

SILVER
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#2

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LEGENDS WALK!



JADE AND INK



Sources from China

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Welcome to the second supplement for *Legends Walk*!

Since the rulebook came out, one of the commonest pieces of feedback was that the source programmes it included were rather Eurocentric and people would really like to have Sources from Asia as well. Quite right too.

The ones in the rulebook were chosen as the ones most of the readers were most likely to be familiar with, but LWV was always intended to be a global game.

So I'm really pleased to be able to remedy that with this product. Like all mythologies, the Chinese has its own character - in this case rooted in the idea of a universe governed according to principles of hierarchy and order by a divine bureaucracy. It's also one that's survived into the present: large numbers of Chinese people still observe at least some of these traditions.

In the spirit of covering it thoroughly I've included quite a lot of detail, so it gets a whole supplement to itself. It also gives you a certain irrepressible ape, who appears to have vandalised my contents list. *sigh* What was that sutra again?

Tim Gray, January 2006

Written and designed by Tim Gray

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Thanks to Tim Partridge for comments.

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NEW KEY POWERS

Powers in the programmes may be marked with the following symbols:

- * found under Key Powers in the main rulebook
- ** found under Key Powers in this book

Key powers introduced in *Splat #1 - Clay and Blood* that are used here are repeated in this section for those who don't have that book.

Attractive Appearance

This Switch gives 2 Advantages for appropriate social rolls rather than the 1 bestowed by the Quirk of that name. (Most powers that mimic Quirks should work that way.) This appears in many programmes in the rulebook and *Splat! #1* - adjust them if necessary.

Book of Life and Death

This power draws on the concept of an objective universal record of when each being is fated to die. It works like a Switch but is costed as an Add.

Appoint the Hour. This application lets you dictate details of a nearby person's fated death - we're assuming that instead of being absolutely fixed it varies over time as circumstances change in their life. There are three important death properties:

- Cause - eg "electrocution", "a knife attack", "a fall";
- Place - by which we mean setting rather than a specific place, eg "in a library" or "underground";
- Time - this is a specific date.

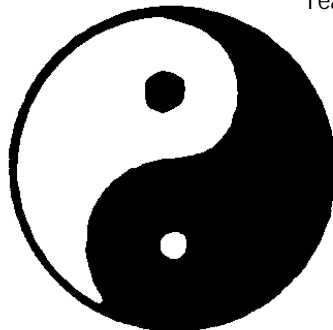
You use the power to specify one of these, rolling Add + Presence BD 2, opposed by either Meta resistance (if any). That is then fixed for the rest of the scene. If you want to specify another of the three it's another power use, but each repetition on the same target gives a Dis. If you fumble, take a physical Injury as backlash for messing around with

death and fate. No-one but you will know what fate is set unless you tell them or a power lets them find out.

For the rest of the scene the death properties change the effect of harm that affects the target.

- If harm matches the property the target has a level of Curse* (see the power) for resisting it and their Extreme Damage threshold becomes 15.
- If harm conflicts with the property (eg fated to die from a fall and someone shoots you) the target has a level of Blessing* (see the power) for resisting it and their Extreme Damage threshold becomes 5.
- If more than one property applies, Blessings and Curses cancel out and the damage threshold is set if one or the other wins out. Multiples don't alter Extreme Damage.

Extreme Damage is an optional combat rule in the rulebook. (This power puts it into effect even for minor characters or if your group doesn't normally use it.) It lets important characters break really high damage down into multiple smaller amounts so they can survive highly dangerous situations. The threshold is normally 10: setting it at 15 means that they'll have to take their chances with exceptionally high damage, while 5 converts lethal harm to a nasty pummeling that might render them helpless quicker but doesn't kill them.



Read the Record. You can also find details of a death that has happened and is now finally set. The death properties are the same: cause, time and place. (You can discover whether a death was an accident or murder, but not the identity of the murderer: that requires investigation!) Roll Wisdom, BD 2 - each success gives one piece of information but takes a Full action of meditation to sift through the "Book". You must know a person's true identity or be next to their corpse to use this.

Control Disease

This is an Add like the other "Control" powers. It first appeared in *Splat!* #1.

To cause a disease or ailment decide what effect you wish to produce. The basic roll is for a minor inconvenience, cast at close quarters. Extra distance levels of range or effect levels (see table below) bring Disadvantages. The effect is opposed by Physical Resistance and lasts [remaining successes] duration levels. Medical help can only tackle the symptoms, not effect a cure. Once the duration expires the subject starts recovering normally - the time this takes depends on what the effect was. The GM should determine the effects, like Disadvantages for physical activity or in social situations. Suggested combat penalties are given.

- 0 inconvenient or embarrassing conditions such as itching, wind or an unsightly boil
- 1 mildly painful and/or distracting conditions like cramp, an ulcer or a cold (-2 Initiative)
- 2 debilitating and/or painful conditions (-2 Initiative, Dis to all activity)
- 3 incapacitating conditions posing a real threat to the character's health, meriting bed rest and medical attention (-5 Initiative, 2 Dis to all activity)
- 4 life-threatening conditions - medical attention required (no action possible)

The power can be used on several targets at once using the Multiple Opponents Disadvantages, as long as all of them are the same kind of creature and all are afflicted with the same condition. To make the disease contagious so that it will pass from the subject to others gives an extra Disadvantage on the power roll, but anyone who catches it this way gets a normal version which can be treated medically.

To cure a disease with the power make a roll with the same Disadvantages from the table above. One success brings temporary relief; more brings a cure.

