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Weapons of the Gods
companion

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The Jade Book

Thrashing Minister
City of the Poison Garden

The Crimson Book

New God-Weapons for your games

The Gold Book

The Great Game of Shen Zhou:
Combat and politics fought on a grand scale

The White Book

The Million-Style Manual:
Rules for creating new Kung Fu styles for your Game

New Martial Arts:
Common, Uncommon, Rare and Formless Techniques

The Silver Book

Notes for the Sage:
Applying Great Game rules to Thrashing Minister City

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A City of Shen Zhou

Playing in Thrashing Minister

An Introduction (Matters of Status)
Character Concepts
Recommended Lore

The Capital of Yang
City of the Poison Garden
Thrashing Minister: District by District
West and East Willow Districts
The Walled City
Phoenix Nest
Peaceful Residence
Jade Garden
Civic Harmony & Applied Righteousness
Green District
Wolf District

The Hidden City
Dealing with Government (in Yang)
The Celestial Palace
Eunuchs
Secrets
The Eunuchs of Yang
The Concubines of Yue Guan
Secret Weapons of Yang

**Campaigns in Thrashing
Minister**
City Relationship Chart
Court Relationship Chart
Signature Characters

Introduction

Life in the Wulin is nothing without conflict. Conflict sets the terms of your Challenge and how far you'll have to go to meet it.

This chapter provides a setting full of conflict and struggle — Thrashing Minister City, capital of the Kingdom of Yang and one of the most troubled cities in all Shen Zhou. It is designed to challenge and interest characters between 5th and 3rd rank, with a natural bridge to 2nd rank play. It provides friends, enemies, opportunities, and adversities for characters who live in Thrashing Minister City and characters who pass through it on their way to other stories.

To get the most out of this chapter, you may want to refer to the **Weapons of the Gods** main rule book and in particular pages 59 (The Kingdom of Yang), 63 (The Fallen Wren Society and The Jade Dragon Society), 140 – 143 (Jiankang, Yang, and the Han Dynasty Seals), and 154 - 157 (visual and cultural reference for eastern Shen Zhou.)

Within this chapter you will find:

- **Taking your Place in Thrashing Minister City** — some interesting character concepts for people starting in Thrashing Minister City.
- **Recommended Loresheets** — a guide to the lore of Thrashing Minister City.
- **City of the Poison Garden** — information on the city as a whole.
- **District Lore** — a guide to the city, district by district.
- **Relationship Chart** — a relationship chart and campaign advice for a Thrashing Minister City campaign.
- **The Hidden City** — information on the administration and palaces of Yue Guan.
- **Hidden City Lore** — a guide to the secrets of the Hidden City.
- **Court Relationship Chart** — a relationship chart and campaign advice for a Yang Court campaign.

A Note on Status

Some of the Destiny options in Thrashing Minister City offer local Status — Status “in” Thrashing Minister or “in” one of the city’s districts. Only people familiar with the city or the relevant district can roll to recognize the character with such Status.



Taking Your Place in Thrashing Minister City

Listed below you'll find a set of character concepts for characters from Thrashing Minister City, along with bare-minimum qualifications. If you want to fit into Thrashing Minister City from day one, pick one of these packages and read the associated lore. If you want to claim a position in Thrashing Minister City later, store up enough Destiny to buy all the bare-minimum qualifications, then talk to your Sage — there's no reason why you have to stay outsiders to the city!

Every character should have the *City of the Poison Garden* lore if they come from the city or want to assume a powerful position there.

Note on Affiliation

You need Affiliation 2 or 3 (Family) if you belong to a prestigious family of Yang.

You need Affiliation 3 (Thrashing Minister City) to work for the city.

You need Affiliation 4 (The Kingdom of Yang) to work for the Kingdom.

You can sell back either of the first two Destinies for their full Destiny cost when upgrading to the third.

Buddhist

You're a Buddhist studying at the temple in the Civic Harmony district. Make the Buddha proud with your kung fu!

- 0 Destiny — *Buddhism* lore (pg. 144, **Weapons of the Gods**)
- 1 Destiny — *Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness* lore

Total Cost: 1 Destiny

City Magistrate

You're the city magistrate. That's right: the city's in so much trouble it needs a kung fu magistrate!

- 4 Destiny — Affiliation 4 (Kingdom of Yang)
- 5 Destiny — Wealth 5
- 4 Destiny — Status 4 (City Magistrate)
- 5 Destiny — Followers 5
- 1 Destiny — *Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness* lore
- 1 Destiny — *Dealing with Government (in Yang)* lore
- 5+ Destiny — lore for other districts.
- 0 Destiny — **Onerous Obligation:** must keep Thrashing Minister in order.

Total Cost: 25+ Destiny

City Official

You're an assistant district magistrate, tax collector, or city troubleshooter. Even though you're a bureaucrat you live an exciting life!

- 3 Destiny — Affiliation 3 (Thrashing Minister City)
- 2 Destiny — Wealth 2
- 1 Destiny — *Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness* lore
 - 1 Destiny — status bonus for *Civic Harmony* and *Applied Righteousness*
- 1 Destiny — *Dealing with Government (in Yang)* lore
- Recommended: lore for other districts
- Recommended: spend 2-3 Destiny on Status

Total Cost: 8+ Destiny

Concubine

You're one of the palace maidens of Yang — but thanks to your Wulin Destiny, you're always finding ways to sneak out into the city and have fun, seek power, fight enemies, or otherwise behave accordant to the Wulin. Such behavior is just intolerable! Eventually Yue Guan will have to throw you out, kill you, or make you his Queen.

- 3 Destiny — Good Looks
- 2 Destiny — The *Concubines of Yue Guan* lore
 - 0 Destiny — Affiliation (Concubines of King Yue Guan)
 - 2 Destiny — ability to come and go from the concubines' palace freely.

Total Cost: 7 Destiny



Constable

The constables of the city are Wulin — mostly 5th rank but with a few 4th and 3rd rank heroes. As a group they're corrupt but many individuals are honorable. They patrol the city and, when the civilians can pay larger bribes than the criminals, they fight crime!

- 3 Destiny — Affiliation 3 (Thrashing Minister City)
- 1 Destiny — Wealth 1
- 1 Destiny — *Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness* lore
- 0+ Destiny — lore for the district you watch over.
 - 1 Destiny — status bonus for the district you watch over.

Total Cost: 6+ Destiny

Criminal

You're a criminal — a thug, extortionist, thief, or hired killer — with roots in Thrashing Minister City.

- Recommended: Affiliation 1+ (Gang)
- Recommended: Followers 1+ (Gang)
- Recommended: 2 Destiny — *West and East Willow Districts* lore
- Recommended: 2 Destiny — *The Walled City* lore
 - Recommended: 1 Destiny — a pass from the local Hell Clan leader, Semi-Devil Soo Jinchoo.

Total Cost: 7 Destiny or less.

District Magistrate

You run one of the city's districts. Here's the deal: you'd like to stay at your desk working all day, but your Wulin challenge is an irresistible draw! The desire for influence, knowledge, or just the chance to test yourself against the arrogant fighters of Thrashing Minister — it draws you into events again and again!

Thank Heaven your assistant does so much of the work.

- 3 Destiny — Affiliation 3 (Thrashing Minister City)
- 3 Destiny — Wealth 3
- 3 Destiny — Status 3 (District Magistrate of Thrashing Minister)
- 2 Destiny — Followers 2
- 1 Destiny — *Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness* lore
- 1 Destiny — *Dealing with Government (in Yang)* lore
- 0+ Destiny — lore for the district you manage.
- 0 Destiny — **Onerous Obligation:** must keep Thrashing Minister in order.

Total Cost: 13+ Destiny

Doctor

You're a doctor with steady employment in Thrashing Minister City.

- Recommended Skill: Medicine 2 (*minimum*)
- Recommended Advantage: Wealth 1 [1 Destiny]
- 0 Destiny (*total*): **Secret Arts** (Intro. to Medical Conditions [0], Health & Sickness [0], Changing Chi Conditions [0])
- 3 Destiny (*total*): **Secret Arts of Medicine** (Medicine [0], Secrets of Diagnosis [3], Physical Conditions [0])
- Recommended: 1+ Destiny — *Jade Garden* or *Wolf District* lore
 - Recommended: 1 Destiny — status bonus for the district.

Total Cost: 6 Destiny

Eight-Way Union Student

You study Heaven's Thunder kung fu in the Green District school! All should bow before Sword Savant Gong Hong — but are you one of his favored students or a pesky annoyance?

- 4 Destiny — Affiliation 4 (Eight-Way Union)
- 5 Destiny — Heaven's Thunder Kung Fu (pg. 239, Weapons of the Gods)
- 1 Destiny — Green District lore
- Recommended: 2 Destiny: Mentor 2 (Gong Hong)
- Recommended: 2 Destiny: Teacher and Student lore (pg. 215, Weapons of the Gods)
 - This lore gives you free useful flashbacks to Gong Hong's advice!

Total Cost: 10+ Destiny

Eunuch of the Palace

You're one of the palace eunuchs, in service to Yue Guan. Either the King or his chief eunuch has recruited you for special duties, allowing you to travel in the city on a regular basis. Even your friends in the city are surprised at how often you're out doing interesting things!

- 4 Destiny — Affiliation (Kingdom of Yang)
- 2 Destiny — Status 2 (Yang court eunuch)
- 1 Destiny — Wealth 1
- 0 Destiny — *Eunuchs* lore
- 2 Destiny — *The Eunuchs of Yang* lore

- 1 Destiny — *Dealing with Government (in Yang)* lore
- 0 Destiny — *The Hidden City* lore
- 0 Destiny — *The Celestial Palace* lore
- 0+ Destiny — Disadvantage: Missing Body Part

Total Cost: 10+ Destiny

Ex-Army Member

You're a member of the Army of Yang! . . . wait, that was yesterday. Your kung fu is too troublesome, so they've kicked you out! Given the low esteem in which even the soldiers hold soldiers in Shen Zhou, this is actually a social step up.

- 1 Destiny — Wolf District lore
 - 1 Destiny — status bonus for the Wolf District

Total Cost: 2 Destiny

Falling Wren Society Member

You belong to the Falling Wren Society — a secret society dedicated to restoring the world's lost glory! You don't actually need the local lore to belong to the Society, but it's helpful if you want to involve yourself in the Society's Thrashing Minister City affairs.

- 3 Destiny — Affiliation 3 (Falling Wren Society)
- Recommended: 2 Destiny — *Jade Garden* lore
- Recommended: 1 Destiny — *Green District* lore

Total Cost: 3+ Destiny

Fighting Pit Champion

You're a gladiator of the Walled City, fighting other warriors for cash, respect, and the cheers of the crowd!

- 2 Destiny — *The Walled City* lore
 - 1 Destiny — you're a fighting pit champion!

Total Cost: 3 Destiny

Hapless One

You're a hideous monster manufactured by the Demon Alchemists! You were human once, but that was before all the alchemical salves. If this kind of thing interests you, talk to the Sage and figure out how to fit it into the story and what abilities you can have. Your supernatural powers will come from Demon Chi, a permanent curse or influence, and possibly Yao-like abilities.

Total Cost: Variable

Hell Clan Ally

You're an ally of the evil Hell Clan! Are you a Selfish Hero, or is it just business?

- 1 Destiny — Wealth I.
- 2 Destiny — *The Walled City* lore
 - 1 Destiny — status bonus for the Walled City.
 - 1 Destiny — allies in the Hell Clan.
 - 1 Destiny — a pass from the local Hell Clan leader, Semi-Devil Soo Jinchoo.

Total Cost: 6 Destiny

Information Broker

You're the go-to person for the secrets of Thrashing Minister! The secrets you still don't know lure you into conflict.

- 2 Destiny — Information Broker 2
- 5+ Destiny — various district lores.
- 1 Destiny — *Dealing with the Government (in Yang)* lore
- 0 Destiny — *The Hidden City* lore
- 0 Destiny — *The Celestial Palace* lore

Total Cost: 8+ Destiny

Jade Garden Artisan

You work in the Jade Garden creating things of value or wonder. But that's only half your life — your love for struggle, influence, or knowledge draws you into the Wulin!

- 2 Destiny — Craft 2
- 2 Destiny — *Jade Garden* lore
 - 0 Destiny — Jade Garden patron.
 - 1 Destiny — status bonus for the Jade Garden.

Total Cost: 5 Destiny



Lustrous Jade Prostitute

You're a respected prostitute trained in kung fu or secret arts — an enemy to the evil Hell Clan! Find out more in the Walled City lore.

- 1 Destiny — Wealth I.
- 2 Destiny — The Walled City lore
 - 1 Destiny — Affiliation I (Lustrous Jade)
 - 1 Destiny — Status 3 (Lustrous Jade prostitute)

Total Cost: 5

Masked Untouchable

You belong to a secret society dedicated to fighting the city's corruption! Find out more in the West and East Willow Districts lore.

- 3 Destiny — Affiliation 3 (Thrashing Minister City)
- 1 Destiny — Wealth I
- 2 Destiny — *West and East Willow Districts* lore
 - 1 Destiny — status bonus for the Willow Districts.
 - 2 Destiny — you're a Masked Untouchable!

Total cost: 9 Destiny

Mercenary

You're a mercenary with steady employment in Thrashing Minister City.

- Recommended: Wealth I
- Recommended: 2 Destiny — *West and East Willow Districts* lore
 - Recommended: 2 Destiny — a good relationship with Great Bear Lu.

Total Cost: 5 Destiny or less.

Minister

You're one of the ministers or assistant ministers of Yang. Since you're a member of the Wulin, you're probably in a very active ministry (War or Intelligence) or a ministry that does nothing at all (Intangibles or Preparation Against Tigers). You have plenty of paperwork but the salary's good and you have a chance to pursue your Challenge!

- 4 Destiny — Affiliation 4 (Kingdom of Yang)
- 4 Destiny — Wealth 4
- 3 Destiny — Status 3 (Minister)
- 2 Destiny — Followers 2
- 1 Destiny — *Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness* lore

- 1 Destiny — *Dealing with Government (in Yang)* lore
- 0 Destiny — *The Hidden City* lore
- 0 Destiny — *The Celestial Palace* lore

Total Cost: 15 Destiny

Noble

You're a member of the city's aristocracy. It's probably poverty that's driven you into the Wulin, but you could have something to prove or a love for righteousness!

- 2 Destiny — Affiliation 2 (Family)
- 3 Destiny — Status 3 (Noble of Yang)
- 1 Destiny — *Peaceful Residence* or *Wolf District* lore
 - Recommended: 6 Destiny — Possession: Manor.
- Recommended: 0 Destiny — *The Celestial Palace* lore (if you attend court).

Total Cost: 6+ Destiny

Phoenix Nest Merchant

You're an established trader in the merchant district, the Phoenix Nest. It's your friends and enemies who draw you into the Wulin — that, and the fact that all the trouble in the market seems to wind up at your door!

- 1 Destiny — Wealth I.
- 2 Destiny — *Phoenix Nest* lore
 - 1 Destiny — status bonus for Phoenix Nest.

Total Cost: 4 Destiny

Red Head Gang Member

You've fallen in with a gang of thugs who harrass bureaucrats. You're wasting your potential! You've resolved to take the first opportunity to get yourself and the gang involved in real challenges!

- 1 Destiny — *Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness* lore
 - 2 Destiny — Affiliation 2 (Red Head Gang)

Total Cost: 3 Destiny

Royal Family Member

You belong to the royal family — you're one of King Yue Guan's potential heirs!

- 0 Destiny — *City of the Poison Garden* lore
 - 7-10 Destiny — close relative of King Yue Guan. This includes an Affiliation with Yang!

Total Cost: 7+ Destiny

Scholar

You're a scholar with steady employment in Thrashing Minister City. It's probably your clients that get you into trouble!

- Recommended: Learning 2
- Recommended: Wealth 1
- Recommended: 2 Destiny — *Jade Garden* lore

Total Cost: 5 Destiny or less.

Recommended Loresheets

The following lores are particularly relevant for a Thrashing Minister City game. Players whose characters aren't studying any particular lore during downtime should look at this list first — in addition, of course, to lore related to stories they already know.

Useful History

The Time of Chaos (pg. 138, **Weapons of the Gods**)
1 Destiny, Learning (15) to study.

In a long campaign, you won't regret knowing about the Han Dynasty seals!

The Shang Dynasty (p. 123, **Weapons of the Gods**)
3 Destiny, Learning (18) to study.

The Zhou Dynasty (p. 124, **Weapons of the Gods**)
3 Destiny, Learning (18) to study.

These are useful if you want your fighting style to harken back to a forebear's.

The Enchanted Demon (pg. 105, **Weapons of the Gods**)
3 Destiny, Learning (20) to study.

If you think you might face a demon sometime during play.

A View of Yang and the East

The East (pg. 154, **Weapons of the Gods**)
2 Destiny, Grace (20) to study.

This is particularly useful when the story leads you to travel Yang as a whole.

Social Connections

A Woman's Life (pg. 179, **Weapons of the Gods**)
2 Destiny, Grace (20) to study.

This is free for women who grew up as outsiders to their family. *Free!*

Courtship (p. 192, **Weapons of the Gods**)
2 Destiny, Grace (30) to study.
Good for a game with some romance in it.

Eunuchs (pg. 38-39)
2 Destiny, Learning (20) to study.
This is free for people who start the game as eunuchs. *Free!*

Local Lore: Thrashing Minister and its Districts

City of the Poison Garden (pg. 13)
1 Destiny, Politics (15) to study.

Note: This is free for characters in a Thrashing Minister City game. It gives a general overview and some handy plot hooks — enjoy!

West and East Willow Districts (pg. 19-22)
2 Destiny, Politics (18) to study.

The Walled City (pg. 22-24)
2 Destiny, Investigation (20) to study.

Phoenix Nest (pg. 25-26)
2 Destiny, Investigation (20) to study.

Peaceful Residence (pg. 26-27)
1 Destiny, Grace (20) to study.

Jade Garden (pg. 27-28)
2 Destiny, Investigation (15) to study.

Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness (pg. 29-30)
1 Destiny, Politics (20) to study.

Green District (pg. 30-31)
1 Destiny, Confidence (18) to study.

Wolf District (pg. 31-32)
1 Destiny, Fight or Melee (18) to study.

Each of these gives you friends in the relevant district and an opportunity to buy cheap Status there. Plus plenty of plot hooks!

Local Lore: The Hidden City of the King

The Hidden City (pg. 34-36)

This is information you can dig up on the administration buildings of Yang and Thrashing Minister.

The Celestial Palace (pg. 37-38)

This is information you can dig up, with more difficulty, on the palaces of the King.

Dealing with Government (in Yang) (pg. 36-37)

1 Destiny, Grace (20) to study.

The protocol for dealing with the administration. It's not exciting, but it's handy!

The Eunuchs of Yang (pg. 40)

2 Destiny, Investigation (20) to study.

The Concubines of Yue Guan (pg. 41-42)

2 Destiny, Investigation (20) to study.

Secret Weapons of Yang (pg. 43)

3 Destiny, Investigation (30) to study.

Secret information on the servants, concubines, and weapons of the King. The Destiny options focus on acquiring enemies, allies, or a position within the King's palaces.



City of the Poison Garden

Destiny Cost: I

Study Difficulty: Politics (15)

This lore is free to all characters in a Thrashing Minister-focused game, and to all characters from Thrashing Minister City.

In the shadow of the palace scaffold

I expect the smell of peach blossoms,

but see the leaves of the poison bead trees.

In the southern square

I hear the floating notes of lute, flute and yue-qin.

In the northern square

I hear the creaking of the gallows.

The noble ladies of Thrashing Minister

are wrapped in silk, adorned with gold and jade

showing off their husband's status.

The women of the Walled City

wear just enough to cover the bruises

from the gangs that own them.

City of clay, of fortune, of crossroads -

you fulfill all expectations under Heaven.

— Anonymous poet, describing Thrashing Minister City during the Time of Chaos.

History

Thrashing Minister City is the current capital of the Kingdom of Yang. Yue Guan, Yang's current king, builds his ever expanding set of palaces here. It is the most cosmopolitan city in the kingdom, the center of all of the kingdom's trade.

The city received its name during the Shang Dynasty. The Shang Emperor exiled a minister of the imperial court, Yong Kwangliang, to the city — at the time merely

神兵玄奇

神農氏

a remote, nameless town. Yong was wise and honest but suffered from occasional seizures. These seizures troubled his colleagues' work — they thought he was cursed! They complained so often to the Emperor that the Emperor reassigned Yong to this isolated town to serve as its magistrate's advisor. Ironically, Yong's wisdom made the city so prosperous that people began to think of his seizures as a sign of favor from Heaven. It became local folklore that those who witnessed Yong's fits inherited some of this favor. People came from all over to witness the "Thrashing Minister" for themselves.

Unfortunately one cannot be honest, forthright, and of high status in Shen Zhou without acquiring some enemies. Eventually, one of these enemies poisoned Yong. People interpreted the final convulsions of the Thrashing Minister as just another lucky seizure until he surprised them with his death. To this day people argue about whether witnessing Yong's final fits was lucky, inauspicious, or both.

The town, already prosperous, became a bustling city during the Qin dynasty when the Emperor built two of his roads to intersect just outside the city. With these roads and with its proximity to the Yellow River, Thrashing Minister became the center of trade for the region.

Until 5 years ago, Wang Murong ruled in Thrashing Minister City. His reign began in the Sixteen States period — also known as the Time of Chaos — and ended with the arrival of the crafty Yue Guan, a Hsiang-nu barbarian who drove Wang Murong from his throne and quickly established himself as the King of Yang. (See **Weapons of the Gods**, pg. 141.) Yue Guan's people consider him an unrighteous ruler and he seems to delight in the suffering of others. It is obvious to the people of Yang that Guan will never receive the mandate of heaven, but, at least for now, they must accept him as their King.

Because Thrashing Minister is the hub of all Yang's trade, everything comes through the city. Thrashing Minister has seen it all. It is a city that contains all the best and all the worst things that Shen Zhou has to offer. It is intensely cosmopolitan. Within its walls one may find nobles, ministers, spies from other states, gangsters, entertainers, Wulin adventurers, Daoist alchemists, court eunuchs, filthy rich merchants, homeless beggars, Buddhist monks, and con artists of every sort. Even to this day everyone comes to this city to see if they can absorb some of the luck of City of the Poison Garden — Thrashing Minister.

Climate

The Kingdom of Yang lies in the east-northeast region of Shen Zhou, an area sometimes called the Northern Steppe. It

is a mostly barren area of limited rainfall, no trees, and much grass and shrubbery. The most fertile areas are near bodies of water. Thrashing Minister is near the Yellow River, making it possible for farmers to grow millet, but wheat is difficult and rice is almost impossible. The city must import most of its rice and other foods from the South.

The steppe is not as dry as the desert, but it has similar extreme temperatures. It has intensely hot summers and freezing cold winters.

Economy

Yang has an abundance of good porcelain-making clay. In the Shang Dynasty, the ceramics trade drove Thrashing Minister's economy. Craftsmen and artisans came to Thrashing Minister to take advantage of this natural resource. They lived in the Muddy Fingers neighborhood of what is now the Walled City and crafted beautiful works of pottery. They worked at great kilns for firing clay just outside the city's western wall.

After the Qin Emperor's roads were built, Thrashing Minister's economy began focusing instead on trade. The Dong Clan, aspiring masters of trade, considered Thrashing Minister for their headquarters, but it was not to be. The young hero sent to evaluate the city returned with shocking white hair and a stress twitch, saying, "Ah! The city's politics — they're too turbulent! Every State wants a piece of them! It'd be better to live near Bird Progress where everyone kowtows to the Dong Clan."

Population

Thrashing Minister's population fluctuates greatly because of the high traffic through the area. It averages around 30,000 people.

The city contains visitors and residents from many families, clans, and societies. It seethes with divergent or conflicting commercial, criminal, spiritual, political, social, and scholarly purposes. Its residents are primarily Han, the prominent ethnic group in Shen Zhou. The presence of Yue Guan, a Hsiang-nu (Northern barbarian) King, has attracted a number of Hsiang-nu, many of whom serve in the army. It is common to see people from other states, cultures, and religions traveling through, and even staying in, Thrashing Minister City.

Local Culture

The culture of Thrashing Minister has an atypical emphasis on cultivating good fortune and getting ahead. Among the favored proverbs of its residents are: "Be in readiness for favorable winds", "Covet wealth, and lack it; don't, and luck will grant it", and "Fortunes and flowers do not last forever." The residents of Thrashing Minister are always on the lookout for something to alter their fortunes — an opportunity for more money, a lucky



omen, or a chance to know someone who will increase their status. In fact, socializing in the City is more often than not about trying to meet and impress someone of higher status in order to increase one's circle of influential and wealthy contacts. There is always the hope that the fortune of others will actually rub off.

Many people in Thrashing Minister City employ less than virtuous means in order to secure wealth and status. If one could ask the Immortal Emperor, he would no doubt call it unfortunate — it's as if people see acquiring fortune as the sign of Heaven's favor and forget that Heaven's favor is the reward for displaying virtue.

Law and Enforcement

Several autonomous groups in Thrashing Minister live by and enforce their own rules. These groups include families, clans, guilds, the military, schools, and societies. However, all of these groups are expected to abide by the supreme law in the Kingdom of Yang — the pronouncements of King Yue Guan. The Bureau of Supremely Correct Declarations and Advisories publishes Guan's royal edicts, passing them on to every office of government from the royal Ministers down to the local magistrates and posting edicts of general relevance in the public squares.

For the most part, the city relies on social pressure to maintain harmony — the pressure on individuals to maintain filial piety and on groups to relate to one another in accordance with the laws of Heaven. (See *The Society of Shen Zhou* on pg. 163, **Weapons of the Gods**). Only if someone breaks a royal edict or if the disharmony between two groups elicits a complaint from someone of status do the constables get involved.

In Thrashing Minister, residents actively and fiercely avoid the involvement of the constabulary in their conflicts. The problem-solving techniques practiced by the constables of Thrashing Minister are invariably expensive or bloody. Law enforcement officials in this city are notorious for taking bribes from criminals. Some even seek out illegal activity and shake down the criminals for funds! For these reasons, some residents consider the constabulary nothing more than the city's largest gang. At the same time, the constables are the instrument of law: when a specific criminal enterprise irritates a city magistrate, a high-status noble, or a constable having a bad day, the constables strike with a speed and a viciousness rare even in the Wulin.

Some of the most frightening citizens of Thrashing Minister City work in its constabulary, including Tiger-Skinned Ching (called thus because a corrupt Chi condition has created black stripes on his skin), No-Shadow Chu (a gaunt albino, believed by children to be a ghost), and Bone-Cracker Lang.

Architecture

Like most cities of its size in Shen Zhou, Thrashing Minister is completely walled off from the outside world. As is typical for cities in the Land of the Gods, it began as a fortress before growing into the residential center it is now. The four 8-yard walls (to the north, the south, the east, and the west) each contain three gates through which people may come and go freely during the day, scrutinized with intermittent vigilance by the city's guards. The gates are locked shut between twilight and dawn.

The home of a typical citizen is a one-storey structure that houses three generations of a family. At its center is the shrine where the family honors ancestors and benevolent spirits. As with most structures in Shen Zhou, symmetry is central to the design of the home, so when one bedroom is built for the family elders on the west side, the family must build another bedroom for elders on the east side. Following this symmetrical pattern, often there are west and east bedrooms, one for parents and one for children. The basic home is usually arranged around a courtyard on its north side. For those without kitchens, cooking is done in the courtyard, often with pots and urns set onto a tripod over a fire.

In addition to these features, homes of the wealthy may also include a kitchen, a dining area, a study, personal library (for scholars), servants' quarters, more than one floor (servants on the first floor, masters on the second or above), larger courtyards, sculpture, ornate decoration, walls, and elaborate gates.

The administrative offices and Royal Palaces form a complex in the very center of town — the Hidden City. This complex is walled off and most residents never see the Royal Palaces at all — they are strictly forbidden to common citizens. The Palaces are almost a city unto themselves, but their only residents are the king, his concubines, his children, and his eunuch servants.

Religion

Thrashing Minister is a secular city. People will make offerings to ancestors and other benevolent entities — if they didn't, who knows what could happen? But the religious, ritual, mystic element of their life focuses on gathering luck to become rich and live a long time. People spend more time avoiding bad omens than they do thinking about virtue, enlightenment, or the Dao, and they are more likely to visit a predictionist for business advice than a temple to make offerings.

Even so, each district features temples honoring spirits important to the people of that district. The temples are gated, with a doorway in the gate. A temple guardian is painted

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upon the door. Beyond the door there is a courtyard containing a fire pit in which one can burn paper money on behalf of one's ancestors in Hell. Past the courtyard is the main hall housing the altar to the temple's honored spirit. Here people burn sticks of incense, bow to the deity, and petition the deity for help. On holidays that honor a particular god, people may also sacrifice grain, hemp, and other goods. The rest of the facility is the living quarters and exercise yard of the monks who attend to the temple.

Secrets of Destiny: City of the Poison Garden

Everybody Needs Luck [Destiny]

Who doesn't need luck? Even the Immortal Emperor could use a little good joss now and then!

DESTINY COST

- 3 **Bonus:** You have **Quality Superstitions**. If you describe what you're doing for good luck, you can get a +5 for non-combat Skill rolls where luck holds meaningful sway.
- 3 **Bonus:** You are a corrupt businessperson (or at least a little shady) — dealing with you is bad luck! You have 3 corrupt joss that you may only spend when using Persuade in a business context. This pool refreshes daily.
- (-2) This benefit applies only in Thrashing Minister City, where you can use others' desire for "good luck" to extort wealth.

Temple Guardian Painting [Treasure]

In Thrashing Minister, and in other places in Shen Zhou, the temple guardians painted on the doors are more powerful than they seem! Though they sleep most of the time, some of them can come to life — speaking, moving from place to place on the temple door and walls, or even coming to life and acting as the most terrible demon! In general, these creatures come to life only if swayed by a Legendary (40) Friends roll or when the temple faces a hideous defilement — something far worse than simple destruction. The Sage should use the Yao rules to construct a temple guardian if one comes to life.

DESTINY COST

- I Bonus: You know the secret of



painting and communicating with sacred temple guardians. This allows you to use your Friends and Information Broker advantages to obtain help or information from the temple guardians painted on the doors of temples (or wherever else you paint them.)

Yue Guan and Wang Murong [Destiny]

Yue Guan burst into the Kingdom of Yang and dethroned its King. What are the implications of these deeds today?

DESTINY COST

- 10 **Fortune or Discovery:** you are a close relative to Yue Guan, and he will honor or use you as such. This includes a 4-point Affiliation with the Kingdom of Yang.
- (-3) The game is not focused on Yang or Thrashing Minister.
- 7 **Fortune or Discovery:** you are a close relative or other trusted agent of King Wang Murong, driven from Yang proper but ruling now in Southern Yang.

Yue Jun [Destiny]

The most famous artisan yet to live in Thrashing Minister went by the name Yue Jun. When the barbarian warlord An Gang rode against Thrashing Minister, his army came across a line of hundreds of ceramic pots. An Gang stopped his army to investigate, and soon found that each of the pots was of quality beyond price. As he passed each, he exclaimed upon its beauty and felt greater avarice for the wealth of Thrashing Minister, until he

came at last to a pot printed with the script of the time: "Shame on the sword that stills the potter's wheel." This brought remorse to the heart of An Gang; with a cry, he cut his own arms and set aside his dreams of conquest.

There is an old story that the heir of Yue Jun will rise to prominence again when trouble comes to Thrashing Minister, defending the city from the unrighteous as Yue Jun did before. Many think that the heir to Yue Jun will dethrone the Hsiang-nu King — but Yue Guan is promulgating the story that he himself is Yue Jun's heir!

DESTINY COST

- I **History:** you descend strongly from Yue Jun by blood.
- * **Destiny:** if you descend from Yue Jun, some of those who honor the old stories will expect you to lead any effort to dethrone Yue Guan.
- * **Bonus:** if you descend from Yue Jun, you can produce one or two pieces of Quality pottery a week without spending Destiny or making Crafting rolls. Someone who employs you as an artisan receives a favorable reputation, gaining a one-die bonus on attempts to impress others within the Kingdom of Yang.

Yong Kwangliang

[Destiny]

This glorious thrashing minister brought great repute to the city!

DESTINY COST

- 2 **History:** you descend strongly from Yong Kwangliang by blood or martial tradition.
- 2 **Bonus:** if you descend from Yong Kwangliang, you may spend 3 Xia joss at any time to convert a Chi weakness condition you have into a hyperactivity. You can only convert one condition at a time, and it stays hyperactive until someone spends corrupt joss to interfere with your actions. At this point, the condition reverts to its natural state.
- * **Bonus:** if you descend from Yong Kwangliang, your allies may benefit from your misfortunes. Every time you critically fail, and every time the Sage agrees that events just totally screwed you, you can give every ally in Short or Medium range a point of Xia joss.

Discounts on Related Lore

DESTINY COST

- I *The Shang Dynasty* (p. 120, **Weapons of the Gods**) — when Yong Kwangliang came to the city!
- I *The Han Dynasty* (p. 129, **Weapons of the Gods**) — when the city became powerful!
- I *The Time of Chaos* (p. 138, **Weapons of the Gods**) — when Yue Guan took over!
- I *The East* (p. 154, **Weapons of the Gods**) — the people and landscape of the east!

Thrashing Minister District by District

Districts

1. West Willow District
2. East Willow District
3. Heaven and Earth City (aka Walled City, Oldtown)
4. Phoenix Nest
5. Peaceful Residence
6. Jade Garden
7. Applied Righteousness
8. Civic Harmony
9. Green District
10. Wolf District

Streets

1. Avenue of Deliberate Calm
2. Spilled Ink Road
3. Avenue of Ash
4. Street of Brilliant Wonders
5. Street of Godly Prowess
6. Fragrant Wind Street

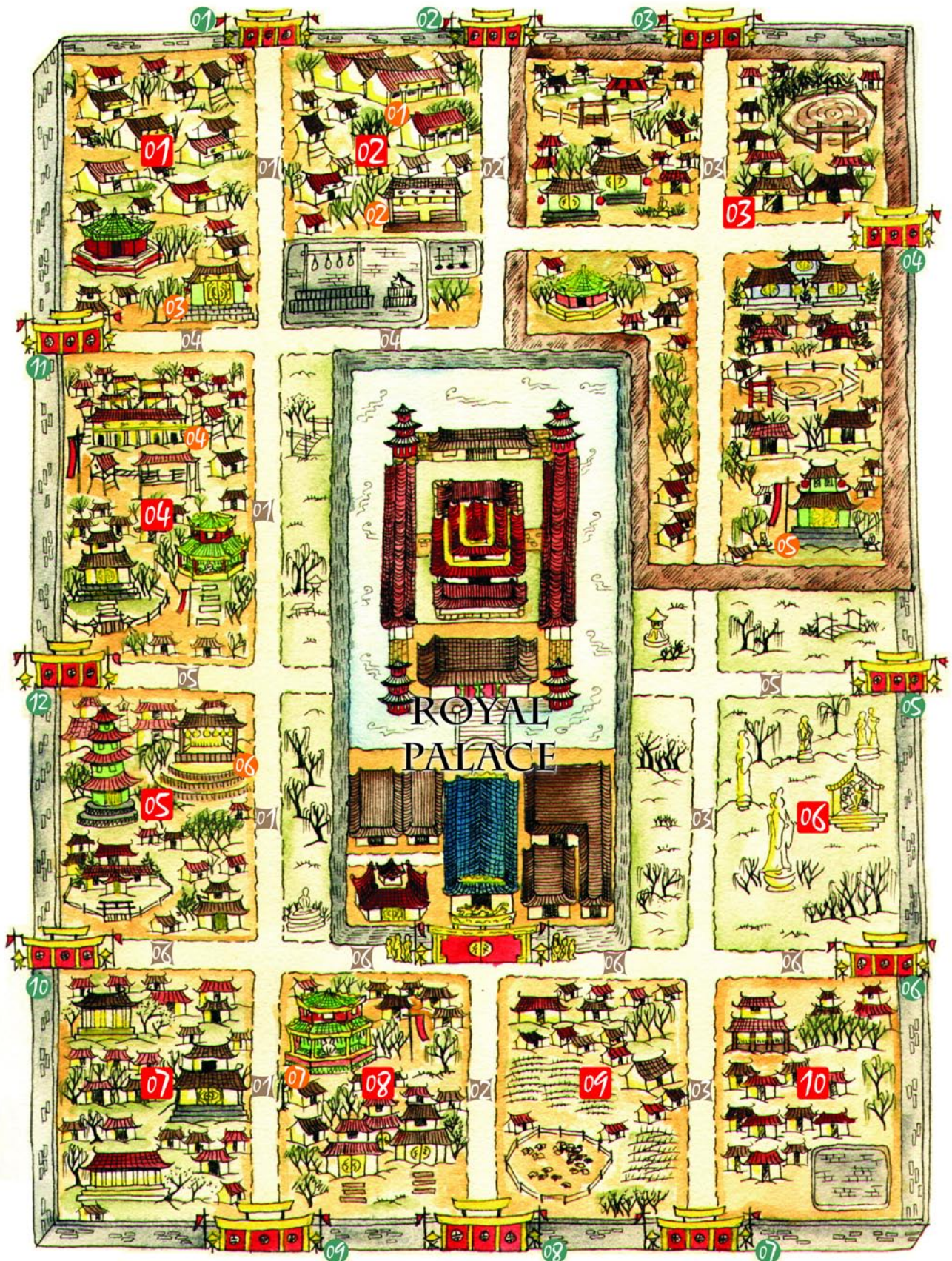
Gates

1. Gate of Earthly Peace
2. Gate of Supreme Fortune
3. Gate of Hero's Return
4. Gate of Cleansed Bone
5. Gate of Forging Fire
6. Gate of Dragon Majesty
7. Gate of Protective Harmony
8. Gate of No Unfortunate Incidents
9. Gate of One Unfortunate Incident
10. Gate of Green Radiance
11. Gate of Phoenix Flight
12. Gate of Tiger Chi

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Thrashing Minister City



West and East Willow Districts

Destiny Cost: 2
Study Difficulty: Politics (18)

The Gate of Supreme Fortune

According to Yang kingdom feng shui and the rules for Chi flow, it's best to enter a city from the north. This avoids bad luck and earns one good luck along one's path. For this reason, traders and visitors usually enter the city by way of the West and East Willow Districts.

Before individual travelers and caravans pass through the Gate of Supreme Fortune, soldiers often stop them and ask about their business in the city. Yue Guan expects vigilance of his soldiers — spies, saboteurs, and rebellious Wulin heroes have good reason to visit Thrashing Minister as part of their intrigues against his rule. The soldiers enjoy exerting their power to make visitors uncomfortable and to remind themselves how important their own role in the defense of Thrashing Minister might be; however, almost anyone, if armed with the appropriate “gate-packet” (bribe), finds that they are unsuspecting and have the authority to enter the city.

Once past the gate guards, a visitor finds several small stations where smiling “station men” advise them as to where in the city to go to saddle their horses, unload their wares, and find shelter for the night. Visitors will find these station men much more pleasant than the soldiers at the gate — but these also are employees of Yue Guan, using subtler means to discover any unrighteous intentions that visitors might have.

Beyond the station men is the market. It is not so large as the one in Phoenix Nest but it does contain a large assortment of goods, giving travelers a sense of just how much gets imported to and through Thrashing Minister.

The Willow Districts market has a disturbing feature: instead of the traditional area for entertainment, there is a public execution square. The square also hosts public criminal trials, which range from serious inquiries to displays of brutality wherein the judge whips the defendant until he or she confesses. Standing in the square are a gallows, a chopping block, and posts where alleged criminals are bound, whipped, and left to die. This last punishment is usually reserved for non-residents since a local convict's family members would sneak food to them to keep them alive.

Taken as a whole, the welcoming area at the Gate of Supreme Fortune conveys a specific message from Yue Guan to all new arrivals: **Thrashing Minister is a place to acquire wealth but not to anger the powers-that-be. Act accordingly.**

Warehouses and Willows

The Willow Districts house the spoils of trade. They contain warehouses, trade stations (where Thrashing Minister's goods are stored for trade with another city's or state's goods), and horse, camel, and caravan stables. They have the lion's share of the city's inns and rent-houses for weary travelers. Most residents of the Willow Districts are common folks of no rank or distinction who work the warehouses, stations, stables, markets and inns.

Willows by the Way

These Districts are not named for the willow tree. Rather, the name derives from the euphemistic phrases “flowers and willows by the wayside,” a polite saying for prostitutes, and “sleeping among flowers and reposing among willows,” a term for visiting a brothel. Not far from the inns are many houses with hanging talismans honoring Pan Chin Lien and Bei Mei Shen, goddesses who serve as patrons and protectors to the prostitutes of Shen Zhou. These are the brothels of the Willows Districts.

Gangs of the Willows Districts

The Willows Districts are home to many criminal gangs that pursue all manner of crime. No one gang is dominant over the others, unless one counts the constables — who certainly qualify, as they take bribes from criminals and pressure warehouse owners for goods in order to ensure that the constabulary investigates crimes against their property.

Recently a new organization, the Masked Untouchables, has shown itself in the Willow Districts. These masked warriors take on criminals and corrupt constables and protect the citizenry. They've even had one struggle with the fearsome 3rd rank constable Shining Blade Wu. The citizens of the Willows Districts consider the Masked Untouchables heroes; the constables consider them a menace!

Temples and Constables

The temples in the Willow Districts are principally dedicated to spirits of wealth (T'ien-Shang Tsai Shen and Ts'ai-po Shing-Chen), happiness and fortune (Fu Hsing), and longevity (Shou Hsing).

Tiger-Skinned Ching lurks in the West Willow District. His superior, the aforementioned *Shining-Blade Wu*, patrols the East.

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The Dong and Nan Clans in Thrashing Minister

The **Dong Clan** Agenda demands a mastery of trade throughout Shen Zhou. Yang is in Dong Clan territory. For these reasons, the Dong Clan has both the power and the desire to maintain a strong presence in the city — stronger than any other Clan's, though not quite a rival to the influence of the King.

The Dong Clan maintains an enormous complex of warehouses and stables in the West Willow District. Although the Dong have a house in Phoenix Nest for genteel receptions and high-class business, the warehouses and stables function as the Dong Clan headquarters in Thrashing Minister. The manager of the complex is Great Bear Lu, who oversees the daily tasks of the staff that houses goods, ships them out, cares for the pack and hauling animals, and constructs and repairs the wagons. He also hires, fires, and judges the performance of the mercenaries the Dong Clan occasionally hires as security escorts for various shipments. As one could expect from his name, Great Bear is an enormous, rotund man. Despite his girth, he has strong kung fu — it's not smart to underestimate Great Bear!

The Dong Clan has some involvement, whether small or large, in nearly a third of the city's trade.

The **Nan Clan** compound is directly across the street from the Dong Clan warehouses. It resembles a military barracks. Members of the Nan Clan commonly hire themselves out as convoy escorts to anyone who can afford their price — at minimum, Wealth Rank 3. The compound serves as a place where Nan clan members may sleep and train until their next job. The Nan and Dong Clans have a symbiotic relationship in Thrashing Minister, since the Nan Clan security escorts often guard convoys put together by the Dong Clan.

Wandering Star, a rough and ready lady, runs the Nan Clan compound with a firm but friendly hand — friendly, that is, until you make a mistake with her. There is considerable tension between Wandering Star and Great Bear Lu, troubling the relationship between the two Clans in the city. No one knows the precise nature of this tension; attempts to inquire have only provoked the hostility of the two concerned. What people do see, however, is that they are sometimes friendly, sometimes hostile, and sometimes coldly indifferent. Rumors abound that the two are ex- or current lovers. Members of both clans still work with one another despite the tension between their leaders.

Prostitution in Weapons of the Gods

There's a myth that currency can buy a woman's feelings, opinions, and desire.

This myth is common among prostitutes' clients. It's as rare as hen's teeth among the prostitutes themselves. They're very well aware that cash doesn't change what they think about a client.

By definition, the prostitutes that matter in your game are the important NPCs — the ones who'd have speaking parts if the game was a movie. This means that they're important enough for the Sage to remember that they have feelings of their own — and if they keep those feelings too much a secret, it's a sign that they're either a villain, a victim, or a hero being really cautious.

Both women and men take up the prostitutes' trade.

Secrets of Destiny: West and East Willow Districts

General Bonuses

[Bonuses]

- * **Bonus:** this lore increases your **Friends** and **Information Broker** by one die, but only within the West and East Willow Districts.
- 1 **Bonus:** you are well-regarded in the willow districts. This gives **Status 3** in the Willow Districts and **Status 1** in Thrashing Minister as a whole. This is not cumulative with other such bonuses.
- 5 **Fortune:** Tiger-Skinned Ching or Shining-Blade Wu may soon become your **Hated Foe** or **Rival**.
(-5) This is your first or second disadvantage.



The Masked Untouchable Society

[Destiny]

Ni Baoyuan, the founder of the Masked Untouchable Society, is one of the few upright members of the constabulary. He could find no legitimate way to fight the corruption within his organization. He decided to don a mask at night, to keep his identity a secret, and to fight his own comrades whenever he found them perpetrating unrighteous deeds. To this end, he acquired an old inn (renamed the “Dragon Inn”) in the West Willow District and gave it to his loyal follower Deng Li to run. Now he uses its carefully-hidden basement as a headquarters. Cautiously, over time, Ni Baoyuan has discovered and recruited other righteous members of the constabulary. The gang only has 20-some members but they are very loyal to one another and extremely dedicated to their cause.

DESTINY COST

- 1 **Discovery or Fortune:** you have an ally in the Masked Untouchable Society.
- 2 **Fortune:** you develop good relations with the Masked Untouchable Society.
 - (-1) Thrashing Minister is important but nowhere near central in the game.
- 2 **Fortune:** you join the Masked Untouchable Society
 - (-1) Thrashing Minister is important but nowhere near central in the game.
- 5 **Destiny:** sometime in the next few stories, Ni Baoyuan will die and pass control of the Masked Untouchable Society to you.
- 5 **Fortune:** Ni Baoyuan may soon become your **Hated Foe** or **Rival**.
 - (-5) This is your first or second disadvantage.

Secrets of the Station Men

[Secret]

In their quest to provide superior information to King Yue Guan and rise in favor and fortune, some of the station men have developed information-gathering techniques more advanced than keen eyes and Investigation Skill. If you catch them using these techniques on you, perhaps you'll learn their secret!

DESTINY COST

- 3 **Bonus:** you have **Quality Subtle Interrogation**. You receive a +5 bonus when trying to work out someone's motives in a cheerful, polite, business-focused interaction. It's helpful to smile a lot.
- 2 **Technique:** if you can learn secret arts, you have the opportunity to learn the Bug Trail Tracking Technique. Sneak a bug into someone's clothing

(normally, a Finesse roll opposed by their Sense Skill.) Up to twelve hours later, depending on how you train your bugs, the bug will leave its host and crawl back to you, leaving behind a scent trail. For anyone else, following this trail is a Legendary (40) Sense task; for you, it's Everyday (18). **Placing the bug is a secret art. Secret arts cannot be combined with attacks in a complex full action.** It may be helpful to note the page number for these rules on your character sheet.

- 2 **Technique:** if you can learn secret arts, you have the opportunity to learn the *Anger Allergy Infliction Technique*. This technique inflicts a special Metal System medical condition — every time the target thinks about hurting a specific person, they sneeze! You inflict this technique with special quivers of your palm while shaking hands with your target and emphasizing a specific person's name. That name is the name of the person that they can no longer safely feel anger towards. This requires a Finesse roll, which they can oppose with Hardiness. They can detect your suspicious attitude with a Moderate (20) Awareness task but need critical success or experience with this condition to detect what you have actually attempted. Inflicting the Anger Allergy is a secret art. Secret arts cannot be combined with attacks in a complex full action. It may be helpful to note the page number for these rules on your character sheet.

The Anger Allergy inflicted by this technique is always a minor Chi weakness. It has a Recovery of 20, an Interval of one session, and a Duration of 3.

Anger Allergy

You're allergic to being angry at someone specific — it makes you sneeze! This is a Metal System condition, where your lungs and sinuses become too sensitive to your anger and try to sneeze it out to cleanse your system of angry Chi.

Weakness: if this is a weakness, you suffer a Wu Wei reduction every time you think about doing a specific person harm and do not sneeze. It's normally up to you when you're thinking about hurting someone, but if you're actively on a mission to do them harm, it's up to the Sage!

Hyperactivity: if this is a hyperactivity, then you gain Destiny every time the wrong sneeze gets you into serious trouble. You don't ever get hyperactive anger allergies from the Anger Allergy Infliction Technique, but the Sage or a doctor might inflict one on you.

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Wandering Star and Great Bear Lu

[Destiny]

What troubles the relationship between these two luminaries of the Clans? Are they ex-lovers? Kung fu rivals? Did Wandering Star kidnap Great Bear's son? Did Great Bear steal her Weapon of the Gods?



DESTINY COST

- 1 **Fortune:** you will have the opportunity to become involved in the trouble between these two.
- 2 **Destiny:** you will obtain something that both Wandering Star and Great Bear Lu want desperately — and won't let the other have.
- 2 **Fortune or Discovery:** you have good relations with Wandering Star or Great Bear Lu (but not both).
- 4 **Discovery:** if the Sage hasn't established firm ideas, your player can choose the general nature of the trouble between Wandering Star and Great Bear Lu and become involved (as above) in whatever fashion seems reasonable.

Willow Houses

[Destiny]

The prostitutes of the East and West Willow Districts rarely trouble themselves with matters of the Wulin — but they can still prove useful allies to a warrior who befriends them. Brothels are good places to hide and excellent places to seek information.

DESTINY COST

- 1 **Discovery or Fortune:** you have allies among the Willow Houses. This functions as a one-die **Willow Houses of Thrashing Minister** specialty on both Friends and Information broker rolls. This stacks with the district bonus, so you'll roll at least two dice even if you don't have the advantages.

The Walled City

Destiny Cost: 2

Study Difficulty: Investigation (20)

The Story of Walled City

The Walled City, also known as Oldtown, is the original Thrashing Minister City. The walls around it are the original city walls. Now it is a neglected and rundown ward, dominated by the Hell Clan. It happened like so:

During the Han Dynasty, the King of Yang, nephew to the Han Emperor, wanted a series of palaces in the area. The walls of Thrashing Minister City were too small to contain his design; thus the King built his royal palace just outside Thrashing Minister's walls. In time a city grew outwards around the palace, eventually surrounding the original Thrashing Minister City and taking its name. The Walled City itself became nothing more than a cramped, broken remnant of the city's original design.

As cities grow larger they become prone to criminal activity. Thrashing Minister was no exception. Members of the Hell Clan entered the region and afflicted the city with rashes of robbery, extortion, kidnapping and even murder. After the constables failed several times to oust the Hell Clan, the city magistrate elected to compromise: he offered the Hell Clan a yearly bribe in exchange for limiting their activities to Oldtown and refraining as much as possible from overt violence.

The deal continues to this day. The Hell Clan has absolute control over Oldtown. They have renamed it Heaven and Earth City, though few but the Hell Clan and their lackeys use that name.

The Semi-Devil Magistrate

The constables do not operate in Oldtown. Instead law and order, such as it is, comes from a powerful Hell Clan lieutenant named Semi-Devil Soo Jinchoo. Soo Jinchoo received the name Semi-Devil after a flawed attempt to create a new formless kung fu technique burned and distorted the entire left side of his body. The event also distorted his personality. He fluctuates, without warning, between a demeanor of icy calm and fiery rage.

Semi-Devil Soo Jinchoo has set himself up unrighteously as the city magistrate of Heaven and Earth City. From the old city administration building, supported by his numerous minions, he runs the Hell Clan operation in Oldtown. From this central location the Hell Clan operates several lavish brothels, bloody fighting pits, gaudy gambling dens, and a black market where all manner of unsavory, illegal, and immoral goods — people not least among them — can be bought or sold.

The Fighting Pits

There are six fighting pits, five named after the elements and one named the Demon Pit. Challengers fight in these pits against the pit's champion. An audience watches, cheers on their favorite, and, of course, places bets on the fight's outcome. The fight is often to the death but the monetary rewards are great enough that there are always poor challengers willing to risk it. Most fighters come from financially strapped families who hope to win enough cash to survive another few months. Many champions become wealthy, but they don't live long.

The mini-arenas for these fights are dangerous places built by the city's "Murderous Arena Craftsman," Wu Song. The walls are embedded with sharp outcroppings that gladiators impale their enemies upon. The guards can tilt or even open the floors to reveal hundreds of spears beneath. The Hell Clan has embroidered on Wu Song's design, adding a few as-yet-unknown surprises in the pits that they're saving for a particularly interesting fight.

In the pits, anything goes: any tactic, any weapon, and any kung fu. There is only one exception: poison is not allowed. This is not for humane reasons but rather because poison ends fights too quickly and with too little blood. If it's discovered that a fighter won by using poison, the Hell Clan immediately attempts to kill that fighter; only if the winner can defeat all the Hell Clan agents and guards on the scene is their victory acknowledged as legitimate.

Despite the bargain between Heaven and Earth City and Thrashing Minister, violence is common in the Walled City. Most often the perpetrators are jealous gangs attempting unsuccessfully to encroach on the Hell Clan's turf. Some are Hell Clan warriors reinforcing their power over the poor inhabitants of the Walled City. The residents have no power or status to affect their situation. They are mere victims of the Hell Clan and its whims — with one notable exception.

The Lustrous Jade Brothel

There is one place in the Walled City that the Hell Clan doesn't control — the Lustrous Jade Brothel. Two wandering members of the Jade Dragon Society, recuperating from a battle with Hell Clan, hid out at the Lustrous Orchid Brothel for seven months. In that time they trained the women of the Brothel in kung fu and secret arts to help them escape their circumstances. Now the brothel — renamed Lustrous Jade — is owned and run by the women who work there. Their powerful techniques have humiliated, killed, or (in two cases) recruited the Hell Clan enforcers sent to resolve the matter. The brothel has thrown off Hell Clan control.

Many of the women who received the original training have left to pursue other affairs. Some have remained. Regardless of their choice, these powerful women are considered the "older sisters" of the brothel staff. Since the brothel broke Hell Clan control, more than a few residents of the Walled City have taken up practice there; these newer prostitutes or "younger sisters" receive training from the elder sisters who remain. Three men work at the brothel, but typically present as the female gender when dealing with their clients; they are "younger sisters" as well.

When one visits a lady of Lustrous Jade, one had best pay her, not just with cash, but with utmost respect. The prospective client makes offerings at the altar of Bai Mei Shen and bestows gifts and praise on the girl they desire. If she is unhappy with the gifts, unimpressed by the praise, or feels the offering is inadequate, she can refuse the client her services. Many clients pay a scholar to meet the girl and compose a poem, or an artist to draw her portrait, or a musician to serenade her.

Patrons of Lustrous Jade put up with the elaborate and expensive nature of acquiring these prostitutes' service because the ladies there have such strong Chi. It's not good for a man to sleep with a woman too much weaker or stronger than he — for a member of the Wulin, the Lustrous Jade is the only brothel in the city worth patronizing. Even the ordinary men of the city consider themselves flush with power and Chi; visiting the Lustrous Jade expresses this pride. In addition to the prostitutes' powerful Chi, a few of the resident courtiers and scholars have mastered extremely rare bedroom techniques — *Sexual Alchemy* (pg. 199, **Weapons of the Gods**) and *Daoist Sexual Techniques* (pp. 227-228, **Weapons of the Gods**). Such skills make their services beyond price.

The Hell Clan would love to own or eliminate Lustrous Jade, but they are yet to win a decisive fight against the ladies. The prostitutes of Lustrous Jade have made their House a well-defended fortress, and they have in the past successfully rescued any women kidnapped by Hell Clan minions.

Temples and Constables

There are many temples to gods of good fortune (such as Fu Hsing) near the district's gambling dens. Pit fighters and some Hell Clan members visit temples to Kwan Di, a martial hero of the Three Kingdoms period.

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Secrets of Destiny: The Walled City

General Bonuses

[Bonuses]

- * **Bonus:** this lore increases your **Friends** and **Information Broker** by one, but only within the Walled City.
- I **Bonus:** you are respected or feared in the Walled City. This gives you **Status 3** in the Walled City and **Status I** in Thrashing Minister as a whole. This is not cumulative with other such bonuses.

Fighting Pits

[Destiny]

Those who contend in the fighting pits of the Walled City can earn both fame and fortune!

DESTINY COST

- I **Discovery** or **Fortune:** you are a fighting pit champion. People who follow the fights can recognize you with an Everyday (18) Awareness task. Your Wealth increases by 2, to a maximum of 6, but only when you're regularly participating in pit fights.
- 2 **Victory:** after a number of pit fights, which you don't have to play out unless everyone has fun watching you fight, you learn the secrets of the pits. This gives you a +5 modifier to Tactics and Speed when you're fighting in the pits. Further, for the duration of the game, at least a few of your enemies will be willing to settle your disputes in the Oldtown fighting pits!

The Hell Clan of Thrashing Minister

[Destiny]

Semi-Devil Soo Jinchoo runs the Hell Clan interests in the Walled City. Sometimes even virtuous heroes deal with him — business is business, after all, and he is the power there!

DESTINY COST

- I **Discovery** or **Fortune:** you have allies among the Hell Clan in the Walled City. This functions as a one-die **Hell Clan of Thrashing Minister specialty** on both Friends and Information broker rolls.
- I **Fortune:** you have the opportunity to obtain a “pass” — a seal from Semi-Devil Soo Jinchoo indicating that Hell Clan members in the Walled City should deal with you politely. Hell Clan issues t h e s e

passes to Yang Kingdom authorities and cooperative virtuous heroes to prevent unnecessary trouble. These seals are carved from wood in a distinctive style and have notches that denote the approximate physical characteristics of their bearer: hair color, sex, rough height, and so forth.

(-1) You have, or later obtain, Hell Clan Affiliation.

- 5 **Fortune:** Semi-Devil Soo Jinchoo may soon become your **Hated Foe** or **Rival**.

(-5) This is your first or second disadvantage.

The Lustrous Jade

[Secret Society]

The Lustrous Jade Brothel defies the Hell Clan. Will you involve yourself in their troubles?

DESTINY COST

- I **Fortune:** You have an Affiliation with the Lustrous Jade Brothel.
- I+ **Fortune:** You are a “younger sister” or “older sister” of the legendary Lustrous Jade Brothel. This gives you a discounted **Status 3** — it applies across Shen Zhou, but isn't necessarily the best status to have. Additional Destiny increases this Status on a point-for-point basis.
- 5 **Hunted:** You work at the Lustrous Jade. You are **Hunted** by the **Hell Clan**. Even if you leave the city, someone will probably pursue you.
- (-5) This is your first or second disadvantage.
- 5 **Onerous Obligation:** In return for favors — kung fu training, secret arts training, helpful Daoist sex, protection of a family member, or the favor of a prostitute a poor hero could not afford — you have the **Onerous Obligation** to help defend the Lustrous Jade Brothel against the Hell Clan.
- (-5) This is your first or second Disadvantage.
- (-3) This is your third or greater Disadvantage, and Thrashing Minister is an important part of the game, but the city is not central enough to give you a reliable Destiny advantage from this obligation.

Advanced Topics

- 3 *Admonitions for Girls* (p. 225, **Weapons of the Gods**, unless rewritten by your Sage) — what are the secrets of the Jade Dragon Sect?

Discounts on Related Lore

DESTINY COST

- 1 *Daoist Sexual Basics* (p. 198, **Weapons of the Gods**) — useful techniques for Lustrous Jade workers.

Phoenix Nest

Destiny Cost: 2

Study Difficulty: Investigation (20)

Phoenix Nest is the most prosperous district in Thrashing Minister and the neighborhood containing the most multi-level homes. Its residents are mostly merchants and traders without rank or position. In the traditional social order, merchants are near the bottom. However, the wealth of trade in Thrashing Minister has made many of its merchant families wealthier than typical noble houses. Indeed, many merchant families (such as the Blue Flame Clan) are clients of the Dong Clan, receiving martial arts training or at least patronage in exchange. All of this, of course, breeds resentment in the nobles' hearts.

Phoenix Nest residents have a reputation for decadence and gaudy displays of wealth. For example, some of the opening gates of homes here are covered in jade and gold. Such gates must have guards posted at them at all hours, day or night, to protect them from thieves — which is, in the end, just another expense to show off.

The Labyrinthine Market

This district also contains the most elaborate market in the kingdom. It contains a remarkable array of standard goods and esoterica. Shops and stands sell every kind of herb, meat, fabric, clothing, weapon, animal, jewel, wine, kite, wagon, statuary, paper clothing or money (to be burned in temples for your ancestors), spice, firework, musical instrument, charm, talisman, and tool, among other goods.

The market is multi-leveled while still being open-air. There is an elaborate network of staggered raised platforms with winding staircases connecting them. The constables and shop-keepers hate the entangled labyrinth of stairs and walkways; it allows thieves to lose themselves easily in the crowd. Yet no one is willing to change the design — the feng shui master who built it used such esoteric principles that no ordinary person can challenge his ideas! Changing even a single feature might drastically alter the luck of the market.

Another feature of the market is its knack for circulating all kinds of rumors. One popular rumor is that one of the dealers can acquire Weapons of the Gods — but that he only sells them to people who appear worthy! True or not, this rumor is useful for the merchants who work here. It draws heroes and villains to the market, where they catch thieves and buy all manner of goods in an effort to appear worthy.

The citizens of Phoenix Nest live in relative peace in their district. The wealthy residents pay (arguably, bribe) the constables well. The constables in turn make sure that the riff-raff from other parts of town stays well away after dark. However, crime is not entirely absent — someone

in the district, reputedly one of the wealthiest merchants, runs a secret society that controls most of the crime in the city: the **Reed and Silver Brotherhood**. The gangs of the city, the constables, and even some lesser members of Hell Clan fear and kowtow to the Reed and Silver, although only a few know any details about it. Most ordinary citizens consider the idea a folktale.

Less reverent citizens call this district “the Phoenix Tangle.”

Temples and Constables

Most temples in the area honor the various gods of wealth, known collectively as the Ts'ai Shen.

Bone-Cracker Lang is usually found in this district, though it can't be said he works very hard... unless collecting bribes can be considered ‘work’.

Secrets of Destiny: Phoenix Nest

General Bonuses

[Bonuses]

- * **Bonus:** this lore increases your **Friends** and **Information Broker** by one, but only within Phoenix Nest.
- 1 **Bonus:** you are well-regarded in Phoenix Nest. This gives **Status 3** in Phoenix Nest and **Status I** in Thrashing Minister as a whole. This is not cumulative with other such bonuses.
- 5 **Fortune:** Bone-Cracker Lang may soon become your **Hated Foe** or **Rival**.
- (-5) This is your first or second Disadvantage.

Feng Shui of the Market

[Treasure]

An ancient master tuned the Chi flows of the market with great precision — forming a locus of powerful luck! Arrange the mirrors and banners of the market properly to shape fortune and circumstance throughout the kingdom of Yang!

DESTINY COST

- 1 **Victory:** after substantial experience in the market, you understand the market's secret luck. For each challenge you defeat in the market, you receive a point of joss — Xia joss, if you're acting on behalf of the merchants; corrupt joss if you're stealing from them; and the Sage's choice, if the matter's ambiguous!
- 1 **Victory:** after substantial experience in the market, you

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understand the patterns of good and bad luck in the market of Phoenix Nest. Anyone trying to outwit you in the market suffers a -5 modifier to their roll.

- 5 Fortune: if you control the Phoenix Nest region, you can convert the Market's luck into a 1-point Treasure Stone — a sorcerous luck power that can shape Thrashing Minister and the kingdom of Yang! When playing the Great Game, you can expend this stone at any time to reroll one of your Skill rolls, including attack rolls. You also reroll all extra dice acquired from Xia joss, kung fu, or other magic.

(-2) Most of the game takes place outside of the Kingdom of Yang.

Advanced Topics

- * *Reed and Silver Brotherhood* — what is the truth behind these rumors? A student of the Reed and Silver can fake membership to impress others, but is there a real Brotherhood running the crime of Thrashing Minister?

(This advanced topic is for the GM to create.)

Peaceful Residence

Destiny Cost: I

Study Difficulty: Grace (20)

Peaceful Residence holds the ancient residences of the city's noble families, specifically including families that have traditionally served the kingdom; families of scholarly or historical distinction; and the great families and small Clans that act as sponsors, patrons, and leeches towards peasant families in greater Yang. All of the households in this district are large and well-built. Some are opulent and rich. Others are rickety and run down, owned by the impoverished, shells of the grand estates they had been when their owners had land and wealth.

While all nobles share the privileges of status, many are cash-poor — it's easy for aristocratic families to lose land and favor when a new dynasty or ruler deposes the King. Their resources are easily claimed by the new King to distribute as favors to those who've helped him take and hold his throne. Thus a poor noble spends most of his days in the court of Yang, attempting to convince Yue Guan and his ministers that the noble's family is an asset to the kingdom worth supporting with largesse. If the noble has non-liquid resources such as artisans or treasures, he or she may appeal to the King with gifts. Other times, nobles seek indispensability through their talents as

bureaucrats, ministers, or military leaders. In a pinch, a hungry aristocrat will rail against the degeneracy of others, hoping to establish themselves as a paragon of righteousness and encourage the King to transfer resources from the “degenerates” families to their own. This kind of backstabbing is common and is usually facilitated by discovering and exposing a decadent habit or shameful practice of the aristocrat who serves as its particular target.

Whatever their wealth, the nobles of Thrashing Minister lead highly decadent lives; this is known by all and condemned by few. They can exceed in their degeneracy even the richest merchants of the Phoenix Nest — cash can buy forgiveness for many things, but the cachet of ancient power is even better. The aristocrats are essentially invulnerable to censure from those of lower status and — up until their peers turn on them — they can prey on ordinary people for their sport. Most maintain proper decorum, with their excesses taking the form of greed, gluttony, and pride. Some subject the common citizens of Thrashing Minister to humiliations and tortures for their amusement. A few even hunt ordinary people in the night as if they were animals, or prowl the West and East Willow Districts with a troop of demon-masked bodyguards acting as their “gang.” If King Yue Guan, the city magistrate, or an important minister deigns to hear and believe a complaint regarding such practices, the family will lose its assets and perhaps its title — but it's troublesome to investigate such allegations. Even hearing such a claim out is political dynamite and many such allegations are false.

Peaceful Residence's main market holds the largest set of entertainment stages in the city. Various noteworthy talents, including musicians, poets, dramatists, and acrobats, come from all over the kingdom to perform at this theatre. Such performers are often sponsored by nobles and it is a sign of prestige to bring a well-known artist to Thrashing Minister. It is of utmost social importance to attend such performances since, of course, anybody who is anybody will be there. The Peaceful Radiance Stage is the place to see and be seen.

Temples and Constables

The major temple in the area honors Lu-Hsing, the god of affluence and official rank.

No-Shadow Chu usually appears, rather too suddenly for most people's taste, anywhere (and any time!) in this District.

*Secrets of Destiny: Peaceful Residence***General Bonuses***[Bonuses]*

- * **Bonus:** this lore increases your Friends and Information Broker by one, but only within Peaceful Residence.
- * **Bonus:** if you are playing the Great Game in Thrashing Minister, and you assiduously mingle with the nobles of the city, this lore gives you a +5 bonus when attempting to Recruit the region's Influence stones.
- I **Bonus:** you are well-regarded in Peaceful Residence — and if the nobles know your name, everybody knows your name! You have **Status 4** in Peaceful Residence and **Status 2** in Thrashing Minister as a whole. This is not cumulative with other such bonuses.
- 5 **Fortune:** No-Shadow Chu may soon become your **Hated Foe** or **Rival**.
(-5) This is your first or second Disadvantage.

Register of Sins*[Treasure]*

Somewhere in the Peaceful Residence district is the lost Register of Sins — a magical scroll dating back to the Shang Dynasty that records the indiscretions of the people of Yang. The Register of Sins uses a strange scratch-mark-based code to track crimes and aberrations, leaving the implications ambiguous even to scholars — but those who practice for a few weeks at interpreting the register can later use it for a +10 on Investigation rolls to uncover crimes committed in Yang and a +10 on Predictionism rolls for which the behavior of habitual sinners is important.

DESTINY COST

- I **Fortune:** You involve yourself with some noble's search for the Register.
- I **Entangled Destiny:** your Destiny will touch that of the Register of Sins.
- I **Defense:** you know the lore of the register of sins, and can make a secret sign when about to commit a crime that conceals your designs from the Register's divine record.

Discounts on Related Lore**DESTINY COST**

- I *Parent and Child* (p. 167, **Weapons of the Gods**) — how nobles relate to their Clan elders!
- I *Clan and Family* (p. 175, **Weapons of the Gods**) — how nobles relate to their Clan peers!
- I *Superior and Minion* (p. 218, **Weapons of the Gods**) — how nobles relate to ordinary people!

Jade Garden**Destiny Cost: 2****Study Difficulty: Investigation (15)**

Jade Garden takes its name from the sculpture garden that resides in the district's center. The name is not entirely representative — only a few pieces are carved of the precious mineral — but the garden's most impressive piece is solid jade of incredible color and value. This is a statue of the Immortal Emperor, placed in the geometric center of the garden, nourished by flows of wind and water. Daoist monks maintain this statue and balance the influences that surround it, treating it as an outdoor temple in its own right. Many thieves have tried to steal the statue, but each has met a horrible end. One thief tripped and bisected himself with his own greatsword. One choked on noodles and died the day of the theft. A third escaped the city by the northern gate only to die at the hands of bandits who took everything but the priceless statue. It is now universally believed that Heaven looks after these statues, and even the Hell Clan is reverent. Other statuary includes depictions of Nuwa the Celestial Goddess, The Yellow Emperor Huangti, the Enchanted Demon, and Hsi-Wang Mu, the Mother of the West.

The principal residents of Jade Garden are the city's craftspeople and artisans. Many work exclusively for the Kingdom, the city, or a wealthy merchant or noble. Such work requires swearing a loyalty oath to the person, family or institution in question. This oath prohibits the craftsman or artisan from working for anyone other than their sworn employer. Many other artisans and craftspeople are struggling, selling their wares cheaply to whomever visits their shops. Some take advantage of the city's place on the trade routes and sell their crafts throughout the kingdom, acquiring far-reaching reputations. Such a career brings wealth but also makes the artisan a target for forgers (who try to sell copies of their works) and thieves.

The market in the Jade Garden district sells high-end merchandise. For many items, such as war fans, shields, teapots, and perfumes, it is the only place in Yang where perfect versions are ever sold. Rare merchandise is easily obtained, and Quality items are generally available through contract with an appropriate artisan. Large sums of cash are traditional payments, but the craftspeople of Jade Garden have been known to barter, depending on what their clients have to barter with. Two of the weaponsmiths in Jade Garden can craft Class III Weapons of the Gods when their lives prompt them to sufficient excesses of emotion.

The Falling Wren Society (see pg. 63, Weapons of the Gods) secretly operates a school and base of operations in either the Jade Garden or the Green District. It is the inclination of the Falling Wren Society to see Yue Guan removed, and so the constables would very much like to find and root out their base.



Temples and Constables

Gentleman Baoyian patrols this district. He's not corrupt, but he hasn't joined the Untouchables either — they're currently considering whether to approach him.

Secrets of Destiny: Jade Garden

General Bonuses

[Bonuses]

- * **Bonus:** this lore increases your **Friends** and **Information Broker** by one, but only within Jade Garden.
- I **Bonus:** you're well-regarded in Jade Garden. This gives **Status 3** in Jade Garden and **Status I** in Thrashing Minister as a whole. This is not cumulative with other such bonuses.
- 0+ **Destiny:** if you're a skilled crafter, you'll have the opportunity to find a suitable patron for your work. The more Destiny you spend, the more important and more dramatically interesting your patron is.
- 5 **Fortune:** Gentleman Baoyian may soon become your **Hated Foe** or **Rival**. This is particularly embarrassing for virtuous heroes and members of the Masked Untouchables, which, of course, means all the more Destiny!
- (-5) This is your first or second disadvantage.

A Weapon of Your Own

[Weapons of the Gods]

Stories set in Jade Garden are a good way for characters to obtain their first Weapon of the Gods — participating, as a corrupt or virtuous hero, in the kind of events that prompt one of the legendary weaponsmiths of the Garden to forge a new Class III Weapon.

DESTINY COST

- I **Entangled Destiny:** you will be caught up in the events, or have the opportunity to cause the events, that result in the forging of a new Class III Weapon. Discuss with the Sage what would be cool, but bear in mind that it'll be a few stories before the weapon is actually forged. If the story is suitably epic, or if Class II Weapons are more appropriate to the game's power level, you could participate in the forging of a Class II Weapon instead.
- 5+ **Victory:** having participated in such a story, and paid a cost deemed suitable by the Sage, claim the new weapon as your own.

Falling Wren Society

[Secret Society]

Somewhere in the city there is a secret school where the Falling Wren Society trains Thrashing Minister citizens to overthrow Yue Guan!

DESTINY COST

- I **Fortune** or **Discovery:** if you also have the Green District lore, you have a source of information that can lead you to the Falling Wren Society. You shouldn't take this Destiny if you're going to immediately betray them to the constables or the King, but it's okay to discover their headquarters, interact with them, spend a while agonizing over what to do, and then sell them out.
- (-I) You have or later acquire an Affiliation with the Falling Wren Society.

Secret of the Jade Statue

[Secret]

The jade statue isn't just cursed — it's part of a secret as old as Thrashing Minister City! One night every lunar month, the statue comes to life. It begins to practice the sacred kata of the Immortal Emperor. A great leonine Yao travels hidden paths through the city to arrive in the garden; sometimes it encounters and kills a citizen on its way.

In the center of Jade Garden the statue and the demon bow to one another and then fight. Sometimes the emperor wins; sometimes the Yao; but before either wins a decisive victory, dawn comes, the demon dissolves, and the statue returns to his place in the garden. On rare occasions, a hairless young girl also visits the garden. Her kung fu is strong, and together she and the Emperor defeat the Yao, but it is fiercest as it dies and it often wounds her.

The details of this secret are for the Sage to determine. The Weapons of the Gods Companion recommends the assumption that the participants are spiritual beings (one of whom either possesses the girl or helps her), that an evil cult has some interest in preventing the PCs from acting as they'd like, and that there's a romantic or heroic tragedy of ancient Shen Zhou at the heart of it.

DESTINY COST

- I **Entangled Destiny:** you will be caught up in the secret of the jade statue. You will learn the reasons for these events and have an opportunity to resolve the tragedies that underlie them.
- * **Discovery:** if you also have the West and East Willow Districts lore, you can determine that the Yao is a temple guardian painting in the Willow Districts.
- * **Discovery:** if you also have the Concubines of Yue Guan lore, you can determine that the girl is one of Yue Guan's concubines — not yet old enough to appeal to him, but selected for her promise of eventual esoteric beauty.



Advanced Topics

- 5 *Making Weapons of the Gods* (p. 356, **Weapons of the Gods**, unless rewritten by your Sage) — how are these mighty weapons forged?

Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness

Destiny Cost: I
Study Difficulty: Politics (20)

Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness are similar districts. Both grew up around the homes of the city's bureaucrats, and both districts remain focused on those bureaucrat's homes and needs. Civic Harmony houses most of the city's employees, including city officials, scholars, record keepers, constables, and the richer station men. Applied Righteousness contains the homes of the Royal Ministers and the hundreds of bureaucrats that work under them — bureaucracy in Shen Zhou is no small thing, and in Thrashing Minister it is an industry second only to trade.

Travelers won't find much of interest in these districts. Their most interesting features are the schools that prepare people for taking the civil service examinations; members of the Wulin sometimes find it relaxing to sip wine, listen to the chanting of the students at their lessons, and laugh at how seriously they take their ordinary lives.

There is a small Buddhist monastery, of recent construction, in the Civic Harmony district. Buddhism is not well established in Shen Zhou, and the monks are seen as a bad element — eccentrics at best, criminals at worst. Fortunately for the Buddhists, the people of Thrashing Minister think it's bad luck to shed Buddhist blood — the city only becomes hostile when the only son of an important family becomes an acolyte and takes up the celibate lifestyle. To prevent such conflicts, the monks have forbidden only sons to join.

The Red Head Gang claims Applied Righteousness as its turf. The gang's name comes from the red head scarves they wear. They operate as protection racketeers, forcing businesses to pay them a tithe to remain in operation. The constables ignore them for two reasons. First, the Gang always smiles and kowtows for Royal Ministers. Second, the Gang makes the constables' life easier by doing real work for their protection payments — if one of their clients is threatened by chaotic criminal forces, the Gang steps up to defend them. In their own way, they make the area more stable. If a business refuses to pay its tithe, an army of Red Heads stands around the business, harrasing or driving away customers, until they are paid.

Temples and Constables

The main temples in Civic Harmony honor Ts'ai-Po, god of civil wealth and Ch'en Huang, the city god and administrative assistant to the Immortal Emperor.

In Applied Righteousness the main temples honor Wen Ch'an Ti-Chen, the god of literature and examinations, and his mother, Tou-Mu. These are gods favored by scholars.

Only one constable spends time in these districts regularly — *Soul Hook Sheng*. Instantly recognizable for his distinctive silvery paired quality hook swords, he spends most of his time harrasing people in the district who look like they “don't belong there,” but he's quick to answer any requests from the locals — after all, the Magistrate might get unhappy with him otherwise!

Secrets of Destiny: Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness

General Bonuses

[Bonuses]

- * **Bonus:** this lore increases your **Friends** and **Information Broker** by one, but only within Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness.
- * **Bonus:** this lore gives you a +5 on all Politics rolls to identify bureaucrats of Thrashing Minister or Yang.
- 1 **Bonus:** you're well-regarded by the residents of Civic Harmony and Applied Righteousness. This gives **Status 3** in Civic Harmony or Applied Righteousness and **Status I** in Thrashing Minister as a whole. This is not cumulative with other such bonuses.
- 5 **Fortune:** Soul Hook Sheng may soon become your **Hated Foe** or **Rival**.
(-5) This is your first or second disadvantage.

