
- A name with two asterisks refers to the New Key Powers section in this book, below;
- A new power introduced in a programme is described fully there.

- For each condition that is contrary to the harm (eg fated to die from a fall and someone shoots you), damage is downshifted (-2). If this would result in zero damage the target takes one Failure Rank instead.

This power should be made available for the Norns programme in the LWTJ mainbook.

Book of Life and Death

This information-gathering power lets you access the universal record of a being's birth and death once these events have happened and are finally set - or if they have been fixed by some power. The pieces of information are similar to those for *Appoint the Hour***: cause (for death), time and place. Roll for it, and treat the MOD of the achieved Rank as the number of pieces of information that can be gained.

It takes concentration, and you must have some link to the person to hand - body, home, prized possession, etc. You can usually discover whether a death was an accident or murder, but not the identity of the murderer: that requires investigation! The GM should feel free to apply the "Cannot derail plot" Limitation here.

This power should be made available for the Norns programme in the LWTJ mainbook.

Subdue Demons

You can command spirit entities that have fully entered the earth plane - often used to simply order them to leave. It's a contest of MOD plus any Qualities like willpower versus the target entity's will and the Rank of any power controlling it. You can Stunt to sense the presence of such entities nearby. The power will work on at least some sorts of minions from *Summon Minions**, depending on what they are in your game. In the Legendary Earth setting they're all sprites, and therefore susceptible.

New key powers

Appoint the Hour

You can temporarily adjust the universal record of each being's fated death, making it more or less likely that they'll meet their doom in a given circumstance.

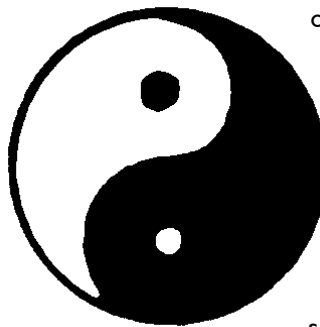
It is used on a nearby target and lasts a scene. You can specify up to MOD conditions, which fall into three brackets:

- Cause - eg "electrocution", "a knife attack", "a fall";
- Place - by which we mean setting rather than a specific place, eg "in a library" or "underground";
- Time - this can be a specific date or something more general like "at night" or "in winter".

So "by shooting, in a city, today" would be three conditions. No-one but you will know what fate is set unless you tell them or a power lets them find out. If the target already has such a fate applied to them you must overcome its Rank to overwrite it - even if it's one you applied yourself there's an Average difficulty.

The conditions kick in if the target takes any damage Ranks from physical harm.

- For each condition that matches the harm, damage is upshifted (+2).



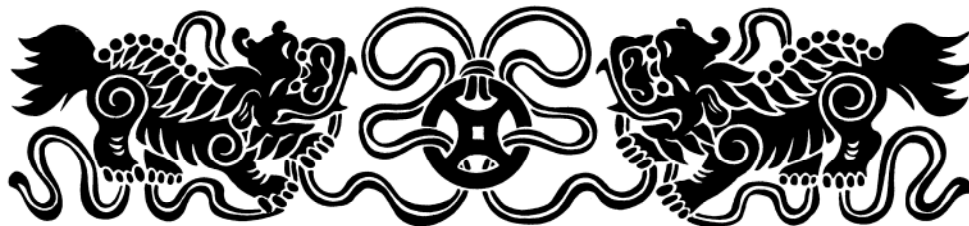
UNDERSTANDING THE PROGRAMMES FOR USERS OF OTHER GAMES

This supplement is designed for *Truth & Justice*, but it can help with other games that work with mythological entities too. You can just treat it as a handy set of concise write-ups of the gods, heroes and monsters that you can use to spin off your own stuff, but you might be able to get some benefit from the rules-based stuff as well, so here's a brief primer to help you get your bearings.

In the **PDQ system** everything important about a character is measured by **Qualities**: innate "attributes", skills, personality traits, possessions, relationships, etc. Qualities are rated on a scale of **Ranks**: Poor, Average, Good, Expert, Master. Abilities normal people have default to Average unless otherwise specified. Each Rank has a **modifier (MOD)** written in brackets after it, eg Good [+2], and a corresponding **target number (TN)**. When rolls are made the GM sets a Rank for difficulty and you add any applicable MODs to the result of 2d6 to try to reach the TN. All conflicts are resolved through the same three mechanisms, from automatic superiority to back-and-forth stroke and counterstroke. **Damage** consists of loss of Ranks in a character's Qualities, reflecting a gradual reduction in story-affecting power in that conflict rather than simulating cuts and bruises.

In T&J, **powers** are like a second tier of Qualities, enabling things normal people can't do or extending normal abilities to super levels. **Scale** is a key concept: most stuff we encounter is on the normal scale, but some powers and rare natural events are on the super scale, which automatically overcomes normal scale abilities (or gets a chunky bonus). **Stunts** let a power push its limits to do cool stuff, as one of the uses of **Hero Points** which also let you boost a Quality, get a second wind or establish story wrinkles.

In LWTJ, each mythic entity has a **power programme** that acts like a shopping list for spending character creation points. (Some groups will come up with additional ideas based on the description.) At least one level of the **required power** must be bought - something that exemplifies that entity - and then there's free choice of **optional powers**. It's also possible to convert power points into **Source-granted Qualities** from a list. Because the programmes are converted from Original Edition LW, and as a description framework, they include a set of seven "**attributes**" which exist as normal Qualities and super-scale power versions: Strength, Agility, Endurance, Wisdom, Ingenuity, Presence and Awareness. Those empowered by gods must take at least one Rank of **Aegis**, which strengthens or weakens them in situations connected to the god's area of influence. Monsters must take at least one **Vulnerability**, and others may do so: these inflict damage when triggered, possibly targeting particular kinds of Quality, in return for more Hero Points to influence the story.



GODS

Cheng Huang

(*chuhng hwahng*) This was more a title than a name: each district was said to have a deity responsible for the land and the welfare of the people, the God of Walls and Ditches. They were appointed by the Jade Emperor, often deceased mortals of integrity who served and protected the people in life and had gained divine status. They acted as protector and governor to an administrative area, town or large village; their rank varied according to the importance of the place.

Human officials sometimes asked Cheng Huang's advice and help when a crime was committed, sleeping in the temple and learning the guilty party's identity in dreams. Part of the god's role was to check that the servants of hell only carried off the souls who had completed their allotted lifespan. At a festival in spring the statue was taken from the shrine and carried round town for a "tour of inspection". In the procession were represented his assistants: Mr White and Mr Black who watched the town by day and by night, and Ox-Head and Horse-Face who carried out his orders.

Many places had a story that the inhabitants were warned in a dream that a new Cheng Huang was going to take up his post, and on the date specified a procession was heard in the streets. The locals hurried to offer a big arrival sacrifice and often recast the temple statue to give it the new person's head.

There were also gods of Place, **Tu Di** (*too dee*), less important but more popular. There was one for every town, every village, every street and every building. They were the lowest ranked officials in the heavenly bureaucracy. In most cases they were anonymous, shown as an old white-bearded man in ordinary clothes,



carrying a long knotted stick and accompanied by his kindly old wife. He acted as a sort of policeman, scaring off robbers or predatory animals, and generally looked after the fortune of the people. Most families had a statue in the house.

An important domestic god was **Zao Jun** (*dzow jyon*), the Hearth God, also known as Stove Master. He was represented by a picture on paper in a little wooden temple over the hearth or elsewhere in the kitchen. He recorded the deeds and words of the family he lived with, and at New Year reported to the Jade Emperor, who assigned good or bad fortune for the coming year on the basis of this report. At the end of the old year Zao Jun's image was offered food and his lips were smeared with honey to ensure he made a favourable report (or perhaps to stick them together!); the picture was then burned and firecrackers lit to help him on his way to heaven.

Aegis

- Civilisation (+ in buildings that are important to the community, eg town hall, library, monument, which will be more common in large cities; - in derelict or ruined buildings or in unworked wilderness)

Required Powers

- Read the Walls - things that occur in a building move and change its elements, and you can access this information. Use the Area and Duration columns for the distance and history you're able to scan. Impressions are always general and uninterpreted, eg buildings don't "get" detailed images or sounds but will pick up numbers and size of people, shouting, blood, lightning bolts etc. As you look further back, only the more significant events are retained. You can spend HP to boost duration units - minutes to hours to days to years to centuries - but each boost Downshifts Area and reduces detail.

Qualities

- Endurance, Awareness, Construction, Home-making

Optional Powers

- Blessing*

- Control Building* - make parts of a building do simple things within their normal function, eg doors will lock, roof slates will fall off, sprinkler systems will activate. You normally have to be inside or in contact with the building - Downshift at Near. Influencing modern technological systems also gives a Downshift. It doesn't work on furniture or appliances that aren't actually part of the building. (You can stunt something a bit like *Read the Walls*, for the present only.)
- Immunity to Construction* - works against building materials, ie worked stuff like bricks and glass.
- Pass Through Construction - you can phase harmlessly through the fabric of buildings and other constructions like bridges, either to move around or to stay hidden (see *Phasing*, T&J p44). Your body retains its normal size, so you can't hide in thin things, but life support isn't an issue. Phasing more than you can comfortably carry along with you is a Weight Stunt. Things you release return to normal.
- Warding*

Vulnerabilities

- Building Signs - when emotional or using building-related powers your appearance changes briefly, eg skin looks like brick or wood, hair turns to cables. This is a clear Meta marker.
- Low-ranking - comes into play in social contests with someone imbued by another god of any pantheon (as long as they don't have this themselves). It targets Qualities of social influence and willpower.
- Patron of Humanity - general debilitation if significant numbers of people are being harmed nearby (and HP to do something about it, of course).

Guan Di

(gwahn dee, also known as Kuan Ti) He was the god of war and upholder of justice, opposing all disturbers of the peace.

The worship of Emperor Guan is comparatively recent. In the official religion he was the god of war, in opposition to Confucius, the god of literature. For the ordinary people he was a Daoist god, a governor

and protector who mainly acted as a judge. They appealed to him when they had something to complain of: demons, illness, bureaucrats, brigands, and so on. He sent his servant to punish the offending party or asked another god like Lei Gong to do it. He was the patron deity of soldiers and policemen. He protected the realm and looked after state officials. People chose to focus on his warlike functions or his role as a protector at different points in history.

In popular belief Guan Di was famed for casting out demons, giving information about people who have died and predicting the future. His temples usually had a set of numbered slips in a bamboo holder: those who wanted to ask about matters like health, family or business shook this till a slip fell out and looked up the numbered verse for the god's answer.

He was originally a human general called Guan Gong, known for integrity, courage and loyalty, who died in 220CE. Many stories grew up about his adventures. He was shown as a giant dressed in green robes or full armour, with a red face, often attended by his squire, his son and his horse.

Aegis

- Guardianship (+ for helping and protecting those in need; - when acting for personal gain or to harm those weaker than you)

Required Powers

- Warding*

Qualities

- Presence, Awareness, Unarmed Fighting, Intimidation, Leadership, Security, Tactics

Optional Powers

- Knowledge of the Dead*
- Precognition*
- See Righteousness*
- Subdue Demons**

Vulnerabilities

- Cannot Ignore Injustice - if you encounter an unjust situation your strong instinct is to fix it, and if it persists this can be triggered (perhaps targeting Qualities to do with composure and self-esteem).

- Red Face - your face is bright red, marking you as a Meta and possibly influencing social situations.
- Unwanted Attention - you tend to attract people who want you to put something to rights, if they know who you are, or just to complain about it. This can erode social Qualities, concentration, attempts to pass unnoticed, etc.

Guan Yin

(*gwahn yeen*, also Kuan Yin) She was the Buddhist goddess of mercy and compassion, known across East Asia – in Japan she was Kannon. Her name was short for Guan Shi Yin, “observing the sounds of the world”. She developed from the male Indian bodhisattva Avalokitesvara, who helped all beings on Earth to attain enlightenment, and gradually gained female characteristics. Guan Yin was a fertility goddess, believed to bless women with children, and an expert in treating sicknesses. She was very popular: her image was found in most homes and many people visited her temple to seek healing.

Guan Yin was shown as a young woman in various situations: holding a fish basket, standing on clouds, riding the back of a dragon in front of a waterfall or sitting on a lotus flower draped in a white veil. She often held a child in her arms, and sometimes held a willow branch and a vase of the dew of compassion.

She was said to live on a mountain or island in the Eastern Sea. The introduction of rice cultivation was credited to her, and she made the grains wholesome by filling each kernel with her own milk. She came to the aid of all who needed her help, especially when they were threatened by water, demons, fire or the sword. It was said she could release prisoners from their chains, remove poison from snakes, deprive lightning of its power, and cure almost every sickness. In *Journey to the West* she interceded with the gods to free Monkey from imprisonment in order to assist in the pilgrimage to fetch the scriptures.

In one account she was the daughter of a human king and entered a religious order against his wishes. The king decided to kill her, but Yanluo Wang appeared and led her to his underworld domain. There she soothed the tormented souls and transformed hell into a paradise. Yanluo released her and she was reborn on an island where she protected seafarers

from storms. When her father fell ill she cooked a piece of her own flesh for him to eat.

Aegis

- Mercy (+ where people are suffering and you can do something to help; - if they are suffering and there's nothing you can do, or if you have somehow caused it)

Required Powers

- Aura of Peace - this power affects an area and gives everyone who stays within it extraordinary resistance to all directly damaging factors, physical and mental. People may be thrown around, restrained, controlled and what have you but punches, blasts, venom, falls etc just don't hurt. It works like *Super-Armour* (T&J p48) at the power's Rank, but without the Downshift option, and lasts up to a scene.

Qualities

- Wisdom, Presence, Awareness, Medicine, Psychology

Optional Powers

- Fertility*
- Healing
- Immunity to Negative Emotions* (against attempts to induce sadness, anger, etc)
- Liberation - with a successful roll, objects that are imprisoning or restraining you or a designated target will move to give freedom, eg ropes will loosen and fall off, locks will open. It won't work on things with no moving parts like a solid rock wall (though a fall of loose rocks might tumble out of the way). Difficulty is Average for a simple restraint; higher for larger, stronger or more complex ones.

Vulnerabilities

- Compassionate - general debilitation if you deliberately cause suffering.
- Raven's Curse - general debilitation triggered if someone dies within your sight.
- Too Protective - you tend to interfere in people's lives even if they could manage without your help. Your patience and composure may be depleted if someone has a persistent problem and you don't make some attempt to solve it.

Lei Gong

(*lay gawng*; also Lei Kung) He was the Daoist god of thunder, often called “My Lord Thunder” or “Thunder Duke”. (Officially he was part of a Ministry of Thunder, but the ordinary people tended to focus on key deities.) He was repulsively ugly: blue all over, with wings and claws. He wore only a loincloth, with one or more drums hanging at his side with which he produced rolls of thunder. He usually carried a mallet, probably for striking the drum, and sometimes a chisel for striking wrongdoers. Lei Gong’s particular concern was punishing perpetrators of great crimes that had gone undetected or were beyond the reach of human law (usually those that caused someone’s death), and punishing evil spirits that harmed humankind.

One story tells of a hunter who had gone far into a forest in pursuit of game and was caught by a violent storm. It seemed to hover over a nearby tree. In the branches he saw a small child with a roughly made flag, with which it was holding off the storm. The hunter realised that the child was an evil spirit pursued by the Thunder and that the flag must be made of some unclean material. He shot down the flag with his gun, and the Thunder struck the tree with a mighty blast, knocking out the nearby hunter. When he woke he found a little roll of paper stating that his life had been prolonged by twelve years for assisting heaven, and at the foot of the tree was the body of a huge lizard, the true form of the “child”.

During storms Lei Gong’s thunderous noise was assisted by Tian Mu, Mother Lightning, producing

flashes with the mirrors she held; Zhi Song-zi, the Master of Rain, sprinkling water from his pot; and Feng Po, the Count of the Wind, who carried the winds in a great sack.

Lei Gong had few temples and was rarely worshipped: most people who approached him asked him to take vengeance against another on their behalf. As well as his aversion to unclean things mentioned in the story above, he was said to be very prudish and would not enter a house where people were having sex – or even where there was a picture of this!

Aegis

- Thunder (+ in extreme weather conditions; - where there’s no weather, eg underground, ocean depths, deep inside a large building)

Required Powers

- Storm Aura - this defensive power surrounds you with a 10ft radius area of dark clouds swirling in strong winds, lit by the occasional flash of lightning and accompanied by rumbles of thunder. The winds act to force others out of the area, requiring a test against TN each round to enter or remain. MOD can be used for other things, like opposing perception and ranged attacks and adding to intimidation. Activating the power takes an action, and it requires a proportion of your concentration to keep going, so if that’s lost it might cease (possible concentration check if confused or distracted).

Qualities

- Strength, Presence, Intimidation, Claws

Optional Powers

- Immunity to Thunder and Lightning* (full against those specific weather effects, MOD against other sound explosions and electricity)
- See Righteousness*
- Thunderbolt - a standard ranged energy attack - see *Bolt*, T&J p41. Damage is part impact and part electrical.
- Flight* (wings, ceiling Good)

Drum

- Thunderclap - an area-effect sonic attack, causing Failure Ranks. It doesn’t cause property damage but most normal animals will flee in fear, and so



will cowardly minions unless they beat the TN.

Vulnerabilities

- Blue Skin - marks you as a Meta, with ensuing social effects.
- Easily Offended - certain things trouble you so much that they erode your Qualities, particularly composure: excreta, the blood of certain animals (for instance dogs), actual or pictured sexual behaviour, anything tainted by powers of uncleanness.
- Ugly - affects social interactions.
- Weather Signs - strong emotions manifest as minor weather conditions nearby, marking you as a Meta.
- Wings - tied to Flight, marking you as a Meta with possible social effects.



In droughts the people sought the help of the Long Wang. Sometimes there was a procession with a dragon effigy. In villages the people visited the most important temple with an ample sacrifice. If that didn't work within a few days they moved the god's statue to the roadside on the basis that this would be unpleasant for a water creature, motivating it to act. If rain came the god received another sacrifice. The Long Wang were also approached to stop rain to prevent floods. They had jurisdiction over funerals too, and if a mistake was made in the rites the people appealed to them.

Long Wang

(lawng wahng) The Dragon Kings were water creatures and bringers of rain, the embodiment of the concept of yang. They reported directly to the Jade Emperor, who told them how much rain to give each region. The most important were the four brothers who ruled the four seas of which the earth was the centre. Each lived in a Crystal Palace with his Ministers, an army of fish, crabs and crayfish, and watchmen who policed the sea bottom. They had many temples but were not worshipped as much as the local Long Wang - every watercourse and well had one. There were also celestial dragon kings and dragon kings of the five cardinal points.

The dragon image still commands a lot of respect in Chinese culture. Chinese dragons were benevolent creatures with a long, snake-like body, scaled skin, horns like those of a deer, and taloned feet. They flew among the clouds without wings.

It's said that Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, had the snake as his emblem and every time he conquered another tribe he incorporated part of its totem beast into his own, creating the image of the dragon. He was immortalised in dragon form.

Aegis

- Water (+ in, on or beside a body of water; - in dry conditions, eg desert, hot summer day, burning building)

Required Powers

- Aquatic*

Qualities

- Strength, Agility, Ingenuity, Awareness, Geophysics, Leadership, Armour (scales), Claws

Optional Powers

- Command Water Creatures - you can issue verbal commands to creatures that live in water, and they will understand and be inclined to obey. Their normal inclinations remain, eg most are wary of danger, and a roll of MOD plus normal social skills might be needed for persuasion.
- Control Water*
- Flight* (wingless)
- Universal Energy*

Vulnerabilities

- Needs Water - you become debilitated if a while goes by without immersing yourself in water.
- Reptilian Appearance - tied to Armour - a Meta marker affecting social interactions.
- Water Signs - your body oozes water when you're under emotional stress - a Meta marker affecting social interactions.

Nu Gua

(*noo gwah*, also called Nü Wa, Nu-kua)

The name of this ancient creator goddess comes from the words for gourd or melon, a symbol of fertility, and she's sometimes known as the Gourd Girl. Her upper half was human but her lower half was like that of a dragon. She could change shape at will.

In the early days Nu Gua felt something was missing from the world and wanted some company. Idly playing with some clay from the river bed, she made a little figure, but gave it legs rather than a tail like her own. The figure came to life, and Nu Gua was very pleased. She worked hard to make many more figures. She soon realised she would never make enough to populate the whole earth, so she trailed a vine or rope in the mud and whirled it round – each drop of mud that fell became a human being. (Some say these mass-produced ones became the poorer and less fortunate people.) To make sure her little people wouldn't die out Nu Gua divided them into male and female so they could have children. (This creation of people is also ascribed to other beings, like Pan Gu and Huang Di. Nu Gua's version seems to be one of the oldest ones.)