Red Head Gang

[Secret Society]

The fierce Red Head Gang intimidates bureaucrats and merchants by standing around and interfering with business! They're not the best opponents or allies for Wulin heroes — but perhaps they have potential.

DESTINY COST

- 1 **Fortune:** you have a chance to earn the friendship of the Red Head Gang.
- 2 **Fortune:** you'll



have the chance to join the Red Head Gang. When you're third rank or higher, you'll have the chance to take over the Gang.

- (-1) Both of these destiny options are 1 Destiny cheaper if Thrashing Minister City is not an important part of the game.

Discounts on Related Lore

DESTINY COST

- 1 *Ruler and Subject* (p. 212, **Weapons of the Gods**) — the bureaucrats of these districts serve the King of Yang!
- 1 *Superior and Minion* (p. 218, **Weapons of the Gods**) — ah! All is in harmony when civil servants righteously serve their superiors!

Green District

Destiny Cost: 1

Study Difficulty: Confidence (18)

Although Thrashing Minister can afford to import anything from anywhere under Heaven, the city has its own farmers who work the farms south and east of the city's walls. These farms provide the core food supply for the city — millet, some wheat, poultry, meat, and eggs. When they come into the city to conduct business, or when they can afford a home inside the city walls, they come into the Green District.

The farmers of the Green District are the most pious and hard-working citizens of Thrashing Minister. Their only endemic vice is gambling — many of the farmers love to test their fortune and determine if Heaven has blessed them with some portion of the city's prosperity. Gambling dens, usually very small and in the back of store houses, exist throughout the district. Most of the gamblers favor small stakes, but occasionally a farmer falls so far into debt that the gambling house must turn to a gang to help them collect.

The major gang in the Green District is a small group named the Death Barter Society. Its members are muggers, burglars, enforcers, and petty thieves. They take their name from the "death barter," the deal victims make to hand over cash and property to keep the gang from killing them. They have no grand agenda beyond their own preservation, but they sell their services cheaply to grander organizations.

When a Death Barter member is involved in a scheme way out of the gang's league, it means the gang is doing contract work for someone else.

Horrors

Because they work and often live outside the walls of the city, the farmers of Green District face dangers that other citizens do not. It's a hard life, and it's gotten harder now that the dead buried east of the city are restless. The city authorities don't really believe the farmers when they talk about this — it's just rustic superstition, after all — but many's the man who's seen some unquiet ancestor walking about.

Temples and Constables

Residents of the Green District often frequent the many temples dedicated to Tu'-Ti Kung, the earth god; Ti-mu Niang-niang, the earth goddess; Yu Shen, the rain-making minister; and Chu-sheng Lao-yeh, the fertility god.

Iron-Face Lu, that ugly customer, has a unique money-making scheme. Instead of shaking down the locals for bribes, he uses his Superior Gambling Skill to win the locals' cash. The residents know better than to try to exclude him from any games; the constable behaves unreasonably when uninvited, and a man who's survived a sword to the face is more than a match for any ten farmers!

Secrets of Destiny: Green District

General Bonuses

[Bonuses]

- * **Bonus:** this lore increases your **Friends** and **Information Broker** by one, but only within Green District.
- 1 **Bonus:** it's easy to become well-known in the Green District! You have **Status 5** in Green District and **Status 1** in Thrashing Minister as a whole. This is not cumulative with other such bonuses.
- 5 **Fortune:** Iron-Face Lu may soon become your **Hated Foe** or **Rival**.
- (-5) This is your first or second Disadvantage.

Death Barter Society

[Secret Society]

The Death Barter Society is a bunch of petty thugs — that's why they're so easy to control!

DESTINY COST

- * **Fortune:** you have a chance to earn the friendship or fear of the Death Barter Society. (This is free but not automatic with the loresheet — you'll have to tell your Sage.)
- 1 **Fortune:** you have a standing arrangement with the Death Barter Society. Increase your **Followers** rating by two, but only within Thrashing Minister, and only when you're willing to pay.

Sword Savant Gong Hong

[*Secret Society*]

The Eight-Way Union Clan (pg. 61, **Weapons of the Gods**) has a kung fu school in Green District, just outside the borders of the Wolf District. This school exists as propaganda, encouraging families seeking protection and young heroes seeking training to ally themselves with the Eight-Way Union. The school welcomes all those of righteous heart and with a craving for justice — even when the Eight-Way Union does something dishonest, the people of the Clan are very sure they're righteous!

At the school, Sifu Sword Savant Gong Hong and his assistants train interested students in basic kung fu forms. When a student proves themselves, they are taught the techniques of Heaven's Thunder. Some of these students then ally themselves with the Eight-Way Union and become strong warriors. Others have become an object lesson in the need for Clans to keep their secrets — they've left the school without joining the Clan, spreading its kung fu secrets to the world. Some of these renegades now strut Thrashing Minister City and the kingdom of Yang calling themselves Heaven's Thunder masters, setting up their own schools, and running factions or gangs. When the stories of one of these pretenders sufficiently irritate Gong Hong, it is the Sword Savant's pleasure to hunt the pretender down and prove to them that their Heaven's Thunder is inferior. Usually he thrashes them within an inch of their life and then leaves them or their students with the address of his school.

DESTINY COST

- I **Discovery or Fortune:** you have an ally in the Eight-Way Union.
- I **Victory:** after defeating Gong Hong, you become known throughout Yang as the supreme master of Heaven's Thunder! Hopefully you know Heaven's Thunder or this may prove embarrassing in the future.

Discounts on Related Lore

DESTINY COST

- I *Secret Weapons of Yang* — what blasphemies in Yue Guan's palace anger the dead into rising?

Wolf District

Destiny Cost: I

Study Difficulty: Fight or Melee (18)

Every plant is purple;

Every man is torn from his wife.

Alas for us employed on these expeditions!

How are we alone dealt with as if we were not men?

— He Cao Bu Huang (translation by James Legge)

King Yue Guan — like Wang Murong before him — set the Wolf District aside for military housing. Because of Yue Guan's Hsiang-nu ancestry, most of the army is also Hsiang-nu. Other residents include long-standing military men and recent conscripts from the Kingdom of Yang. Some impoverished nobles who have taken positions in the army also keep their houses here.

Army housing is very structured and regimented and the quality of the residence depends on the tenant's rank. Recent conscripts share the most basic facilities with several men sleeping in one room. Officers receive better housing. The General has a decent two-floor home.

In general, only members of Yang's army have reason to enter this district. The martial atmosphere is immediately evident. There are many squares, gardens, and fields for training. Throughout the day men drill and train in the various forms of the army's kung fu. It is common to see men dueling one another, either for practice or to resolve a sincere grievance. The entire district focuses on preparing men for challenge and conflict. Those who enter this district should prepare themselves to either kowtow and endure sneers or stand tall and face challenges — everyone tests their mettle here.

Temples and Constables

The crime and trouble in this district is homegrown — perpetrated by members of the army themselves. None of the constables spend much time here. They may visit, but they're not needed. If there's trouble, the soldiers will react in force — outsiders who cause problems must, literally, face an army.

At homes and in temples, the dominant shrine is to Kuan Di.

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*Secrets of Destiny: Wolf District**General Bonuses**[Bonuses]*

- * **Bonus:** this lore increases your **Friends** and **Information Broker** by one, but only within Wolf District.
- * **Bonus:** if you are playing the Great Game in Thrashing Minister, and you are well known to the soldiers, this lore gives you a +5 bonus when attempting to Recruit the region's Force stones.
- I **Bonus:** you're well-regarded by the soldiers. You have **Status 4** in Wolf District. This does not come with Thrashing Minister status as a whole; nobody cares about your reputation among the soldiers! This is not cumulative with other such bonuses.
- 5 **Fortune:** after repeated poundings on the head in conflicts with soldiers of the Wolf District, you acquire the **Thick as a Brick** Disadvantage.
(-5) This is your first or second Disadvantage.

The Hidden City: Royal Palaces of the King

The Royal Palaces: Location by Location

The Hidden City

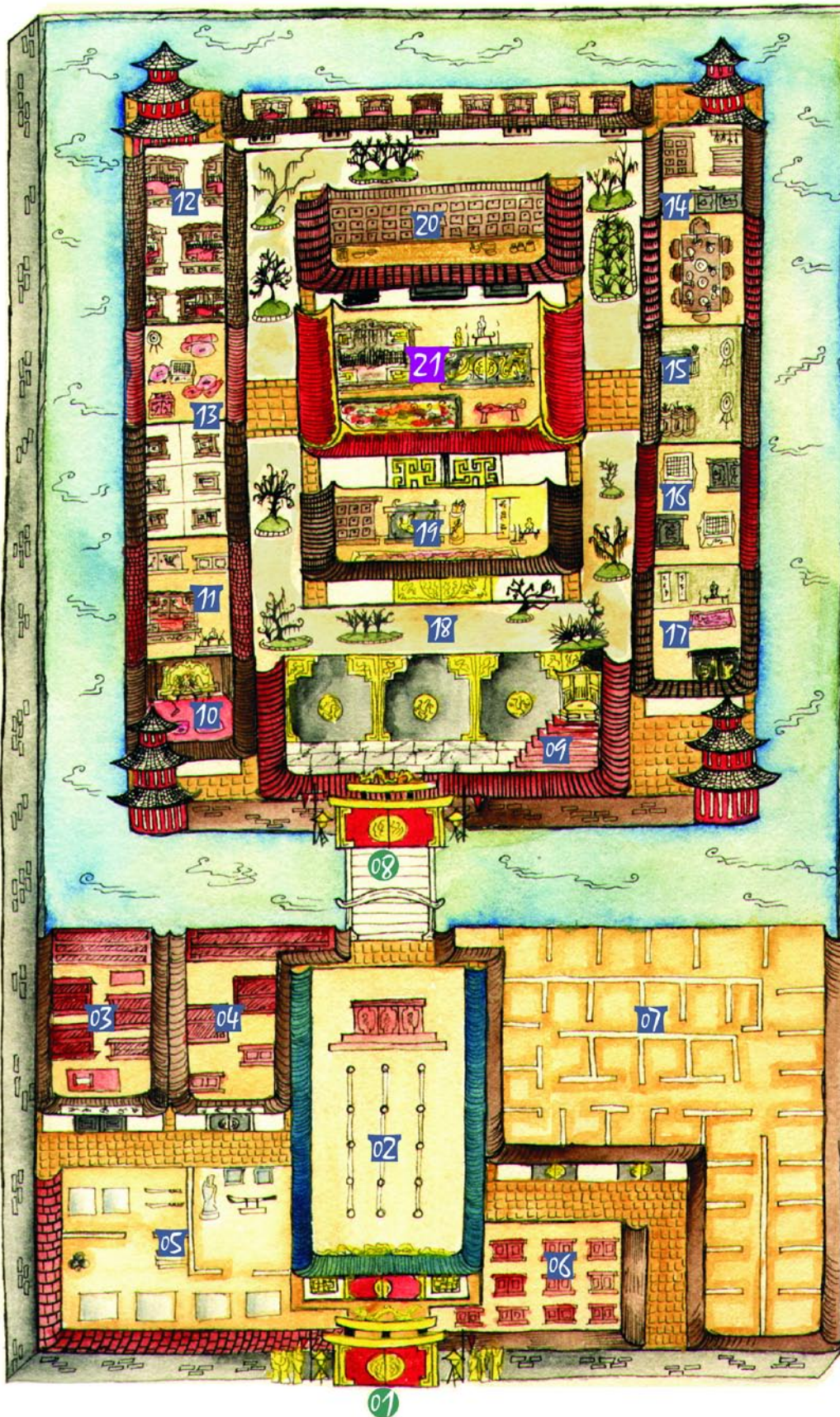
1. Gate of Earthly Tranquility
2. Main Reception Hall
3. Library of Literary Splendor
4. City Records
5. Hall of Military Eminence
6. Magistrates' Offices
7. Hall of Ministries
8. Gate of Heavenly Purity

The Celestial Palace

9. Royal Reception Hall
10. Ancestral Shrine
11. Eunuch Palace
12. Concubine Palace
13. Children's Hall
14. Imperial Dining Hall and Kitchens
15. Archery Pavilion
16. Gaming Parlor
17. Hall of Mental Cultivation
18. Poison Garden
19. Lair of the Four Venoms
20. Laboratory of the Demon Alchemists
21. Royal Apartments

Royal Palace Map

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The Hidden City

Destiny Cost: Special

This lore is available to characters who successfully research the Hidden City. The Sage can make this difficult or easy as appropriate.

There is another city within Thrashing Minister, isolated by 13-yard-high walls and the massive Gate of Earthly Tranquility. This is the Hidden City of Yue Guan — a place of ornate halls and poison gardens. It contains both the administrative offices for Thrashing Minister and Yang and the arching, beautiful palaces wherein Yue Guan and his associates reside.

Gate of Earthly Tranquility

This Gate is the entrance to the administrative buildings of Thrashing Minister City and the Kingdom of Yang. The enormous iron gate is guarded by several men. It requires at least 15 guards to open it and 10 to bolt it shut, and they must spend three rounds to do so.

Statuary surrounding the gate depicts various important personages: Confucius, Li Er (aka Lao Tzu), The Yellow Emperor, and several Yang Kingdom heroes such as the thrashing minister Yong Kwangliang.

Using Lift Skill to Open or Close Heavy Gates

If people can reasonably work together on a Lift task, they can add together the total weight they Lift, Throw, or Move. In a tug of war, you can subtract the weight one side contributes from the weight contributed by the other — or, of course, just resolve it as a contest.

Up to 20 people can work together on moving the Gate of Earthly Tranquility. They don't need to make a new roll each round — once they throw their weight against the gate, they can keep pushing until it's open or closed.

Opening the Gate of Earthly Tranquility is as hard as lifting 2600 pounds. Closing the gate is as hard as lifting 1700 pounds. The guards are strong, with Lift I and Might 2+. Statistically, 20 ordinary citizens with Lift 0 can close the gate but won't be able to open it without preparation or good joss. Note that a Legendary (40) Lift roll allows a single person to push open the gate.

Main Reception Hall

Those unwilling or unable to Lightfoot over the palace walls enter the Hidden City through this hall. Guards ask visitors their business. For ordinary business, such as meeting a city bureaucrat or a royal minister, the guards direct citizens to the proper line. On a typical day, a handful of the city's residents are found in this hall, waiting in several lines to reach the appropriate bureaucrat and air their grievances.

Someone wishing to enter the palace on miscellaneous business must first obtain an authoritative pass signed by officers of the city or someone in the royal court. When they enter the hall and inform the guards that they are not seeking audience, the guards check their pass or other papers and verify its legitimacy. If everything checks out, the individual may proceed into the palace.

Library of Literary Splendor

This is the greatest repository of books and scrolls in all of the Kingdom of Yang. The facility is 200 yards square with two floors and the contents are terribly private — only guards, important officials, and characters with a special request from the Minister of Education can get in. He grants such entry very rarely — it takes Legendary (40) persuasion, special circumstances, or the fame of a Second or higher Rank scholar to earn one's way in.

The Library contains histories, genealogies, classics, poetry, and works of political, social, and religious importance. At the Sage's option, it may contain alchemical and magical texts, the kung fu manuals of long-dead Clans, or even the embarrassing personal diaries of the character's enemies. The Minister of Education keeps guards posted here at all times. Rare texts are not necessarily out in the open — the library may have secret rooms, compartments, or other tricks.

DESTINY COST

- 2+ **Fortune:** you will have the opportunity to obtain or study one of the rarer texts of the Library. Talk to the Sage about your interests and whether you'd rather steal it, obtain a legitimate pass, or some possibility in between. Spend more Destiny for a cooler book.
- 5 **Fortune:** you have the chance to impress the Minister of Education and earn general access to the library. This dramatically reduces the time necessary to perform unusual research — you can spend a few hours on things that would normally take days, a few days on things that would normally take months, and a few months on things that would normally take years. The net effect is to reduce "cursory effort" penalties — a -10 penalty for inadequate study becomes a -5, and a -5 penalty goes away. You can look for the secret texts but aren't guaranteed to

find them, and discovering them might spark a story that takes your access to the library away.

- (-3) You and your companions spend very little time in Yang.
- (-3) You are a Second Rank scholar or a First Rank warrior or courtier, and you have a good reputation in Yang. This cannot reduce the cost for this advantage below 0.

City Records

This section of the Hidden City stores all of the municipal information for the city. It is slightly smaller than the library and houses records of property ownership, tax records, past censuses, and historical families. There is a rumor that certain secret tomes are kept here instead of the library, buried among thousands of scrolls of data without interest.

Hall of Military Eminence

The main hall of this building is also a memorial where the Kingdom of Yang honors the warriors of its past. Portraits and statues of legendary soldiers and fighters line the walls. There are also displays featuring armor and weapons and plaques with text and illustrations recounting military victories.

People in the city say there are two Weapons of the Gods in this hall — Skull Divider and Wind-Rending Sword. According to the story, no one has recognized the true identity of these weapons and so they sit under ordinary names in their displays. This is a half-truth; the Weapons were recognized nearly fifty years ago, labelled neatly, and protected by a powerful Yin technique that chills the bones and blood of anyone who tries to steal them. That said, one of the palace eunuchs made an attempt to steal them during the turmoil of Yue Guan's ascension — replacing them, ironically, with ordinary weapons — and if he did not die, then he probably succeeded. See Chapter 2 for more.

Past the initial hall is a training ground for the kingdom's elite warriors. These soldiers, and the personal bodyguards of Yue Guan, use these facilities to train themselves for crazy kung fu battles — it's a danger room with spears that spring forth from the walls at random, geysers of flame that burst from the floor, bombs dropping from the ceiling, and other tricks to put the fighting pits to shame. This facility is extremely difficult to maintain and some of these implements fail on a regular basis. This year alone, the army has lost two of its 5th rank warriors to out-of-spec explosions.

DESTINY COST

- 1 **Defense:** improve your defense against the training ground of Yang.
- 5 **Fortune:** if you know *Blizzard Fist* kung fu, you have the opportunity to learn the *Yin Fortress* technique.

This is a I-point Treasure stone — a sorcerous power that uses cold Yin to prevent enemy action. It can do work to keep anything safe from theft or attack. When playing the Great Game, you can expend this stone at any time to trap another stone. The two stones must be in the same region, and the affected stone cannot leave the region until the Yin Fortress stone recovers or the enemy stone's commander uses a full action to free it from the trap. This is the stone that is currently at work protecting the Weapons in the Hall of Military Eminence.

Magistrates' Offices

The magistrates and city officials share an office — one enormous hall with desks that seem to span from horizon to horizon and diligent workers whose eyes never seem to rise from their desks.

The chief magistrate, Ming Lizhi, has ten district magistrates below him. Each district magistrate has three or more assistants to help run the bureaucracy and maintain the relevant district's infrastructure. The district magistrate tries civil and criminal trials pertaining to their district, manages the constabulary of the district, and maintains cleanliness, decent roadways, and the other hallmarks of city order. There are also various miscellaneous officials handling matters such as local taxation, the Thrashing Minister census, and evaluating the reports of other officials.

Certain smaller rooms adjoin the large office, screened off to allow the magistrates and their assistants to handle civil court cases therein. Criminal cases are resolved in the public square of the West Willow district.

Hall of Ministries

The most significant ministries of the Kingdom of Yang include:

- Agriculture
- Religion
- Trade
- War
- Finance/Taxes
- Punishments
- Law
- Diplomatic Affairs
- Intelligence
- Education

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There are also dozens, perhaps hundreds, of less important ministries in the Kingdom of Yang. Some of these do meaningful work, but not all of them.

It is a maxim of the bureaucracy that it is easier to create a ministry than it is to dissolve one. Past regimes have created ministries important at the time but useless now. One example is the Ministry of Road Construction. It once had a major role in developing Yang's roads. Now it processes papers and the Ministry of Road Maintenance handles any necessary construction.

Kings have created ministries as rewards for friends or diligent nobles. These ministries are usually without function, but have impressive titles such as the Ministry of Seasons, the Ministry of Intangibles, the Ministry of Celestial Mechanics, and the Ministry of Silk Inspection.

Between these two processes — the retention of obsolete ministries and the creation of meaningless ones — the bureaucracy of the Kingdom of Yang has become bloated with nonessential functions.

Each ministry oversees one aspect of the kingdom. It suggests programs appropriate for its function, thereby obtaining some of Yang's resources. Then it implements the programs by guiding the bureaucracy in appropriate action down to the local level.

Gate of Heavenly Purity

This is the entryway to the Royal City — a place absolutely forbidden to commoners. This gate exactly resembles the Gate of Earthly Tranquility but has no statuary or insignia. Yue Guan has not decorated it yet as Yue Guan has not yet devised a suitable insignia for his house.

Dealing with Government (in Yang)

Destiny Cost: I

Study Difficulty: Grace (20)

This lore covers the procedures necessary to deal with the Yang government. The Sage should use these rules whether any characters have the lore or not.

Procedures for Appointments

First, a citizen or a hired calligrapher composes a request for an audience with the appropriate bureaucrat, magistrate, or minister.

It's an Everyday (18) Grace roll to ensure a favorable response,

unless the recipient has specific reason to be surly — but there's a -10 penalty if the request includes something prideful like a request for a specific appointment time, immediate action, or a specific person to read and reply.

If the relevant bureaucrat receives the message and deems it worthy of consideration, the Hidden City sends a messenger indicating the day and time for the petitioner to return to the reception hall. If there's a conflict, the petitioner must send an apology, decline the appointment, and make a new request. In all cases the petitioner must maintain an attitude of humility and reinforce the official's social power.

When the palace grants an audience and both parties agree upon a time, the petitioner rarely meets important officials directly. Instead, assistants, servants, or even written messages read aloud by a guard answer their request. After someone delivers the bureaucrat's message, the petitioner leaves.

Even the minor officials who answer typical requests expect the petitioner to treat them with utmost respect. They expect the citizen to bow, to meet the official's eyes during introductions but not again until the appointment ends, and to include appropriate honorifics in their speech. Officials respond to impudence and discourtesy by banishing the petitioner from the hall and ensuring they are never invited back. In particularly offensive cases, they order the upstart jailed or killed, as determined by the slighted official's legal power.

Often the substance of the response is neither positive nor negative — instead, the relevant official informs the petitioner that they have addressed their inquiries to the wrong department, and that they must file a new petition with the appropriate individual.

The Minister for Shouting Heroes

Wulin heroes are sometimes reckless. They act like the law doesn't apply to them! The King can't set a precedent by letting them do whatever they want, but kicking out warriors who can cut down guards like so much wheat causes all manner of trouble. That's why there's a Minister for Shouting Heroes.

The Minister, Wei Bang, is a harried civil servant. His kung fu would be strong if he ever had much time for sleep — but between training, apologizing to the King for Wulin-related disruptions, and handling incidents in the Main Reception Hall, he's up at all hours. His most important job is to intercept reckless, fiery Wulin heroes before they get into a fight with the entire palace guard, hurry them out under the guise of hearing their request, and offer them an alternative — appealing through the Wulin for a Heaven-Earth Celestial Moon Warrant.



Heaven-Earth Celestial Moon Warrants

Wulin characters can sometimes work around this procedure. Any Wulin character can appeal through the Wulin for a Heaven-Earth Celestial Moon Warrant signed by a major Clan. Such warrants cut through red tape like Tiger Soul cuts through soldiers — they're very effective! But most characters won't know about this option.

Heaven-Earth Celestial Moon Warrants are a form of *Hero's Letter* (see pg. 344, **Weapons of the Gods**) drawing on the character's Wulin prestige. You can appeal for a Warrant once per month of game time, rolling your highest Status rating (including local Status ratings, such as those you earn from Thrashing Minister lore) against a Moderate (20) difficulty. If you succeed, you can spend up to three Virtue points for a Warrant that will attract the attention of an official (1 Virtue point), a high official (2 Virtue points), or the King himself (3 Virtue points). The Warrant arrives quickly but not immediately.

DESTINY COST

- * **Victory:** this lore gives you a +5 on the Grace rolls necessary to deal with the bureaucracy of Thrashing Minister City and the Kingdom of Yang.

Characters and Bureaucracy: Advice for Sages

Reckless heroes of the Wulin don't generally stand around in line. If your PCs are the exception, then you can handle this two ways. If you as the Sage want a city official to hear the PCs' request, have the appropriate character make a Grace Style roll. This determines how many travails of bureaucracy you subject them to before they finally get in. You can spread these out over a session or story, timing each new insane bureaucratic requirement for tragic or comic effect — and don't forget the virtues of having a thief steal a PC's court clothes just before the appointment, forcing a friend with no idea about the relevant issues to stand in for the PC until the PC catches the thief, changes clothes, and arranges a substitution. If you as the Sage don't care whether a city official hears the PCs' request, try a Hard (30) Grace roll instead.

If your characters just won't do it — either because standing in line makes the players feel deprotagonized or because they're loaded up with official or unofficial Disadvantages like Black-hearted, Egotistical, and Thick as a Brick — then the Sage should handle things a different way.

Bring in the Minister for Shouting Heroes, Wei Bang! He'll intercept the PCs, hurry them out while nodding his head at whatever they're shouting, and explain about Heaven-Earth Celestial Moon Warrants. If the characters find obtaining a Heaven-Earth Celestial Moon Warrant too difficult, Wei Bang will suggest befriending someone with status — he certainly can't just hear anyone's complaint because they think they're important.

If the guards or Wei Bang recognize the characters based on an important Status or Affiliation, then matters may differ — agents of Yue Guan's enemies may receive harsh treatment, while a Prince of Yang merits a kind reception.

Celestial Palace

Destiny Cost: Special

This lore is available to characters who successfully research the Celestial Palace. The Sage can make this difficult or easy as appropriate.

Beyond the Gate of Heavenly Purity there is the Celestial Palace — a splendid edifice dedicated to the necessary functions of the court of Yue Guan.

Royal Reception Hall

This large audience chamber is where King Yue Guan receives visiting nobles, royal ministers, and others he has deemed worthy. This is where the business of the kingdom is done and where his court converses with itself. While many court intrigues occur behind closed doors, this is where the elaborate drama of the court has its dialogue, out in the open, in front of all the players. Every night the court meets, whether or not King Guan attends; anyone with adequate reason to appear — that is, an invitation from a eunuch or noble or a personal background appropriate to the court — may attend.

When holding audience or attending court, Yue Guan sits on a throne thirty yards away from the proceedings. No one may approach him more closely without a direct invitation. Five yards from him, at attention, stand two loyal Wulin warriors and the most trusted Minions of the King's personal guard.

When someone enters the audience chamber to meet the king, the chief attending eunuch meets them at the door and coaches them quickly on the relevant etiquette:

"Do not speak unless spoken to. You must proceed quickly to the center of the room and kowtow twice. Never look at the king. If he requests that you look up, you must refuse; you are not worthy to look upon his countenance. When he dismisses you, you must leave immediately. Never turn your back to the king. Instead, step backwards quickly, head bowed at all times. Any deviation from these directives will result in immediate dismissal. You must then immediately apologize, kowtow three times, and leave, or face even more severe punishment."

The attending eunuch is typically intense as he explains the importance of these directives. If someone fails to abide by them, the King will dismiss, torture, or even kill the eunuch, depending on the seriousness of the transgression.

More often than not, however, when someone attends upon the King in his audience chamber, they meet not the King himself

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but a eunuch representing him. The eunuch provides and explains an edict or message from the King. It is appropriate to treat the eunuch with the respect appropriate to a high official.

Eunuchs have historically abused their ability to dispense the king's orders and meet with others in his name. It is easy to create their own orders as if from the king, taking over the governance of portions of the kingdom for their own purposes. This corruption is not unknown in Yang, although it is not yet a pervasive influence.

Breaking Protocol

Yue Guan doesn't relax his protocol for members of the Wulin. If someone Black-hearted, Egotistical, or otherwise passionate refuses to honor him properly during an audience, then it's going to end in blood! In the best of all possible worlds, he'll hear out a presumptuous argument and then order one of his Wulin guards to apprehend and beat the offender. In the worst case, he'll order the presumptuous person flogged, hamstrung, thrown in the gutter, tortured, and/or killed, using the entire might of the palace and (in a sufficiently long-running battle) the army to back up his desires. The Sage should consult with players of reckless PCs to make sure that the story can reasonably continue if they insult Yue Guan — if it can't, the group might not want to play out the conversation!

Ancestral Shrine

This is the shrine where the royal family makes offerings to their ancestors.

Imperial Dining Hall and Kitchens

The Dining Hall is huge. It has to be — it needs to feed groups of up to 100 people without notice and up to 400 with some warning. It takes an army of cooks and servants and a kitchen the size of a pavilion to prepare and serve meals to the family and staff the size of Yue Guan's.

Ironically, the Hall doesn't see much use. Each palace has its own dining area and kitchens. The Imperial Dining Hall is used principally when there is some disaster in another palace's kitchen or when foreign dignitaries and their entourages arrive to dine.

Archery Pavilion

This is where Yue Guan practices with his archers. He finds the skill useful and relaxing, and he's an expert with a bow.

Gaming Parlor

This parlor supports war games, card games, xiangqi, dicing matches, and all manner of other activities. Yue Guan staffs it principally with eunuchs he finds clever. On occasion, a noble or concubine who has impressed him earns the opportunity to play against Yue Guan here. Much more rarely, Yue Guan invites a foreigner or citizen to his parlor to test his skill against theirs.

The concubines, eunuchs, and even the military use this parlor for large-scale games, but it exists to serve King Yue Guan — he is an avid player of games, prone to philosophizing about the insights they reveal into the souls of his competitors and the universe itself. A reputation as a master of games is one of the best ways to earn an invitation to the palace; impressing him at such a game is an excellent way to earn a high position in Yang. His opponents should beware, however: Yue Guan often practices his secret arts of intrigue during a game, quoting classic manuals of strategy and maintaining gaming propriety in order to use the Righteousness and Propriety tools.

Hall of Mental Cultivation

This is Yue Guan's lair, of sorts, where no one else may enter. Here he meditates, reads, and plots his next strategies for his schemes. Guan is a plotter in the truest sense of the word; he doesn't just have a plan, he has many of them, and he carefully moves each towards its fruition. He takes pleasure even in the successful conclusion of a feint.

Eunuchs

Destiny Cost: 2

Study Difficulty: Learning (20)

In Shen Zhou, eunuchs — castrated men — can more easily obtain positions in a King's palace. They cannot take advantage of the King's concubines, at least not in a fashion threatening to the virility or dynasty of the King. They cannot conspire to place their own children on the throne, nor if they depose the King can they create a dynasty of their own. Many Kings and important nobility insist that all men employed within their household be eunuchs; others offer eunuchs greater prestige, greater freedom of the palace, and more opportunities for advancement.

Many eunuchs are the younger children of families



wealthy enough to afford surgical castration but not to support additional sons. Some unfortunate eunuchs are created without surgery — perhaps they are hardy enough to survive a heated knife castration or determined enough to remove their genitals over the course of months by gradually tightening a horsehair wrapped around them. The principal virtues of surgery include a reduced risk of infection or death by blood loss and the surgical implantation of a small metal tube to assist with urination.

It is technically possible to restore a eunuch's generative power through special kung fu or secret arts. In the Shang Dynasty, a castrated prince had children by mixing honey, sage, cinnabar, and several unknown ingredients with his own saliva, transforming it into sperm. Certain arts can transform eunuchs into fertile women, and arguably — though this has never been accomplished — back into uncastrated men (see pages 203-205 and 211, **Weapons of the Gods**). Naturally, a genius doctor could find some way to coax reproductive Chi out of a eunuch's kidneys or brain fluid, possibly even regenerating what was lost — particularly if they're willing to do unnecessary surgery on practice subjects to become familiar with the subject matter. It's not clear why this kind of thing hasn't happened more often in the long history of Shen Zhou — some scholars hypothesize that the Immortal Emperor in Heaven has set a curse on the whole idea, just to keep his own divine eunuch servants from getting any ideas.

Secrets of Destiny: Eunuchs

Being a Eunuch

[*Destiny*]

Traditionally, eunuchs in Shen Zhou find employment within the palace of a King or an Emperor. They are simultaneously esteemed and despised — looked down upon as effeminate and weak and looked up to for their power and erudition. Of course, eunuchs in the Wulin aren't quite the same — all are equal in the Wulin!

Eunuchs are isolated in a land driven by family connections by their service to another and their inability to sire children. Many develop a near-familial bond to other eunuchs.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive this lore sheet for free if you grew up as a eunuch.
- 3 **Bonus:** you are a **Quality Eunuch**. You have a +5 to all attempts to gain favor with those of high position, to present yourself to females as harmless, and to carry out a eunuch's mundane duties. If you are not actually a eunuch, then you look like one and carry yourself like one — people have a -10 on Awareness and Sense rolls to notice that you are actually a female or uncastrated male, as the case

may be.

- 5 **Fortune or Victory:** something happens to castrate you. After suffering castration, you acquire the **Missing Body Part Disadvantage**.

(-5) This is your first or second Disadvantage.

Restoration Techniques

[*Destiny*]

Some people think that to restore a eunuch is to suffer Heaven's curse — but, of course, not everyone believes that and baneful humans just don't care! These Destiny options are principally suitable for unjustly castrated characters and their friends. Doctors and scholars can also research these ideas with the intent of bribing a eunuch or (in some cases) threatening one — bear in mind that while most eunuchs castrated in later life would leap at the chance to become whole again, powerful eunuchs and men who became eunuchs at a young age might reject the idea as appalling.

DESTINY COST

- 5 **Secret:** you obtain information regarding a method for restoring a eunuch.
- 5 **Secret:** you obtain information regarding "Heaven's curse" (that is, the fate that has befallen those eunuchs who've used such techniques before.)
- 10 **Victory:** having satisfied the Sage regarding the soundness of your methodology, acquire the Eunuch Restoration Technique, a secret art that restores a eunuch to normal sexual function.
- (-5) The technique only restores potency, not the eunuch's physical shape.

Discounts on Related Lore

DESTINY COST

- 1 *The Han Dynasty* (pg. 129, **Weapons of the Gods**) — featuring the famous eunuch Fang-Head Wu!
- 1 *Ruler and Subject* (pg. 212, **Weapons of the Gods**) — learn how to serve Kings . . .
- 1 *Superior and Minion* (pg. 218, **Weapons of the Gods**) — and other masters!
- 1 *The Eunuchs of Yang* (pg. 40) — what are the secrets of the Eunuch Palace of Yang?



Secrets of Yang

The rest of the chapter contains some of the terrible secrets of Yang. Players: If you don't want spoilers, don't read any further!

The Eunuchs of Yang

Destiny Cost: 2

Study Difficulty: Investigation (20)

The King of Yang employs approximately 150 eunuchs. They reside in the Eunuch Palace and act as servants and personal attendants to the King and his concubines.

Eunuchs of the Palace

The eunuchs of Yang serve the King and struggle constantly to secure a greater measure of his power for themselves.

Yue Guan's 150 eunuchs hold various positions within the Hidden City. Some are strictly attendants to the king. Others act as attendants to individual concubines. Some are liaisons to the outside world — the most powerful positions because they are easiest to abuse. Some prepare various palaces and grounds within the royal estate.

Most of the eunuchs are ambitious, and they compete for the positions they wish to have. There is no formal mechanism for doing so — they have no hierarchy or codified system of advancement and must obtain the King's favor through unconventional means. The eunuchs who attend individual concubines often maneuver to place the concubine they serve more regularly in the King's bed — if the concubine praises the wisdom and service of her attending eunuch, the King may see fit to elevate him. This benefits both the concubine and the eunuch. Traditionally, the King chooses concubines for his bed by selecting a tile from a collection of tiles each labelled with a concubine's name; thus, perhaps, a eunuch might send in secret for a predictionist and demand their advice on where in the row of tiles to hang their mistress' name.

Ying Jiang

Power within the Hidden City is valuable, but it is power in Thrashing Minister or Yang Kingdom that most eunuchs seek. A rare few obtain it. The most accomplished in his use and abuse of authority beyond the palace walls is the eunuch Ying Jiang, sometimes referred to as "The Royal Shadow" or "Shadow" Jiang. He is the chief eunuch of the Hidden City. All the other eunuchs report to him. He is a close companion of King Yue Guan and is often by his side when dealing with

matters of state. He is the eunuch most often chosen to present the king's edicts in the royal reception hall to the members of the court. He regularly abuses this power, amending or adding to the edicts as he presents them. In this manner, Shadow Jiang rewards his allies, punishes his enemies, and maintains subtle control over much of the kingdom.

The eunuchs are Jiang's spy network throughout the royal estate. He has contacts with several gangs in Thrashing Minister, including minor members of the Hell Clan, who serve as his spies throughout the city. Before his ascension to his position as chief eunuch he would hire mercenaries to do his dirty work throughout the kingdom. Now he is too high-profile to conduct such activities freely; he hires killers, thugs, and saboteurs rarely, and only through a long chain of subordinates that obfuscates his participation.

Shadow Jiang seeks to become immortal and to rule over Shen Zhou. His heart has the same longings as Yue Guan. This is why Yue Guan keeps him close — he senses their similarity of desire and knows through introspection that it's safest to keep ambitious people near. At present, Jiang must keep the King alive to preserve his own power; if exiled, or unsuccessfully executed, he would become a ruthless enemy with the connections and influence to bring the Yue Dynasty to an end. In short, it's better to keep a serpent coiled in a basket in your bedroom than dump it out to roam freely through the halls.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** this lore increases your **Friends** and **Information Broker** by one die, but only within the Eunuch Palace.
- * **Fortune:** if you are a eunuch, or can successfully impersonate one, you'll have an opportunity to take employment in the Eunuch Palace.
- 1 **Defense:** you have one extra die when rolling to resist the machinations of Shadow Jiang.
- 5 **Destiny:** your path will cross the path of Shadow Jiang, making him your **Hated Foe** or giving you an **Onerous Obligation** to him.
- (-5) This is your first or second Disadvantage.

Advanced Topics

- 3 *Secrets of the Eunuch Palace* — if the Sage has created additional storylines involving the Eunuch Palace, this lore contains the secrets thereof.

Discounts on Related Lore

DESTINY COST

- 1 *Eunuchs* (pg. 38-39) — so why can the King trust them with his concubines, again?

The Concubines of Yue Guan

Destiny Cost: 2

Study Difficulty: Investigation (20)

Yue Guan keeps 99 concubines. Some date back to his days as a barbarian clan chief, having known the days of rough-built homes, nomadic travel, and regular challenges to Yue Guan's rule. Some come from later years, when all of the barbarians cried Yue Guan's name; when the King had a foothold in Shen Zhou; when Yue Guan's family resided in his crude Stick Palace in the north. A few once belonged to Wang Murong; because of their beauty and virginity, Yue Guan elected to keep them. Most of his concubines are from these past five years of Yue Guan's rule. These have known nothing since he claimed them but the luxury of his glorious gray-and-silver Concubines' Palace.

Yue Guan's concubines have given him 68 children, but as yet Yue Guan has not named any of them his heir. Nor has he married any of his concubines. The concubines and the people of Yang assume that when Yue Guan marries, the eldest son of his first wife will inherit his throne. Currently, the situation is tense — the concubines are under enormous stress and compete constantly for the King's attentions in the hope of becoming his first wife. The people of Yang, and particularly the aristocracy, want Yue Guan to marry quickly so that the line of succession is stable. Even the King's enemies, such as the Falling Wren Society, would rather he married — if they can't unseat him, or he dies unexpectedly, an heir who could prove righteous is superior to chaos in Yang!

Most of the concubines have made an alliance with their attending eunuch, aiming to ensure their primacy in the contest for Yue Guan's affections and to give their sons a higher probability of succession if for some reason Yue Guan does not name a wife. The drive to ensure a good future for their children is strong and has on occasion prompted violence or murder within the concubines' palace. If Yue Guan takes more than one wife, the children of his first wife become immediate targets for the children of his second.

Yue Guan prefers to minimize intrigue among his concubines. He has kept their numbers low — while he could afford hundreds, he follows the advice of his predictionist Wu-Gong and limits himself to 99. (Nine is a lucky number that represents longevity.) He works hard to keep their attention focused on other things than conspiracy. He has instructed the eunuchs to plan full schedules for them that include gaming contests in cards, mah jong, or xiangqi; trips to various markets; and the care, feeding, and education of their children. In addition, he devotes some of his own time to developing large-scale diversions for them.

DESTINY COST

- * **Fortune:** if you are female (or could pass for female), you have the opportunity to obtain the **Affiliation** (Concubines of Yue Guan) when next one of Yue Guan's 99 concubines dies.
- 2 **Fortune:** you have the skills, knowledge, connections, and joss to secretly come and go from the Concubines' Palace. Do you hide stolen goods and illegal poisons with a concubine you trust? Are you sneaking into the palace disguised as Yue Guan? Are you conspiring with the concubines and eunuchs there? Are you a concubine yourself, sneaking out into the city? Any rolls you make to sneak in and out are Style rolls — normally, you automatically succeed. If the Sage wants to introduce a plot wherein someone catches you, you receive 1 corrupt joss; if it causes substantial trouble, you receive 1 or 2 Destiny.

The Ministry of Palace Beautification

As Yue Guan's grandest attempt at distraction, he created the Ministry of Palace Beautification — a ministry filled with dowager concubines who no longer interest him, due to their age, but who have given him fine sons. The ministry's official purpose is planning and implementing the seasonal decoration of the various palaces on the royal estate. In practice, when the Ministry's staff first met, they discovered a shared hatred of Yue Guan far more compelling than the needs of the palaces; now the Ministry does nothing but plot the overthrow of Yue Guan. The cabal suspects that Yue Guan is aware of their plans and that one of their members is a spy addled into loyalty by his secret arts; in response, several of the dowagers have begun informing him as to the group's activities while carefully reframing even deadly serious plans as the foolish and ineffectual ideas of doddering harridans. Yue Guan therefore regards this conspiracy with genial contempt and considers the distraction, after its fashion, successful.

The most dangerous woman of the cabal is Wei Sushuang. She is often called "Grandma" Wei by the younger concubines because her hair has gone prematurely white. She hates the title with a passion, but makes no attempt to disclaim it; instead, when addressed as such, she smiles, bows, and silently refines her plans for the speaker's elaborate torture in a future where Wei Sushuang holds power. Her intention is to destroy Yue Guan and then rule Yang through the vehicle of her teenage son Yue Yifu.

DESTINY COST

- I **Fortune:** you have the opportunity to become an agent of Wei Sushuang, with access to the wealth of her Ministry for projects targeting Yue Guan.

神兵玄奇

Hua Yisheng

Hua Yisheng, librarian at the Library of Literary Splendor, found a forbidden scroll offering an esoteric path to immortality. He stole the scroll and took the first step of its prescription, castrating himself and becoming a eunuch. He took a position in the royal estate and pilfered ingredients from the royal alchemists' lab to create an elixir that further advanced his transformation. He drank this potion over the course of months and it filled him with demonic Yin; one by one, his natural organ systems fell into contention with this demon spirit and withered. As they withered, he cut them out. The power of the demon Yin made Yisheng both female and cold; as the transformation progressed, Yisheng became increasingly beautiful and acquired the Hell Condition "Heatless Spirit." He took the place of a newly-arrived concubine who'd died before she met the King; Yisheng's one encounter with Yue Guan came while still warm enough to pass for human and plain enough for the King to forget the encounter afterwards.

The next step in Yisheng's transformation is to obtain a dark Weapon of the Gods — a specific weapon, written of in the ancient scrolls as "The Shadow of Yang." Yisheng does not know its proper name or its appearance, save that at one time it was buried somewhere beneath where the concubines' palace now stands. Now and again Yisheng sneaks from the palace to scour the Library and city for records that will help him find the weapon and unlock its secrets. The scroll says that the elixir and the weapon will, together, transform Yisheng into a transcendent being. This is essentially true; if his body is "killed" by the Shadow of Yang, Yisheng will emerge from the corpse-chrysalis as a monster manifesting his demon patron's hideous power.

One interpretation of the scroll is that Yisheng must pass through masculinity and femininity to unlock a third immortal state beyond them both. In this version Yisheng is salvageable and his mystical transcendence legitimate — he wouldn't be the first transcendent, glorious being to have demonic features and strength. Another interpretation is that yin and yang must balance. In this version, Yisheng is irredeemably corrupt, a cold-hearted monster who murdered the concubine he replaced. When the Shadow of Yang completes the eradication of Yisheng's yang spirit, he will become demonic, a channel for the utmost evil pouring up from Hell.

DESTINY COST

- I **Entangled Destiny:** you become involved in Yisheng's quest, either to oppose him or to help him become immortal.

The Children

A complex within the Concubines' Palace — officially labelled the Children's Palace or the Children's Playground and School — houses the 68 children of Yue Guan. In this complex their mothers and various instructors train Guan's children in skills, Chi cultivation, and royal comportment. The youngest children here are less than a year old; the oldest are 19, born when Yue Guan was a barbarian instead of a King.

Some of the teenagers make occasional appearances in the city. The most trustworthy and the most disposable can travel with a minimal escort; Yue Guan forces most to stay in the Palace or travel with heavily armed entourages.

DESTINY COST

- 10 **Fortune:** you are one of the children of Yue Guan. You should be no older than 19. This lore includes a 4-point Affiliation with the Kingdom of Yang.
- (-3) The game is not focused on Yang or Thrashing Minister.

Advanced Topics

- 1 *Secret of Stick Palace* — the abandoned Stick Palace in the north might hold a terrible secret. This is something that King Yue Guan would kill to conceal, and others might kill to obtain, ideally leading to many-sided kung fu battles in a rickety palace haunted by concubines' ghosts.
- 3 *Secrets of the Concubines* — if the Sage has created additional storylines involving Yue Guan's concubines, this lore contains the secrets thereof.

Discounts on Related Lore

DESTINY COST

- I *A Woman's Life* (p. 179, **Weapons of the Gods**) — including the story of the legendary concubines Kung Min, Kung Jai, and Kung Hu!
- I *Courtship* (p. 192, **Weapons of the Gods**) — how can one better attract Yue Guan?



Secret Weapons of Yang

Destiny Cost: 3

Study Difficulty: Investigation (30)

The Poison Garden

Most palaces have a royal garden. Yue Guan's is no exception. Its unique feature is that every plant in the garden is poisonous. The garden surrounds the inner sanctum of the king's personal palace and contains every poisonous plant known in Shen Zhou. Yue Guan commissions his doctors and alchemists to cultivate poisons so that if he is poisoned, his people have the experience to create an antidote. The poison garden is also a protective layer between the King's residence and the outer palaces.

DESTINY COST

5 **Fortune:** you can obtain some manner of access to the Poison Garden. There is always a cost — someone whom you must pay off, whether it is Yue Guan or a spy in his palace. This functions as the **Onerous Obligation** Disadvantage, but instead of Destiny you earn credit towards obtaining rare poisons. Figure out what you want; the Sage'll let you know how much trouble you need to get into to earn it!

(-5) This is your first or second Disadvantage.

Lair of the Four Venoms

Yue Guan keeps a small cadre of Wulin scholars, known as the Four Venoms, on hand in his personal palace. Two are Curse Masters, one a Predictionist, and one a Doctor. They take the names of four of the five Noxious Animals: **Wu She** is known as Snake, **Wu-Gong** as Centipede, **Bi-Hu** as Gecko, and **Ha-Ma** as Toad. These are the weapons Yue Guan wields against his subtler enemies. For this reason Yue Guan's enemies sometimes refer to him as the fifth Noxious Animal, "the Scorpion."

Yue Guan is an integral part of the Four Venoms' work. It is usually his passions — his anger and occasionally his other emotions — that fuel the Venoms' curses. The lair of the Four Venoms is a ritual space that the Curse Masters use to focus his passions and create horrid spells from them.

The Curse Masters: Wu She and Bi-Hu

Yue Guan has many enemies lurking in the shadows. He is often unable to strike at them directly. To reach such untouchable opponents, he asks the Curse Masters of the Venoms to cultivate his own ill-will into terrible curses that will find and harm his enemies no matter where they might be.

Wu She, leader of the Four Venoms, was once a simple hermit. He kept his distance from people so that he could study the ways of nature and the Dao in peace. He saw the land falling out of balance thanks to the greed and corruption of the people of Xiangfen, a town near his hermitage in Yang. He held his tongue and tended to the wilderness in peace. Then the son of a wealthy Xiangfen merchant suffered a blood clot and collapsed in the street, lapsing into a coma.

The father, unable to cope with his loss, blamed sorcery. He stirred up fear and resentment in the people of Xiangfen. When drought and sickness followed, their agitation grew to a peak; they demanded that the magistrate eliminate the "evil of the yin-yang masters." The magistrate yielded to their shouts and demands, organizing a force of warriors to scour the province for Daoist masters and execute them.

Wu She traveled to Thrashing Minister to petition then-King Wang Murong to stop the slaughter. The King would not hear his petition — discarding it out of hand as an outlaw complaining about the magistrate who hunted him — and ordered Wu She arrested pending a later investigation. Wu She escaped and returned home, now boiling over with rage. He turned his fear and anger into curses to destroy the magistrate. Each time the magistrate issued a new order in his campaign against the masters of Daoist secret arts, his organs deteriorated. When he finally lost his voice, it was already too late. The magistrate died a blind man, spastically twitching, unable to control his bodily functions, and surrounded by the stink of his own rotting flesh.

Wu She returned to the wilderness, but his vengeful heart would not release its anger. When Yue Guan led his army against Wang Murong, Wu She decided to offer Yue Guan his services. He recruited the three surviving Daoist masters in his province. Together, they became Yue Guan's four venoms.

Wu She (Snake) and Bi-Hu (Gecko) are both Curse Master Daoist scholars. Their favorite Daoist technique is to craft Wood curses — curses of grievous bodily harm — out of Yue Guan's spite, revenging themselves on his enemies and their own.

Ha-Ma and Wu-Gong

Ha-Ma (Toad) is an accomplished doctor. He keeps the King in good health, save in one respect: the King has a chronic gallbladder condition that Ha-Ma judges useful in fine-tuning the King's spite. Thus when it flares up Ha-Ma is more likely to aggravate it than heal it — the King suffers increasing abdominal discomfort, itching eyes, and sexual dysfunction until at last his temper snaps and he threatens Ha-Ma's life, at which point the Toad hastily provides a more effective remedy.

神 兵 玄 奇

Wu-Gong (Centipede) is a skilled Predictionist. He meditates constantly upon the Dao and the Book of Changes, seeking the best future for the King. He steers Yue Guan through many troubles, but he is crippled by his secret: he knows that the King must eventually execute the Four Venoms to survive, and yet he will not relay this prediction to Yue Guan.

DESTINY COST

- 2 **Discovery or Fortune:** you have an ally in the Four Venoms.
- 2 **Defense:** improve your defense against the Four Venoms' techniques.
 - (-1) Thrashing Minister is important but nowhere near central in the game.
- 5 **Destiny:** your path will cross the path of the Four Venoms, making one a **Hated Foe** or giving you an **Onerous Obligation** to them.
 - (-5) This is your first or second Disadvantage.
- 7 **Victory:** having stunned Yue Guan with your magical or medical skills, become a new or replacement member of the Four Venoms!

Laboratory of the Demon Alchemists

Yue Guan plans to become immortal, outliving even the Jin Emperor!

That a King should search for immortality is nothing new. In fact, the toxic effects of improperly prepared longevity potions are one of the most common causes of a King or Emperor's death. Only the ruthlessness of Yue Guan's methods is uncommon — and even that is not rare.

Yue Guan's chief alchemist, Eng Chi Mo, has a driving obsession — he wants to deduce from the principles of alchemy a formula for the elixir of immortality. He feels that this formula represents an ultimate understanding of life and death, a power of cultivation and insight that will help him achieve the supreme Daoist enlightenment. Drinking the resulting potion is a secondary interest at best.

Eng does not wish to poison Yue Guan — that would be a matter for endless embarrassment! So Eng and his team of alchemists constantly perform experiments on servants and prisoners, using new salves on the patients' skin, cutting patients open to apply elixirs directly to their internal organs, and force-feeding them draughts that alter their Chi dramatically and painfully.

The creatures created by these experiments are called Hapless Ones — deformed, imbalanced, poisonous, and even demonic creatures that are no longer functionally human. Sometimes an elixir has promising invigorating results: the Hapless Ones to whom

the demon alchemists apply it may develop inhuman strength and demonic Chi, burst free from the alchemists' chambers, and roam the city terrorizing its citizens until the constables take it down. The people of Thrashing Minister City rarely talk about these horrors. When they do, they explain them as “demons walking the earth.”

Sometimes the chief eunuch Shadow Jiang releases one of the more cogent Hapless Ones and sends it on a mission for him. Even if the creature betrays him, Jiang cannot imagine anyone believing it when it says it comes from the palace; and of course, the experiments are secret, and Yue Guan will deny them if someone discovers the truth. The creatures are expendable, monstrous, and cannot realistically betray his secrets: perfect, if unsavory, agents.

Most of the Hapless Ones die painful deaths without leaving their chambers. When this happens, Eng secretly buries their bodies in a cemetery just to the east of the city walls. Unluckily, their bodies are tainted with Demonic Chi and their very presence disrupts the positive feng-shui of the cemetery. As a result, some of the dead are rising. They roam the countryside as 5th-rank or even 4th-rank warriors, marked by *Hell Conditions* (pg. 368-369, *Weapons of the Gods*) and the *Thick as a Brick* and *Onerous Obligation* (Kill People) Disadvantages. The general populace of Thrashing Minister City is not yet aware of this, although some of the Green District farmers tell stories. When the Chi of the graveyard is sufficiently out of balance, the Hapless Ones themselves may begin to rise.

The Hideous Secret of Demon Alchemy

Demon Alchemy is an internal-external technique that creates curses and influences directly from medical conditions. This is a *corrupt* technique, following the same rules as corrupt kung fu; however, the character does not suffer the effects of learning a corrupt technique until the first time they use Demon Alchemy.

Medical conditions affecting a bodily system cause curses or influences of the same element. For example, a wood system condition creates a wood curse or wood influence. The curse or influence affects the person with the medical condition — doctors, even alchemists, can't transfer conditions from one person to another. The victim suffers a *curse* if they are very passionate and an *influence* if they are virtuous; it's the Sage's choice if they're both or neither.

Like all internal-external techniques, this uses the rules on pg. 282, *Weapons of the Gods*.

Here's an example: a demon alchemist turns on his innocent apprentice, withering her leg with an herbal salve. This creates an earth system weakness. The application of demon alchemy commences, creating an earth spell (an influence) directly from the weakness. The victim is influenced to singleminded dedication to the alchemist that crippled her.

Laying the Dead to Rest

There are two kinds of risen dead that the PCs may encounter in Yang.

The first kind is effectively a character. There's not really anything to do with it but kill it — the Sage may allow Daoists to perform clever stunts with Learning and drive it away or trap it or otherwise weaken it, but ordinary yin-yang techniques can't lay the dead back to rest.

The second kind is a creature driven by a spell. In particular, many walking dead are driven by a major wood influence that makes them get up again. This influence typically has Hard (30) Recovery, a Duration of one story, and Interval 3. Characters can use Learning and Daoist techniques to help the creature recover from the influence.

Daoist characters should be able to recognize the spell as such. They can then soothe the influence, making the creature passive. If they soothe it down to a trivial influence, the creature is inanimate once more. They can also progress or otherwise manipulate the influence.

If there's a Daoist or a courtier PC, the Sage may wish to consider whether there are existing inspirations, passions, and curses connected to this spell — it's not at all unlikely! For example, there could be a natural yin-yang connection between an earth curse of folly on Eng Chi Mo and the wood influence that woke the dead. Another possibility is that the demonic Chi is warping the benevolent inspiration of those who bury and honor their dead. Perhaps the agony suffered by the Hapless Ones represents a wood curse, and the wood influence that surrounds them and wakes the dead is pair to it. There could also be a yin-yang connection between a metal influence that keeps the Hapless Ones from rising and the wood influence that wakes the dead.

DESTINY COST

- 1 **Discovery or Fortune:** you have an ally among the Demon Alchemists.
 - 1 **Fortune:** you befriend a Hapless One.
 - 2 **Bonus:** if you have the Secrets of Treatment medical lore and the Scholar Archetype Gift, you can learn the *Demon Alchemy* technique (see box.)
 - 2 **Victory:** having impressed Yue Guan with your alchemical skills, join the Demon Alchemists.
 - 5 **Destiny:** your path will cross the path of Eng Chi Mo, making him a Hated Foe or giving you an **Onerous Obligation** to him.
- (-5) This is your first or second Disadvantage.
- 10 **Secret:** you will have the opportunity to learn a key secret, either from Eng Chi Mo or one unknown to him, as you choose, to the creation of the immortality elixir.

Advanced Topics

- 3 *Secrets of the Four Venoms* — if the Sage has created additional storylines involving the Four Venoms, this lore contains the secrets thereof.
- 3 *Secrets of the Demon Alchemists* — if the Sage has created additional storylines involving the Demon Alchemists, this lore contains the secrets thereof.

Campaigns in Thrashing Minister

City Campaign & Relationship Charts

For a member of the Wulin, to involve oneself in the goings-on of Thrashing Minister City is to fall into conflict or alliance with the gangs and Clans that attempt, unofficially, to control it. Characters can thus choose their enemies and friends among the Hell Clan, the corrupt constables, the Masked Untouchables, the Falling Wren Society, the army, and the city bureaucracy. It is reasonable to confront the wicked and ally with the faithful, issuing ringing condemnations of those authorities who have been passively standing by as the city decays; the characters may also pursue a more partisan involvement, their goals clashing with some among the righteous.

Below you may find the various plotters in the relationship chart for a typical campaign in Thrashing Minister City. To create a campaign around your players' characters consult pages 333-337 of *Weapons of the Gods*. Most of the steps of campaign creation are provided herein; just place the characters in the web of the city's story, attaching them to the relationship chart anywhere that makes sense given their Passions, Lores, Destinies, Advantages and Disadvantages.





Plotters

Ming Lingzhi, Chief City Magistrate of Thrashing Minister City

Archetype: Fourth Rank Scholar
Passion/Inspiration: Defiant/Ruthlessness
Agenda: Maintain the status quo and keep his job.

The Falling Wren Society of Thrashing Minister

Archetype: Warriors
Passion/Inspiration: Contemplative/Altruism
Agenda: Restore the city to its former glory.
Secondary Goal: Cast the unrighteous Yue Guan off the throne.

The Hell Clan of Thrashing Minister

Archetype: Warriors
Passion/Inspiration: Obsessed/Ferocity
Agenda: Maintain control of the Walled City.
Secondary Goal: Prosper.
Secondary Goal: Acquire or Destroy the Lustrous Jade Brothel.

The Constabulary of Thrashing Minister

Archetype: Warriors
Passion/Inspiration: Obsessed/Force
Agenda: Collect bribes, keep order, and obey important officials.

The Masked Untouchable Society

Archetype: Warriors
Passion/Inspiration: Driven/Justice
Agenda: Protect the people from exploitation, particularly by the corrupt constabulary.

Noble Families

Archetype: Varies (most often Courtier approach)
Passion/Inspiration: Varies (Nostalgic or Obsessed typical) /Individualism
Agenda: Become safer and more important (through acquiring wealth, political position, and assets.)

Red Head, Death Barter (and other) Gangs

Archetype: Warriors
Passion/Inspiration: Defiant/Revenge
Agenda: Control a large territory.

Secondary Goal: Keep hold on their own territory, challenge Hell Clan's hold on the Walled City.

Lustrous Jade Brothel (Jade Dragon Society)

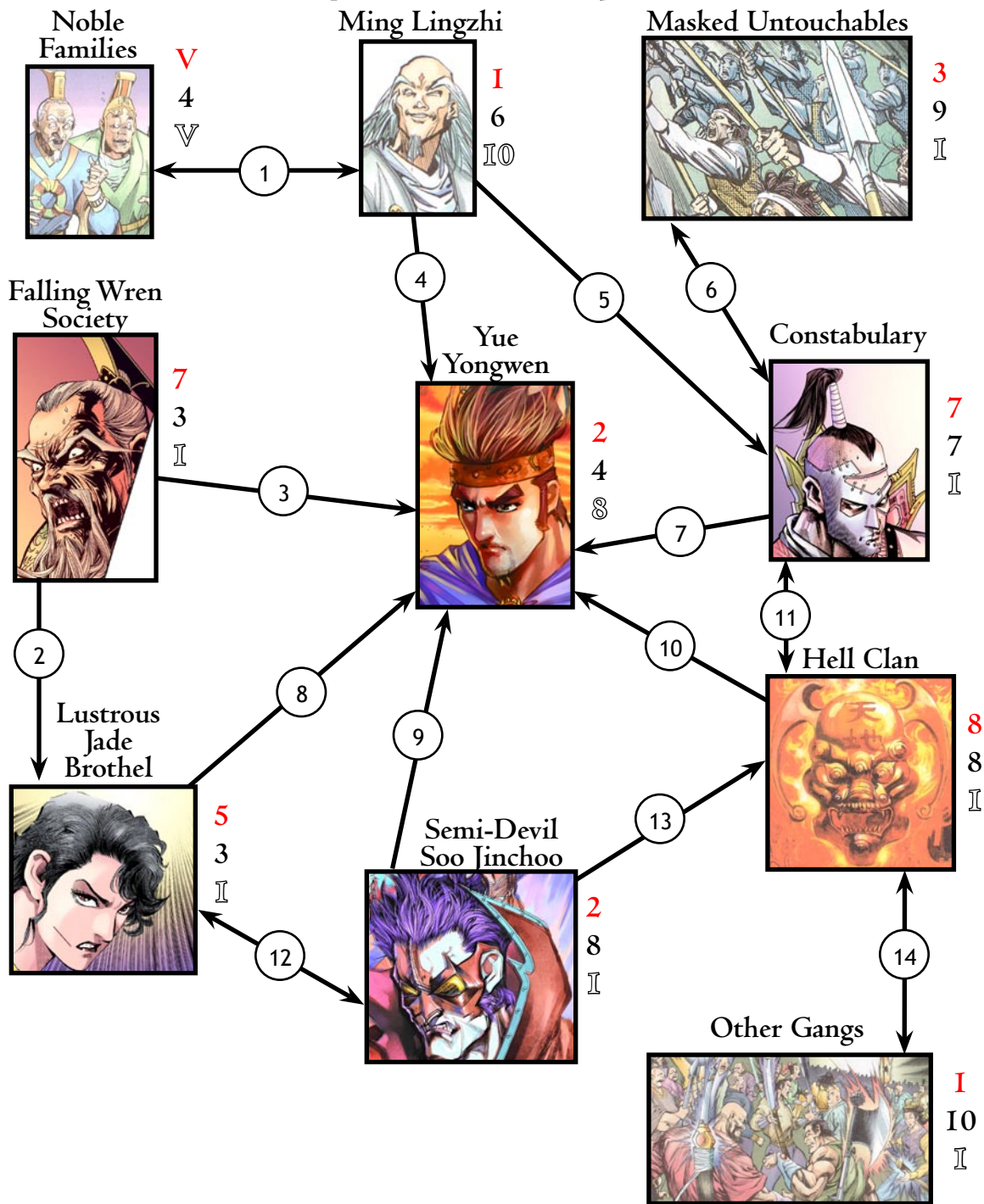
Archetype: Warriors
Passion/Inspiration: Joyful/Altruism
Agenda: Protect the "younger sisters" and the Lustrous Jade Brothel.
Secondary Goal: We will protect the helpless, particularly women.

Yue Yongwen

Archetype: Courtier
Passion/Inspiration: Obsessed/Individualism
Agenda: Survive and make a profit at everyone else's expense!
Secondary Goal: Stay away from his father's palace until the assassin is dead.

Remember that the notations on the following page refer to the rules on pp. 333-337 in the **Weapons of the Gods** Main Rule Book.

City Relationship Chart



Relationships (Sentiment/Relationship) (See Weapons of the Gods p.I63)

- | | |
|--|---|
| I - Similar Interests (<i>Friends</i>) | 8 - Interested in Helping (<i>Interest</i>) |
| 2 - Wary (<i>Allies</i>) | 9 - Seeks for Ransom Purposes (<i>Interest</i>) |
| 3 - Seeks to Interrogate for Royal Secrets (<i>Interest</i>) | 10 - Seeks for the Semi-Devil (<i>Interest</i>) |
| 4 - Seeks for the King (<i>Interest</i>) | 11 - Disdainful Enemies (<i>Rivals</i>) |
| 5 - Large and In Charge (<i>Superior/Minion</i>) | 12 - Despises/Seeks to Control (<i>Rivals</i>) |
| 6 - Hatred/Determined to Reform (<i>Rivals</i>) | 13 - Obey Sifu or Else (<i>Teacher/Student</i>) |
| 7 - Seeking on Behalf of Magistrate (<i>Interest</i>) | 14 - Bitter Enemies (<i>Rivals</i>) |

Segue: From a City Campaign to a Court Campaign

When it's time to involve the PCs in the activities of the royal court, the Weapons of the Gods Companion recommends that you start with the following rough storyline.

Someone in the Royal Palace has targeted Yue Guan's eldest son — the 19-year-old Yue Yongwen — for assassination. Yongwen knows his life isn't safe. He's an impetuous kid and he's not sure whom to trust, so instead of telling his father the situation he fled into the city without telling anyone his plans. He's currently hiding somewhere in Thrashing Minister City waiting for the situation to resolve.

The PCs become involved with the search in a fashion appropriate to their own stories. If there's no obvious way to connect them to the plot, a friend can tip them off to the status, cash, or Deed they might earn by finding Yue Yongwen. Alternatively Yongwen can bump into them and bribe them somehow to protect him. Do what you can to make involvement in his story a natural outgrowth of the PCs' typical activities in Thrashing Minister.

What You Want from This Story?

If the characters would accept a position from Yue Guan, then you want to put the characters in a position to earn government rank. Courtiers and scholars can earn a place in the government and open the door to court intrigues. Yue Guan might offer warriors a reasonably forceful position in the government (such as investigator, constable, tax collector, or Assistant Minister for Kicking the Unrighteous) or keep them on retainer to perform miscellaneous duties for the King and his chief eunuch Ying Jiang.

If the characters would refuse, you want them to make enemies and at least one friend in Yue Guan's court. Ideally you want Yue Guan to open the palace to them — it's best to paint him as a little bit oblivious, so that in the worst case their allies in government can give the PCs access to the court. He may be too distracted by worry to make sense of events, naturally oblivious, or simply willing to feign ignorance of what's going on in order to see what his enemies do.

Figure out whether your players want you to keep them in the dark about where events are going or to enlist them as allies to make things come out well. Act accordingly. At the end of the story, barring shocking turns of events, you want the characters well-situated to meddle with the politics of Yang.

Finding Yongwen

Before they can earn their rewards, the characters have to find Yongwen — and everyone is looking for him.

- Ming Lizhi and the constables are looking for him because it's their job;
- The Hell Clan would love to ransom him;
- The Falling Wren Society might want to recruit him or force royal secrets from him;
- And the original assassin wants to finish the job.

So where is Yongwen hiding? Some possibilities include:

- In a Daoist temple or the Buddhist monastery, posing as a monk;
- Working as a farmer in the Green District (and hating every minute of it);
- Disguised as a woman in the Lustrous Jade Brothel.

Tracking Down the Assassin

Yongwen won't go back home until the assassin is dealt with — unless, of course, corrupt or short-tempered heroes drag him back to his father by force. Here are several possibilities regarding whom the assassin might be.

- *Wolf-Heart Hsu*, Guan's supposed bodyguard, is the assassin. Yue Yongwen definitely can't go home to the Palace — if he does, it's only a matter of time before she completes the job and kills him. She is, after all, the very model of a Mao Shan Assassin.
- “Grandma” *Wei Sushuang* hired an assassin to clear the way for her son to succeed Yue Guan. (See the *Concubines of Yue Guan* lore). The assassin is a talented but mundane killer; he failed because of Yongwen's good joss — a chance sound elsewhere in the palace woke Yongwen up mid-assassination. Yongwen sounded the alarm and the guards dispatched the assassin, but Yongwen decided that the palace just wasn't safe — if one assassin could get into his room, a deadlier assassin could surely follow.
- The Assassin is a *Hapless One* (one of the the Demon Alchemists' cogent experimental subjects) carefully sculpted into Yongwen's exact shape. The only flaw is the eyes, which are an inhuman color (e.g., purple-black, gold, white, or tricolor). In this version of the story, Yongwen is a rakish snoop who'd been spying on the Demon Alchemists — he saw the Duplicate Prince before its completion. Demon Alchemist Eng saw Yongwen in turn and Yongwen fled the palace. Yongwen doesn't know who commissioned the Duplicate Prince's creation — perhaps his father, perhaps Wei Sushuang, perhaps even the Head Eunuch, Shadow Jiang, as part of a plan to usurp the Kingdom!



- Another plotter who staged a failed assassination to agitate the palace and distract constables, guards, and the various notables of the city from their current plans.

Court Campaign and Relationship Chart

The Sage should use the schemes of Yue Guan and his enemies to drive a court campaign. If the players are allies of the King, then they face the machinations of Shadow Jiang and “Grandma” Wei; the potential disloyalty of the Four Venoms and the Demon Alchemists; the desires of rival Kings; and, of course, the enemies accumulated over time. If the players seek to dethrone the King, then their rogues’ gallery is almost the same — excepting any specific allies they have made, and including the King.

Rongji and Jiamei

This is a storyline to help keep the characters busy in their early days of court-level intrigue.

Yue Guan’s favorite son, the teenaged Yue Rongji, has been courting a traitor to the Kingdom — Chi Jiamei. They met in the Phoenix Nest market, neither knowing the others’ identity. They fell in love. For both of them the relationship was an illicit thrill; neither of their fathers would allow it, did they know! Then Prince Rongji discovered that Jiamei is a member of the Falling Wren Society, a group intending to remove King Yue Guan from the throne. Her father, “Silver Eagle” Chi Meng, is a senior member of that group and a master of Three Kings Kung Fu. This made Yue Rongji gulp.

Naturally Yue Rongji must observe filial piety — he can’t betray his own father. Yet he is too passionate and foolish to override the yearnings of his heart and report the situation to Yue Guan. The dilemma is agonizing to him. He knows that if he speaks to his father, Yue Guan can convince him to betray Chi Jiamei and destroy his beloved and her father both. He knows that if he listens to Chi Jiamei and her well-reasoned arguments, he’ll start to doubt Yue Guan’s righteousness — but he can’t face the idea that his father and his Dynasty are unrighteous!

Sometime before or shortly after you introduce this story, Chi Jiamei will discover Yue Rongji’s identity. This puts her in difficulty as well. If her father finds out, he’ll demand that she spy on him, sneak into the palace, steal secrets, or even kill Rongji. She’s also afraid that her father will become so angry at her for a secret romance that he’ll kill her.

Characters, particularly courtiers, have incentive to bring about one of the following outcomes: a good resolution; a victory for Falling Wren; or a victory for Yue Guan. Making things work between these two lovers

gives any courtier a large favor to call on in the future. If Rongji clings to his love, then he’s sure to slip secrets to Jiamei, giving the Falling Wren power. If Jiamei is true to Rongji, on the other hand, she might side with the King to help him neutralize the city’s Falling Wren Society base.

The characters can find out about the situation directly from one of the participants or indirectly through investigating someone whose behavior is otherwise suspicious. Once they find out about the situation and begin applying pressure, the Sage can raise the stakes using the other forces in play — for example, once the characters begin working towards recruiting Jiamei for Yang, her father should discover the situation and begin trying to twist Rongji to the Falling Wren Society’s ends.

The Battle for Shen Zhou

Characters who participate in court-level intrigue will become aware of the resentment Yue Guan holds towards his cousin, the Unrighteous Emperor. This drives Yue Guan’s activities — he wants nothing so much as to claim the lost Han Dynasty Seals and seize the Jiankang Throne for himself. The Unrighteous Emperor does not approve of Guan’s plans but he does not take them seriously as of yet — “the dog must demonstrate the ability to bite,” as he noted in one languid missive to the Court of Yue Guan, “before one listens to its yapping.” When the Sage wants to involve the characters in Shen Zhou-level events, they are likely to find themselves caught between Yue Guan, the Unrighteous Emperor Hu, and the rightful emperor Jin Cheng Di — giving them one powerful ally and two deadly enemies as they seek to determine the fate of Shen Zhou.

See pp. 138-142, **Weapons of the Gods**, to understand who Jin Cheng Di and the Unrighteous Emperor are, as well as why the Han Dynasty Seals matter.

Local Version

The story is where the PCs are. Perhaps Jin Cheng Di and several of the Han Dynasty Seals are hidden in Thashing Minister City. Cheng Di is probably looking for them; when Yue Guan finds out they’re in town, so will he!

The **Weapons of the Gods Companion** recommends making Jin Cheng Di an NPC the characters already know. Choose someone the characters already have strong feelings for — someone the players enjoy whom the characters would either help or hate and declare him the dethroned Jin Emperor in disguise. If you don’t care whose side the characters wind up on, consider making him one of the PCs’ Rivals.

神兵玄奇

Here's how the Seals were lost. In the final days of the Han Dynasty, the people revolted. The army under noble leadership put down the rebellion, but the Imperial eunuchs turned on the nobles and executed some of their greatest leaders. Certain noble families attacked the palace, breaking the power of the Imperial eunuchs and then dethroning the Emperor. During this period, a noble or eunuch stole away with four of the Han Dynasty Seals, intending to use them to control the succession; this failed, and the Seals are now scattered through the city where that noble or eunuch died — Thrashing Minister. Put them in places of your choice, such as:

- Among the artifacts in a temple, guarded by a painted temple guardian;
- In the Lustrous Jade Brothel — one of the prostitutes descends from that noble or one of the eunuch's friends, and the jade seal is in her desk with similar trinkets;
- Hidden in plain sight among fine jade curios, priced too highly for anyone to give it a second look;
- Fallen into the hands of a gangster who has no use for them (or it) but knows what power it could bring;
- In the possession of a low-ranking thug who took it off a woman he murdered.

Remember that it's not *looking* for the Seals that will keep the campaign interesting, but rather interacting with NPCs and exploring the PCs' personal stories. The search for the Seals is simply a backdrop — motivation to kick the characters into action. That's why the **Weapons of the Gods Companion** isn't specifying where they are — players who read this section shouldn't be focused on using this information to collect the Seals more efficiently.

International Version

It's also possible to draw the characters out of Yang by scattering Jin Cheng Di and the Seals throughout Shen Zhou. It's up to you to create the kingdom-spanning campaign that this decision implies — perhaps reading over the loresheets of the *Painter's Path* (pg. 152, **Weapons of the Gods**) will inspire some ideas.

Plotters

Below you may find the various plotters in the relationship chart for a typical campaign in the Yang Kingdom court. Place the characters in the web of Yang's story, attaching them to the relationship chart anywhere that makes sense given their Passions, Lores, Destinies, Advantages and Disadvantages.

Yue Guan, King of Yang

Archetype: Second Rank Courtier

Passion/Inspiration: Obsessed/Obsession

Agenda: Establish himself as rightful Emperor of Shen Zhou

Secondary Goal: find and acquire the Han seals.

Secondary Goal: find and kill Jin Cheng Di.

Secondary Goal: prove himself the legitimate ruler of Yang.

Jin Cheng Di

Archetype: Third Rank Courtier-Warrior

Passion/Inspiration: Contemplative/Justice

Agenda: Reclaim the Jin Empire

Secondary Plan: Stay hidden from Shi Hu, build an army in the shadows.

Jiang "Shadow" Ying

Archetype: Third Rank Courtier

Passion/Inspiration: Obsessed/Obsession

Agenda: Become immortal and reign over Shen Zhou.

"Grandma" Wei Sushuang

Rank/Archetype: Courtier

Passion/Inspiration: Anger/Revenge

Agenda: Rule Yang

Secondary Goal: Destroy Yue Guan in a memorable fashion.

Secondary Goal: Enthroned her lazy eldest son, Yue Yifu, as her figurehead King.

Hua Yisheng

Rank/Archetype: Scholar

Passion/Inspiration: Obsessed/Obsession

Agenda: Discover the Weapon necessary to become immortal.

Yue Rongji

Rank/Archetype: Warrior

Passion/Inspiration: Foolish/Individualism

Agenda: Make romance work between himself and Jiamei.

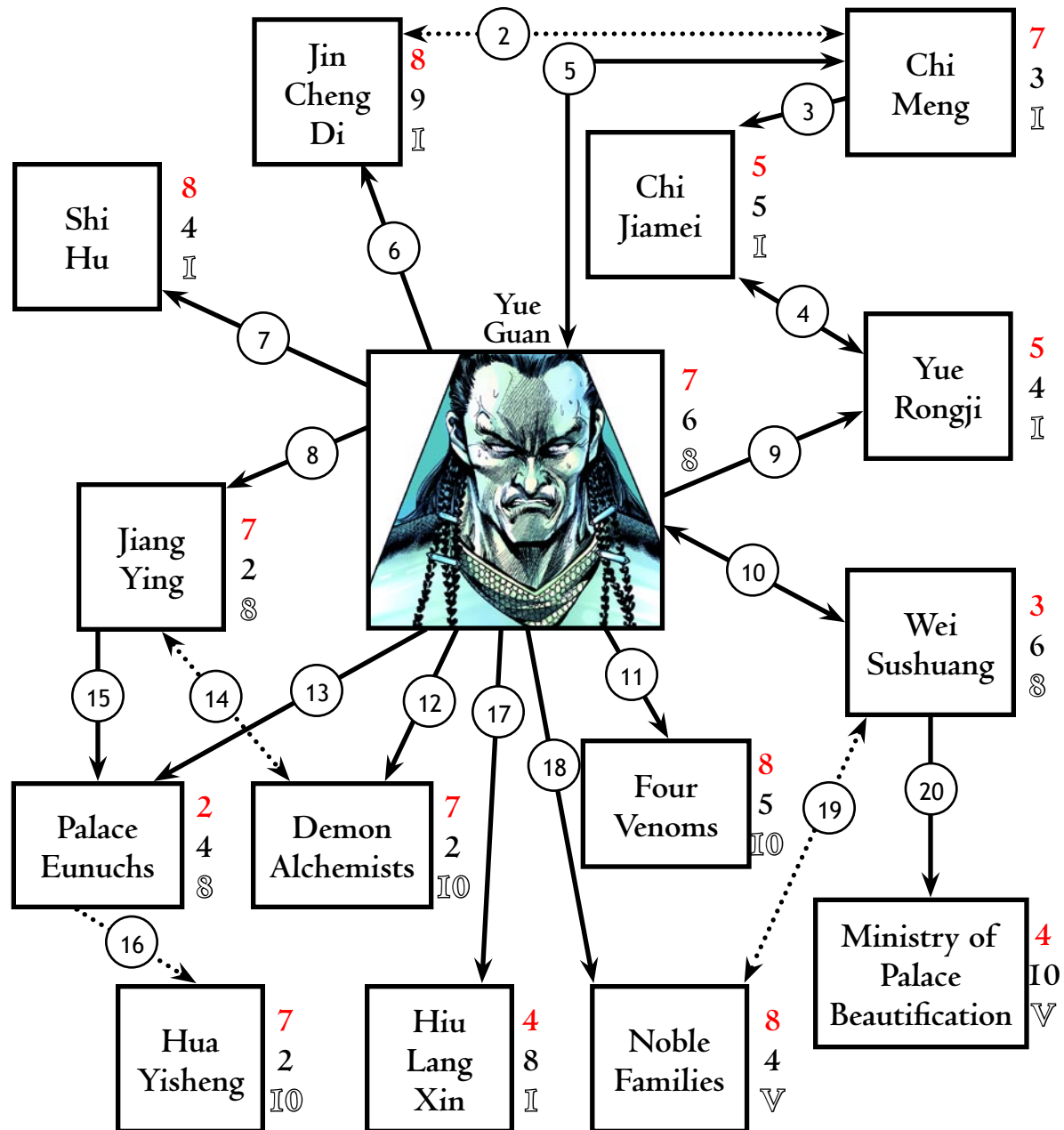
Chi Jiamei

Rank/Archetype: Warrior

Passion/Inspiration: Foolish/Loyalty

Agenda: Make romance work between herself and Rongji.

Court Relationship Chart



Relationships (Sentiment/Relationship) (See Weapons of the Gods p.163)

- | | |
|---|--|
| I - Seeks his demise (<i>Rivals</i>) | II - Fairly Trustworthy (<i>Friends</i>) |
| 2 - Would Help [Is Helping?] (<i>Allies</i>) | 12 - Useful, Eventually Very Useful (<i>Ruler/Subject</i>) |
| 3 - Concern & Opportunity (<i>Parent & Child</i>) | 13 - A Necessary Evil (<i>Superior/Minion</i>) |
| 4 - Star-Crossed Lovers (<i>Romantic Interest</i>) | 14 - Disgustingly Useful (<i>Superior/Minion</i>) |
| 5 - I'll Bring You Down! (<i>Rivals</i>) | 15 - My Useful Brethren (<i>Superior/Minion</i>) |
| 6 - Means to an End (<i>Interest</i>) | 16 - Saving for the Future (<i>Allies</i>) |
| 7 - Seeks to Displace (<i>Rivals</i>) | 17 - Untrustworthy but Useful (<i>Superior/Minion</i>) |
| 8 - "Keep Your Enemies Closer" (<i>Ruler/Subject</i>) | 18 - Annoying/Want Advantage Over (<i>Ruler/Subject</i>) |
| 9 - My Best Son [Love] (<i>Parent/Child</i>) | 19 - Common Purpose (<i>Allies</i>) |
| 10 - Indifference/Deep Hatred (<i>Ruler/Subject</i>) | 20 - My Power Base (<i>Superior/Minion</i>) |

Signature Characters of Thrashing Minister**YUE GUAN****King of Yang**

Rank/Archetype: Second Rank Courtier

Origin: Barbarian Chieftain Turned King

Passion: Anger (Driven to prove himself Better than anybody else!)

Region: Yang (Dong Territory)

Virtues: Chou 1/2, Si 3/3, Chan 3/4, Hen 5/5, Bao 1/2.

Background: Yue Guan was a fish out of water even with his own people. The son of a barbarian clan chief, he should have been a tall, burly, and boisterous man. Instead he is diminutive and calculating. He was an unlikely man to seize control over five tribes of passionate Hsiang-Nu barbarians and lead them against Shen Zhou. Yet such was his caliber that none could oppose him. His size puts him at a disadvantage against barbarians of equal Chi; for that reason, he learned non-violent approaches to conflict. Since before his mother weaned him, he has been a master of manipulating others' passions, promising others what they most desire and threatening them with what they most fear. In the personal libraries of the Han scholars his armies killed, he discovered and devoured the Classics of Confucianism, Daoism, and Legalism.

He entrenched his forces for a decade in the northern regions of Yang (where they simply appeared to bandits, albeit well-organized ones) so he had time to master the tenets and philosophies of the sages before sweeping down to drive out Wang Murong. He sees himself as the rightful ruler of all Shen Zhou; the Kingdom of Yang is just a stepping stone towards the ultimate prize.

In appearance, Yue Guan is a scholarly-looking man of barbarian extraction, who is rather vain about his black hair and beard. He usually dresses in orange and white robes and, on formal occasions, black and green robes with royal head dress. His demeanor is typical of one afflicted with "short-man-syndrome" — he bowls people over with his commanding personality and forceful air to make up for his physical stature. He avoids physical contests; Yue Guan's weapons are his mind, mouth, and his enemies' own passions.

Kung Fu:

Lightfoot 3 (Any: Surefoot¹, Run Like a Deer², Headlong Flying Leap³),

Cloud Mastery 2 (Jade: Phantom of the Clouds¹, Moon Covered by Clouds²)



Flawless Archery 4 (Silver: Zhou's Powerful Bow¹, Han's Swift Arrows², Qin's Unstoppable Bolts³, Yi's Flawless Fusillade⁴),

Dragon Saber I (Crimson: Flash of Steel¹),

Perfect Aim 2 (White: Eagle Eye¹, Palpable Hit²)

Secret Arts:

Basic Secret Arts (Introduction to Medical Conditions, Health and Sickness, Changing Chi Conditions)

Extraordinary Courtier Techniques (Lassitude, Joy and Love Technique, Anger-Inspiring Technique, Instant Inspiration Technique, Exploitation of Sorrows Technique, Fear-Inspiring Technique)

Secret Arts Of Intrigue (Passions, Inspirations, Controlling Passions, Yin-Yang Passion Technique, Elemental Passion Progression, Paired Passion Creation, Inflame/Soothe Passions, Stealthy Work)

Story Of The Self

Equipment:

Bow [Quality] (Speed +10, Strike +15, Damage +5)

Dagger (Speed +15, Strike +0, Damage +0)

Punch Or Kick (Speed +15, Strike +0, Damage -5)

Light Armor (Armor -5, Impairment 0)

Treasures:

Hell Condition: Monster-Attracting Aura (Yue Guan has a Hell Reputation of I and Demon Chi to match)

Poisoned Dagger (Level Three Treasure — Yue Guan's Dagger has a *Rare Vegetable Poison* smeared on its blade, requiring a Lethality Roll of Hard (30) and having a Potency of 8.)

Chi: Jade 2, Crimson 3, Gold 5, White 4, Silver 7

Might 2: Athletics 2, Fight 2, Hardiness 1

Speed 3: Initiative 5, Dodge 3, Finesse 2, Melee 3, Ride 2

Presence 5: Confidence 5, Grace (Court) 3*, Inspire 4, Persuade (Point of View) 4*

Genius 4: Learning 3, Crafting (Social Order) 3*, Politics (Yang) 5*, Tactics 3

Wu Wei 7: Awareness 3, Investigation 3, Ranged (Archery) 5**, Senses 2, Stealth 2

Advantages: Affiliation 4 (Country of Yang), Inventive, Information Broker 4, Possession (Quality Bow), Status 5 (Respected), Wealth 4 (Affluent)

Disadvantages: Black-hearted, Rival

Chi Aura/River 4, Light Armour (5), Health: 21



Ying “Shadow” Jiang

Age: 44
Height: 5' 4"
Weight: 120 lbs.
Hair: Gray
Eyes: Gray

Shadow Jiang is pale and sallow — a common eunuch's complexion. He looks almost ill, save that he is very animated: his wit is quick, his intellect razor sharp, and his movements vigorous. His robes are white with silver trim and a black cap. He has embroidered this symbol onto them: four stars, symbolizing eunuchs, standing just to the west of a constellation representing the Emperor. This formation in the sky is a common astrological evidence cited to justify the presence of the eunuchs in palaces throughout Shen Zhou. One can make different inferences regarding the meaning of these symbols on Shadow Jiang's robes. On one level, they remind viewers of the celestial mandate for his position; on another, they suggest an ambition to serve or become the Emperor.

“Wolf-Heart” Hsu Lang Xin

Age: 25
Height: 5' 5"
Weight: 120 lbs.
Hair: Black
Eyes: Black

Wolf-Heart Hsu wears deep red and black clothes — normally, a shirt and pants deep red with red and black trim. Her hair is an unkempt, knotted black mane. Her look is one of ferocity and wildness. It is rumored that she was orphaned and found by the Mao Shan in the woods after several years of surviving on her own. It is unclear if her feral nature is a pose to strike fear into her enemies or a true aspect of her nature.

She is a favored bodyguard of Yue Guan.

Semi-Devil Soo Jinchoo

Age: 34
Height: 6'
Weight: 200 lbs
Hair: Purplish-Blue
Eyes: (Not Visible)
Clothes: Armor

Semi-Devil Soo Jinchoo suffers from a permanent Chi condition that makes his right side a hideous red and his personality... erratic. So wracking is his condition that his hair has become a horrible shade of purplish-blue and his eyes have become so light-sensitive that he wears a light-screening mask. Like his idol, Dominion (he's only met him in person once), that he tries to emulate in all ways — he's canny, domineering, and prone to setting people at each others' throats, while seeming otherwise reasonable... at least, some of the time.

Semi-Devil Soo Jinchoo is the head of Hell Clan in Thrashing Minister City. He is mercurial, wavering between a demeanor of icy calm and fiery rage.

“Snake” Wu She

Age: 55
Height: 5' 7"
Weight: 180 lbs
Hair: White
Eyes: Black

Wu She wears dark blue and grey robes adorned with the symbols of the ba gua — the eight trigrams of the I Ching. The symbols represent eight permutations of change in the natural world and decorate the cuffs of his sleeves, the hem of his robes, and the center of his robe in front. His hair is pure white, including his bushy eyebrows, moustache, and goatee.

Wu She is extremely poor at stealthy techniques — when he curses someone, his eyes turn completely black and his skin slightly green. In this fashion he adopts the venomous nature of the snake that is his namesake.

Tiger-Skinned Ching

Age: 30
Height: 5' 9"
Weight: 195 lbs
Hair: Streaked Black and Gray
Eyes: Yellow
Clothes: Constable uniform

Tiger-Skinned Cheng suffers from Chi corruption — the Chi of a tiger-headed demon infects him, marring his skin with black and white stripes. He wears an ordinary constable's uniform when out of armor — black shirt, black pants, and the black cap of a senior officer. When he wears armor, however, it reflects his personal style — painted black and white with stripes to match the pattern of his skin. His countenance is that of the tiger, moving constantly as if he is on the prowl.

Ching is a very determined man and he will not stop a pursuit until he has subdued his prey. Some believe he has a cruel streak; others say he is merely bold. He treats all of his targets alike, whether guilty or innocent — those the tiger chooses to hunt are those the tiger chooses to hunt.



The New Forging: New God-Weapons Created by Fans

General Notes:

Activating God-Weapon techniques: Remember that you may only ever apply one technique of a God-Weapon in any given round!

Starting play with God-Weapons: Each weapon's description includes destiny costs to entangle your destiny with a particular weapon, learn defenses against it, or obtain it outright. The option of starting play with a God-Weapon always requires the approval of your Sage, however - they are potent artefacts, and may not be appropriate to your story!

Dragon Saber Guan Yu

Class III Heavenly Kwan Dao

(+5 Speed, +20 Strike, +15 Damage)

Note I (Requires both hands to use)

Entangle Destiny: 1 point

Defense: 1 point

Obtain: 6 points

Description: Made entirely of metal from tip to butt, the Dragon Saber Guan Yu is a mammoth weapon weighing two hundred pounds, requiring an Everyday (18) Lift Skill Roll to pick up and wield. A pair of dragons are inlaid into the weapon's grip, one gold and one silver, dancing and cavorting about the shaft. They entwine about the pole and claw at one another as if they were both lovers and enemies in one. At the guard of the blade are the heads of the two dragons, maws opened, fangs curved to catch an enemy blade. A three-foot blade tips six feet of pole, decorated with a dragon motif and inlaid with jade. This dragon bears wings that stick out of the spine of the blade and curved to offer a 'reverse blade' on the sword, allowing it to strike on a forward or backward swing. A red plume comes from the nose of the gold dragon like its whiskers, and a white from the silver in the same fashion, with a bit of a silk flag coming from the butt of the staff itself.

History: Guan Yu was a hero of the Sanguo period of China, and became immortalized in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*. Coming from a simple background, he joined his two Peach Garden Oathbrothers to fight the Yellow Turbans and later enemies of the Han Throne.

When his eldest Oathbrother, Liu Bei, fought to establish his own kingdom of Shu-Han, Guan Yu's strong arm and bright mind were the driving force behind realizing that dream. Promoted to the head of the Five Tigers of Han, Guan Yu was given the job of guarding Jingzhou from the kingdoms of Wu and Wei, a battleground coveted by all states of the time. And, when Guan Yu was captured by a joint attack force, he was given the choice to join or be executed. Remembering his oath to his brothers, and feeling a sense of duty to Shu-Han, he was executed, and his saber, the sword that slew hundreds of champions in the past, passed on to the conquerors of Wu. When his eldest son liberated it, the blade was buried with the great warrior.

And, then both took a life of their own. Eventually Guan Yu was promoted to the status of a god, originally (and at the time of **Weapons of the Gods**) revered as God of the Hunt. Later generations would promote him to the God of (Just) Warfare, Kuan Di, but always was the Warrior of the Silken Beard with his blade, inseparable from one another, even infusing part of his godhood within the weapon he lived and died with.

Techniques:

Originally merely a Class III Earthly Weapon, it attained Heavenly Status once Guan Yu became God of the Hunt and the blade was exalted by his ascension. If one is able to lift it, the heavy blade is heavy enough to chop a man in half.

The weapon itself specializes in severing the limbs of opponents. Wielding it, Guan Yu was able to lop the limbs off of champions of greater strength and experience than he!

Light As Air (Lesser Power): When invoked, this power adds +10 to the Weapon's Speed, reduces the Lift Roll down to Trivial (10) to pick it up, and allows the heavy weapon to be wielded one-handed! **Cost: 1 White Chi.**

Limb-Severing Strike (Lesser Power): This power allows one to sever a limb on a hit, providing it is a Critical Success; however, much like Downing or Knockback, it can be bought off, though for a price of 10 Any Chi... unless the wielder of Dragon Saber Guan Yu has a 20 point Success over your defense, in which case you're going to lose a limb. Losing a Limb always inflicts a Health Level's worth of damage minimum. **Cost: 3 Crimson Chi.**

Rumors: The Dragon Saber Guan Yu is believed to lie somewhere in the western mountains. It was formerly in the tomb of Guan Yu, but a foolish grave-robber abducted it, and is running around the mountain villagers babbling about a bearded ghost stalking him... suggesting that the blade is haunted by the shade of its original wielder!

Contributor:
IntegralENT





Unyielding Saint

Class III Heavenly Stone Greatsword
(Speed +0, Strike +20, Damage +20)

Note I (Requires Both Hands to use)

Entangle Destiny: 1 point

Defense: 1 point

Obtain: 6 points

Description: Unyielding Saint is a large slab of dull grey stone with a polished surface, marked with the scratches and notches of battle. It stands as tall as a young woman, is as wide as her elbow to fingertips, and is one and a half inches thick. On one end, a Y-shaped iron prong has been fitted. Three bolts pierce through the stone to fasten it and the handle is almost two feet long and wrapped in leather straps that want replacing. It weighs three hundred pounds, requiring a Moderate (20) Lift roll at the beginning of a combat to Lift and wield.

History: When the Great Saint of Flowers died, a great tomb was raised on a lonely mountain overlooking the valley where he was born. As it was such an isolated place, friends, students, and admirers of the Great Saint placed enchantments of safeguarding upon the tomb to repel those who would seek to steal from the honored dead.

But with time the deeds of the Great Saint were either forgotten or exceeded by even greater men, and it was inevitable that some day a traveler came to the tomb with intentions other than reverent pilgrimage. His name was Hare-Footed Huan, and he was an arrogant youth who thought that the secrets of the dead saint would be better off in his hands.

Huan sundered the building with a single blow of his fist, for he wished to scare off any vengeful ghosts with his obvious power and skill. The roof fell down, and the walls buckled inwards.

Only the stone door remained standing.

"What a useless thing!" Huan cried out when he saw this. "A door without a house to walk into? There is no purpose in this."

Still laughing at the foolish sight, he picked up a piece of rubble and flung it at the door to knock it over.

But the stone door remained standing.

Annoyed by this defiance, he leaped forward and kicked with all his might.

But the stone door remained standing.

Having never been denied his wishes in this manner before, Huan yelled out and placed his palms upon the door and poured his inner power through the door to shatter it from inside. And indeed, the engraved outside broke off in fragments which were smoking from intense heat!

But the heart of the stone door still remained standing.

Infuriated and crazed with wrath like a blinded boar, he rained down punches upon the upright slab of stone, not stopping when his hands began to bleed, and not even when he heard the sound of his own breaking knuckles.

Then, suddenly, he realized that the door was stronger than him because it had a more righteous purpose than he did. And so he learned that there can be power in obeying one's destiny, and became enlightened. He kowtowed three times before the slab and promised to build the Great Saint a new tomb.

Only then did the door fall over.

Huan immediately understood that with its duty fulfilled the door no longer had the power to stand. He in turn kept his promise and made a new tomb, not even waiting for his broken bones to heal. He left the mountain a year later, carrying the slab of stone on his back as a permanent and weighty reminder of his lessons.

Later, it would come to save his life on multiple occasions. But those stories are for another time...



Techniques:

Unyielding Saint's powers flow from its imperturbability and its unstoppable!

Falling Mountain Strike (Lesser Power): This power makes a single attack inflict Knockback on a successful hit, while inflicting three additional dice of damage. *Cost: 2 Gold Chi.*

Hundred Mountains Block (Lesser Power): When invoked, this power allows its wielder to ignore a single Knockback or Downing Effect. *Cost: 1 White Chi.*

Rumors: The Unyielding Saint is currently believed by Sages to be held by a mercenary somewhere in the Bei Territories... possibly in Xia. Of the truth of this, we do not know.

Contributor: Arik ten Broeke

Flayer of Soul and Sinew

Class II Divine Whip

(Speed +20, Strike +20, Damage +20)

Notes 2, 6 (Unpredictable, and can Entangle).

Entangle Destiny: 3 points

Defense: 3 points

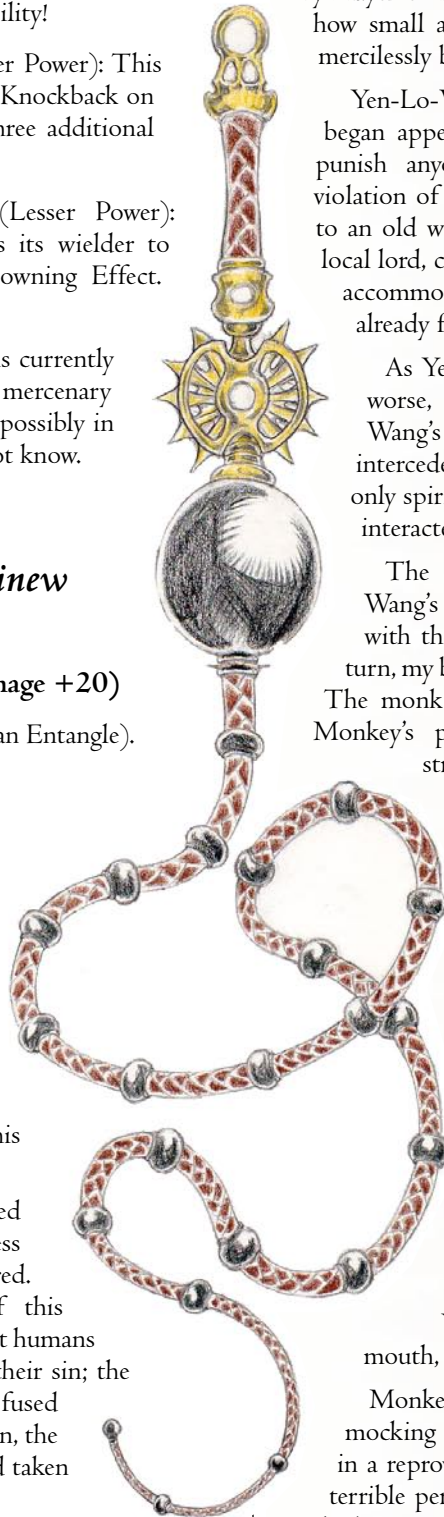
Obtain: 14 points

History & Description: It's said that when the gods judged Yen-Lo-Wang unfit to rule over the first court of hell thousands of years ago (he had been too lenient, sending unfit souls to a beneficent rest) they punished him by removing him from his duties.

Yen-Lo-Wang was much aggrieved by what he considered the unjustness of his punishment, but he persevered. The base and binding beads of this weapon were the bones of the basest humans he could find, burned black with their sin; the handle and butt were made of their fused teeth; and the fire that he forged it in, the pure hate he had for those who had taken his position away.

The strings of the whip came from the sinews of fallen men – those who had been heroes, but had been seduced from a path of virtue and righteousness.

When he finished, he named it "Flayer of Soul and Sinew", and he vowed to show the Gods that he was no longer the lenient judge he once was.



Indeed, he became the strictest of judges. A soul passing before Yen-Lo-Wang was certain to be scourged by Flayer of Soul and Sinew. For every sin, no matter how small and insignificant, the soul was scourged mercilessly by Yen-Lo-Wang.

Yen-Lo-Wang soon stepped over the line, and began appearing in the Mortal Realm. He would punish anyone who he saw make the slightest violation of law or etiquette. He gave twenty lashes to an old woman who did not bow properly to her local lord, caring little that her aged bones could not accommodate the bowing, or that the Lord had already forgiven her!

As Yen-Lo-Wang's abuses became worse and worse, a wandering monk learned of Yen-Lo-Wang's angers and prayed with the gods to intercede. But the Gods are slow to act, and the only spirit to answer was that of Monkey, he who interacted most with the mortal world.

The monk informed Monkey of Yen-Lo-Wang's disturbances, and Monkey made a pact with the monk. "I will do this for you, and in turn, my brethren will be welcome at your temples." The monk agreed, and informed his brothers of Monkey's pledge. Monkey found Yen-Lo-Wang, striding purposely toward another town, the Flayer of Souls and Sinew propped against his shoulder.

"Hey! Hey! What are you doing?" Monkey shouted at the angry Yama King.

"I am fulfilling the dictates of the Gods. They have punished me for not judging harshly enough, and I am showing them the folly of their mistake." Yen-Lo-Wang stated.

"So what you are saying is that you are punishing others for your own sins, because you are afraid that the Gods' punishment was just?" Monkey asked?

Yen-Lo-Wang scowled, "Stay your mouth, or you shall be the next I scourge!"

Monkey then launched a torrent of abuse, mocking the angry demon, waving his finger in a reproving manner, and insulted him with terrible personal taunts, each more awful than the last.

Yen-Lo-Wang attempted to strike down the impudent Monkey for his mocking ways, but he never could hit the agile Monkey, who continued to taunt and harass the demon. This only infuriated Yen-Lo-Wang further.

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They two spent days in this manner. Time and time again the Flayer of Soul and Sinew lashed out, and time and time again Monkey spun out of the way of the deadly weapon, which tore at the ground.

Monkey eventually led Yen-Lo-Wang to the Great Forest, and set a trap for the rampaging demon. He waited behind the largest tree in the Great Forest, as the rampaging Yen-Lo-Wang, now infuriated beyond all reason, charged through the trees looking for his vocal tormentor.

Monkey finally stepped out in front of the demon.

"Have you tired of this game, Yen-Lo-Wang? I will make a deal with you. I will stand right here, and not move. You can have one strike at me. Swing your weapon at me, as hard as you can. Then you will return to your home and not step foot on mortal soil again until you are properly invited!" Yen-Lo-Wang, angered beyond rational thought, agreed and went to strike Monkey, raising Flayer of Soul and Sinew high.

But that is when clever Monkey's plan was revealed. As the sinews that made up the lashes of Flayer of Soul and Sinew raised high, Monkey's tail pulled a hidden piece of vine, and an outraged Yen-Lo-Wang fell on his face, as a hidden series of vines popped up under his feet, tripping him and sending his weapon flying into the trees.

Monkey scampered off, laughing. "I said you could have one strike at me, Yen-Lo-Wang, and so you have. I never said that I would not defend myself, just that I would not move. Now return to your realm, as our agreement, or will you add to your dishonor by breaking your oath as well as your duties?"

Great was Yen-Lo-Wang's anger, and many hours he spent looking through the forest for either Monkey, or his weapon. But in the end, he could find neither — clever Monkey had hidden himself and his weapon too well.

Yen-Lo-Wang eventually returned to his realm, and resumed his duties of judgment over souls. But while he is still strict, he is not overly harsh, as he remembers his shame against Monkey all too well, and the price he paid for his arrogance.

That is why you will usually find that most Temples have at least one monkey in residence, the brothers remember their ancient pact with wise, clever Monkey.

And that is why monkeys never enter graveyards or tombs, for they know all too well the trouble this would cause should the Judge of the Dead learn of their presence.

And as for Flayer of Soul and Sinew? Monkey hid the weapon very well indeed.

The Great Forest is known by another name now, as is the way of

humankind, to rename that which already has a name. But somewhere in that forest, inside the largest clearing is an old oak tree has been hollowed out, and inside, rests Flayer of Souls and Sinew.

Monkey is afraid that if Yen-Lo-Wang ever retrieves his weapon, he will return to the realm and judge the living once again. Yen-Lo-Wang wants his weapon back, but not to judge the living, oh no.

He wants revenge on Monkey for his humiliation.

Techniques:

Created by the First Yama King, the Flayer of Soul and Sinew's techniques are based around punishing people by the freight of their past Deeds...

Scourge the Sins (Effortless Power): This power, when used, inflicts an extra die of Damage to a victim per point of Status they possess in a Corrupt Organization. Alternately, the whip will inflict said extra damage for each point the victim possesses in their highest Corrupt Virtue. Use the higher of these two values. If the wielder should commit a Corrupt Deed while wielding the whip, one of the whip's sinews will automatically attack them as they attack their next target, inflicting damage normally, plus a die for each Corrupt Deed they may currently have. Such is the price of having a weapon that punishes unrighteousness! **Cost: None.**

Torment the Unrighteous (Lesser Power): When invoked, this power allows its wielder to make an attack that will automatically Entangle an opponent if successful; while they are so held, they will automatically take damage equal to the amount of the first attack, as long as the wielder would have it so and spends the Chi to keep this technique active. **Cost: 2 Gold Chi.**

Rumors: It is rumored amongst sages that the ancient Great Forest has been long cut down, and was formerly sited on the Twisted Ground of Zhuo Lu. If so, the weapon is almost certainly held in the Hell Clan stronghold of the Sun-Moon Monastery, doubtless within the treasure trove of the dreaded Flesh-Eating Abbot himself!

Contributor: David Yellope

Jubilate Wing and Tether

Class II Earthly Rope Dart

(Speed +20, Strike +15, Damage +15)

Notes I, 6, 8 (Requires two hands and special training to use, and can Entangle).

Entangle Destiny: 3 points

Defense: 2 points

Obtain: 10 points

History: The King of Eagles was a powerful yang spirit of the jing shen. Gazing down from the sky, his eye fell on a beautiful young maiden who gave some of her own food to orphaned children. So struck was he by her sweet face and gentle spirit that he could not help but fall in love — longing for her when awake and lusting after her in his dreams. Soon, the thought of her haunted him so that he visited her one moonlit night to admit his feelings for her. But his love would remain unrequited, for she told him she could only love a human man; she loved men with legs, hands, and hair instead of feathers. Her love would need a handsome face, not a sharp beak.

Angry and saddened, King of Eagles flew off into the mountains where he whipped up terrible storms to cool his anger.

Unknown to the spirit, on one such mountain lived an old woman, alone and happy. Though not strong or clever, she nevertheless had an excellent skill all her own. All her life she had been a seamstress and now was the most accomplished in the world. She could sew any two material things together, as well as anything that was beautiful. She stitched loyalty, bound together emeralds and flame, and rejoined lost limbs.

Scared when she saw the ominous tempest roiling towards her humble shack, she spotted the figure of a great eagle speeding around the storm, flapping his wings to beat the clouds into shape and herding it ever forward. She screamed for it to stop, and miraculously the King heard her.

Though still angry, the King of Eagles had no desire to harm an innocent. He diverted the course of his storm and pierced it in place with the highest mountaintop he could see. Then he flew down to the old woman to demand she leave the area, so that he could safely resume his storm-chasing.

She asked why, and with a sigh he told her of the misfortune he had suffered: to love a beauty who would not even look upon his kind. The old woman quickly explained to him of her reputation as the supreme seamstress and offered to help the King, if he would stop chasing storms around her home.

But he was a proud spirit, and wary of entrusting his relationships to a mortal because he had been shown how unwise these beings can be. When the old woman sensed his apprehension, she was hurt in her own peculiar pride and promised to prove her skills to him. He could name anything material she would join together, as well as something beautiful.

“Very well,” King of Eagles responded, “Take three feathers from my breast and sow them onto your own needle. After you’ve done that you must sow unsurpassed beauty onto your own thread. If you can do this I will make use of your skills. If the girl then truly loves me, I will also pay you anything you want. I will come back in one week to see if your skills are truly as you claim.”

And so she started out her work. First she sowed together the feathers unto the needle, though nobody could tell you how; her skills are strange and forgotten, and poorly understood.

Then out of the very air she plucked the beauty required and started to sow it onto her thread. But just before she was about to make her last stitch she stopped. She suddenly realized that if she would complete that stitch, she’d be instantly overcome by the finished and thus unsurpassed beauty of her own work. How could she possibly get any work than afterwards if she’d only want to bask in the presence of her own creation?

So she waited until she could think of a solution for this. But the King of Eagles returned before her work was done.

“You have made me waste my time, old woman!” he screeched at her, “pack up your belongings now and hope you can outrun my angry storm!”

But the woman was not about to be forced out of her own home. “Wait please, oh King of Eagles! My work is not done because there is one final thing I need from you to finish. It is but a small thing. All I need is for you to take the rain from your storm and let it lightly fall around my house. No clouds or wind or monsoon, just the light rain. Then, close your eyes and fly back. It will be done by then.”

The King of Eagles did not understand how this would help, but he had nothing to lose and would punish her twice as hard if she was just stalling for time. He flew up to the storm he had pierced onto the mountain and scratched it open with one powerful stroke of his wings, blowing the rain towards the old woman’s house. Then he closed his eyes as promised.

As the rain began to fall the old woman closed her own eyes and finished the last stitch. The two waited until she dared to open her eyes again and found



what she expected: an enamored rainbow had wrapped itself along the thread to hug itself close to its one true love. Jealously it stopped anybody else from catching a glimpse of its hidden treasure.

The King of Eagles saw this and marveled at the woman's skill. He allowed her to patch up his private matter and never regretted his choice.

Description: Jubilate Wing and Tether is a long, narrow band of the finest silk 20 feet in length that nobody has ever seen. Those who look upon it can only see a gently shifting nimbus of all colors. This is the enamored rainbow that once saw the ribbon and hasted down to be with it.

Attached to one end of this silk is a heavy golden cone six inches long, with three wing-shaped barbs sprouting from its base.

Technique:

This god-weapon has only one power, which is active all the time...

Perfect Beauty (Greater Power): Apart from being a surprisingly agile weapon, the Jubilate Wing and Tether has a single supernatural ability - its perfect beauty.

Who can break the hand that is his lover's most gentle touch? Who can turn from the enlightenment of the Buddha? And who would want to? There is no strength in this weapon save for the weaknesses in the hearts of those around it; in the hands of a skilled Courtier it can cause tears in the eyes of vicious killers with but a glance.

This technique adds a +10 modifier to all Presence Skill rolls, including uses of the Secret Arts of Intrigue. Additionally, any successful application of the *Terrifying* combat effect is treated as having two bonus result dice.

Rumors: The old woman, whose name is lost to time, never used that particular needle and thread ever again, out of fear of accidentally scraping off the rainbow. She sent it to a niece who lived in the city as a present for her sixteenth birthday... most tales agree that the weapon lies somewhere in the country of Yang.

The tales do not agree on what happened next, but most tell that the needle and thread resurfaced nearly a hundred years later in the hands of a hero of the Wulin. His name is not known, but most tales say he had a powerful but strange lineage, able to fling rain and wind as easily as easily as a javelin...

Contributor: Arik ten Broeke

Lost Beauty

Class I Wolf-Tooth Staff

(Speed +25, Strike +25, Damage +25)

Entangle Destiny: 5 points

Defense: 3 points

Obtain: 25 points



History: Chih-nii the Heavenly Spinner, who wove robes for the gods and the daughter of the Immortal Emperor of Heaven, came to earth to learn. She learned to weave items of iron, gold and jade. She went to the stars and used their essence, together with her favored materials to weave together a weapon of power. She created it from stardust, gold and red jade; and molded it with the power of the stars. She bathed her creation in the Heavenly River, but she dropped it and it was swept away by the current. She wept for a thousand years, her tears flooded the Heavenly River, and the weapon was washed into the Ocean. Her father, the August Personage of Jade, was so distraught that he turned her into the star of the east.

Once each year on the seventh day of the seventh month, all the magpies of the world fly to heaven and leave a trail of twigs from heaven to the ocean showing Chih-nii where the weapon is, but she is unmoved, and remains the eastern star... longing for her creation to be returned.

Description: Feeling wet to the touch, the weapon appears as an eight foot long rod of golden metal ornamented with red jade - it handles and is similar to a Wolf-Tooth Staff.

The ornate head of the weapon is latticed with the essence of stars. Engraved in minute characters at the base of the weapon in the language of the gods are the secrets of weaving jade and iron together. The weapon drips Chih-nii's tears of sorrow.

Techniques:

Accorded status as one of the 'weaker' Class I weapons, *Lost Beauty* still has great power, though not so much of war.

Jarring Blow (Lesser Power): When used, this power causes a dual Disarm and Knockback, but only against an opponent's Weapon! This power is effective against any Class of god-weapon save the other Class Is. This technique can be employed even when *Lost Beauty's* other power is in use. **Cost:** 2 Gold Chi.

Surpassing Peace and Harmony (Effortless Power): This power is automatic - when held or touched to someone with a Chi Condition, *Lost Beauty* will Soothe



that Condition away. Curses will break, Influences will wane, towering Passions cool and Inspirations will pass away; even Hell Conditions will be destroyed, though any Demon Chi the wielder possesses will also be lost. Note that only unnatural Chi Conditions will be healed; those inflicted by Medicine to heal existing damage or are natural to the person (for example, the root passion chosen at character creation) will not be affected. Finally, even Chi Conditions the wielder might want to keep (like helpful Hyperactivities) will be soothed away as well!

The length of time required to soothe away the condition varies – Trivial Conditions vanish away at a touch, while Minor Conditions require a number of turns equal to the Condition's Duration; Major Conditions require hours.

Rumors: It is thought that the 'Heavenly River' of the story is, in the current era, the Great River itself – but considering that river's size... if Lost Beauty is somewhere at the bottom along its length... it would be extraordinarily hard to find!

Contributor: Pierce

Pacifying Jade Net

Class I Weapon of the Gods

No Normal Statistics (*see below*)

Entangle Destiny: 5 points

Defense: 3 points

Obtain: 25 points

History: Following her great adventure upon slaying the Black Water Devil, Waveheart Xue returned to the place of her victory, kneeling upon the cold jade capstone that closed the volcanic fissure prison of the devil's now forever-lost weapon. While it was safe away and could never be regained, she had little to show for her heroism. Distraught and with nowhere else to turn, she cried to the heavens –

"Nüwa! Oh Celestial Goddess! I thank you for the mercy you showed Shen Zhou, and for choosing such an unworthy warrior as I to carry your blessing. Yet, as unworthy as I am, ten thousand times less worthy are the Wulin! They have been saved from the Black Water Devil, but can they do anything but carp about floods and whine about my thoroughness? I have no proof, and yet am exile – but I would not forsake righteousness or become less than the hero you needed me to be. Now I have nowhere to go and no purpose, and no member of the Wulin will give me face!"

As it so happened, her prayers were answered – a prismatic blaze overcame her vision, and a rush of heat blew her hair back... and the hill behind her opened like a door. A beautiful woman's voice came forth.

"Child of my Heart, you have done so much... would you do more?"

Waveheart knelt and touched her forehead to the ground eight times, for she knew that it was a god who spoke — indeed, the very god to whom she had called.

"Mother, how may I be of service? I have heard the tales – you are the parent of all my kind. I would help you however you wish."

Coruscating rainbows rippled and flared on the jade rock she looked into. The Celestial Goddess said: "I needs must forge one last time – but what I make must have an owner, someone to ever look after it. Will you accept this burden? The Immortal Emperor has decreed that a priceless yet perilous Treasure be kept on Earth, but to leave it where any could reach it would cause immeasurable tragedy. I propose to create a place of perfect keeping for this object, and have you be its custodian."

"Yes, Oh Goddess, yes. What is the gratitude of Earth worth, if I can have the approbation of heaven?"

The only response of the Goddess was to laugh a deep and thrilling laugh that echoed ever after... as Waveheart looked up and saw the Dragon of Creation, the Maker of Humanity, Nüwa herself, come forth from the cave with her hammer and forge, setting them down on the shore. Her scale was somehow wrong – or perhaps the earth was wrong, as she seemed far larger than she could possibly be. With one hand, she swept up the entire lake and thrust it upon her forge's hard surface... then reached and took a chunk of the jade capstone on which Waveheart Xue knelt, adding that to the glowing fire that sat underneath the lake. She then began to strike the two with her delicate hammer, with a jeweler's precision... blending the cooling jade stone with the fluidity and life of the lake's water, her sacred fire melting the definitions of both so that they could blend and amalgamate and become as one.

At last, the work was done. Nüwa lifted the lake in one hand, and set it back into its banks as easy as one slides a foot into a shoe. When She was done, the lake was seemingly as it ever had been – cool, deep and green.

The Goddess looked upwards – "Look; I have completed my task in time. The Stone falls..." Waveheart Xue saw it; it was a bright yellow star, radiating terrific heat as it fell to earth... right into the now-transformed lake. It splashed down, but the lake did not boil — indeed, the heat that almost set fire to Xue's hair ceased the moment the object sank beneath the waves. Waveheart Xue knelt and sifted her hand through the lake's edge.

"It looks like water!" she exclaimed "Yet it cannot be made steam. Who will know what sleeps below it?"

When she looked up, she saw the Goddess' radiant and

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benevolent smile, lingering for a few seconds after Nüwa herself had faded from view. **Description:** Pacifying Jade Net is a lake of liquid green jade five hundred yards long and two hundred yards wide. Its greatest depth is seventy-five yards; it comes complete with fish, water birds and all other normal forms of life, for while the water is jade, it becomes purely water when ingested. The village at its edge is picturesque and quaint, though living in fear without the protection of the Xue lineage. The lake sports a pagoda that the family was wont to use to commune with the Celestial Goddess' final forging.

Techniques:

As this Weapon is like no other and is not in the least bit portable, it does not have Statistics in a normal fashion - it may never be moved and only accepts a single wielder at a time. Pacifying Jade Net instead functions only through its powers, described below. As usual for Class I god-weapons, the Net cannot be damaged or destroyed by anything than other Class I's.

Lance of the Goddess' Anger (Greater Power): Responding to its wielder's will, the Lake will lash out with lances of hardened Jade water, inflicting terrible harm. This power can strike anyone within the Lake's bounds or within the Favored Chi of its wielder in yards from the water's edge. Against airborne opponents, the Lances must be aimed with the Ranged Skill of their wielder; if the target is actually in the water, then they cannot be Dodged, though parries are still efficacious. Note that the wielder may call forth as many of these Lances as she wishes from the lake per round, attacking simultaneously, limited only by how much chi she is willing to spend. If so done, this is counted as an Area Attack, and the wielder need only roll once; any applicable kung fu may also be brought to bear through the Pacifying Jade Net. **Cost: 5 Any Chi.**

Weapon Statistics: Artful/Brutal/Ranged Weapon.

(Speed +20, Strike +30, Damage +15)

Benediction of Harmony (Effortless Power): While in the bounds of the lake, God-weapons may not make use of their techniques while touched by Pacifying Jade Net's waters (but not droplets or water otherwise separated from the lake)! While Class III's have no recourse, Class II weapon wielders may attempt to override this effect by spending double the usual Chi Cost of Lesser and Greater Powers, while Effortless Powers will function normally. This power cannot affect other Class I weapons in any fashion.

Celestial Tide's Embrace (Effortless Power): A whirling, crossing pattern of waves ripples up to assist the defense of the warrior wielding the Net - doubling the wielder's effective Chi Aura! As an extension of Benediction of Harmony, this power also automatically protects the warrior against the techniques of attacking weapons.

Rumors: Waveheart Xue founded a village by her lake, knowing full well she could never leave her charge unguarded, lest wars be fought for the secret of the lake's depths! She raised a daughter, whom she trained in the use of the lake, naming the girl and weapon alike *Pacifying Jade Net*. Pacifying Jade trained her son, who trained his son, who trained a daughter, and so on to this day. A side-effect of the Goddess' forging of the Lake seems to be that its location is very hard to reach; high in the mountains as it is, it is very easy to become lost or simply not find one's way there - indeed, the lake is easily forgotten by anyone who leaves the area. Once the secret of Pacifying Jade Net's existence becomes common knowledge, will this gift of the Goddess still remain? Only time will tell.

Contributor: Jye Nicolson



The New Forging: New God-Weapons Found in Thrashing Minister

Skull Divider

Class III Heavenly Battleaxe

(Speed + 0, Strike + 15, Damage + 25)

Entangle: 1 point

Defense: 1 point

Obtain: 6 points

Description: Skull Divider is a great shining black battle axe, made entirely from an unearthly, gleaming metal. The guard consists of a large metal grid featuring several 3 to 5 inch spikes which the wielder can use to trap blades and then disarm opponents. The weapon is made from a terribly dense and heavy metal, facilitating exceptional bone-shattering blows.

History: Heaven was cruel to Fang Kwan-ha. He'd earned great blessings in his previous lives but he'd been born poor and sold as a eunuch — he couldn't possibly have the sons his Destiny promised him! At a small altar in the eunuch palace, he prayed to the North Pole Star, Great Emperor of the Purple Heaven, Keeper of the book of Destiny, asking for a destiny as a Wulin hero instead of a palace servant. He dreamed that he would find his son buried in the ground. Instead he found only a meteor of hard black metal marked with the name of Fang.

The King of Yang would want this treasure, but Kwan-ha could not give it over to him. Instead, he fled the Eunuch Palace with the metal. Living on the road with a price on his head, always hungry, and full of sorrow, he would heat the metal in a fire and use stones and water to scrape at it until it took the form of a crude battle axe, which he affixed to a wooden handle.

Kwan-ha came across bandits attacking a Yang Kingdom caravan on the road. He could not hold back: wielding the axe, he charged them, cutting the leader's head in half. For this service the King forgave him and provided the tools he needed to finish the construction of the axe. It is called Skull Divider because it so neatly cut the bandit leader's head, but until the day he died, Fang Kwan-ha called it Fang Li.

Fang Kwan-ha became one of the legendary Wulin heroes of Yang.

Techniques

Shattering Bone (Greater Power). When this technique is used, the wielder negates a number of his opponent's Chi Protection dice equal to the wielder's Chi Aura. In other words, a Rank 4 warrior would negate 2 dice from his opponent's Chi Protection; a Rank 3 warrior would negate 3 dice; etc. This effect lasts for the single attack only, not for the round. *Cost: 4 Jade Chi.*

Blade Thief (Lesser Power). On a critical defense roll, the attacker's weapon gets trapped in the series of spikes which extend from Skull Divider's hilt. By paying the chi cost, the wielder of Skull Divider may Disarm the attacker. *Cost: 1 Crimson Chi.*

Location: Skull Divider is supposed to be housed in the Hall of Military Eminence in the Royal Palace at Thrashing Minister. During Yue Guan's usurpation, a palace eunuch attempted to steal this weapon and replace it with a mundane one. If the eunuch survived and was loyal to Wang Murong, the weapon waits in a secret place for servants of Wang Murong to reclaim it. If he survived and was disloyal, he sold it or hid it with his birth family. If he died, of course, it's still in the Hall.



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Wind-Rending Sword

Class III Heavenly Longsword

(Speed + 15, Strike + 10, Damage + 10)

Entangle: 1 point

Defense: 1 point

Obtain: 6 points

Description: Wind-Rending Sword is a typical looking longsword except for the blade, which is made from shimmering blue metal. With each stroke, the blade makes a noise like the rush of wind during a gale-force storm.

History: Though demons tempted him, though the gods forbade it, still alchemist Huang Guangfu sought the supreme celestial enlightenment! He conceived this sword as the representation of his desire — the mirror of his desired transcendent perfection on the earthly plane. It would control the five elements: wood, fire, earth, metal, and water!

Swords, of course, already control wood: they can chop trees down and sever firewood. Next was to cut the fiery yang principle. He meditated atop a tree, holding the blade against the wind. When the sword could cut the air, he knew that it had the sharpness to cut fire. He meditated in the winter snow, naked, pushing the sword into the earth. When he no longer felt the cold, he knew the sword had the chill to cut fire. He tested it, and lo! He had the second element victory. Third was the principle of earth. When the summer came, he began to practice the blade against stone. Bandits found and harassed him: “Old man, you’re wasting your blade on rocks — they won’t fight back!”



“I am Huang Guangfu!” he shouted back in rage. “I will have the supreme celestial enlightenment!”

Then they killed him. His Chi exploded in a white fireball, killing all but one bandit and bathing the blade in its glory. That bandit instantly repented of his horrible ways, kowtowing seven times to Heaven, and became a servant of the Kingdom of Yang. After many glorious deeds, he tried to return the sword to Guangfu’s family, but they wouldn’t accept it — the ex-bandit, Mei Wenfu, was too famous! The only way he could convince them to accept was to explain the circumstances by which he obtained the sword; this sobered Guangfu’s family, and Guangfu’s younger brother executed Mei Wenfu to avenge his brother.

Techniques

Destroyer of Air (Greater Power). With a successful attack an opponent will suffer chi flow loss in one of his colors of chi (defender’s choice). The sword has essentially destroyed some of the air around, and some inside, the opponent. This makes it difficult for the opponent to regain chi from breath. **Cost: 4 Gold Chi**

Wind Quells the Fire (Lesser Power). This technique allows the wielder to reduce a fire’s Burning potency by one for each point of Silver Chi as you spend. The amount of ground covered by the wielder during the round determines the range of the technique. Note: the chi cost is twice as much for fires created from kung fu or magic, and can definitely extinguish someone employing Holy Fire Kung Fu. **Cost: as noted**

Location: Wind-Rending Sword is also supposed to be housed in the Hall of Military Eminence in the Royal Palace at Thrashing Minister. During Yue Guan’s usurpation, a palace eunuch attempted to steal this weapon and replace it with a mundane one. If the eunuch survived and was loyal to Wang Murong, the weapon waits in a secret place for servants of Wang Murong to reclaim it. If he survived and was disloyal, he sold it or hid it with his birth family. If he died, of course, it’s still in the Hall.

Fox-Spirit Blade

Class II Hellish Longsword

(Speed + 25, Strike + 20, Damage + 15)

Entangle: 3 points

Defense: 3 points

Obtain: 12 points

Description: The Fox Spirit Blade gleams with a slight green tint. Its hilt is black. From a distance it seems carved from wood; studied closely, its material is the bone from a Wulin hero's arm altered by magic into its current form. (It could actually be anyone's bone, but who'd use the bone of an ordinary person for something like a hilt?)

History: As everyone knows, fox-spirits sometimes take human form and afflict people with diseases or demonic possession in order to steal their Chi. Their cunning, craft, and duplicity are legendary. The story of the Fox Spirit Blade exemplifies these traits.

The son of a noble fell ill with a debilitating disease not even the greatest city doctors could treat. One day a traveling doctor appeared. He said that he'd seen the secret of the ailment and treated the sick child. The child's symptoms faded. The child, though not entirely cured, felt better. The doctor convinced the noble that his son would soon recover completely, took his payment, and left. However, the boy did not recover. His symptoms worsened. The following week the doctor returned to offer a new cure, another respite from symptoms, and another promise of recovery. This happened every week for months: the child fell sick again, the doctor returned, the doctor offered a temporary respite, the doctor promised complete recovery, and the doctor left, only to have the cycle resume.

Eventually a Daoist exorcist appeared. He explained to the noble that some fox spirit had cursed his son — that's why he kept getting sick! When the doctor reappeared, the exorcist accused him of cursing the boy. In turn, the doctor accused the exorcist of being a fox spirit sent to sow confusion. The two argued until finally they drew weapons and fought, the doctor flinging acupuncture needles and the exorcist deflecting them with a sword made from copper coins. Finally, a Wulin hero appeared. He cried that both the doctor and the Daoist were foxes hoping to take advantage of a child's suffering. With one voice the doctor and exorcist accused him of the same. The battle continued among all three of them, the Wulin hero wielding a sword against both opponents with near-supernatural speed.

The conflict raged for three days non-stop. It caused such a cacophony as to drive everyone away from that neighborhood of Phoenix Nest. Then the fighting stopped. Everyone rushed in to see the outcome of the battle. Surprisingly, they found only three foxes laying exhausted on the ground, one next to a coin sword, one beside a container of needles, and the third atop a shining blade. Quickly the townsfolk took clubs and bashed the first two foxes to bits. Sadly, one of the townsfolk was greedy and stole the sword. Roused to indignant fury by this act, the hero-impersonating fox struggled to its feet, fought off the townsfolk, and escaped.

A few days later the noble's son recovered.

Techniques

Plague Carrier (Greater Power) In the midst of battle, the wielder may make an invisible area attack to subject anyone within a 10 yard radius with a debilitating illness. While not seen, the attack can still be resisted with the character's Hardiness. The effects of this illness are a Minor Chi Weakness with a -5 Action Penalty and a loss of Breath in Crimson and Jade Chi, unless the victim does nothing but rest and shiver. The illness has Recovery 20, Duration 3, and an Interval of one day. *Cost: 2 Jade Chi, 2 Crimson Chi, and 1 Demon Chi.*

Shape Shifter (Greater, Corrupt Power): As long as the wielder holds onto the sword and pays the chi cost, the wielder can change form to look like another person. This will change the person's body and voice, but not his or her clothing. As powerful as this technique is, the wielder must be careful, as it was not intended to be used by human beings. The first use of this power in any given story gains the user a point of Demon Chi. Later uses bring guaranteed misfortune. *Chi Cost: 3 Silver Chi, 2 White Chi.* Channel: 1 Silver Chi and 1 White Chi.

Shiny Trinket (Trivial Power): This weapon can appear to be something that it's not, though it must always be harmless in appearance — a piece of cheap jewelry, perhaps. It is useless as a weapon in that form, although it remains as difficult to break as any Class II Weapon. Its user can spend a full action to revert the sword to its true form. It automatically appears in its wielder's hand, ready for action! *Chi Cost: None.*

Location: After the events of the fox curse, on certain nights, arms merchants swear they hear scampering inside their store houses. Most think it is the fox looking for his lost blade. The fox would know if the blade had left town, so it probably hasn't.





Predictionist Blade

Class II Heavenly Longsword

(Speed + 20, Strike + 20, Damage + 20)

Entangle Destiny: 3 points

Defense: 2 points

Obtain: 12 points

Description: This is a magnificent blade, slightly blue or silver in tinge, depending on how the light hits it. When life is peaceful, the blade is completely smooth. In the moments just before a potential battle, I Ching hexagrams appear on its surface. These hexagrams change from moment to moment, predicting the outcome of each round of battle — although, since it takes a full round to interpret them, this isn't terribly useful.

History: The Predictionist Blade is also a unique tool for predicting the future. It was created, under duress, by predictionist Tieshan Chan for Zengxian Shih, a corrupt official in the Kingdom of Yang.

All his life Chan had failed — he was the worst of all predictionists, since he had the skills and the understanding but every future he read was clouded.

Zengxian Shih, one of Chan's childhood friends, saw this as potential. Smug and certain as wicked people always are, he reasoned that a predictionist incapable of using ordinary methods must have skill in unusual ones.

Shih commissioned Chan to work with his weaponsmiths to design a sword that would know the future of every battle it would fight in. He imagined that its wielder would then know every mistake in advance, allowing them to avoid these mistakes and seize victory every time. Chan warned him that even if such a blade existed, it could never assure victory in every battle. One person can't control the nature of the world — you have to understand the nature of the world and live in accordance with it.

Shih refused to hear such wisdom. He cajoled Chan. He showered him in wealth. And when Chan still refused, the wicked magistrate — explaining constantly how reasonable his request remained — imprisoned Chan's family and threatened them with death.

Chan faced the future. He cast the I Ching and saw for the first time an unclouded future — that his life had in fact shaped him to make this sword, that Heaven had entrusted him to create the Predictionist Blade, and that both his wife and his eldest son would die at the hands of Zengxian Shih.

He worked. Sweating, crying, and aching, he worked, until he had crafted a blade that was a divination tool as well. It fell short of Shih's ambition but the wielder, by performing the proper sword form, could see one battle ahead. More than that, the sword, knowing the nature of this battle, would move before the wielder moved, making it difficult for opponents to follow the patterns of the sword.

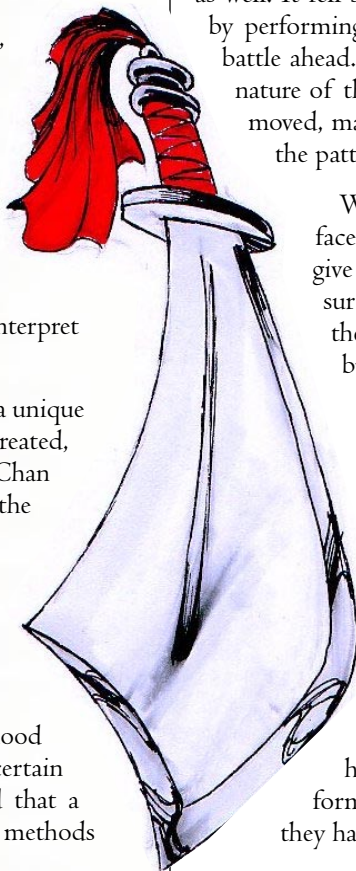
When Chan brought the blade to Shih, he faced the greatest temptation of his life — to give it over to Shih, thus ensuring his family's survival. This act would defy the patterns of the world and ensure all manner of sorrow, but Chan's wife and child would live.

Trembling, Chan made his choice. When he entered Shih's chambers, he unsheathed the blade. In this moment the sword achieved its full power. One of Shih's soldiers dropped his hand towards his own sword; before he reached it his hand fell to the ground. A full second later, the Predictionist Sword swept by where the soldier's hand had been. Three other soldiers charged and fell before they ever reached him. The predictionist moved in the sword form "One attacks three" in the spaces where they had been.

Zengxian Shih, being a superior swordsman, could fend off Chan's blows. He rang the bell that called for Chan's family's execution. He fought Chan long and hard; but defeating such an unparalleled blade, even in the hands of the unskilled Chan, was beyond him. He collapsed, hamstrung, a second before the vision of the blade cut his heel.

Chan did not kill Shih. Instead, he forced him to sign papers releasing Chan's family. They were in time to save his daughter and his youngest son, but, as predicted, his wife and eldest son were dead. A panicked soldier, hearing the bell and knowing of Chan's presence, had killed them both.

In later reflection, Shih was horrified: he had lost a friend, murdered two innocents, and suffered a crippling wound at the hands of an invincible blade. He cut off his hair, resigned his position, and dedicated himself to the life of a Daoist monk. Chan never used the sword again, and no one knows where it is now.



Techniques

Know Thine Enemy (Greater Power) The Predictionist Sword knows where to move before its wielder does. In fact, as long as the wielder is able to follow the sword's lead, the sword strikes before the wielder actually moves. This technique applies the Disorienting combat effect on a standard success (see Combat Effects on page 75 of the main rule book). Cost: 3 Silver Chi.

Know Thyself (Greater Power): With this weapon anyone can make a prediction about their next battle, even if the wielder does not have the Secret Art of Prediction. This works in the same manner as the rules for the Secret Art of Prediction (See **Weapons of the Gods**, p.291-295), and the wielder may add the sword's Strike to the roll. The prediction can only be made about the next battle the sword will be used in. To make a prediction the wielder must perform a sword form, an elaborate dance of movements, for a scene (or less time, with appropriate modifiers). While this doesn't cost any Chi, the wielder must spend a point of Joss, just as if he or she were a predictionist.

Location: The weapon could be in the hands of The Ultimate Predictionist, Bufon Jou, but no one has ever seen him use the blade. He may be its caretaker, waiting to deliver it to its destined wielder. One rumor alleges that Chan's family sold off his possessions when he died, including the Predictionist Blade, and it sits, unassuming, in some weapon merchant's shop.

Cloud Commander

(Only Rumored to Exist in Thrashing Minister)

This is a story. It may not be true. It may be true but exaggerated or in part allegorical. Old people in Thrashing Minister City tell it to their grandchildren.

In the days before the thrashing minister — before the Shang, before the Xia, before the Yellow Emperor himself — there was a small town where Oldtown now stands. A wealthy merchant was walking home. He saw an ugly, stinking man whom he assumed to be a beggar. He did not offer the beggar copper cash. Instead he spat into the beggar's face. This proved inauspicious, since the beggar was already dead; a demon had eaten him, and was currently wearing the man's skin. The demon grew very angry and swore to destroy the merchant, his family, the village, and in fact the entire Northern Steppe.

The dragon with dominion over the Northern Steppe heard this terrible oath. Instantly he flew into the village and met the demon with outstretched teeth and claws. Storms raged in the sky. Eventually the dragon fell, bleeding to death. The demon also collapsed, exhausted, but not in any fashion defeated.

The merchant ran to the dragon and hugged its neck and wept. He felt shame because of the dragon's sacrifice. He asked Heaven for some way to honor the dragon and take revenge against the demon that had slain him. The dragon exhaled his last breath, saying: "take my spine and skin and fashion a whip several li long. With this weapon you will be able to control the wind, rain, clouds, lightning, and thunder."

The merchant did this. He fashioned a weapon worthy of an immortal. He began whipping the demon.

"Let me sleep!" whimpered the demon.

"I don't mind if you sleep, but I'll cut the skin from your bones!"

"I'm so tired," the demon said. But it opened its eyes. It struggled up. It tried to fight the merchant.

It was too late. Too much damage was done, and the demon was still too tired. The merchant cut away his skin and grabbed the demon's heart and ripped it out and ate it. (This proved to be a mistake, as he discovered after he died, but that's another story for another time.) The demon kept fighting until the merchant ripped out his brain. At this point the demon exploded. The merchant did not have a chance to celebrate his victory; the whip was far too great for a man like him to wield, and he shriveled to dust as soon as it fell from his hand.

The whip buried itself — the story goes — in the land that became the city of Thrashing Minister. The whip worked its way into the very framework of the city: the dragon's bones and skin are part of its streets, its gates, its walls, and the foundations of its buildings. It is the very soul of Thrashing Minister City.

Most of the whip is hidden from human eyes, but people say that when it's needed once again, the whip's end will reveal itself to someone strong enough to wield it. The warrior will then face a horrible choice — rip the several li long Weapon from the city, breaking walls, ripping streets, and shattering buildings, or leave it unused in the city's time of greatest need.





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The Great Game: How to Win Battles and Influence Kingdoms

or

Mass Combat, Mass Politics, and the
Clash of Heroes

Turn to this section for a basic overview of the
Great Game.

Introduction to the Great Game

(Great Game: Introduction)

Destiny Cost: 0

Imagine all Shen Zhou as a battlefield.

Imagine the forces moving on it — the armies, the fortunes, the great political power of the Clans and Kings — represented by colored stones. With strategic placement of these stones, you sweep away your enemies and set your order on the world.

That's the Great Game.



You can use the Great Game to play out large battles (mass combats) in **Weapons of the Gods**. You can also use it for high-stakes political and diplomatic combat. In short, take out these rules when it's time to fight Kings and warlords on their own terms — not with kung fu but with armies, wealth, dogma, influence, and with stratagems spanning miles or hundreds of miles.

The Player's Role

During the Great Game you'll do many things. You'll move stones strategically and make vicious attacks with them. You'll use secret battle techniques. You'll lead your forces to victory.

None of that is important.

What you should focus on as a player of the Great Game is deciding what's important to you and just how important it is. When you say, "We need to keep order in this city, because that's what I'm charged to do," that's playing the Great Game. Or when you say, "We need to keep that farmland from burning, or everyone will starve." Deciding what to care about — and how much.

You won't have the troops, money, and power to get everything you want. Some of the things dearest to you are going to be in a tenuous position. Others you won't be able to defend at all.

Choosing what to do about that, deciding what to defend to the death and what to leave undefended — that's playing the Great Game.

The Sage's Role

The Sage is also busy when using the Great Game. As the Sage, you need to do everything the players do, only for the NPCs instead of the PCs. You will set up the scenario. You will make rules calls, set difficulties, and decide which Skills the players can get away with using to achieve their goals.

Again, that's not important.

What the Sage needs to do during the Great Game is keep the events of the Game — the play of great forces on the stage of Shen Zhou — relevant to the character's lives. That means holding the players in their decisions to the crucible of the story. It means keeping the game from degenerating into moving stones around mechanically to win fights by rolling dice. You'll see how to do this in the sections below.

How to Play

(*Great Game: Introduction*)

Destiny Cost: 0

You can play the Great Game to resolve almost any conflict — to fight for a neighborhood, a forest, a city, a state, or control over Shen Zhou itself.

The Sage creates your opposition by identifying everyone else with an interest in whatever you're fighting for — if it's a neighborhood, the Sage might build street gangs and corrupt merchants as your enemies. If it's Shen Zhou, the Sage is more likely to pit you against the Jin Empire's army!

Agendas

Start playing the Great Game by picking a cause to back with your personal prestige — your public **Agenda**. If someone asks you what you stand for, this is what you'll tell them. The Sage will use this to decide which NPCs you can recruit and how enemy commanders react to you.

You can share an Agenda with others. For example, the government of Southern Liang has the **Southern Liang Agenda**: "keep order and squeeze the people for money." If you want to play as part of the Southern Liang government, sign on to their Agenda at the start of play instead of creating your own.

That said, you don't have to pick the same Agenda as the group or organization you work for. For instance, if you're a Confucian working for the Southern Liang government, you might express your Confucianism by choosing a different Agenda — the **Southern Liang Confucian Agenda**: "keep order and encourage humaneness."

Stones

Once you have an Agenda, you need stones. The Sage will assign you a collection of colored stones to represent your initial forces:

- One *commander* stone to represent your personal power.
- *Force* stones to represent your military power and work force.
- *Influence* stones to represent your wealth and political power.
- *Will* stones to represent your power over people's hearts and minds.
- *Agenda* stones to represent the particulars of your personal devotion to your cause.

- Any unusual stones you might have, such as an *Order* stone representing your troops' discipline or a *Treasure* stone representing a Weapon of the Gods that can shape whole battlefields.

The Sage decides how many stones you actually get — there isn't a fixed troop-to-Force or tael-to-Influence ratio. In a simple game where you're not well-established on the battlefield, you'll start with your commander stone and nothing else.

Later in the game, you can add additional stones to your collection. If you want to develop your power — training troops, building wealth, or winning people's hearts — use the rules for building new stones. If you want to recruit people or seize resources, look at the rules for recruiting stones. If you beg your allies for help, they might give you stones!

(For full details, see *Stones* on page 78!)

To take aggressive action in play, wield these stones against your enemies!

Your Enemies

Your Sage will pit you against two kinds of enemies.

First, the Sage should list or create the interesting Wulin characters independently involved in the situation. These may become personal enemies. You might win them over with charm and the rightness of your cause, but to make them go away, you have to kill, shame, or crush them.



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Second, the Sage should list or create the other **Actors** in the situation — things that aren't really characters but which can act in the situation, like Buddhism, the Jin Empire, bandit tribes, Bei Clan, and city governments. Something is an Actor if — should the characters kill or convert its leader — it can pick a new leader and keep going.

Actors are impersonal enemies. By definition, you can't win them over. However, if they become your enemies, you can take them out of the picture without killing or shaming any particular person.

For example, if you're playing in Thrashing Minister City, the Dong Clan is an Actor. It's run by Great Bear Lu (pg. 22) but it's not following Great Bear Lu's personal Agenda — if you convince him to go against Dong Clan policy, he'll get replaced! However, even if you can't kill or shame Great Bear Lu, you can make things hard enough for the Dong Clan in Thrashing Minister that Ian Dong pulls its forces out.

Conversely, if you're playing to control Shen Zhou as a whole, the Dong Clan isn't an Actor. It's the personal forces of Ian Dong and his allies. If you kill Ian Dong or convince him to follow your orders, you've defeated the Dong Clan.

These are the only enemies you'll ever face — Wulin characters and Actors.

Winning

To figure out if you're winning the Great Game, pay attention to three things: the state of the world, your personal Prestige, and the Prestige of your enemies.

You can use your stones to change the world — to burn cities, build libraries, uncover secrets, and change the face of civilization. The more the world looks like what you want it to look like, the better you're doing.

As a Wulin character, you have a certain amount of Prestige — legitimacy, power, and gravitas that you can throw behind the Agenda of your choice. An Agenda without Prestige is so many empty words. Backed by Prestige, the Agenda becomes a powerful force that can rally people against your enemies.

The healthier your Prestige, the better you're doing.

Your enemies and rivals also have Prestige. You can attack their stones or their causes to strip Prestige from them. When you destroy that Prestige utterly, their stones shatter or retreat to other battlefields — who would serve such a disreputable foe? Wulin characters are shamed; Actors lose their interest in competing with you.

The weaker your enemies' Prestige,
the better you're doing.

Structure of Play

You will play out the Great Game in **rounds**. These are like combat rounds, but much longer. The Sage will pick a length of time that's realistic or dramatically appropriate for what you're actually doing — if you're having a heated battle for the future of a neighborhood, the Sage might make rounds a few minutes' long. If you're playing out a slow diplomatic struggle for control over Shen Zhou, the Sage might pick season-length rounds.

In each round, you will take a full action and some free actions. Use these to approximate your IC actions in attacking your enemies, defending your interests, and generally get things done.

Necessary Stones

(*Great Game: Introduction*)

Destiny Cost: 0

When you play the Great Game, the Sage designs a specific **battlefield** — a place where people like you contest for power, such as a neighborhood, city, forest, large area, State, Territory, or all of Shen Zhou. Everything in the conflict that your character cares about is somewhere on that battlefield and it's usually represented as one or more stones.

If you care about **Keeping Order in the City**, you can represent that with the use of colored stones. You might use three stones: "a well-policed market," "safe wealthy neighborhoods," and "tranquility in the bad parts of town."

If you care about **The Food Production of the Farmlands**, you can represent that by putting a "food that we need to survive" stone out in the farmlands.

These rules call these stones necessary stones, because you need to defend them. If you don't defend them or fail to defend them, your character loses something they care about.

Keep in mind as you read the Great Game rules below that the only really important thing is keeping your enemies from reaching and doing horrible things to your necessary stones. Choose a strategy that keeps the enemies at bay and you'll be fine. If you can't find a way to protect them, don't even bother playing the Great Game — go home to your parents and get more training!

Read more about necessary stones on ppg. 103-117.

Challenges

(Great Game: Introduction)

Destiny Cost: 0

To tie together the story and the battlefields of the Great Game, Sages should use Challenges. There are two basic Challenges —

- **Great Game Challenges.** Use these when the Sage wants the characters to strive in the Great Game to earn a personal reward or otherwise progress the story of their lives.
- **Story Challenges.** Use these when the Sage wants the characters to use their skills in personal combat, investigation, and persuasion in order to gain an advantage in the Great Game.

These rules assume that the key difference between the Great Game and ordinary play is the kinds of actions the players and their characters are making — the Sage doesn't have to think in Great Game terms unless the characters are using the Great Game rules, and the Sage doesn't have to think in terms of the personal conflict rules when the characters are using the Great Game.

Read more about Challenges on ppg. 118-120.

Fictional World vs. A War Game

(Great Game: Introduction)

Destiny Cost: 0

Here is how you should think about the Great Game, necessary stones, and Challenges.

Most of the Great Game rules focus on an abstract war game of colored stones on a battlefield map. These rules are essentially objective and self-contained and they don't care about what's "really" going on in the world — a Force stone, for example, obeys the same rules whether it's a highly-trained army led by a notorious drunkard or a conscript rabble run by committee.

The players and the Sage have individual visions of Shen Zhou and in these visions the meanings of events are more important than the formal rules that govern them. The Sage's vision is most definitive but, since human communication is never perfect, the visions aren't

identical. Even for the rawest questions like "*did event X happen?*" some divergence of vision is okay — and when it comes to complex emotional and ideological interpretations of events, the player's vision is as much the canon as the Sage's.

You can think of these visions of the world — both the grand story that the Sage tells and the individual stories that the players perceive — as happening "alongside" the events of the wargame. Sometimes you'll take wargame actions where the story doesn't seem to matter — it gets abstracted out, like the nature of the Force stone mentioned above. However, the rules keep the player and Sage visions of the world important by giving them ways to influence the war game when the two drift apart.

In every formal game, including games like Monopoly and Stratego, the players can inject story into the game by the following channels:

- **Choices.** You can respond to events based on their meaning rather than the optimal war game action.
- **Narration.** You can always describe events and actions in a fashion appropriate to your vision of what's going on.

In addition, these rules add three specific ways that the story directly affects the war game:

- **Challenges.** Challenges are designed in the context of the world, not the war game.
- **Difficulties.** The Sage sets the difficulties for variable-difficulty tasks based on the story.
- **Necessary Stones.** Necessary stones respond to the players' visions of the world, not the war game.

When you notice that the rules for the war game aren't covering something that you feel is important to your vision of the world, that doesn't mean that you should ignore your vision. Keep your ideas in mind and use them to shape your choices, narration, and how you as a player or Sage handle Challenges, tasks, and necessary stones!



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Using the Great Game

(*Great Game: Introduction*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Before You Play

Here are some things that you should do before using the Great Game for the first time —

Define what the Sage wants players to use the Great Game for.

You can use the Great Game to defeat an enemy's armies or topple Kings from their thrones.

However, some Sages prefer to handwave the defeat of an army or the toppling of a King; others won't want the characters to do that kind of thing at all.

If the Sage wants the players to proactively invoke the Great Game, then the Sage should figure out what kinds of tasks the players can use it for.

A typical statement might be, "Yeah, we can switch to the Great Game when you want to intrigue against people I won't let you topple with a few Skill rolls."

Or "Why don't you use the Great Game during downtime to track your overall efforts in rebuilding this city?"

Make a plan for play.

There are a few standard ways to use the Great Game:

- Making a few moves whenever there's a long Downtime.
- Swapping back and forth between the Great Game and the story a few times during a typical session.
- Having an occasional session of play dominated by the Great Game, with the active roleplaying confined to Challenges and decision-making.

You can use any of these plans.

Figure out the bookkeeping.

You'll generally need to keep track of the state of the battlefield between sessions, unless you finish the Great Game each time.

Here are some ideas for how to maintain a persistent world when you can't just leave a battlemat out between games:

- Use short, self-contained Great Game sessions with clear win conditions.
- Replace "stones" with colored pushpins in a paper map that you can keep around.

- Record the state of the Great Game in a text file or online collaborative environment (like a wiki).
- Agree not to try to keep everything exactly the same between sessions — the Sage takes the stones off the map at the end of each session and puts them back the next time she uses the Great Game. The players help the Sage out with remembering where stones go, but even if the Sage gets it wrong, her placement is final.

Clarify house rules.

If you want to modify the Great Game for your particular group's needs, feel free!

Setting up a Short-Term Session

You can use the Great Game to track events in a city, state, or Shen Zhou itself over the course of years. Unless you're disposing of a relatively minor irritant of an enemy, there's no specific point where the Great Game ends.

Sometimes that's what you want — but sometimes it isn't.

If you're going to use the Great Game for a limited engagement — in particular if you'd like to spend less than an hour on Great Game play, but also any time you want to run a defined story through the Great Game with a definitive ending — you need to bracket it with ending conditions. In particular,

- Define what the PCs have to do to "win."
- Define what else, besides a victory, can end or suspend the Great Game and return to ordinary play.

Recognize that "killing the enemy entirely" is either a long-term or a small-scale engagement. That is, don't expect to defeat Dominion faster using the Great Game than with ordinary play.

Instead, in a short-term engagement against a reasonably strong plotter, make sure the PCs have a specific set of goals — e.g., "We need to rescue the captive Prince, destroy the Evil Wheel, and hold the city's walls for at least ten rounds." Read *Challenges*, pg. 118 and *Goal Stones*, pg. 108 for more information on the tools you'll need.

Similarly, in the Sage's capacity as adversary, the Sage shouldn't set a goal of "destroy the PCs' forces entirely" unless the PCs are in a last-stand kind of situation. Instead, the Sage should figure out when — if the PCs haven't succeeded yet — to stop running the Great Game and return to ordinary play. Recognize that this doesn't automatically mean failure — the Sage can give PCs the opportunity to salvage victory through personal prowess; the Sage can suspend their efforts in the Great Game to run a different subplot in ordinary play; sometimes, the Sage might declare that the antagonists have achieved what they wanted in the Great Game and now proceed to challenge the PCs with a more personal intrigue or combat. Read *Events* and *Consequences* in the *Challenges* section, pg. 118 for more information on how to make this work.

Initial Forces

In a short-term use of the Great Game, the Sage should provide the players with their initial forces — either by handing them a stock of stones or by making plentiful stones available for recruitment with a good pitch. There are some recommendations for initial stones in Starting Characters Out, pg. 127, in the Tips and Tricks section.

Leaving the Great Game

In a short-term engagement, expect your characters to stay in it to the bitter end.

A player can decide that their character stops playing the Great Game, abandoning their forces in the field and going back to the simple life. By default, players can't expect this to work out for them — if they want to keep some of their stones, guarantee an escape or a reprieve, or otherwise make their retirement a tactical withdrawal, they must ask the Sage to set up an appropriate Goal or Challenge.

Setting up a Long-Term Session

If you're going to use the Great Game for long-term play, then you don't necessarily need ending conditions. Instead, you need to define a pace of play — how you'll interleave the Great Game and ordinary roleplaying. In particular, you need to:

- Define what needs to happen to make you feel “enough” has happened in the Great Game and it's time to return to the story.

Generally you will either play a fixed number of rounds or play until the next Challenge.

Initial Forces

In a long-term use of the Great Game, the Sage does not need to provide the characters with a very large stock of stones — the characters can develop their resources over time. There are some recommendations for initial stones in Starting Characters Out, pg. 127, in the Tips and Tricks section.

Leaving the Great Game

In a long-term engagement, expect your characters to leave the battlefield occasionally, either to attend to other interests or to retreat and regroup. The Sage should allow characters to do this at any time. The player should provide the Sage with the “standing orders” for their stones when their character departs. The Sage should assume that their stones follow these orders, using an appropriate NPC lieutenant's dice pool, and with a -5 penalty to Strike and to all non-attack actions.





Battlefields

Ten Thousand Places to Destroy Your Enemies

or

Looking at Shen Zhou through a Great Game Lens

Turn to this section for general information on battlefields and stones,

the explanation of stones' "Strength,"

the mini-guide to stone exhaustion,

and the rules for using your stones to control and change the qualities of the battlefield!

Battlefields

(Great Game: Concepts)

Destiny Cost: 0

When playing the Great Game, you can't consider every factor of the political, social, and military situation. It's too difficult! By the time the Sage explained every detail of events and you figured out a comprehensive plan to respond to them, it'd be 4am and you'd have to go home. So instead, the Sage and the players simplify things down to a "battlefield" — a limited arena of conflict, like a game board.

The important thing about a battlefield is that all the details your group isn't interested in dealing with — even if other groups would consider them deadly important — aren't on it. You don't have to care about them. It doesn't matter how vital sanitation is to real-world armies, for instance: if no one at your gaming table is interested in playing out sanitation arrangements, it's not on the battlefield, and it won't come up in the game.

This also applies to NPC opponents — no matter how important the local Nan Clan forces should be, if their actions aren't dramatically interesting to a player or the Sage, they're just not participating in the game in play!

These rules sometimes refer to relevant details as "on the battlefield" and everything else as "off the battlefield."

Scale

These rules allow battlefields to have many different sizes — you have more choices than just "personal battle" and "struggling for the fate of Shen Zhou."