At one time Gong Gong, the Spirit of the Waters, lost a fight with the Spirit of Fire or, in other versions, a rebellion against the emperor. In his rage Gong Gong smashed his head into Mount Buzhou, one of the supports of the sky, breaking it. Sky and earth tilted. Chasms opened and there were floods and fires. Food was scarce and people were being attacked by hungry beasts. Nu Gua melted coloured stones to mend the sky, used the legs of a tortoise to prop it up again and made dams to control the waters. Order returned but she couldn't completely straighten things out, which explains why the sun, moon, and stars move towards the northwest and the rivers in China flow southeast into the Pacific Ocean, and why China has mountains in the northwest and flat plains with rivers in the southeast.

In other stories she and her brother Fu Xi were the only survivors of a great flood. Eventually they received a sign from the gods that they were permitted to marry, and from their union came a new race of humans.

Nu Gua was worshipped as the intermediary between men and women, and as a goddess who grants children. She invented the flute, instituted

marriage and instructed mankind in the art of building dams and channels for irrigation.

Aegis

- Creation (+ where things are being made from natural materials; - where such things are destroyed)

Required Powers

- Super-Ingenuity*

Qualities

- Natural History

Optional Powers

- Create Homunculus - you can make humanoid figures out of found materials and imbue them with a semblance of life. They follow your spoken commands. For simplicity, this riffs on *Creation**: you assign [power MOD + 1] Ranks of Qualities to a homunculus. The first Rank is spent to get a basic set of Average [0] Homunculus, Expert [+4] Small, Poor [-2] Small. Making it larger costs a Rank per size level, and construction takes at least one action per size level. It's sometimes appropriate to give it a bit of Armour to reflect its materials. Homunculi normally last a scene, mysteriously disappearing by the next, but you can make one permanent by embedding some of your own life force at the cost of a Damage Rank and a Hero Point. You can never have more homunculi than the power's TN.
- Dragon Tail - this vaguely reptilian appendage can be used to make blunt or sweeping attacks, particularly useful against multiple opponents.
- Fertility*
- Jury Rigger - when constructing or repairing something you can use items, parts and materials that are only borderline suitable for the job and they'll function fine. This doesn't change the properties of the materials, just the way they fit as part of a whole. The result will hold together and function for Rank duration.
- Shapeshifting* (ceiling Good)
- Summon Minions*: Mud People, humanoid figures of clay and mud, not yet set into proper humans. Good [+2] Strength, Good [+2] Body of Mud, Good [+2] Unliving*, Good [+2] Immunity to Toxins and Diseases*, Good [+2] Vulnerability to Heat and Water.

Vulnerabilities

- Compulsive Fixer - you have a strong instinct to put things right and correct problems. If a situation that needs a fix persists, it might reduce Qualities like concentration or self-control.
- Parent Figure - people instinctively look to you for comfort and support, which can get in the way and hinders more equal relationships like romance. In a stressful situation you might find your social abilities eroded, be unable to get away to do other things, etc.
- Ramshackle Genius - things you make never look neat and tidy and may draw derision from professionals in the appropriate fields, affecting Qualities like debating and social status.
- Tail - tied to *Dragon Tail*, marks you as a Meta and affects social interactions.

Shou Xing

(*show hseeng*, “star of longevity”) He’s popularly called Shou Lao. He was the god of long life, easy to recognise: an old man with white beard and eyebrows and an enormously high bald head. He was usually shown leaning on a rough staff with the peach of immortality in one hand, and often accompanied by a white crane or a turtle, animals that were thought to live a long time.

Shou Xing decided the date of each person’s death. Once written in his tablets it was unchangeable – except that he could fiddle with the writing a bit, for instance changing someone’s lifespan from 19 to 91 years. He formed a triad, the San Xing (“Three Stars”), with **Fu Xing**, god of happiness, and **Lu Xing**, god of salaries and status.

In China old age is considered a great blessing, so he received great honour even though he has no temples. His image was displayed at the birthday of an older person and received offerings and greetings.

Aegis

- Long Life (+ around older people who are healthy and happy; - in places where life is cut short or prolonged unnaturally)

Required Powers

- Book of Life and Death**

Qualities

- Endurance, Wisdom

Optional Powers

- Appoint the Hour**
- Blessing*
- Immortal*
- Sense Death’s Presence*
- Taste of Age - gives the target a Downshift for Strength and an Upshift for Wisdom, which can help or hinder depending on circumstance. It lasts Rank duration.
- Time Sense*

Vulnerabilities

- Big Giant Head - your forehead grows upwards by about 6 inches, and you become bald. It’s quite noticeable and disconcerting, affecting social interactions.
- Leave It To The Young Folk - triggered if you try athletic tasks, targets your physical capabilities.
- Signs of Age - eg white hair, wrinkled skin - may affect you in some social situations.



Wen Chang

(*wuhn chahng*) He was the Daoist god of literature and writing, invoked by scholars and those seeking to pass examinations. He was originally a stellar deity who descended to earth and lived seventeen successive lives filled with remarkable events and achievements. The Jade Emperor rewarded him with the title Grand Emperor of Literature. When the constellation he represented was bright, literature flourished. He was usually shown as a seated mandarin holding a sceptre.

In one story a hard-working student returned from the examination dissatisfied with what he'd written. He called on Wen Chang for help. While he slept he dreamed that the god was throwing essays into a stove, including his own. They were destroyed and then emerged quite different. Wen Chang gave him the corrected essay and he memorised it. In the morning he heard that the building where the essays were stored had burned down, so the examinations had to be repeated. He used the god's advice and passed.

Wen Chang's assistant **Kui Xing**, god of examinations, was more popular. He was an ugly fellow, usually shown standing on the head of a turtle – originally a mortal scholar who threw himself into the sea from shame at his appearance but was saved by a water beast and became immortal. Every literary family had an image or tablet of him because he decided who would succeed in entering government service. When the list of candidates was placed before the Jade Emperor he used his basket to measure their talents and his brush to mark the names of the successful ones. Other assistants were Diya, "Earthly Dumb" and Tian Long, "Heavenly Deaf", who could be relied on not to leak examination questions in advance, and Zhu Yi who helped ill-prepared candidates.

Aegis

- Writing (+ surrounded by written material; - where a significant quantity of written material, or a smaller but important piece, is defaced or destroyed)

Required Powers

- Super-Wisdom* (ceiling Good)

Qualities

- Language - Chinese (in most games you can ignore the variety of Chinese languages), Language - own, Research

Optional Powers

- Alter Characters - you can cause a nearby piece of writing to alter, changing its words and meaning. In most cases this is an Average task, but the GM might make it harder for a large or complex document. It works on physical writing, not electronic, and is a permanent change.
- Assess the Candidate - you can get an idea of the mental abilities and education of a nearby person. You can either focus on an aspect like "intellect", "willpower" or "education", or do a general scan. The power reveals up to MOD (Av=1) relevant Qualities and their Ranks, highest first.
- Characters in Motion - you can cause any nearby object bearing or containing writing to move around, including flying through the air at modest speed.
- Remote Reading - you can access the content of nearby documents without needing to see it. You get an overall, general impression of subject matter very quickly and can sift through like high-speed skim-reading. You must take normal reading time to focus in on any passages you want to comprehend and retain in detail. A roll might be needed to understand long or complex documents.
- Universal Reading - you can read and write the written form of any human language – gives no ability in the spoken form.

Vulnerabilities

- Neglected Speech - you are so oriented to writing that your Qualities are eroded when you need to impress people with speech.
- Obsessive Writer - you make lots of lists, and if distracted will tend to make notes or work things through on any available surface. If you go a while without writing anything your concentration and composure might suffer.
- Written Signs - when you are emotionally agitated nearby written materials that are flexible, like paper or cloth, flutter and rustle. This is a Meta marker that can affect social situations.

MRS CHARACTER

She is a short, middle-aged woman wearing a plain suit and spectacles, with eyes that can pin you to the wall and dissect you for weaknesses. One of the highest-profile agents of the ruling Party of China, she is completely dedicated to it (and well rewarded for her service). She will do almost anything in its cause, and her powers make it particularly easy to trump up charges against troublemakers. She does have some vague principle of doing what's best for the people - it's just that there can be no debate about what that is.

In Mandarin she is Han Zi Nü Shi (*han dzuh nyew shuh*), literally "Ms Chinese character" - the Mrs seems to have stuck in English even though it's not generally known whether she has a husband - indeed her private life is very private, down to her given name. Occasionally she's called Madam Character, or in some Party contexts Han Zi Tong Zhi (*han dzuh tong juh*), "comrade character".

Source: Wen Chang

Motivation: Protect the Party from its enemies.

Qualities: Expert [+4] Party Official, Good [+2] Educated, Expert [+4] Strong-willed; Poor [-2] Short-sighted

Powers: Average [0] Aegis - Writing, Average [0] Super-Wisdom*, Good [+2] Alter Characters, Good [+2] Characters in Motion, Average [0] Universal Reading

Stunts: *Paper Straitjacket* (Characters in Motion Signature, usually 2HP for Good - draws in written papers from the nearby area to cocoon the target, immobilising, constricting and asphyxiating them for Failure Ranks)

Xi Wang Mu

(*hsee wahng moo*, "Queen Mother of the West") The goddess of immortality and personification of yin. In ancient times she was a monster with a human face, the teeth of a tiger and a leopard's tail who ruled over plague demons and was the goddess of epidemics. By the 1st century CE, under the influence of Daoism, she had become a noble lady ruling the paradise of the immortals on Kun Lun Mountain. In popular mythology she was Wang Mu Niangniang, wife of the Jade Emperor Yu Huang.

Xi Wang Mu was shown as a beautiful woman in a royal gown, sometimes with a peacock or ladies in waiting, sometimes riding on a crane. She lived in a jade palace on Kun Lun, nine storeys tall, surrounded by a golden wall over a thousand miles long. It was also said to extend for nine storeys underground, connecting with hell at the bottom and heaven at the top. In her garden grew the peaches of immortality, ripening every 3000 years - when this happened she invited the gods and immortals to a peach feast to renew their immortality. She bestowed immortality on a number of humans.