The Sage picks a scale for the battlefield appropriate to the region your characters are actually struggling to control — whether that's a neighborhood, a city, a State, or the Land of the Gods. Unless the Sage wants to define all of the battlefield details herself, she should pick the closest-seeming match from the four standard choices below:

Personal (pg. 123). Think of Personal battlefields as the setting for a few scenes of a movie, book, or session — small backdrops of space and time where things happen. Use these battlefields for conflicts like "escaping a hungry tiger," "dousing a fire," and "dueling an enemy." You can also use them for long-term conflicts in a very small region such as a single neighborhood or family.

Local (pg. 124). Use Local battlefields to represent things like cities, small forests, villages and their environs, and other things of a municipal scale. You can also use Local battlefields to play out internal strife within a small Clan or large Gang. Unranked characters might not have enough Prestige to play the Great Game on a Local battlefield.

State (pg. 124). Use State battlefields when playing out conflicts that can shake an entire State — struggles between cities, infighting inside a Great Clan, border skirmishes between the States, and so forth. 5th rank characters might not have enough Prestige to play the Great Game on a State battlefield — or the whole PC group might have to work together as a single commander.

Territory (pg. 124). Use Territory-scale battlefields for everything bigger — up to and including the conflicts that shape the affairs of the Land of the Gods. 4th and 5th rank characters might not have enough Prestige to play the Great Game on a Territory battlefield — or, again, the whole PC group might need to work together.

In this section, the **Weapons of the Gods**

Companion shows you the authors' picture of the battlefield — complete with the nitty-gritty details you might need to understand what you can reasonably do.

In actual play, you can totally ignore most of these details! The map isn't all that important, the grid of points is only there to help the Sage set difficulties, and individual points on the map hardly ever matter unless they're really cool and special places.

All you'll need to care about is regions and routes.



Places

Imagine the battlefield as a loose grid of about 20x20 points. Each point is a “place” where you can put stones. These points are more or less evenly spaced on north-south and east-west lines, but you won’t ever need to hold to that — if the interesting places don’t line up properly, the Sage can bend the grid to accommodate. Imagine that there’s a collection of places off to the side that aren’t on the grid at all — see *The Elephant Board*, below.

The Sage makes a battlefield map that fits on top of this grid — conceptually, at least, it’s an overlay on the 20x20 grid. The Sage needs to mark the rough location of the places of interest to the players — the important houses in a neighborhood, the treasures in a city or Clan stronghold, the mountain fastnesses of Buddhist monks in a Territory battlefield, and so forth. There’s no obligation to include any more detail than that; these rules leave a lot of wiggle room.

Regions

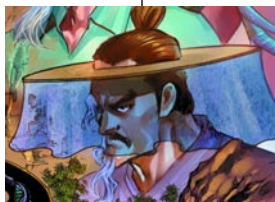
You don’t have to keep track of all 400 places on the battlefield individually. Instead, the Sage should identify small sections of the battlefield that seem like distinct and interesting locations. The Sage then draws non-overlapping borders around these sections, making them **regions**. As a rule of thumb, make regions that contain about 10 places (grid points) each and see if you can divide up any regions much larger than that.

Consider an example Local battlefield that consists of a city, the hills around it, and the bandit clan that makes trouble for the city. The Sage might circle the bandits’ home, forming the **Bandit Fortress Region**. The key farmland receives a border and becomes the **Farmland Region** — if it’s too large, it could become the **Northern Farmland Region** and the **Southern Farmland Region**. The homes of the rich become the **Good Part of Town Region**. These are all reasonable locations for necessary stones and good places to feature in Challenges.

It’s okay if some regions are larger or smaller than 10 places. The size of the region only matters when it’s large enough that it’s hard to travel through or when it’s too big for a single stone to control.

These rules call everything between regions and important single places **routes**. Routes differ from regions because you don’t expect to use them outside of travel montages — you won’t build things there, have a clash of armies there, or do interesting things in the Great Game in a route. If for some reason the Sage thinks that something important is going to happen in a route, it becomes a region.

In the example battlefield above, the miscellaneous hilly territory forms one large route. Several boring parts of the city become small in-city routes.



Practical Battlefields - What Do You Do?

Battlefields are like the city maps, region maps, and world maps in computer roleplaying games.

If you’re the Sage and you’re starting to use the Great Game, start by picking a scale (Personal, Local, State, or Territory) for the conflict. Once you’ve done that, sketch out a map for your players. There are two approaches to this that the **Weapons of the Gods Companion** recommends. The first is making a freehand sketch of the general layout, spending no more than a minute. The second is painstakingly laying out a detailed map on a 20x20 grid, generally completing it with a computer’s aid a day or two before the game. The idea is this: unless you have the time and interest to awe the players with a neat prop and your elite Sage skills, it isn’t worth sweating the details.

Note down the places of interest on the map and draw borders around the major regions. Make sure you have a rough sense of where everything is in relationship to everything else. Feel free to amend this map later if the players have a cool suggestion or you have a new idea.

Everything in between the regions and places is a route. Draw a few borders to break up the very large routes. If there are some regions or routes that are particularly hard to travel, such as criminal-run ghettos or snow-covered forests, note that down.

That’s it! You’re done!

The Elephant Board

(*Great Game: Concepts*)

Destiny Cost: 0

You’ll have many different goals and interests in the Great Game. It’s helpful to assign them to specific physical locations on the battlefield, but you don’t have to — there’s a section of the battlefield that isn’t tied to the physical map. The **Weapons of the Gods Companion** calls this the “elephant board.”

Suppose that a player declares his character Chao’s reputation all-important — that’s what he’s fighting to guard! This should create a necessary stone, but where does it go? Assuming that he only cares about his reputation among the wealthy, it’s easy to put the stone somewhere such as the **Good Part of Town Region** — but sometimes the location of Chao’s reputation is more ambiguous than that.

Similarly, characters associated with a local Buddhist temple could have a terrible internal struggle about a fine point of its doctrine. The Sage might decide that whomever controls the physical temple controls the doctrine, and there's a lot of truth to that, but if your characters are struggling not so much to silence dissent as to prove one point of view right, then physical and social control of the temple isn't enough.

In these cases, the Sage should invoke the “elephant board” — a set of abstract regions that are part of the same battlefield but not physically connected to it.

In the examples above, the Sage might draw two regions on the elephant board — one called **Chao's Reputation** and one called **Correct Doctrine**.

You can move certain stones back and forth between the elephant board and the battlefield — the Sage should decide which physical regions have a strong connection to the abstract elephant board region and allow you to move stones from one to the other. However, there are two special rules. First, to move stones to the elephant board, you have to explain the action in a way that makes sense — you can't march an army from the battlefield into the **Chao's Reputation Region**, but you might be able to divert some of your political clout there. Second, when you move a stone off of the elephant board, it always returns to the region it left from, even if there's no longer a connection — you can use a treasure house of silver to prop up Chao's Reputation, but you can't smuggle it from one country to another using Chao's Reputation as a tool.

The **Weapons of the Gods Companion** calls these abstract regions “the elephant board” in reference to the elephant piece in Xiangqi, which can crush enemies in its native region but cannot cross the river to attack the enemy.

Tips and Tricks: The Relationship Chart

In simple conflicts the Sage should not connect the regions of the elephant board.

The Sage can add some interest to long-term conflicts by linking the regions of the elephant board as if they were people in a relationship chart — essentially, the Sage should make routes between the elephant board regions that mirror the regions' emotional connections. The closer the connection, the easier that route is to travel. For example, if Unrighteous Emperor Hu is vaguely considering Chao for a position, then there's a very long and difficult route between **Emperor Hu's Plans** and **Chao's Reputation**. If Chao is actually Emperor Hu's beloved but unacknowledged son, then the route is short and easy — Emperor Hu's plans and Chao's reputation in the world are intertwined.



Stones

(*Great Game: Concepts and Terminology*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Once upon a time the Enchanted Demon placed stones of different colors on a map of Shen Zhou to mark the places where his enemies concentrated their power. You can do the same! These rules use colored stones to represent everything on the battlefield.

You as a player don't actually have to use colored stones. You can use miniatures. You can use pieces of paper. You can draw on the map. You can wing it! “Stone” is really just the shorthand that the **Weapons of the Gods Companion** uses for “important thing found on the battlefield.”

The Great Game uses stones as a *language* with which the players and the Sage communicate their ideas about the game world. They fulfill a necessary role by giving everyone a common interface to the events of the game. **If other people can have any effect at all on an event or plan, use the tools in this section to express it in terms of stones and what it does to other stones.** This makes sure that there are clear rules for how to handle their actions and saves your group the trouble of coming to formal consensus on what the event or plan actually means.

Here's an example. Suppose that you develop a complex and diffuse plan — say, manipulating others' wealth through currency exchange. To apply this plan in the Great Game, express it in terms of stones. Reviewing the battlefield, you discover that you have Influence stones that represent your wealth and your political power. They have Influence stones that represent their wealth. You implement your plan by moving your Influence stones into a good position to attack theirs.

Even when your plans play out as ordinary combat actions between stone and stone, the high-level vision still matters. You can keep it in mind when describing your actions to other characters and choosing your approach to battle (*Approaches to Battle*, pg. 97). You and other players can respond to that vision when creating necessary stones (*Necessary Stones*, ppg. 103-117). The Sage can incorporate your plan into her vision of the world when setting the difficulty of certain tasks, narrating events, and constructing Challenges (*Challenges*, ppg. 118-120). To the degree that the players and Sage use these techniques, the complex narratives of plans like the above can be *felt* everywhere on the battlefield even when the primary implementation is purely a battle of stones.

If you're into immersive play, where you try to think as much like your character as possible, you should think of the map and the colored stones on the map as your character's tactical vision — you might even have such a map in your office or tent, just as the Enchanted Demon did. If you're not very immersive, think of the map and the stones as a game that you play to express your characters' interests.

Attacking Your Enemies

You can express attacks against an enemy's labor force and military power as attacks on their Force stones.

You can express attacks against an enemy's fortune and political influence as an attack on their Influence stones.

You can express an attack on the enemy's morale by attacking its Will stones.

You can express an attack on the vital interests of an enemy by damaging their necessary stones. For instance, to ruin the productivity of vital farmland, you damage the necessary stone that says, "This region produces food that the enemy cares about."

You can also do this the other way around — decide to attack or otherwise influence a stone and figure out what that means in the world afterwards. You can even get in-character advice or out-of-character help from the Sage

or players as to what exactly that attack might look like — it's not a test of player ingenuity. **The Great Game assumes that if something matters, it's a stone, and anyone can move their forces to the stone to protect, heal, or destroy it.**

Commanders

The **Weapons of the Gods Companion** assumes that each stone gets its marching orders from exactly one character — the stone's "commander."

Your character will command a set of stones. You will dictate their actions in accordance with your will.

Subordinates

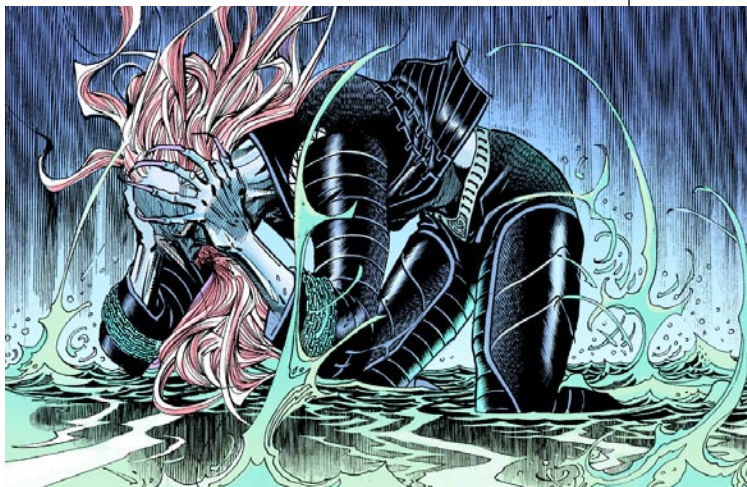
These rules assume that your character can communicate with and control all of your stones at all times. If the Sage wants to simulate communication difficulties, she can apply a -5 modifier to the Strike of any stones that you can't reach — they're having to follow old orders and they don't have your personal Prestige driving them on.

The Great Game is not a modern vision of combat. Independent commanders do not subordinate their will to a larger force. Instead, assume that every Wulin commander is leading their own personal army — even if they're technically your subordinate. A fiery Wulin subordinate brings their own Prestige to the table, their own version of your Agenda to the game, and their player doesn't have to act in accordance with your interests. This means that the stones you personally command and the stones you can think of as "yours" are the same — stones that you give to a subordinate are their army, not yours, and stones that your superiors have given you to command are yours, not theirs.

You or the Sage can give a name or other details to loyal non-Wulin officers in your command structure and to other agents who technically control some of your stones. Because these aren't Wulin commanders with their own Prestige, they don't have their own actions — they just implement your orders. Their names and personalities won't matter in play unless you, the Sage, or another player makes them matter through necessary stones or Challenges.

An Abundance of Commanders

If there are too many NPC commanders, the Sage can simplify the game by allowing the players to dictate the actions of some allied or subordinate Wulin NPCs.



“Exhausted” Stones

These rules divide stones into **exhausted** stones and **ready** stones. Assume that stones start out “ready” unless otherwise noted.

During the Great Game, you need to keep track of which of your stones are exhausted and which of them are ready. You can’t take the full range of actions with your exhausted stones — for example, they can’t move around. You can take any legal action with a ready stone, but some of those actions exhaust the stone — for example, when you rush a Force stone from place to place, it can exhaust that stone.

Every round you have the option to automatically “recover” some of your exhausted stones, making them ready again (*Movement and Recovery*, pg. 91). If recovering additional stones is strategically important, you can use specific actions to do so.

“Hurt” and exhausted are synonyms, as are “healthy” and ready. These rules sometimes use the words “hurt” and “healthy” because it’s more appropriate, but “hurt” just means that the stone is exhausted and “healthy” just means that it’s ready.

Stones that Fight

You can use fighting stones and special stones to defend territory and do useful work. Fighting stones also have the power to attack your enemies’ stones. You can use fighting stones to crush the enemy’s stones and they can use their fighting stones to crush yours.

Learn to recognize the power of the three basic fighting stones —

Force stones are raw physical power — your military and labor units.

Influence stones express the power of money and social position.

Will stones are the strength of your ideology.

Other stones that can fight include the Army stones, Commander stones, and Treasure stones. You can read more about all of the fighting stones under *Fighting Stones*, ppg. 99-103.

Special Stones

You can use fighting stones and special stones to defend territory and do useful work. You can use special stones to handle more unusual tasks.

Learn to recognize the subtle power of the two basic special stones —

Chaos stones are the raw power of inspiration and defiance.

Order stones are the raw power of discipline and infrastructure.

Exhaustion

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Fighting and Special Stones

Stones become exhausted by:

- Moving.
- Invoking certain battle techniques.
- Attacks designed to exhaust them.

Exhausted fighting and special stones can:

- Attack your enemies.
- Control regions.
- Win contests for territory.

Exhausted fighting and special stones can’t:

- Start moving voluntarily.
- Block an enemy’s travel.
- Change a region’s qualities.
- Use many special techniques.

To recover fighting and special stones:

- During your turn, after movement and before your action, you can recover
 - One fighting or special stone and
 - All fighting or special stones in the same region as your character.
- Use the *Recover* (pg. 95) or *Fast Recovery* (pg. 96) Action.

Necessary Stones

Stones become exhausted (“hurt”) through —

- Enemy action.

The effects are individual to the stone, as are the steps necessary to recover the stone.

Other special stones include Passion and Sorcery stones. You can read more about all of the special stones under *Special Stones*, ppg. 120-122.

Other Stones

You’ll also see **Necessary** stones on the map —

Necessary stones are things the characters fight for.

Fighting Stones

(*Great Game: Concepts and RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

To master kung fu and learn the weapons of the Wulin — that's a useful trick. But to wield armies, influence, and will — that's the key to controlling Shen Zhou!

You can use Force, Influence, and Will stones to make dramatic attacks upon your enemies.

The Strength of a Stone

You can differentiate large, powerful stones from small, weak stones by their Strength.

The Sage assigns each stone a rating or a Strength — listed as a number of points, like a Skill or Attribute rating. Everyone should understand this as a rough measurement for how large that stone is compared to the other forces on the battlefield. For example, you might have a 3-point Force stone or a 1-point Will stone.

In play, you'll use a stone's Strength to measure its defense, its ability to do large projects, and its conceptual scale. Its mechanical benefits are these —

- Strength acts like a Chi Aura against some attacks.
- Strength acts like 15 points of Health against other attacks.
- The strongest stone in a region usually dominates that region.
- Large stones are more useful for special tasks — a 1-point Force stone is just a few people, but a 10-point Force stone is a massive labor force!

Note that Strength doesn't have any offensive benefit. You can expect a large army, bolstered by its defensive Strength, to defeat a small army and take relatively few casualties, but you can't expect it to win quickly. For quick, decisive victories, don't use Strength — focus on high Skills, joss, the River, and special battle techniques (pg. 112-113).

When you use Great Game actions to create new stones, they start as 1-point stones. It's just as hard to add one point of strength to a stone as it is to make a new 1-point stone!

How Strong is Strong?

Here is a typical opponent — the kind of enemy that a reckless Wulin roustabout and her gang of outlaws might have to fight. The Sage should use this as a model when figuring out how big typical enemy forces should be. Players can use it to get a sense for how many stones they'll need to graduate from “meddling Wulin hero” to “powerful political figure.”

Black Chicken City: Government Power 3 Actor

Chaos 2, Will 4, Force 6, Influence 4, Order 4.

Leadership: Officials

Commander: Magistrate

Agenda:

“Keep order and collect taxes”

Some Necessary Stones:

- Order in the Streets
- Loyalty of Outlying Farmers
- Treasury
- Confucian Government Philosophy

Force:

- Guards (2-point Force stone)
- Guards (1-point Force stone)
- Indentured Laborers (1-point Force stone)
- Militia (2-point Force stone)

Influence:

- Money (2-point Influence stone)
- Magistrate (1-point Influence stone)
- Secret Money (1-point Influence stone)

Will:

- State Loyalty (3-point Will stone)
- Courtier (1-point Will stone)

Special Stones:

- Order stones (2, 1, 1)
- Chaos stones (2)

The bureaucracy that runs Black Chicken City — so named after a kung fu battle shot thirty-seven local chickens into the sky and they came down, inexplicably, on fire — has 6 total points of military and labor stones. It has 4 points of political influence, mostly its legitimate and illegitimate stores of cash but also the influence associated with the magistrate's title. It commands 4 total points of loyalty from its citizens. They like being part of whatever State the Sage puts Black Chicken City in, so the Seal that makes the city government legitimate carries with it three points of Will. There's also a 5th rank courtier in the city bureaucracy who can rouse the loyalty of some of the city's people.

Expect most Wulin leaders and most Actors to command 2-6 points each of Force, Influence, and Will; some special stones; and appropriate necessary stones.

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The Sage can build a “strong force” by assigning it 10-15 points each of Force, Influence, and Will. Season such a force with special and necessary stones to taste.

When the Sage creates stones for an established organization on one of its “native” battlefields (its centers of power), give it Force roughly equal to its Membership, total Influence roughly equal to its Resources, and total Will roughly equal to its Solidarity. Its total strength in fighting and special stones should be $(7 * \text{Power})$ or a little less — so a Power 4 organization can have 23-28 total points of fighting and special stones on its native battlefields.

In the Xia capital, **Only Six Devils**, the Iron Shadow Warlord commands a staggering 18 points of Force, in addition to 6 points of Will, 10 points of Influence, and up to 8 points of special stones. That’s mighty, but it’s nothing compared to the 25 points of Force that the Jin Empire can muster on the battlefield that is Shen Zhou!

Expect most offensive stones to have 1-5 points of strength, with the largest practical defensive stones having 10-15. These aren’t hard limits — they’re just what you can reasonably expect.

Big Stones vs. Little Stones

You can use the rules for *Transfer Strength* on pg. 90 to stick little stones together and form a big stone, or divide up a big stone into multiple smaller stones. Both the Sage and the players should keep in mind that commanders can redivide their “points” of a stone type — of Force, Influence, Will, or whatever — to respond to changing needs.

You should think of big stones as incredible concentrations of power clustered together in one place. They aren’t going to control much territory but they’re very hard to defeat.

You should think of collections of little stones as well-distributed power — power that you’re using to manage your interests in many places at once. You can control a lot of territory with collections of 1-point stones, but all of that territory is vulnerable.

Fighting with Stones

You can read the detailed combat rules for the Great Game under *Attack!*, pg. 90. For now, you should understand that fighting with stones uses your Skills in ways very similar to physical combat.



To figure out what Skill to use to “wield” a stone in combat, look up its key Skill. You can find this in the *stone type descriptions* on ppg. 99-102, and there’s a list of three key Skills below. If the key Skill doesn’t seem right for what you’re actually doing, the Sage can allow you to use a different Skill.

The common key Skills are —

Tactics for attacking with your Force stones.

Politics for attacking with your Influence stones.

Grace for attacking with your Will stones.

(Example)

Read this to get a sense for what fighting with stones will look like once you’ve seen all the rules.

You attack an enemy Force stone with one of your Influence stones. You’re using a really treacherous strategy of bribery and subversion — as you’ll see on pg. 97, *Approaches to Battle*, this gives you a +10 Strike. You roll your five dice of Politics, getting 2 2 5 8 9. With the +10, you have a 32.

The enemy commander defends, also rolling Politics. The result is 24. You succeed on your attack, with two result dice, so you’ll have two dice of damage to crush that Force stone with. Perhaps you’ll split it apart!

Controlling Places and Regions with Stones

(Great Game: Concepts and RULES)

Destiny Cost: 0

Your focus in the Great Game isn't on the stones. It's on the world — the battlefield that you're fighting to control. Your core goals aren't generally "defeat that army" except insofar as the army gets in your way: you're fighting to *protect* something, or *build* something, or *control* something. You want to make things happen the way you want them to. Enemies are obstacles in your path and only rarely the point of the exercise.

Before you can accomplish your goals in a region, the rules for the Great Game will often force you to establish *control* over that region.

Here's how.

Move a fighting stone or a typical special stone into a region and it automatically becomes a contender for control over that region. Its influence spreads throughout the region. Military Force stones can subjugate the region. Financial Influence stones can manipulate the people of that region by way of their avarice. Persuasive Will stones can win over the populace. You can also use force, money, or spirit to project power into an otherwise unpopulated region. Every stone has its own characteristic method for controlling a region.

Control doesn't take an action. The instant you move a stone into a region, you can consider it under your control — unless the region is unusually large or has other stones there. If it is very large, the Sage can demand that you move additional stones into the region before declaring your control over it. If other commanders have stones in the region, then only one of you gets to control the region — they can oppose your attempt at control as explained below.

To understand how control works, you might find it useful to imagine that the power of each stone flows out from that stone as an energy — an energy that reshapes the world around it. This is very literal for some special Daoist stones, such as a Sorcery stone that sends forth fire energy to heat up the land. For typical fighting stones, it's more of a metaphorical idea.

To win the Great Game, you have to control interesting places and regions with your stones. In particular, you have to control the places and regions where you or an enemy have necessary stones. This is what lets you decide the fate of those necessary stones, which is the only certain way to defeat an enemy and prevent your own defeat.

How Much Does One Stone Control?

Assume that most stones control about ten "places" on the battlefield — enough to dominate a typical region of 7-13 places. To control such a region, place the stone near the center of the region. You can also defend two regions from other commanders' control by placing a stone at the border between the two regions where it has influence in both.

The Sage can identify a region as "large" or "very large" to make it too big for a single stone to control. This rule exists to provide additional verisimilitude when dealing with regions with many (14+) grid points in them — but you don't have to use it that way. The Sage decides with complete discretion which regions are large or very large and she doesn't have to be consistent or realistic. In particular, you don't ever have to count the number of grid points in any region unless your map is so nice that somebody wants to.

To control a "large" region, you'll need to scatter two or more stones inside the region, each controlling part of the region — the northern part and the southern part, for example. To control a "very large" region, you'll need more than that.

Thrifty commanders who want to make the most of a small force of stones should read the descriptions of the various fighting and special stones on pp. 99-102 and 120-122. Each explains unique characteristics that allow the commander to "stretch" that stone's power — controlling a large region, a region plus part of a neighboring region, two small regions, or a big piece of a very large region. For example, the energy of Order flows on the roads. When a place is orderly and disciplined, the places connected to it by roads also grow more orderly. Order stones can control a larger area *if* it's connected by a major road!

Often, the Sage will allow you to control a large region with a single appropriate stone. For example, the Sage might declare a **Trade Road Region** too long for a single stone to control — unless it's an Order stone. A single Force stone might control the huge **Abandoned Keep Region**, since the builders conceptually intended a single garrison — other stone types might have more difficulty!

The Sage can also make declarations such as "this region is very large — you need to distribute five or more stones through the region to control all of it; Will stones count double."

These benefits of using the "right" kind of stone are automatic. If you want to stretch your stones' influence in a way that the Sage considers possible but dubious; to dam up an enemy's influence; or to otherwise affect the strategic

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situation using the qualities of stones, that takes a Challenge (*Challenges*, pg. 118-120). Describe the high concept of your plan. The Sage sets a difficulty based on the plausibility of your plan. If you're still interested, take the relevant actions to implement your plan, such as moving your stones around, doing work with them, and performing personal inspections of the relevant site. You don't have to spend a separate action for the plan itself. Once you've implemented the plan, make a Skill roll; if the Skill roll succeeds, so does the plan.

Remember that strong stones concentrate their power into the same space as a weak stone —the strength of a stone doesn't matter at this stage.

Contested Territory

Sometimes you'll want to control a place or region, but it'll have someone else's stones in it — or, at least, the energy from someone else's stones. You might have to deal with those stones before you can control the region. These rules call the portions of the region that multiple commanders' stones could conceivably control "contested territory," and at this point the strength of your stones comes into play.

In the Great Game, stronger stones dominate weaker stones in any contest for territory. The simplest case is where the region is small, all the important stones are in the region's center, and one commander has a stone that's stronger than any of the other stones.

You have four options if you want to control such a region. First, you can be the commander of the strongest single stone in that region. Second, you can get permission to do whatever you need control for from the commander of the strongest single stone in the region. Third, you can force the commander of the strongest single stone in the region to yield control to you for a single action. You can read more about this option under *Attack!* on pg. 92. Fourth, you can destroy or drive out the strongest stones in the region until you or someone amenable to your actions has the strongest remaining stone.

In sum, you have "control" of the region if the strongest stone there will let you do whatever it is that you want to do.

Sometimes a region is large and it takes multiple stones to control it. Sometimes an enemy puts a stone at the edge of a neighboring region, interfering with your control. In this case you should think of every place affected by the stones of two or more commanders as a "contested territory." You need to use the same four methods to control every contested territory in the region.

For example, if someone has a 5-point Chaos stone on the western border of a region, and you have a 1-point Influence stone in the region's center, then nobody controls

that region. The Chaos stone isn't close enough to control the eastern part of the region, and the Influence stone isn't strong enough to control the western half. You can position your stone cleverly to seize as much of the region as possible, but in a head-to-head conflict your political power just can't win out over the rebellious and unruly power of that Chaos stone. If you want to control that region, you'll need to get the Chaos stone's commander's permission or move some 6-point stone into the region.

What if there's a Tie for Strongest Stone?

If your plans for the region are chaotic or destructive, then you can resolve all such ties in your favor. For example, if there's a Force 3 stone in a region willing to let you sow trouble, and an Army 3 stone that would rather crack down and keep order, you can make as much trouble as you like — if the two forces fight for control over the territory, that only helps your cause.

If you want to impose order or do something that relies on harmony, peace, or calm, then ties break against you. For example, if there's a Force 3 stone in a region that objects to a careful investigation of the region's history, and an Order 3 stone in the region that wants to help, you can't control the territory — if the two stones fight for control over the territory, it disrupts your careful investigation.

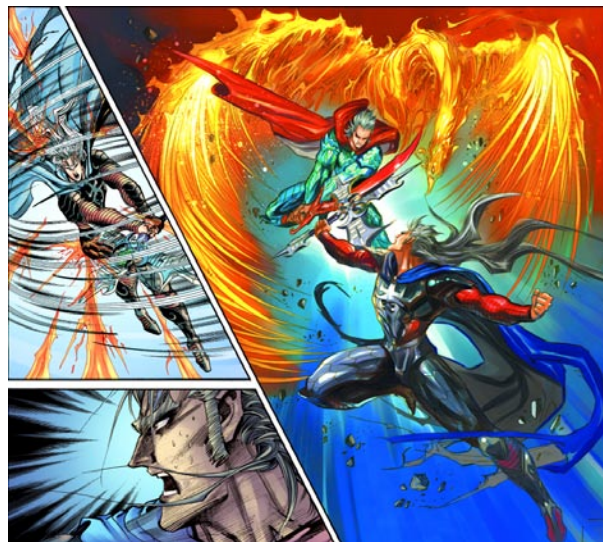
If there's a player-level dispute, the Sage is the final arbiter of whether your plans are chaotic or orderly.

What if There are Many, Many Stones?

To keep things simple, these rules assume that the number of stones in a region doesn't matter.

A 10-point stone can control a region despite the fervent opposition of 100 1- to 9-point stones. The same principle applies for every other value.

If this strains your credulity in a specific case, the Sage can let someone commanding many small stones to block the power of a larger stone with a Skill roll. This is normally a Challenge (*Challenges*, pg. 118-120) built around a Hard (30) Tactics, Politics, or Grace task.



Energies and Qualities

(*Great Game: Concepts*)

Destiny Cost: 0

You have the power to change the world of Shen Zhou.

These rules treat each region on the battlefield as having its own special qualities. Rivers are wet. Deserts are hot. Military camps are orderly. Schools are chaotic. In the east, people are characteristically philosophical. In the west, they're hard as knives.

You can use the energy of your stones to change these qualities — changing the in-game reality of the battlefield to your specifications!

Don't think of this as a sideshow to the clash of stones in combat — it's the combat that's the sideshow. **Changing regions is the heart of the Great Game.**

The Energy of Standard Stones

Some Daoist stones radiate their energy as a magical force.

The rules pretend that every stone's power works this same way — that it's always an energy that radiates from the stone's central point to reshape the world. However that's not always the best way to imagine the power of the standard stones.

Most of the time when you change the world you will use a Force, Influence, Will, Chaos, or Order stone.

You should envision the energy of a Force stone as the power of hard work. Force stones are military units or labor forces. The people in them work hard. You can use the stone's energy when changing the world in the same way that hard work can — to build structures, clear land, impose martial order, and so forth.

Think of the power of an Influence stone as the power of money and status. Influence stones are political power — often cash, sometimes social position. You can use the stone's energy when changing the world in the same way that political power can — shaming, organizing, or inspiring people to cooperate on a task.

Will stones represent the power of your ideology. You can use the stone's energy to change the world in the same way that ideology can — to shape the way people live and treat one another.

Think of a Chaos stone as a lump of disorder, chaos, and innovation. Its energy is the roughness, inspiration, and recklessness that you bring to the battlefield — something you shape and channel but don't wholly control. You can use it to spread disorder and inspire useful ideas.

Imagine the energy of an Order stone as the discipline and humaneness that you and your followers bring to the table. You use it to build infrastructure, spread harmony, and encourage people to behave properly. A Confucian bureaucracy has lots of Order; a rowdy bandit gang might not have any!

How to Use Energy

Using energy is simple.

To use a stone's power, pick some quality of the region — like, "housing quality" in a neighborhood, or "disorder" in the streets.

Then make a Skill roll. If you succeed, that quality grows stronger or weaker, as you prefer!

You can and should make up an appropriate quality for whatever it is you, as a player, want your character to do. You can read the standard qualities list on pp. 128-131 for inspiration — but if you want to do something that your character can theoretically do in the world, never get hung up on whether the quality in question exists. If you need more bells in a town to perform some kind of Daoist rite, you can increase the town's "belledness" and nobody at the gaming table has a reason to object.

How Difficult is It?

The Sage and players can use the following table to estimate the difficulty of doing what a player wants to do.

Difficulty	Meaning
Trivial (10) or Simple (15)	Changes the stones are transparently capable of accomplishing.
Everyday (18)	Minor changes, such as even barbarians and impractical idealists can effect.
Moderate (20)	Moderate changes, such as only a skilled leader can reliably effect.
Hard (30)	Major changes that transform a region in unexpected ways.
Legendary (40)	Major changes that the region will remember forever in its stories.
Impossible (60)	Major changes that all of Shen Zhou will remember forever.

For example, building a few more houses in a town is Simple. Transforming desert into lush farmland overnight is usually outright forbidden. If the Sage feels permissive, it is instead an Impossible task, most likely (because of the timing) at -10.

神兵玄奇



Rules for Energy

(Great Game: RULES and Examples)

Destiny Cost: 0

Here is how you change the qualities of a region.

First, move the right stone into that region — this is the stone that will actually do the work of changing that region. Pick a stone that can do appropriate work. For example, Force stones are laborers, so they can build structures and clear land. They're also military forces, so they can tame a region and make the people behave! Order stones exude discipline and sound practice, so they can improve sanitation. Influence stones are money and status, so they can change what people value. You can move multiple stones into the region if it's too big for one stone to control or if you think it'll help.

Second, if necessary, recover the stone. Exhausted stones can't do work. That means that if you exhausted the working stone moving it into the region you'll have to recover it before the work begins.

Third, establish control over the region. You can't do work in the region if there are enemy stones around that have the power to object.

Fourth, use a free action to put the stone or stones to work (see *Free Actions*, pg. 96) and make a Skill roll!

The Sage decides what Skill you need to use and the difficulty of the roll — whether the work you want to do should be a Simple, Everyday, Moderate, Hard, Legendary, or Impossible task for someone capable of playing the Great Game. This is not a trivial decision — it is the place where the Sage's discretion has the greatest impact on the progress of the Great Game.

The Sage should also determine how many rounds the change "should" take and how strong the stone "should" be to accomplish the task. **Assume a default of one round with a strength-I stone**, but more complicated tasks can require strong stones and multiple rounds.

If you cut the process short, use a stone that's too weak, or use a stone that's a bad tool for the task, then the Sage should assess a -5 or -10 penalty — this is the standard "cursory effort" penalty from pp. 15-16 of *Weapons of the Gods*. If you use more strength or take more time than you really need, the Sage can give a +5 or +10 — again, this is a standard bonus.

The Sage has the option to declare this a Style roll if it's obvious that you "should" succeed or fail for reasons of narrative consistency or fun.

On success, you make a specific desired shift in some quality of the region, driven by the energy of your stones.

Congratulations. You've changed the world!

How does this Affect Other Stones?

Don't expect your efforts to affect the other fighting and special stones in that region directly. Even if you've just sunk the Jin Army headquarters into a poisonous swamp, you have to use necessary stones and Challenges to bring the effects of that into play.

However, you *should* expect changing the world to affect one or more of the necessary stones in the region, trigger Challenges, and so forth — that's common, and in fact, it's how you can strategically justify taking the time to change the world.

What if I Can't Change a Whole Region?

You should change an entire region if at all possible.

If you can't, but have the resources to change a single place or part of a region, you can do so using the rules above. However, think of this like putting out *part* of a forest fire or taming a third of the wild frontier. The Sage shouldn't treat that kind of result as stable or definitive.

If you're changing a region to affect a necessary stone or trigger a Challenge, then in practice, most of the time, you need to change the whole region to get the desired result. Sometimes the rules let you get away with a partial effort.

What Happens on Failure?

If someone attempts to change a region and fails, they've still done *something* in the game world. It just didn't have an effect measurable by the game rules.

If you're a player, you're supposed to focus on your goals for the battlefield — on deciding what you consider important. That means that even if someone fails to transform a region, you're within your rights to decide that they did "too much damage" in the process and declare a goal to fix the harm they've done. Alternately, even if you fail to change something, you're within your rights to decide that you've done enough and allocate your resources elsewhere.

If you're a Sage, then you should be focusing on the story. Sometimes, even a failed attempt to change something can spark a story. Sometimes, it takes success. Watch everything people do with these rules for interesting opportunities — every time a player makes a Skill roll to spend their stones' energy, succeed or fail, they're changing the world.

Simple Example

Your enemies have foolishly placed a necessary stone in the **Farmland Region** — declaring their intention to keep its food supply safe! You have control over that farmland now, though, so you employ a Force stone to set everything afire.

The Sage declares that this is a Simple (15) Inspire roll, since all you really need to do is get your troops behind the notion. You succeed; the enemy suffers for their folly!

Complex Example

The Iron Shadow Warlord is going to invade your peaceful hometown in just seven rounds. The first thing you decide to do is create some defensible positions. There aren't any specific rules for defensible positions, but that's okay. You pick some of the approaches to the town and build fortifications. The Sage marks down the places you're working on as new, interesting regions of the battlefield and declares that you're trying to increase their "defensibility" (a quality your sage made up on the spot).

The Sage decides, based on the *Commander Stone* rules on pg. 99, that each PC can do the work of a 1-point Force stone. Between you and your friends and the town's workers, you have 10 points of Force to work with. You divide this as evenly as you can between the three roads leading into the town, setting each group to the task of building low walls, gates, and ditches to control horse access; guardhouses to keep troops in; and sentry towers to make sure you're aware of any enemy approach. You've got 5 rounds to build something meaningful but you don't have much more than that, so the Sage declares that this is a Simple Crafting roll with a -5 penalty because you don't have the full 5 points of Force you need. Each of the PCs on the scene makes a Crafting roll to construct their fortifications; two of them succeed. The third PC, Reckless Liu, fails, so the south road isn't as well-defended as it could be.

The Sage places Goal stones (a kind of necessary stones) on each of the well-fortified areas: "hold this region, and your stones in it are effectively in light armor." For the south road, the Sage asks the player if the character admits her failure to the others. Liu doesn't — she's too hot-blooded! So the Sage puts a different Goal stone there: "Reckless Liu has a +5 Strike modifier when defending this area — but if the enemy seizes it, she'll be embarrassed!"

The Sage figures that you need at least a 2-point Force stone working for one round to build a crude fortification. Something serious needs 5 points of Force and 5 rounds. Ten rounds builds a wooden fortress. A terrible stone fort would take at least a 5-point Force stone and twenty-five rounds. These numbers aren't necessarily realistic, but it's the Sage's best guess that matters.

The Difficulty of Changing the World

This section provides a more complex model of the battlefield. It isn't rules text — it's something the Sage can keep in mind when setting difficulties.



The **Weapons of the Gods Companion** assumes that every region in the battlefield has a set of qualities that have fixed numeric values — habitability, defensibility, order, chaos, comfort, danger, passion, lethargy, and so forth. Every region also has a natural level for these things — a baseline quality that's easy to reach whether you're tearing the region down or building it up.

To accomplish whatever they want to accomplish, characters need to change those values. As they spend energy from their stones, they slowly improve or damage the qualities of the region, aiming for the level they need to get the effect they want. If they fail or if someone interrupts them halfway through, sometimes they've left a permanent mark on the region and sometimes they haven't.

In practice, keeping track of all of this is too complicated. That's why the **Weapons of the Gods Companion** doesn't bother listing the qualities regions have and why you don't have to keep track of the numeric values and baselines for the qualities you're using. Instead, when setting the difficulty for Skill rolls to change the battlefield, the Sage should make a quick estimate of the region's current qualities, how much they need to change, and how much the region resists that change. This is what determines whether it should be a Simple task, an Everyday task, a Moderate task, a Hard task, or a really hard task for the stone or stones in question.

See also *Qualities*, ppg. 128-131.



Combat Rules

Taking Action in the Great Game

or

Destroy All Enemies — Fight!

Turn to this section for the rules on Prestige, movement, recovery, stones in motion, combat actions, stances, and secrets in the Great Game.

Agendas and Prestige

Here's a trick you can use. If you don't want to learn all the details of the combat rules, you can actually run the Great Game with nothing but the Challenge rules on pg. 118-120 — Let people accomplish things in the Great Game by successfully meeting Event challenges!

(Great Game: Concepts and RULES)

Destiny Cost: 0

If you use a shorthand for the ideologies on the battlefield, you won't have to think through all the philosophical details every time people take Great Game actions. For this reason, you should boil down the various causes in play into Agendas — short imperative statements that give direction to the various Wulin commanders and Actors. Here are some examples —

“Control this city, and lead its people to righteousness.”

“Serve the Nan Clan, preferably through martial excellence.”

“Keep the bandits from overrunning the town.”

“Keep Zhu Chen happy and healthy.”

The First Emperor conceived the following theory regarding Agendas — they are only as strong as the prestige of the power players that support them. If even one Wulin commander or powerful Actor raises a banner to support an Agenda, then it is a “living” cause and people will follow it. Without that prestige, the Agenda is dead. No army is sufficient to directly control every living person in Shen Zhou, but because the First Emperor could destroy the commanders and Actors pursuing hostile Agendas, he could keep every living person in line.

The Sage and players should assume that the First Emperor's theory is true — that the prestige of Actors and Wulin commanders is all that gives an Agenda life. This is useful because it establishes an unambiguous mechanism for determining victory over an Agenda: destroy its backers or their prestige on the battlefield, and the Agenda is defeated. At the same time, it leaves the Sage and players free to revisit even the most settled matter by introducing new Wulin characters to the battlefield with a stake in old events.

Here's an analogy: the Agenda is a signal fire in the social world. Signing on to an Agenda kindles a flame that burns as brightly as your personal Prestige. When legendary warriors, courtiers, scholars, and organizations back an Agenda, it gains legitimacy and everyone yearns to fight on its side. But without Wulin characters or Actors to stand up for a cause, ordinary people won't support it.

To win the Great Game in the long term you must crush the Prestige of your enemies' Agendas and maintain enough strength to keep your allies' Agendas in check.

How this Works

Your enemies in the Great Game are not stones. Stones are tools. Your enemies are the Wulin characters and Actors who command stones. Each Actor and Wulin commander gives Prestige to their particular Agenda.

On the battlefield, this Prestige uses a health track — just like Health. You can wound Prestige or heal it, and when your character's Prestige is wounded, you suffer certain penalties.

You can drive a Wulin commander or Actor from the battlefield by doing five times their Prestige in damage. The idea behind Actors is that they are impersonal foes whom you can discourage or drive away without destroying them. The game represents that discouragement by their Prestige track: when you do five times their Prestige in damage, not only have you discredited them locally (if appropriate), you've convinced them that the battlefield just isn't worth maintaining a presence on. Their forces withdraw.

Wulin commanders have a personal stake — normally, it's up to their player (or the Sage's characterization, if an NPC) when they actually give up. However it's possible to make someone politically impotent without killing them. You can do this by damaging their Prestige. When you do five times their Prestige in damage, you've diminished their influence to the point where they can no longer command stones on this battlefield. These rules call this “Prestige death.”

Think of Prestige death as losing the Great Game. Characters do not recover from it naturally. Characters remain Prestige-dead until they gain a new rank or the Sage offers them a Story Challenge to restore their

reputation. Prestige-death is a purely local phenomenon, however — even Prestige-dead, you can still play the Great Game on any substantially different battlefield. For this reason, incompetent players of the Great Game often wander from state to state, searching out conflicts where people are still willing to follow them.



Taking Action!

(*Great Game: CORE RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

These are the core conflict rules for the Great Game.

Time and Distance

Measure time in rounds, just like in personal combat. Instead of imagining each round as a few seconds, however, treat these rounds as a substantial period of IC time — for example, during a fierce-fought street war for control of a city, the Sage typically makes rounds one hour long.

These rules measure distance in grid points, but in practice you will measure distances by hassle — specifically, the task difficulty of traveling between two points. The Sage should usually make travel between adjacent regions a Simple (15) or Everyday (18) task, but can make getting through a difficult route Moderately (20) difficult, downright Hard (30), or even a Legendary (40) accomplishment. Traveling longer distances through congenial landscape should be a Moderate (20) or Hard (30) task.

Fast Rounds and Slow Rounds

Sometimes a conflict is fast-paced. If you blink, you'll miss it!

Other times, instead of having a raging battle, there is stasis and calm — the forces entrench in their positions and rarely adjust them.

Play out heated conflicts, where everyone's in a hurry and travel involves no courtesies, in "fast rounds." These rules assume fast rounds as a default because fast-paced conflict is the kind most likely to draw in PCs. If anyone on the battlefield decides to switch to fast rounds, everyone on the battlefield must follow suit!

Play out calmer situations in "slow rounds." These correspond to a much greater amount of IC time and allow an unlimited number of free actions (see below).

There are two cases in which you should use slow rounds. The first is a situation of relative peace. Play out peace

in slow rounds until someone decides slow rounds are no longer an option. The second is a situation where some external natural or social force slows everything down — for example, if the Sage decides that Unrighteous Emperor Hu disapproves of hurried and blatant scheming, players playing palace bureaucrats might have to play out their social conflicts in slow rounds or lose their posts. In winter, troop movement and other tasks become difficult, and the Sage can force military conflicts into slow rounds by weather-related fiat.

You might think that you can move stones further in a slow round than a fast round, but these rules assume that's not true — that the same troop movement that takes an hour of fast marching in a time of war takes a week of negotiation, preparation, and paperwork in a time of peace. If you want your stones to run around doing as they please, switch to fast rounds!

Exact Timing

The exact IC duration of a round depends on the scale of the battlefield. Standard times are listed here and on the *Battlefield Summary Sheets* (pg. 123-125).

Battlefield Scale	Fast Round	Slow Round
Personal	1-3 minutes	One full day
Local	1 hour	One week
State	6 hours	One month
Territory	One day	One season

Initiative

Every character playing the Great Game on a given battlefield makes an Initiative roll at the start of each round. During the round characters act in order of their initiative rolls, highest to lowest.

In the Great Game, weapons don't give characters Speed, but a character's approach to battle can — if a character is using one of the stances from *Approaches to Battle*, pg. 97, use its Speed to modify their Initiative.

On each character's Initiative, they do the following things in order:

- **Movement.** The character can move some of their stones.
- **Recovery.** The character can recover one or more stones.
- **Actions.** The character can take a full action and some free actions.

Movement and Recovery

Some of a character's stones may be "in transit" at the start of the round. The higher the character's Initiative total, the more likely those stones are to arrive dramatically at destinations of the character's choice, ready to oppose the ambitions of the character's enemies and issue a devastating offense. You can find the rules for this on pg. 91.

After movement, the character can recover one of their exhausted fighting or special stones. In addition, the character can automatically recover all of the fighting and special stones that are under their command and in the same region as the character. Think of this as the stones taking inspiration from the character's glorious Prestige.

Actions

In each round of the Great Game, each character can take a single full action.

In addition characters can take free actions.

In a conflict using slow rounds, characters can take up to four free actions. In a conflict using fast rounds, characters can still take up to four free actions, but if they take more than two, they suffer a -10 distraction penalty on their full action.

Full Actions

Most actions relevant to the Great Game are full actions.

There are six standard full actions —

Attack! You can use your full action to attack an enemy's stones in a region (pg. 92).

Boost. You can prepare yourself to unleash devastation next round (pg. 94).

Develop. You can develop your forces by creating new stones or adding strength to existing stones (pg. 94).

Recover. You can heal your wounded Prestige and help exhausted stones recover (pg. 95).

Special Action. If you want to do something incredible — typically, using secret arts, predictionism, or sorcery to influence a character or Agenda — you can do so with this full action. This is also the action to use for particularly impressive Skill uses. (pg. 95)

Tactical Opposition. You can use your full action to tactically oppose others' actions, as in personal combat.

Unless otherwise specified by these rules or the Sage, assume that any Skill roll that directly affects the battlefield requires a full action.

Free Actions

There are ten standard free actions, plus a miscellaneous free action for the random things you might want to do during the Great Game.

These are:

Block. You can interfere with the enemy's travels.

Change Approach. You can change your general approach to the Great Game.

Decision (1/round). You can make an important ideological decision!

Fast Recovery. You can "hurry" an exhausted stone's recovery, but it loses strength.

Give Stone. You can give one fighting or special stone to a consenting commander.

Move Stones (1/round). You can set up to three stones in motion towards a destination.

Put Stones to Work. You can put stones to work in a region to change its qualities.

Recruitment. You can make a pitch to NPC-run stones in the same region as one of your stones.

Technique. Some special techniques require a free action.

Transfer Strength. You can combine, split, or move strength between stones of the same type in the same region.

Unrelated Activities. As a free action, you can take care of important miscellaneous business that's time-consuming enough to distract you but not part of the battlefield. For example, if you're playing the Great Game in a city-sized battlefield, personal combat is usually distracting. If you don't have bodyguards who can fight off attackers while you focus on important paperwork and strategy, you have to spend a free action each time assassins burst in. If you've already spent all four free actions, further unrelated activities — within the natural time constraints of the

Great Game — are free.

Quickly-performed Special Actions (e.g., secret arts with the Quick Work technique) can be free actions on a case by case basis.

Opposing Actions

You can oppose actions in a fashion almost identical to opposing actions in personal combat. In particular, use the personal combat rules for tactical and opportunistic opposition.

When someone attacks a stone, its commander receives an automatic defense.





Movement and Recovery

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

If you're the Sage, you don't actually have to set movement difficulties for every region and route. Just assume that everything is Simple or that everything is Everyday (to taste) and throw in more difficult traveling conditions when it seems appropriate.

On your Initiative, stones in motion can arrive at their destination and exhausted stones can recover. You can't help other players out here — it's only your stones that can arrive or recover.

Movement

Did you know that when you rolled Initiative, it was actually a complex roll not just to place yourself in the Initiative order but also to move any of your stones currently in transit?

Now you do.

On your Initiative, you can declare that any number of stones currently "in motion" arrive. At the same time you specify their destination.

Your Initiative roll — counting Speed and other modifiers — limits the available destinations. You need a high Initiative roll to have a stone arrive far from where it started. **Don't roll again: reuse the roll you made to determine your place in the Initiative order.**

Initiative Total	Stones in motion can arrive . . .
Trivial (5)	...at a different place inside the region they left.
Simple (15)	...from a Simple-travel region/route to any adjacent region/route.
Everyday (18)	...from an Everyday-travel region/route to any adjacent region/route.
Moderate (20)	...2-3 regions away, but without passing through a Hard region/route.
Hard (30)	...5-6 regions away, but must circle around Legendary regions/routes.
Legendary (40)	...as far as the Sage allows, but not through Impossible routes.

This system gives a high Initiative total two new benefits. First, better rolls let you move your stones farther. Second, the Sage gives every region and route on the battlefield a base difficulty to move through — an Initiative roll necessary to leave that region or route and move to a neighboring region or route. You can't move stones through regions or routes that are too difficult for your roll.

On a normal success, you have to exhaust each stone as it arrives in its destination. If you want a stone to arrive ready for action, wait until you can get a critical success for that stone's journey. If your Initiative roll is a critical success for that particular stone's movement, the stone arrives at its destination *ready*.

The Great Game does not have any rules for moving stones in transit in a specific direction. That's not on the battlefield, and you shouldn't think of it as an action that you can take. Stones start moving, and both their path and where they were going is determined retroactively at the moment of their arrival. This is one section of the Great Game where the player's strategy is different from the character's strategy — you can roleplay strategic genius by having your stones arrive where you want them to arrive, trickiness by having them arrive in unexpected places, and indecision by leaving them in limbo marching, for all anyone knows, in circles. Players are welcome to conceive of and declare more specific marching orders, but it's only relevant insofar as it affects their play, necessary stones, and Challenges. In particular, if you want to simulate stones moving towards a distant destination and you aren't getting the Legendary (40) rolls you want, don't get confused because they're "no closer" after a while — instead, have the stones arrive at some intermediate point and then move on again.

Example

Wu Bu is planning a major assault, but he rolls terribly on his Initiative — a 17! He has one stone in motion to an adjacent region, so he lets it arrive; otherwise, his stones remain in transit. He decides to Boost his Speed.

Next round, he rolls a 32 on his Initiative. Looking at the board, Wu Bu's player notices an undefended position. Suddenly all of his forces converge there — they're exhausted from the rush, but Wu Bu's ready to crush his enemies!

Recovery

Once you've handled movement, you can now recover one exhausted fighting or special stone. In addition — and you should consider this a major tactical power that commanders have — you can automatically recover every fighting or special stone that's both loyal to you and in the same region as you are!

Stones “In Motion”

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Stones in motion are —

- Still technically in the region they started from.
- Vulnerable to attacks there.

Stones in motion aren't —

- Controlling the region.
- Contesting territory in the region.
- Able to make attacks or do work.

Attack!

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Attack! uses the attacking stone's key skill.

Use this action to attack other characters' stones.

Things to Remember

Strong stones, like high-rank fighters, are hard to hurt with a single attack.

Your enemy can deal with damage in several different ways. You can't control which way the enemy handles damage, and this can make accomplishing your goals with violence more difficult.

It's good to have extra stones in the region to support you in battle — they can't make separate attacks, but you can exhaust them to fuel common battle techniques (pg. 112-113)!

Fighting Stones

Under normal circumstances, you can only make attacks using “fighting stones.” The standard fighting stones are Force, Influence, and Will stones. (See *Fighting Stones*, pg. 99-103, for a complete list.)

You can target both fighting stones and special stones.

You attack using one specific stone. You can target any fighting or special stone whose energy — that is, potential region of control — overlaps or touches the energy of the attacking stone.

Attack and Damage Rolls

Each fighting stone has a “key” Skill used for most attack rolls — Tactics for Force stones, Politics for Influence stones, and Grace for Will stones.

The commander of the targeted stone receives a free defense. The defending commander can pick one of two Skills to roll —

- The key Skill for the attacking stone.
- The key Skill for the defending stone, at a -5 penalty to Strike.

Thus, you can always defend a Force stone with Tactics, but defending against a political assault with Tactics alone suffers the -5 penalty — it's probably better to use Politics unless you're politically inept or have other penalties at work.

If the attack succeeds, then damage works very much like damage in personal combat. You determine damage by rolling the result dice for your attack.

Offering an Alternative

You can offer the target an alternative to taking damage — either when you declare the attack or after you've succeeded.

The specific alternatives you can offer are these —

Yielding Control. The targeted stone yields control over the region — until the end of your next action, it allows your stones to control any contested territory. You can make this alternative contingent on the opponent also accepting it for other stones you target with secondary or area attacks — that way, you don't have annoying cases where one stone yields control but the opponent still controls half of a large region with a different stone.

Leaving. The targeted stone is set “in motion” (see *Movement and Recovery*, pg. 91). You can, again, make this alternative contingent on the opponent also accepting it for other stones you target with secondary or area attacks.

Exhaustion. The targeted stone becomes exhausted (see pg. 80).

In addition, you can offer any other alternative that the Sage considers reasonable.

Reducing Damage

If you don't offer any alternatives, or if the enemy refuses them, the commander of the targeted stone has two ways to reduce the damage.

Aura. First, they can defend against that damage with the stone's Aura. This is the stone's natural defense against damage, called Aura because it works exactly like Chi Aura. Stones have an Aura with magnitude equal to the stone's strength, but can never roll more than five dice of Aura to defend against a single attack. Each stone's Aura



regenerates fully at the end of each round of the Great Game. Thus a 25-point Force stone has a legendary 25-point Aura — it can roll up to 25 dice a round to reduce damage taken, although it cannot roll more than 5 dice per attack.

Bleeding Strength. If a stone bleeds strength, this reduces the damage taken by 15 points for each point of strength the stone loses. If the stone loses its last point of strength, the stone breaks and the damage is entirely annulled. (This is so you can never destroy a commander's Prestige by attacking a stone they're willing to sacrifice.) A "broken" stone is destroyed as a tool in the Great Game — broken stones leave the battlefield, and except in weird special cases, you shouldn't expect them to return.

Special stones can use their Aura and then bleed strength. Fighting stones must choose one or the other.

You can't destroy a commander's Prestige by attacking stones unless they give you the opportunity to do so by invoking their Aura.

Bleeding strength against every dangerous attack is a valid defensive strategy! If your opponent is doing this, you'll have to target their necessary stones to take them off the battlefield.

Suffering Damage

The remaining damage is assessed against the commander's Prestige. Destroying that Prestige scatters every stone under that person's command and may very well render their Agenda moot. It's the ultimate victory against any rival in the Great Game!

As an example of how this is supposed to work, one can imagine a battlefield in the north in which the Bei Clan has an interest. It has an army consisting there of three Force stones. One of those Force stones is a small scouting unit; the Bei Clan representative, Dog-Breath Bei, will bleed that stone's strength if it gets attacked because it's better to lose the stone than to risk the Bei Clan's Prestige. One is a large military force — whether Dog-Breath risks Prestige damage to keep that stone intact will depend on the result dice he's looking at. The third is the strength-4 force that guards the Bei Clan's necessary stones in that region. Dog-Breath Bei can't afford to lose this army unless the other military force is close enough to protect the necessary stones — if he can't defend it with Aura, he'll suck up the damage. If the damage destroys his Prestige, the region clearly isn't worth the investment of Bei Clan forces — the Bei Clan army retreats and waits for Dog-Breath's new assignment.

Notes on Special Stones

You should think of special stones as powers that the commander manipulates rather than forces the

commander directly controls. You wield fighting stones with the bluntness of a sword; they follow you with the loyalty of a dog. Controlling a special stone is more like mastering a spell or a pet fox — it'll generally do what you want it to do, but it follows its own path!

You can never use special stones to attack your enemies. Conversely, special stones that someone attacks don't ever have to pass damage on to their commander's Prestige. The commander can bleed the stone's strength to stop damage even if she's already used the stone's Aura.

Health

You can take up to five times your Prestige in damage before there's no point in playing the Great Game any longer. This uses the same Wound Level system as Health.

The Prestige of a Wulin character is based on rank. The Prestige of an Actor is based on the scale of the battlefield. The Sage can adjust this as appropriate, offering particularly famous characters or antagonists extra Prestige.

Rank (for Characters)	Battlefield Scale (for Actors)	Prestige
Unranked	—	2
5th	Personal	5
4th	Local	10
3rd	—	15
2nd	State	20
1st	Territory	25

Damage imposes penalties on stones that that character or Actor commands. **These penalties only apply to the commander's rolls. They only apply in the Great Game, and only to Initiative and actions involving commanding stones.**

Healthy / Battered. Before someone's Prestige takes damage, it's Healthy. Afterwards, it's Battered.

Injured. The Rush, Recover, and Fast Recovery actions suffer a -5 penalty.

Wounded. All rolls commanding stones suffer a -5 penalty. Initiative suffers a -5 penalty. The Rush, Recover, and Fast Recovery actions suffer a -10.

Staggering. All rolls commanding stones suffer a -10 penalty, as does Initiative.

Last Legs. All rolls commanding stones suffer a -10 penalty, as does Initiative. Rush, Recover, and Fast Recovery actions suffer a -20.



There is no **Dying** phase for someone's Prestige — when someone takes five times their Prestige in damage, they've lost at the Great Game. A character who loses all their Prestige suffers Prestige death. They can no longer command stones, act as a stone, or have necessary stones on that battlefield. Their necessary stones break; the Sage decides what happens to their fighting stones and special stones. The character cannot recover this lost Prestige until they gain rank, they move to an unrelated battlefield, or the circumstances of the battlefield dramatically change. Note that play is still possible, as the character can still take special actions, assist others, and participate in the ongoing story — they just don't have any personal prestige left.

The Sage can postpone the final collapse of someone's broken Prestige for up to three rounds (or more, if nobody starts throwing rotten vegetables at her) in the interest of drama.

Boost

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

The Boost action increases your power in the next round. Choose one of the following benefits for your next round:

- +10 to Speed.
- +10 to Damage.
- +5 to Strike.

Boosting your Speed doesn't just give you a better place in the Initiative order — it allows your stones to move quickly to new positions. It's a great choice when you're in a rush!

Develop

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Develop uses the **Crafting** Skill. Use this action to develop your tangible resources in the Great Game.

You can do one of three things with the “develop” action:

- Create a new fighting stone,
- Create a new special stone,
- Add a point of strength to a fighting or special stone.

If you're developing someone else's resources, you need their permission.

Doing this in a fast round of the Great Game is a **Legendary** (40) Crafting roll.

Doing this in a slow round is a **Hard** (30) Crafting roll.

Review: Succeeding on Hard Rolls

The roll to develop stones is very difficult — so here's an overview of the techniques you might use to succeed.

If another character capable of playing the Great Game spends their full action helping you instead of doing their own thing, you can get a +5 on any roll.

The River and joss work just fine in the Great Game — so the **Legendary** (40) roll to develop stones isn't necessarily a problem.

You can get positive modifiers from necessary stones with the power of belief (*Concept Stones*, pg. 114-117) or by achieving important goals (*Goal Stones*, pg. 108-110)!

Stones

Everyone can create and improve Force, Influence, Will, Chaos, and Order stones. To create or improve a Treasure stone requires the Sage's permission.

Special lore can allow you to create and improve additional stone types such as Army stones, Sorcery stones, and Passion stones.

Characters can use alternate Skills to create stones — as by rallying a new Force stone with Inspire or using Finesse to steal an Influence stone-sized fortune. This costs 2 *joss* each time the roll succeeds — you bend the rules with the favor of the gods or break them with the favor of the demons.

You always create new fighting stones and special stones in your location. You can't build them remotely — the person making the Skill roll must be right there pulling the resources together. If you're currently in transit — see *Commander Stones*, pg. 99 — the new stone is created in motion. You can ignore these rules for special stones, like Passion stones, that specifically waive them.

When you make a stone, you pick an Agenda that it's loyal to and someone fighting for that Agenda to act as its commander. This is usually your own Agenda and you yourself, but it's okay to make stones for your allies. You might do this because they're a better commander than you are or because you already have as many stones as you can handle (see below.)

Limits

You can only have so many fighting and special stones gathered under your personal banner to serve your Agenda.



Each commander has a set of Agenda stones — a kind of necessary stone (see *Agenda Stones*, pg. 107). The limit on the power you can command is simple: you can have up to seven points of fighting and special stones for each Agenda stone you possess. Past this point, you aren't bringing enough Prestige to the Agenda to hold everything together — extra stones break off and their disposition is left to the Sage. Normally they wander as NPC-run stones until such time as someone recruits them with a good pitch and the **Recruitment** action.

It's perfectly legitimate to create stones for an ally instead of for yourself if you're at your limit — even special stones with the power of Daoist magic or a courtier's secret arts.

Recover

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Recover uses the **Inspire** Skill. Use this action to catch your breath when beleaguered and low on resources in the Great Game.

The Recover action is a complex Inspire task. It does three things. You don't have to pick one — it's a complex task and you get everything you roll well enough to get.

First, Recovery can heal your reputation, restoring one Wound Level of Prestige.

Second, on a Moderate (20) roll or better, Recover allows you to recover one “hurt” or “exhausted” fighting or special stone. On a Hard (30) roll or better, you can recover two such stones. These don't have to be your stones — you can recover anyone's stones, as long as their commander consents.

Third, on a Hard (30) roll or better, you restore hope, vigor, and confidence to your forces. This has no direct impact on the strategy of the Great Game but it can trigger story effects.

Wound Level	Difficulty to Heal
Dead	Impossible (60), at best
Last Legs	Legendary (40)
Staggering	Hard (30)
Wounded	Moderate (20)
Injured	Everyday (18)
Battered	Simple (15)

Special Action

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Use this action to do miscellaneous cool things using your special powers and Skills.

Secret Arts. You can use a special action to use predictionism, the secret arts, or Daoist sorcery on an enemy commander or Agenda.

Impressive Skill Use. Skill uses epic enough to affect the course of the Great Game are special actions. You could, for example:

- Attempt the Hard (30) or Legendary (40) Persuade roll to involve a previously neutral Actor in the battlefield;
- Compose a timeless ballad about the sexual proclivities of your enemy's ancestors;
- Attempt the Hard (30) Investigation roll to discover the secret of your Clan's hidden temple;
- Struggle medically against the plague that has claimed your Clan Head just when you need him most!

In most cases this is redundant with the rules for necessary and story stones below, but go ahead and treat special projects as special actions if it's what feels most appropriate.

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Techniques. Using some special abilities associated with your stones requires a full action. More details are found under the individual stone descriptions in *Fighting Stones*, pg. 99-103.

Tactical Opposition

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Use the Tactical Opposition action to interfere with your enemies' projects.

You can find the rules for tactical opposition on pg. 70, *Weapons of the Gods*. You'll use them exactly as you do in personal combat.



Free Actions

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Block

You can use your unhurt stones to hinder an enemy's movement, making a set of regions impossible for them to get to. This requires a Moderate (20) Tactics success and lasts until the end of the current round. (Thus, you can only block people with lower Initiative than you have.)

You can block as many regions as you like, but you can only block regions within an Everyday move of one of your ready (non-exhausted) stones — see *Movement and Recovery*, pg. 91.

You can block these regions to as many or as few stones as you like.

Change Approach (1/round)

Once per round, you can change your overall stance in the Great Game — focusing on raw power, simple strategy, fancy strategy, or stealth and treachery. This has effects on your Strike, Speed, and Damage as detailed under *Approaches to Battle*, pg. 97.

Decision (1/round)

Once per round, you can make a formal decision about what you care about in the Great Game. "Formal" means that instead of just taking place in your head, as a player, it's a decision action that creates or otherwise affects necessary stones. See *Necessary Stones*, pg. 103-117.

Fast Recovery

You can recover one exhausted stone. This requires a Trivial (10) Inspire roll.

Successful fast recovery costs the stone one point of strength.

Give Stone

You can transfer one of your fighting or special stones to another commander. This requires the target's consent.

Move Stones (1/round)

You can put up to three fighting or special stones "into motion."

You can't move exhausted stones.

In some future round, the stone can arrive at its destination! (See *Movement*, pg. 91.)

Put Stones to Work

You can put stones to work in a single region, changing the qualities of the region or some portion thereof. You can only put a given stone to work once per round. You need a new free action to put stones to work in a different region, but you don't need a new action to leave stones working for multiple rounds. Note that exhausted stones and stones in motion can't do work. See *Rules for Energy*, pg. 86-87.

Recruitment

Use this action to recruit stones without important commanders — stones commanded by random people who aren't deeply involved in the Great Game or aimless stones whose commander isn't an interesting antagonist, ally, or PC. For example, you use Recruitment to collect the Influence of organized merchants to back one side or the other in a war or to recruit a Force of peasants whose commander has suffered Prestige death. The Sage can seed the battlefield with potential recruits to give you a head start on the Great Game.

When you take this action, one of your stones makes a pitch to the NPC-controlled stones in its region, inviting them to sign on to your Agenda. This is an Awareness, Confidence, Grace, Inspire, Investigation, Learning, Perform, Persuade, or Politics roll. The Sage determines which Skills work for a given audience, the difficulty, and,

more importantly, whether this is a Style or a Skill roll (pg. 98) — it's usually a Style roll since most stones are either easy converts to your Agenda or dedicated servants of another.

Technique

Maintaining some special battle techniques costs a free action. More details are found under *Planning Stones*, pg. III.

Transfer Strength

Pick a region and a stone type.

In that region, you can take any number of your stones of that type and transfer strength from them to other stones of that type. You don't have to be the target stone's commander, but that commander has to consent. You can use this action to split a single stone into two or more stones or to merge two or more stones entirely.

For example, you have a 4-point Force stone and a 2-point Force stone in some region. You can transfer strength around within that region, resulting in a 3-point Force stone and 3 1-point Force stones.

Unrelated Activities

Most things that have no material impact on the battlefield, that take substantially less time than a round of the Great Game, are free actions. For example, if you're participating in conflict on a Territory-scale battlefield, then playing a few rounds of the Great Game on a State-scale battlefield is a free action. After a certain point, things shouldn't even take free actions — if you're playing on a State-scale battlefield, where even fast rounds are six hours long, you can have as many fast-paced kung fu battles as you want without breaking your Great Game stride.

You can still perform unrelated activities, up to the limit of your actual time constraints, even after running out of free actions.

Approaches to Battle

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

You can approach the Great Game in four different ways — in one of four basic stances. Like weapons in personal combat, these stances affect your Speed, Strike, and Damage.

The four basic approaches are raw power, simple strategy, fancy strategy, or stealth and treachery. You can pick a new approach as a free action once per round.

These approaches have more concrete forms in each type of combat, as described further below.

Stances

Stance	Speed	Strike	Damage	Notes
Raw power	-5	+0	+15	
Simple strategy	+0	+5	+10	
Fancy strategy	+5	+10	+0	1, 2
Stealth and treachery	+0	+10	-5	2, 3, 4
1 Delicate: -5 to Strike when you're not in the same region as the stone.				
2 Unusual: Forces involved must train for this kind of conflict or suffer a one die penalty to damage.				
3 Unpredictable: can ignore Aura on a critical success.				
4 Flexible: can attack every kind of stone without a Strike penalty.				

Diplomatic Attacks

Characters commanding Will stones can attack other stones with Grace rolls. This “diplomatic attack” focuses on undermining the target's ideology, confidence, and alliances.

The four stances for a Will stone translate as:

Intimidation (-5 Speed, +15 Damage) uses raw power to silence dissent.

Diplomacy (+5 Strike, +10 Damage) strategically controls the debate.

Rhetorical tricks (+5 Speed, +10 Strike) include framing the enemy as the Zenith Demon reborn.

Infiltration (+10 Strike, -5 Damage) infiltrates and subverts the enemy's forces.

The first three stances have a -10 modifier to their Strike when used against a Force or Army stone.

Military Attacks

Characters commanding Force or Army stones can attack other stones with Tactics rolls. This “military attack” focuses on seizing territory and forcing the residents into submission.

The four stances for a Force stone translate as:

Raw manpower (-5 Speed, +15 Damage) uses overwhelming force to get the job done.

Territory Control (+5 Strike, +10 Damage) focuses on controlling the battlefield.

Fancy tricks (+5 Speed, +10 Strike) are things like disguising your archers as corpses.

Guerilla warfare (+10 Strike, -5 Damage) involves striking from surprise and eluding the enemy.

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The first three stances have a -10 modifier to their Strike when used against a Will stone.

Political Attacks

Characters commanding Influence stones can attack other stones with Politics rolls. This “political attack” undermines the target’s physical resources or ideological confidence, depending on the circumstances.

The four stances for an Influence stone translate as:

Raw leverage (-5 Speed, +15 Damage) throws wealth and social influence at the problem.

Politics (+5 Strike, +10 Damage) uses careful maneuvering and alliance-building.

Dirty tricks (+5 Speed, +10 Strike) include forged letters that turn enemies against one another.

Corruption (+10 Strike, -5 Damage) twists the agents of the enemy to your service.

The first three strategies have a -10 modifier to their Strike when used against a Treasure or Sorcery stone.

Epic Attacks

Characters commanding Treasure stones can attack other stones with appropriate Skill rolls. This “epic attack” uses world-changing kung fu, sorcery, treasures, or Weapons of the Gods to smite the foe!

Large-Scale Wonders (-5 Speed, +15 Damage) collapse cliffs, cause floods, split the earth, or hammer down thunder against the enemy. The focus on devastating blows also limits opportunities — this kind of thing takes significant planning or inspired on-the-spot brilliance.

Tactical Magic (+5 Strike, +10 Damage) uses natural hazards, weather, and horrible Chi effects to strategically control terrain and channel enemy forces. Wars are fought with steady attrition and pushing the enemy into unfavorable locations.

Subtle tricks (+5 Speed, +10 Strike) include applying subtle curses, influences, and effects to the enemy through the power you command.

Foul Deeds (+10 Strike, -5 Damage) rouse unwholesome passions, plague the enemy with terrible illnesses, and so forth.

The first three strategies have a -10 modifier to their Strike when used against an Influence stone.

The lesson is simple: marvels are terrifying, but what can compete with silver cash?

Skill Rolls, Style Rolls, and the River

(*Great Game: Concepts*)

Destiny Cost: 0

As a player in the Great Game, you’ll face two temptations.

First, you might be tempted to add too many interesting and important tasks to your plate. Here the players should remember that the more free actions they take, the more they have opportunities to earn joss and fill the River — doing a little extra isn’t as much of a disadvantage as it might seem.

Second, you might be tempted to add uninteresting, unimportant tasks to your plate — to tear down and rebuild roads throughout the battlefield, for instance, just because that’s an opportunity to roll. Here the Sage should remember that any roll that doesn’t have two or more potentially interesting outcomes should be a Style roll — even if the rules say otherwise.

Secrets and Lies

(*Great Game: Optional RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

The Great Game generally assumes that the players have full information about the battlefield. This isn’t absolutely necessary — if the players are more or less on the same side, the Sage can keep some of the NPCs’ resources secret. Still, on the whole, the Game is designed on the assumption that the players can see the whole battlefield and tailor their actions to best produce an epic saga.

For characters, this is not so. The fog of war is thick and heavy, and while secrets do not last long in politics, the maze of secrets and lies is ever-renewing.

If the players are good at separating IC and OOC information, you may enjoy adding secrets to the Great Game. This adds one new free action —

Conceal. The Conceal action lets you hide something from other characters — stones, treaty violations, or whatever. Roll Stealth to determine how sneaky your actions are. Enemies receive a free Awareness -based defense against this stealth.

If your character has a low Awareness, has reason to suspect something’s going on, and wants to investigate, you can use a necessary stone (see *Goals*, pg. 108-110) to begin appropriate research.

Fighting Stones

Hordes, Hoards, Houris, Horoscopes

or

Stones that Beat Your Enemies Up

Turn to this section for descriptions of the fighting stones, rules for fighting personally on the battlefield, and rules for the incredible Army and Treasure stones.

Commander Stones

(Great Game: RULES)

Destiny Cost: 0

Key Skill: Grace, Politics, or Tactics

Sometimes — particularly in the smaller battlefields — Wulin characters can turn the tide of a conflict with personal prowess alone. A fighter can pit herself against a garrison; a courtier in rags can show more authority than an empowered minister; a scholar can, with cunning, blunt the power of a city's wealth!

Use *commander stones* to represent Wulin characters on the battlefield.

For each Wulin character participating in the Great Game, create a *commander stone*. The rules treat the commander stone as a stone under the character's command, with the following exceptions.

First, the initial strength of a commander stone is fixed. Give it one point of strength for each point of rank the character has achieved, counting 5th rank. Give it +1 points of strength on Personal battlefields, -1 on State battlefields, and -2 on Territory battlefields. The stone can lose or gain points of strength normally.

Note: This lore is optional. The Sage decides whether it applies to her game.

Second, no matter how strong you are, don't count your commander stone against your Agenda stones' limit. As long as you're sane enough to follow your own orders, the commander stone is a freebie.

Third, you can use commander stones with the Attack action to launch political, diplomatic, or military attacks — commander stones aren't limited to one specific mode.

Changing the World with Your Own Hands

You can use your commander stone as a small Chaos, Force, or Will stone when it comes to changing the

world — in short, you can bring labor, inspiration, or destruction.

Special Commander Techniques

Highly Mobile — You can spend a full action to race to any of your stones, if you could plausibly reach it in one round's time. The Sage may sometimes move you to a location potentially narratively interesting; this doesn't cost you an action.

Radiant Prestige — During the recovery phase of your action, you automatically recover all of the stones that you command that are in the same region as your commander stone.

Shamed

You've been embarrassed by your political enemies! Your credibility is low and it suffers further if you don't drop the issue.

Weakness: If this is a weakness, then every social action that publicly advances the Agenda that you were shamed while serving suffers a negative modifier — either -5 or -10. If you do too much of this then others' disdain starts getting to you and you'll suffer that modifier on every action until you take a break and cool down.

Hyperactivity: Shame stimulates your mind. You *will* have your revenge. As long as you stay out of the public eye and occasionally play out furious embarrassment, you receive an extra breath in Gold Chi — or the special ability to recover an additional exhausted Influence stone each round!

Disillusioned

You've lost confidence in your former cause — the arguments of the enemy got to you!

Weakness: If this is a weakness, then it's hard to fight too hard for your cause. The only way to do it is to close your mind to doubt and fight with dogmatic blindness. Any time you take a big risk for the Agenda you were disillusioned while serving, you suffer Attribute Reduction in Genius.

Hyperactivity: You're tempted to turn against your former loyalties. When you do, and it gets you into trouble, you get a Destiny bonus!

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What if the Stone Breaks?

If you bleed out all of your strength and “break,” you’re still in play as a stone, but you can’t make attacks, suffer attacks, or do work in the Great Game.

Broken by Physical Attacks

If a physical attack breaks you, you receive the *Injured* Chi condition.

This Chi condition has Recovery 20, Duration equal to your initial Strength as a stone, and an Interval equal in length to one slow round. When you recover from this Chi condition, you also recover your normal status as a stone and your full initial Strength.

Broken by Social Attacks

If a social attack breaks you, you receive a passion Chi Condition. This is often the Anger passion *Shamed* or the Grief passion *Disillusioned* (see box.)

This Chi condition has Recovery 20, Duration equal to your initial Strength as a stone, and an Interval equal in length to one slow round. When you recover from this Chi condition, you also recover your normal status as a stone and your full initial Strength.



Force Stones

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Key Skill: Tactics

Force stones represent an Agenda’s work force. On a battlefield important to an organization, the Sage should usually assign it total Force Strength equal to the organization’s Membership.

Use Force stones to represent organized groups of people. You can expect most Force stones to represent either military units or forces of hired laborers. To estimate how many people make up a Force stone of a given Strength, treat its Strength as Membership in the Membership table (*Weapons of the Gods*, pg. 345). Increase this four steps down the table on Territory battlefields, two steps on State battlefields, and one step on Local battlefields — you can, for example, reasonably imagine a 1-point Force stone on the battlefield of Shen Zhou as a 40-person mob.

Changing the World with Force

You can use Force stones to perform orderly physical labor. The Sage should consider Force stones particularly good at controlling regions well-suited for inhabitation and patrol, such as fortresses and armed camps.