Aegis

- Immortality (+ where people are working for their own health or enlightenment; - in places with strong death resonance)

Required Powers

- Confer Immortality - you can give someone else nearby the *Immortal** power at your Rank, lasting Rank duration. You can't use it on yourself.

Qualities

- Ingenuity, Presence, Leadership, Socialising, Attractive Appearance

Optional Powers

- Control Disease* (ceiling Good)
- Ruler of Kun Lun - you can access a strange physical pocket dimension (the same one for all users of this power) taking the form of a great jade palace and grounds bounded by a gold wall, with mountains visible in the distance but unreachable. You can enter and leave as an Average action, with any items you can carry on you. It's also possible to send others here with a similar roll (Downshifted as usual for multiple targets at once). You have an intuitive



understanding of the place, using MOD to navigate, but others can become lost. It is kept neat and tidy and food is usually available, but no beings are seen. The layout of Kun Lun maps to locations on Earth in a way that seems to shift over time, so by walking to the right part of the palace you can emerge in any part of the planet, though usually not a specific location (make a roll and use the achieved Rank as a guide for accuracy). Items that are part of Kun Lun can't be brought out. Anyone can enter the Dead Zone from here by passing through the Door of the Dead in the lowest level, which sends their spirit through and holds their body in limbo, but disembodied spirits from the Dead Zone can't normally come out.

- Shapeshift (Tiger Monster) - with an effort you can resume your ancient part-tiger, part-human form for a short period. Its Quality is mainly useful for fighting, agility and keen senses.
- Super-Presence* (ceiling Good)

Vulnerabilities

- Monstrous Past - when emotional, especially angry, elements of your old tiger monster form become visible briefly – eg eyes, teeth, claws. This is a Meta marker that can affect social situations.
- Regal - you're concerned about keeping up a respectable appearance, inhibiting frivolous or disreputable activities.
- Unwanted Attention - you tend to attract people who want to serve and assist you, especially in a situation like a shop or restaurant. This can be annoying, and makes it hard to be low-key.

Yanluo Wang

(*yahn luaw wahng*, also called Yen-lo, Yan-lo) He was the ruler of the dead and the underworld, first among the ten Kings of Hell. He reported directly to the Jade Emperor and the Great Emperor of the Southern Peak who governed all human affairs. The souls of those who died come first to him – he investigated their actions in their past life and sent good souls to their proper reward and sinful souls to the other Kings for punishment and eventual reincarnation. Hell was envisaged as a country much like earthly China, except that it was populated by the dead, many of whom were undergoing horrible tortures to work off their sins.

The Kings of Hell were shown dressed like Emperors, and all looked pretty much the same. They had many servants to carry out their will: these were shown stripped to the waist, with stubby horns on their foreheads, bearing spiked maces or tridents.

Aegis

- Death (+ in cemetery or mortuary; - in places connected with new life, eg maternity ward or plant nursery)

Required Powers

- See Righteousness*

Qualities

- Wisdom, Presence, Business, Law

Optional Powers

- Breach the Wall of Death*
- Command the Dead - any death-based creature must listen to your words. You can use this to alter their behaviour - coupled with Qualities like Leadership and Presence, and possibly opposing another Meta's influence - or as a simple warding forcing them to beat TN to enter the nearby area.
- Hell Vision - forces a mental illusion on the target, in which they experience one or more horrible punishments appropriate to the misdeeds they've committed in life. On the initial attack the target must resist TN with Qualities like willpower and virtue. If they fail they take the difference as Damage Ranks and are locked in the illusion, unable to take action and usually writhing in agony. Each round thereafter they

make a similar roll to attempt to break out. On the user's side it's limited to Rank time with a maximum of one scene. Victims sometimes find this a life-changing experience, especially if they're easily swayed.

- Immunity to Death* (vs life drain, ageing, etc)
- Knowledge of the Dead*
- Summon Minions* - Servants of Hell, demonic-looking shirtless men with stubby horns, bearing spiked maces and tridents. Good [+2] Guard, Good [+2] Endurance, Good [+2] Awareness, Good [+2] Immunity to Death Powers*, Good [+2] Immunity to Horror and Fear*
- Super-Presence* (ceiling Good)

Vulnerabilities

- Judge's Curse - tied to *See Righteousness* - you can't avoid seeing people's basic characters, and this experience of how flawed people are makes it hard to show friendliness and trust.
- Lawful - debilitation from hesitation and doubt triggered if you deliberately embark on actions that are against the law.
- Ruler of the Dead - it's your duty to see that the dead are in their proper place. This can be triggered if you don't act to send an earthbound spirit on, or if you try to bring someone back from their "proper" end.

Yi

(yee, also called Shen Yi) He was a divine archer who performed many brave deeds and was eventually promoted to the position of sun god.

At one time ten suns lived in a giant mulberry tree beyond the eastern ocean. They were the children of Taiyang Dijun, god of the east, and Xi He, goddess of the sun. Xi He decreed that only one should appear in the sky at a time, so each morning she would drive one to the edge of the sky in her chariot so it could pass across the sky and take it back to the tree at the end of the day. After a thousand years, though, the suns grew tired of this routine and all appeared in the sky at once. On earth the soil dried, crops withered and even rocks began to melt. The people had nothing to eat or drink and were preyed on by hungry monsters and animals.

This was the time of the legendary emperor Yao. He called on the gods for help but they could not persuade the suns to return. So the divine archer Yi was given a magic bow and told to frighten the suns into submission and kill the wild animals. However, Yi decided the situation was so serious that the suns had to be killed. He shot an arrow high into the sky – a great ball of fire fell to earth and landed as a three-legged raven (each sun had a raven living in it). In some versions Yi became too enthusiastic and Emperor Yao, afraid of losing light and warmth entirely, had a servant steal an arrow so Yi could only shoot down nine of the suns.

There were still many difficulties to deal with on earth. Destructive storms were sweeping across China, and they turned out to be due to Feng Po, Count of the Wind, who kept the winds in a big sack. (Another version says this was during a rebellion against the legendary emperor Huang Di.) Yi reached a mountain top and subdued Feng Po with an arrow, making sure the winds would be operated properly in future. There was also a turbulent river that had burst its banks: an arrow loosed into the flood revealed a water god and his entourage. Yi drove him off, but his beautiful sister Zhang E remained and Yi asked her to marry him. The archer subdued many monstrous creatures: the giant Chiseltooth, a great water serpent and the Windbird, a gigantic peacock.

Everyone praised Yi – except Taiyang Dijun, who banished Yi and Zhang E from heaven for killing his children the suns. Yi was content as a mortal, spending his time hunting, but Zhang E was bored and worried that one day she would die. She persuaded Yi to visit Xi Wang Mu, the Queen Mother of the West, and ask for the elixir of immortality. She gave him a box containing enough for the two of them to live forever, but only enough to make one truly immortal. Unfortunately temptation proved too great for Zhang E: she took all the elixir herself and rose upwards until she reached the moon, where she has lived ever since.

One story says that Yi was eventually killed by a pupil who was jealous of his greater ability. The more common version says the gods forgave him and he returned to heaven, living in the Palace of the Sun. He was granted the power to visit his wife on the moon and does so on the fifteenth day of each lunar cycle, making the moon shine more brightly.

Aegis

- Sun (+ in direct sunlight; - in total darkness)

Required Powers

- Far Shot - you can make a ranged attack at any target you can see clearly, regardless of normal range penalties or limits. Ranks beyond Average add MOD to long-range shots.

Qualities

- Presence, Awareness, Archery

Optional Powers

- Call Heat - makes it hotter in the nearby area. This can only be normal scale.
- Elemental Resistance - MOD resists all elemental forces - heat, cold, wind, lightning, etc.
- Monster Slayer - like *Smiting**, does MOD extra damage on successful physical attacks against beings imbued by monster Sources and other hostile unnatural creatures.
- Pacify Elements - your ranged attacks carry the ability to reduce, overcome or disrupt elemental effects like fires and floods. This can be a simple or complicated situation - if you succeed it is negated or disrupted, and if you fail it is merely Downshifted one Rank.
- Sun Immunity* (full against light attacks, MOD against heat)

Bow

- Effectiveness*

Vulnerabilities

- Exiled From Heaven - rendered mortal, you are vulnerable to aging, life drain or death powers.
- Faithless Companions - the Source's influence spreads into your personal relationships, targeting social Qualities when you're trying to inspire loyalty and trust in those close to you.
- Monster Target - kicks in if you're trying not to be noticed by monster-imbued Metas or other monstrous creatures.



Yu Huang

(yew *hwahng*, also called Yu Di or Yu Huang-ti)
The Jade Emperor was the ruler of heaven and patron of the Chinese emperors. He was more formally known as the August Personage of Jade. Children and commoners called him Tian Gong, Grandfather Heaven, or Lao-tien-yeh, Father Heaven. He's actually quite a recent introduction, from around the 11th century CE.

He lived on the topmost level of heaven, surrounded by his court. Yu Huang's palace was envisaged as exactly like that of the earthly emperor. There he granted audiences to his many ministers and officers. He had an army to fight rebellious spirits. His wife was Xi Wang Mu, the Queen Mother of the West. He had a large family of sisters, daughters and nephews, and a celestial dog that protected his household from evil spirits. He was always shown in the high ceremonial costume of an Emperor with dragons on his robe, a head-dress with pendants of coloured pearls, and the book of etiquette, seated on a throne. He was middle-aged with long whiskers and a small beard. His expression was stern, calm and dignified.

Yu Huang was said to be one of the earliest gods to appear, and was one of those credited with making humans from clay. He was preceded in office by the Heavenly Master of the First Origin and would one day be succeeded by the Heavenly Master of the Dawn of Jade of the Golden Door. He came to be regarded as the supreme ruler of heaven, determining events in the heavens and on earth, with

a vast number of underlings to carry out his commands in a replica of the earthly bureaucracy. At the beginning of each year Yu Huang summoned all the deities to his palace in the highest heaven to hear their reports. Based on how well each had performed during the previous year they might be promoted or transferred to another department. The Jade Emperor was said to deal directly with the Emperor of China, and his assistants dealt with less important people. At the winter solstice and in spring the earthly Emperor made a grand procession to make offerings at Yu Huang's temple.

Long ago Yu Huang had been a mortal prince. He succeeded his father on the throne but abdicated after a few days, retiring to the mountains to study the Dao and achieving perfection. Thereafter he instructed the sick and poor in the Dao and eventually became an immortal. After millions more years he became the Jade Emperor.