Special Force Technique

Garrison Technique — You can use a Force stone to **garrison** a region. This takes one full action, does not exhaust the stone, and gives the stone a three-point Strength advantage in any contests to control the territory. Force stones cannot garrison routes.

Maintenance: the region remains garrisoned until something exhausts the stone or the stone arrives in another region.

A Note for Daoists

If you’re a Daoist then you might wind up in control of some of nature’s Force stones. These don’t represent soldiers, but rather the quality of nature that drives away human interference — jungles and glaciers have high Force, but lush farmland doesn’t!

Army Stones

(Great Game: RULES)

Destiny Cost: 5

This lore requires the Warrior Archetype Gift.

Key Skill: Tactics

If you're playing a warrior, you can construct specialized professional military units. Use Army stones to represent these units.

You use Army stones as Force stones, but they lack the "Garrison Technique." Instead, they have the following ability.

Special Army Power

Battle Technique — each Army stone has a special battle technique (see *Battle Techniques*, pg. 112-113) chosen at the time of its construction. You can use this battle technique at any time, but only the Army stones and their attacks benefit from it. For example, you could have heavily-armored Army stones with the Armor battle technique; when you pay the cost for this technique, only the Army stones benefit.

Using Army Stones

You must have this lore to recruit or create Army stones. Characters can *have* these stones without this lore, if someone gives them away, but Army stones suffer a -10 Strike penalty in the hands of commanders without this lore.

Influence Stones

(Great Game: RULES)

Destiny Cost: 0

Key Skill: Politics

Influence represents an Agenda's cultural, political, and financial power. On a battlefield important to an organization, the Sage should typically assign it total Influence Strength equal to the organization's Resources.

A Note for Daoists

If you're a Daoist then you might wind up in control of some of nature's Influence stones. These stones represent the power of the land's feng shui — the flows of wind, water, and Chi that shape events. The Sage should consider this Influence best at controlling regions traveled heavily by wind and water.

The key skill for natural Influence is **Learning**, not Politics.

Use Influence stones to represent platforms from which you can throw around political weight. You can expect most Influence stones to represent supplies of cash, such as treasuries and mercantile businesses. Some will represent powerful social positions, such as "bandit chief," "local matchmaker," or "Xia magistrate."

Changing the World with Influence

You can use Influence stones to accomplish just about any physical or social task — its energy acts as Force or Will energy, but more clumsy, so that the difficulty of the task or the time the task requires is often larger. The Sage should consider Influence stones particularly good at controlling regions that people travel — roads and rivers and such.

Special Influence Technique

Vastly Spreading Influence Technique — You can use Influence stones to **influence** a set of regions and routes on your behalf. This takes one full action, does not exhaust the stone, and it increases the area that the stone can potentially control tenfold.

Maintenance: the technique's effects remain until something exhausts the stone or the stone arrives in another region.



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Will Stones

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Key Skill: Grace

Will represents the strength of an Agenda's ideology. On a battlefield important to an organization, the Sage should typically assign it total Will Strength equal to the organization's Solidarity.

Use Will stones to represent things that unite people — forceful leaders; well-loved citizens; ideological principles; sacred books, scrolls, and places; ideas and doctrines; prestigious appointments; and titles. If you're not sure whether something is a Will or Influence stone, it's okay to choose whichever feels better to the player or Sage who is OOC creating the stone.

Changing the World with Will

You can use the energy of Will to accomplish social tasks such as building alliances and trade routes, spreading ideas, and shaping social interactions. The Sage should consider Will stones particularly good at controlling abstract regions on the elephant board and at controlling physical regions where people have to deal with your philosophy and your Agenda every day.

Special Will Technique

Ideologue Technique — You can use Will stones to fire up the people of an inhabited region or route against your enemies. This takes one full action, does not exhaust the stone, and imposes a -5 penalty on any attempt your enemies make to do work in the region or route that contains that stone.

Maintenance: the region remains fired up until something exhausts the stone or it arrives in another region.

Treasure Stones

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Key Skill: Varies

(Sage chooses one at stone's creation)

Treasure stones represent the power wondrous artifacts, curses, influences, and techniques have to change the course of the Great Game. You can use Treasure stones to represent the secret spells and formless kung fu techniques that can crush armies; to represent the bound power of enslaved demons and gods; to represent the physical nexus of a Void-powered sorcery; to represent the city-destroying power of certain God-Weapons; and as the Great Game representation of sacred Daoist invocations for controlling rivers, lakes, weather, soil, sky, and sea.

In short if there is a special power that should have influence on the Great Game, and it's not just a way to manipulate enemy commanders, you should create a Treasure stone as the Great Game expression of that power.

To obtain a Treasure stone you might seek rare knowledge. A Blizzard Fist practitioner might study the rare Winter General technique. This technique creates a store of cold yin so powerful that it can subdue armies, shatter influence, and break the fiery spirit that a Will stone creates. Once the Blizzard Fist practitioner learns the technique, they can use the **Develop** action to create a Treasure stone — that aforementioned store of cold yin. When they use that power to freeze an army, the rules say to implement that as an attack of stone on stone — the Treasure stone moves up to the Force stone representing the army and launches an “epic attack.”

You can also obtain Treasure stones by learning the secrets of Treasures and Weapons of the Gods. For example, if you know the One-Foot Drum's secrets, beating the drum can change the course of a war. That's a power that an object has to affect the Great Game, so you represent the beating of that drum and the way it terrifies your enemies as a Treasure stone. If you want to make your enemies flee, that's either a stone-on-stone attack or the special power of that stone.

You can break a Treasure stone normally using the combat rules. This doesn't mean that the underlying knowledge or Treasure is broken — instead, it makes that power quiescent or useless for a time, usually until its wielder faces some Challenge (pg. 118) or achieves a suitable Goal (pg. 108).

The Sage invests each Treasure stone with its power by defining the kinds of *work* it can do when put to work and the *special technique* that the stone has. Recognize that the tactical and dramatic value of Treasure stones comes

from these two decisions by the Sage — Treasure stones are interesting because they can do unusual work and have a unique special technique.

Changing the World with Treasures

You can use the energy of a Treasure stone to perform specific tasks well-suited to the treasure in question. The Sage defines the tasks “well-suited” to the treasure.

Special Treasure Technique

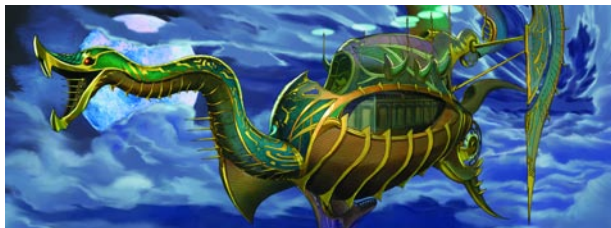
Every Treasure stone has a special technique — just what, varies with the treasure. The Sage defines the technique, picking something to make the Treasure stone unique and valuable.

Using Treasure Stones

The ability to create Treasure stones usually follows the completion of a Sage-provided Goal (pg. 108) or Challenge (pg. 118). This gives you access to a treasure, a secret technique, or unlocks hidden potential of a treasure or technique you already have. With that comes the ability to construct Treasure stones. You may need another Goal or Challenge to unlock your treasure for larger-scale battlefields — learning to use the One-Foot Drum to dominate a city-sized battlefield doesn't immediately scale to shaking the destiny of Shen Zhou.

DESTINY COST

- 2 **Technique:** the character has the opportunity to unlock secret potential in a treasure, kung fu style, or formless technique they have or know, developing a Treasure stone based thereupon.
- 3 **Entangled Destiny:** your Destiny will touch that of an interesting treasure or formless technique. Discuss what you're interested in with the Sage.
- * **Victory:** describe a large-scale Marvel or Skill use and spend 1 Transcendent Destiny to create a I-point Treasure stone in your location. This is a free action.



Necessary Stones

The Mind One Holds Towards the Great Game

or

Those Things That Are Necessary

*Turn to this section to understand Agendas,
Goals, Plans, and Concepts.*

This section also lists the standard battle techniques.

The Ideological Battlefield

(Great Game: Concepts)

Destiny Cost: 0

What are the rules of the Great Game?

What decides whether you can achieve your objectives?

If you've read the previous sections on Battlefields and Combat Rules, you might think that the answer to both questions is “the rules in the **Weapons of the Gods Companion**.”

This is one perspective, but it is not the only perspective.

You have the power to decide what your character considers important. You have the power to assert your character's objectives and your character's beliefs.

You play in the battlefield that your character's beliefs define.

Defining Your Beliefs

In this section you will stop thinking of the battlefield as a completely objective environment. Instead, it's an arena where ideologies compete. It's not about what is true; it's about what you can make true.

Recognize that as a player, you may have different ideas about the battlefield than the Sage and the other players. You'll never be able to have the exact same vision of the game world as the other people at your table, and that's okay. For example, you might think that the **Farmland Region** is full of thieves and liars because your character's nemesis lives there. The Sage might assume that your nemesis was the only bad apple in the place. That's okay — you don't have to care what the Sage secretly thinks, only what the Sage tells

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you. The Sage might never tell you the truth of the matter, or might later change her mind and agree that the place must be pretty bad. If you decide to raze the region to the ground, it's up to history to decide whether those people *were* good or bad and whether you *were* right or wrong. To some degree, you're always playing on a battlefield defined by your assumptions as a player because you don't really have a choice.

You're also allowed to explicitly conceive some things as your character's ideas. You might think they're true. You might think they're false. But you don't have to condition your character's belief on whether you as a player later find out it's true or false — you can say, "My character thinks Shi Hu is bad," and leave it at that. If your character thinks Shi Hu is bad, then victory includes defeating Shi Hu. If your character thinks Shi Hu is a great guy, then it probably doesn't. That's one way that your character's ideas affect the victory conditions for the Great Game.

Your character can also come up with some ideas to *make* true — things you want written in the history books or the future Classics of Philosophy. Are they true now? Are they false now? That doesn't have to be relevant.

In the end, on the battlefield, it is not the rules that decide what must be done. It is not the rules that decide what is true or false.

It is your **will**.

Concerned?

Don't get the wrong idea about these rules. You won't be using them to override the Sage, although they will make the Sage less necessary. You won't be using them to escape the idea of objective truth, although they will hide your character's mistakes from you. When your characters disagree with the Sage about the world, your characters are still wrong, wrong, *wrong*.

Instead, you'll be using these rules to simulate a world where the *characters* don't have any way to distinguish their beliefs from the truth. You'll use them to integrate your character's take on the world into the events on the battlefield, so that the things that matter to your character always matter in the Great Game.

These rules give your roleplaying meaning. They give you license to see the battlefield through the lens of your character's prejudices, errors, and plausible beliefs — a lens that isn't necessarily wrong even when it contradicts the standard rules of the battlefield. With the right necessary stones, your character can make their beliefs work.

You'll also use these rules to mechanically capture the reality that the powerful can remake the world to their vision and that — as long as their starting place isn't that

far off reality — they don't even have to know that that's what they're doing.

These are the rules that say: history is written by the winners.

Reality is defined by the strong.

The future is shaped by the bold.

The Secret of Necessary Stones

You can enforce your beliefs on the battlefield using necessary stones. When you want to make a declaration of intention and belief that changes the battlefield forever, play a necessary stone.

Do you want something to be worth fighting for? Place an **Agenda** stone, declaring, "This is worth fighting for."

Do you want something to be important? Place a **Goal** stone to make it so.

Do you have a strategy that you think can defeat the foe? Create a **Planning** stone to declare that strategy, and perhaps it can.

Finally, place **Concept** stones to declare your characters' beliefs — to demand of the world, "This must be true."

And perhaps, when the dust settles, it will be, or at least, it might as well have been.

The Rules for Necessary Stones

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Every necessary stone represents a commitment.

Make necessary stones for the things that you, as a player, decide that your character will go to the mat for. That is, things that aren't just conveniences for your cause — but necessities!

Where They Come From

The Sage places a necessary stone when someone playing the Great Game successfully uses the **Decision** action. The necessary stone represents your in-character decision. In the future, you and others can use that necessary stone to enforce the positive and negative consequences of that decision.

The **Weapons of the Gods Companion** treats these stones as "yours" and "under your command," even though you can't usually take actions using them.

How They Work

These rules divide necessary stones into healthy/ready/strong stones and hurt or exhausted stones.



Stones that are healthy represent ideas that are working out for you. You can use them to take actions that make those ideas more correct. For example, a strong Agenda stone lets you recruit move stones — it proves that something is important to people by attracting people to care about it. A strong Concept stone helps you take actions that agree with it — for example, if you have a Concept that the **Farmland Region** is full of thieves, you can use that stone to get a bonus on finding a thief there to hire. Don't assume that this means that your belief is *right* — it just happens to be *pragmatically useful* to believe it.

Stones that are hurt represent ideas that are not working out for you. You still believe them, but your enemies can use those stones to hurt you — basically, whether it's true or false, it's not pragmatically useful to believe them. For example, if you hurt an enemy's Planning stone, you can use it to turn your enemy's plans against them.

Where To Put Them

Here is what the Sage should think about when placing a necessary stone.

To hurt or recover a necessary stone, one must control the region, place, or other location where it resides.

The Sage should normally pick a whole region as the stone's location, not a specific place. She should pick that region of the battlefield most reasonable to seek control over when trying to hurt or recover the stone. For example, she might place a merchant's **My Wealth Matters** stone in the same region as the treasury, but **My Wealth Helps the Poor** in the region where poverty is most pervasive.

The Sage can also put necessary stones in a specific place within a region. She should do so if she wants people to be able to exploit that particular decision — for weal or woe — *without* controlling the entire region.

Finally, the Sage can place necessary stones “on” a mobile person, object, or stone. These stones move. She should do this if she wants people to exploit that particular decision by controlling whatever region a specific person, object, or stone is in. For example, she might place a **We Love Prince Tian** stone on Prince Tian himself. See *People and Treasures*, pg. 117.

The Sage should consider briefly at this point the following. If a necessary stone is hard for its commander to reach and control, then game balance suggests that hurting the stone shouldn't hurt the commander as much while a healthy stone should be very useful. If a necessary stone is in the center of the commander's power base, then game balance suggests that hurting the stone should be a crippling blow while a healthy stone isn't that useful. If the Sage wants a particularly flashy effect, she should place the stone accordingly.

Penalties

Enemies can inflict penalties on you by hurting your necessary stones. The Sage will define these penalties based on roleplaying concerns — that is, on what the stones actually *mean*. If damaging the stone is like a blow to your side's resources and morale, then the Sage should make the penalties instantaneous. If it's more like a burr that will continue to hurt you until resolved, the Sage should make the penalties last until you recover the stone.

Recognize that while the Sage may inflict a heavier or lighter penalty than you expect, the *fact* of a penalty is inherent in your own decisions about the game. In creating the necessary stone, you declared that there was something that your character *needed* to defend. Then your character did not do so adequately.

Here are some example penalties that you can use to get a sense for what appropriate penalties are like:

- Negative modifiers on some Great Game actions, particularly in the region that has the necessary stone;
- Prestige damage (see *Attack!*, pg. 92);
- Prestige damage that you can't heal until you recover the stone;
- Special problems (such as a forcible relocation of some of your stones);
- Chi conditions — like humiliation-based anger passions;
- Loss of a stone, or difficulty using some stones — again, particularly in the region that has the necessary stone.

Hurting Stones

Here are some additional tools that the Sage and the rules may use to describe the implications of hurting a particular stone.

The Sage can remove a necessary stone from the battlefield entirely when it's hurt. Use this to represent goals like “protecting the prince from assassins,” which, once failed at, are no longer reasonable to pursue.

The Sage may allow an enemy to steal command of a necessary stone when it's hurt, along with any of its potential benefits. Use this for necessary stones like fortifications, productive towns, and thrones, which an enemy can occupy and make their own.

For more details on penalties, read the discussion of the specific types of necessary stones below.



Benefits

You can earn special benefits by recovering a hurt necessary stone. You can also earn special benefits when you have a necessary stone that hasn't ever been hurt. Think of this as an incentive to create necessary stones — and, in particular, an incentive to create necessary stones that are difficult to defend.

Here are some example benefits that you can use to get a sense for what appropriate benefits are like:

- The stone shapes all actions and events in its region, both yours and others', in a fashion that favors your Agenda;
- You receive positive modifiers on some Great Game actions;
- You receive bonus Great Game actions, e.g., “create a I-point Will stone, once per 5 rounds”;
- You acquire the use of free battle techniques (basically, special kung fu for the Great Game — see pg. 112);
- You earn special bonuses (such as the ability to change a stone's type);
- You gain I Destiny (at most once per session);
- You gain I Xia joss (at most three times per session).

Expect that most of the time, you can recover anyone's necessary stones, and that most of the time, if you recover someone else's stone, it's the stone's commander — not you — who receives any benefit for your doing so. The Sage can freely declare that in a specific case, only certain individuals can recover a certain stone, or that the benefit for recovering a stone accrues to the person who does so and not that stone's commander.

The Sage may remove a necessary stone from the battlefield entirely when it's recovered. Use this to represent goals like “assassinating the prince,” which, once succeeded at, immediately yield all the benefit that they will ever yield.

For more details on penalties, read the discussion of the specific types of necessary stones below.

Disavowing Necessary Stones

You can use a **Decision** action to abandon a necessary stone. You succeed at this automatically if disavowing the stone offers no potential advantage — for example, if it's a hurt stone that has already inflicted a one-time penalty and can't hurt the character again unless the character first chooses to recover it. Otherwise, this action rolls Crafting or Politics.

The Sage should set difficulties as follows. If the stone is healthy and not in any particular danger, disavowing it is an Everyday (18) task. If the stone is hurt or under imminent threat, disavowing it is a Hard (30) task. If the stone is hurt and you have no reasonable hope of recovering it soon, disavowing it is a Legendary (40) task. These rules include the implicit assumption that things difficult to fight for correlate with the things important to your cause.

Special Powers

You can acquire a special power just by creating an Agenda stone or a Planning stone. Enemies can inflict penalties on you by hurting those stones, but they can't take away the special power. These rules give you the special power just for committing to an Agenda and a Plan.

Agenda Stones

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

This section contains important rules for the Great Game.

You represent your commitment to your Agenda by assembling a collection of tangible goals. The Sage places these on the battlefield as your Agenda stones — the things that you agree to do, in service to your cause. Expect every commander and Actor to have their own set.

Don't skip this section — Agenda stones are the only necessary stones that you can't play the game without. They channel your Prestige into the Agenda you're fighting for, giving people (that is, stones) a reason to follow you in the Great Game!

Motivation

Each Agenda stone represents a core purpose important to your Agenda, such as:

- “We must protect Thunder Bei.”
- “We must protect the treasury.”
- “We must maintain the Emperor's favor.”
- “We must conquer this city (for its own good).”
- “We must encourage harmony between people and Heaven.”

You must choose core purposes for your Agenda stone that you can take active steps to accomplish. Imagine that people gather behind you because they expect you to achieve these things. For this reason, most Agenda stones should be either vital tactical resources or things with specific symbolic importance. If you pick an abstract Agenda stone, such as the last example above, the Sage may ask you at some point to describe visible markers of success and failure.

You use Agenda stones to channel your Prestige into the idea that something is important. Your enemies cannot “disprove” Agenda stones, as importance is subjective — the fact that you consider something important and can inspire others to do so suffices to make the Agenda stone's underlying statement true. To hurt the stone, your enemies must cause you to fail at doing whatever it is that the stone commits you to doing.

Special Power

You can have up to seven points of fighting and special stones for each Agenda stone that you have. You cannot have more than this — if you don't have issues to fight for, you won't have resources to fight with!

Creating Agenda Stones

You create an Agenda stone with a **Decision** action and a Skill roll. In fast rounds, you must succeed on a Hard (30) Politics or Inspire task. In slow rounds, you must succeed on a Moderate (20) Crafting, Politics, or Inspire task.

If you have one Agenda stone already, you suffer a -5 on this roll. If you have three or more Agenda stones, you suffer a -10. If you have five or more, you suffer a -15. Characters with seven or more Agenda stones can only build additional Agenda stones with the permission of the Sage; the Sage should still require a roll. These penalties provide the principal limit on the power of Actors and Wulin commanders alike.

Hurting Agenda Stones

To hurt a typical Agenda stone, your stones must control the region that holds that stone. You must then put a stone or stones to work changing that region — making that stone suffer in some fashion.

You, as the attacker, choose a basic in-character mechanism through which your stones make the Agenda stone's core purpose suffer. This determines which Skill you're likely to need. The Sage then decides how difficult it is to use that Skill to make the relevant core purpose fail.

For example, you set forth to make the Agenda stone “We must protect Thunder Bei” fail. You seize control over the region where Thunder Bei is. You set a strength-3 Force stone to the task. You choose the basic in-character mechanism of attack — your soldiers try to capture him. The Sage declares this a Moderate (20) Tactics task — Thunder Bei is powerful, but with good tactics a strength-3 Force stone can capture him!

As another example, you want to hurt an Agenda stone that has the core purpose, “We must protect the Treasury.” You seize control of the region with the treasury in it. You order a stone to loot the treasury. The Sage declares this an Everyday (18) Finesse task.

You may find that a given Agenda stone's purpose cannot really fail. There's no way to fail at “we must conquer this city;” if it takes ten thousand years and the city is nothing but dust, your enemy can still stumble in and place a claim. In these cases, you can exhaust the Agenda stone by putting stones to work making the cause “no longer worthwhile” relative to the original intention in declaring it.

For example, you declare an intention to claim a city and note that your reasoning is that the city is sacred to your Clan's ancestors. An enemy wishes to damage this Agenda stone. They

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seize control over the region containing the city and begin seeking proof — either real or forged — that it's not sacred to your Clan's ancestors. The Sage declares this a Legendary (40) Investigation task, and on success, they discover or forge proof that the city is actually sacred to your ancestor's black sheep brother, Leisurely Bu. The enemy could also attempt a Hard (30) or Legendary (40) Politics roll to make your Clan stop caring. In some cases, they might have the ability to make an Everyday (18) Crafting roll to raze everything in the city that you cared about. In each of these situations, the stone is hurt and you lose political momentum.

When an Agenda Stone is Hurt

When an Agenda stone is hurt, your enemies can use your dedication against you. You face a penalty. This is usually one of the following —

- Damage to your Prestige.
- Damage to your Prestige that won't heal until you can recover or disavow the stone.
- Penalties on appropriate Great Game actions (e.g., recruitment) until you can recover the stone.
- You suffer an anger-based Chi Condition.
- Some of your stones leave, possibly returning when you recover the stone.

The Sage decides what happens based on two things — first, how taxing it was to take control of the region and hurt the stone, and second, the story of what happened.

Default Penalty. Expect the Sage to inflict your attacker's Prestige in Prestige damage when your Agenda stone is hurt. You cannot heal this damage until the stone recovers or you disavow it.

Recovering Agenda Stones

If an Agenda stone is hurt, you can recover it.

Again, you must control the region that holds the stone. Now you must put a stone or stones to work changing the region — making the Agenda stone's cause both possible and meaningful once again. This functions as with hurting the stone, save that the skills and difficulties necessary may vary.

For example, in reference to the examples above, you might free Thunder Bei from his captors, replenish the treasury's funds, or redeem the name of Leisurely Bu. It would also be possible to disguise someone as Thunder Bei and parade them before your troops, recapture the lost funds, or find evidence that the allegations of Leisurely Bu's involvement of the city were in fact falsified.

When an Agenda Stone is Recovered

The Sage can decide that recovering an Agenda stone gives a benefit. This is useful when the Game is moving slowly, when recovering the stone is dramatically interesting, or when the penalty for losing the Agenda stone has already expired and there's no other reason to bother recovering it. The Sage may apply the benefit to the Agenda stone's commander or to the person who recovers the stone. Possible rewards include:

- Healing the commander's Prestige somewhat.
- A new stone joins the Agenda stone's commander's forces.
- The person who recovers the stone earns one point of Xia joss or even Destiny.
- Either the commander or the person who recovers the stone gains a hyperactive Chi condition.

Default Benefit. Don't expect a benefit for Agenda stone recovery.

Goals

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Use Goal stones to declare smaller goals — not the core things you're fighting for, but important secondary considerations!

Motivation

Each Goal stone represents some goal you have on behalf of your Agenda, such as:

- "We must maintain this fortification."
- "We must search the First Emperor's tomb before the enemy does."
- "We must rescue the lost caravan."
- "We must protect the supply lines."

Expect most Goal stones to fall into two categories — tasks that you've set yourself and useful things you'd like to hold onto.

If the Sage wants you to do something, or thinks you should do something, she can create Goal stones for you. These are "story stones" and not necessary stones, but they work in an essentially identical fashion.

Creating Goal Stones

You create a Goal stone with a **Decision** action and an Everyday (18) Politics or Tactics roll.

The Sage starts a Goal stone "hurt" if you haven't achieved the Goal yet. Expect most Goal stones to start hurt. However, the Sage can start a Goal stone "healthy"

if you have already invested the necessary work — for example, you’ve just seized control over a city and want to declare, “We must hold on to this victory!”

Achieving a Goal will earn you some reward. You may request a specific reward when creating the Goal. If you do so, and the Sage finds your desires excessive, the Sage should discuss this with you before you roll for the **Decision** action. Otherwise, you’re likely to earn a reward at least close to what you suggest.

Using Goal Stones to Make the Game More Fun

You can use Goal stones to increase your flexibility. They allow you to accomplish things that you can’t ordinarily do using the Great Game rules.

You can use Goal stones created with ordinary Decision actions to earn standard benefits — things like positive modifiers to Great Game actions.

You can also ask the Sage to suggest a Goal that lets you do something special — for example, a Goal that allows you to inflict damage every round on a commander whom you’re having trouble damaging, or one that will allow you to win back your character’s lover’s heart. If you work with the Sage, you’ll have the opportunity to conceive of Goals that break the rules directly.

Recovering Goal Stones

If a Goal stone is hurt, you can help it recover.

To recover a Goal stone, your stones must control the region that holds that stone. You must then put a stone or stones to work changing that region — in some fashion achieving your Goal. In general, you must either succeed at an appropriate Skill roll, win an appropriate in-character Challenge, or both.

For example, the Sage might declare searching the First Emperor’s tomb a Moderate (20) or Hard (30) Investigation task. The Sage might make rescuing a lost caravan a Trivial (10) task once a stone actually reaches it. In either case, the Sage could trigger a Challenge instead of requiring a roll — in these examples, a Challenge wherein the characters explore the tomb or fight off enemies that attack the caravan.

The Sage decides on a case-by-case basis which characters can recover a Goal stone. Sometimes it is possible to steal a Goal stone from one’s enemies or recover one for a friend; other times, a Goal is relevant only to its commander. Players should not assume they have the power to recover someone else’s Goal stone without asking first, nor should they assume that an enemy lacks that power without the Sage’s confirmation.

When an Goal Stone is Recovered

Recovering a Goal stone, or having an unhurt Goal stone, gives a benefit.

The Sage should pick a benefit appropriate to the difficulty of recovering the stone — counting both the task difficulty and the inherent difficulty of seizing control over the region.

Players can expect no meaningful benefit for a task accomplished without cost or difficulty. Simply placing a Goal stone next to an unoccupied special stone and taking a Trivial free action to fulfill it earns you nothing.

Players can expect a *small* benefit for achieving a Goal if they face meaningful but challenge-less obstacles in achieving it, e.g., if they must move a stone to a nearby location and perform a Moderate (20) task. Here are some examples of small benefits:

- One point of Xia joss (at most 3/session).
- A one-time +5 modifier on a single Great Game action, specified at the Goal stone’s creation or recovery but not necessarily taken at that time.
- A one-time -5 modifier on a single Great Game action taken by an enemy, again specified at the Goal stone’s creation or recovery but not necessarily taken at that time.
- A one-step difficulty reduction for a single Great Game action, again specified at the Goal stone’s creation or recovery but not necessarily taken at that time.
- A minor advantage applying to ordinary play instead of the Great Game, such as an important person who now owes them a favor.
- The ability to stretch, dam up, or otherwise adjust the regions of control for a stone, as discussed under *Controlling Places and Regions*, pg. 83.

Think of one-time benefits as things like “+5 to Damage on your next attack from this region.” or “-5 to an enemy’s Tactics roll when you call upon this benefit.”

Players can expect a *moderate* benefit for achieving a Goal that requires substantial travel, risk, and effort. Here are some examples of moderate benefits:

- One point of Destiny (at most 1/session).
- A +5 modifier to a set of well-defined Great Game actions, such as Recruitment, Develop, or “attack rolls in the north.” This lasts until the stone is hurt again.
- A +10 modifier on I-3 Great Game actions, specified at the Goal stone’s creation or recovery but not necessarily taken at that time.
- The ability to use an extra battle technique with I-3 particular stones or in I-3 particular regions.

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- The ability to take a specified bonus full action (such as Developing Will stones or attacking a specified enemy once every five rounds.)
- A moderate advantage applying to ordinary play instead of the Great Game, such as a new ally, the destruction of an enemy fortification, or access to a kung fu secret.

Players can expect a *major* benefit for achieving a Goal that requires either a Challenge or staggering risk. Major benefits include the moderate benefits but can also reach such heights as:

- A +10 modifier to a set of well-defined Great Game actions, such as Recruitment, Develop, or “attack rolls in the north.” This lasts until the stone is hurt.
- A +20 modifier on one Great Game action, specified at the Goal stone’s creation or recovery but not necessarily taken at that time.
- A major advantage applying to ordinary play instead of the Great Game — anything that substantially changes the terms on which the characters face their enemies.
- A Deed.

The Sage can also offer additional benefits that are outside the rules. Players can ask for these but cannot expect them. Players should work with the Sage to determine an appropriate Goal if they do ask. Some examples include:

- The instant creation of some new stones.
- The instant destruction of some enemy stones.
- Forcing an enemy to use Aura rather than bleeding their stones.
- Inflicting substantial long-term negative modifiers on an enemy.
- Special bonuses (such as the ability to change a stone’s type).
- Access to Treasure stones.

In the end, the benefit for recovering a Goal stone is entirely up to the Sage’s discretion. The Sage should not hesitate to create unique benefits when appropriate — after all, players and the Sage can define Goal stones running the gantlet from trivial things hardly worth a point of joss (“we must hold a dance!”) to battlefield-shattering discoveries worth major persistent advantages (“we must claim the secret of Light-Body Form and dethrone the Immortal Emperor!”) The Sage should reward the achievement of the various qualities of Goals in kind.

Expect most Goal
stones to
leave the

battlefield, destroyed, when someone successfully recovers them. There’s only so much rescuing a single lost caravan can take.

Default Benefit. Expect to receive either the benefit you ask for or a toned-down version thereof. If you don’t ask, expect to receive something that sounds good to the Sage.

Hurting Goal Stones

To hurt Goal stones, use the standard necessary-stone-manipulation approach. First, control the region that holds that stone. Then put a stone or stones to work changing that region — making that stone suffer in some fashion. The Sage sets the difficulty as appropriate.

When an Goal Stone is Hurt

You can deny an enemy the benefits of a Goal stone by hurting it. Expect almost every Goal stone to stop yielding its benefits when hurt.

You may also be able to inflict further disadvantages by hurting someone’s Goal stone.

The Sage can inflict penalties when she has a cool and appropriate idea. The Sage should do this only rarely, and usually **when the Goal stone is connected to a delicate issue** that can easily turn against its commander.

The Sage should break a hurt Goal stone if it is **conceptually no longer useful** to anyone.

You may be able to “steal” the Goal stone you have hurt, making it one of your own Goal stones, **if the Sage rules it something anyone can legitimately control**. Examples include the defenses of a fortification; the productivity of a farm, smithy, or mine; and the prestige of controlling an important political position.

When you hurt a Goal stone, you automatically steal it under the following conditions:

- You want to.
- The Sage rules that it’s possible.
- You have a suitable stone in the region to “seize control” (such as a Force stone to occupy captured fortifications.)

If you steal a Goal stone, you may then recover it to receive its benefits.

Default Penalty. Don’t expect a penalty when a Goal stone is hurt. The Sage can levy one but only when specifically appropriate.

Planning

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Use Planning stones to represent your theory of battle — that masterful exercise in tactics, politics, and reason that will sweep your enemies from the battlefield!

Special Power

Using a Planning stone gives you gain access to two standard battle techniques.

If you don't think two battle techniques is enough, or if you need special techniques for a specific region or stone, talk to the Sage. With the Sage's cooperation, you can use both Concepts and Goals to gain access to limited-use battle techniques.

If you are a warrior, or have the warrior Archetype Gift, you can also access additional techniques through *Army stones* (pg. 101).

Motivation

Your Planning stone represents your philosophy of battle, such as:

- “Attack with lean, cunning strike forces who are masters of fire!”
- “Our units will command snakes, much as I do!”
- “Strong defense: prediction of the enemy's moves: superior tactical thought!”
- “Scourge evil with the strength of righteousness!”
- “Be as water: feign strength in weakness: feign weakness in strength!”
- “Heart Moves the Army Style -- Kindness Army Technique! “

Creating Planning Stones

The Great Game allows each commander and each Actor on a battlefield one Planning stone at a time. Assume that every major antagonist has a Planning stone but that the Sage will often ignore Planning for less interesting enemies. The Sage places Planning stones on the elephant board in the (**Appropriate Character**)'s **Plan Region**. Assume, because the stone is on the elephant board, that no single place on the battlefield will determine whether the character's strategy succeeds.

You create a Planning stone with a **Decision** action and a Skill roll. In fast rounds, you must succeed on a Moderate (20) Learning or Tactics task. In slow rounds, you must succeed on an Everyday (18) Crafting, Learning, or Tactics task.

If this is your character's first Planning stone, pick two standard battle techniques. You can then use these battle techniques in the Great Game.

If you already had a Planning stone, the Sage should remove the old Planning stone from the game. You should keep one of the previous battle techniques and pick one new battle technique. If you rolled a critical success on the Crafting roll, you can replace both battle techniques instead.

The Great Game doesn't let people heal hurt Planning stones by replacing them — when the Sage replaces a hurt Planning stone with a new one, the Sage should start the new stone out hurt.

Hurting Planning Stones

To hurt a Planning stone, you must first move stones into the (Relevant Character)'s Plan Region.

To move a stone into that region, you must satisfy one of the following criteria:

- The stone must have a valid path to that region through the elephant board, or
- The stone must be “in transit” in a region of the battlefield containing one of that character's fighting stones.

You can only move certain stones into these regions:

- Influence stones.
- Chaos, Order, and Passion stones.
- Special stones that the Sage considers appropriate.

You must then seize control over that region and put a stone or stones to work changing that region — subverting the enemy's plan to make it a hindrance. Don't think of this as changing the enemy's plan, because you can't. Think of hurting the stone as seizing the advantage and forcing the enemy into a reactive stance where you and others can use the enemy's own playbook to manipulate them.

You should always use the Tactics Skill to hurt a Planning stone, and the Sage should always set the difficulty to Moderate (20), unless there is a pressing argument for some other Skill or difficulty.

When a Planning Stone is Hurt

When your Planning stone is hurt, your enemies can use your own plans against you. Here are some negative effects the Sage should consider typical:

- **Prestige Damage.** The Sage inflicts 3 points of damage to your Prestige each round until you recover the stone.
- **Involuntary Technique Use.** When you're attacking an enemy, the enemy can pick a battle technique relevant to the attack that you have the power to use and force you to use it.
- **Strike Penalty.** Until you recover the stone, your Strike takes a -5 penalty and cannot rise above +10.

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Default Penalty. The Sage should generally decide on a single standard penalty for hurt Planning stones and apply it whenever a Planning stone is hurt.

Recovering Planning Stones

To recover Planning stones, use the standard necessary-stone-manipulation approach. First, control the region that holds that stone. Then put a stone or stones to work changing that region — restoring the plan's functionality. You should always use the Tactics Skill to recover a Planning stone, and the Sage should always set the difficulty to Moderate (20), unless there is a pressing argument for some other Skill or value.

Battle Techniques

You will use your fighting and special stones as “fuel” for these battle techniques.

When you use a battle technique acquired through a Planning stone, you must exhaust some of your fighting or special stones. You can't use anyone else's stones for this even if they're freely offered. Nor can you use necessary stones or stones which are already exhausted.

Much as with kung fu, you can use your battle techniques at any time — they don't require an action.

You can maintain some of these battle techniques for multiple rounds. This functions much like maintaining kung fu through a channel. To maintain a technique, you will need to make some sacrifice, as listed on the **Maintenance:** line of the technique's description. You cannot continue maintaining the technique if you or someone else recovers one or more of the stones you exhausted to pay for it.

Techniques Using Local Stones

You'll get the most value from these techniques if you have extra stones in the regions where you're attacking and defending.

Defensive Strike Enhancement. Your plan favors a careful defense. When defending, exhaust an Order or Influence stone to add +5 to Strike. If the exhausted stone's region of control touches the place you're attacking, add +10. If it actually controls that place, add +15.

Maintenance: N/A

Offensive Strike Enhancement. You have an aggressive, well-thought-out plan of attack. When attacking, exhaust a Chaos or Will stone to add +5 to Strike. If the exhausted stone's region of control touches the place you're attacking, add +10. If it actually controls that place, add +15.

Maintenance: N/A

Brutal. Your forces can muster devastating attacks. Exhaust a Chaos or Force stone to add +10 to your Damage for one attack. If the exhausted stone's region of control touches the place you're attacking, add +15. If it actually controls that place, add +20.

Maintenance: N/A

Harry. You keep after the enemy, preventing recovery. After a successful attack in which you damage an enemy, exhaust one stone in the same region as the targeted stone. While you maintain this technique, you can tactically oppose the target's commander's Recover actions using a free action and the exhausted stone's key Skill.

Maintenance: Maintaining this technique requires one free action per round, and you cannot harry a single target more than once.

Tactical Assistance. Your stones can assist one another. You can exhaust one stone to give a two-die bonus to another stone in the same region. This can apply to attack, defense, or damage rolls.

Maintenance: N/A

Techniques Using Strong Stones

You'll get the most value from these techniques if you have high-Strength stones available.

Armor. Your forces are buttressed against harm. Exhaust a stone with at least 5 points of strength to impose a -5 modifier on damage rolls against your stones. Exhaust three such stones to impose a -10 modifier on damage rolls against your stones.

Maintenance: you can maintain this technique indefinitely.

Corrupt. You can corrupt a fighting stone so that it poses a continuous threat to its commander's Prestige. After a successful attack in which you damage an enemy, exhaust a Chaos, Will, Passion, or Sorcery stone to corrupt that stone. Each round thereafter, on your initiative, that stone suffers one die of blockable damage. If the exhausted stone is strength 5 or greater, roll two dice of blockable damage instead.

Maintenance: Maintaining this technique requires one free action per round.

Elusive. Your forces are hard to pin down. Exhaust a 2-point Chaos stone, a 2-point Order stone, or a 5-point fighting stone to initiate this technique. While it remains active —

- Diplomatic attacks against you are complex rolls involving both Grace and Politics;
- Political attacks against you are complex rolls involving both Politics and Tactics;
- Military attacks against you are complex rolls that involve both Tactics and Awareness;

- Epic attacks against you are complex rolls that involve both Awareness and Grace.

Maintenance: you can maintain this technique until you or someone else heals your Prestige.

Seizing the Initiative. Your plans are very flexible. Exhaust at least five total points of Force, Influence, Will, and Passion to add +5 to your Speed. Exhaust at least ten total points to add a +10.

Maintenance: maintaining this technique costs one free action per round.

Strike Limit. You're good at equalizing circumstances. Exhaust an Order or Influence stone to limit the Strike modifier on both sides of attacks by or against your stones to +5. If the exhausted stone is strength 5 or greater, limit it to +0.

Maintenance: you can maintain this technique until you or someone else heals your Prestige.

Extra Attack Techniques

You'll get the most value from these techniques if you're facing a superior enemy.

Area Attack. Your stones can attack in all directions. When using the attack action, you can exhaust a Chaos stone or the attacking stone to launch an Area attack. This affects every enemy stone in the attacking stone's region.

Maintenance: N/A

Extra Attack. Your forces press the offensive. At the end of a round in which you made an attack, you can exhaust a Chaos stone or the attacking stone to receive a secondary attack against the same target. You can only use this technique once per round, and cannot earn more than two extra attacks in a single round through any combination of techniques.

Maintenance: N/A

Reply. Your forces respond to attacks with discipline and ferocity. When someone attacks one of your stones, and you successfully defend, you can exhaust an Order or Force stone to execute a reply.

Maintenance: N/A



Suicide Attack. Your forces are unrelenting. After making an attack, at the end of the round, you can exhaust the attacking stone to make two extra attacks against the target. These attacks gain a +5 bonus to Strike and a +10 bonus to Damage. If either attack is successful, both attacker and defender suffer the result dice plus the Damage in damage. If the attacking stone breaks after the first attack, the second attack does not happen.

Maintenance: N/A



Concepts

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Concept stones represent your character's beliefs about the battlefield. They represent honest estimates of truth, but they also represent propaganda and self-deception — so it's not necessary that the Concept stone represent a true belief!

Think of Concept stones as gambits — sources of great power and great risk. Use these stones as the tools by which your character can forge their own reality — or fail to do so, opening themselves to a devastating comeuppance. Sages should feel free to hand out very large benefits and penalties when daring Concept stones are on the table.

The Physical Battlefield

You can create a Concept stone based on anything that you feel, as a player, is a reasonable assertion to make about the game world. Try to stick to things that you feel could be true or that your character can make true, but don't stress over the ambiguous cases. Here are some example Concepts regarding the tangible battlefield (regions, places, fighting stones, and so forth):

- “Our country, Southern Liang, has a secret path across that river.”
- “This region is very good at training up Force stones.”
- “Those mountains are full of dangerous bandits!”
- “The enemy does not know about our northern army.”

Observe that none of these ideas are necessarily “true” — only the last has any rules support, and the Sage may choose not to agree with any of them. At the same time, note that these are all valid beliefs for the player or the character to hold.

Creating Concept Stones

You create a Concept stone with a **Decision** action and a Skill roll. In fast rounds, you must succeed on a Hard (30) Investigation or Persuade task. In slow rounds, you must succeed on an Everyday (18) Crafting, Investigation, or Persuade task.

Having an unhurt Concept stone provides you persistent benefits in the region containing the stone. You may request specific benefits when creating the Concept. If you do so, and the Sage finds your desires excessive, the Sage should discuss this with you before you roll for the **Decision** action.

Otherwise, the effects will be at least close to what you suggest.

Hurting Concept Stones

To hurt a concept stone, you need to demonstrate that the Concept is false. You must demonstrate this publicly but you do not need to prove it definitively — an adequate demonstration that leaves room for reversal suffices.

First, you must control the region in which the concept stone resides. Second, you need to put a stone or stones to work disproving the concept.

When you try to disprove a Concept stone, the Sage should assume or pretend that the Concept stone is not true. The Sage sets the difficulty of disproving the stone based on this assumption.

For example, imagine that an enemy has a Concept that a mountainous region is infested with bandits. To disprove this, you might need to make a Hard (30) Investigation roll. You have to really study the mountains to be sure there aren't any.

On the other hand, if the enemy's Concept is that the mountainous region is so deadly that you can hardly walk ten steps without a bandit ambush, you can disprove the Concept with a Trivial (10) Investigation. The Sage assumes for this specific purpose that the problem isn't that bad. All you need to do to disprove the Concept is send a few scouts walking around and have them return unharmed.

When a Concept Stone is Hurt

Enemies can use your Concept against you when the Concept stone is hurt.

This works like so.

Enemies can attempt to capitalize on your Concept by mentioning it to the Sage and players in conjunction with some action they take. For example, an enemy can suggest that you're too invested in your Force-stone training region, in conjunction with tactical opposition against your developing new stones elsewhere. As another example, an enemy could suggest, as they move stones across the mountains you believe are infested bandits, that you can't possibly expect their advance — impeding your ability to move stones into their path or defend against their attacks.

If the Concept stone is healthy, you suffer no penalty for this, and it's only worth their mentioning it if you're trying to roleplay belief in that Concept.

If the Concept stone is hurt, then the enemy — in trying to capitalize on your weakness — inflicts a penalty on you. This is as follows:

- A -10 on Great Game actions, if your Concept makes them more difficult to take:
 - **Decisions** that this Concept contraindicates;
 - **Defense** against attacks that your belief keeps you from preparing for;
 - **Blocking** enemy offensives, under the same conditions;
 - **Putting stones to work** in a manner politically or ideologically unsound;



- o Others, as appropriate.
- 5 points of Prestige damage, if your Concept embarrasses you.
- A major denial (fear)-based Chi condition, if your Concept should hurt you but the relevant matter will be decided in ordinary play rather than the Great Game.

Default Penalty. The default penalty is -10 to specific individual actions that the enemy highlights and the Sage recognizes as hindered by the Concept.

The effects of hurt Concept stones are battlefield-wide.

Reducing Penalties

You have an opportunity to reduce the penalty you take — reducing the -10 to a -5, the major Chi condition to a minor Chi condition, or eliminating the Prestige damage.

Here is the idea.

Suppose that you believe that your northern army is a secret. If that Concept stone is hurt, then that belief is a potential liability. You can't then expect to cope with it properly when enemies attack that army. You might take, for example, a -10 to your defense. It is appropriate to stand in your throne room shouting, "How can this be? My army was perfectly hidden!"

If you wish to reduce the penalty, however, you may assume that your character is good at doublethink. Offer the Sage a good argument — in a sentence or two, rather than as a running debate — explaining how you can cope with this specific event. If the Sage buys your argument, the Sage can reduce or eliminate the penalty.

For example, when the enemy attacks your northern army, that your Concept tells you you have perfectly hidden, you might say, "Bah! Those aren't observant enemies! Those are just random bandits that happened onto my army!"

Recovering Concept Stones

To recover a concept stone, you need to demonstrate that it was true after all.

First, you must control the region in which the concept stone resides. Second, you need to put a stone or stones to work proving the concept.

When you try to prove a Concept stone, the Sage should assume or pretend the Concept stone is true. The Sage sets the difficulty of recovering the stone is based on this assumption.

For example, proving that a mountain region has many dangerous bandits is easier than disproving it — just go find some! Since the Sage should assume that the bandits exist, this is probably a Simple (15) or Everyday (18) Investigation task.

When a Concept Stone is Recovered

Imagine that unhurt Concept stones strive constantly to remake the battlefield in their image.

The Sage shouldn't usually offer specific benefits for the act of recovering a Concept stone.

Instead, Concept stones yield a continuous benefit for *having* them unhurt.

Whenever someone takes an action in or affecting that region, the relevant player can suggest to the Sage that the Concept stone supports that action. If the Sage agrees, the stone offers a benefit. You can benefit from any Concept stone — not just yours. In general, however, the Sage should give larger benefits to the person who actually created the stone and smaller benefits to opportunists who did not.

The Sage should offer *minor* benefits when something is indirectly supported by the Concept, or when someone other than the Concept stone's commander is taking advantage:

- A +5 on a Great Game action that the Concept supports:
 - o Blocking movement, e.g. when the mountains are "full of bandits."
 - o Defense, e.g. a Strike bonus when the army is "unknown" to the enemy.
 - o Development, e.g. when you're "very good at training Force stones."
 - o Movement, e.g. a Speed bonus vis-à-vis certain stones' movement when you have a "secret path" across a river.
 - o Plus attacks, tactical positioning, putting stones to work, etcetera.
- Trivial advantages applying to ordinary play in that region instead of to the Great Game, such as people reacting more favorably to the character there.

The Sage should offer *major* benefits when something is directly supported by the Concept, and it's the Concept stone's commander taking advantage:

- A +10 on a Great Game action that the Concept supports:
 - o Blocking movement, e.g. when the mountains are "full of bandits."
 - o Defense, e.g. a Strike bonus when the army is "unknown" to the enemy.
 - o Development, e.g. when you're "very good at training Force stones."
 - o Movement, e.g. a Speed bonus vis-à-vis certain stones' movement when you have a "secret path" across a river.
 - o Plus attacks, tactical positioning, putting stones to work, etcetera.
- Bonus free actions (such as a bonus "Block" action instead of a +10 to one), if the commander prefers.
- Extra battle techniques for use with a stone associated with the Concept, which would carry the Concept stone with it as it moves, or for use in the region where the Concept stone is.

- Minor advantages applying to ordinary play in that region instead of to the Great Game, such as a +5 bonus to relevant Skill rolls.

The Sage can also offer additional benefits that go beyond these standard ideas. Players can ask for unusual benefits but cannot expect them. Players should work with the Sage to determine an appropriate Concept if they do ask. Some examples include —

- Damaging the Prestige of enemies who move stones through the region.
- The ability to take special full actions not normally allowed, such as sacrificing Force stones in that region to create Will stones (perhaps declaring, “that Force stone — those people were brutally slaughtered by the enemy! How dare they!”)
- The ability to recruit enemy stones if they remain in the region for several rounds.
- Moderate advantages applying to ordinary play in that region instead of to the Great Game, such as the availability of additional allies there, the ability to circumvent enemy fortifications, and access to a kung fu secrets.

Recognize that the Concept benefit rules deliberately minimize the power of Concepts to affect ordinary play. In the Great Game, you should expect ideology to regularly trump the Sage’s view of what’s “real;” in ordinary play, Concepts have less of an effect.

Defiance

You can point out when someone is defying one of your Concept stones in the region where it resides. You may only do this for your own Concept stones.

If the Sage agrees that whatever that action is, it’s contrary to your Concept, that action suffers a penalty. This uses exactly the same penalty structure as for hurt Concept stones, above, and the enemy can reduce the penalty in the same fashion.

For example, consider “The enemy does not know about our northern army.” When the enemy attacks your northern army, if the Concept stone is healthy, you might point out that it’s hard to attack an army one doesn’t know about. The Sage could then impose a -10 penalty to the attacker’s Strike. The enemy might then say, “Wait, wait, I don’t know about the army — I think I’m attacking random bandits!” If it amuses the Sage to accept this argument, this reduces the Strike penalty to -5.

In an opposed action, the Sage should only apply the Concept stone once, in whichever fashion is most favorable to the stone’s commander — never double it up and provide a benefit to one side and a benefit or penalty to the other.

Default Benefit. A +5 or +10 bonus to Great Game actions that the Concept logically supports. This can include parts of an action, such as a bonus to moving a specific stone.

The effects of healthy Concept stones on the physical battlefield are region-specific.

The ultimate Concept is, of course, “I am unstoppable — a veritable god-emperor destined to rule Earth and Heaven!”

It’s great while it lasts, and you’ll have the resources to defend the Concept well.

Still, enemies will find a way — asking the Sage for a helpful Goal, if necessary — to create a temporary weakness in your defense. Then they’ll break the Concept stone. At that point you’re just a stupid, shiny fool who *thinks* he’s unstoppable, and that’s going to really hurt. See *The Enchanted Demon*, pg. 104-106, **Weapons of the Gods**, for an example of how this can go.

The more powerful the Concept, the more readily it bites you.

The Social Battlefield

You are not limited to Concepts regarding the physical battlefield. You can also make assertions about the social battlefield — the world of ideals, perceptions, and decisions. Here are some example Concepts regarding these less tangible aspects of the battlefield:

- “The Iron Shadow Warlord is our ally.”
- “Nobody’s rude enough to attack us without a formal declaration of war.”
- “Of course we’re trying to defend the northern border!”
- “Our enemies are depraved — warriors without virtue!”
- “The bandits spend all of their time training deadly warriors to destroy us.”

The Sage places these Concept stones on the elephant board, in the region defined by your interaction with the relevant person, Actor, or group of people. Unlike stones placed on the physical battlefield, the Sage should allow these stones a global effect — they can affect every action that the relevant characters take.

The Sage should allow other characters to negate penalties for defying these Concept stones with any reasonable excuse — not just reduce, but negate. Think of this as balancing the universal scope of Concept stones that affect the social battlefield, and also as a manifestation of the more inherently subjective nature of social reality. This means that you can’t expect Concept stones to paralyze an enemy. If you have a Concept stone that declares the Iron Shadow Warlord your ally, he can still engage in large unit buildup and “military



maneuvers” as long as he provides rudimentary excuses. However, the Concept stone penalizes him when he takes hostile actions without explaining them away. You suffer normally when the stone is hurt, and the Sage should be exactly as lenient or harsh as with a hurt Concept stone on the physical battlefield.

To move a stone into the relevant elephant board region, you must satisfy one of the following criteria:

- The stone must have a valid path to that region through the elephant board, *or*
- The stone must be “in transit” in a region of the battlefield containing one of the involved characters’ fighting stones.

You can only move certain stones into these regions:

- Influence stones.
- Chaos, Order, and Passion stones.
- Special stones that the Sage considers appropriate.

The effects of healthy Concept stones on the social battlefield are battlefield-wide.

Wait, “Our Enemies are Depraved?”

Observant readers may notice that some of the Concepts mentioned above aren’t necessarily helpful. You don’t want depraved enemies, and you definitely don’t want bandits training deadly warriors to destroy you — do you?

You can use Concepts like this to manipulate the behavior of other characters on the battlefield. In the first case, you’re using *your* Concept stone to give your enemies incentive to be bad people. This gives everyone else motivation to consider them a potential threat. In the second case, you’re offering the enemy a carrot — a bonus to their warrior-training, as well as possible drawbacks to other activities — to help divert them from whatever you’re really scared of.

People and Treasures

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Instead of placing necessary stones in a region or a specific place, you can put them on a person, treasure, or stone — something mobile that you care about. Recognize that the mobility helps you protect the necessary stone from harm but conversely allows enemies to seize that stone, carry it off, and hurt it at their leisure.

Here is how the Sage should determine the movements of these stones.

People should move around the battlefield according to their own natural motives and inclinations. They may choose to travel with a specific stone.

The Sage should allow fighting stones and only fighting stones to “carry” treasures around. The Sage should also allow stones to pass treasures to other stones in the same region. This can vary on a case-by-case basis — ten-thousand-pound jade statues might require large Force units to transport, making strength-I Force stones and all Will and Influence stones ineligible. Conversely, the Sage might allow a Chaos stone to carry a treasure of the void.

In general the Sage should not let stones traveling with people or treasures enter the social regions of the elephant board.

The Sage should assume that everything with a necessary stone on it can be stolen or commandeered. If a person, treasure, or stone is *stolen*, the Sage should no longer allow it independent movement. Instead, the rules dictate that it move automatically with the stone that stole or commandeered it. The Sage can allow handoffs once per round, wherein one stone hands the kidnapped person, stolen treasure, or commandeered stone off to another stone in the same region and the stolen thing moves with the new stone thenceforth.

To steal or commandeer people, treasures, and stones with necessary stones attached, use the same basic procedure as you’d use to hurt those stones. Sometimes you can even do both at once. First, you must control the region the stone is in; then you must use one or more stones to do appropriate work! If this succeeds, one of the working stones carries the person, treasure, or stone off. The stolen thing stays with the kidnapping stone until either you release what you’ve stolen or someone steals it back.

On the Smuggling of Enemy Commanders

You can kidnap other Agendas’ commanders and commandeer their stones if the commander or stone has a necessary stone on it — including your own. The **Weapons of the Gods Companion** does not offer general rules for when you can do this. You need the Sage’s explicit permission to place a necessary stone on another Agenda’s commander or stone, and you need the Sage’s explicit permission to kidnap such a stone.

Note that even if the Sage allows it, placing a necessary stone on high-powered enemies like Earth Lord and then kidnapping them is still a Legendary (40) or Impossible (60) task.



Story and the Great Game

The Wulin Sage Leaps Into Action

or

Keeping the Great Game in Context

Turn to this section for information on Challenges and story stones.

Story

(Great Game: Concepts)

Destiny Cost: 0

What are the rules of the Great Game?

What decides whether the characters can achieve their objectives?

Know that the answer is, “the will of the Wulin Sage.”

In the Great Game, as ever, the Sage acts as the final arbiter and thereby the foremost architect of events.

The Sage defines what it means to play the Great Game — choosing through oversight and vision what it means to a character that their Force stones rout an enemy's Influence stones; what a character suffers and gains from their losses and victories; what “wins” and what “loses.” The Sage defines victory conditions and — when victory is fuzzily defined — ending conditions that return the game to ordinary play.

The Sage must ensure that it matters that the regions are not abstractions but places — real landscapes, with their own colors, their own temperatures, their own inhabitants and structures. The Sage must make the stones feel like more than colored stones, capturing their nature as military units, merchant empires, and the seals of great Kings.

Without the Sage, the Great Game is simply a peculiar boardgame. The Sage's role is to transform it into a saga.

In the end, what the Sage causes to matter is not how many stones one wields or where they travel, but the romances, rivalries, blood, tears, tragedies, and triumphs; the roars and stamping feet of the armies; and the acclaim that comes to those who enter the battlefield weak and small and emerge triumphant masters of the World of Martial Arts!

Story Techniques

The Sage has these standard tools for giving meaning to events.

Consequences and Consequence stones invoke story consequences for Great Game actions.

Description connects a stone or region to the story.

Events allow the story to intrude unexpectedly on the Great Game.

Goal stones direct the characters towards an important plot point.

Motivations draw the players into the Great Game.

Challenges: The Five Techniques

(Great Game: RULES)

Destiny Cost: 0

Challenges unite the Great Game and the characters' everyday lives.

Here's how they work.

First, the Sage or the players sets forth something that the characters hope to accomplish — something in the Great Game or the story that the characters would like to do.

Aim to give every character individual, personalized goals and risks.





Second, the Sage may ask the players what they're risking — what **stake** each character is most willing to risk to see it achieved. You can often skip this step — discussing stakes early on will help you when constructing dramatic, important Challenges but it's not necessary for the small stuff.

The Sage then sets forth the Challenge — a situation, scene, or story of play wherein the characters risk their stakes to achieve their goal. At some point during the Challenge, the Sage instructs each player (or one player, representing the group) to make a Skill roll with some appropriate Skill and difficulty. The player can use River and joss on this roll if the character has it available.

You will use the outcome of this Skill roll to determine the outcome of the Challenge. Success should mean that the character succeeds — the Sage ensures that the character accomplishes whatever it is they set forth to achieve. Failure means that the player must choose — the player must sacrifice an appropriate stake, which the Sage must approve, or accept that the character fails at the Challenge. Players can still suggest a stake at this time even if the Sage didn't ask about stakes back before the Challenge started.

Don't expect everything to end neatly at the moment of the Skill roll. Don't try to make every conflict come so perfectly to a crux that either side can win immediately based on the outcome of one roll. Instead, assume that once the roll is made and, if necessary, the player decides whether to sacrifice their stake, the outcome is certain. The Sage can narrate the remainder of the conflict or use Style rolls to enforce the predetermined outcome. Specifically, the Sage makes any roll that would void the result of the Challenge on either success or failure into a Style roll instead, with the necessary outcome assumed. This can include damage rolls.

Here are five techniques for using Challenges to enrich the Great Game.

Consequences

Use **consequence** Challenges to connect events that happen in the Great Game back to the overall story. You can invoke a consequence Challenge any time some Great Game event either threatens the characters' interests or offers them an opportunity, not in the Great Game but in the broader context of their lives.

When you invoke the consequence, you Challenge the characters to seize the opportunity or mitigate the threat. Run this Challenge as a traditional situation, scene, or story of play.

You can place **Consequence stones** to communicate to the players that some event in a region will trigger a consequence — either something bad to prevent or something good to cause. You can explain this in advance ("If enemies capture this region, it's bad for you.") or you can place the stone there unexplained as taunting foreshadowing of events to come.

(Example)

Wu Tian just crushed a Force stone in which his fiancée was fighting. He didn't know she was there! But after Wu Tian rolled damage, the Sage said:

"As your army sweeps down to crush them, you notice that that's Sun Blossom out there holding them back!"

Now Wu Tian's facing a threat — he could lose Sun Blossom's affection, or even her life! Heedless of danger, Wu Tian rushes into the press of troops. Startled, his faithful courtier companion Wu Bu follows.

The Sage sets aside the Great Game for a scene. Tian and Bu fight minions and then come face to face with Sun Blossom's sword techniques — it's time to make a Challenge roll!

Wu Tian fails, but he decides to offer a severe injury (an Addled condition, from a terrible blow to his head) as his stake. The Sage accepts. The scene plays out, but it's certain that Sun Blossom will live, that she'll find a way to accept their disparate circumstances, and that someone (whether Wu Bu, Sun Blossom, or a passing soldier) will strike Wu Tian fiercely on the head.

Descriptions

As the Sage, you are telling a story. You often want regions and stones to have unique qualities in that story. You can keep the mechanical process of the Great Game from abstracting these qualities away with a **description** Challenge. For example, you might believe that the **Lor's Forbidden Territory Region** should terrify the characters in a way that ordinary penalties for moving through it cannot convey.

You can invoke the description Challenge at any time when that unique story quality either threatens the characters' interests or offers them an opportunity, not in the Great Game but in the broader context of their lives. This Challenges the characters to seize the opportunity or mitigate the threat.

Run description Challenges as traditional situations, scenes, or stories of play.

(Example)

One of Wu Tian's Army stones has a fiery-tempered commander, "Phoenix" Ling. She's hard to control — she'd rather have her own Prestige than follow his banner!

Tian uses that stone to garrison a peaceful town — but Phoenix will have none of it! It's time for a Challenge scene to determine whether he can prove his worth to her and possibly strengthen the stone, or fail and have her refuse the order.

Events

Use **event** Challenges when something happens in the ongoing story that interrupts the normal process of the Great Game. For example, you might use



an event stone when something important happens in the characters' personal lives; when a new ally or enemy joins the battle; or when it's time for the characters to drop everything and deal with a completely different impending threat!

Most event Challenges either threaten the characters' interests or offer them an opportunity, either in the Great Game or in the broader context of their lives. The event Challenges the characters to seize the opportunity or mitigate the threat.

You can run event Challenges using traditional situations, scenes, or stories. You can also run event Challenges using the Great Game.

Goal Stones

You can place pre-hurt Goal stones for the characters. These function as Consequence stones once recovered.

Motivation

Use **motivation** Challenges when something in the characters' personal lives is so difficult that they seek to resolve it through the medium of the Great Game.

With a motivation Challenge, you pit the characters against a high-end threat or offer them an incredible opportunity that they may only overcome or seize on the battlefield of the Great Game.

You run motivation Challenges like any other instance of playing the Great Game, save that at some point the players make their Challenge rolls. Their success or failure shapes the remaining course of the Great Game.

(Example)

Ang Yin only wants to impress her father. But he's stingy with his compliments!

Now her father's been arrested by the Unrighteous Emperor Hu, so it's time for Ang Yin to lead the Ang Clan on a hopeless assault against the Jin Empire. The Sage sketches out the battlefield, from the massive forces of the Emperor to the Goal stone of her father's prison. It seems hopeless — but with an appropriate stake, or if any of the PCs make their Legendary (40) Challenge roll, they have a chance. The Sage is secretly planning to give them favorable Skill choices and make sure the PCs have a fair amount of joss and River — but even then, it'll be dicey.

In the end, two PCs succeed — Ang Yin with a Legendary (40) Tactics roll and her brutal kung fu-wielding boyfriend with a Legendary (40) Fight roll. He knocks Jin Empire forces about like tenpins; she leads the Ang Clan to victory! This story plays out in the Great Game, with the Sage using their prerolled victory more and more often as the Ang Clan forces dwindle — until at last she saves her father and the tattered remnants of her army retreat. Such fidelity! Such righteousness! Such filial loyalty! But Ang family corpses litter the field.

Special Stones

Secrets and Truths of the Great Game

or

Your Agents to Command

Turn to this section for descriptions of the special stones, plus the Mini-Guide to Purchaseable Powers.

You can use special stones to do work — to control and change the battlefield's regions.

Most perform unusual kinds of work, or do traditional work more readily than fighting stones.

They come into their own when used to defend your necessary stones, attack your enemies' necessary stones, and favorably trigger Consequence stones.

Mini-Guide to Purchaseable Powers in the Great Game

(Great Game: Index)

Destiny Cost: 0

Army stones (5) — the ability to create Army stones. (pg. 120)

Nature Recruitment — the ability to recruit nature's stones. (pg. 125)

Passion stones (5) — the ability to create Passion stones. (pg. 122)

Peculiar Battlefields (1+) — your destiny awaits on a peculiar battlefield (pg. 126)

Sorcery stones (5) — the ability to create Sorcery stones. (pg. 122)

Treasure stones — Treasure stone-related destiny options. (pg. 102)

Chaos Stones

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Key Skill: Crafting

Chaos stones represent an Agenda's strategic reserve of cussedness, perversity, ingenuity, and lawlessness. Think of developing Chaos stones as increasing the disorder inherent to your Agenda — disorder that you may then channel into “battle spirit,” innovation, spark, defiance, corruption, or violence!

Use Chaos to represent the effects that your Agenda's disorder has on a region. Near your own territory you can expect Chaos stones to represent the innate tendency your Agenda has to create disorderly places — such as ghettos, universities, kung fu schools, and bandit-infested regions. When you project that Chaos away think of it as spreading corruption, disorder, and decay among your friends or enemies.

Changing the World with Chaos

You can use Chaos stones to spread chaos and disorder. You can also use them to drive innovation and new ideas. Only Chaos stones can work to produce new technologies, new monsters, new kung fu techniques, and new heroes and villains of the Wulin. Here, the Weapons of the Gods Companion takes a rules-light approach: it's up to the Sage how difficult it is to use a Chaos stone to develop useful things. Chaos stones are good at controlling wild, untamed regions.



Special Chaos Power

Overwhelm Fading Prestige — In contests to control territory, the Sage should give Chaos stones a 3-point Strength advantage against the stones of a commander whose Prestige is Wounded or Staggering. The Sage should give them a 5-point Strength advantage against the stones of a commander whose Prestige is on its Last Legs.

Order Stones

(*Great Game: RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Key Skill: Crafting

Order stones represent an Agenda's inherent store of organization, cooperation, and order. Think of developing Order stones as increasing the harmony inherent to your Agenda — cooperation, selflessness, honor, and a sense of tradition that you can apply to improving infrastructure, making people happy, and improving the overall quality of life.

Use Order stones to represent the effects that your Agenda's discipline, humaneness, or law has on a region. In your own territory Order stones can represent the martial discipline of your troops, the honor of your bureaucrats, and the good or at least honest intentions of your Agenda. When you project those Order stones, think of it as encouraging harmony, discipline, and law in distant places.

Changing the World with Order

You can use Order stones to spread peace, harmony, and order. You can also use Order stones to build and maintain infrastructure. In building and maintaining infrastructure the Sage should make Order stones superior to Force stones, typically by making such tasks one or two steps less difficult. Thus the Sage might make a task like “provide hot and cold running water everywhere in the city” Impossible (60) for a Force stone and Legendary (40) for an Order stone. A task like “build a reliable post” might be Hard (30) for a Force stone and Moderate (20) for an Order stone.

Special Order Power

Fueled by Prestige — Order stones receive two extra points of Aura when their commander's Prestige is Healthy or Battered. They receive one extra point of Aura when their commander's Prestige is Injured.

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Passion Stones

(Great Game: RULES)

Destiny Cost: 5

This lore requires "Secret Arts of Intrigue"

Key Skill: Inspire

Passion stones represent the passions and troubles in peoples' hearts!

Think of each passion stone is an issue — an idea — that you and your associates can use to provoke a strong passion or inspiration. Expect that most of these ideas will be idealistic visions or lies. When you move the passion stone around, imagine that you are shifting how that idea affects people in the world at large — focusing that idea on changing the world in a slightly different way.

You Develop Passion stones with Inspire, not Crafting. They can appear up to a Moderate (20) move away from your location — 2-3 regions away, but not beyond a Hard region/route.



Changing the World with Passion

You can use the energy of Passion to build up a community or to undermine it. The Sage should treat Passion stones as superior to Will stones in their ability to influence enemies. Specifically, the Sage should make such tasks one or two steps less difficult for a Passion stone. For example, if the Sage would call "destroy the capital's loyalty to its King" a Legendary (40) task for a Will stone, she should fix its difficulty at Hard (30) or Moderate (20) for a Passion stone.

Special Passion Power

Invisible to Force — Players cannot use Force stones, including Army stones, to affect Passion stones in any way, and vice versa. Think of the two stone types as existing in parallel battlefields, entirely ignoring one another's existence.

For example, if a region has a hostile 25-strength Force stone and your I-point Passion stone in it, your stone can ignore the Force stone and work as if it controlled the region. (Of course, the Force stone can still do work of its own.)

Using Passion Stones

You must have this lore to recruit or create Passion stones. Characters can *have* these stones without this lore, if someone gives them away, but anyone without this lore is at a -5 penalty to all associated rolls.

Sorcery Stones

(Great Game: RULES)

Destiny Cost: 5

This lore requires "Daoist Magic"

Key Skill: Awareness

Sorcery stones represent the elemental power of the natural world!

Think of Sorcery stones as great nexuses of pattern, consequence, and power that you build with your Daoist sorcery to change the land of Shen Zhou. As you move the stone, imagine that the effects of your design proceed in an inevitable fashion through the manifold interconnections of the world. In the end, looking back, imagine that it will seem inevitable that the spell had all the effects it had, in the time from the stone's development to its breaking.

Changing the World with Sorcery

You can use the energy of Sorcery to change the weather, adjust the elemental qualities of the land (see *Qualities*, pg. 128), and curse or influence large regions. The Sage should allow Sorcery stones to accomplish many tasks that no other stone can accomplish — unique tasks that require Daoist sorcery to accomplish — and assume a default difficulty for these tasks of Hard (30).

Special Sorcery Power

Invisible to Will — Players cannot use Will stones to affect Sorcery stones in any way, and vice versa. Think of the two stone types as existing in parallel battlefields, entirely ignoring one another's existence.

If a region has ten hostile 10-strength Will stones and your I-point Sorcery stone in it, your stone can ignore the Will stones and work as if it controlled the region.

Using Sorcery Stones

You must have this lore to recruit or create Sorcery stones. Characters can *have* these stones without this lore, if someone gives them away, but anyone without this lore is at a -10 penalty to all associated rolls.

Battlefield Summary Sheets

The Master Surveys the Battlefield

or

Good Places to Fight In

Turn to this section for the special rules of the battlefield you're playing on.

Personal Battlefields

(Great Game: Index)

Destiny Cost: 0

Use Personal battlefields for things like city blocks, families, forest glades where heroes and villains fight, and crumbling bridges.

Interesting features you can use in consequence Challenges, description Challenges, Goal stones, and Concept stones on a Personal battlefield include —

- Prized possessions enemies can break or steal;
- Sturdy walls that characters can't jump through even in a pinch;
- Mud sucking at the characters' feet; and
- Unruly neighbors who don't like any of the participants in the fight.

Rounds

Expect fast rounds on a Personal battlefield to last several minutes each. Expect slow rounds to last one full day.

Commander Stones

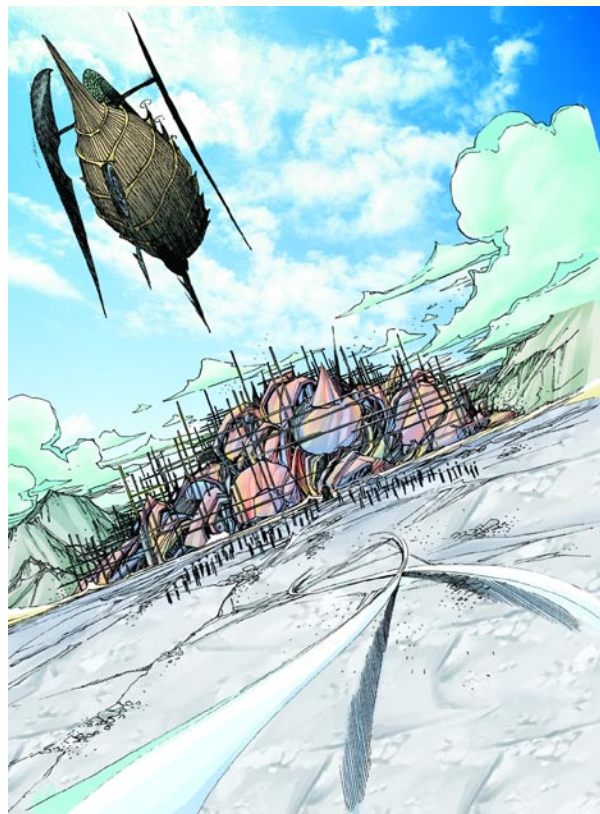
The Sage should give Commander stones a +I strength bonus on a Personal battlefield. Even unranked characters can have some Prestige and act as a I-point stone on a Personal battlefield. First rank characters manifest strength-6 Commander stones!

Prestige

The Sage should assign Actors on Personal Battlefields Prestige 5.

Typical Challenges

The Sage should make most Challenges on a Personal battlefield quick. Expect them to take a few minutes of



dialogue and dice or up to 15 minutes if they include combat.

For example, the player characters could be city officials ordered to subdue and empty a temple of its unreliable Buddhist monks. One character is trying to diplomatically move a Force stone of armed monks out of its defensible position and discovers a description Challenge —

“The monks are drunk! They don't want to listen to your argument.”

The player interacts briefly with the monks, makes a Challenge-appropriate Skill roll, and can potentially take advantage of their inebriation to trick them into evicting on their own.

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Local Battlefields

(*Great Game: Index*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Use Local battlefields for things like cities and fortresses and small Clans and village-dotted hills.

To calibrate your sense of scale, assume that a typical region of control for a stone is the size of a large neighborhood.

Interesting features you can use in consequence Challenges, description Challenges, Goal stones, and Concept stones on a Local battlefield include:

- Important buildings;
- Rivers, cliffs, and warrens of densely-packed houses that affect movement; and
- Dens of iniquity that draw nearby Chaos and Force stones towards them.

Rounds

Expect fast rounds on a Local battlefield to last one hour. Expect slow rounds to last one full week.

Commander Stones

You can't command stones on a Local battlefield unless you're at least 5th rank. The Sage can make an exception when warranted — an unranked princess loved by all the people might have Prestige of her own.

Prestige

The Sage should assign Actors on Local Battlefields Prestige 10.

State Battlefields

(*Great Game: Index*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Use State battlefields for things like inter-city politics, large natural regions, and political and social movements internal to a State or Clan.

To calibrate your sense of scale, assume that typical regions of control for stones on State battlefields are villages, small rivers, sections of forest, and portions of large cities. Imagine that stones on the elephant board offer opportunities to control small Clans and large mercantile enterprises.

Interesting features you can use in consequence Challenges, description Challenges, Goal stones, and Concept stones on a State battlefield include:

- Large industrial facilities;
- Whole villages;
- Terrain features;
- The city walls of a fortified city; and
- Mountains full of bandits that attack passing Force stones.

Rounds

Expect fast rounds on a State battlefield to last six hours. Expect slow rounds to last one full month.

Commander Stones

The Sage should give Commander stones a -I strength penalty on a State battlefield. Only characters 4th rank or above have enough Prestige to participate in a State-level conflict. The Sage can allow a team of 5th rank characters to pool their Prestige and play the Great Game on such a battlefield as a single strength-I Commander stone.

Prestige

The Sage should assign Actors on State Battlefields Prestige 20.

Territory Battlefields

(*Great Game: Index*)

Destiny Cost: 0

Use Territory battlefields for things like the Bei Clan Territory, the Jin Empire, and the combined states of the Qin. The largest Territory-scale battlefield is Shen Zhou itself.

To calibrate your sense of scale, assume that typical regions of control for stones on Territory battlefields are major cities and large wild regions. The Sage can give stones on the elephant board opportunities to control powerful Clans and large religious sects.

Interesting features you can use in consequence Challenges, description Challenges, Goal stones, and Concept stones on a Territory battlefield include:

- Supply lines for troops marching long distances;
- Monasteries of deadly kung fu cultists;
- Buried Weapons of the Gods and hidden Treasures; and
- Roads that a given city must control to survive.

Rounds

Expect fast rounds on a Territory battlefield to last one full day. Expect slow rounds to last one full season.

Commander Stones

The Sage should give Commander stones a -2 strength penalty on a Territory battlefield. Only characters 3rd rank or above have enough Prestige to participate in a Territory-level conflict. The Sage can allow a team of 4th or 5th rank characters to pool their Prestige and play the Great Game on such a battlefield as a single strength-I Commander stone.

Prestige

The Sage should assign Actors on Territory Battlefields Prestige 25. Notice that it takes 125 points of Prestige damage to remove such an Actor from the Game!

Typical Challenges

Expect Challenges on a Territory battlefield to take a good length of time — a session or story of play rather than a single scene. For example, after the PCs seize a city with their Influence stones and topple the necessary stones an enemy placed there, the Sage could spend several sessions dealing with the fallout and having the PCs interact personally with the political factions of the city before returning to the Great Game.



Tips and Tricks

The Tactician Sees All Things as Tactics

or

Folding, Spindling, and Mutilating These Rules

Turn to this section for special battlefields in the Great Game.

Nature's Stones

(Great Game: Optional RULES)

Destiny Cost: 5 (Varies)

This lore requires "Daoist Magic"

This lore is optional. The Sage decides whether players can purchase it and how much it costs. Unless the Sage plans to make it exceptionally valuable or nearly useless, the Sage should set a value of 5 Destiny.

Imagine that nature has stones of its own — Force, Influence, Chaos, Order, and even Treasure stones.

Imagine that these are the stones nature wields against humanity when plagues, fires, famines, and other disasters run amok. That the Sage sets the dice pool used when nature rolls Skills based on the threat level for the disaster. That nature's necessary stones map not to nature's "mind" but to the dramatic schemes of the Sage — that, for example, a plague might "set its sights" on killing the characters' Clan Head, complete with an Agenda stone placed on him, Goal stones scattered through his lands, and a Concept stone that the plague is inevitable death.

If the Sage wishes, she may use these stones as such.

In addition, Daoist characters with this lore can sometimes use the **Recruitment** action to turn nature's stones to their service. This requires a Moderate (20) Awareness roll if the world is extremely out of balance and a Hard (30) Awareness roll if the land is at peace. The Sage decides how many of nature's stones to place on the battlefield and how many a Daoist may recruit at any given time. Assume that if the cost of this lore is 5 Destiny that most battlefields will feature at least one or two points of nature's stones and that it is possible but by no means certain that the Daoist will eventually play on a battlefield where this lore lets them recruit a great army.

Peculiar Battlefields

(Great Game: Optional RULES)

Destiny Cost: 0

This lore is optional. The Sage decides whether players can purchase it. If so, it is available free to any player who expresses interest.

If the Sage uses this lore, then you can solve problems or puzzles — whether they involve unraveling a mystery, dealing with one's family, or working a particularly difficult sorcery — using the rules of the Great Game.

The **Weapons of the Gods Companion** defines a “peculiar battlefield” as a problem that uses the basic Great Game rules for something other than a political or military situation. On such a battlefield,

- **Force** represents unskilled power;
- **Influence** represents holistic effort; and
- **Will** represents focused effort.

For example, one character has a terrible Chi sickness that sometimes cripples him and sometimes blesses him with great power. Solving this sickness takes more than ordinary medicine — instead, the character, his doctor, and their kibitzing courtier friend study and fight the illness on the peculiar battlefield that is the character's body.

The Sage sketches the battlefield, including the various organ systems and the routes between them. The enemy commands Force, Will, Chaos, and Treasure stones; the heroes **Recruit** and **Develop** stones from the sick character's bodily systems. In scenes scattered through multiple sessions, the heroes wage war across a sick body's Chi meridians, and when appropriate the Sage uses Challenges and Goals to reveal the secrets of the mysterious illness.

DESTINY COST

I+ Destiny: You will have the opportunity to address an ancient or important mystery, work a powerful sorcery, or develop a new kung fu technique through traveling a peculiar battlefield with the other characters. You choose the kind of thing you want to do, and of course you control what you actually try to research, but the Sage is free to surprise you (in a non-annoying fashion) with the twists and turns your studies take. The more Destiny you spend, the more famous success will make you.

Large-Scale Effects

(Great Game: Concepts)

Destiny Cost: 0

This lore is optional. The Sage decides whether it applies to her game.

Sages — if you don't use the Great Game rules, but want your players to have access to the kind of world-shaking magic that Treasure and Sorcery stones allow, you can use the system below.

First, declare that any such effort takes time — about as much time as affecting one region in one round of the Great Game would take. For example, smiting a whole city at once is a Territory-scale action in the Great Game — in a context of heated action and war, you should demand that the sorcerer spend one full day on the effort. If the world is more sleepy than that, assume that the character doesn't have as much passion, chaos, and drama to fuel their kung fu, secret arts, or sorcery and require that they spend a season. Consult the box below for concrete time suggestions.

After the character has invested an appropriate length of time, use the Challenge system to determine whether they successfully unleash their powers — e.g., by smiting the city. Instead of a Great Game outcome, the result of a successful Challenge is a successful use of a large-scale marvel, technique, secret art, God-Weapon power, or spell.

You can also use this approach to let characters execute incredible intrigues or complex tactical plans without using the Great Game rules directly.

Time Requirements

<i>Rough Scale</i>	<i>Action During Heated Conflict Takes ...</i>	<i>Or, During Times of Peace ...</i>
House	A few minutes	One day
Neighborhood	One hour	One week
Village	Six hours	One month
Large City	One day	One season

Characters need a heated conflict to cover a much larger region than the region they want to affect to get the time savings. For example, to level a house with a few minutes of sorcery, the district must be in turmoil; to level a neighborhood in an hour, the city must be in turmoil; to blot out a district of Thrashing Minister in six hours, all of Yang must be at war; and before someone can wipe Thrashing Minister from the map in one day rather than one season, all Shen Zhou must fall into disorder.

Starting Characters Out

(*Great Game: Optional RULES*)

Destiny Cost: 0

This lore is optional. The Sage decides whether it applies to her game.

If the Sage wants to use the Great Game for a quick, limited engagement, she should provide the players with their initial forces — either by handing them a stock of stones or by making plentiful stones available for recruitment with a good pitch.

If the Sage wants to use the Great Game for a long-term struggle, she can start the PCs out weaker. However, she may still wish to give them the benefit of their Advantages and established contacts.

Here is how this works.

Advantages

If the Sage is using this lore, players can expect to make the following Advantages useful on battlefields —

Automatic

- Each Affiliation is a I-point Will stone on any battlefield where people care.

Rolled

You can attempt these rolls once per session of play.

- You can make a Moderate (20) Mentor roll to acquire a I-point Will or special stone.
- You can make a Moderate (20) Friends roll to acquire a I-point Influence or Force stone.
- You can make a Moderate (20) Information Broker roll to acquire a I-point Influence, Order, or Chaos stone.

Scope-Limited

- Followers give one point of Force for each point of Followers.
- Relevant Status gives one point of Will for each point of Status.
- Wealth gives one point of Influence for each point of Wealth.

Reduce these totals by one on Local battlefields, two on State battlefields, and four on Territory battlefields.



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Established Characters

If the Sage is using this lore, players can expect to make their established resources useful on battlefields of the Great Game —

- Characters controlling more than 10% of the available manpower on the battlefield can expect a collection of Force stones comparable to their antagonists'.
- Characters with a strong financial investment in the battlefield can expect a collection of Influence stones comparable to their antagonists'.
- Characters with a strong social position on the battlefield can expect a collection of Will stones comparable to their antagonists'.

In addition, players with a strong reputation for virtue should receive a 2-point Order stone and players with a strong reputation for recklessness or corruption should receive a 2-point Chaos stone.

Contacts and Service

If the Sage is using this lore, characters in service to an established Actor or commander in the battlefield can expect a gift of stones from their patron. The Sage has full discretion on how large this gift is — think of this as a tool for the Sage in calibrating the difficulty and tension of the Great Game more than as a guarantee for the player.

Agenda Stones

If the Sage is using this lore, characters begin the Great Game with a sufficient number of Agenda stones to manage their forces. The players must still decide what those stones represent.



Qualities

(*Great Game: Concepts*)

Destiny Cost: 0

This is a picture of the underlying qualities of the battlefield that the special stones can affect.

The Sage should use this lore as a reference point when setting the difficulty of changing a region with a stone's work.

The Sage can also imagine these qualities as the region's Skills — for example, that animals roll the region's Wood to determine their fertility, with rabbits adding a Quality Fertility bonus and elephants getting an extra die from their Might; that a region simmering with discontent occasionally rolls its Disorder to see if it bursts out in riots; and so forth. Don't expect to actually roll these things out, since mating animals and simmering regions aren't protagonists or antagonists, but do use the concept of these Skill rolls to get a sense for how characters who change a region's qualities affect the probability of events.

Disorder

The disorder in a region produces innovation, suffering, violence, disobedience, and chaos.

Commonly adjusted by Chaos and Order stones.

<i>Disorder</i>	<i>Typically Creates</i>
I	Dissatisfaction, grime
2-3	Laziness, disobedience, petty crime
4-5	Trouble, heroes, villains, criminals, cults, philosophers
6-7	Insurgents, atrocities, works of genius
8-10	Monsters, new kung fu, State-destroying paradigm shifts

Passion

Passion measures a group or region's passion about some issue, often stirred up by a courtier's Passion stones.

Commonly adjusted by Will and Passion stones.

Passion

Level of Fervour

I	The issue is generally dismissed or ignored
2-3	The issue is generally laughed off
4-5	The issue provokes emotion
6-7	The issue is a uniting or a polarizing force for the community
8-10	The issue is central to the people of the group or region

Habitability

Habitability measures the base suitability of a natural region for human habitation. In general short-term habitability increases require Sorcery stones or very large Force stones.

Commonly adjusted by Chaos and Sorcery stones.

Habitability

Region is suitable for . . .

I	Inhabitation by legendary warrior-hermits and Daoist sages
2-3	Inhabitation by outlaws, minor resource harvesting
4-5	Scattered residences, travel
6-7	Settlement
8-10	Massive resource harvesting or large-scale settlement

Infrastructure

Infrastructure is the work of human hands and minds to create a better living environment.

Commonly adjusted by Chaos and Order stones.

Infrastructure

Typical Resources

I	Bare-minimum sanitation and slow communication
2-3	Minimalist social structure, a functional post, corrupt bureaucracy
4-5	Sanitation, trade, manners
6-7	Honorable bureaucracy, low-end industry
8-10	Anachronistic or noble living conditions



Benevolence

Benevolence governs the impulse to altruism in a community.

Commonly adjusted by Will and Passion stones.

<i>Benevolence</i>	<i>Characteristics of the community</i>
1	People are reluctant to offer the simplest kindnesses. Nobody helps anybody else. The people are like vultures or jackals, hungry for others' suffering
2-3	People have courtesy but very little compassion
4-5	People are generous, warm, and giving
6-7	The community is profoundly good
8-10	Mythical utopias are Benevolence 8-10, suffused with benevolence beyond the power of ordinary courtiers to instill

Unity

Unity measures a community's ability to act with a single mind.

Commonly adjusted by Will and Passion stones.

<i>Unity</i>	<i>Characteristics of the community</i>
1	There is no community. There are only disparate individuals who do not acknowledge a common identity
2-3	People incline towards factions and independence
4-5	People have a strong sense of the communal good
6-7	The community works together like a well-oiled machine
8-10	The Metal Liquid Delegates are Unity 8-10, possessing a supernatural power of cooperation and unity

Fidelity

Fidelity represents the basic honesty of the community — the willingness of the people to speak frankly, to admit their wrongs, and do what they say they will do. Expect Fidelity to fall in the 2-5 range in the Land of the Gods unless someone's meddling.

Commonly adjusted by Will and Passion stones.

Fidelity

Characteristics of the community

- 1 Language is artifice; not only does nobody mean what they say, nobody *expects* words to mean what they say. Blame dissipates into the ether; face is more important than substance
- 2-3 People are very focused on appearances. Hypocrisy is common
- 4-5 People are honest and sometimes blunt
- 6-7 People are shockingly open, even with personal matters
- 8-10 The Dao is Fidelity 8-10, but even Old Boy's writings on the Dao are at most 7

Propriety

Propriety governs the respect that a community gives to tradition, manners, and proper behavior.

Commonly adjusted by Will and Passion stones.

<i>Propriety</i>	<i>Characteristics of the community</i>
1	People are like bandits, like savages, like baneful humans. They do what they think is right and they wouldn't even know how to behave properly if they wanted to
2-3	People are hard and bitter and do what they must, propriety be damned
4-5	People respect tradition and order
6-7	Ritual and propriety are the heart of the community
8-10	Heaven is Propriety 8-10, with gods who think nothing of spending one hundred years on a single tea ceremony (as long as the tea does not get cold.)

Righteousness

Righteousness governs the respect that a community gives to duty.

Commonly adjusted by Will and Passion stones.

<i>Righteousness</i>	<i>Characteristics of the community</i>
1	People are entirely unreliable, resentful of authority, rebellious and lazy
2-3	People are focused on the needs of the moment
4-5	People are focused on their long-term goals
6-7	The community is unnaturally driven by duty or obsession
8-10	Communities willing to sacrifice their lives and even their souls for some cause are Righteousness 8-10. It is Legendary (40) or Impossible (60) but not unprecedented for a courtier to instill such loyalty

Wood

Wood governs windy climates, reproduction and youth, beginnings, and general health.

Commonly adjusted by Sorcery and Treasure stones.

Wood	Characteristics of the Region
I	Life has trouble maintaining a foothold. Many animals mate without success, many plants fail to spread their seeds, and most creatures die young. Only unusually strong and fertile creatures have a chance at normal fertility and a healthy youth. The wind is still
2-3	Most creatures are a bit sickly
4-5	Life is unusually vibrant
6-7	The world is flooded with life and health, and probably wind
8-10	The island of P'eng-Lai is most likely Wood 8-10, burgeoning with a life force beyond the ability of normal Daoists to create

Fire

Fire governs heat, early summer, vigor, passion, and expansion. Fire helps the sun and man-made fires heat things up, and it helps things without a heat source stay warm.

Commonly adjusted by Sorcery and Treasure stones.

Fire	Characteristics of the Region
I	It's hard to stay warm! Many young creatures freeze, plants don't flower, and life moves slowly and ponderously
2-3	It's cold and most creatures are sluggish
4-5	The world is hot, plants bloom freely, animals are large, hot, and quick
6-7	It's very hot. Everything expands; even water steams up!
8-10	It gets this hot inside volcanoes! It's pretty hard to live in a volcano because of the low Wood, Earth, and Water scores, but staying warm is never a problem

Earth

Earth governs damp climates, adulthood, stability, and ripening. It helps make things wet, keeps things from drying out, and helps everything resist outside forces and stay the same.

Commonly adjusted by Sorcery and Treasure stones.

Earth

Characteristics of the Region

I	Everything's in flux — there isn't enough moisture! Most hostile places are Earth I — windy deserts, volcanoes, blizzards, and even the ocean. That's why drinking seawater doesn't keep your tissues moist: it has lots of water, but no Earth
2-3	Conditions are hostile
4-5	Conditions are stable and orderly
6-7	Things are sleepy — nothing much changes. A region with high Wood and high Earth is full of life; a region with low Wood and high Earth doesn't have much; but either way, the things that make it through childhood in a high Earth region tend to hang on a long time
8-10	Like parts of the south — a kettle of life!

Metal

Metal governs dry climates, old age, withering, and decay. It helps dry things out and keep them from getting excessively damp. Metal controls the process of withering, decay, rotting, and growing old — high Metal makes the process a graceful sacrifice of unneeded qualities, like a snake shedding old skins, while low Metal means that important things are lost.

Commonly adjusted by Sorcery and Treasure stones.

Metal	Characteristics of the Region
I	Everything's damp and rotting. It's not a good place to keep secrets or treasures — when you come back for them, they'll have sunk into the earth or rotted to nothing. It's not just a region of decay — it's a region of <i>bad</i> decay
2-3	Things age poorly
4-5	Things age well
6-7	Things are dry and safe — you can come back millennia later and find preserved relics
8-10	Only things like the Weapons of the Gods have a Metal this high — that's why they're greater in their age than in their youth!



Void

Void is that sickness that strives always towards the primeval nothing. Void helps things pass away, never to return. Void drains energy, life, and soul.

Commonly adjusted by Treasure stones.

<i>Void</i>	<i>Characteristics of the Region</i>
1	The world works as it should
2-3	The world is troubled, but well
4-5	The world is thin and touched by chill
6-7	The void has injured the world somewhat
8-10	The region is tainted with Existence-Hating Radiance

Water

Water governs cold climates, death, and dormancy. Water helps snowstorms, ice, and chill winds make things cold. Things need Water to keep from overheating. Water energy is the line between death and sleep — when winter or tragedy comes, and things grow still and quiet, it is Water that determines whether this is death or simply a pause before spring. Water helps animals and plants survive great crises, such as harsh winters, droughts, and terrible wounds.

Commonly adjusted by Sorcery and Treasure stones.

<i>Water</i>	<i>Characteristics of the Region</i>
1	It's too hot! Things get heatstroke easily
2-3	Too hot! There's not enough cold yin energy
4-5	A bit cold, and there's a lot of yin
6-7	It's freezing! Hibernation is common. Fire is usually low, but if there's adequate fire — perhaps in a northern hot springs environment — creatures can actually survive reasonably well
8-10	The depths of the north. Everything is very, very cold, and there are things that sleep the ages there that should, instead, have died

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The World is Martial Arts

The Creation of Kung Fu
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Maneuver Index

- Area Attack
- Breath Loss
- Chi Control
- Coordination
- Combat Maneuver
- Deflection
- Distant Harmony
- Equipment-Destroying
- Fancy Footwork
- Healing Fire
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Maneuver Glossary

New Kung Fu

Common Styles

- Flawless Archery
- Forge-Hammer Fist
- Green Mantis
- Heaven-Earth Sun Moon Saber
- Ling Zhi Two Finger
- Shatterfoot
- Shooting Stars Hands
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Uncommon Styles

- Blue Flame Spear
- Darkened Flying Edges
- Dragon Palms
- Eight Diagram Fist
- Force of the Wind
- Sublime Doctrine
- Wild Horse
- Yin Ice Sword

Rare Styles

- Armor of the Gods
- Death Fist
- Dugu Four Ultimates
- Righteous Thieving Rebel

Formless Techniques

- Ghost Finger
- Lion's Roar
- Toad Style





The Creation of Kung Fu

[A System Topic]

Destiny Cost: 0

(Story)

"Stop kowtowing!" Feng snapped irritably. "It's too embarrassing!"

"I said that to you once" replied Tai, breaking floor tiles with every kowtow. "And look where it got me! My baby sister has grown to be my sifu! I have to show you filial piety, so I imitate your techniques."

"Frustrating Tai! You can't pretend we're still children. Endless kowtowing isn't kung fu."

"I'll act childish if it saves the sect!" Blood ran from his forehead, but he did not slow. "If you seek to rule the Wulin, you'll turn every clan and society against us! The Sublime Doctrine will be dust on the wind. I beg you, stop."

"Ignorant Tai! Until now, the Sublime Doctrine has been an eagle trapped in a cage – our kung fu was worthless. But I have studied the wisdom of the Sleeping Dragon, and wed it to Master Zi's martial principles – with this all-conquering kung fu, the Sublime Doctrine finds the endless sky!"

Tai straightened slowly, and sighed, resigned. Feng's eyes gleamed with pride in her invincible new techniques. The demons of the nine chasms couldn't stop her now!

"My own sister - such a troublesome sifu! The way of kung fu is hard," he muttered, and withdrew.

In the halls of Heaven, Thoughtless Wen sighed in wordless agreement. The last stone of his Million Style Manual clicked into place, confirming the harmonious nature of the new Sublime Doctrine style, and his shoulders slumped.

"It is the way of things, friend Tai – you must follow your master; I must fill out the paperwork!"

(Discussion)

As noted in the *Pangu Teaches the Void* (p.88, **Weapons of the Gods**), martial arts was born of the primal conflict that created the world from the destruction/differentiation of the Primordial Void – each potential kung fu style, existed, if for only brief moments, before the Land of the Gods was born.

However, that would be one thing
– while the existence of martial
arts is literally
encoded into

the structure of the universe, it would be purely a matter of trial and error and great fortune that any martial art was devised at all! While it is certainly possible to get hints from the world itself (particularly from natural phenomena or animals), otherwise the creation of martial arts would be a very difficult thing.

Or would be... if there weren't literally a manual that provides easily-accessible hints that makes martial arts design a much easier proposition! The so-called 'Million Style Manual' exists, and no amount of hoarding or even outright destruction of copies seems to keep the infernal thing from cropping up again.

The Manual itself is a set of sixty-four flat jade stones, in five different colors, marked with pieces of Shen Zhou characters. It expresses the kung fu of the void, as taught by Pangu's axe. One can write the core secrets of any kung fu style by arranging these stones properly in an eight by eight grid; it seems likely that this is only the most current form of the Million Style Manual and that it took other forms in prehistory.

So where does the Manual come from? It's an interesting question – but the clue is there in the origin story of Pangu! When he slept for those eons, and his thoughts condensed into a heavy jewel that literally was the existence of *Pangu's Binding Edge* kung fu. So when Pangu fought the Void and carved away the martial arts styles it was devising in its struggle against him (using his wondrous god-weapon, the great axe **First Conception**), he would use the flat binding edge of his axe to capture the new kung fu before it was forever lost. Each style then became a star in the depths of the new sky over Shen Zhou... which is why those lights of knowledge are used for astrology to this day.

Each time **First Conception** cut away a martial art, the axe's own knowledge grew – while like all god-weapons that would follow it, it was sentient in its own nonhuman way – until the burden of its knowledge grew too great for it, and its freight of knowledge would condense into a stone, which would fall to earth... as one of the stones of a Million Style Manual. Each stone would contain a hint of some kind to martial arts, and the separate stones of a Manual would eventually gather together into a collection, for the individual stones have an affinity for one another.

So there you have it – the Million Style Manual is one of the First Created Things – it is immortal and enduring, and when destroyed, always comes back into existence. Though the sages remain divided upon the topic of whether or not there are multiple copies – of the truth in this matter, we do not know.

Learning Kung Fu

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 3

Study Difficulty: Fight (18)

(Discussion)

Learning new and more powerful kung fu techniques is an essential element of the Wuxia genre, and an important part of any **Weapons of the Gods** campaign. As characters advance in the Wulin, their players will find they need to increase their kung fu repertoire in both depth and breadth in order to meet the more spectacular challenges of higher Rank. It's unfair of the Sage to make it difficult for characters to do so! However, learning powerful kung fu techniques is often extremely arduous for characters in the wuxia genre, and access to kung fu is an important aspect of a character's interaction with the social structure of the Wulin. It's not true to wuxia fiction to simply write a technique down on your character sheet without telling the story of how your character earned it!

This Lore aims to resolve this tension by offering Secrets of Destiny that give tangible benefits for emphasising the process of learning kung fu in play. Outside of those Secrets, it does not alter the rules for learning kung fu as printed in **Weapons of the Gods** in any way – it is not required to learn kung fu. However, the benefits offered by this Lore are substantial; it is strongly recommended that you consider this Lore for characters likely to spend a substantial proportion of their earned destiny on kung fu.

Conversely, this Lore does include rules for characters inventing their own kung fu – characters wishing to do so are required to purchase it.

(Rules)

The following rules for learning kung fu are unchanged from Weapons of the Gods. They are collected here and expanded on for clarity and convenience.

Purchasing the Appropriate Lore:

Kung Fu can only be learned if your character has the appropriate Lore. Kung Fu styles are Lores in their own right, whereas Formless Techniques appear as Secrets of Destiny on Lores of all kinds. It can be worth purchasing a Lore before you have the opportunity to learn the kung fu in question, as having the Lore gives your character complete knowledge of the style's capabilities, and access to its Secrets of Destiny.

- **Common Style Lores** should be available to characters in all but the most extraordinary of circumstances. Players are encouraged to justify their purchase, but it generally shouldn't be required of them.
- **Uncommon Style Lores** represent knowledge and story opportunities related to a powerful and distinctive kung-fu style. Players should expect to give an interesting justification for purchasing this Lore. Sages are encouraged to be receptive to justifications other than the default suggested by a style's Secrets of Destiny.
- **Rare Style Lores** represent knowledge and story opportunities relating to a style of kung fu that is unique in the setting. Players should not only expect to give an interesting justification for purchasing the Lore, but to give a **very** good one if they want to deviate from the default suggested by the style's Secrets of Destiny. Sages are encouraged to be more lenient with alternate explanations for styles without a * *Bonus* granting advantages such as Mentor or Affiliation.

Instruction in the Technique:

Before spending destiny on a technique from a Lore, your Sage must agree that your character has access to appropriate instruction in that technique. By default, this is either a teacher who knows the technique, or a technique manual. Sages are encouraged to treat gaining access to instruction for Common Styles as trivial. For Uncommon and Rare styles, Sages should be guided by the Style's loresheet. A character in good standing with the Nan clan could find a clan member to instruct them in *Heart Moves the Blade* anywhere that the Nan have a presence; for *Dugu Four Ultimates*, there's not much option other than the mountain mentioned in the Lore. However, **Sages are strongly encouraged to be as lenient as they can** – it's not fair to retard the progress of a character simply because the campaign moves away from the base of their faction or mentor. If the idea of the character finding appropriate instruction somewhere within reasonable travel distance during the required downtime (see below) isn't actively ridiculous, let them buy the technique. However, it is reasonable to assign a low Learning score to teachers with sketchy justifications.

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Downtime Required:

Having paid destiny for a technique, a character is required to accumulate a certain amount of downtime training before they can use it, based on the level of the technique. You must have access to instruction throughout this time. This downtime does not need to be contiguous. A day of training is considered to be eight hours; training in excess of 8 hours in a given day has no benefit (though it may count as superlative effort for a bonus on the Learning roll to reduce training time below).

For example, if Red-Faced Shen, a busy palace official has only 2 hours a day to practice his kung fu, it will take him four days to accumulate a day's worth of training. If he were to neglect his duties for a day and devote 10 hours to his kung fu, it would only count as a single day of training. If his Lord demanded he suspend his training for a season, he could pick up where he left off after the season elapsed – he wouldn't have to start from scratch.

The following table specifies training times by level of technique. Tiers below Level I give training times for techniques moved that low by Transcendent Destiny or the Secrets of Destiny of this Lore. The third column specifies the difficulty of a Learning roll needed to move the required time down one tier; you may attempt this roll once per technique, and each of your teachers (if any) may attempt this roll once per technique (multiple teachers suffer from Too Many Cooks at the Sage's

option). This may only move the training time down a maximum of two tiers in total, and the difficulty is set by the level of the technique, not the current training time tier. It is common practice to implicitly encourage rivalries in kung-fu schools in order to give students and teachers access to the River for these rolls.

For Example, the Notorious Dark Warrior Wu is instructing her brother Tai in the level 4 technique of the Sublime Doctrine Style. This normally takes six months. As teacher, Wu makes a Learning roll at difficulty 20 to move the time required down one tier to three months, and succeeds. As student, Tai can also make one attempt to move the required time down one tier (to one month), but the difficulty remains at 20. If Tai fails, Wu can bring other instructors in to make rolls and speed up the process, but risks the Too Many Cooks rule.

Creating Kung Fu Techniques

Your character may only invent kung-fu techniques that are already on a Lore they know – the Secrets of Destiny on this Lore allow your character to create new Lores for this purpose.

Inventing a technique removes the requirement for instruction, but shifts the technique two tiers up for the purpose of training time. You may make a Learning roll to shift the training time down a tier as normal.

Note: All effects that move training time up or down the tiers are cumulative.

Technique	Training Time	Learning Difficulty
Divine Kung Fu	One Century	60
Level 8+ Formless Techniques	Forty Years	40
Rare Form 4	Twenty Years	40
Level 7 technique/Rare Form 3	Ten Years	30
Level 6 technique/Rare Form 2	Five Years	30
Level 5 technique/Rare Form I	One Year	20
Level 4 technique	Six Months	20
Level 3 technique	Three Months	18
Level 2 technique	One Month	18
Level I technique	Two Weeks	15
Understanding of chi-flow**	One Week	N/A
Physical movements of a technique, suitable for intimidation*	One Day	N/A
Physical movements of a technique, suitable for performances*	One Hour	N/A
Instant mastery through a Marvel	Instant	N/A

* Grants a +5 modifier in appropriate circumstances (standard superlative effort bonus)

** Grants a +5 modifier for mastering the technique with a Marvel (standard superlative effort bonus)

Secrets of Destiny: Learning Kung Fu*Student and Sifu**[Destiny]***DESTINY COST**

- * **Bonus:** You are a Quality student of kung fu. Add a +5 modifier to Learning rolls to reduce training time.
- * **Bonus:** Your kung fu training is harmoniously entangled with your life in the Wulin. For each session in which your kung fu training or a relevant source of instruction plays an important part in play, you may shift the training time required for a technique

What the Million Style Manual is for

The Million Style Manual helps players and Sages quickly and easily create the mechanical skeleton for their custom styles, letting them express their ideas in terms of Weapons of the Gods rules. It is targeted primarily at campaign play rather than tournament play.

Not every Kung Fu style will come out of the Million Style Manual perfectly balanced with every other style. This is particularly true at higher Technique levels, where powerful maneuvers can be combined in surprising ways. Million Style Manual compatibility should be considered a minimum requirement for a balanced style, not an absolute guarantee.

In practice, we encourage you to experiment and enjoy yourselves doing whatever you like with the system. Post your styles on the Eos Press forums, hold all-comers Kung Fu tournaments, and generally play around to your heart's content. You'll discover, above all, that making Kung Fu is fun.

However, Sages should ensure that any new Kung Fu – whether from the Million Style Manual or Weapons of the Gods supplements – fits the style of their campaign and group. In some groups (and for online tournaments), that will mean making sure the style is well-balanced in order to give everyone a fair chance at the Kung Fu spotlight. In other games, it might just mean making sure that each horribly broken Rare style is different, in order to preserve variety in the over-the-top fun. The Million Style Manual is a flexible tool, and it allows you to make styles of varying power (particularly in the case of Rares) – the only trick is making sure the style's power fits its theme, and the fun of your game.

down by one tier. Examples include sessions where a technique manual is fought over, where there is a major scene of interaction with a Mentor, or where you successfully represent your faction in the Great Game. Sessions in which Secrets of Destiny from the appropriate kung fu Lore feature may also qualify. For campaigns *At the Movies* (p.340, **Weapons of the Gods**), a well-described and novel training montage will qualify.

- 0 **Fortune:** Having shown exemplary filial piety to your Sifu, gain 2 Xia joss.
- 0 **Fortune:** Having failed to show filial piety to your Sifu, thereby compromising your ability to gain instruction, gain 2 Corrupt joss.
- 1 **Entangled Destiny:** A relevant source of instruction for a kung fu whose Lore you own (ie your Sifu, a technique manual, a faction) becomes entangled in the current story.
- 1 **Destiny:** You gain the opportunity to learn kung fu wisdom through challenge. Your Sage lays out a Challenge Stone – if you succeed, you may waive the requirement for instruction for a single technique.
- 1 **Discovery:** You discover an onerous task set by a relevant sifu, and which you have successfully completed in play, was in fact a lesson in kung fu. You may waive the requirement for instruction for a technique known by that sifu.
- 1 **Victory:** Having been soundly defeated with use of a particular technique, you may waive the requirement for instruction when learning it.
- 2 **Treasure:** Having learned all techniques in a style, you write a technique manual for it.
- 3 **Discovery:** You discover that a technique manual you have gained is a Quality manual – it always reduces training time by one tier, as if it was a teacher that had succeeded on a Learning roll.
- 3 **Victory:** Having publicly defeated a major opponent from a rival kung fu school or tradition, you permanently move a point of Solidarity or Membership from that school to one you have an Affiliation with. Increase your Status in your school by one if it is below 5.
- 5 **Fortune:** You gain Quality Kung Fu Observation. You may always waive the need for instruction on a technique that you have witnessed being used by a victorious warrior. This does not grant any special opportunity to buy the appropriate Lores, however.

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Creating Kung Fu

[Destiny]

- 1 **Victory:** Having won a challenging fight using techniques of a given style, you gain deep insight. You may learn the next technique in the style as if you were inventing it – requiring no instruction, but raising the downtime required by two tiers.
 - +I: You invent a variant technique instead, using the *Million Style Manual* rules to modify the existing technique. This may also be used to invent additional techniques for a style if it has fewer techniques than the maximum allowed by the *Million Style Manual* rules.
- 5 **Victory:** Having found a suitable source of inspiration, you create a Common Kung Fu Style. Write the Lore for this style – your character gains the Lore for free.
- 10 **Victory:** Having achieved Rank 3 and having found a suitable source of inspiration, you create an Uncommon Kung Fu Style. Write the Lore for this style – your character gains the Lore for free. You do not gain any * *Bonus* secrets on that Lore if they would normally cost destiny. You may pay their normal destiny cost if doing so makes sense (ie you cannot buy yourself as a Mentor).
- 15 **Victory:** Having achieved Rank 2 and having found a suitable source of inspiration, you create a Rare Kung Fu Style. Write the Lore for this style – your character gains the Lore for free. Rules for * *Bonus* secrets as above.
- 3 **Fortune:** Having achieved Rank 3 and having found a suitable source of inspiration, you create

a Formless Technique. Write a Lore giving access to this technique – your character gains the Lore for free. Rules for * *Bonus* secrets as above.



Discounts on Related Lore

DESTINY COST

-I *Teacher and Student* – what is the nature of the relationship between sifu and student?



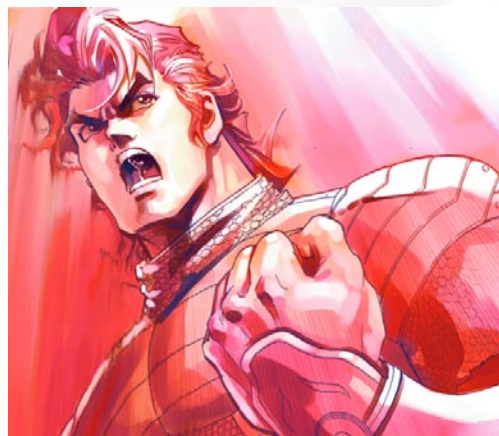
Martial Arts Creation Rules

Basic Rules

- 1.) Every Kung Fu Style has its **Theme** – what makes it distinct from other styles. Choose a name evoking this theme, and keep it foremost in mind when making design decisions for your style.
- 2.) Choose the **Color of Chi** the Style is based on. The standard choices are the *Five Colors* (Jade, Crimson, Gold, White, Silver), but there are three other options – *Unique* (a non-standard mix of colors by level), *Flexible* (any color may be spent) and *Demon* (each technique has at least one Hell Maneuver [qv]; choose one of the five standard colors to act as the base color for chi costs).
- 3.) Choose your Kung Fu style's **Availability** – whether it is Common, Uncommon or Rare. Common and Uncommon styles always have between 3 and 7 techniques, with costs as detailed on page 233 of **Weapons of the Gods**. Rare styles have 3 to 4 techniques, also referred to as Forms – the first is costed as a normal level 5 technique, the second as a level 6 and the third as a level 7. The fourth form costs 20 Destiny to purchase and 8 Chi of the base color +12 Any Chi.

Formless Techniques exist outside of a style – if building such a technique, choose its level, between 1 and 7. Its costs are determined normally for a technique of that level. A fourth tier of Availability – *Divine* – exists, but is outside of the scope of these rules.
- 4.) All Martial Arts Styles have a single free **Chi Channel**. This can be applied to a single technique of a given level, depending on the style. Common Styles can only have a Chi Channel for a Level 4 Technique or higher; Uncommons, Level 2 or higher; Rare Styles can have a channel at any level Form. Additional Channels for other techniques must be bought as the appropriate maneuver; see page X.)
- 5.) All Martial Art Styles can have up to two **Default Combat Effects** to choose from whenever a Critical Success is made. Commons may choose from both Lesser Combat Effects and Minor Combat Effects; Uncommons may choose a single Major Combat Effect as one of its Default Critical Successes, while Rares may choose any combination whatsoever.

- 6.) Each **Technique** is built with a set number of 'maneuver points' equal to its chi cost plus an *Availability Bonus* – Common Styles only add +1, but Uncommon Styles add +2 and Rares add +3; Formless Techniques add +0 (their benefit is that you don't need to spend a buy-in cost to learn them). Corrupt Formless Techniques (those built with Hell Maneuvers) have an Availability bonus of +4; after all, you should get something extra for giving up a piece of your soul for power.
- 7.) According to the Theme, build each technique using maneuvers – martial arts are, after all, coordinated sequences of such maneuvers. See the *Maneuver Index*, below. All Maneuvers must add up to the technique's Maneuver Point Total.
- 8.) Each Maneuver comes from a group defined by purpose, which aligns with its Chi Color. When a maneuver's color is the same as the Chi Color of the martial arts style, then the resulting **Chi Color Match** grants an additional bonus point to that technique; only the first such match gains the additional points. It's not possible to have multiple color matches and get more than one extra point, however!
- 9.) By applying **Restrictions** (see below) to the style, you can receive bonus maneuver points to distribute amongst the style's techniques. Restrictions are properties of styles; formless techniques never benefit from them.
- 10.) **Bonus Maneuver Point Limit:** Under no circumstances can you spend more bonus points (from Restrictions, Flaws or Chi Color Match) on a single technique than its base maneuver point slots. For example, A Common Style's First Technique has a cost of 1 and an availability bonus of 1 for a total of 2; therefore, no more than two bonus points can ever be spent on a First level Common Technique. For an Uncommon Style, the example would be 3 points; whereas the first form of a Rare martial art would permit 8 points!
- 11.) **0 Point Maneuvers:** No technique can have more than one 0 point maneuver.



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Restrictions

Applying **Restrictions** can grant additional bonus points for Maneuvers, which can be spent on any technique in the Style. Each such narrowing of the Style's functionality grants +1 maneuver point to a single technique. A given restriction can only be applied once.

- Restricting the Style to a single type (*Only Brutal* or *Only Artful*): +1 bonus point.
- Restricting the Style to using only a single Weapon Type (*Only Staves* or *Only Swords*): +1 bonus point.

Regarding the use of Weapons: The *Million Style Manual* does not seek to provide exhaustive rules for interaction between the styles created and weapons from **Weapons of the Gods**, as it is assumed that the weapons are balanced with each other in an overall context.. However, Sages might find some use for an example weapon classification system as well as a reminder of how weapons work in the game.

- **Artful/Ranged** weapons are considered both Artful and Ranged (**Weapons of the Gods**, p68) and so can be used with both Artful and Ranged techniques. Therefore either the Melee or Ranged skill may be used; either way, all relevant penalties and benefits apply to an Artful/Ranged action. Range of such weapons is usually limited to 10 yards (1 move increment) by default. This means that weapons such as the Rope Dart can combine Dragon Saber and Perfect Aim techniques. Brutal/Ranged weapons are treated in a similar manner, counting as both a Brutal and Ranged weapon; an example of this would be using a whip with *Waves Like Water* and *Perfect Aim*.
- **Ranged(Artful)** and **Ranged(Brutal)** weapons can be used **ONLY** with Ranged (and Free) techniques. All relevant penalties and bonuses apply for a Ranged action. Range is limited by weapon type; fired projectiles go out to Long range, Thrown weapons go out to Medium range. The bracketed "Artful" or "Brutal" serves as a damage subtype, which is important in some cases, such as the *Barred Armor Shield* Formless technique.

Flaws

Flaws are more extreme versions of Restrictions, but only applicable to specific techniques – they represent a serious drawback to the user, rather than making the technique more narrow. +1 or +2 Flaws are *Vulnerabilities*, which make it more easy for them to be attacked or countered. +3 or +4

Flaws are *Backlashes*, where the technique user can be harmed by his own kung fu.

The following list shows a few examples used in this book — you are encouraged to create your

own Flaws for your own games, subject to your Sage's discretion.

1-point Flaws:

- *No Secondary Attack*. You may not make a Secondary Attack on the round you use this technique.
- *Stifled Air*. Lose your breath in one color of Chi this round. You must choose Crimson if it is available.
- *Off-Balance*. you take a –5 penalty to the next defensive roll.

2-point Flaws:

- *Furious Charge*. You must have Covered Ground of at least 20 yards in a straight line this round to use this technique.
- *Principle of Yi*. This technique does not function when attacking, or being attacked by, a character with four or five deeds of Yi.
- *Weakened Protective Air*. Lose one die of Chi Aura while this technique is in effect. You must have at least one die of Chi Aura to activate this technique.

3-point Flaw:

- *Delayed Onset*. The technique does not take effect until the beginning of the next round.
- *Expended Fortune*. You must spend one joss (either type) to activate this technique.

4-point Flaw:

- *Godly Disfavor*. You are considered a target of your attack, against which you can defend normally.

Suggested Weapon Groupings

Unarmed Weapons - Bite, Gauntlets, Kick, Punch, Punch Daggers, Steel boots

Bludgeons - Club, Big Club, Hammers, Logs, Maces, Melon Hammers, Shields

Blades - Knives, Sabers, Fire Wheels, Blade Wheels, Heaven-Earth Sun and Moon Saber, Hook Swords

Cleavers - Cleaver, Hand Axe, Long Axe, Battle Axe, Farm Scythe, Battle Scythe

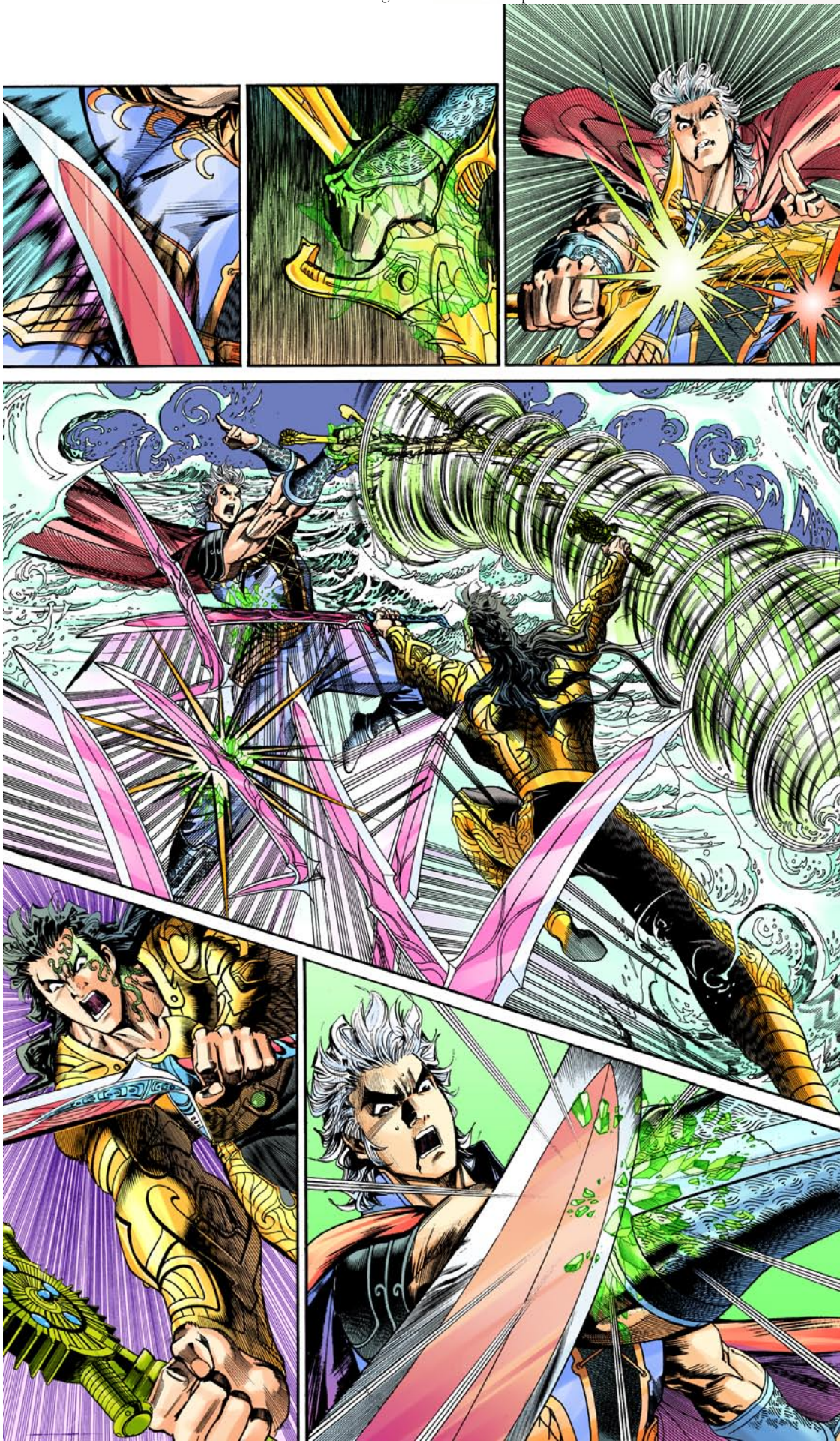
Swords - Longswords, Greatswords, Paired straight-swords, Nine-Ring Saber

Polearms - Staff, Wolf-Tooth Staff, Short Spear, Long Spear, War Lance, Kwan Dao, Tang-Ba

Flexible Weapons - Flail, Rope Dart, Sectional-Steel Chain, Whip

Improvised Weapons - Chairs, Coins, Cooking Utensils, Flutes, Judge's Brush, Rocks

Kung Fu Weapons - Staff-Flail, Stone Column, Three-Section Staff, Ten-Headed Falling Star Hammer



神兵玄奇



Maneuver Index

Color indicated is the innate color of the Maneuver, and Black has no color for matching purposes.

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AREA ATTACK

(*Gold Chi Maneuver Set*)

Makes an attack an Area Attack (see glossary). Specific maneuvers dictate how the attack is defended against; they do not correspond to the skill used to make the attack.

III Artful/Brutal

V Ranged

VII Unparalleled [Rare Styles Only]

BREATH LOSS

(*Jade Chi Maneuver Set*)

Affects Chi Regeneration as noted below.

II Breath Loss

III Chi Flow Loss

IV Perfect Breath Loss [Potent]

VI Perfect Chi Flow Loss [Potent]

VII Profound Chi Flow Loss [Potent]

CHI CONTROL

(*Jade Chi Maneuver Set*)

Various Feats Involving Chi.

I Elemental Resistance

II Boost

III Awareness

V Immaculate Virtue

V Chi Locking (Standard) [Potent]

VIII Chi Locking (Perfect) [Potent]

X Chi Locking (Flawless) [Rare Only]

COORDINATION

(*Gold Chi Maneuver Set*)

Allows a group to share rolls for certain skills.

I Initiative

II Any non-Combat

III Melee & Fight

IV Ranged

COMBAT EFFECTS*(Crimson Chi Maneuver Set)*

Add a Combat Maneuver to a Technique.

- I Lesser (Critical Success)
- II Lesser (Standard Success)
- II Minor (Critical Success)
- III Minor (Standard Success)
- III Major (Critical Success)
- IV Major (Standard Success)
- IV Reply (Critical Success)
- VI Reply (Standard Success)

Lesser Combat Effects:

Burn, Down, Embarrass, Knockback, Maim, Terrify

Minor Combat Effects:

Blind, Disarm, Entangle, Grapple, Stun

Major Combat Effects:

Disorient, Poison, Redirect

DEFLECTION*(Crimson Chi Maneuver Set)*

Improves Block against special attacks — see glossary.

- III Ranged Attacks
- IV Area Attacks [Potent]
- V Unparalleled Attacks [Potent]
- VI Unparalleled Area Attacks [Rare Styles Only]

DISTANT HARMONY*(White Chi Maneuver Set)*

Affects the use of Ranged Weapons.

- I Accuracy
- I Ranged Attack
- III Stellar Defense
- IV Continuing Attack
- V Flawless Stellar Defense [Potent]

EQUIPMENT-DESTROYING*(Silver Chi Maneuver Set)*

Applies a Breaking Things Roll to either a Weapon or worn Armor in an Attack. (See Definition)

- II Mundane Items Difficulty 35
(Weapons and/or Armor Only)
- III Quality Items Difficulty 40
- IV Perfect Items Difficulty 50
- VI Divine Items Difficulty 65
(up to and including Class III God-Weapons)

FANCY FOOTWORK*(White Chi Maneuver Set)*

Maneuvers that alter your Maneuverability, Dodging or Defense.

- I Elusive
- I Shuffle
- II Air-Walking
- II Wall-Walking
- IV Unparalleled Dodge [Potent]
- V Wu-Wei Move
- VI Velocity Transformation



HEALING FIRE

(Jade Chi Maneuver Set)

Channels Chi to Regain Health

III Bounce Back

V Regenerate [Rare Styles Only]

HELL MANEUVERS

(Demon Chi Maneuver Set)

Any technique containing a Hell Maneuver must be paid for with Demon Chi, which replaces part of the technique's normal cost. To calculate the Demon Chi cost of a given technique, count the number of Corrupt maneuver points in the technique and divide the total by five (rounding up). Replace this many chi points from the technique's cost with Demon Chi. *Note that since techniques of Level 1-4 only provide one Demon Chi, and techniques of Level 5+ only provide 2, some techniques will cost more Demon Chi than they provide.*

If the total Chi cost exceeds 6, any channels and investments must include Demon Chi in the cost.

0 **Snakeskin** (Makes martial artist Immune to Entangles)

III **Quality Venom** (Common, Lethality 18, Potency 3-5)

IV **Perfect Venom** (Uncommon, Lethality 20, Potency 3-5)

V **Flawless Venom** (Rare, Lethality 30, Potency 5-10)

IV **Lifetaker** (All damage inflicted [after Armor and Chi Aura] Attack heals the user)

V **Unseen Blow** (This maneuver permits Surprise in combat)

VI **Deceive Heaven*** (Allows user to mask/misrepresent their Virtues to the Wulin Sage - see Glossary)

VII **Obliteration**** Baneful Maneuver that inflicts the Existence-Hating Radiance! See Glossary for further details.

VII **Souldrain** (Drains available Chi from victim's Favored Chi; stolen Chi may exceed normal maximum, though it vanishes when the technique's duration ends.)

*** Baneful in the Eyes of Heaven. See pg. 339 of WotG for more details – repeated use (more than a number of times equal to the levels of Rank achieved is a good guideline) will brand the user as a threat to Heaven, and thereafter they will be considered Baneful with all the benefits and problems of such a state, such as being pestered by martial artists dispatched by the Wulin Sage, as well as Heaven Hunters sent to kill you by the Celestial Bureaucracy.*

HIDEOUS ATTACKS

(Crimson Chi Maneuver Set)

Inflicts bizarre wounds and strange damage.

II Rampage

IV Element-Wounding Attack [Potent]

V Ruinous Attack [Potent]

VI Horrific Attack [Potent]

VI Unparalleled Accomplishment [Potent]

INEFFABLE FEATS

(Colorless Maneuver Set)

Assorted Unique Effects.

I Transfer

II Additional Chi Channel - Colored
(After the first)

II Relentless [Potent]

II Rooted to the Earth

II Secondary Attack (Limited)

III Secondary Attack

IV Additional Chi Channel – Colorless

+III Chi Channel Modification: Investment [Potent]

LIVING WEAPON

(Jade Chi Maneuver Set)

Upgrades one's unarmed attack stats to a given weapon.

0 **Iron Skin** (No Maiming or Damage taken for using Hands/Feet/Head as Weapons)

II 20 points of Weapon Stats (maximum 10 points in a single Stat)

III 30 points of Weapon Stats (maximum 15 points in a single Stat)

IV 40 points of Weapon Stats (maximum 20 points in a single Stat) [Potent]

MASTERY

(Gold Chi Maneuver Set)

Adds bonus dice to Skill Rolls.

I 1 die to non-combat rolls.

II 1 die to combat-related rolls.

III 2 dice to non-combat rolls.

IV 2 dice to combat-related rolls.

VII Divine Prowess (doubles result dice for any and all purposes) [Rare Styles Only]

MINION-DESTROYING

(Gold Chi Maneuver Set)

Affects how Minions are taken out by Result Dice on a Successful Attack.

- I Double each Result Die.
- II Triple each Result Die.
- III Quadruple each Result Die.

MOVE

(White Chi Maneuver Set)

Modifies Rolls in a Set Fashion.

- I +/- 5 to a single Roll (Dodge & Athletics)
- II +/- 5 to a single Roll (Attacks & Blocks)
- II +/- 10 (Non-Combat Rolls)
- IV +/- 10 to a single Roll. (Attacks & Blocks)

PAIN CONTROL

(Jade Chi Maneuver Set)

Affects a Martial Artist's reaction to being hurt – or allows them to use that pain.

- II Unyielding
- III Channel Suffering

PENETRATION

(Silver Chi Maneuver Set)

Allows a technique to apply a modifier against an opponent's Armor.

- I Quality (- 5 to Armor)
- II Perfect (- 10 to Armor)
- III Flawless (- 15 to Armor)

PERSISTENCE

(Jade Chi Maneuver Set)

Grants a duration to a technique

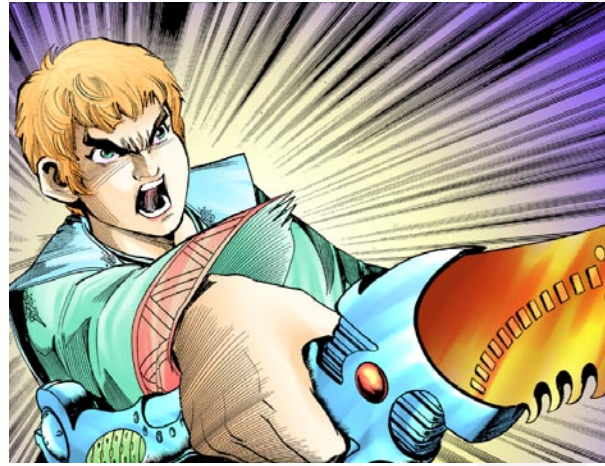
- II Standard (One Round)
- IV Quality (Rank Level Rounds)
- V Perfect (Kung Fu Skill Rounds)
- VII Flawless (Favoured Chi Rounds)

PRESSURE

(Silver Chi Maneuver Set)

Reduces an Opponent's Defenses.

- II Quality (-1 die from a roll)
- III Perfect (-2 dice from a roll)
- IV Shapeless Attack (Permits user to spend Chi to reduce target's Defense; requires Channel).



POWERFUL BLOWS

(Crimson Chi Maneuver Set)

Inflicts additional Damage Dice.

- 0 Lucky (+1 Die on Winning Initiative)
- I Battering (+2 Dice)
- II Injuring (+3 Dice)
- III Wounding (+4 Dice)
- IV Staggering (+5 Dice)
- V Death-Dealing (+6 Dice)
- V Indomitable (doubles all Result dice for damage purposes).

SKILL SUBSTITUTION

(Gold Chi Maneuver Set)

Replaces a combat skill with a non-combat skill for attacks. Replacement Skill may never be any of the three Archetype Skills.

- 0 Attack uses a Skill of a Different type, and is defended against normally.
- I Attack with a substituted Skill (determined by a separate maneuver) out To Short or Medium Range as a Ranged Attack.
- II Attack with a substituted Skill (determined by a separate maneuver) out To Long Range as a Ranged Attack.
- III Attack using a Presence Skill, opposed with Confidence. This attack is not made with a weapon, and has no Speed, Strike or Damage modifiers.
- III Attack using a Genius Skill, opposed with Awareness. This attack is not made with a weapon, and has no Speed, Strike or Damage modifiers.



SPIRITUAL ATTACK

(Silver Chi Maneuver Set)

Inflicts a Chi Condition on a target that persists until recovered from or healed.

I **Chilling** (A successful hit Inflicts the next higher level's Wound Penalties).

III **Minor**

V **Major** (No Dying)

VI **Major** (Can be Dying) [Potent]

VII **Dam the Flow** (Can Block the River's use against the wielder via Any Chi Channel). [Potent]

STRENGTH OF CHI

(Colorless Maneuver Set)

Adds a given Chi Bonus to a given Kung Fu Technique. Kung Fu always modifies the modifiers of tools, rather than the roll directly, unless explicitly stated otherwise.

I **Speed, Damage, Dodges or Non-Combat Rolls**

II **Attacks** (excludes Ranged Attacks), Blocks or Armor

III **Strike**

STRIKE NEGATION

(White Maneuver Set)

Modifies an opponent's Strike.

I **-5 Strike**

II **Strike Equalization**

III **-10 Strike**

IV **Favored Chi Modifier Subtraction from Opponent's Strike**

WEAPON CONTROL

(White Maneuver Set)

Controls Weapons in Combat

0 **Chopping Block** (win def. Ties)

0 **Weapon Draw** (As a Free Action)

I **Weapon Call** (Fav. Chi in feet)

II **Weapon Summons** (FC in yds.)

II **Weapon Entangle** (Special)

IV **Divine Swiftness** (Gives +20 Speed, in addition to any Speed Bonuses).

Maneuver Glossary

Accuracy. Treat targets as one Range category closer.

Air-walking. Treat your Favored Chi Modifier as a Mobility bonus. Mobility bonuses can be applied to Dodge or Athletics rolls, if described in an appropriate fashion.

Area Attack (*Artful, Brutal, Ranged, Unparalleled*). Area Attacks follow the rules from p.76, **Weapons of the Gods**. By default, an Area Attack attacks ALL targets in a radius around a particular point - either the attacking character for a Brutal or Artful attack, or a valid point within range for a Ranged attack. You may substitute "X number of distinct targets" for "radius of X yards" for ease of use, either when designing the technique, or at the Sage's option during play.

For Common techniques up to level 4, or Uncommon techniques of level 1 or 2, the default radius is Kung Fu Skill in yards. For Common techniques level 5 and above, and Uncommon techniques of levels 3 to 5, the default radius is Favored Chi Rating in yards. For Uncommon techniques of level 6 and above, and Rare techniques, the default radius is twice Favored Chi Rating in yards. Note that while the actual area can vary to suit the theme of the technique, it should be nonetheless loosely based on these defaults.

Awareness. Cancels Surprise against user. A technique with this maneuver may be activated in response to Surprise whenever the user has chi to pay for it, regardless of their current condition. If asleep, they wake up; Sages may allow similar sudden readiness in similar states of incapacitation

Boost. On a successful hit, spend Chi to purchase additional damage dice, or Knock Out additional minions on a one-for-one basis. The color of Chi varies: same as style (Common); any single color (Common Level 4+, Uncommon) or Any color (Rare or Formless only).

Bounce Back. Jade Chi may be spent to heal two health points per point of Chi. This maneuver does not stack with the Robust advantage (p.49, **Weapons of the Gods**)

Breath Loss (*Standard, Perfect*). Target loses their breath in one or more colors of Chi for one round. Standard Breath Loss knocks out a single color of Chi Regeneration (usually their Favored Chi; always knocks out the next colour via elemental progression if targeted colour is already lost) while Perfect Breath Loss affects all five colors of Chi, and is considered a Potent maneuver.

Channel Suffering. Each time damage is taken, add +1 Damage Dice to your attacks. This bonus wears off at a rate of one die per minute; if you're caught in two close-together battles, ask your Sage if you have any bonus remaining.



Chi Channel (*Single color, Any color*). By default, a Channel extends a technique's use. For Instant techniques, channelling allows the technique to be reactivated in the next round at no chi cost. For techniques with a Duration, channelling extends the duration of the technique by one round. In both cases, you may channel in subsequent rounds to continue extending the use of the technique. If you do not channel for a round, you must reactivate the technique normally before you can continue channelling.

Channelling to extend a technique's use always costs 2 chi, and is never the same color as the style. When designing the technique, choose a color of chi for the channel matching one of the maneuvers in the technique. If all the maneuvers in a technique are of the style's color, choose the color that controls the style's color by referencing the Wheel of Dharma on WotG pg. 281.

For techniques with an Area Attack, Channels may alternatively be used to increase the size of the Area Attack. Normally this increases the radius of the attack by 1 yard per point of chi channelled, or adds one target per point of chi channelled, as appropriate for the technique. Choose the color for this channel as above.

Some maneuvers make use of channels (such as *Shapeless Attack* and *Chi Investment*) - check those maneuvers for their specific rules.

Chi Condition (*Minor, Major, Dying/Last Legs damage*). Inflicts a Chi Condition on the target. Recovery Interval, Duration etc are determined by the GM when the style is created. By default, omit Recovery, Duration and Interval - condition persists until damage from the attack is healed. Otherwise, Minor conditions default to Recovery 20, Duration 3, Interval Scene. Major conditions default to Recovery 30, Duration 5, Interval Session

Chi Flow Loss (*Standard, Perfect, Profound*). Target loses their breath in one or more colors of chi for a variable number of rounds. Standard Chi Flow Loss targets colours as per Standard Breath Loss; Perfect and Profound affect all five colours. *Standard* and *Perfect* Chi Flow Loss last for a number of rounds equal to the attacker's levels in Rank. *Profound* Chi Flow Loss lasts until all damage from the attack is healed. Perfect and Profound Chi Flow Loss are considered **Potent** maneuvers.

Chi Investment. [**Potent**]. Extends the duration of a technique for as long as the user Invests Chi to maintain it (p.230, **Weapons of the Gods**). Chi Investment requires half the Chi cost of the technique, rounding up. Distribute investment proportionately amongst colours used in initial expenditure.

Chilling Attack. On a successful hit, target suffers the next higher level of Wound Penalties until the end of the next Round. Multiple Chilling Attacks are not cumulative.

Chi-locking (*Standard, Perfect, Flawless*). [**Potent**]. Prevents any expenditure of Chi by the target during time of effect. Standard Chi Locking lasts for one round; Perfect

for Kung Fu Skill in rounds, Flawless for Favored Chi in rounds. The victim may roll their Archetype Skill at a difficulty of 30 (Standard), 40 (Perfect) or 60 (Flawless) as a Free Action to cancel Chi Locking.

Chopping Block. Win defensive ties. Ordinarily attackers succeed ties in Weapons of the Gods; a technique with this maneuver allows defenders to succeed on ties.

Combat Effects (*Lesser, Minor, Major, Reply*). Adds a given Combat Effect to your technique. Techniques are grouped into four categories. They may be purchased as a Critical effect, or as a standard effect on each successful hit. The *Terrifying*, *Redirect* and *Reply* effects are described in this Glossary. All other combat effects are described in **Weapons of the Gods** pp.74-76.

Combat Effect, Lesser. Burning*, Downing, Knockback, Maim, Terrifying.

Combat Effect, Minor. Blind, Disarm, Embarrassing, Entangle, Grapple, Stun.

Combat Effect, Major. Disorienting, Poison, Redirect

* *Burning's Intensity Level is always set at equal to the level of the technique it's incorporated into.*

Continuing Attack. A successful Thrown attack gets another damage roll each round, until the target makes a successful Hardiness (18) roll to expel the projectile from their flesh.

Coordination (*used for rolls of a particular Skill*). Activate this technique after an ally makes a roll of the appropriate skill, after they choose which set to use. You save the value of this set (for example, if they choose '8, 8, 8' you may save a value of '38'). Once during this Round, after making an appropriate skill roll, you may choose to use this saved value instead of the rolled set. Since only the value of the set is used, Joss is only earned by the character who initially rolled the set. The ally must also know the technique containing this maneuver.

If this maneuver is included in a technique with Duration, you may choose to replace the saved value at any time while the technique is active. You may still only use a given saved value once.

Dam the Flow. *Rare Styles Only*. A technique can Dam the Flow after the target's River is used on a roll, causing those particular River die to be Washed out for no effect. This maneuver requires a Channel, with each River die Washed costing a single point of Any Chi.

Deflection (*Ranged attacks, Area Attacks, Unparalleled attacks, Unparalleled Area Attacks*). *Ranged Deflection* allows Blocks against Ranged attacks without the normal



penalty or loss of Strike. *Unparalleled Deflection* gives the benefits of Ranged Deflection, and allows the block to oppose attacks made as Style Rolls. *Ranged Area Attack Deflection* gives the benefits of Ranged Deflection, and cancels any Area Attack successfully blocked – further targets are considered never to have been targeted. *Unparalleled Area Attack Deflection* gives the benefits of Unparalleled Deflection and also cancels any Area Attack successfully blocked. Resolve any defences against an Area Attack that might cancel it first

Deceive Heaven (*Hell Maneuver*). While technically Baneful (qv), the consequences of the use of any technique with this maneuver are hidden from Heaven – including the fact that it's a Baneful maneuver! However, if user is reduced to Staggering, this maneuver will not function for them until they are healed back above Staggering, and all earlier actions in this scene are retroactively revealed to Heaven.

Divine Prowess. *Rare styles only*. Doubles Result Dice for any and all purposes.

Divine Swiftess. [*Potent*]. User automatically acts first this Round, unless opposed by others with this maneuver. In this case, characters with Divine Swiftess use their original Initiative rolls to determine their order of activation, and act before characters lacking this ability.

Duration. Techniques without explicit durations are Instant techniques. They are only considered active in the instant they are activated and the chi cost paid. Their effects are applied once at the earliest possible opportunity in the round they are activated.

Techniques with duration (almost always a maneuver selected from the Persistence set, or Chi Investment) are considered to be active throughout that duration. Each maneuver in the technique gives its benefits on each applicable occasion while the technique is active.

Elemental Resistance. Add your Kung Fu skill to Chi Aura, for the purposes of reducing damage from one element type.

Element-wounding Attack. [*Potent*]. Allows a successful attack to permanently reduce one of the target's attributes. This damage is considered Profound. Treatment is a Hard task with an Interval of one day (remember that you can keep rolling on the same day if you beat the difficulty). Each successful test heals one point of attribute loss.

Elusive. Increase Range by one category when targeted by Ranged attacks.

Equipment-Destroying. Applies the Attack total as a Breaking Things roll against a target's equipment after any Defenses are resolved. Normally the defender

chooses one item that is destroyed. On a standard success, the attacker chooses one item; two items on a Critical! Remember that destroying items that have a Destiny investment will result in their replacement or reimbursement in the near future, so take any advantage while you can!

Horrific Attack. [*Potent*]. In addition to any damage rolls, the attack inflicts a health level of damage and the Missing Body Part <limb> Disadvantage on a standard success. (*Weapons of the Gods* p.51). The attacker may choose which limb this is, though a Called Shot cannot be made into a Horrific Attack as well.

Immaculate Virtue. [*Potent*]. Doubles Chi Aura, but additional points may only be used to reduce damage.

Indomitable. Doubles all Result Dice for damage purposes.

Iron Skin. May block unarmed without incurring damage or risking Maiming.

Living Weapon. Replace the Speed, Strike and Damage modifiers of a specified Unarmed Weapon while this technique is active. Distribute points provided by the maneuver in blocks of +5, up to the limits specified in the Index. Modifiers begin at +0 and may not be lowered.

Mastery. Adds dice to Skill Rolls.

Minion-destroying. Affects how Minions are taken out by the attack's Result Dice.

Obliteration. Applies attack total as a Breaking Things (*Weapons of the Gods* p.72) roll against the target (plus any area of effect). See *Equipment-Destroying* (p. 143) for default difficulties. Anything that survives this roll is afflicted with the Existence-Hating Radiance (*Weapons of the Gods* p. 371).

Move. Modifies rolls in a set fashion, but only against a target in Personal Combat range.

Penetration (*Quality, Perfect, Flawless*). Applies a modifier to the target's Armor for the purposes of resisting damage from this attack. The modifiers are -5 (Quality), -10 (Perfect) and -15 (Flawless).

Persistence (*Standard, Quality, Perfect, Flawless*). Extends the effects of a technique beyond a single action. *Standard* increases this to one round. *Quality* Persistence lasts for a number of rounds equal to the user's levels in Rank. *Perfect* Persistence lasts for the user's Kung Fu Skill in rounds. *Flawless* Persistence lasts for the user's Favored Chi in rounds.

Potent. Restricts the application of a maneuver. The maneuver may only be included in Common techniques of Level 4+ or Uncommon techniques of Level 2+. Rare and Formless techniques may include Potent maneuvers at any level.

Powerful Blows. Inflicts additional damage dice on a successful attack.



Pressure (*Quality, Perfect, Shapeless Attack*). Reduces the number of dice an opponent rolls in defense against the technique by 1 (*Quality*) or 2 (*Perfect*). *Shapeless Attacks* require a Chi Channel, and allow the user to reduce their opponents defensive pool by one die per point of Chi spent in this manner.

Profound. Profound damage may not be healed by spending Jade Chi, and requires use of the Medicine skill to be healed at all. See **Weapons of the Gods** p. 77 for task difficulties.

Rampage. Each round this technique is in effect, the user gains a cumulative bonus of +1 damage die. This bonus resets to zero in any round the technique is not used.

Ranged Attack. The technique may be used to attack a single target at Short Range. It is still treated as an attack of the original type (Artful, Brutal, Ranged or Unparalleled) for defensive purposes.

Redirect. A *Combat Effect*, used on defensive rolls. If the defense is successful, the defender may choose a new target for the attack that is within range of the original attack. The new target may defend against the attack normally. A redirected attack may not target the attacker, nor a target that has already successfully defended the attack.

Regenerate. *Rare Styles only*. Spend 5 Any Chi to regenerate a single Health Level. May not be used to heal more Health Levels than the user's levels in Rank.

Relentless. [*Potent*]. Activate this technique after making a roll of the appropriate skill, after making a set. You save the value of this set (for example, if you choose '8, 8, 8' you may save a value of '38'). Once during this Round, after making an appropriate skill roll, you may choose to use this saved value instead of the rolled set. Since only the value of the set is used, Joss is only earned on the initial roll. If this maneuver is included in a technique with Duration, you may choose to replace the saved value at any time while the technique is active. You may still only use a given saved value once.

Reply. [*Potent*]. A *Combat Effect*, used on defensive rolls. If the defense succeeds, the defender turns the attack against the attacker! Treat the defender's roll as an attack that is opposed by the attacker's total. No further modifiers apply to either totals. Each activation of a technique with a Reply maneuver generates a maximum of one Reply per turn. Replies never trigger events dependent on rolling a critical.

Rooted to the Earth. User is immune to Knockback and Downing while this technique is in effect.

Ruinous Attack [*Potent*]. In addition to any damage rolls, the attack inflicts a health level of damage and the Missing Body Part <limb> Disadvantage on a critical success. (**Weapons of the Gods** p.51). The attacker may choose which limb this is, though a Called Shot cannot be made into a Ruinous Attack as well.

Secondary Attack. Make an additional attack at the end of the round, after everyone has taken their turn. Where multiple characters make Secondary Attacks, resolve these in Initiative order.

Secondary Attack, Limited. Make an additional attack at the end of the round, after everyone has taken their turn. Where multiple characters make Secondary Attacks, resolve these in Initiative order. The additional attack may only be enhanced by other techniques from this style.

Shapeless Attack. Spend Chi to reduce an opponent's defense, at a cost of one chi per die. Requires a Chi Channel.

Shattering. Allows Damage total to be used either as damage, or as a roll to *Break Things* (**Weapons of the Gods** p.72).

Shuffle. Prevents attackers from cornering the user, allowing them to escape from tight spots. In these situations, the user may reposition themselves without making a Tactics roll.

Souldrain (*Hell Maneuver*). On a successful hit, drain one point of Chi from the target for each damage die rolled. The attacker must nominate a single color of Chi for this effect. Drained Chi is added to the attacker's total, and may exceed the user's normal maximum. Chi above normal maximums vanishes when this technique ends. If the technique kills an opponent outright, the attacker drains their target of all remaining Chi, which is then treated as Demon Chi until it is all gone. A given Souldrain user can only store up to six victims' worth of stolen chi.

Stellar Defense. User may defend against Ranged attacks with their own Ranged skill, benefiting from their weapon's Strike modifier, without the usual penalty.

Stellar Defense, Flawless. User may defend against Artful, Brutal and Ranged attacks with their own Ranged skill, benefiting from their weapon's Strike modifier, without the usual penalty.

Strength of Chi. Applies a Chi Modifier bonus to a technique. By default, kung fu modifies the modifiers of weapons and tools, rather than the roll itself, where applicable.

Strike Equalization. Used on attack or block, sets both the attacker's and the defender's Strike to zero after all modifiers have been applied.

Terrifying. A *Combat Effect*. In addition to inflicting damage on a successful hit, Named targets will incur a -5 action penalty for a number of rounds equal to the number of result die from the attack. By default, a number of Minions equal to the number of result die are driven off, after the usual number are incapacitated.

Transfer. Allows dice or bonus to be used for another purpose, such as using extra damage dice to assist a Lift roll.

Unparalleled Accomplishment. [Potent]. The technique becomes an *Unparalleled* attack.

Unparalleled. Attack is made as a Style Roll, and cannot be directly defended against. As a Style roll, dice may only be Flowed from the River and Joss may only be used (not earned) on the roll. The attack's result dice are calculated by dividing the total value by 5, rounding up. [See "Thoughtless Wen Has Failed"]

Unparalleled Dodge. Allows a Dodge to oppose an attack made as a Style Roll.

Unyielding. Ignore Wound Penalties.

Velocity Transformation. Defensive maneuver. Converts each dice of damage into one round of harmless Knockback, before damage is rolled. A pool reduced to 0 in this way does no damage; however this maneuver does not prevent any other effects contingent on a successful hit, such as Burning. Affects a maximum number of damage dice equal to the user's Kung Fu Skill in which Velocity Transfer is used. Only affects either Artful or Brutal attacks, and never affects Ranged attacks.

Wall-walking. Treat any stable surface as if it were a floor.

Weapon Call. Bring a weapon to your hand from a maximum range of your Favored Chi in feet.

Weapon Draw. Ready a weapon as a Free Action.

Weapon Entangle. On a Critical Success (attack or defense), the user may Entangle the weapon of their opponent. Determine the duration and difficulty of escape from the user's Result Dice, following the table in **Weapons of the Gods** p.75. The target is considered Entangled unless they choose to drop their weapon, becoming Disarmed.

Weapon Summons. Bring a weapon to your hand, from a maximum range of your Favored Chi in yards.

Wu-Wei Move. Each level of Rank above Fourth grants an additional Free Action per turn, while this technique is in effect.

Thoughtless Wen has Failed!

[Unparalleled Attack Discussion]

Unparalleled Attack, as you've probably noticed, is a very potent maneuver. It does not, however, represent power creep, the guaranteed death of your character, or the end of Weapons of the Gods as you know it.

- Unparalleled Attack is a formalised version of a concept that already existed in the game (particularly in Hell's Disasters 6).
- The Kung Fu genre in general, and comics in particular, are rife with "unbeatable attacks." While inevitably those attacks turn out to be very much beatable (as Unparalleled Attack certainly is), they usually cause horrible destruction before a counter is discovered. The Million Style Manual aims to facilitate the emulation of such stories.
- Tactical Opposition can work against Unparalleled Attacks. While this is not automatic, Sages should rule generously towards interesting strategies.
- A Chi Cost 6 Marvel is sufficient to emulate Unparalleled Deflection.
- Making your attack as a style roll does have a downside - without a difficulty, it's impossible to score a critical success. If you want to apply a combat effect as part of an Unparalleled Attack, you'll have to pay for it as a standard success maneuver.
- Styles with such powerful techniques - whether new styles in this chapter, or the equally mighty Uncommon and Rare styles of Weapons of the Gods - are not held by obscure people. To achieve high enough Rank to practice such a style, a character must achieve many, many Deeds. Such warriors are obviously famed in the Wulin - player characters will have heard of them and their devastating Kung Fu, and should have fair opportunity to prepare to face them. It is not good form to drop an unknown Three Powers master on your players from ambush straight out of character creation. Likewise, it is not good form to suddenly wipe out the PCs with an Area Unparalleled Attack because you just bought this book and are dying to try out Dugu Four Ultimates.
- Tactically, Unparalleled Attacks are a gamble. If nobody can defend against it, it's extremely powerful. If they can, you've wasted a lot of maneuver points (and hence chi) on an effect that's been neutralised. While it's a potentially lucrative gamble, it's much less reliable than Strike Negation, Weapon Shattering, Shapeless Attack and other methods of compromising defenses.

Kung Fu Styles Are Loreshets:

Destiny Costs and Secrets of Destiny

Every Kung Fu style is a Lore in its own right, following the format laid out on page 232 of **Weapons of the Gods**. Kung-Fu Lores all have the following properties:

They do not have a Learning Difficulty.

Their destiny cost is standardized based on their availability. Common styles have a base cost of 5, Uncommon 10 and Rare 15. This cost may be higher if you add compulsory Secrets of Destiny to the Lore (see below).

Every Kung-Fu Lore has the Secret of Destiny:

* Bonus: you receive a free <Kung Fu> Skill Level equal to the highest technique you've learned.

As a Lore, you can add more Secrets of Destiny to the style, in order to give players unique story opportunities relevant to the style, and how they might have gone about learning it. The default model for doing so is demonstrated in the Kung-Fu Lores presented in **Weapons of the Gods**: Secrets of Destiny attached to Uncommon and Rare styles giving players the opportunity to purchase advantages for their characters representing association with the martial traditions or individuals who teach the style. In this chapter, several styles include more explicit story manipulation options (such as *Wild Horse Style* and *Armor of the Gods*). Both approaches are appropriate when designing your Lore, but there are two key points to keep in mind.

Firstly, any Secret of Destiny without an asterisk in the cost column is explicitly an option for the player, not a de facto cost. Many players make the mistake of assuming that the "real cost" of an Uncommon Style is 18 to 19 destiny because you "must" buy an Affiliation or Status. This is not the case. By default, Uncommon and Rare styles give you the opportunity to buy into the expected story of someone learning that style – they are a trusted member of the organisation that teaches the style, or a trusted student of a powerful sifu. This is automatically sufficient justification for your character knowing the style, which is why many players mistakenly assume these Secrets are prerequisites. In truth, they're just the option that does not require you to explain the extraordinary story of how you learned a secret kung-fu style – players are more than free to go with the extraordinary story if they'd prefer, it's just the style's author doesn't have to give any suggestions for it! **If you want a Secret of Destiny to be mandatory on your Style Lore, increase the cost of the Lore by the value of that Secret, and assign the Secret a cost of *.** In general, you shouldn't do this for more than one Secret per style.

Secondly, Kung Fu Lores are lores about the kung fu style, not the society or individuals that use the style. We encourage you to put fun and relevant Secrets into the style, but you shouldn't use too many Secrets for anything that would normally deserve a Lore in its own right. For instance, *Armor of the Gods* was a style created by Chang Chio of the Heaven Clan and includes some fun Secrets of Destiny related to Chang Chio and how you might have gone about learning his kung fu. However, it does not make a Heaven Clan or Chang Chio Lore redundant – players should be able to explore story opportunities related to famous subjects like the Heaven Clan and the Yellow Turban Rebellion without buying an expensive Rare style for their characters.

When assigning costs to a secret, use the following guidelines, tempered by your judgement of what's appropriate for the style and your game:

- **Advantages, Treasures** (including Defenses and Entanglements) and **Techniques** have their normal Destiny cost. The Loreshet gives an opportunity, not a discount, to buy them.
- If you're creating an Advantage, Treasure or Technique for this Lore, compare it to examples of the same class from **Weapons of the Gods** or other published materials. Make a judgement call on how useful it is compared to the closest match, and price accordingly.
- **Disadvantages** always cost 5 destiny, with a 5 destiny discount if it's the character's first or second Disadvantage.
- **Trivial** story opportunities (**Destinies, Secrets, Victories** etc) should have a cost of *, 0 or 1. Usually these are cosmetic changes to Shen Zhou; they might change a session, but not the overall flow of the story. For example, having been trained in a particular style may give you the opportunity to enter a famous martial arts tournament if you're in the area, or "discover" members of your secret society in a given town.
- **Minor** story opportunities should have a cost of 2 or 3. These are usually substantial changes to the story, but unlikely to change the character of an entire campaign. For example, *Wild Horse Style* and *Yin Ice Sword* give a one-time opportunity to dictate the actions of a faction in Xia, influencing a war or making a change to civic policy in Only Six Devils. A more generic example might be the opportunity to enter a martial arts tournament after "discovering" that its prize is the solution to the current problem facing the PCs.