His chief assistant was **Dongyue Dadi**, Great Emperor of the Eastern Peak. He headed a ministry of some 75 departments concerned with every aspect of human life including birth, death, social position, wealth and number of children. He was directly responsible to the Jade Emperor and had a large staff of assistants recruited from the souls of the virtuous dead. He was widely worshipped and his temples were busy.

Aegis

- Rulership (+ when there's a body of people to lead; - when on your own with no people nearby)

Required Powers

- Summon Minions* - you have access to two minion types, but can't call both at once.
 - Ghostly Officials - cultured oriental gentlemen in robes - Good [+2] Official (inc bureaucracy and dealing with people), Good [+2] Wisdom, Good [+2] Presence, Good [+2] Super-Armour (from ghostliness), Immunity to Death Powers and Life Drain*.
 - Heavenly Host - soldiers with archaic armour, swords and spears, disciplined but not overly bright - Good [+2] Soldier, Good [+2] Strength, Good [+2] Armour, Good [+2] Sense Spirits, Good [+2] Immunity to Mind Control*

Qualities

- Presence, Business, Leadership

Optional Powers

- Blessing*
- Curse*
- Immunity to Mind Control*
- Master of the Gate*
- Subdue Demons**
- Super-Presence*

Vulnerabilities

- Elevated - your social abilities are eroded for interactions with ordinary working class folk.
- Official Responsibilities - you often hear ghostly voices asking you to make decisions and give opinions. If you haven't taken a few minutes to deal with them (by speaking out loud) for a while they become more insistent and damage your concentration and composure.
- Someone Comes In To Do That - triggered if you have to do ordinary everyday activities in a stress situation, like cooking, cleaning, shopping, driving... Damage targets your coordination and composure.



Zhang E

(jahng uh, also Heng O or Chang O or other variations) She was the goddess of the moon, where she lived in the Palace of the Great Cold. She was shown as a very beautiful young woman; so much so that in poetry a pretty woman was said to be as if she had come down from the Moon. She often wore regal garments and carried the disc of the moon. She was regarded as an embodiment of yin.

Zhang E was the sister of an unruly water god driven off by Yi the Archer. Yi was entranced by her beauty and they married. After Yi shot down nine of the ten suns, the pair were exiled from heaven and condemned to live as mortals (see Yi's entry). Zhang E persuaded Yi to ask Xi Wang Mu, the Queen Mother of the West, for the elixir of immortality. She provided enough to let two people live forever, but only enough to make one person truly immortal. Zhang E thought about taking it all herself, but worried the gods might be angry if she abandoned her husband. An astrologer suggested that she could escape to the moon. On swallowing the elixir she floated up to the moon but found she had been turned into a toad.

On the moon she kept company with a white hare or rabbit, more anciently said to live there preparing the elixir of immortality, and a woodcutter who'd been banished there for offending the gods. In some accounts Yi pursued his wife furiously and the hare fought him, making him promise not to harm her. Some say Zhang E did regain her human appearance and thenceforth lived in the palace of the moon (she's certainly shown as a woman, not a toad). The most common version of Yi's story says that the gods restored his divine nature and installed him in the Palace of the Sun as the yang to balance Zhang E's yin. He visited his wife once in each lunar cycle, causing the moon to shine with an extra brilliance.

Aegis

- Moon (+ when moon is out; - in bright sunshine)

Required Powers

- Beauty*

Qualities

- Ingenuity, Awareness, Subterfuge, Night Vision

Optional Powers

- Call Cold - makes it cold in the nearby area. This can only be normal scale.
- Immortal* (ceiling Good)
- Moon Immunity* (full vs darkness-based attacks, MOD vs cold)
- Shapeshift* (Toad)

Rabbit (pretty much has to be a rabbit or hare)

- Qualities: Unarmed Fighting
- Confer Immortality - you can give someone else nearby the *Immortal** power at your Rank, lasting Rank duration. You can't use it on yourself.
- Intelligence*

Vulnerabilities

- Nocturnal - your natural rhythm is to be active at night and sleep during the day. This kicks in if you undertake active exploits in daytime, targeting focus, coordination and alertness.
- Unwanted Admirers - your beauty tends to attract attention wherever you go, bringing gifts, marriage proposals, and sometimes obsession. This can certainly mess up social situations.
- Vulnerable to Dryness - as a former water spirit and, let's face it, amphibian you are particularly susceptible to harm that has a drying effect.



HEROES

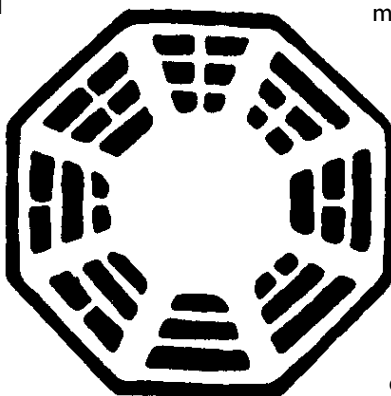
Huang Di

(hwahng dee) China has a number of mythical emperors said to have ruled in the 3rd millennium BCE and to have instigated the skills and institutions of human society. The greatest of them was Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor.

His inventions included (are you ready for this?): the wheel, enabling men to make carts; boats and oars; roads and the cutting of passes through mountains; pottery; writing; music; the first calendar; instruments to measure the movement of the stars and planets; the compass; selective breeding of animals; seasonal planting of crops and trees; the cultivation of silkworms; the first armour; and the first medical treatise. He allocated a name to each family, an important step in determining Chinese social order. He's said to be the ancestor of the Han ethnic group (the largest in China and, in fact, the world), and is revered as one of the founders of religious Daoism.

In the earliest stories about him he was a warrior and general who defeated a number of deities to establish order: notably his half-brother the Fiery Emperor Yan Di. One of Yan Di's followers was Chi You, a fearsome figure. He was a god of war, tall and broad-chested. His head was unbreakable bronze, with an iron forehead, sharp horns, hair that stood up straight like knife blades, and four eyes. His feet were hooved like those of an ox, and he crunched up sand and stones in his strong teeth. He also had 81 brothers like himself, and none of them liked answering to the Yellow Emperor. Huang Di's army of bears, tigers and other ferocious animals met Chi You's army of demons. With the help of the gods of rain and wind Chi You called up a thick black fog; Huang Di invented the compass to find his way. Chi You called down wind and rain; Huang Di summoned Ba, goddess of drought (said to be his daughter) to clear the skies. Chi You was reinforced by giants from the north and Huang Di was at a loss. Fortunately a divine fairy appeared to teach him military strategy, and he mined a magic copper from

the Kun Lun Mountains to make new swords of a transparent green that could slice through jade. Finally he triumphed and Chi You was executed.



In one story Huang Di arose from the mingling of the energies that instigated the beginning of the world. He then made humans by leaving earthen statues exposed at the cardinal points of the world for 300 years, during which they absorbed the energy of creation. Huang Di gained his magical powers when he was 100 years old. He achieved immortality and rose to heaven on a dragon or became one himself, becoming the ruler of the fifth

cardinal point, the centre. Some say that as God of the Centre he had four faces, one facing each of the cardinal points, and could not be defeated or outwitted because he could see every direction at once.

Required Powers

- Master of Skills*

Qualities

- Wisdom, Ingenuity, Tactics, Leadership

Optional Powers

- Centred Awareness - you can switch to a visual sense that lets you perceive what's happening on all sides of you at once. It is less detailed than normal vision - big posters are OK, but to read a book you'd want to switch back to normal vision, and anything beyond Middling range is a blur.
- Super-Ingenuity* (ceiling Good)

Green crystal sword (more or less any long weaponry thing, develops a faint greenish sheen)

- Smiting* (ceiling Good)

Vulnerabilities

- China Signs - wherever you go, little bits of Chinese culture and its trappings crop up, like written characters, ba gua mirrors, dragon images, Chinese shop assistants... It's not always clear whether they're "coincidences" or new

objects popping into existence. This Vulnerability is mainly about interfering with attempts to have a normal life, making those with you uncomfortable (so it's not much use if your game isn't concerned about characters' normal lives).

- Need to Invent - if you haven't come up with a new item or way of doing things for a while you can become debilitated. (This acts as a push for players to deal with situations through invention rather than straightforward use of what exists.)
- Tied to China - if the land of China, people of Chinese descent, or even significant bits of trappings of Chinese culture are damaged, destroyed or killed nearby you become debilitated. (So if a character has this, such things will turn up surprisingly often at the player's or GM's behest - a little bit like *China Signs* above)

Pan Gu

(*pahn goo*) In the commonest creation story the first being, Pan Gu, formed within the moist darkness of the primeval egg. When he broke out the light elements became heaven and the heavy elements became earth. He forced them apart, growing to fill the gap over thousands of years until they were fully separated.

Immense but exhausted, Pan Gu lay down and died. The various parts of his body became parts of the world: mountains, rivers, the wind and so on. In one version of creation his body fleas became humans; in another he made them from clay; in others still, different deities made people.

He was shown as a "dwarf" – a thickset, strongly built man, wearing rough furs or leaves, sometimes with a horned head.

Required Powers

- Size – Growth*

Qualities

- Strength, Endurance, Ingenuity

Optional Powers

- Creation* (ceiling Good)
- Immortal*

- Super-Endurance* (ceiling Good)
- Super-Strength* (ceiling Good)

Vulnerabilities

- Creation From Own Flesh - tied to *Creation* power - the things you create are, in a sense, part of you, and when they are destroyed you take damage. (This is perhaps best kept at a low Rank.)
- Primitive Fashion - your clothes rapidly deteriorate, becoming ragged and untidy. Normally this takes an hour or two (you could think of this Vulnerability as "needs new clothes"). It can be triggered in situations where appearance is important.
- Squat - your body shape alters so that you're shorter and broader - just enough to be noticeable and affect some social situations.

Sun Wukong

This one was hard to classify - he's ended up as a Hero, although more powerful than most.

This character is perhaps the best known to western audiences out of all Chinese mythology, due in part to the TV series of the same name. He appears in *The Journey to the West*, written by Wu Cheng'en as recently as the 16th century. It reworks an older factual account of a monk's pilgrimage to India to fetch Buddhist scriptures into an irreverent comic fantasy. Monkey himself, usually named as **Sun Wukong** (*soon woo-kawng*), appears in much older tales.