- **Major** story opportunities should have a cost of 4 or 5 (however, you can lower this price by 1 or 2 points by asking significant sacrifice of the character). Generally they will enable large changes to a given storyline, or minor changes to a campaign as a whole. For example, *Armor of the Gods* allows you to repeat Chang Chio's trick of crumbling a State as a parting gift to Shen Zhou. Extending the tournament example, the character may be permitted to enter a once-in-a-century tournament, with a secret society's fealty on the line, and be able to "discover" that 3-4 NPCs of their choice are also competing.
- **Profound** story opportunities should cost 6+ Destiny, and represent massive changes to Shen Zhou and the campaign. An example would be the opportunity to convene a tournament for the heads of the Sixteen States and the Great Clans, with the prize being the Mandate of Heaven. Such Secrets should only very rarely be used in Kung Fu Lores.

Use the following guidelines for assigning Secrets to your Kung-Fu based on their availability:

Common Styles:

Common Styles usually do not have any extra Secrets of Destiny. However, one or two Trivial or Minor story opportunities might be appropriate, especially if the style is particularly new and still strongly identified with its founder.

Uncommon Styles:

Uncommon Styles are fairly remarkable – they should have 3-4 additional Secrets of Destiny. In almost all cases, one of these should be a Fortune giving an Affiliation with the faction teaching the style. Advantages, Disadvantages, Trivial and Minor story opportunities are good choices. Only add a Major opportunity if it is particularly appropriate. Try to avoid having Secrets costing more than 5 Destiny.

If you don't want to create unique Secrets for your style, use the following:

- X **Fortune:** Gain an **Affiliation** with <Faction> (where X is the normal cost of an Affiliation with that faction).
- 2+ **Fortune:** Gain a Status advantage in <Faction>.
- 5 **Onerous Obligation:** Gain an **Onerous Obligation** in return for your kung fu training.
-5 This is your first or second Disadvantage.

Rare Styles:

Learning a Rare style at all is an amazing feat – it shows you are an epic personality! Rare styles should have 3-5 extra Secrets of Destiny. In almost all cases, one of these should be a Fortune giving a Mentor advantage for the individual who teaches the style. Few Secrets are inappropriate for a Rare style, should they fit the style's history and theme, but you should generally not use Profound story opportunities unless the style is designed to be the centre of a specific campaign.

If you don't want to create unique Secrets for your style, use the following:

- X **Fortune:** Gain the advantage **Mentor:** <Character> (where X is the normal cost of that character as a Mentor).
- X **Fortune:** Gain an Affiliation with <Faction of Mentor> (where X is the normal cost of an Affiliation with that faction).
- 5 **Onerous Obligation:** Gain an **Onerous Obligation** in return for your kung fu training.
-5 This is your first or second Disadvantage.



Strategy – Kung Fu Creation

- If you've built a technique that doesn't have a color match, look for any applicable 1 point maneuvers in your Style's color – you can add one essentially for free, since the color-match bonus will pay for it. This will bring your technique into line with most others, and ensure that it's at least "flavored" by the appropriate color. This is more important at lower levels, where it's easier to have a relatively large point-gap between techniques of the same level. Don't worry about dragging out the same 1 point maneuver for your 5th level technique if it's not appropriate!
- The first technique of a style is often the most important, as it's the technique characters are likely to use most often. Make sure that it's a solid, useful technique that you're happy to have characters using over and over again. If it's too weak, it's a critical disadvantage for the style; if it's too strong, you'll have a balance problem that crops up every round.
- Pay attention to the stacking rules, and that each technique can only be activated once per round. For example, Holy Fire (**Weapons of the Gods**, p.240) is a style where each technique is an improved version of the one before it. This is an advantage when you might need a given bonus (like a Strike bonus) multiple times in a round, and with **Holy Fire**, you have a palette of Strike modifiers available. It's also a disadvantage because you can't usefully combine different Holy Fire techniques owing to the stacking rule. A style where each technique is thematically similar but mechanically completely different has lots of useful internal combinations. Such styles are more flexible and more likely to be useful over the entire life of the character. However, they can also leave you short, since they will only give you access to any given bonus once per round.
- Consider styles that may be used to complement your style. If you're using common bonuses available elsewhere easily, it's probably less useful to repeat the same bonuses throughout the style. If you're using maneuvers rarely seen elsewhere, consider repeating them through the lower-level techniques to give characters more frequent access to them. Understanding this balance is crucial to understanding how players will use a style.

- Consider existing styles of the same color. If you've just created "Falling Leaves Blade," a common Crimson sword style, it should be no more or less powerful than Dragon Saber or Heart-Breaking Blade, and obviously support a different strategy. A character should choose one of those three styles because it is mechanically better **for their strategy**, not because it's objectively mechanically better. No style should make any other redundant.
- Most styles should be Artful or Brutal rather than Artful/Brutal, but try to resist the temptation to restrict every style to a single weapon. An Artful (Swords Only) style gravely restricts the character concepts that can use it. The bonus point is nice, but in general it's better to have a style that is attractive to a wide range of characters. Specific weapon restrictions are most appropriate when a character develops their own style, or when the style is designed to complement an already restricted style (it's no surprise to see Swords Only styles developed by the Nan!).
- Some combinations of maneuvers (e.g. Strength of Chi: Strike and Duration) are so obviously useful that you can expect to see them in many styles. For variety's sake, don't use these combinations in the earliest possible technique. Placing them a little higher in the style avoids having every Level 2 Uncommon adding your Chi Modifier to your Strike for the round and doing nothing else.

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Martial Arts

Common

1 **Jade**, 2 **Crimson**, 2 **Gold**, 1 **White**, 2 Silver

1.)	Flawless Archery	(Silver)	[Ranged/Bows Only]	<4>
2.)	Forge-Hammer Fist	(Crimson)	[Brutal/Palms Only]	<6>
3.)	Green Mantis	(Jade)	[Brutal/Palms Only]	<6>
4.)	Heaven-Earth Sun & Moon Saber	(Gold)	[Artful/ Heaven-Earth Sun & Moon Saber Only]	<4>
5.)	Ling Zhi Two-Finger Style	(Silver)	[Brutal/Palms Only]	<4>
6.)	Shatterfoot	(Crimson)	[Brutal/Kicks Only]	<5>
7.)	Shooting Stars Hands	(Gold)	[Ranged/Thrown Only]	<5>
8.)	White Crane*	(White)	[Brutal/Kicks or Palms Only]	<4>

Uncommon

1 **Jade**, 1 **Crimson**, 2 **Gold**, 2 **White**, 2 Silver

1.)	Blue Flame Spear	(White)	[Artful/Spear Only]	<6>
2.)	Darkened Flying Edges	(Silver)	[Ranged/Artful Thrown Only]	<6>
3.)	Dragon Palms	(Crimson)	[Brutal/Palms Only]	<6>
4.)	Eight Diagram Fist	(Gold)	[Brutal/Palms Only]	<7>
5.)	Force of the Wind	(White)	[Brutal]	<4>
6.)	Sublime Doctrine	(Gold)	[Free]	<6>
7.)	Wild Horse	(Jade)	[Brutal/Kicks Only]	<4>
8.)	Yin Ice Sword*	(Silver)	[Artful/Swords Only]	<6>

Rare

1 **Jade**, 1 **Crimson**, 1 **Gold**, 1 Silver

1.)	Armor of the Gods	(Gold)	[Artful/Brutal]	<3>
2.)	Death Fist*	(Silver)	[Brutal]	<4>
3.)	Dugu Four Ultimates	(Crimson)	[Artful/Brutal]	<4>
4.)	Righteous Thieving Rebel	(Jade)	[Artful]	<3>

Formless Techniques

1.)	Ghost Finger*	(Silver/Demon)	[Artful/Brutal]	<Level 3>
2.)	Lion's Roar*	(Gold)	[Artful/Brutal]	<Level 6>
3.)	Toad Style*	(Jade/Demon)	[Brutal]	<Level 5>

*Schema Included



Common Kung Fu Styles

Flawless Archery

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 5

Common Silver Chi Style

By and large, there are few styles based on ranged attacks – and of these, most tend to use thrown weapons, as they're easier to hide. Why is this? It's basically an ongoing case of prejudice on the part of xia warriors – that sniping at your opponent from a distance is rather cowardly and untrusting of your own skills. A true fighter sees the face of the man he kills! This style was devised by an ordinary soldier who got fed up with watching his companions be mown down like chaff by arrogant warriors. He took this rush of righteous indignation and devoted all his energies to creating this style. Now, wuxia warriors must beware... as this style makes it much easier to empower one's arrows with Chi!

Signature: This style has no visible manifestation, but the terrible buzzing hum that the user's arrows make as they strike is all the signature they need!



Type: Ranged (Bows only).

Default Critical Success: Maim or Stun.

1: Zhou's Powerful Blow (1 point). This technique might not allow an archer to go first, but their arrows strike true! When invoked, you gain the following effects:

- Add your Silver Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Strike.
- Your attack applies a -5 modifier to your opponent's Armor
- You may ready a Bow as a Free Action.

2: Han's Swift Arrows (2 points). Invoking this technique, the skilled archer can fire much faster and more often!

- You may make a Secondary Attack at the end of the Round.
- Add 1 bonus die of damage, if you win Initiative over your opponent.
- Add your Silver Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Speed.

3: Qin's Unstoppable Bolts (3 points). The strongest single-target attack of this style, it will fire arrows right through armor!

- Add your Silver Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Damage.
- Your attack applies a -15 modifier to your opponent's Armor.
- Add 2 bonus dice of damage on a successful hit.

4: Yi's Flawless Fusillade (4 points). The ultimate technique of this style, it can take out whole armored units of soldiers in a single barrage! Dictating life and death from afar, the user feels as powerful as the gods! Tragically, such hubris invites disaster. The archer may be far from the weapons of their foes, but they cannot escape the eye of Heaven.

- Your attack is an Area Attack, with a radius of your Flawless Archery skill in yards around your target. This is still considered a Ranged attack.
- Your opponents must subtract 2 dice from their defenses.
- Triple all result dice for the purposes of dispatching Minions.
- *Godly Disfavor.* You are considered a target of your attack, against which you can defend normally.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Flawless Archery* Skill Level equal to the highest technique you've learned.

Forge-Hammer Fist

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 5

Common Crimson Chi Style

Devised by a blacksmith-turned-warrior, this style is practiced by many warriors who do not wish to wed their destinies to a society or clan. While very much a 'common man's style', it offers real power – with this martial art, one can hold one's own in just about any arena!

Signature: This style's signature is the red-orange glow of the forge, blazing around the arms of the martial artist as he uses its techniques.

Type: Brutal (Palms Only)

Default Critical Success: Knockback or Down.

1: Iron Arm, Silver Fist (1 point). With this technique, your punches strike with deadly force, burning so hot as to ignite your target – whether flesh or otherwise!

- Add your Crimson Chi bonus as a modifier to your Palms' Strike for an attack.
- On a successful hit, inflict Burning: Intensity 2 on your target.

2: Bronze-Barred Iron Hands (2 points). This technique concentrates your Chi into a shield around your forearms, strengthening your blocks and glowing with the heat of the forge.

- Add your Crimson Chi bonus as a modifier to your Palms' Strike for Blocks.
- You may safely block weapons unarmed, without risking additional damage
- Duration: One Round

3: Shock and Thunder Strike (3 points). This punch is so powerful that it shatters distance itself! Attack a target at range, as though they were in personal combat.

- You may make a Brutal attack at up to Short range.
- Add your Crimson Chi bonus as a modifier to your Palms' Strike (Attack only) and Damage.
- Your attack deals 2 bonus dice of damage.

4: Ten Iron Fists (4 points). A double-fisted punch trailing ten crimson afterimages, the Ten Iron Fists technique assaults entire groups of enemies!

- Your attack is an Area Attack, affecting all targets within your Forge-Hammer Fist Skill in yards directly in front of you. It is still considered a Brutal attack, for defensive purposes.
 - Add your Crimson Chi bonus as a

modifier to your Palms' Strike for this attack.

- Double result dice for the purposes of removing Minions from play.

5: Iron-Barred Steel Fence (5 points). This technique displays true mastery, building a translucent wall from glowing Chi. It is only barely visible, but forms a barrier against all but the most powerful attacks!

- Add your Crimson Chi bonus as a modifier to your Palms' Strike for Blocks.
- If you successfully defend against an Area Attack with this technique, you are assumed to defend on behalf of all those in the area of effect.
- On a Critical Success, your Blocks inflict Burning: Intensity 2 upon your attacker.
- You may safely block weapons unarmed, without risking additional damage.
- Duration: One Round
- **Flaw: Immobile.** You may not Cover Ground or use Lightfoot while using this technique.
- Channel: 2 Gold. Maintain this effect for an additional Round.

6: Twelve Steel Dragons (10 points: 6 Crimson+ 4 Any). The pinnacle attack of the style is draining, but very effective – even more so than Ten Iron Fists! This technique unleashes a barrage of draconic images from your punch, roaring out to destroy your foes!

- Your attack is an Area Attack centered upon yourself, with a radius equal to your Forge-Hammer Fist Skill in yards. It is still considered a Brutal attack, for defensive purposes.
- Your attacks shatter blocking weapons, depending on your attack total. 35 will shatter an ordinary weapon, 40 a Quality weapon. This does not affect your opponent's defense for that attack.
- Add your Crimson Chi bonus as a modifier to your Palms' Strike and Damage for this attack.
- Double result dice for the purposes of removing Minions from play.
- You inflict the Terrifying combat effect on a standard success.

DESTINY COST

* Bonus: you receive a free *Forge-Hammer Fist* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.

Green Mantis

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 5



Common Jade Chi Style

Every possible style of kung-fu exists as potential. Reasoning that in a sensible universe, such potential must frequently express itself throughout Shen Zhou, sages familiar with the secrets of the Million Style Manual often look to the natural world for inspiration! It's no surprise, then, that Green Mantis is one of Shen Zhou's oldest styles – who could see a mantis effortlessly snatching a moth from the air and mistake it for anything other than powerful Kung Fu?

Signature: This style is obvious in use – the practitioner behaves like a praying mantis, arms held in a position of pious predation as they move with swift, unpredictable motion.

Type: Brutal (Palms Only)

Default Critical Success: Grapple or Maim.

1: Snatching Moments (1 point). Striking a low, defensive stance, the warrior darts from side to side – grasping hands moving effortlessly to intercept their opponents' attacks.

- Add your Jade Chi bonus as a modifier to your Palms' Strike for Blocks.
- You may safely block weapons unarmed, without risking additional damage
- Duration: One Round.

2: Snatching Reflections (2 points). Distance can be deceptive. Lashing out suddenly, the Green Mantis practitioner may strike targets who thought themselves to be safely out of range!

- Add your Jade Chi bonus as a modifier to your Palms' Strike for this attack.
- You may use this technique to attack a target at up to Short range, as though they were in personal combat with you. This is still considered to be a Brutal attack, for defensive purposes.

3: Snatching Clouds (3 points). Arms blurring with motion, the warrior's grasping hands appear to be in all places at once. Even arrows are no match for such a defense!

- You may block Ranged attacks with your Fight skill, using your weapon's Strike, and do not suffer the usual penalty for defending in this fashion

- You may safely block weapons unarmed, without risking additional damage

- Duration: One Round

4: Snatching Wind (4 points). In a blur of lightning-fast pressure point strikes, the warrior snatches away their opponent's very breath!

- Add your Jade Chi bonus as a modifier to your Palms' Strike for this attack.
- On a successful hit, your opponent suffers Chi Flow Loss, losing their breath in their Favored Chi for as many rounds as you have levels in Rank.
- Damage from this attack is considered Chilling, causing the target to suffer the next higher level of Wound Penalties until the end of the next Round. Multiple Chilling attacks are not cumulative.

5: Snatching Sun (5 points). Only the foolish or unwary stray within reach of a Green Mantis practitioner. Adopting a powerful defensive posture, the pinnacle of the style's defenses allows the user to act on their opponents' slightest misstep!

- When you have a Critical success on any Block roll, you may make a Reply on your attacker.
- You are immune to Knockback and Downing effects while this technique is active.
- You may safely block weapons unarmed, without risking additional damage.
- Duration: One Round

6: Snatching Moon (10 points: 6 Jade + 4 Any). This technique appears identical to Snatching Sun, until the warrior strikes! Disguised as a defensive stance, the ultimate technique of Green Mantis is a powerful attack, striking with unnatural precision to disrupting its victim's Chi.

- Add your Jade Chi bonus as a modifier to your Palms' Strike and Damage for this attack.
- Add two bonus dice to your Attack roll
- Your attack is Disorienting, on a Standard success.
- On a successful attack, your opponent suffers Perfect Breath Loss, losing their breath in all five colors of Chi this Round
- **Flaw: Expended Fortune.** You must spend one point of Joss to activate this technique.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Green Mantis* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.

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Heaven-Earth Sun & Moon Saber

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 5

Common Gold Chi Style

This style is a lesson in specialized weapon-based martial arts – the Heaven-Earth Sun & Moon Saber, a double ended sword-like weapon that clears space around its wielder, seems to be an object lesson in how odd weapons can be very deadly indeed. When in use, the style allows a practitioner to spin, lunge and whirl – their blade a seeming unending ribbon of deadly metal.

Signature: The weapon itself is this style's signature. The double-ended blade trails brilliant gold and silver sparks as it moves, striking with uncanny speed at those threatening its master.

Type: Artful (Heaven-Earth Sun & Moon Saber only)

Default Critical Success: Disarm or Maim.

1: Moon Shimmer Blade (1 point). The true strength of the style's unusual weapon is its great flexibility – composed of so many deadly blades, one will always be positioned to parry a blow, or to press home an attack! Leaping and spinning, the warrior creates a wall of silvery blades.

- Add your Gold Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Strike, for one attack or defense.
- Add one bonus die to your next Athletics roll

2: Sun Ray Sword (2 points). Gleaming with golden Chi, the wielder's weapon glows like the noonday sun! It rains down blows with the speed of sunlight, scattering enemies before its wielder.

- You may make a Secondary Attack at the end of the Round.
- Double the result dice from your initial attack, for the purposes of dispatching Minions.
- Add your Gold Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Speed.

3: Heaven & Earth Thunder (3 points). This technique causes the double-ended blade to coruscate with lightning, making claps of thunder with every movement!

- Add two bonus dice to your Attack roll.
- Inflict Knockback on a successful hit.
- Your attack deals

one bonus die of damage, if you won Initiative over your opponent this Round.

- **Flaw: Off-Balance.** Take a -5 penalty to your next defense.

4: Sun-Moon Edge Strike (4 points). The final technique in this highly focused style turns the warrior into a flashing whirlwind of gold-and-silver destruction, striking all in reach with a preternatural fury! Foes rout and allies rally at the sight of such destruction!

- Your attack is an Area Attack, affecting all targets within your Gold Chi in Yards. It is still considered an Artful attack, for defensive purposes.
- Add your Gold Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Strike for this attack, and as a modifier to your next Inspire roll.
- Your attacks deal an additional 3 dice of damage.
- Double your result dice for the purposes of removing Minions from play
- **Flaw: No Secondary Attacks.** You may not use a Secondary Attack this Round.
- **Flaw: Weakened Protective Air.** Lose one die of Chi Aura while this technique is in effect. You must have at least one die of Chi Aura to activate this technique.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Heaven-Earth Sun and Moon Saber* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.



Ling Zhi Two-Finger Style

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 5

Common Silver Chi Style

What a warrior was Ling Zhi! All have heard the tales of his victory over the Mud Demon Cult – deftly snatching weapons from his opponents, he danced unarmed amongst his foes. When the cult's most powerful fighter swung his greatsword, Ling Zhi caught the weapon between two fingertips – shaming his enemy with such an effortless defense, then twisting it right out of his hand!

Signature: This style has no obvious chi manifestations – the only giveaway of a practitioner's knowledge of this style is their bare hands, held with index fingers outstretched.

Type: Brutal (Palms Only)

Default Critical Success: **Downing** or **Embarrassing**.

I: Ling Zhi's Dance (1 point). To emulate Ling Zhi's infuriating style, it's not enough to merely avoid an opponent's attack – you must do so with flair! This technique injects an unpredictable element into your stance, making it difficult for an opponent to land a solid blow. However, it adheres to rigorous principles of positioning and footwork, making it easy to launch off powerfully in any direction.

- Apply a -10 modifier to your opponent's Strike, for one attack or defense.
- Apply a +5 modifier to one Dodge or Athletics roll.

2: Ling Zhi's One-Finger Strike (2 points). Effortlessly weaving through an opponent's defense, the One-Finger Strike wounds their self esteem! Any warrior expects to weather an occasional blow, but for a swordsman to be struck barehanded – that is truly shameful!

- Add your Silver Chi bonus as a modifier to your Palms' Strike, for a single attack.
- On a successful hit, you inflict a minor Shamed Weakness on your opponent. While under this effect, they suffer a -5 modifier on any attempt to attack while armed! They will recover from this automatically at the end of the scene, unless it has been further modified with Secret Arts.
- **Flaw: No Secondary Attacks.**

3: Ling Zhi's Disarming Gesture (3 points). With this technique, the warrior shows their utter disdain for their foe's attack. Plucking a weapon from their opponent's grasp, they send it flying!

- Add your Silver Chi bonus as a modifier to your

Palms' Strike for a single Block roll.

- On a successful Block, Disarm your opponent.

4: Ling Zhi's Two-Finger Defense (4 points). Spinning and weaving amongst the enemy's blades, the warrior leads their opposition in a deadly dance – pinning their weapons in place, and restricting their ability to attack!

- Subtract two dice from all attacks against you while this technique is active.
- On a Critical success when making any Attack or Block, you may Entangle the weapon of your attacker. See WotG: Companion, pg. 150).
- Duration: One Round
- **Flaw: Immobile.** You may not Cover Ground while using this technique.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Ling Zhi Two-Finger Style* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.

Shatterfoot

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 5

Common Crimson Chi Style

In the cities of Shen Zhou, the most feared Kung Fu is not the merciless Hell's Disasters or the cruel Death Fist – it's Shatterfoot, a style hated for being so distressingly common! Shatterfoot is a mighty and unfortunately popular kicking style, which is infamous for the destruction it leaves behind after any battle. In the Wulin, it's much admired – to a teahouse proprietor, it's the Avici Hell!

Signature: Possibly the least subtle of all common styles, Shatterfoot is instantly recognizable by the fact that it breaks everything around the target of its vicious kicks. Before long the whole scene is a ruin!

Type: Brutal (Kicks Only)

Default Critical Success: **Down** or **Terrify**.

I: Shattering Kick (1 point). This potent technique exemplifies the Shatterfoot ethos by creating two craters at once – the first where the enemy was standing, the second where they land!

- Inflict Knockback on a successful attack
- You must use your Damage totals to inflict damage as normal and as a Breaking Things roll.



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2: Stonefist (2 points). The only Shatterfoot technique that does not ruin its immediate surroundings, by virtue of transferring the destructive energy to the target's body. The target rarely considers this an improvement, but inn-keepers enthusiastically support its use!

- Treat your Kicks as a weapon with +10 Speed, +10 Strike, +10 Damage
- On a successful attack, inflict Maiming on your target

3: Breaking Run (3 points). The destructive power of this style is an expression of the raging yang energy within the warrior – when they begin to run, it only grows stronger!

- Add your Crimson Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Damage for a single attack.
- You must use your Damage total to inflict damage as normal and as a Breaking Things roll on that attack.
- Add your Crimson Chi bonus as a modifier to one Athletics roll this Round
- Your opponents may not corner or out-manuever you. Once in the round in which you activate this technique, if caught in a tight spot, you may automatically reposition yourself without making a Tactics roll.

4: Stone-Skipping Kick (4 points). With this technique, a warrior can break the earth in order to attack distant enemies! Delivering a powerful kick into the ground, the warrior sends shards of broken stone flying towards their foe.

- You may make a kick attack at up to Short range. It is still treated as a Brutal attack, for defense purposes.
- Add 4 bonus dice of damage to a successful attack
- You must use your Damage totals to inflict damage as normal and as a Breaking Things roll.

5: All-Shattering Sprint (5 points). When a master of Shatterfoot runs, nothing can escape the destruction! Wulin opponents are blasted by powerful kicks – lesser foes are swept away by the hurricane of debris!

- To activate this technique, you must run 10 yards in a straight line. Your attack is treated as a Brutal Area Attack against all targets in this path.
- You may spend Gold Chi to purchase additional damage dice or knock out extra Minions on a one-to-one basis.
- You must use your Attack total to inflict damage as normal and as a Breaking Things roll.
- Add your

Crimson Chi bonus as a modifier to one Athletics roll this Round.

- *Flaw: No Secondary Attacks.*

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Shatterfoot* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.



Shooting Stars Hands

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 5

Common Gold Chi Style

The poets sing that this style was created by a bold hero of the south, who used it in a daring moonlit rescue of a Han princess from Fang-Head Wu's court. Civilized gentlemen do not point out earlier references from the Shang Dynasty – it's a style of peculiar beauty, and deserves its myth!

This Kung Fu earns its name from its signature, which masks weapons in shining starlight as they are thrown. Because many practitioners use hidden weapons with the style, they seem to be shooting stars from their hands!



Signature: The warrior's hands move with incredible speed, and her weapons fly yet faster! When using this style, weapons appear to be streams of stars shooting towards the target.

Type: Ranged (Ranged [Artful] Thrown weapons only)

Default Critical Success: Maim or Stun.

I: Twin Twister Hands (1 point). This attack uses complex movements of both hands to give the weapon a twisting arc as it is thrown, allowing it to strike two targets in succession! The peculiar spin on the weapon has even been known to knock warriors from their feet!

- Your attack is resolved as an Area Attack against two targets, both of whom must be in range, and who must be within your Shooting Stars Hands skill in yards of each other.
- You may choose the Down combat effect on a critical success.
- You may ready a thrown weapon as a Free Action.
- **Flaw: Two Handed.** You must have both hands free to use this technique. This technique may not be used with a normally two handed weapon.

2: Bright Moon Finger (2 points). With this technique, the normal shower of stars seems to fuse into a single bolt, brighter than the full moon! This bolt hits with incredible force, and has been known to puncture through multiple lesser foes.

- Apply a –10 modifier to your opponent's armor.
- If you successfully cause damage, your opponent suffers Chilling damage (pg. 147).
- Double result dice for the purposes of dispatching Minions.

3: Morning Star Moment (3 points). Seen from afar, Shooting Stars Hands seems like a pretty show of lights – when it attacks your eyes, it's like the sun rising in a heartbeat! The warrior hurls her weapon and it becomes a shower of sparks that gather like a tiny sunrise in her opponent's face. This usually blinds the foe, as well as injuring them terribly, and allows the warrior a moment to conceal herself.

- Blind your opponent on a standard success.
- Add three bonus damage dice on a successful hit.
- Add a bonus die to any use of the Stealth skill before your next Action.

4: Falling Stars Hands (4 points). For all the beauty of this style, its penultimate technique is merciless! The warrior leaps high above their foe and hurls their weapon down with all the force of a star hurled from Heaven by the Immortal Emperor! Such a blow will cripple all but the most resilient opponents.

- Disorient your opponent on a standard success.
- If you successfully cause damage, your opponent is

afflicted with a Minor Injury Weakness causing a –5 penalty to all physical actions, which persists until the damage inflicted by this attack heals.

- Add a bonus die to any use of the Athletics skill before your next Action.
- **Flaw: Altitude.** You must begin your attack at least ten yards higher than your opponent to use this technique.

5: Planetary Storm Strike (5 points). Even for a master of hidden blades, it's easy to have more foes than weapons! With this technique, the warrior abandons her props and simply hurls a shower of burning golden chi-stars towards her foes. These stars saturate the target area, burning craters into earth and enemy alike!

- For this attack, you are considered to be using a thrown weapon with Speed +0, Strike +15, Damage +5.
- Your attack is an Area Attack with a radius of your Shooting Stars Hands Skill in yards, centered on your primary target.
- Add your Gold Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's damage.
- **Flaw: No Secondary Attack.** You may not use a Secondary Attack this round.
- **Channel: 2 Jade.** Use this technique again next round without additional Chi cost.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Shooting Stars Hands* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.

White Crane

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 5

Common White Chi Style

An exceptionally popular style, White Crane unites actors, courtiers and courtesans throughout Shen Zhou – its graceful movements are easily practiced alongside dance, and provide excellent exercise for those unable to spend their days running about with heavy swords! Such popularity among more leisurely fighters does not indicate a lack of technical excellence, however – White Crane is a superlative defensive style, with some surprisingly ferocious attacks! As one of the most popular “soft” unarmed styles, it is often paired in a balanced repertoire with harder styles like Eagle Claw and Thousand Scythe Kick.

Signature: A subtle style, White Crane rarely involves flashy displays of Chi, but can be easily recognized from its appearance of effortless grace, and the distinctive postures of the first and fourth techniques.

Type: Brutal (Palms and Kicks Only)

Default Critical Success: Down or Maim.

1: Stilted Perfection (1 point). Holding themselves at their full height, with perfect poise, the White Crane practitioner presents a surprisingly slender profile to ranged fire, and gives ground effortlessly.

- You are considered one Range category further away than your actual distance would indicate for the purposes of Ranged Attacks against you.
- Add your White Chi bonus as a modifier to Dodge rolls.
- Duration: One Round.

2: Diving Lunge (2 points). Grace and beauty are deceptive; even the most wary foe is taken by surprise when a dance-like motion becomes a swift attack!

- Apply a –5 modifier to your opponent's Block roll.
- Add your White Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Strike (for attack only) and Damage.

3: Rustling the Reeds (3 points). The warrior makes a softer, feinting blow to disrupt the balance of their opponent, and then follows up with a strike of seemingly inhuman precision.

- Activate this technique after making a successful attack roll with your action. You may deduct result dice from your attack roll up to your White Crane Skill level, which are added to your Secondary Attack (see below).
- Gain a Secondary Attack, which must target the opponent hit by the first attack, and may only be enhanced with White Crane techniques. Add bonus dice to your attack roll equal to the result dice subtracted from the first attack roll.
- On a successful hit, the Secondary Attack deals an additional 3 dice of damage.

4: Stroking the Water's Face (4 points). The most energetic White Crane technique, this stance demands rapid yet graceful movements of the hands and feet in the service of a powerful defense. Each incoming blow is gently brushed aside, leaving the warrior in no more danger than a stage actor. Masters of White Crane have been known to leave would-be assassins bewildered and embarrassed before the courts of Shen Zhou as their attacks turn to impromptu performances!

- Add your White Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Strike for the purpose of blocking.

- Apply a –10 modifier to your opponent's Strike
- Duration: One Round.
- **Channel: 2 Jade.** Extend the duration of this technique by one round.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *White Crane* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.

White Crane

Common White Style

(Brutal (Palms and Kicks Only))

2 Restrictions: +2 Maneuver Points

Critical Successes: Down or Maim

1.) Stilted Perfection (2 +I +I) Bonus Point

I – Elusive (~~Color Match~~)

II – Duration

I – Strength of Chi (Dodge)

2.) Diving Lunge (3 +I +I) Bonus Point

I – Strength of Chi (Damage)

II – Move (Block) –5 (~~Color Match~~)

II – Strength of Chi (Strike – Attacks only)

3.) Rustling the Reeds (4 +I) Restriction: Same Target

II – Secondary Attack (Limited)

I – Transfer*

II – Powerful Blows (Injuring)

4.) Crane Wings (5 +I)

II – Strength of Chi (Blocks)

II – Strike Negation (-10)

II – Duration

Note: Channel

* The use of these maneuvers represents a unique extension to the core Million Style Manual maneuvers in order to suit the style in question. They are an example of the sort of thing that would normally require Sage approval, and should not be relied upon as a precedent.

Uncommon Kung Fu Styles

Blue Flame Spear

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 10

Uncommon White Chi Style

In the Kingdom of Yang, a new clan rises to prominence in the Martial Arts world. The Blue Flame Clan have only recently splintered from the Blue Jade Ink Society, but their name – and tales of their sword-shattering spear style – circulates through the Wulin in cautious whispers. Several mighty foes have been struck down by the Blue Flame, and many wonder just how far their ambition soars!

However, the Blue Flame's eyes are not on the present, but the past. Across the centuries, they struggle against Ying Zheng, attempting to defeat the legacy of ignorance he bequeathed upon Shen Zhou by discovering copies of every last text thrown into the flames. Hence they have adapted Wangmang's ancient spear style to their cause – stab a book with a spear, and you can rescue it with little damage! Can a sword say the same?

Signature: The white chi used to empower this style flickers in tiny white stars, trailing in the wake of the spear as it is used.

Type: Artful (Spears Only)

Default Critical Success: Stun or Maim.

I: Swift Spear (1 point): A few seconds can make all the difference to the life of a warrior – but they're much more critical in the fate of a book! With this technique, an opponent can be attacked with devastating speed, well before they're ready, and books can be easily retrieved from across a room, or foe's grip!

- Add your White Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Speed.
- Add you White Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Strike.
- You may attack a target within Short Range.
- You may spend a Free Action while using this technique to recover any one book on the person of your target.

2: Righteous Spear (2 points): The Blue Flame are dedicated to a single righteous pursuit – their sincerity awes even Heaven! When fighting side by side, they channel the spirit of their dedication into their spears and strike as one!

- Activate this technique after a Melee roll of an ally who knows this technique. You gain Coordination (Melee) for that roll.
- Apply a –5 modifier to your opponent's Strike if they attempt to Block your attack when you use the Coordination value.
- You may summon your spear to your hand as a Free Action from up to your Favored Chi in yards.

3: Invulnerable Spear (3 points): The Blue Flame Spear serves all of Shen Zhou – how can a blade that serves slaughter or selfish ends withstand it? With this technique, the warrior's attack shatters the weapons of unworthy foes!

- Your attack gains *Equipment Shattering: Perfect*.
- Apply a –5 modifier to your opponent's Block roll against this attack.

4: Radiant Spear (4 points): The Blue Flame are of a scholarly bent, but with this technique, they can't truly be called retiring! When using this technique, their spears shine with the righteousness of their cause, and unleash waves of blue-tinted white fire as they strike!

- You automatically win Initiative this Round. Roll for initiative normally against characters using similar techniques. You must activate this technique before Initiative is rolled to enjoy this benefit, in which case the Area Attack effect applies to your first attack.
- Your attack is an Area Attack with a radius of your *Blue Flame Spear* skill in yards.

5: Cloud Spear (5 points): Leaping high into the air, the warrior expels his chi aura, suffused with his own righteousness, in a glowing cloud! Gathering the cloud with his spear, he smashes it into his foes, destroying their unworthy weapons, and scattering their soldiers to the winds!

- Your attack is an Area Attack with a radius of your Favored Chi in yards.
- Your attack gains *Equipment Shattering: Perfect*.
- Triple result dice for the purpose of dispatching minions.
- **Flaw: Weakened Protective Air.** This technique costs a die of chi aura to activate.





6: Heaven Spear (10 points: 6 Silver + 4 Any): This technique is a recent addition to the style, inspired by two narrowly-failed assassination attempts on the Clan Head. Swearing never to risk failing in his cause so lightly again, he invented this ultimate defensive technique!

- This technique cancels Surprise, whether activated in response to Surprise, or Surprise occurring during its duration.
- You are considered one range category further away for the purpose of Ranged attacks while this technique is active.
- You may use your Melee skill and the Strike of your weapon to block Ranged attacks, without the normal penalty. If you successfully block an Area Attack, you have deflected it for all targets, who are considered to have not been attacked.
- You gain an extra Free Action for each Rank above Fourth during each round this technique is active.
- Your opponents may not corner or out-maneuver you. Once in the round in which you activate this technique, if caught in a tight spot, you may automatically reposition yourself without making a Tactics roll.
- **Flaw:** Expended Fortune. You must spend a point of joss to activate this technique.
- **Duration:** One Round.
- **Channel:** 2 *Jade*. Extend the duration of this technique by one Round.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free Blue Flame Spear skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.
- 5 **Fortune:** You are a member of the Blue Flame Clan, dedicated to recovering the lost works of the pre-Qin era. You receive a 3 point Affiliation with the Blue Flame Clan, and are considered to have Friends 4 in Yang.
- 1 **Victory:** Having defeated a Legalist foe, you rescue any books in the same scene.
- 5 **Rival:** The Blue Flame and Falling Wren would seem like natural allies, but in truth they're fierce rivals – neither trust the other's motivations!

-5: This is your first or second Disadvantage.



Darkened Flying Edges

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 10

Uncommon Silver Chi Style

The Duke of Zhou was loved throughout the Land of the Gods, but none loved him so much as Fei Liu, the Martyred Blossom! For him, she ran with the Ta Shadow Butterflies and learned their ways - who could doubt her dedication? When the Shadow Butterflies attempted their coup, her eyes ran with liquid metal, and she summoned their poisoned hairpins to her with webs of shadow. How horribly they died when she hurled them back!

Fei Liu is long gone from Shen Zhou, but her peerless technique for thrown weapons remains. A magnificent tool for the bodyguard or assassin alike, it has been preserved by the Metal Liquid Delegates and dedicated to the service of their masters. Thrown weapon specialists for some notable Clans and Societies have developed styles very similar to Darkened Flying Edges, but with less dramatic signatures. The most famous of these, King of the Hidden Knife, is practiced by the Merciful White Day Ministers. This variant lacks the sixth technique, and has the Embarrass combat effect in place of Disorienting.

Signature: The user's weapons leave an inky black stain upon the air, coiling like smoke as it slowly dissipates. This does not obstruct vision, but it is terribly inauspicious. The weapons themselves often take foreboding and vicious shapes in flight.

Type: Ranged (Ranged (Artful) Thrown weapons only, including sharp improvised thrown weapons).

Default Critical Success: **Disorienting** or **Maim**.

I: All Edges Return (1 point). To be safe from Darkened Flying Edges, you can't have a single sharp edge within fifty yards! With but a gesture, the warrior can summon a weapon to her hand, seemingly dragging it through the air by its shadow. This technique allows many practitioners to feel comfortable about using Quality throwing weapons, knowing they will certainly retrieve them.

- You may summon an appropriate thrown weapon to your hand from up to Medium Range, as a Free Action. You may not do so if the weapon is held or otherwise tightly secured. "Appropriate thrown weapons" for this technique are Ranged (Artful) thrown weapons and sharp improvised throwing weapons weighing a maximum of 30lbs.
- On your next attack with that weapon, if you successfully cause damage your opponent will be *Chilled*.
- If that attack occurs before your opponent's Initiative, you gain a bonus damage die.



2: Diamond Dagger Dart (2 points). With this technique, the warrior's blade cuts the light from the air and devours it. Should it hit its target, light bursts from their eyes, nose, mouth and ears as it is released into their body!

- Add your Silver Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Strike.
- Add 3 bonus damage dice on a successful hit.
- Apply a -5 modifier to your opponent's Armor for this attack.

3: Assassin's Long Reach (3 points). It's hard to kill a martial artist with a single knife, and with Lightfoot, targets can all too easily escape! Fei Liu's solution was elegant, if not kind – extending the range of your weapon helps, but crippling your foe is better! With this technique, a bolt of shadow lances unerringly to a point which will disable the target; a knife following that path can't help but cause agony!

- Add your Silver Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Damage.
- Your opponent must subtract 1 die from their defense.
- Your opponent is considered to be one range category closer.
- If you successfully cause damage, your opponent is afflicted with a Minor Injury Weakness. If they do not behave as if crippled, they suffer a cumulative one point reduction in Speed (maximum two points). The condition persists until the damage inflicted by this attack heals

4: Army Flensing Assault (4 points). It's all very well to be a peerless assassin, but you can't assassinate an army! In answer to this difficulty, the Darkened Flying Edges practitioner hurls her weapon towards her foes and then leaps into the air, spiraling a trail of shadow behind her! As the weapon strikes the ground, she unleashes the shadow, black tendrils following the path of the weapon before striking out randomly, piercing and throttling her foes.

- Your attack is an Area Attack, with a radius of your Favored Chi in yards around your target. This is still considered a Ranged attack.
- Your opponents must subtract 1 die from their defenses.
- Double all result dice for the purposes of dispatching Minions.
- **Flaw: No Secondary Attack.** You may not make a Secondary Attack on the round you use this technique.

5: Thousand Hell Knife (5 points). Even with *All Edges Return*, it's still too easy for a hidden weapons master to be caught empty handed! When an assassination turns unexpectedly into a duel, students of Darkened Flying Edges extend their Chi into their weapons, which spring out and orbit them at high speed, ready for instant use. The signature shadow-trails of this style soon surround the warrior – the sight of this storm of shadow and steel is too much for many opponents!

- You may ready a Thrown weapon as a free action.
- Add your Silver Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Strike.
- Your attacks inflict the Terrify combat effect on a critical success.
- You may use your Ranged skill to defend against Ranged attacks with your weapon's Strike modifier, and do not take the normal Strike penalty for doing so.
- If you hit and successfully cause damage your opponent is Chilled.
- Duration: One Round.
- **Channel: 2 White.** Extend duration for an additional round.
- **Flaw: Weakened Protective Air.** Lose one die of Chi Aura while this technique is in effect. You must have at least one die of Chi Aura to activate this technique.

6: Locust Fossil Flight (10 points: 6 Silver + 4 Any). Following the Shadow Butterflies, Fei Liu made many terrible discoveries – one was the corpse of the *Heaven-Eating Locust-Body Devil*! Slain by Huangti, it fell from Heaven to Shen Zhou, shattering into the ten thousand iron-jawed locusts that comprised its body. In time, the earth covered the demon insects, and they were forgotten.

The warrior trusts to her luck that there are locusts nearby, and sends tendrils of shadow into the earth about her (if there is no earth, then stone floors, tree canopies, lakes, oceans or even clouds can hide fossilized locusts!). The shadow tastes of blood and the essence of her weapon, awakening the fossilized insects with a hunger for flesh and vengeance! Bursting from the ground, they swarm about her, and follow with impossible swiftness wherever her blade directs! There they gnaw until temporarily sated, before returning the blade to their master.

- Apply a -5 modifier to your opponent's armor.
- After your attack, your weapon is returned to your hand.



- You make a Reply on a standard success if blocking with a weapon compatible with Darkened Flying Edges. This Reply may target a foe attacking from up to Medium range.
- You gain a Secondary Attack.
- Duration: Rank level in Rounds.
- *Flaw: Expended Fortune.* You must spend a point of joss to activate this technique.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** if you have the Metal Liquid secret Technique and an Affiliation with an appropriate Clan or State, you are tutored in this style by fellow Metal Liquid Delegates.
- 5 **Onerous Obligation:** If you are not a Metal Liquid Delegate, but have an appropriate Affiliation, you may still be tutored in this Style by the Liquid Metal Delegates, at the cost of an Onerous Obligation to your tutor.
 - 5 This is your first or second disadvantage.
- 4 **Mentor:** After revering the Duke of Zhou and making sacrifices to his memory, you are taken in by the ghost of Fei Liu herself!
- 5 **Discovery:** You have sacrificed something precious, and keen eyes see the void in your heart. Gain the Unwholesome Disadvantage.
 - 5 This is your first or second Disadvantage.
- 2 **Entangled Destiny:** Choose a character, location or object. It was once a cherished part of your life, but you sacrificed the memory of that joy to learn Darkened Flying Edges. Your character has no memory of this connection, but it is strongly entangled with your destiny.



Dragon Palms

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 10

Uncommon Crimson Chi Style

Once there was a Clan that dominated the Martial Arts World – the Five Heavenly Towers Clan. Motivated, unified, with a kung fu all its own, it reached a status higher than the other Great Clans, of which it was the Sixth. Using knowledge from the Classic of Great Peace, the Towers wielded both powerful kung fu and daoist magicks, and was able to rule the Wulin for a solid decade... until one of its leaders went too far.

The Four Clans built a Wulin Army and managed to destroy the Towers' control of the land... but unbeknownst to them, the Hell Clan followed the Ruling Clan back to its hidden stronghold, sealing them in their own mountain in Eastern Qin! This gave rise to the legends of a peak holding a bandit city prisoner within its snowy slopes! Now they are free, and are seeking to bring Peace to the Clans once more... by ruling the Martial Arts World! Already their 'Unnamed Master' has made a stir by presenting himself at the Wulin Election!

Signature: Shimmering transparent images of draconic talons and more complete images are the marks of this style – appropriate, since some of the techniques of the style break the morale of followers!

Type: Brutal [Palms Only]

Default Critical Successes: **Disorient** or **Stun**.

I: Howling Dragon (1 point). This technique manifests shimmering dragon images as the hooked-finger palm strike is made - terrifying onlookers!

- Add your Crimson Chi Bonus as a modifier to your palms' Strike for this attack;
- Apply the Terrify Combat Effect on a standard success.
- Double result dice for the purpose of removing Minions.

2: Dragon Tail (2 points). A dragon's tail can knock down ten thousand foes! The reach of the warrior's arm is far less, but the ferocity of his attack is every bit a dragon's equal.

- Your attack is an Area Attack against everyone in Personal Combat Range.
- You may inflict the Downing Combat Effect on a Critical Success;
- Add your Crimson Chi bonus as a modifier to your palms' Damage.



3: Dragon Field (3 points). A powerful blocking technique, this causes a brief but very distinct  image to flash into existence as the Block occurs – rebounding the damage of the attack upon its wielder!

- Apply the Reply combat effect on a Standard Success;
- Add your Crimson Chi Bonus to your Palms for this Block only;
- You may make this Block unarmed without suffering the usual damage or risking Maiming.

4: Battle Dragon (4 points). The warrior projects her chi aura outwards in a spectacular display, taking on the fearsome aspect of the dragon! Arrows shy away in terror, and her foes are shattered by strikes of her dragon claws!

- Your Palms are considered to have Speed +0, Strike +15, Damage +15.
- You may block Ranged attacks without suffering the normal penalties or loss of Strike.
- Add 2 bonus damage dice to successful attacks.
- You may Block unarmed without suffering the usual damage or risking Maiming.
- Duration: One Round.
- **Flaw: Weakened Protective Air.** Lose one die of Chi Aura while this technique is in effect. You must have at least one die of Chi Aura to activate this technique.
- **Channel: 2 Jade.** Extend the duration of this technique by one round

5: Hidden Dragon (5 points). For all the dragon's terrible fury, it is a creature of infinite cunning. This seemingly straightforward strike in fact strikes a vicious blow to the chi of the victim, rupturing their veins and causing flame to burst from their pores!

- Add your Crimson Chi Bonus as a modifier to your palms' Strike for this attack;
- If you hit and successfully cause damage, your opponent suffers a Minor Burst Veins Weakness. If they Cover Ground, jump or dodge, they suffer a cumulative one point Speed reduction (maximum two points). This condition persists until the damage from this attack is healed.
- Inflict the Burning combat effect (Intensity 5) on a standard success.
- Add 2 bonus damage dice on a successful hit.

6: Six Dragons Attack (10 points - 6 Crimson + 4 Any). A massive chi-strike against an entire area, this double-palm strike manifests six draconic chi-images that lash out roaring and tearing at all living things to the front of the wielder!

- Your attack is an Area Attack targeting a number of enemies (named opponents or minion groups) equal to twice your Favoured Chi rating. These foes must be within Medium range and in front of you.
- For this attack, your Palms are considered to have Speed +0, Strike +20, Damage +20.
- Add your Crimson Chi Bonus as a modifier to your palms' Strike for this attack.
- Apply a -10 modifier to your opponents' Armour.
- Apply the Terrify Combat Effect on a standard success.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Dragon Palms* Skill Level equal to the highest technique you've learned.
 - 5 **Fortune:** You are a member of the remnant of the Five Heavenly Towers clan, lead by the enigmatic Ao Lan, and dedicated to the cause of Chang Chio. Gain the 3 point advantage **Affiliation:** Five Heavenly Towers Clan, and add a +5 modifier to any study rolls for Lores related to *Chang Chio*, the *Heaven Clan* or *Daoism*.
 - 1 **Victory:** Descendents of the Yellow Turbans are everywhere - they supported the Five Heavenly Towers, and remember legends of Dragon Palms' powers. Having displayed your Dragon Palms prowess and made a reasonable effort to whip them into righteous fury, recruit 30 peasants as mob-level minions.
 - 5 **Hunted:** The animosity between the Great Clans and Chang Chio's martial lineage has lingered since the fall of the Han. By practicing Dragon Palms, you draw the Clans' ire!
- 5: This is your first or second Disadvantage.

Eight Diagram Fist

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 15

Uncommon Gold Chi Style

In the city of Ink, the Jin Emperor's repressive laws bite as harshly as anywhere else, seeking to deprive revolutionary heroes of their martial virtue. The righteous scholar-warriors of the city are not daunted – Hu cannot take their calligraphy from them, and when it is in harmony with the Way, its power is matchless!

The Changing World Sect appeared in Ink during the Three Kingdoms era, inspired by the turmoil of a Shen Zhou without the mandate of Heaven. As Predictionists and Warriors of remarkable skill, they revel in the Time of Chaos, considering it a vital time of learning for the long age of prosperity to come. It is said they serve the All Under Heaven Prediction, rumored to be sapping the strength of the Jin Empire to clear the way for the true inheritor of the Mandate of Heaven. Their Kung Fu is derived from the principles of the Book of Changes – to fight against it is to be forced to adapt to an ever-changing world!

Signature: The use of this style typically involves flashy displays of calligraphy, scribed into the earth or the air itself with fist or weapon. The characters so written blaze with the golden light of the warrior's Chi! Even the techniques that do not demand a display of calligraphy typically burn the appropriate trigram into the air with golden Chi, where it hangs for up to an hour.

Type: Brutal

Default Critical Success: **Disarm** or **Maim**.

I: Rippling Wave Stance (1 point). *K'un* does not rule her family, but unifies it. When she smiles, they act as one – her influence is subtle but limitless!

- While this technique is active, you have Coordination (Fight) with allies that know this technique.
- You may defend against armed attackers while unarmed without risking injury.
- You may remove result dice from Learning (Calligraphy) rolls and add them as bonus dice to an Athletics or Finesse roll later this round.
- Duration: One Round.

2: Spinning Reflections (2 points). *Chen* is the eldest son – when the family is insulted, it is his duty to deliver the stinging rebuke! Swiftly, he cuts down the ringleader and disperses the jeering mob. For this reason,

it is said “The family's reputation is sound when the eldest son's sword is sharp!”

- Activate this technique when blocking – if your defense is a critical success, your block is a Reply.
- If your Reply was against Minions, double result dice for the purpose of dispatching them.

3: Rotating World (3 points). A family has no asset like a cunning daughter. *Sun* is beautiful, but formless as the wind – a foe seeks to gain advantage, only to find she has ensnared them!

- On a Critical Success (attack or defense), you may Entangle the weapon of your opponent. Determine the duration and difficulty of escape from your roll's Result Dice, following the table in WotG p.75. The target is considered Entangled unless they choose to drop their weapon, becoming Disarmed.
- Add a bonus die to all Fight rolls.
- Duration: One Round.

4: Four Mirrors (4 points). *Ken* is the youngest son – the family's hopes rest upon him, they fight to give him a better life! In turn, he is like a mountain, bearing the sorrows of the family, and giving respite from their troubles.

- You may block Ranged attacks without penalty, using your weapon's Strike. You may defend normally against attacks that would otherwise be style rolls. If you successfully defend against an Area Attack, you have deflected it for all targets, who are considered to have not been attacked.
- You may defend against armed attackers while unarmed without risking injury.
- Add a bonus die to all Learning rolls where the Calligraphy specialty would apply.
- Duration: One Round.
- Flaw: Calligraphy. You must succeed on a Learning (Calligraphy) roll at Everyday (18) difficulty as a Free Action to inscribe calligraphy on the battlefield during a round in which this technique is active. You must attempt this at the earliest opportunity. Opponents in personal combat range may use Opportunistic Opposition with the Finesse skill. If you run out of Free Actions without having successfully passed the Learning roll, the technique immediately ends.
- **Channel: 2 Crimson.** Extend the duration of this technique by one Round.

5: Holding Yin and Yang (5 points). *Li* is the middle daughter, in the first flower of womanhood! Her infinite yin overflows, but her nature is the fiery yang of youth! Her entrance to the world is in harmony with the Way – who can withstand her?



- Your attack is an area attack, centered on you. It targets all other characters within your Favored Chi in yards.
- Triple result dice for the purpose of dispatching minions.
- If you hit and successfully cause damage, your opponent is afflicted with a Major Weakness Condition, depending on their gender. For female opponents, this is a Too Much Yang condition – they must remain immobile or suffer a cumulative one point reduction in Genius for each movement (maximum 5 points). For male or genderless opponents, this is a Too Much Yin condition – on their Initiative each round, they must spend two Free Actions on tending their Yang (tactically useless movement, indulging in passions etc) or suffer a cumulative one point reduction in Speed (maximum five points). These conditions last until the end of the scene, or until the damage inflicted by this attack is healed.
- **Flaw: Calligraphy.** You must succeed on a Learning (Calligraphy) roll at Everyday (18) difficulty as a Free Action to inscribe calligraphy on the battlefield immediately before activating this technique. Opponents in personal combat range may use Opportunistic Opposition with the Finesse skill.

6: Altered Universe (10 points: 6 Gold + 4 Any). K'an has the spirit of the moon – at the centre of the sky, his words are infinite wisdom, his blows dire peril! To fight K'an, one must surrender concepts of right and left, up and down – only the principle of Yi can guide you when his Chi distorts the battlefield!

- You may choose the Redirect combat effect on a critical success while blocking. You may choose any new target within Favored Chi yards.
- Your attacks gain *Equipment Shattering (Perfect)*.
- After rolling your block, you may replace your rolled total with the highest total you have rolled on a block while this technique has been active. You are considered to have rolled that total after replacing it (for the benefit of allies using Rippling Wave Stance etc).
- **Duration: Investment.** This technique remains in effect as long as you reduce your Chi ratings by 3 Gold and two other points used to activate this technique.
- **Flaw: Principle of Yi.** This technique does not function when attacking, or being attacked by, a character with four or five deeds of Yi.

7: Universal Cycle (15 points: 7 Gold + 8 Any). Ch'ien is the father, ruler of the house. He complements his wife K'un perfectly – where her influence is subtle, his is overt. Where she is limitless, his power is rarely shown – but when it is, who can resist it?

- Your attack is a style roll. It cannot be defended against except by techniques that explicitly defend against attacks made as style rolls (also known as Unparalleled Attacks), such as Four Mirrors.
- Add two bonus dice to your attack roll.
- Double result dice for the purpose of damage.
- If you hit and successfully cause damage, your opponent is afflicted with a Major Zhong Inspiration Weakness. They must show loyalty towards you, or suffer a cumulative one point reduction in Speed (maximum 5 points) for each disloyal action. This condition ends when the damage from this attack has been healed.
- **Flaw: Calligraphy.** As detailed in Technique 4.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Eight Diagram Fist* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.
- * **Bonus:** you receive the *Tools of Divination* Lore for free. If you are unable to learn this Lore, or already know it, gain the *Mentor 5: Master of the Changing World* Sect advantage, to reflect the Master taking an interest in a backward or advanced student.
- 3 **Fortune:** You are a member of the Changing World Sect. Gain the 3 point Advantage: Affiliation [Changing World Sect].
- 2 **Discovery:** If you are a member of the Changing World Sect, you discover members of the Falling Wren Society in the area. These Falling Wren are eager to repay their society's debt to the Changing World, earned during the numerous battles that have afflicted Ink during the Time of Chaos. They will assist you in a major endeavour.
- 5 **Secret:** You will discover the terrible secret of *Tui*, the Eighth Diagram.

Force of the Wind

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 10

Uncommon White Chi Style

When Banchao arrived in a Kingdom, it was if a wind of righteousness blew through it, correcting wickedness and cultivating humane behavior! So it is that the Upright Gentlemen of the Silk Road, a society dedicated to following Banchao's example, harness the wind to power their spectacular Kung Fu.

Force of the Wind is the defensive style practiced by the Gentlemen, which miraculously converts an enemy's malicious intent into graceful motion – savage blows merely send them soaring unharmed across the battlefield! The Gentlemen have been known to instruct virtuous descendents of Banchao in this style for their protection. It is said that not only has Cai Ying-ping, ruler of Western Yang, survived several assassination attempts owing to her mastery of Force of the Wind, but that the society has based itself in Mating Butterflies with the intent of protecting her.

Signature: The wind intensifies when this style is in use, growing stronger as the more powerful techniques are unleashed. On the Silk Road, or in a crowded teahouse, there's no mistaking it!

Type: Free

Default Critical Success: None

1: The Humane Man is Free of Burden (1 point). The wind buoys and shelters those of cultivated conduct, lifting them gracefully from the path of their enemies' attacks!

- Your Favored Chi modifier is considered a Mobility bonus. Apply it as a modifier to Athletics and Dodge rolls, if appropriately described.
- You are considered one range category further away, for the purposes of Ranged attacks.
- Duration: One Round.

2: Spin with the Impact (2 points). A brutal attack communicates its malice openly, but with little eloquence. Understanding the examples of Banchao and Master Confucius, the virtuous warrior refines such aggression into grace, setting a magnificent example of their own.

- Use this technique after being successfully hit with a Brutal attack, but before damage is rolled. You may convert a number of dice of damage equal to your Rank Level to harmless rounds of Knockback. An attack reduced to 0 damage dice in this way does no damage, but still inflicts any effect not contingent on damage.

3: Drift With the Edge (3 points). An artful attack speaks of its malice in deceptive and treacherous fashion! The cultivated warrior, however, is illuminated by study of Master Meng Tzu's teachings, and may answer such an attack as gracefully as they would a brutal one.

- Use this technique after being successfully hit with an Artful attack, but before damage is rolled. You may convert a number of dice of damage equal to your Rank Level to harmless rounds of Knockback. An attack reduced to 0 damage dice in this way does no damage, but still inflicts any effect not contingent on damage.

4: Wind Diverts the River (4 points). Gracious conduct does not exist in isolation – its essential righteousness flows from action to action, building up over time, until one is living a humane life. The Upright Gentlemen of the Silk Road have developed a martial application of this principle, harmonizing the wind of their kung fu with their actions!

- Upon activating this technique, you gain an additional Free Action for each rank you possess above Fourth.
- On any successful Athletics action to jump or Cover Ground, you may remove result dice from your roll, to be added as bonus dice to a Block or Dodge roll during this turn.
- Duration: Investment. This technique remains in effect as long as you reduce your White Chi rating by 2.
- **Flaw: Expended Fortune.** you must pay a point of Joss to activate this technique.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Force of the Wind* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.
- 5 **Fortune:** You are a member of the Upright Gentlemen of the Silk Road, the society dedicated to the memory of Banchao. You gain a 3 point Affiliation with the Upright Gentlemen, and may apply a +10 modifier to any study rolls for Loresheds on the Han Dynasty, Banchao or Confucianism.
- 2+ **Fortune:** If you are a member of the Upright Gentlemen, you may purchase Status in Western Yang or the Silk Road.
- 5 **Victory:** Having convinced the Upright Gentlemen that you are a descendent of Banchao, they train you in Force of the Wind and will aid you where possible. Gain 2 points in the Friends advantage, and a 3 point Followers advantage for the 5 Faction Fighter bodyguards assigned to you.
- 5 **Painfully Honest:** Having taken the Upright Gentlemen's practice of righteousness to an extreme, you are resolved to never lie in any circumstances. Hopefully you'll develop tact to go with your honesty!
- 5: This is your first or second Disadvantage.

Sublime Doctrine

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 10

Uncommon Gold Chi Style

High in the mountains above Hungry Pillars, the Notorious Dark Warrior Wu prepares the Sublime Doctrine Sect to storm Shen Zhou. His brother begs him to show temperance, but is dismissed with a wave of Wu's hand! Seeking infinite accomplishments, he has studied deeply of the Scrolls of the Sleeping Dragon, and yearns to master the Great Game as well as Kung Fu.

Inspired by the Scrolls, Wu has created a style that emulates the techniques of the ancient masters of the Great Game, harmonized with the all-conquering wisdom of the Sublime Doctrine. This style is subtle, but tactically potent; it demands careful use, but rewards the warrior with control of the battlefield!

NOTE: This is a style recently invented by Feng; it is distinct from the Sublime Doctrine version of Cloud Mastery referenced in Weapons of the Gods.

Signature: When this style is in use, gold chi radiates from its wielder in waves, ensnaring and misdirecting the energy of her foes!

Type: Free

I: Level Ground Stance (1 point). When facing an opponent of superior resources but inferior abilities, it is natural to limit the circumstances to those where the surplus resources are useless! With this technique, the warrior blunts the overt power of her opponents' weapons and kung fu, in return for limiting her own.

- While this technique is in effect, opponents attacking or blocking you have their Strike capped at +5 after all modifiers have been added. While blocking or attacking, your Strike is also capped at +5 after all modifiers have been added. The total value of all modifiers applied to your Dodges against attacks affected by this technique is capped at +10.
- Duration: One Round.

2: Harrying the Prey (2 points). It is shameful to wound a foe and then suffer defeat because you allowed them to recover! With this technique, the Sublime Doctrine warrior traps her foes within a disadvantageous position, preventing them from leaving or gaining respite!

- While this technique is active, you may automatically oppose the Recover Chi and Cover Ground actions of any character in personal combat with you with a Tactics roll. Techniques that allow the user to reposition themselves without a Tactics roll will automatically negate this effect.
- Add your Gold Chi bonus as a modifier to Tactics rolls.

- Duration: One Round.
- **Channel: 2 White.** Extend the duration of this technique by one Round.

3: Corrupt the Soldiers (3 points). A sure path to victory is to turn the tools of the foe against them! The Dark Warrior Wu refined this principle into a useful countermeasure, corrupting the swords of those who attack him. The opponent feels that their weapons are burning, although there is no visible flame!

- Add your Gold Chi bonus as a modifier to a single Dodge roll.
- Add a bonus die to that Dodge roll.
- If you succeed on the Dodge roll, your opponent's weapon suffers the Burning combat effect, with an intensity equal to the number of result dice you scored. This does not damage the weapon; instead, roll the damage die against anyone wielding it. This does not affect unarmed foes, though fighters wearing gauntlets, boots or even gloves suffer normally.

4: Demanding Boundless Accomplishment (4 points). The Sublime Doctrine teaches that it is folly to ask a foe for only part of his prowess; far better to demand that they be as skilled as Huangti! If they fail, victory is yours. If they succeed, the legend of the battle will ring through the ages!

- While this technique is active, attacking you is a complex action. Ranged attacks use the lower of Ranged and Grace. Brutal attacks use the lower of Fight and Inspire. Artful attacks use the lower of Melee and Persuade. All other attacks use the lower of the appropriate skill and Investigation.
- Duration: Investment. This technique remains active for as long as you lower your Gold Chi by 2.
- **Flaw: Boundless Accomplishments.** Your attacks and blocks also become complex actions – see above.

5: Elephant Stance (5 points). A foolish opponent laughs at this technique's name – a wise one nods sagaciously! With this stance, the Sublime Doctrine warrior takes on the aspect of ideology; she is like an abstract concept, intangible to her foes' weapons.

- Add your Gold Chi bonus as a modifier to Dodge rolls.
- You gain Relentless (Dodge).
- Add one bonus die to Tactics rolls.
- Duration: Sublime Doctrine skill level in Rounds.

6: Master of Ten Thousand Routes (10 points: 6 Gold + 4 Any). With this final accomplishment, the warrior takes possession of the battlefield! Her opponent's moves are not their own, but instead merely pieces of her grand strategy.





Even on open ground, those fighting a warrior with this technique find themselves terribly confused, leaping in directions opposite to those they intended, and sprinting towards horrible danger!

- While this technique is active, you may oppose with your Initiative skill any rolls to Cover Ground or leap that would cause a character to pass through any point in the area surrounding you with a radius twice your Favored Chi Rating. If you succeed, you may choose to move that character in any fashion you wish that is not instantly suicidal (Sage's discretion), as if your Initiative roll had been their Cover Ground roll.
- Add your Gold Chi bonus as a modifier to Initiative rolls.
- Add a bonus die to any use of the Initiative skill.
- Duration: Favored Chi rating in Rounds.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Sublime Doctrine* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.
 - 3 **Fortune:** Gain the advantage Affiliation: Sublime Doctrine Sect.
 - I **Entangled Destiny:** Choose a character. They become entangled in Tai's quest: to find a husband for his sister Feng (as demanded by his parents) and a wife for his brother Wu (as the sect demands). You're not sure why he's so distressed about this, but you're curious to meet his sister.
 - 5 **Two Lives:** A woman can't openly practice Sublime Doctrine Kung Fu; if you're female, you'll have to pose as a man, or Wu will throw you out of the sect! This is a disadvantage; gain a Destiny when it causes you substantive trouble.
- 5: This is your first or second Disadvantage.

Sublime Doctrine

Uncommon Gold Style (Free)

2 Restrictions: +2 Maneuver Points

1.) Level Ground Stance (3 +I) Bonus Point

II – Strike Equalization**

II – Duration

2.) Harrying the Prey (4 +I +I) Bonus Point

III – Harry (Color Match)**

I – Strength of Chi (Initiative)

II – Duration

* Channel

3.) Corrupt the Soldiers (5 +I)

I – Strength of Chi (Dodge)

II – Mastery (Dodge) (Color Match)

III – Corrupt Weapon*

4.) Demanding Boundless Accomplishments (6 +I + 2) Flaw: Boundless Accomplishments

IV – Complex Attacks (Color Match)**

V – Chi Investment

5.) Elephant Stance (7 +I)

V – Perfect Persistence

I – Strength of Chi (Dodge)

I – Mastery (Tactics) (Color Match)

I – Relentless (Dodge)*

6.) Master of Ten Thousand Routes (12 +I)

VII – Flawless Persistence

IV – Misdirection** (Color Match)

I – Strength of Chi (Initiative)

I – Mastery (Initiative)

* The use of these maneuvers represents a unique extension to the core Million Style Manual maneuvers in order to suit the style in question. They are an example of the sort of thing that would normally require Sage approval, and should not be relied upon as a precedent.

** These are not standard Million-Style Manual maneuvers, but instead an example of adapting ideas from outside sources (in this instance, the Great Game). This is obviously subject to Sage advice and approval.

Wild Horse Style

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 10

Uncommon Jade Chi Style

Before the founding of Only Six Devils, you couldn't enter the desert without fearing the bandit Queen Thundercloud Na! She would charge ahead of her Devil Cloud gang and smash into caravans and armies alike, breaking her foes with her unstoppable jade kicking technique. When the Iron Shadow Warlord finally tamed her, his famous armor was dented with a thousand footprints, as if he'd withstood a stampede!

The Devil Clouds are still part of life in Xia. When their Wild Horse tradition is strong, they are a feared mercenary company, known for the ferocity and speed of their cavalry. When their martial tradition is weak, they fall to banditry, and are thought worthless by captains of cultivated conduct.

Signature: As the Wild Horse warrior runs, he unfailingly kicks up a swirl of debris to mark his passage, and the sound of galloping hooves fills the air!

Type: Brutal (Kicks Only)

Default Critical Success: Down or Stun.

1: Sudden Horse Kick (1 point). Even the strongest fighter can be knocked breathless by a horse's sudden kick! The warrior strikes with the force of a stallion, hurling their opponent back and knocking the air from their lungs.

- Inflict Knockback on your opponent on a standard success.
- Add your Jade Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Damage.
- Your opponent loses their breath in their Favored Chi for this round if hit.

2: Flying Mare Stomp (2 points). Leaping into the air, the warrior charges their foot with Jade Chi, rendering it harder than any hoof, and brings it down upon their unlucky foe! Any sage can recognise a Devil Cloud battlefield by the craters left behind by this fierce technique.

- For this attack, your kick is considered a weapon with Speed +0, Strike +15, Damage +15.
- Add three bonus damage dice on a successful hit.
- Down your opponent on a standard success.

3: Rearing Stallion (3 points). It's bad enough when a horse is charging, but when it rears – that's trouble! Inspired by the power of a horse maddened by battle and fear, this technique allows the warrior to unleash terrible blows and ignore their own wounds if they hold their ground.

- Ignore wound penalties.
- Add your Jade Chi bonus as a modifier to your weapon's Damage.
- Add two bonus dice damage on a successful hit.
- Secondary Attack.
- Duration: One Round.
- **Flaw: Immobile.** You may not Cover Ground while this technique is in effect.

4: Unstoppable Stampede Attack (4 points). This technique was Thundercloud Na's signature move, feared across the north! As the warrior charges, a storm of debris gathers about them, glowing with Jade Chi. As they reach their target, a single powerful kick sends the debris out in a wave of energy, scattering their foes!

- For this attack, your kick is considered a weapon with Speed +0, Strike +20, Damage +20.
- Your attack is an Area Attack with a radius of your Favored Chi rating in yards.
- Triple result dice for the purposes of destroying Minions.
- Furious Charge: You must have Covered Ground of at least 20 yards in a straight line this round to use this technique.
- Channel: 2 Gold. Use this technique again next round without additional Chi cost.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Wild Horse Style* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.
- * **Bonus:** your increased insight into the way of horses lets you treat an ordinary horse that you have previously ridden within the last month as a Quality horse.
- 5 **Fortune:** Gain a 3 point Affiliation advantage with the Devil Clouds, and choose one of the following:
 - * **Bonus:** The Devil Clouds are currently a despised bandit gang. Once per game, you may arrange for an enemy character or faction to be hit by a devastating bandit raid, significantly damaging their wealth.
 - * **Bonus:** The Devil Clouds are currently a respected Xia mercenary company. Once per game, you may choose which side of a conflict Xia offers its mercenary services to. This is a critical advantage to the beneficiary.

神兵玄奇

神兵玄奇



Yin Ice Sword

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 10

Uncommon Silver Chi Style

Eight Weapons of the Gods stand impaled in the blue stone outside the Cold Fortress of Only Six Devils. Traditionally, they are seized by challengers for rulership of the city. Without exception, it is the Iron Shadow Warlord who returns them to their vigil, bearing no weapon of his own, but with black ice evaporating from his hands.

The Wulin lusts for this style, forged from the infinite patient cruelty of the Iron Shadow Warlord's yin, a style for which he disdains the use of his many God-Weapons. Yet there is no known technique manual, no society of sifu, only a select and secretive brotherhood of Xia mercenary captains who have pleased the master of the Cold Fortress, and can summon the Yin Ice Sword.

Signature: This style is best known for the cruel swords of black ice that manifest in its practitioners' hands. Few know that the style may be used with any sword – the black ice sheathes the weapon it enhances, rendering it indistinguishable from the true yin blades.

Type: Artful (Swords Only)

Default Critical Success: **Disorient** or **Maim**.

I: Frost Blade (1 point). The signature technique of the style, Frost Blade creates a sword of black ice in the warrior's hand. The weapon's appearance largely matches its wielder's preferences, but invariably strikes onlookers as being exceptionally cruel.

- You are considered to be equipped with a two handed sword with Speed +0, Strike +15, Damage +15. You may describe the blade as being one handed, but may not use your off hand while this technique is active. This sword may be disarmed or damaged as if it were a normal weapon, but vanishes at the end of this technique's duration. If you activate this technique again on the following turn, you are creating a new sword, but you don't have to describe it vanishing and reappearing – you may treat it as the same weapon for aesthetic purposes.
- On any attack with this weapon, if you successfully cause damage, your opponent is Chilled.
 - Duration: One Round.
 - Flaw: Too Much Yin Weakness.** On your initiative, if you do not spend two Free Actions on actively promoting your yang

(tactically useless exercise, indulging in passions etc), you suffer a one point Attribute Reduction to your Speed, until your initiative in the following round. This weakness is ignored while you are suffering the Burning combat effect.

2: Rimed Edge (2 points). Yin is not swift, but its economy of motion achieves much with a single stroke! When using this technique, a trail of ice follows your attack, cutting into your target like a second sword blow, and chilling the fires of their heart.

- Make a Secondary Attack at the end of the Round.
- On your Secondary Attack, if you hit and successfully cause damage, your opponent contracts a **Minor Too Much Yin Weakness**. On their initiative, if they do not spend two Free Actions on actively promoting their yang (tactically useless exercise, indulging in passions etc), they suffer a cumulative one point reduction to Speed (maximum 2 points). This weakness is ignored while they are suffering the Burning combat effect. The condition persists until the damage from this attack has been healed.
- Flaw: Same Target.** Your Secondary Attack must target the same opponent as your normal attack on this round.
- Channel: 2 Crimson.** Use this technique next round without additional Chi cost.

3: Icy Wind Cuts Through (3 points). Many speculate that there is a hidden, calculating cunning to the Iron Shadow Warlord. All who have witnessed this technique, however, can testify to his unrelenting power, which has no more subtlety than a blizzard.

- Apply a –10 modifier to your opponent's armor.
- Add 5 bonus dice damage on a successful hit.

4: Cold Sky Weapon (4 points). Visually, there is little to distinguish this technique from Frost Blade. However, opponents of the Yin Ice Sword warrior know the difference instinctively – where one is the shock of a sudden frost, the other is the dread of overwhelming winter covering the earth.

- You are considered to be equipped with a two-handed sword with Speed +10, Strike +15, Damage +15. This sword functions as described for Technique 1 (Frost Blade).
- On any attack with this weapon, if you successfully cause damage, your opponent is Chilled.
- Duration: Investment. This technique remains in effect as long as you reduce your Silver Chi rating by 2.
- Flaw: Too Much Yin Weakness.** As described in Technique 1 (Frost Blade).

5: Heart Chilling Sword (5 points). Many warriors fight as if they were raging fires, burning their own chi with spectacular displays of prowess, and relying on their breath to survive. With perfect precision, the Yin Ice Sword master cuts the very warmth from the air, and



the hot blood from their opponent's body – their heart shudders as it pumps nothing, their lungs spasm as they inhale nothing but black ice smoke!

- Your opponent loses their breath in all five colors of chi for this round if you successfully hit.
- If you hit and successfully cause damage, your opponent is afflicted with a Major Dying Weakness causing Loss of Breath until the damage inflicted by your attack is healed. Note that this is not the same as being knocked into Dying by damage, and causes no additional damage, but your opponent should act as if it were so if they want to breathe in any Chi!
- **Flaw: Stifled Air.** Lose your breath in one color of Chi this round. You must choose Crimson if it is available.

6: Ultimate Soul-Freezing Blade (10 points: 6 Silver + 4 Any). When the Iron Shadow Warlord is challenged for the rule of Xia, it is not uncommon to shortly thereafter hear a scream that cuts through even the chaotic noise of Only Six Devils, chilling the hearts of an entire city! It is said that there is a hall within the Cold Fortress lined with grim reminders of the victims of this technique – their ghosts, lifted from their bodies and frozen solid by a cruel sweep of the Warlord's blade!

- Double result dice from your attack for the purpose of damage.
- If you hit and successfully cause damage, your opponent suffers chi flow loss in all five colors of chi until the damage from this attack is healed.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** you receive a free *Yin Ice Sword* skill level equal to the highest technique level you've learned.
- 5 **Fortune:** You are a member of the Yin Blizzard Wolves, the society of elite Xia mercenary captains trained by the Iron Shadow Warlord. You receive a 3 point Affiliation with the Yin Blizzard Wolves, and are considered to have Status 4 in Xia. You must have been a Xia mercenary captain at some point in your history.
- 2 **Victory:** If you are a member of the Yin Blizzard Wolves, once per game, having somehow convinced the Iron Shadow Warlord that you were once his student (surprisingly difficult!), he will give any one order of your choice to the Governor of Only Six Devils. The Governor will attempt to fulfil the order to the best of his ability.
- 5 **Family Curse:** You sacrificed a family weapon in order to be trained in the Yin Ice Sword, infuriating the ghosts of your ancestors.

-5: This is your first or second Disadvantage.

Yin Ice Sword

Uncommon Silver Style (Artful (Sword Only))

2 Restrictions: +2 Maneuver Points

Critical Successes – Disorient or Maim

1.) Frost Blade (3 +I +2) Flaw: Too Much Yin

III – Living Weapon*

II - Duration

I - Chilling (Color Match)

2.) Rimed Edge (4 +I +I) Flaw: Same Target

III – Secondary Attack

III – Spirit-Injuring Attack (Minor Too Much Yin Weakness, Speed attribute weakness) (Color Match)

* Channel

3.) Icy Wind Cuts Through (5 +I)

II – Penetration (Perfect) (Color Match)

IV – Staggering

4.) Cold Sky Weapon (6 +I +I +2) Bonus Point, Flaw: Too Much Yin

IV – Living Weapon*

V – Chi Investment

I – Chilling (Color Match)

5.) Heart Cutting Sword (7 +I +I +I) Bonus Point, Flaw: Stifled Air

VI – Spirit Injuring Attack (Major Dying Weakness, Loss of Breath) (Color Match)

IV – Perfect Breath Loss

6.) Ultimate Soul-Freezing Blade (12)

VII – Profound Chi Flow Loss

V – Indomitable

* The use of these maneuvers represents a unique extension to the core Million Style Manual maneuvers in order to suit the style in question. They are an example of the sort of thing that would normally require Sage approval, and should not be relied upon as a precedent.



Rare Kung Fu Styles

Armor of the Gods

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 20

Rare Gold Chi Style

Chang Chio knew potent Daoist secrets, and had one million Yellow Turbans – he didn't fear the Han! But faced with Heart Moves the Blade, One Man Legion, Wind Sweeping Away Clouds and Limitless Freedom, a prudent man shows respect to such mastery. In order to fulfill his Prediction of Great Peace, Chio devised a style capable of withstanding the ferocity of the Four Clans, claiming that its potency was a sure sign of Heaven's favor!