Monkey was born from a stone egg high on a mountain, received special powers from the Jade Emperor and became king of the monkeys. Eventually he decided to go off in search of wisdom and found a Daoist Immortal who taught him new powers: flying, transforming into 72 different shapes, covering 30,000 miles in a single leap and creating 100,000 duplicates of himself from his own hairs. For a weapon he tricked the Dragon King of the Eastern Sea into giving him a magic wand that could change size from a huge pillar to a needle that could be hidden behind his ear.

The Jade Emperor decided to keep Monkey out of trouble with a post in heaven. When he realised how menial it was Monkey stormed back to Earth and proclaimed himself the Great Sage, Equal of Heaven. An army sent to punish this presumption was defeated, and Monkey threatened to invade heaven with his subjects. The Jade Emperor offered him a new post looking after the Heavenly Peach Garden, but Monkey ate the best peaches of immortality for the Peach Banquet that took place every 3000 years, as well as much of the other food and drink. He found his way to the palace of Laozi, founder of Daoism, and ate the golden pills containing the Elixir of Life. He was now doubly immortal, and proved invulnerable to the weapons used by his would-be executioners. He even survived 49 days in Laozi's alchemical furnace.

The Jade Emperor handed him over to the Buddha, who challenged him to prove his power by simply jumping out of Buddha's hand. Monkey soared for thousands of miles and reached five great pillars, which he thought marked the edge of the universe, and urinated on one to prove he'd been there. On returning he found that the pillars had been the Buddha's fingers. Defeated, he was imprisoned under a mountain range for centuries.

Eventually the Buddhist goddess of mercy, Guan Yin, released him on condition that he accompany the monk Xuanzang (*hsyooan-dzahng*) to India to bring back some Buddhist scriptures. To ensure his good behaviour she put a band on his head that tightened on Xuanzang's command, causing terrible headaches. The travellers soon acquired companions. Pigsy (Zhu Bajie) had been a general in heaven but was expelled for lustfulness and was now a monster with a pig's face - lazy, gluttonous and not very bright. Brother Sand (Sha Wujing) was another celestial general transformed into a water monster, actually quite polite and intelligent but with a habit of devouring travellers.

The group had eighty adventures on the way, mostly against various monsters and spirits, succeeding through holiness, wit and brute force. After fourteen years they gained the scriptures and returned to China magically. The pilgrims ascended into the presence of the Buddha. Pigsy was given a post in heaven, Brother Sand became a saint, and Xuanzang and Monkey became buddhas themselves - the Great Sage had overcome his animal nature.

Required Powers

- Invulnerability

Qualities

- Strength, Agility, Ingenuity, Athletics, Staff Fighting, Unarmed Fighting

Optional powers

- Animal Connection* (monkeys and apes)
- Cloud Flying - when under the open sky you can take an action to summon a small cloud that can carry one or two people and fly around on your command, behaving rather like a loyal dog. It disappears at the end of the scene, or when your journey is finished. In rules terms it's a little like a Super-Sidekick. It has the Qualities Cloud and Loyal at [Rank + 1] and the power Flight at [Rank]. It comes with an implicit Limitation of "Must have cloud", so in some situations you might be deprived of flight and gain a HP.
- Immortal*
- Leaping*
- Shapeshift*



- **Summon Minions*** - Monkeys, hairy ape-people in Chinese peasant garb. Good [+2] Adventurer, Good [+2] Agility, Good [+2] Endurance, Good [+2] Ingenuity, Good [+2] Unarmed Fighting, Good [+2] Athletics, Good [+2] Animal Connection* (monkeys and apes)

Magic wishing staff

- **Size-changing** - gives the object the equivalent of both *Growth* and *Shrinking* (see *Size**) at Rank, as you get less utility than if those applied to a person. It gets the appropriate Quality attached to it for occasions when the MOD might come into play, and can be a handy tool.

Vulnerabilities

- **Headache Sutra** - triggered if an authority figure, like a priest or civic leader, rebukes you for bad behaviour, like harming others without just cause or being ill-mannered.
- **Proud** - you lose your composure when challenged or taunted about your competence.
- **Restless** - triggered if a while goes by without seeking excitement, or if you're stuck doing boring stuff like stake-outs and research. Tends to target concentration and composure.



THE EIGHT IMMORTALS

Daoists devoted a lot of their attention to prolonging life and ultimately achieving immortality through spiritual perfection, using techniques like meditation, breathing, diet and conserving sexual energy. Over time stories grew up about individuals who had successfully become immortal through various means and they became an important part of Chinese culture, their images appearing widely. They were linked as a group, the *Ba Xian* (*bah hsiyen*, "Eight Immortals"), relatively late on. They were seen as in touch with human concerns, approachable and jolly, fond of a drink and helpful to the deserving. They dwelt on the island of Penglai in the Eastern Sea. They usually travelled by flying on clouds or white cranes, but on one occasion crossed the sea on their various emblematic objects. (They are counted as Heroes for character creation.)

(*Designer notes*: The Immortals might make a good pulp-style team. I've left out cloud flying and such to keep the powers lower key as heroes, and because He Xiangyu has flight as her distinctive schtick. See *Sun Wukong* if you want it.)

Cao Guojiu

(*tsoow gwaw-jyew*) He was an aristocrat and courtier, a brother of the empress. As a young man he was thoughtless and became implicated in a murder carried out by his brother. He just escaped execution, and renounced his privileged life to meditate in the mountains. (Another version says he was an upright man who left in shame at his brother's behaviour.) This brought him to the notice of Zhongli Quan and Lü Dongbin, who revealed the secrets of immortality to him.

Cao is normally shown in official robes, bearing the golden tablet that gave him access to court. It's said that when he left court he had no money to pay a ferryman, so tried to impress him with the tablet. The ferryman (Lü Dongbin in disguise) pointed out the folly of this, and Cao threw the tablet into the river. He was the patron of the nobility and of actors, and is sometimes shown with what's said to be a pair of castanets (though based on pictures these might actually be the tablet in the form of two linked pieces).

Required Powers

Golden Tablet (take at least one)

- Liberation - with a successful roll, objects that are imprisoning or restraining you will move to give you freedom, eg ropes will loosen and fall off, locks will open. It won't work on things with no moving parts like a solid rock wall (though a fall of loose rocks might tumble out of the way). Difficulty is Average for a simple restraint; higher for larger, stronger or more complex ones.
- Stamp of Authority - puts you on the super scale for social status. Minor characters with no super-scale mental or social defences will automatically let you stay or pass – they won't remember it clearly afterwards.

Qualities

- Ingenuity, Presence, Socialising, Subterfuge

Optional Powers

- Immortal*
- Sorcery* (Ceiling Good)

Vulnerabilities

- Atonement - an ill-defined sense of shame about the past makes you very sensitive to people questioning your moral character. Damage targets composure and savoir faire.
- Someone Comes In To Do That - triggered if you have to do ordinary everyday activities in a stress situation, like cooking, cleaning, shopping, driving... Damage targets your coordination and composure.

Han Xiang

(hahn hsee-ahng) This scholar and philosopher was known for supernatural powers and sometimes said to have a stormy temper. He studied under his uncle Han Yu, a famous statesman and poet, and soon surpassed him. Han Yu scoffed at his claim to be able to cause flowers to bloom instantaneously, but he did so and on the leaves appeared a prophecy predicting Han Yu's fall from favour. Other magical feats included pouring cup after cup of wine from a gourd.

Han Xiang was a student of Lü Dongbin. Lü took him to heaven and he fell from a heavenly peach tree, becoming immortal just before crashing to Earth. He's usually shown as a young man with a basket of flowers or a flute (and is the patron of flautists).

Required Powers

- Precognition*

Qualities

- Wisdom, Ingenuity, Awareness, Play Flute

Optional Powers

- Immortal*
- Master of Lore* (ceiling Good)
- Sorcery*

Vulnerabilities

- Impetuous - you have a tendency to wander and explore in places where it's not entirely safe, driven by curiosity and arrogance. Faced with a novel and possibly dangerous situation your judgment and alertness can be eroded.
- Temper - you find it hard to keep your cool, especially when being insulted or challenged. Damage targets your judgment and composure.

He Xiang

(huh hsiyen-goo) She is the only female of the group. As a girl a spirit in a dream told her to grind and eat a mother-of-pearl stone. Doing so while taking a vow of chastity, she became able to float in the air and no longer needed to eat. She spent her time flying over the mountains collecting herbs and berries to take home to her mother. Empress Wu summoned her to court, but on the way she achieved immortality and disappeared. She is the patron of unmarried girls, and is usually shown carrying a lotus flower, or sometimes a peach, a musical instrument or a ladle.

Required Powers

- Flight* (ceiling Good)

Qualities

- Agility, Awareness, Natural History



Optional Powers

- Immortal*
- Immunity to Emotional Control* (ceiling Good)
- Sorcery* (ceiling Good)
- Unliving* (ceiling Good)

Vulnerabilities

- Chastity - in a situation with a sexual context you tend to lose social understanding, empathy and finesse (though not will).
- Ground Repulsion - your feet are always a hand's breadth above the ground. This is a clear Meta marker, though people don't always look down.
- Needs Natural Surroundings - if you're away from healthy natural surroundings for a while you can become debilitated.

Lan Caihe

(*lahn tsai-huh*) This contrary figure was usually said to be an effeminate-looking man, but sometimes thought to be female or even a hermaphrodite. He was usually shown as an effeminate youth with a bamboo basket of flowers or fruit, but sometimes as a girl.

In his mortal life he was a poor wandering street musician, playing cymbals and flute and singing. He acted like a madman, wearing a thick coat in summer and light clothing in winter, a belt of black wood and

only one shoe. His songs told of the vanity of life and its pleasures, urging people to seek the Dao, and often he threw away the money he received so those who needed it more could have it. One day he passed out drunk in a tavern and was wafted away to Penglai island, leaving his clothes and instruments behind.

Another story, which seems to be associated with the feminine version, had Lan coming from a family dealing in medicinal herbs. One day she met a beggar in filthy rags, covered in boils, and looked after him. It turned out to be Li Tieguai in disguise and he rewarded her with immortality. She travelled around singing songs and one day took off her coat, belt and boot and rose into the sky on a crane.

Required Powers

- Immunity to Environmental Conditions* - mainly temperature and weather - provides MOD only against related powers like Blast of Flame.

Qualities

- Endurance, Ingenuity, Presence, Medicine, Singing, Play Flute, Subterfuge

Optional Powers

- Immortal*
- Luck Control (ceiling Good)
- Sorcery* (ceiling Good)
- Uplifting Song - your words and music make people feel better and bring out their nobler, more spiritual side. There are two main uses. As a restorative it heals MOD Failure Ranks in all nearby, or gives them a Hero Point if they have no Failure Ranks, with a lingering feelgood effect afterwards. As a corrective, those nearby must also beat the Rank with willpower to commit any base or immoral act while the Song lasts, and if it beats them on a simple contest they can do nothing but listen.

Vulnerabilities

- Androgynous - it's not immediately clear from your appearance whether you're male or female – this makes some people uncomfortable and can cause difficulties in some social situations.
- Contrary Dress - if your clothing is appropriate for the setting you're in, over the course of five minutes or so it alters so that it isn't, targeting appearance or social Qualities. It can be better

to choose a mismatching or inappropriate item or two yourself, as at least you have control over what you get.

- Signs of Youth - you appear to be a young person, probably late teens/early twenties, and it can be difficult to convince people of your skills and experience - targets appropriate social Qualities.

Li Tieguai

(lee tee-uh-gwai) Shown as a cripple with a crutch, he is generally reckoned as the first of the group to attain immortality. He lived an ascetic life for forty years. The spirit of Laozi (laow-dzuh), founder of Daoism, visited him and tempted him with the pleasures of the flesh; on refusing he gained immortality.

Most versions say that he wasn't always a cripple. One time he sent his spirit in response to a summons from Laozi and left a disciple looking after his body, with instructions that if he did not return within a week he would have become pure spirit and the body should be burned. On the sixth day the disciple heard that his own mother was ill and, rather than leave it unattended, burned Li's body before going to her. Shortly afterwards the sage's spirit returned to find its host destroyed. It was able to enter the body of an old beggar who had just died nearby, but unfortunately he had been lame and most disreputable in appearance. In sympathy Laozi gave him an iron crutch (walking stick) to support himself. Li went at once to the disciple's house. The mother had died, but he was able to revive her with his medicines.

He was adopted as the patron of pharmacists and often appeared on their shop signs. He was usually shown carrying a large gourd on his back or a small one in his hand, from which a mysterious vapour rose - it contained healing substances.

Required Powers

- Spirit Travel - you may separate your spirit form from your body and travel the physical world as if you had [Rank - 1] Flight*. You are invisible and incorporeal, unable to interact physically with the world although some powers work (using mental abilities instead of physical ones where appropriate, eg Presence as Strength). Those

with superhuman senses might perceive you, and you're vulnerable to abilities affecting minds or spirits. It is Good difficulty for observers to tell that your physical body is still alive. You can Stunt to manifest a ghostly image and voice for a short while.

Qualities

- Presence, Awareness, Medicine

Optional Powers

- Immortal*
- Recalling the Dead - you can bring the spirit of someone recently dead back into their body. The body must be sufficiently intact to support life, and can have been dead no longer than your Rank's duration. You can try to bring the spirit into someone else's corpse at a Downshift. The power adds its MOD (min 1) if you yourself are consciously attempting to regain your body, eg getting back from the Dead Zone.
- Sorcery* (ceiling Good)

Gourd (can apply to most containers)

- Healing

Disadvantages

- Chaste - erodes social Qualities for flirting, seduction, etc.
- Lame - even if your legs appear completely functional, you still have difficulty using them. It's triggered when you need to run or use fast footwork, targeting suitable athletic Qualities.
- Ugly - erodes social Qualities in situations where appearance is a factor.

Lü Dongbin

(lyew dawng-been) Lü is the best known and most popular of the Immortals. The others often deferred to him, though he was not officially the leader.

He came from a family of high officials, and was set for a high rank in the civil service himself after graduating with honours. However, in an inn he encountered Zhongli Quan disguised as a retired army officer. They drank together till late. Lü drifted off to sleep and had a strange dream. He saw his future career, rising from an obscure posting to high



office, proving wise and just and receiving great honours. But just as he was looking forward to retirement someone complained to the Emperor about some misdemeanour. He was exiled in disgrace, his family was executed and he was eventually killed by a brigand. Waking in horror, he was convinced of the futility of his plans and gave up everything to follow Zhongli.

Lü had a magic sword, sometimes called a devil-slaying sabre, given to him by Zhongli or by a dragon. It was variously said to conquer ignorance, passion and aggression and to enable him to conceal himself in heaven. Motivated by compassion, he travelled about fighting evil, helping the oppressed and rewarding the honest.

He was shown in the robes of a scholar with a sword on his back. He was said to have written many treatises and even to have founded a Daoist sect. Couples asked him to help their children become successful government officials; he was often shown with a male child. He was the guardian of ink makers and the tutelary god of barbers.

Required Powers

Sword – Devil Slayer (must take at least one power)

- Immunity to Detection Powers* - works against meta powers that would perceive or locate you. Normal abilities are unhindered, so using your own stealth as well is often useful.

- Virtuous - MOD contributes to any action in opposition to ignorance, aggression or passion.

Qualities

- Wisdom, Presence, Sword Fighting, Investigation, Research

Optional Powers

- Immortal*
- Master of Lore* (archaic knowledge skills)
- Sorcery* (ceiling Good)

Vulnerabilities

- Cannot Ignore Injustice - targets your composure and self-esteem if you wish to avoid helping innocents.
- Too Virtuous - triggered if you try anything criminal or disreputable like breaking in to a property or blending in with criminals.
- Unwanted Attention - your air of scholarly authority tends to attract people who want you to answer questions, make decisions for them or otherwise help. This can hinder attempts to remain unnoticed and may affect social interactions.

Zhang Guolao

(jahng gwaw-laow) This old man of the mountains seems to have been based on a real hermit. He claimed to be extraordinarily old, and practised magic and alchemy. Two emperors, impressed by tales of his sanctity, summoned him to court but he refused. Eventually he was persuaded by Empress Wu, but fell dead at the gates of a temple as he entered the capital. Shortly afterwards he turned up back in the mountains. Called to court by a later Emperor he demonstrated magical feats like becoming invisible, drinking poison, and felling birds and flowers just by pointing.

Some years later the Emperor asked a famous Daoist, Fa-shan, to reveal the secret of Zhang's longevity. Fa-shan said that this would cause his own death, and agreed only when promised that Zhang himself would be brought to revive him. He related that Zhang's true form was that of a white bat (an animal of health and luck) that came from the chaos that existed at the beginning of time, and then he fell

dead. The Emperor begged forgiveness of the sage, who restored the Daoist by sprinkling his face with water. A little later Zhang returned to his mountains and finally died – but when his disciples opened the tomb it was empty.

He appeared as a white-haired old man, somewhat eccentric. As a hobby he brewed liquor from herbs and shrubs for the other Immortals. He had a magical mule or donkey, and often rode facing its tail. It could travel thousands of miles in a day, and when not required could be folded up like a piece of paper and kept in a bag. He was often shown with a “fish drum”, an instrument that looks like a long cylinder with two golf clubs sticking out. Zhang was revered by married couples for giving fertility.

Required Powers

- Reincarnation* (revive in a safe, familiar natural setting the following sunrise)

Qualities

- Wisdom, Ingenuity, Presence, Chemistry, Riding

Optional Powers

- Immortal*
- Primeval Nature - this acts against power-based attempts to see your true nature or make deep contact with your mind, for instance to control you. It adds MOD to resist such attempts, and

the other party must resist TN mind-damaging feedback.

- Sorcery*

Mule (can be any riding animal, or a vehicle up to the size of a large car or small van)

- Portability* (it won't shrink with passengers, though you can store modest supplies and equipment)
- Super-Speed (ceiling Good)

Vulnerabilities

- Eccentric - you're frequently distracted from the matter at hand by other trains of thought, which can erode problem-solving, investigation and social interaction.
- Signs of Age - eg white hair, wrinkled skin - may affect you in some social situations.
- Unwanted Admirers - stories of your age, wisdom or powers cause people to seek you out. Can be triggered when you're trying to stay low-key.

Zhongli Quan

(*jawng-lee chooan*) He was a soldier who rose to the rank of Marshal and retired to a mountain cave as a hermit. One day as he was meditating the cave wall split to reveal a jade casket. Inside were magical writings containing the secrets of immortality. Zhongli followed the instructions and was carried to the island of Penglai by a white crane or shimmering mist. He was the nominal leader of the Eight, though they often deferred to Lü.

One time during a famine Zhongli produced silver coins miraculously and gave them to the poor. He became a messenger of heaven, bringing divine communications to Earth.

Zhongli was shown as a fat man in simple robes with a bare chest and belly, sometimes bald, with a long beard, carrying a fan made of feathers or palm leaves that was said to revive the dead.

Required Powers

- Immortal*



Qualities

- Strength, Presence, Leadership, Tactics

Optional Powers

- Messenger of Heaven - this is an information-gathering power that lets you communicate with M-space entities like Sources and sprites. It follows strong Gate connections, so although you can direct it to a degree the entities you deal with will usually relate to the land you're in, the local surroundings for Aegis, and any Metas present. What comes back isn't human conversation but emotions and images - it won't necessarily be a clear answer to what you wanted to know, and contains an element of "go and carry out my will", but it should help to move you along. It can be used MOD times per scene, and the GM might ask for a roll to determine how much information you get.
- Sorcery* (ceiling Good)
- Voice of the Herald - boosts the volume and resonance of your voice, with various uses such as cutting through noise, shouting across

distances, impressing or intimidating. It can also be used as a sonic attack to stun and deafen those nearby (Failure Ranks).

Fan

- Recalling the Dead - you can bring the spirit of someone recently dead back into their body. The body must be sufficiently intact to support life, and can have been dead no longer than your Rank's duration. You can try to bring the spirit into someone else's corpse at a Downshift. The power adds its MOD (min 1) if you yourself are consciously attempting to regain your body, eg getting back from the Dead Zone.

Vulnerabilities

- Fat - can kick in as a general penalty in some social and athletic situations.
- Official Duties - you often hear ghostly voices asking you to deliver messages and carry out their will. If you don't take time every so often to deal with them by speaking out loud these whispers can rise to affect your concentration.



MONSTERS

Note: the Chinese dragon is covered in the Gods section under Long Wang, rulers of the waters.