Signature: When a technique of this style is invoked, golden characters spelling out passages from the I Ching and Classic of Great Peace orbit the warrior. The enemy's attacks are resisted by these characters, which rearrange themselves into a stinging rebuke!

Type: Artful/Brutal

Default Critical Success: **Disarm** or **Down**.

1: White Clarity (5 points). Divinely inspired, the warrior's eyes shine brightly, and he sees the murderous intent in his enemies' hearts. His defenses predict their movements, and his righteousness shields him from harm!

- Add two bonus dice to your Blocks and Dodges.
- Add your Gold Chi Bonus as a modifier to your Armor.
- Duration: Rank level in Rounds.
- **Flaw: Quote the Classics.** The character must quote from the Book of Great Peace while activating this technique. If the player makes up something appropriate, this doesn't consume an action – otherwise, their character spends a Free Action proselytizing.

2: Yellow Aurora (10 points: 6 Gold + 4 Any). A glorious light envelops the warrior – surely a sign of Heaven's benevolence! He plants his feet in the earth, turning aside even the most cunning blows without moving, striking back across the battlefield with golden chi-images of his weapon. Chang Chio claimed he united Heaven and Shen Zhou in his person when using this technique – the Clans called it hubris, but who could deny its power?

- Double your Chi Aura. The extra Chi Aura dice may only be used for opposing damage rolls.
- Add a bonus die to Inspire skill rolls.
- You may ignore any **Knockback** or **Downing** effects inflicted upon you.
- You may use your Melee or Fight skill to defend against Ranged attacks with your weapon's Strike modifier and do not take the normal Strike penalty.
- You may make Melee or Fight attacks at up to Short Range.
- Duration: Rank level in Rounds.
- **Flaw: Immobile.** You may not Cover Ground while this technique is in effect.
- **Channel: 2 Jade.** Extend the duration of this technique by one Round.

3: Golden Shield (15 points: 7 Gold + 8 Any). As Wood controls Earth, so it is that this ultimate Gold Chi technique is fuelled by the principle of Kuan. With the words of the Classic of Great Peace written across the sky with his own chi, the warrior selflessly pulls the most powerful attacks to himself to save his brothers. Showing such virtue, who would not feel they held the Mandate of Heaven?

- Add two bonus dice to your Blocks and Dodges.
- Add your Gold Chi bonus as a modifier to your Armor.
- Ignore your wound penalties while this technique is in effect.
- You may use your Melee or Fight skill to defend against Ranged attacks with your weapon's Strike modifier, and do not take the normal Strike penalty for doing so.
- All Ranged and Area attacks targeting you or any of your allies within your Favored Chi in yards are considered to have you and only you as their target. Area attacks so affected become single attacks targeting you.
- Duration: Favored Chi rating in Rounds.
- **Flaw: Hubris.** You must verbally challenge the strongest visible opponent on each Round this technique is in effect.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** You receive a free *Armor of the Gods* skill level equal to the highest technique you've learned.
- * Choose one of the following:
 - 0 You receive the Advantage **Mentor 5: Ao Lan**, having learned this style from the master of the Five Heavenly Towers Clan.
 - 5 **Onerous Obligation:** you have an Onerous Obligation to Ao Lan. If you do not take this disadvantage, consult your Sage to determine Ao Lan's reasons for teaching you.
 - (-5) This is your first or second Disadvantage
 - Or:
 - 0 **Treasure:** You managed to recover the *Armor of the Gods* technique manual, and have taught yourself the style thereby. However, all of Shen Zhou is convinced you've recovered the *Classic of Great Peace*, and trouble flocks to your door!
 - 3 **Victory:** Having been reduced to *Last Legs* or worse by forces loyal to a State, you ascend into the skies and are never seen again (you must retire your character). The State in question loses the mandate of Heaven, and crumbles within the year.



Death Fist

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 20

Rare Silver Chi Style

In Not A Fox Town, nobody dares to offer violence or discourtesy to a bride on her wedding day! Not only is it the height of uncivilized behavior, it risks the wrath of the Red-Day Witch! This ancient and spiteful martial artist descends from the jungle to inflict her terrifying Death Fist style on those that offend a bride – some say in an act of vengeance for her own ruined wedding day, hundreds of years earlier.

While in these times of chaos the Death Fist is rarely used against a worthy opponent, the fame of its cruelty and power have spread far and wide. Every Kung Fu style can defeat an opponent, but even Hell's Disasters can't claim to cause such suffering?

Signature: When attacking with this style, the warrior's fist or weapon leaves metallic streaks in the air. However, the style's true signature is the awful swelling of the target's body as their organs are suffused with the warrior's malicious intent, and threaten to burst!

Type: Brutal

Default Critical Success: **Terrifying** or **Downing**

1: Momentary Cessation (5 points). The kindest of the Death Fist techniques, this blow merely directs the warrior's malice directly to the lungs of the opponent, freezing them solid for a long and terrible moment!

- Add five bonus dice of damage on a successful hit.
- Apply a -10 modifier to your opponent's Armor.
- On a successful hit, your opponent loses their breath in all five colors of chi this round.
- **Channel: 2 Jade.** Use this technique again next round without cost.

2: Chains of the Grave (10 points: 6 Silver + 4 Any). Shen Zhou is a graveyard – no matter its beauty, the ten thousand battles of history have filled the earth with corpses! As the warrior strikes their opponent, those corpses unfailingly respond, and skeletal limbs burst from the earth to drag the unfortunate victim into death!

- Apply the Entangle critical effect to your opponent with a standard success.
- Your opponent suffers Chi Flow Loss in all five colors of chi while Entangled.

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- While Entangled, your opponent suffers a Major Fear Passion Weakness. They must spend their actions to scream in fear, rather than making rolls to escape the entanglement, or suffer a cumulative one point Wu Wei reduction (maximum 5 points) for each escape attempt.

3: Final Escape (15 points: 7 Silver + 8 Any). Some postulate that the Red-Day Witch sees her terrible Kung Fu as an act of mercy, catapulting the unworthy soul into the next life, where their children's sacrifices will bring them peace. It's possible there's some truth in those rumors - this powerful attack knocks the very ghost of the opponent out of the body, inspiring it to correct the wrongs of its life!

- Inflict the **Missing Body Part (Limb)** Disadvantage and an extra health level of damage on a standard success.
- Apply a -10 modifier to your opponent's Armor.
- If you hit and successfully cause damage, your opponent is afflicted with a Major Dying Weakness causing Loss of Breath until the damage inflicted by your attack is healed. Note that this is not the same as being knocked into Dying by damage, and causes no additional damage, but your opponent should act as if it were so if they want to breathe in any chi!
- If you hit and successfully cause damage, your opponent is afflicted with a Major Xia Inspiration Weakness. This requires them to use their action each round to describe their ghost righting the wrongs of their life (apologizing to allies, writing poems to wronged children etc), or suffer a cumulative one point Wu Wei reduction (maximum five points) for each action. This condition lasts until the damage inflicted by your attack is healed. Alternately, the player of the afflicted character may voluntarily declare their character to have died. If this option is chosen, their ghost's efforts to make things right will automatically succeed.

4: Ultimate Organ-Shattering Strike (20 points: 8 Silver + 12 Any). The use of this technique implies great malice on the part of the Death Fist master, for even the arts of the Hell Clan cannot cause such agony. With but a touch, the body of the victim floods with poison, they vomit up spleen and liver, and their lungs, stomach and gallbladder burst out of their torso! It is said that the poor victim cannot hope to walk more than five paces before expiring – this technique is hence also known as the “Five Pace, Five Organ Doom”.

- Your opponent must subtract 2 dice from any attempt to Block or Dodge this attack.
- Inflict the *Terrifying* and *Poison* Combat Effects on a standard success
 - **Shattered Liver and Gallbladder:** While the victim remains

poisoned, they suffer a Major Wood System Weakness. They must act as if blind, or suffer a cumulative one point Might reduction (maximum 5 points) for each incidence of seeing.

- **Shattered Lungs:** While the victim remains poisoned, they suffer a Major Metal System Weakness. They must forgo their Hardiness roll to resist the poison, or suffer Loss of Breath in all five colors of chi for the round.
- **Shattered Spleen and Stomach:** upon being hit by an attack enhanced with this technique, the victim is afflicted with a Major Water System Weakness, with a Recovery 40, Duration I and an Interval of One Story. The victim must withdraw from battle and hide themselves away, refusing contact and food, or suffer a cumulative 1 point Presence reduction (maximum 1 point) per infraction.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** You receive a free *Death Fist* skill level equal to the highest technique you've learned.
- * Choose one of the following:
 - 0 **Fortune:** You receive the **Mentor 5: Red-Day Witch** Advantage, having been received into the Death Fist tradition as a man.

Or:
 - 0 **Victory:** You are received into the tradition as a woman, and gain no assistance other than Kung Fu training. At a later date, having married a master of the *Righteous Thieving Rebel* style, you heal the breach between the traditions, successfully forming your own clan.
 - 2 **Victory:** Once per game, having publicly subjected an appropriate victim to your Death Fist, you terrify a region into following a tradition of your choice. You may set a single Quality of a State sized region to whatever value you please.
 - 5 **Unwholesome:** The potential for infinite cruelty that lurks within you is obvious to the keen-eyed!

-5: If this is your first or second Disadvantage.



Death Fist

Rare Silver Style (Brutal)

I Restriction: +I Maneuver Point

Default Criticals: Terrifying, Downing

1.) Momentary Cessation (8 +I +I)

IV – Perfect Breath Loss

II – Perfect Penetration (Color Match)

IV – Powerful Blow - Staggering

* Channel

2.) Chains of the Grave (13 +I)

V – Major Chi Condition (Color Match)

VI – Perfect Chi Flow Loss

III – Entangle (Standard Success)

3.) Final Escape (18 +I)

VI – Horrific Strike

II – Quality Penetration (Color Match)

VI – Major Dying Condition

V – Major Chi Condition

4.) Ultimate Organ Shattering Strike (23 +I)

IV – Major Combat Effect: *Poison*, Standard success

V – Major Chi Condition (Color Match)

V – Major Chi Condition

V – Major Chi Condition

III – Perfect Pressure

II – Lesser Combat Effect: *Terrifying*, Standard Success

“I sent my armour into the desert. I entombed my swords and fought with blades of glass! Yet none could touch me – my life was wasted, and I must die.” Dugu Sword Devil stood sombrely, accepting his failure at last.

“Perhaps if you were truly devilish, instead of just having the name? Heaven would have to send a second Huangti!”

Sword Devil contemplated the proposal, but considered it unlikely – he’d just cause Thoughtless Wen needless suffering! Wordlessly, he seized the convenient blizzard and carved his secrets into the mountainside. If nothing else, perhaps his legacy would know the defeat he craved.

(Discussion)

Of all the great warriors that have graced the Wulin, few are so tragically neglected by the mythic history of Shen Zhou as *Dugu Sword Devil* – in his time, he was unsurpassed, but it was an era in which the Wulin was anaemic. His thousandfold excellencies were wasted without a true opponent! He left no tradition behind, and few legends – if any were to decipher the secrets of his mountain tomb, the Wulin would be stunned by the emergence of his forgotten power!

Dugu Four Ultimates is a relentlessly aggressive style, seeking to smash not only the weapons of its opponents, but to “break” their fighting style. Its techniques have a pure warrior spirit – despite Dugu’s preference for swords, his Ultimates are mighty with any weapon!



Dugu Four Ultimates

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 15

Rare Crimson Chi Style

(Story)

On the snowy mountain slope, the tortoise-shell did not merely crack as the poker touched it, but shattered.

“It’s no good!” the girl sighed and slumped into the snow. “Huangti and Chi You have fallen into history, and dynasties will rise and fall many times before Dominion or the Heroes of Chaos rise! I can’t predict an opponent worthy of you – Shen Zhou has no challenge for the Lonely Sword Devil.”

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Signature: Flashy chi effects or distinctive forms are not the way of this style – the signature of *Dugu Four Ultimates* is the respect paid to its wielder by Shen Zhou itself. Trees and grass seem to bow to the warrior, the wind stills courteously, and peasants instinctively kowtow! Only the most astute of sages will recognise the style itself, but it's obvious to everyone that they stand in the presence of a master with accomplishments as high as the clouds!

Type: Artful/Brutal

Default Critical Success: **Disarm** or **Disorient**

I: Missile Breaking Stance (5 points). The excellency of even the least understanding of the Lonely Sword Devil's style is astounding. Numbers are nothing to them, they can deflect ten thousand knives as easily as they would drops of rain! Conquering distance, they sternly rebuke foes dishonourable enough to use a bow!

- You may block Ranged attacks without penalty, using your weapon's Strike. You may defend normally against attacks that would otherwise be style rolls. If you successfully defend against an Area Attack, you have deflected it for all targets, who are considered to have not been attacked.
- You may make your normal Fight or Melee attacks against targets at up to Short Range.
- You may inflict the Reply combat effect on a critical success on a block roll. You may only Reply against attackers within Short Range.
- Duration: One Round.
- **Channel: 2 White Chi.** Extend the duration of this technique by one Round.
- **Flaw: Seeking-A-Loss.** After activating this technique, you are afflicted with a Major Loss-Seeking Weakness chi condition while this technique is active. If you flow dice from the river into a block roll, you lose your breath in Crimson and White chi.
- **Flaw: Weakened Protective Air.** you must spend one die of chi aura to activate this technique.

2: Blade Breaking Stance (10 points: 6 Crimson + 4 Any). Having entombed his swords and taken to wielding Shen Zhou as his weapon, Dugu Sword Devil grew ashamed of the Wulin's obsessive dependence on weapons. In this Time of Chaos, many search for particularly famed God Weapons in vain – Dugu smashed them an age ago!

- Your attacks gain *Equipment Shattering (Divine)*.
- Double result dice for the purpose of damage.
 - Gain a Secondary Attack
 - Duration: one round.

- **Flaw: Seeking-A-Loss.** after activating this technique, you are afflicted with a Major Loss-Seeking Weakness chi condition while this technique is active. If you flow dice from the river into a block roll, you lose your breath in Crimson and White chi.

3: General Index Stance (15 points: 7 Crimson + 8 Any). When this technique is activated, Shen Zhou donates itself as the warrior's weapon – at a gesture, ten thousand swords seem to strike from the grass! If the warrior pours his teapot, the stream of tea could deflect Tiger Soul or Heaven's Crystal! This is fundamentally an equalising technique – the world donates as much power as is required, no more.

- On activating this charm, and at the start of each subsequent round, select a weapon wielded by an opponent in the same scene. Your fists and feet are considered to be Artful/Brutal weapons with Speed, Strike and Damage equal to those of the weapon you selected. They count as fists, feet and the weapon selected for the purpose of compatibility with kung fu.
- Double result dice for the purpose of damage.
- Relentless (Attack).
- Duration: Favored Chi rating in rounds.
- **Flaw: Unburdened Perfection.** You may not have a weapon on your person while using this technique. You may and must discard weapons as a free action while this technique is active.

4: Energy Breaking Stance (20 points: 8 Crimson + 12 Any). This potent strike is never executed in the same fashion twice – it is always improvised, crafted to shatter the stances of the warrior's opponents! The Lonely Sword Devil never executed this move against more than one opponent at once, but he longed for a world in which many strong fighters might attack him, and built the technique to answer such a challenge.

- Your attack is an Area Attacks centered on yourself with a radius of twice your Favored Chi rating.
- Your attack is considered a style roll. It cannot be defended against except by techniques that explicitly defend against attacks made as style rolls (also known as Unparalleled Attacks), such as Missile Breaking Stance.
- If you successfully hit and cause damage, you inflict a *Major Broken Stance Weakness* on your opponent. Choose a style of kung-fu. If your opponent uses a technique of that style, they suffer a cumulative one point Wu Wei reduction (maximum five points). This condition lasts until all damage from this attack has been healed.
- If you successfully hit and cause damage, your opponent suffers *Chi Flow Loss* in all five colours until the damage from this attack is healed.
- Inflict the *Disorienting* combat effect on a successful hit.



- Double result dice for the purpose of dispatching minions.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** You receive a free *Dugu Four Ultimates* skill level equal to the highest technique you've learned.
- 5 **Victory:** Having triumphed over the terrible challenges of the mountain, you decipher its secrets and are able to learn the *Dugu Four Ultimates* style from this large and immobile technique manual. The surviving guardians of the mountain swear to serve you – gain the **Followers 5** Advantage to represent these 15 Faction-level fighters.
- 10 **Fortune:** You contract a permanent *Major Ba Inspiration Hyperactivity*. Whenever you've gone out of your way to put yourself in a position whereby you stand a real chance of defeat, gain two points of Speed, two points of Presence, and one point of Wu Wei.
- 5 **Egotistical:** Dugu Sword Devil could say without ego that he was the greatest swordsman alive! When you say it in the Time of Chaos, it doesn't play quite as well.
- 5: If this is your first or second Disadvantage.



Righteous Thieving Rebel

(A System Topic)

Destiny Cost: 20

Rare Jade Chi Style

The number one position on the Top Ten Thieves List is permanently reserved for the Thrice-Handsome Fox Prince, tireless foe of Ying Zheng and champion of the peasants! The Fox Prince was never able to defeat the first Emperor, but his legend lives throughout Shen Zhou for his epic deeds of thievery (stealing a garden from Heaven itself!) and his invincible sword skills. Few know, however,

that the Prince's most potent style has been passed down even to the present day.

The few warriors who keep the Fox Prince's martial tradition alive show astounding ability, effortlessly seizing their foes' weapons, and protecting their allies from even the most savage assaults!

Signature: When this style is in use, the warrior appears to be a blur of motion, leaping, twisting and diving to seize weapons and deflect assaults. It is as if the real martial artist is surrounded by one hundred distorted images of himself!

Type: Artful

Default Critical Success: Embarrassing or Downing

I: Proper Property Reclaiming Form (5 points). The humane man recognises that property is an illusion – the claim of ownership is entirely illusory! The superior man demonstrates this principle for the edification of his opponents and allies alike, showing how transitory the act of wielding a weapon can be...

- Your attacks are considered style rolls. They cannot be defended against except by techniques that explicitly defend against attacks made as style rolls (also known as Unparalleled Attacks), such as Benevolent Rebellion Defense.
- Inflict the Disarm combat effect on your opponent with a successful hit.
- You may summon any unsecured weapon within Favored Chi yards to your hands with a Free Action.
- Duration: One Round.
- **Channel:** 2 *Crimson*. Extend the duration of this technique by one Round.
- **Flaw:** *Expended Fortune*. This technique costs one joss to activate.

2: Benevolent Rebellion Defense (10 points: 6 Jade + 4 Any). The Thrice-Handsome Fox Prince earned fame not for Si but Kuan – he protected the peasants and stole for the good of others! Emulating his example, the warrior braves even the most horrific of attacks in order to shield his allies, and draws strength from his own virtuous conduct.

- You may block Ranged attacks without penalty, using your weapon's Strike. You may defend normally against attacks that would otherwise be style rolls. If you successfully defend against an Area Attack, you have deflected it for all targets, who are considered to have not been attacked.
- Add your Jade Chi bonus as a modifier to Lift rolls.
- Duration: Favored Chi in rounds.



3: Magnificent Army-Opposing Stance (15 points: 7 Jade + 8 Any). The Fox Prince's survival against the merciless forces of Ying Zheng relied on this magnificent power – the ability to disarm even an army! With this technique, it seems that the scoundrel is everywhere, snatching any weapon not nailed down!

- Your attacks are Area Attacks centered on yourself with a radius of twice your Favored Chi rating.
- Your attacks are considered style rolls. They cannot be defended against except by techniques that explicitly defend against attacks made as style rolls (also known as Unparalleled Attacks), such as Altruistic Vagrant Stance.
- Inflict the Disarm combat effect on your opponent with a successful hit.
- You may at any time in the round, summon an unsecured weapon to you from within twice your Favored Chi rating in yards. You may ready the weapon, secure it on or near your person, or drop it at your feet, without using an action.
- Double your Chi Aura while this technique is active. Extra Chi Aura dice may only be used to oppose damage rolls.
- Duration: One Round
- Flaw: Expended Fortune. You must spend one joss to activate this technique.

DESTINY COST

- * **Bonus:** You receive a free *Righteous Thieving Rebel* skill level equal to the highest technique you've learned.
- * **Bonus:** Righteous Thieving Rebel is taught only to the greatest of thieves when they have demonstrated sufficient Kuan towards the people of Shen Zhou. Gain the **Affiliation 2: Fox Prince Lineage** and **Friends 3** (Peasants of Shen Zhou) Advantages.
- 2 **Victory:** The memory of the Fox Prince is still strong in the nations through which the Yellow River flows. Having made a reasonable attempt to escape the forces of the ruler of any such state, you may declare that your escape attempt is automatically successful due to the assistance of the common people.
- 3 **Fortune:** You obtain the *Duplicitous Fox Technique*. This allows you to roll Initiative instead of Tactics when taking the Block action in the Great Game. Once per round, you may use that Initiative roll to make the Blocked stone arrive at a location, as if you had set it in motion, and were rolling to make it arrive.
- 5 **Hunted:** Ying Zheng's Legalist tradition advises execution for any who emulate the Fox Prince; therefore all those in power will automatically *Hunt* someone known to pursue the Fox Prince's ultimate style – for there are Legalists in every court in the Land of the Gods!

-5: If this is your first or second Disadvantage.

Formless Techniques

Ghost Finger

A truly devious and foul technique, it was devised by the 'Destroyer Cleric', a ranking priest of the West Doctrine Clan that crossed into Shen Zhou many years ago. By channeling corrupt silver chi through the body, it allows the warrior to momentarily take on the aspect of a ghost, chilling the air, sliding effortlessly through their opponent's armor, and imparting the infinite yin of death to their victim!

Type: Brutal (Unarmed Only)

- Apply a -15 modifier to your opponent's Armor;
- A successful hit results in the target's Chi being Locked – unable to be spend any Chi whatsoever for three rounds, including the round the attack hits!
- If you hit and successfully cause damage, your opponent contracts a *Minor Too Much Yin Weakness*. On their initiative, if they do not spend two Free Actions on actively promoting their yang (tactically useless exercise, indulging in passions etc), they suffer a cumulative one point reduction to Speed (maximum 2 points). This weakness is ignored while they are suffering the Burning combat effect. The condition persists until the damage from this attack has been healed.
- **Flaw: Stifled Air** (Crimson Chi Breath is lost in for the round in which this technique is used)

Ghost Finger is featured on the *West Doctrine Clan Lore*, which players or Sages interested in using the technique are encouraged to create.

Ghost Finger

Formless Level 3 Silver Technique (3 points)

Corrupt technique (+4 points)

1-point Flaw (*Stifled Air*). (+1 point)

Color Match (+1 point)

Total: [3 +4 +1 +1] = 9 Maneuver Points.

Chi Cost: 2 Silver + 1 Demon

III Flawless Penetration (*Color Match*)

III Quality Venom (*Common*, Lethality 18, Potency 3-5)

III Minor Chi Condition

Lion's Roar

Brought by the Mysterious Gold Lioness from Persia, this technique was her devastating opening salvo, that both battered her opponents and let them know exactly what they were facing – truly a fearsome woman, who never let anyone forget just how formidable she truly was. Big and loud and boisterous, yet always serving the common folk, she was a hero to all until she was lost in battle in the Northern Desert. Perhaps she yet lives – and would be willing to teach this technique!

Type: Brutal (Unarmed Only)

- Your attack is an Area Attack with a radius of twice your Favored Chi rating, centered on yourself.
- Your attack is made with the Inspire skill, and may only be opposed with the Confidence skill. This attack does not use a weapon, and has no Speed, Strike or Damage modifiers.
- Inflict the Stun combat effect on a standard success.
- Add 3 bonus damage dice.
- Apply your Gold Chi bonus as a modifier to your attack roll.
- **Flaw: Immobile.** User may not Cover Ground this round.

Lion's Roar is featured on the *Secrets of the Silk Road Lore*, which players or Sages interested in using the technique are encouraged to create.

Lion's Roar

Formless Level 6 Gold Technique (10 points)

2-point Flaw (*Immobile*) (+2 points)

Color Match (+1 point)

Total: [10 +2 +1] = 13 Maneuver Points.

Cost: 6 Gold + 4 Any

III – Area Attack (*Color Match*)

III – Stun (Standard Success Combat Effect)

III – Skill Substitution

II – Str. of Chi (Attack)

II – Injuring

Toad Style

This technique was devised by a most deadly and baneful of men – a heterodox martial artist who committed the sin of betraying not just one clan but two! The nefarious Lu Gaofeng, the dreaded Hunchback of the West, was supposedly defeated by being slashed open and driven off a cliff – but his body was never found!

Type: Brutal (Unarmed Only)

- Add your Jade Chi bonus as a modifier to your next Athletics roll. This explicitly may benefit the roll to Cover Ground or jump required by the Furious Charge flaw below.
- For this attack, your unarmed weapons are considered to have Speed +0, Strike +15, Damage +15
- Whatever the martial artist strikes suffers the attack as a Breaking Things roll; if a person, then all of their equipment must be checked for breakage.
- If you hit and successfully cause damage, your opponent, the subject suffers the Existence-Hating Radiance; a standard success inflicts a Minor case of the Radiance, but a Critical Success inflicts a Major case of the Rot of the Void. See **Weapons of the Gods**, page 370.
- Add 2 bonus damage dice.
- Inflict the Knockback combat effect on a standard success.
- **Flaw: Expended Fortune** (User must spend a point of Joss to invoke this technique.)
- **Flaw: Furious Charge:** The attack portion of this technique does not function unless you have moved at least 20 yards by jumping or Covering Ground directly towards the target immediately before launching the attack.

Toad Style is featured on the *Top Ten Traitors Lore*, which players or Sages interested in using the technique are encouraged to create.

Toad Style

Formless Level 5 Jade Technique (5 points)

Corrupt technique (+4 points)

2-point Flaw (*Furious Charge*) (+2 points)

3-point Flaw (*Expended Fortune*) (+3 points)

Color Match (+1 point)

Total: [5 +4 +5 +1] = 15 Maneuver Points.

Brutal Only

Cost: 4 Jade + 1 Demon Chi

VII – Obliteration

III – Living Weapon (*Color Match*)

II – Powerful Blow (Battering)

II – Knockback (Standard Success)

I – Strength of Chi (Athletics)

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Building the Battlefield:

Thrashing Minister City

Application of Principles

or

So You Want to Change the City?

Turn to this section for an example of the reasoning process involved in developing a battlefield.

This section also contains example writeups of the various Actors and commanders in Thrashing Minister City at differing levels of detail.

Walkthrough

Herein find an example development process for a battlefield of the Great Game — specifically, the battlefield that is *Thrashing Minister*. We recommend that you familiarize yourself with the city as described in Chapter I before reading this example (the specific parts of Thrashing Minister highlighted here are chosen for their aptness to the mechanic discussed; they're not self-explanatory).

Read this section for insights into how the **Weapons of the Gods Companion** thinks you'll be using this stuff.

Walk through this section, imitating the process step by step, to build your own battlefields.

Battlefield Design

Choosing the Scale

First you must pick the scale for the battlefield. Since Local battlefields cover cities, we choose to make Thrashing Minister City a relatively large Local battlefield.

Looking at Local Battlefields, pg. 124, we note that fast rounds should last one hour and slow rounds one full week.

Sketching a Map

Second you must sketch the battlefield. Here we'll use the Thrashing Minister map on pg. 18.

Identifying Regions

Third you must pick out areas that would make good regions. The rest of the map becomes routes.

We note immediately that Thrashing Minister is highly developed, containing a lot more data than your battlefields probably will — specifically, because Thrashing Minister City contains huge amounts of stuff your group probably won't use, while your battlefields will only contain stuff your group uses.

We also note that the lore set on Thrashing Minister makes it pretty clear what's important in the main city:

- The Willows Districts
- Heaven and Earth City
- Phoenix Nest
- Peaceful Residence
- Jade Garden
- The Administrative Districts
- Green District
- Wolf District

Here we pause to note two things. First, we *could* break the two Willow Districts and the two administrative Districts into multiple regions. We don't, for the same reason that they don't have independent lores. We're not expecting people to do much in play that affects just one of the Willow Districts or just one of the administrative Districts. If that changes, we can split the regions in half. Second, we note that these are pretty big, each covering a lot more than 1/40 of the basic map. That's okay — while smaller regions are preferable, it's not worth distorting the map to make them so.



We note that there are two portions of the city left over. We make them routes:

- **West Park Sector and Gardens Route**
- **East Park Sector and Gardens Route**

Now we turn our attention to the hidden city. We don't want to lump it together into a single region — that would make it harder to have power struggles that the rest of the city never sees. Conversely, we don't want to cut it so fine that *occupying* the hidden city with troops becomes unrealistically difficult.

Here we use a trick that you can also use — we split the Hidden City into regions that will be *interesting* to control with stones. These are:

- **The Hidden City** (everything on the city side of the moat)
- **The Eunuch Palace**
- **The Concubine Palace** (including playground, school, and a tower)
- **The Poison Garden** (including the Lab, the King's Quarters, and the Curse Masters' Lair).

We don't make a separate region for controlling the Kitchens or the Archery Pavilion just yet. We can certainly imagine that a Wulin cook might build a power base in the palace kitchens, but there's no particular reason to think that it will happen.

We stare at the Royal Reception Hall for a while. You don't have to do that, but it's all right if you do. Basically, we're not sure whether it'll be an interesting region in play. We wind up picking the option that involves the least commitment — we separate it out as a route, which can later become a region, but we don't declare it a region.

Then we chop up the rest of the bits of the Hidden City/Palaces area into routes based on what makes sense to us —

- **Royal Reception Hall Route** (includes the bridge)
- **Moat Route** (includes the moat)
- **Southwest Corner Route** (includes the Ancestral Hall and a tower)
 - **Eastern Route** (includes two towers, the Hall of Mental Cultivation, the Gaming Parlor, the Archery Pavilion, the Dining Hall, and the Kitchens)

Here's something you should note — it's useful to leave some room around the edges of your battlefield so that if the game expands out of the core regions you don't have to use the elephant board.

Accordingly we look outside the city and mark the following extra regions and routes —

- Farmland Region
- Northern Road Route
- Everything Else Route

Summing it up, we note that we've built 13 regions and 8 routes. Nine of the regions are large; four are sized for control by a single stone.

Identifying Places of Interest

Fourth you should mark down a few places of particular interest.

We have no idea what your players will care about so we choose some things we care about. You can do this, too, if your players are mysterious and don't declare their intentions in advance. We choose:

- the **Dong Clan Headquarters**,
- the **Nan Clan Headquarters**,
- the **Dragon Inn**,
- the **Lustrous Jade Brothel**,
- the **Labyrinthine Market**,
- the **Peaceful Radiance Stage**, and
- the **Buddhist monastery**.

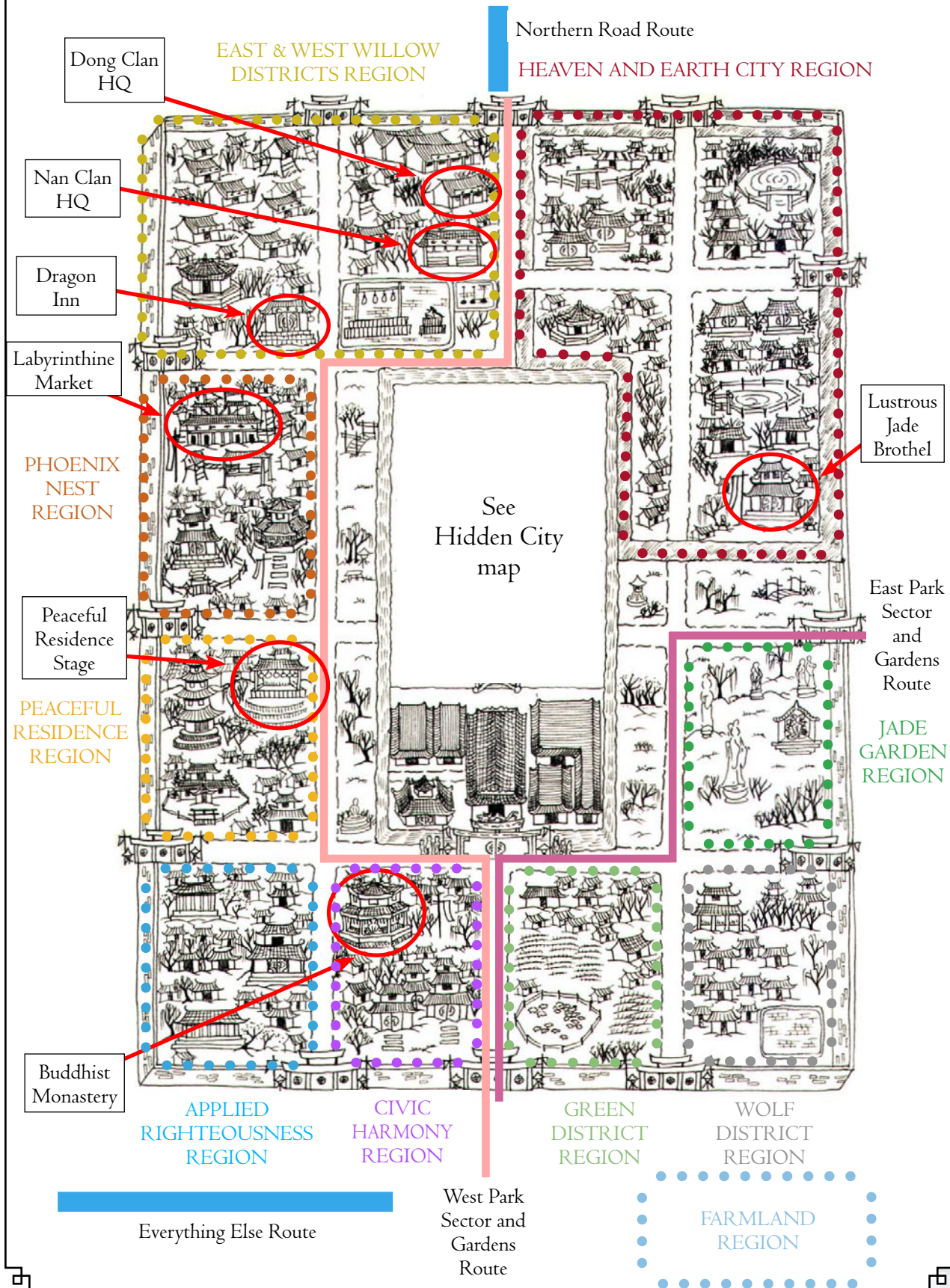
And we mark these on the map.

The Elephant Board

Fifth, you should note the existence of the elephant board.

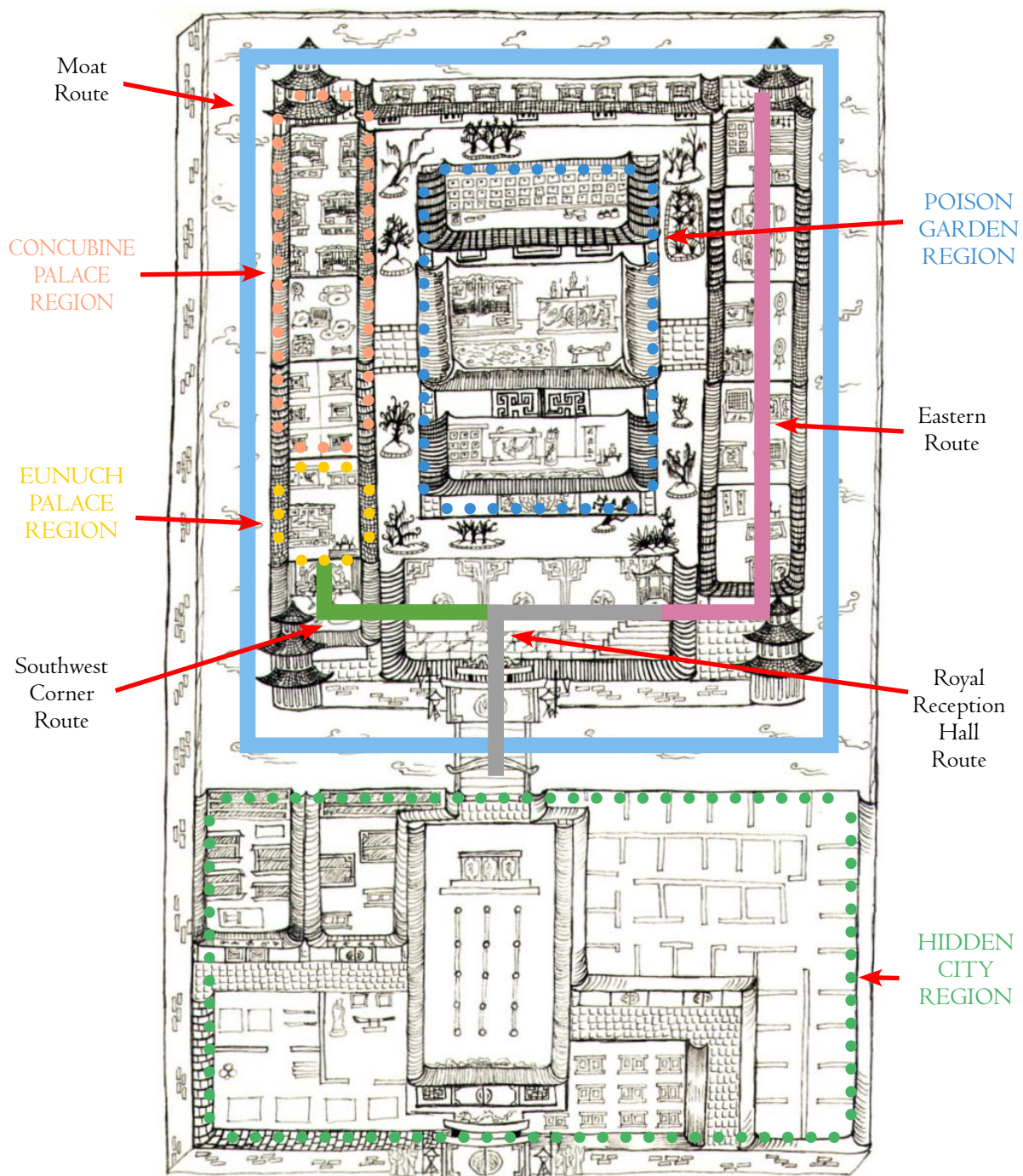
We don't know exactly what we'll need on the elephant board right now — that depends on events in play. We set aside a space for it, and make a mental note that if things get complicated we'll use the relationship charts on pg. 47 and 51 as prototypical elephant boards.

Battlefield: Thrashing Minister City



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Battlefield: The Hidden City





Miscellany

The final step in battlefield design is filling in a few small details.

Pick a default difficulty for moving through regions and routes. We're going to assume Simple (15).

Pick movement difficulties for any regions or routes particularly difficult to move through. You can do this pretty much however you like. We mark the Willows Districts and Heaven and Earth City as Everyday (18) because they're crowded. You might wonder: why isn't Phoenix Nest crowded enough to slow down movement? And the answer is: there's no terribly deep reason, we just decided that it was on the other side of the Simple/Everyday line.

We mark the Royal Reception Hall Route, the Concubine Palace, and the Poison Garden as Moderate (20) to reduce the casual flow of money and soldiers in and out of these sanctums.

Finally we mark the Moat as Hard (30) to move stones through. It should probably be Legendary, but we're the kind of laissez-faire Sage who enjoys it when player characters catapult their armies across the wall to invade Yue Guan's Palaces.

Lastly, you can decide in advance what kinds of stones are good at controlling the larger regions on your map. We decide that it's easy to control the Willows Districts, Heaven and Earth City, and Phoenix Nest with Influence (money). We decide that it's easy to occupy Jade Garden or Wolf District with troops due to their layout. We decide that it's easy to control Jade Garden, Peaceful Residence, or the Administrative Districts with Order, due to their natures. Finally we decide that Will controls the Green District and the Farmland Region well because the farmers there are easily led.

Actors and Commanders

You have to specify the stone collections for all of the enemies that play against the characters in the Great Game. You can also design some of their possible allies.

Quick Picks

Here's some quick pick options for opponents at various power levels. These map to Power 1-5 if the whole organization is present; of course, since even the Power 8 Jin Empire can command a pitiful force in some distant outpost town, the mapping doesn't always hold up.

Pitiful: one Agenda stone, 4 Force, 2 Will or Influence, 1 Order or Chaos.

Weak: two Agenda stones, 6 Force, 4 Influence, 2 Will, 1 Order or Chaos.

Minor: three Agenda stones, 15 points of fighting stones (divided 7/5/3 to taste), 1-5 points of special stones.

Major: four Agenda stones, one to two Goal or Concept stones, one Planning stone, 20 points of fighting stones (divided 11/7/2 to taste), 2-7 points of special stones.

Deadly: five Agenda stones, one to three Goal or Concept stones, one Planning stone, 25-30 points of fighting stones, 4+ points of special stones, one Treasure stone.

General Technique

Here's the things you should do — in any order, really — when building someone's Great Game forces:

- Write down their possible Agenda stones.
- Write down any fighting or special stones that you definitely want them to have, eyeballing the stones' size.
- Give established groups Force, Influence, and Will based on their Membership, Resources, and Solidarity.
- Fill out fighting and special stones based on concept.
- Pick their power level.
- Fill out their fighting stones as appropriate to their power level.
- Give them some Order or Chaos as feels appropriate.
- Give them Goal, Concept, and Planning stones as feels appropriate.
- Record their Prestige.
- Record their important Skills.

Pick their Possible Agenda Stones

Choose how you want to express their Agenda in play. Break it down into bite-sized chunks: small, region-specific Agenda pieces. Then list those possibilities.

Example: Yue Guan

Yue Guan has an Agenda of “Establish himself as rightful Emperor of Shen Zhou.”

We can't break this down into clauses but we can break it down into individual, region-specific bullet points. These are the ones we're going to choose for his Agenda stones:

- Prosper.
- Rule.
- Keep the city a center of trade.
- Guard against the Jin Empire.
- Raise strong sons.

We also think up and discard the following ideas, which you could easily switch in to change Yue Guan's focus in your game:

- Keep a check on the concubines.
- Keep a check on the eunuchs.
- Watch everything that happens in the city.
- Demonstrate the qualities appropriate to the Emperor of Shen Zhou.
- Prove himself the legitimate ruler of Yang.
- Suppress the Falling Wren Society.

Notice that all of these are valid things for an unrighteous Yang King trying to establish himself as a possible Emperor to do.

We have to choose regions for the five Agenda stones we've picked. This is a stylistic choice — what we choose matters in play, but the only wrong choice is the choice you don't like. We assign them as follows:

- **Phoenix Nest Region:** “Prosper.”
- **Hidden City Region:** “Rule.”
- **Willows Districts Region:** “Keep the city a center of trade.”
- **Somewhere on the elephant board:** “Guard against the Jin Empire.”
- **Yue Yongwen:** “Raise strong sons.”

We've chosen to put the last Agenda stone on Yue Yongwen to make Yongwen's story more interesting. It's not really “right,” since the logical location is the Concubine Palace Region. However, it's more likely to lead to fun play this way, and that's what counts. You can do that sort of thing too!

Assign Stones Central to their Concept

Give antagonists the stones you want them to have to convey a certain effect or in-setting truth.

Example: Yue Guan

Yue Guan commands the Demon Alchemists. We want to represent this on the battlefield, so we create a I-point Treasure stone: “the Demon Alchemists.”

We pick a special power for this stone. Inspired by the rules for Demon Chi, we decide that the owner can exhaust the Demon Alchemists to fuel battle techniques as if the I-point Treasure stone were five points of any other kind of stone.

Give Established Groups Stones Appropriate to their Foundations

Conveniently, you can assign groups Force, Influence, and Will based on their Membership, Resources, and Solidarity.

If this is an important battlefield to that group, give them . . .

- points of Force equal to their Membership,
- points of Influence equal to their Resources,
- points of Will equal to their Solidarity.

If the battlefield is *sort of* important to the group, cut about 30% off of this.

If the battlefield isn't really that important, cut about 50% off of this.

If you think the result is too big, put some of it in reserve.

Example I: Yue Guan

Yue Guan represents the Kingdom of Yang. Thus, in his city, we assign him Will equal to that country's Solidarity (2 points), Force equal to its Membership (15 points), and Influence equal to its Resources (12 points).

Note that this means he needs at least five Agenda stones — we can see that his interests in the city range from north to south and east to west!

Example 2: The Falling Wren Society

We think that Thrashing Minister City is sort of important to the Falling Wren Society, so we're going to give them 70% of the power that their writeup offers them on their native battlefields — 7 points each of Will, Force, and Influence, instead of 10.



Fill out Stones Based on Concept

You can build your NPCs' collections of stones by reasoning about the world. The **Weapons of the Gods Companion** doesn't recommend this — it's more work than you need to do! But if you're the kind of Sage who likes to nail every stone down, you can do this sort of thing.

The basic tricks in your toolbox here are *comparison*, *listing*, and *character rules*.

You can use *comparison* to estimate how much power an NPC should have in comparison to organizations whose power level you know.

You can use *listing* to write down the various resources that an NPC has in character that would make sense as stones, and then pick a strength for them to taste.

You can use the rules found under *Starting Characters Out*, on pg. 127, to translate an NPC's resources into stones.

Example: The Masked Untouchables

We give Ni Baoyuan a Commander stone. We'll set his rank based on the players' power level, but for now we assume that he's 4th rank and has a level-2 Commander stone. Even though everyone in the Masked Untouchables is Wulin, Ni Baoyuan's the only one playing the Great Game; the other members of the group are Force.

We know that the Masked Untouchables have about 20 members.

We note that a PC with Followers 3 (20 people) could start out with a 2-point Force stone representing those followers.

We want to represent the fact that they're all Wulin, though. We decide to double their value — we make each 5-person team a point of Force, so that the Masked Untouchables command 4 I-point Force stones.

We can't imagine the Masked Untouchables using cash or titles to manipulate people, so we don't give them any Influence.

We want the Masked Untouchables to be a symbol of hope. We want to give them the power to inspire hope in two districts at once, so we give them 2 I-point Will stones called "**Legend of the Mask**." These aren't actually different from any other Will stones, but they have a cooler name.

Pick their Power Level

You can assign enemies a power level based on how tough you want them to be.

We're going to assume — and this isn't 100% true, but we recommend that you stick with this assumption when building enemies — that the number of Agenda stones an NPC has correlates with their power.

Based on that assumption, we scale power like so: **Local Power** is a number from 1 to 10. Each point comes with an Agenda stone and about seven points of fighting and special stones. This is more or less the same thing as the organization's Power (see pg. 57, **Weapons of the Gods**), except that where Power is a setting concept and is the same on all battlefields, Local Power is a mechanical term and it's relevant only on this particular battlefield.

If you want an enemy to be really powerful, give them a high Local Power. If you want an enemy to be wimpy, give them a low Local Power.

We generally write this as "(Enemy) is a level-X local power" because it reads better than "(Enemy) has Local Power X."

Example 1: Ming Lizhi

You'll see above that Ming Lizhi needs at least 20 points of stones for concept reasons. So he's at least a level-3 local power. We decide to make him tougher and make him a level-4 local power. He has four Agenda stones and up to 28 points of fighting and special stones! We will wind up not using two of the Agenda stones we picked out for him above.

Example 2: The Masked Untouchables

You'll see above that the Masked Untouchables have at least 6 points of stones. We decide to make them a level-1 local power, on the cusp or rising to level 2. The tipping point, if it happens, happens in play.

Fill out Fighting Stones Based on Power

Unless something terrible has just happened to an Actor or commander's forces, they should have 0-6 stones less than (Local Power * 7) points in stones:

Pitiful / level-1 local power — 1-7 points.

Weak / level-2 local power — 8-14 points.

Minor / level-3 local power — 15-21 points.

Major / level-4 local power — 22-28 points.

Deadly / level-5 local power — 29-35 points.

Note that the first five levels of local power correspond to the quick picks recommended earlier, so you can use the quick picks for reference at this stage.

You can lowball this a bit if you plan to assign lots of special stones — it's possible to have a Major antagonist with 16 points of fighting stones and 6 points of Order, for instance — but the lion's share of an enemy's stones are going to be fighting stones.

Example: The Masked Untouchables

The Masked Untouchables are a level-I local power with 6 points of fighting stones — that's perfect!

Give them Appropriate Order and Chaos

You need to assign Actors and commanders Order and Chaos stones. We recommend not putting too much brain-sweat into this — pick numbers based on one or two of the criteria below, and let the events in play tell you what, in the end, that means.

Here are some reasons to give a local power Order:

- You want it to be good for people when that local power dominates.
- That local power is orderly or harmonious.
- That local power is disciplined and rigorous.
- You want them to have defensive battle techniques that use Order.
- You want them to build infrastructure and spread peace and harmony.
- You want them to be more powerful but you can't justify more fighting stones.

Here are some reasons to give a local power Chaos:

- You want them to represent a chaotic, disorderly, corrupt, or disruptive influence.
- That local power is destructive and cruel.
- That local power is undisciplined and wild.
- You want them to have offensive battle techniques that use Chaos.
- You want them to innovate and bring new things to the world.
- You want them to be more powerful but you can't justify more fighting stones.

Remember not to give someone so much Order or Chaos that they become a higher-level local power than you want them to be.

Example I: Yue Guan

We note that Yue Guan does not encourage innovation, corruption, or destruction in the city of Thrashing Minister. He does have that side to him, but in the city, he brings only Order. We give him 5 points of **Order** and no **Chaos**.

Example 2: Wei Sushuang

As Kung Min and Kung Hu point out on pp. 181-182, **Weapons of the Gods**, concubines who want to put their son on the throne are chaotic in the eyes of Heaven. We assign Wei Sushuang a 1-point Chaos stone.

Give them Additional Necessary Stones

You need to assign your local powers a Planning stone if you want to make them maximally interesting and threatening opponents. In this case you should also choose battle techniques evocative of their plan or appropriate to their stones.

You need to assign your local powers Goal stones in the following cases:

- You want them to actively pursue something that's not an Agenda stone.
- They have some established resource (typically, fortifications) to defend.

In this case you should also pick the effects of the Goal stone.

You need to assign your local powers Concept stones in the following cases:

- You think it'd distinctly improve the game to do so.
- You want to make some aspect of their ideology very clear.

In this case it is useful but not necessary to plan out the effects of the Concept stone in advance.

Example: Yue Guan

We want to make Yue Guan an interesting and dangerous antagonist. We give him a Planning stone, "ring the city in plots within plots."

Looking over the list of techniques, *Seize the Initiative* seems obvious for a schemer.

We almost give Yue Guan the **Area Attack** technique, because he can strike throughout the city, but as an offensive technique, it's fueled by Chaos stones. Yue Guan's power in the city is that of Order, so we give him a more suitable extra attack technique — **Reply**. Yue Guan can exhaust stones to improve the Speed of his approach to battle; when someone attacks one of his stones and he successfully defends, he can exhaust an Order or Force stone to reply.

Yue Guan has three Goal stones in play in the standard Court Campaign:

- Find and acquire the Han seals,
- Find and kill Jin Cheng Di, and
- Prove himself the legitimate ruler of Yang.

We'll set the rewards for these in play, since it's up to both the Sage and circumstances just how difficult these things are.

Record their Prestige

Turn to Attack!, p. 92, and the subheading of Health. (p. 93). Record the local power's Prestige.

Example: Yue Guan

We've decided that Yue Guan is playing the Great Game in Thrashing Minister City personally. He has his army here. He has a large store of wealth here. He wields his stones in the city against his enemies — personally. This means that defeating him here, barring a Challenge or Goal that moves his forces elsewhere, topples the government of Yang.

As a 2nd rank commander, he has 20 Prestige.

Record Important Skills

Note the Tactics, Politics, and Grace dice that this power uses in conflict. Note the dice for any other important Skills. Include specialty dice if you think they're going to matter most of the time.

If you're winging it, we recommend giving the group or commander:

- 5 dice in their highest Skill (out of Tactics, Politics, Grace, and Crafting)
- 4 dice in their second-highest Skill (out of Tactics, Politics, Grace, and Crafting)
- 2 dice in their third-highest Skill (out of Tactics, Politics, Grace, and Crafting)
- 1 die in the remaining Skill.

Assume that this includes any Attribute bonus that they have.

If you need a key Skill that's not on the list, use either their Crafting dice or — if that seems wrong — a number that seems right.

We're going to use these winging it rules most of the time, although in some cases — such as Jin Cheng Di — we'll pick Skill levels we think are interesting, instead. Sometimes we'll use lower Skills when we want to make an enemy feel inferior even to starting characters.

Example: Shadow Jiang

We note that Shadow Jiang has 5 dice of Grace, 5 dice of Politics, 4 dice of Crafting, and 5 dice of Tactics.

Thrashing Minister City's Local Powers

We're about to write down the forces available to a selection of possible enemies and allies.

Note that we do not expect you to put all available forces on the battlefield at once.

Remember that things only appear on the battlefield when they're interesting to somebody. The Sage spending half of the session playing a dozen different antagonists is rarely interesting. You might enjoy that if you're playing a round or two of the Great Game at a time, so that the slow progression of events builds tension. Otherwise, you probably won't.

We expect you to use a few of these enemies on the battlefield when you play the Great Game in Thrashing Minister. We expect you to use a few more as groups that might make their stones available for **Recruitment** or hand PCs their starting allocation of stones to get the Great Game started fast.

We recommend that you keep the rest of these forces out of the Great Game until a Challenge or necessary stone brings them in.

We'll start with a detailed explanation of how we assign stones to Shadow.

Shadow Jiang

Pick Agenda Stones

We begin by picking possible Agenda stones for Shadow Jiang.

Shadow Jiang's Agenda is "become immortal and reign over Shen Zhou." He organizes this into specific regional-scope steps towards that Agenda. Here are some of our ideas:

- Control the eunuchs.
- Maintain an information network.
- Keep in the good graces of the King.
- Punish his enemies and help his allies.

Fill Out Stones Based on Concept

Shadow Jiang is a 4-point Commander stone, since he's a 2nd-rank courtier.

In terms of Force, Shadow Jiang has explicitly given up his mercenary-hiring habits. He should, however, have at least a few thugs. We'll use the *Starting Characters Out* rules — Followers 4 becomes 3 points of Force.

In terms of Influence, we'll use the same tool and convert

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his Wealth 4 into 3 points of Influence. He also has the direct power to influence the law, so we'll make that a 2-point Influence stone.

In terms of Will, his Status and Affiliation translate as 4 points of Will. Since it's fun when second rank courtiers who could topple kingdoms or slaughter small armies pretend to be helpless, emasculated servants of the state, we'll also give him a 1-point "Just a Servant of Yang" Will stone.

Pick a Power Level

Shadow Jiang has 13 points of stones, so he's at minimum a level-2 local power. We want him stronger than that, but adding 9+ points of stones seems a bit much. We make him a level-3 local power.

Assign Order and Chaos

Spreading disorder is a traditional role for palace eunuchs. To capture that idea, we weight Shadow Jiang's special stones towards Chaos, giving him 4 points of Chaos and 1 point of Order.

Pick Additional Necessary Stones

Shadow Jiang now needs a Planning stone. His likely theory of battle is "*Sly cunning defeats all foes*," which seems like it should be particularly useful with the **Stealth and Treachery** approach to battle. This is a high-Strike, low-damage approach, so we pick two techniques that mitigate the low Damage: **Area Attack** and **Corrupt**.

Shadow Jiang only needs three of his possible Agenda stones. We ditch "Keep in the Good Graces of the King," making it, instead, a Goal stone.

We look through the interesting possibilities for benefits for this Goal stone and limited-scope battle techniques catch our eye. They offer a way to give Shadow Jiang's stones more power in the palace than they have elsewhere. Looking over the battle techniques, we find Harry and we're sold — while he keeps the good graces of the King, Shadow Jiang may use the Harry technique within the **Eunuch Palace Region**, **Hidden City Region**, and **Concubine Palace Region**.

Pick Agenda Stones (Revisited)

We place Shadow Jiang's "Control the eunuchs" stone in the obvious location — the **Eunuch Palace Region**.

We feel that the location of his "Maintain an information network" stone shapes where people in the setting most feel Shadow Jiang's influence. We decide that we want his influence focused on the palace and not the city, so we place this stone in the **Hidden City Region**.

We feel that the location of Shadow Jiang's "Punish enemies and help allies" stone defines the region where he's most likely to help

or punish others. We decide that we'd rather he focused on controlling the nobles than on the army, merchants, crafters, or Clans — so we put that stone in the **Peaceful Residence Region**.

Record Prestige

Shadow Jiang is a 2nd-rank courtier, so we give him 20 points of Prestige.

Shadow Jiang, level-3 local power (20 Prestige)

Agenda

"Become immortal and reign over Shen Zhou."

- in the **Eunuch Palace Region**: "Control the eunuchs."
- in the **Hidden City Region**: "Maintain an information network."
- in the **Peaceful Residence Region**: "Punish enemies and help allies."

Skills

5 dice of Tactics, 5 dice of Politics, 5 dice of Grace, 4 dice of Crafting.

Plan

"Sly Cunning Defeats All Foes"

This plan provides the **Area Attack** and **Corrupt** battle techniques.

Goals

Poison Garden Region: "Maintain the good graces of the King."

While this Goal stone is healthy, Shadow Jiang can use the Harry battle technique in the **Eunuch Palace Region**, the **Concubine Palace Region**, and the **Hidden City Region**.

Generic Resources

Will 5, Force 3, Influence 5, Order 1, Chaos 4

- Thugs (3 points of Force stones)
- Law (2-point Influence stone)
- Money (3 points of Influence stones)
- Humble Servant of Yang (1-point Will stone)
- Court Position (1-point Will stone)
- Court Status (3-point Will stone)
- Order (1-point Order stone)
- Chaos (4 x 1-point Chaos stones)

We scatter these stones through the Hidden City, the Eunuch Palace, and Peaceful Residence.

Special Resources

Shadow Jiang, a 4-point Commander stone.

Example Summaries

We'll provide in-depth description as we assign stones to the following local powers, but we won't walk through it step-by-step.

Lustrous Jade Brothel

We pick some appropriate Agenda stones for the Lustrous Jade:

- Protect the Lustrous Jade Brothel.
- Protect the sisters of Lustrous Jade from the Hell Clan.
- Fight the Hell Clan for control of the Walled City.

We want to represent that they have formidable warriors, so we assign them 4 points of Force.

We want them to have riches, but notably less than the Hell Clan's 6 points of Influence; we give them 4 points of Influence.

We want to represent the idea that their key power is Will — that their dedication to Wulin principles holds them together; that their defiance of Hell Clan is a symbol that gives them power; that their ability to win hearts and minds is a key edge against Hell Clan. So we give them almost as much Will as Force and Influence put together — 7 points' worth.

We also want to model their unique abilities in the Great Game, which we do by designing two Treasure stones:

- **Daoist Sexual Alchemy.** This stone represents their power to inflict Chi conditions through bedroom arts. They can exhaust this stone to add one die to all Great-Game-related Skill rolls the commander makes that turn, declaring, "the Daoist arts inspire greatness!" This stone's key Skill is *Medicine*.
- **Unfolding Glory.** This Treasure stone builds on the Unfolding Glory kung fu. It represents their ability to use epic Face of the Moon- and Yin Principle-based Marvels. The former gives it its special power — every attack this stone makes is Unpredictable, ignoring Aura on a critical success. These warriors shine with incredible power! The latter ability gives this stone its ability to do work — rituals of Unfolding Glory kung fu can spread rivers and tendrils of Yin through an entire region, increasing its Water quality. This stone's key Skill is *Unfolding Glory*.

We give the Lustrous Jade one point of Order to connote discipline.

To help the Brothel stand against the Hell Clan, we give them a Planning stone — "Prevent attrition at all costs." We choose the **Defensive Strike Enhancement** and **Harry Techniques**.



We know to represent their fortified base as a Goal stone. Normally, Goal stones that represent fortifications defend your own forces in a region. However, we decide that it's cooler if the Lustrous Jade Brothel can defend others, so we declare that it serves as light armor for both their stones and allied stones, but only in one specific place — the Lustrous Jade Brothel.

Finally, we turn our attention to their ideology — their willingness to protect anyone.

Here's why we're not just making this an Agenda stone or a Goal stone: the Lustrous Jade Brothel isn't in the business of being good. In fact, being a force for good and trying to save everybody can come into conflict with their core Agenda.

At the same time, we want protecting random people to be important enough to them that the Hell Clan can use it against them — that is, we want the moral choice between saving a stranger and protecting their camp to be a tactical choice as well, so that tactics don't dictate one response or the other.

We achieve this by building a Concept stone — "We will protect the helpless." If the stone is healthy, it aids their morale — among other things, it gives a +10 bonus to Developing Will stones. If the stone is hurt, it means that Hell Clan can use the Concept against the women of the Lustrous Jade, drawing them into unfortunate positions.



The Lustrous Jade Brothel

Level-3 local power (10 Prestige)

Agenda

"Protect the Lustrous Jade Brothel, its younger sisters, women in general, and people in general."

- in the Heaven and Earth City Region: ""Protect the brothel."
- in the Heaven and Earth City Region: "Protect the little sisters of the brothel."
- in the Heaven and Earth City Region: "Fight the Hell Clan for control."

Skills

2 dice of Tactics, 1 die of Politics, 5 dice of Grace, 4 dice of Crafting.

Plan

"Prevent attrition at all costs."

This plan provides the **Defensive Strike Enhancement** and **Harry** battle techniques.

Goals

Heaven and Earth City Region: "Maintain the fortifications of the Lustrous Jade Brothel."

While this Goal stone is healthy, attacks against stones in the Lustrous Jade Brothel, if the Brothel is willing to defend them, suffer a -5 Damage.

Concepts

Heaven and Earth City Region: We will protect the helpless, particularly women.

While this stone is healthy, among other things, it gives a +10 bonus to Developing Will stones.

Generic Resources

Will 7, Force 4, Influence 4, Order 1

- Warriors (4 points of Force)
- Money (4 points of Influence)
- Wulin Dedication (3-point Will stone)
- Inspiring Example (1-point Will stone)
- Respect of the People (3-point Will stone)
- Order (1-point Order stone)

We place these stones in the **Heaven and Earth City Region**.

Special Resources

Unfolding Glory Treasure: This 1-point Treasure stone has Unfolding Glory as its key Skill. It can affect the Water quality of a region. Its attacks ignore Aura on a critical success regardless of the Lustrous Jade's current approach to battle.

Daoist Sexual Alchemy Treasure: This 1-point Treasure stone has Medicine as its key Skill. Exhausting this stone adds one die to all of the commander's Great Game-related Skill rolls this turn.

Nan Clan

Thrashing Minister is not terribly important to the Nan Clan. We'll give them less than half of their Solidarity as Will and less than half of their Resources as Influence. However, since they are providing mercenaries, we'll assign them 70% of their natural Force.

We settle on the following numbers — 3 Will, 7 Force, 4 Influence, and 1 point each of Order and of Chaos. We note that this makes them a level-3 local power with three Agenda stones. We build these Agenda stones starting with the basic Nan Agenda of surviving while providing security to others. One Agenda stone is therefore "Protect the Nan compound." One is "Honor the name of Nan." The last is "Provide security to the Dong." All of these Agenda stones reside in the **Willows Districts Region**; a schemer could practically eliminate the Nan Clan presence by seizing control over the Willows District and hurting all three stones at once!

Nan Clan

Level-3 local power (10 Prestige)

Agenda

"Survive and provide security to others."

- in the **Willows District Region:** "Protect the Nan Clan compound."
- in the **Willows District Region:** "Honor the name of Nan."
- in the **Willows District Region:** "Provide security to the Dong."

Skills

5 dice of Tactics, 4 dice of Politics, 2 dice of Grace, 1 die of Crafting.

Generic Resources

Will 3, Force 7, Influence 4, Chaos 1, Order 1

- Nan Clan Mercenaries (7 points of Force)
- Money (4 points of Influence)
- Nan Clan Interests (3 points of Will)
- Order (1-point Order stone)
- Chaos (1-point Chaos stone)

We place all of these stones in the **Willows Districts Region**.

Example Abbreviated Summaries

We won't go into as much detail on the design of these local powers.

Constables (Group)

We have established the constabulary as part of Ming Lizhi's forces.

That said, the constables are Wulin — we note that they can act on their own. If they do, we assign them 10 points of Force because that's what they'd have when working for Ming Lizhi. We give them a point of Order because they bring order, a point of Chaos because they're corrupt, and finally 2 points of Will to represent their status as a group.

Constabulary

Level-2 local power (10 Prestige)

Agenda

"Collect bribes, keep order, and obey important officials."

- in 1-2 appropriate regions, pick two:
 - o "Keep order"
 - o "Collect cash"
 - o "Enjoy the privileges of rank"
 - o "Obey officials."

Skills

3 dice of Tactics, 1 die of Politics, 2 dice of Grace, 1 die of Crafting.

Generic Resources

Will 2, Force 10, Order 1, Chaos 1

- Constables (10 x 1-point Force stones)
- Status and Title (2 x 1-point Will stones)
- Order (1 x 1-point Order stone)
- Chaos (1 x 1-point Chaos stone)

We scatter these stones through the city, but focus the Will on the location of the constable directing them all in the Great Game.

Constables (Individual)

Individual constables can choose to play the Great Game. They may operate with complete independence as a Commander stone or place an Agenda stone and gather power under their own banner. In the latter case, we'll give them 2-5 points of Force. Recognize that these stones don't come out of Ming Lizhi's Force — they're not constables or thugs drawn to the Prestige of the city government who then switch commanders. Rather, they're people who've signed on as constables or thugs because of that individual constable's Wulin prestige.

Constable

Level-1 local power (5-15 Prestige)

Agenda

"Collect bribes, keep order, and obey important officials."

- in the appropriate region, pick one:
 - o "Keep order"
 - o "Collect cash"
 - o "Enjoy the privileges of rank"
 - o "Obey officials."

Skills

3 dice of Tactics, 1 die of Politics, 2 dice of Grace, 1 die of Crafting.

Generic Resources

Force 2-5

- Constables or Thugs (2-5 x 1-point Force stones)

We place all of these stones in the relevant Region.

Special Resources

Relevant Leader, a 1-3-point Commander stone.

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The Battlefield:

Thrashing Minister City

This section gives advice on running the Great Game in a smaller, single-district battlefield.

It also provides advice on recruitment, and an example district – the Willows District

Smaller Battlefields

As a rule, the districts of Thrashing Minister are complex enough that you can make them battlefields of their own — for quick battlefield design, you don't even need to change the stones that each side have! Just increase the strength of each commander stone, move any Agenda stones that are in other districts to somewhere within the battlefield at hand, and you're ready to play!

The Willows Districts, Heaven and Earth City, and Peaceful Residence are complex enough that you should play out local conflicts as a Local battlefield. Similarly, you could group the various Hidden City and palace regions together as a single Local battlefield.

Treat conflicts inside the other regions of Thrashing Minister (e.g., Green District politics, a struggle for control over the Poison Garden, etcetera) as Personal battlefields.

Recruitment

Regions should often list stones available for recruitment. Players can read the descriptive text to figure out whether they qualify to recruit stones. The Sage should use the descriptive text to set Recruitment difficulties! Thus, if a PC is the supreme pit fighting champion in Heaven and Earth City, they can reasonably claim one of the Will stones there with a style roll; if they've won a couple of fights, they could try for it, but as a Hard (30) Skill roll!

If a PC or NPC has substantial connections in the city not described in a Region, the Sage can invent appropriate stones for them to recruit during play—the Recruitable stones lists are guidelines, not hard rules.

The Sage can allow characters with the right connections to Recruit the stones of local powers who are not playing the Great Game — such as the Dong Clan in Thrashing Minister, if Great Bear Lu's forces aren't on the battlefield.

When there's a large collection of stones available for Recruitment (as when the Sage makes Dong Clan stones available), **at most 1-2 points of stones are immediately available for someone with a good pitch.** However, characters can recruit additional stones later — up to the maximum available — based on challenges, Goals, personal connections, and events in play.

Example Region: Willows Districts Region

The Willows Districts Region is large — the Sage should require characters to use at least three miscellaneous stones to control it. However, in the Willows Districts Region, money talks — allow two Influence stones or a single Influence stone using the **Vastly Spreading Influence** ability to control the Region.

The power most likely to control the Willows District Region is the Dong Clan, followed by the Nan Clan and the Constables.

Movement

The streets are busy. Make moving stones through the Willows Districts Region an Everyday (18) task.

Stones

The Willows District contains a Recruitable 1-point Force stone. These are bruisers who offer their services to characters who've made their mark in the region.

Unusual Stones

Goal stone: The Willows Districts Region features the Masked Untouchables' Goal stone, "Protect our base from discovery." This stone penalizes the attacker's Damage by -5 when attacking the Masked Untouchables' stones in the Willows District Region.

Local Powers

The Willows District serves as the home base for these potential allies and antagonists:

The Dong Clan (Level 3). Local branch of the legendary trade enterprise, led by Great Bear Lu! (pg. 22)

The Nan Clan (Level 3). Local forces for the legendary great family, providing protection services to one and all, the Thrashing Minister Nan Clan led by Wandering Star! (pg. 22)

The Masked Untouchables (Level 1). Honorable constables defending ordinary people against corruption! (pg. 21)

Constables (Level 1). Local constables, if they're acting on their own! Here are the resources you can expect:

- *Tiger-Skinned Ching*, a 2-point Commander stone.
- *Shining-Blade Wu*, a 3-point Commander stone.
- *Agenda stone* (Pick One): "Keep order," "collect cash," "enjoy privileges of rank."
- *Resources* (2-5 points of Force)

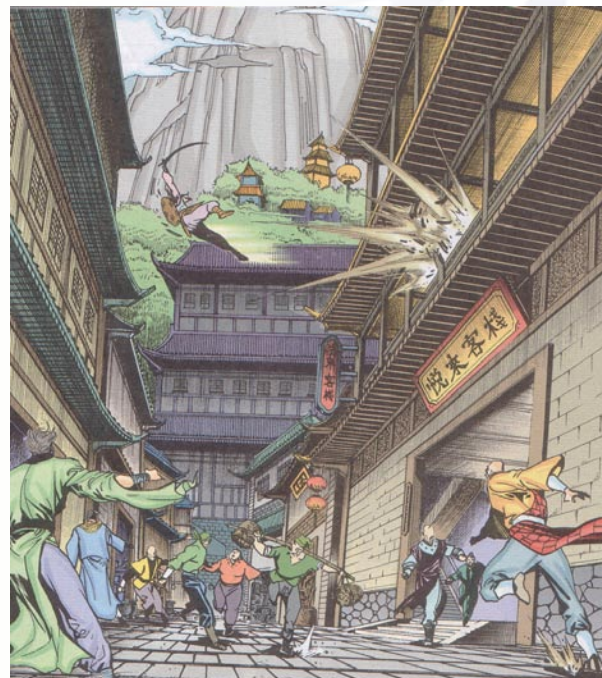
Gangs (Level 1). Typical criminal gang, boisterous and unruly!

- *Agenda stone*: "Defend the gang's interests."
- *Resources* (4 Force, 1 Will, 1 Chaos)

Outside Interests

The Willows District contains necessary stones for the following commanders and Actors, who might therefore station forces herein;

- Jin Cheng Di,
- King Yue Guan, and
- The Thrashing Minister City Government.



Appendix A: Important Clarifications and Errata

The *Million Style Manual* and the *Great Game* assume that you are using the following clarified and corrected rules from **Weapons of the Gods**.

Regaining Chi (*omitted from Pg 230, Weapons of the Gods*): A character may regain chi by taking a Full Action to make a roll against Everyday (18) difficulty. Warriors roll their Hardiness, Courtiers Confidence, and Scholars Medicine. If successful, choose a color of chi, and regain one point of that color per result die, up to the character's normal maximum.

Kung Fu and Modifiers (*Clarification*): By default, modifiers (as defined on pg 14, **Weapons of the Gods**) from kung fu techniques apply to weapons, not directly to rolls. For example, techniques in **Weapons of the Gods** applying modifiers to "your Speed" or "your Initiative" should be read as applying a modifier to the Speed of your weapon, which in turn applies to your roll. If a character with Crimson 5 and armed with a Longsword with Speed +5 used Dragon Speed (pg 235 WotG), their Longsword's Speed would be modified to +15, which would then apply to their initiative roll. The Cardinal Rule of Modifiers (pg 14 WotG) still applies, as always.

Ranged Weapons and Kung Fu (*correction to pg 68, Weapons of the Gods*): Ranged Weapons are only compatible with Ranged kung fu techniques (and Free, where applicable). Ranged (Artful) and Ranged (Brutal) are damage subtypes, which are important for some defences – they are explicitly no longer kung fu compatibility flags. Existing characters who have used Artful or Brutal kung fu techniques with Ranged weapons should be given the option to use the *Million Style Manual* to replace their existing styles with thematically similar Ranged styles. The common Wulin prejudice against use of ranged weapons is explicitly not a balance to Ranged weapons, but a setting element – players wishing to explore this prejudice should consider taking an appropriate Disadvantage.

Gaining Demon Chi from Corrupt Techniques (*correction to pg 368, Weapons of the Gods*): Learning a Corrupt Formless Technique of level I-4 replaces one point of chi with Demon Chi. Learning a Corrupt Formless Technique of level 5 or above replaces two points. Learning the first technique of a Common or Uncommon Demon Chi style replaces one point, while learning the fifth technique replaces a second. Each technique of a Rare Demon Chi style replaces a point of chi as it is learned. It is possible to know techniques costing more Demon Chi than you actually have – you will need to acquire more Demon Chi before using them.

Quality and Perfect Weapon Modifiers (*correction to pg 77, Weapons of the Gods*): Normal weapons cannot have their Speed, Strike or Damage improved beyond +15 by Quality or Perfect Weapon bonuses. Kung Fu weapons are likewise capped at +20.

Million Style Manual Glossary: Rules and definitions in the *Million Style Manual Glossary* (pg 146-150) are considered to supersede those printed in **Weapons of the Gods**. In most cases, these are clarifications rather than changes.

Free Downloads on the Eos Press Website

As well as a helpful and friendly forum community and the latest news on **Weapons of the Gods** and other great games, the Eos Press website (<http://www.eos-press.com>) has a number of great downloads to enhance your game!

- *Auspicious Beginnings*, a free 62 page introductory adventure.
- Quick reference sheets
- Full colour map of Shen Zhou
- Character Generator
- Dice rollers
- Full FAQ & Errata
- Extra Lores and Antagonists
- And much more!



Appendix B: Fast Organization Building

Often Wulin Sages will find themselves creating new organizations for their campaigns, or may find players taking a strong interest in organizations from their Lores that the Sage didn't have any plans for. In such circumstances, especially when playing the Great Game, you may find yourself having to quickly assign Solidarity, Membership and Resources ratings.

Firstly, decide on your organization's **Power**. This is an important number; it allows you to quickly compare entities with very different compositions, and is the number of Agenda Stones required to deploy the full weight of their might on battlefields that are important to them. The best way to decide Power is to open **Weapons of the Gods** to pg. 57-65, and use the Power of an organization that you think would make for an even struggle with your new organization in the Great Game. However, here are some quick default Power ratings:

- Wandering Bands and Gangs should have a Power of 3
- Minor Clans and smaller Secret Societies should have a Power of 4
- Clans, Lesser States, Factions and large Secret Societies are generally Power 5
- Great Clans and most States are Power 6-7
- Major Kingdoms consolidating several States (such as the remnant of the Jin Empire, or the historical Three Kingdoms) are Power 8
- A Dynasty ruling all of Shen Zhou is at least Power 9

Having decided on the organizations Power, multiply that rating by 7, and divide the result between **Solidarity**, **Membership** and **Resources**. The distribution of points between these three factors should represent the degree to which the lords, heroes and generals of the organization prefer to use ideology (Will Stones, derived from Solidarity), weight of numbers (Force Stones, derived from Membership) or political and financial power (Influence Stones, derived from Resources) to triumph in the Great Game. Remember that these factors represent the power that the organization uses; aesthetically their territories might contain more wealth or people, but if they're not marshaled to the Agenda, mechanically they don't count.

The following rules also apply to the distribution of these points:

- When no-one possesses the Mandate of Heaven, division is inevitable, and an organization may not have Solidarity greater than 15 without special Secrets of Destiny.
- An organization ruling less than half of Shen Zhou cannot have Resources greater than 15 or a Membership greater than 25 without special Secrets of Destiny.
- Membership cannot be greater than 15 without either Solidarity or Resources greater than 10.

In general, Solidarity becomes a smaller proportion of the organization's might as it increases in Power, and Membership relatively larger. For example, the Jin Empire has Solidarity 4 and Membership 25 – it relies on its army far more than ideology! Wandering Bands, on the other hand, should be expected to have very low Membership (by definition!) and high Solidarity.

You will notice that most of the examples of organizations in **Weapons of the Gods** have less than 7 times their Power in total Solidarity, Membership and Resources. When creating an organization, the Sage may reduce the points to be distributed between those three ratings; each of those points may be spent instead to put an epic location into the organization's territory (an amazing natural landmark, a ruin from an earlier dynasty, a fantastic library, or perhaps even something abstract like the memory of saving an Emperor in a legendary battle). Literally anything can be purchased with this option, though an organization who wishes to actually hold the location is advised to limit their ambition accordingly - a Gang holding a vast temple of the Zhou Dynasty is liable to have a Society or State simply come and take it.

In the Great Game, such a location automatically has a potent Concept Stone associated with it, benefiting the organization while it is unhurt, and the battlefield is always considered important to them as an Actor (though as the Sage's option, abstract options chosen through this method may appear on the Elephant Board even if the battlefield is considered unimportant to the organization). Narratively, it's good joss, tangibly tying the organization to Shen Zhou's mythic history. The location can All of the organizations in **Weapons of the Gods** have spent multiple points on such locations.



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