Feng Huang

(fung hwahng) The Chinese phoenix was the ruler of all birds and a symbol of heaven's favour, happiness, luck, virtue and grace. It was the yin to the dragon's yang (and therefore linked with the Empress), and the two together represented the union of opposites, such as in a happy marriage. The feng huang represented fire, summer and the south. It appeared in peaceful and prosperous times.

The feng huang was said to be made of different animals' parts: for instance the beak of a cock, the face of a swallow, the forehead of a fowl, the neck of a snake, the breast of a goose, the back of a tortoise, the hindquarters of a stag and the tail of a fish or a peacock. Its feathers were of the five fundamental colours: black, white, red, green, and yellow. It was often shown attacking snakes with its talons, wings spread. Used to decorate a house, it indicated loyalty and honesty in the inhabitants.

Required Powers

- Flight* (usually winged)

Qualities

- Agility, Ingenuity, Presence, Talons

Optional Powers

- Animal Connection* (all birds)
- Blessing*
- Control Fire* (ceiling Good)
- Immunity to Fire*
- Uplifting Song - your words and music make people feel better and bring out their nobler, more spiritual side. There are two main uses. As a restorative it heals MOD Failure Ranks in all nearby, or gives them a Hero Point if they have no Failure Ranks, with a lingering feelgood effect

afterwards. As a corrective, those nearby must also beat the Rank with willpower to commit any base or immoral act while the Song lasts, and if it beats them on a simple contest they can do nothing but listen.

Vulnerabilities

- Feather Hair - a Meta marker that can erode social Qualities in some situations.
- High Standards - if you commit any significant immoral action the guilt targets your confidence, self-esteem and composure (eg Presence).
- Wings - an obvious Meta marker, tied to Flight.

Gui

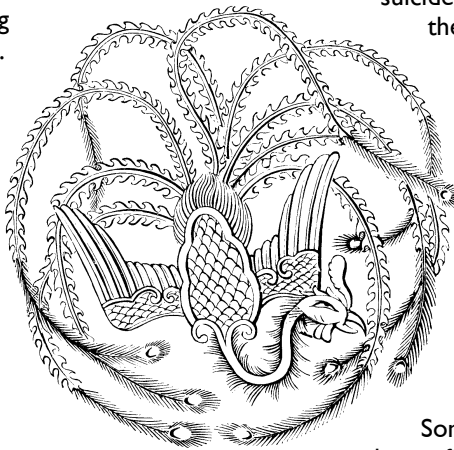
(gwee) These were ghosts; usually those whose allotted lifespans were cut short by accident or suicide or who had no relatives to tend their graves. They were doomed to wander as restless spirits. Gui were cut off from the cycle of rebirth unless they could find someone who died the same way to replace them - suicides in particular were thought to tempt people to follow suit and possibly then to steal their bodies. The Chinese tended to avoid places where there had been a murder, suicide or fatal accident.

Some gui avenged injustices or insults they suffered in life. Normally they were only perceived as a breath of air, but when seen they wore clothes with no hems and cast no shadows.

There is an annual "feast of the hungry ghost", and people burn offerings of special paper money "issued by the bank of the Lower World" to placate the gui.

Required Powers

- Invisibility



THE SCARLET PHOENIX

Younger Metas sometimes don't take the Phoenix seriously. They find his costume kind of silly, with the bird's head cowl and flapping "feathers", and think he has no impressive powers. But they are forgetting his record as one of the longest-serving metahuman heroes, or perhaps have never looked him in the eye or seen him cut loose. Certainly the people of his "patch", west coast USA, feel safer under the familiar silhouette.

Nathan Masters ran a little curio shop, *The Dragon's Hoard*, in a less-visited part of town, regularly helping his fellow shopkeepers to see off the local hoodlums. Then the Phoenix Cabinet came into his possession and everything changed, though he's managed to maintain both shop and secret identity over the years. (You might make the Cabinet a Favour Reservoir and have him use it for a power-up in case of dire emergency, or create a sidekick who finds they can get temporary powers from stepping inside.)

Source: Feng Huang

Motivation: Fight the forces of evil. Really.

Qualities: Good [+2] Veteran Hero, Good [+2] Man of Principle, Expert [+4] Presence, Good [+2] Physical Condition, Good [+2] Curios and Antiques, Good [+2] Accomplished Flier; Poor [-2] Old-fashioned Principles

Powers: Average [0] Flight*, Average [0] Animal Connection* (birds), Good [+2] Control Fire*, Average [0] Immunity to Fire*, Average [0] Vulnerability - High Standards (plus 1 Av converted to Qs)

Stunts: *Fiery Breath* (Control Fire Signature, a Good [+2] Blast-type attack for 2HP); *Fiery Wings* (Control Fire Signature, usually Good [+2] for 2HP, making large wings of flame and using the super-scale damage against objects, e.g. to cut through or as a defensive barrier).



Qualities

- Ingenuity, Awareness, Subterfuge

Optional Powers

- Death Immunity* (full vs death powers and life drain, MOD vs poison and disease)
- Phasing (for LW, stuff you can carry on you is included but anything further, including other people, requires a Stunt)
- Possession - you can phase into another body, taking complete control. On a living person you must overcome their mental resistance. They may then attempt to cast you out and regain control up to once per round if a personality Quality or Motivation comes into play or they spend a Hero Point. (So for average Normal NPCs this won't happen often.) It can also be used on a reasonably fresh corpse, which has no resistance but only lasts Rank duration.
- Sense Premature Death - from a corpse or a location you can sense life cut short by accident, suicide or murder. Roll, with achieved Rank indicating level of detail learned - you get a sense of which type of death it was and roughly how long ago, but not specifics like killer's identity.
- Unliving*

Vulnerabilities

- Dead - you are noticeably gaunt and pale, which can erode social abilities when appearance is a factor.
- Out of Phase - tied to Phasing - your natural state is semi-substantial, which can be a problem when you need to exert significant physical force (usually targeting strength).
- Out of Sight - tied to Invisibility - your natural state is somewhat translucent, which can be a problem when you really need to be noticed.
- No Shadow - you don't cast one any more. This is a Meta marker - more subtle than many, but it does unsettle people when they notice.

Jiang Shi

(*hjeeang shuh*, also *kuang shi*, *geung si*) These were basically Chinese zombies: corpses with the power of movement but no true intelligence or will, said to be created when a person's soul fails to leave the body at death or is called back into it. They were known as hopping corpses for their distinctive way of moving. Their touch could kill a living person.

If a Chinese person died away from their ancestral village they would not receive the proper gifts and remembrances. Poor families might hire a specially trained priest to bring the dead home by walking them along the roads. A popular myth describes this. Others say the hopping corpses originated as disguised smugglers wanting to scare away law officers. In Chinese architecture it was traditional to place a six-inch threshold at an outside door so that hopping corpses couldn't get in.

The Cantonese version of the name, *geung si*, means "vampire" and hopping corpses were also known as Chinese vampires. These "hopping vampires" have appeared in a number of movies. The film versions are usually dressed in imperial robes, arms outstretched to strangle victims, but can be put to sleep by placing a paper spell on their forehead. They track living creatures by their breathing.

Required Powers

- Unliving*

Qualities

- Strength, Endurance, Athletics, Armour (for being dead)

Optional Powers

- Breath Sense - you have a supernatural awareness of the exhalations of nearby living creatures, giving you their precise location and a general idea of their type. (The GM may call for a roll and use achieved Rank as a guide for precision and detail.)
- Death Immunity* (full vs death powers and life drain, MOD vs poison and disease)
- Death Touch - this is a life energy draining attack, delivered by touch, causing Damage Ranks as victims grow pale and withered. Similarly to *Raven's Fare**, if an attack causes damage you can recover a Failure Rank; if the victim zeroes out you recover MOD Failure or Damage Ranks instead or, if you have no damage, gain 1 HP.
- Super-Armour (for being dead; ceiling Good)

Vulnerabilities

- Dead - you are noticeably gaunt and pale, which can erode social abilities when appearance is a factor.
- Hopping - you can no longer walk in the normal way but must travel using a curious hop, like a small jump with both feet. The Vulnerability is triggered if you need to run, jump over obstacles, etc, and targets athletic Qualities.
- Life-Hunger - tied to Death Touch - you can become debilitated if a while goes by without taking energy from a living person.

Qilin

(*chee leen*, also *ki-lin* and other variants)

These beneficent creatures can very broadly be thought of as Chinese unicorns. They differed in appearance, combining parts of various animals. One example was like a deer with one horn, the tail of an ox, the hooves of a horse, and a body covered with the scales of a fish. Among the chief animals the qilin was considered the lord of all hairy creatures.

Qilin embodied all that is good, pure, and peaceful. They lived in heaven and only visited the world in connection with some great man (or presumably woman), for instance at the birth of a philosopher or in areas ruled by a wise and benevolent leader. They did not eat meat and took care not to tread on any living thing. Their steps were so light that they could walk on grass without trampling the blades, and even walk on water. A qilin only became fierce if a pure person was threatened by someone wicked: then it might spout flames from its mouth or use other miraculous powers.

Required Powers

- See Righteousness*

Qualities

- Endurance, Wisdom, Presence, Horn or Antlers

Optional Powers

- Animal Connection* (all mammals, but not humans)

- Blast of Flame (ceiling Good)
- Immunity to Negative Emotions* (anger, jealousy, etc)
- Light Tread - you can walk or run at normal speed across any surface, even a liquid, without disturbing it. You're affected normally by gradients and such. Adds MOD for moving silently or opposing being tracked.

Vulnerabilities

- Animal Features - for instance scaly skin or a tail; possibly tied to Horn or Antlers. An obvious meta marker, affecting social interactions.
- High Standards - if you commit any significant immoral action the guilt targets your confidence, self-esteem and composure (eg Presence).
- Pacifist - you always try to find out what's really going on and work out a peaceful solution even when it's not appropriate. The Vulnerability is triggered if you initiate aggression.



Powers of the Middle Kingdom

Look to the East for your *Legends Walk* mythic supers game! This supplement contains concise descriptions and LWTJ power programmes for 28 gods, heroes and monsters from Chinese mythology: heavenly bureaucrats, hungry ghosts, eight immortals and one irrepressible monkey!

There are also notes on understanding the programmes for users of other games who want to make use of the descriptive material.

*Requires the Truth & Justice corebook and
Legends Walk - Truth & Justice Edition to play.*



LEGENDS WALK!

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