Creation

This Add (first seen in *Splat!* #1) gives you the power to create items out of thin air. Level 1 allows inanimate objects, level 2 allows simple living things like plants and insects, and level 3 allows higher animals including humans (who start with a childlike mentality). Remember the archaic basis of the powers - the Source has no knowledge of microbiology, for instance, so you can't throw a flu virus at someone.



It takes a Full action and the basic roll is Add + Ingenuity, BD 2 modified by the size of the item. The base is Small (2), and further size levels bring Disadvantages. The default is to make it in your hand or at arm's reach - to make it further away brings distance level Disadvantages. The GM might also give a Dis for unusual complexity.

The creations have the properties of a normal thing of their type but are ephemeral, lasting a scene and then dissipating. However, the character can make one permanent by embedding some of their own life force when they create it, which costs a physical Injury.

Immortal

This Switch doesn't actually let you live forever, but it does increase your natural lifespan by about 50%. It imbues you with the idea of immortality, giving the following benefits:

- 10 points of "armour" against aging and life draining effects;
- 2 Advantages to resist poison and disease;
- +2 natural healing limit for physical Injuries.

Master of Skills

This Add is the ability to gain access to any skill. (It's been seen before as Samildanach in the Dagda and Lugh programmes.) Each level of Add acts as a slot that can contain one level of any skill - this is added on to any abilities you already have. Under stress, changing the skill in one slot takes a Free action and an Add + Ingenuity roll, BD 2. If you lose consciousness all slot contents are lost.

In most cases it only gives access to archaic skills: those that might have been available when the Source was worshipped. Modern stuff like computer use is beyond them. Sometimes, though, the idea of skill mastery can overcome this, as it does for Lugh.

Reincarnation

This Switch means that if you die your remains disappear and you awaken elsewhere in good health, though without any Destiny or Presence Points. Power objects probably remain where you last had them, but will be replaced if necessary. The process takes a little time, usually at least a day. Different versions of the power may specify this, along with the sort of place you reappear and any other conditions. It's suggested that the GM not allow this to overcome simple aging; at least, not indefinitely.

Summon Minions

This is the power to summon a number of supernatural servants to do your bidding - usually to fight! We've seen versions of it previously for Odin, Freyja, An and Nergal. This Add is a standardised version that can serve as a basis for future instances. It's slightly different to those previous versions, especially regarding duration - you might want to "backdate" it to Odin etc.

The minions themselves are probably sprites serving the character's Source who can be sent through for a brief period, clothed in whatever fleshly or other form is appropriate, and then return when their task is done (or they're dispelled). Their abilities vary depending on the

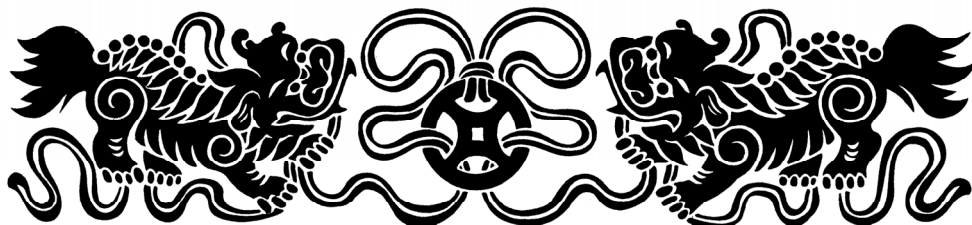
Source, and can be specified along with their appearance when the power is listed. They often have suitable equipment, like archaic weapons - such items function normally but dissipate when the minion does.

Summoning minions - roll Add + Presence, BD 2. Take a physical Hurt if successful as some of your life force is needed to give them substance. Each success gives one minion, lasting a scene, or possibly other funky stuff for that specific instance of the power.

Minion stats - they are Horde creatures. If summoning duration expires or they are rendered "down" by damage they fade away. They usually have two attributes at Talented and the others at Average. They are considered to have an occupation in their key function and a specialism in their key skill, so a warrior type would have Fighting 2 and perhaps 1 in Athletics and Riding. (Basically they're the embodiment of a certain limited idea.) Most types also have a couple of passive-type Switches, often Immunities or sensory stuff. (If you find it hard to come up with these, trade one for an extra skill level or both for an extra attribute level.) They do have basic personalities, eg they might be disciplined or battle-hungry. It's a good idea to work out their basic Horde combat stats and include these in the listing.

Here's an example from the programme of Yanluo Wang.

- Add: Summon Minions (3)** (Servants of Hell - demonic-looking shirtless men with stubby horns, bearing spiked maces and tridents - End Tal, Awa Tal, Guard, Security 2, Fighting 1, Immunity to Death Powers, Immunity to Horror and Fear - Init 5, Weapon 3/2, Defence 1, Damage 2/4/-)



CHINA

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

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

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

Between 1949 and the 1970s the government of the People's Republic of China took a hostile attitude to religion, seeing it as backward. Religious buildings were converted for secular use or even destroyed. The new constitution of 1978 guaranteed freedom of religion with certain restrictions, and recently there has been a big programme to rebuild Buddhist temples. The Communist Party reacts against any group it perceives as challenging its power, and will not allow its members to practice religion (and

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

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

membership is required for high level posts). Most modern Chinese report no religious affiliation, but hundreds of millions believe in folk traditions, ancestor worship, feng shui and suchlike, and there are still Buddhist and Daoist communities. (There are also significant numbers of Christians and Muslims.) So while the mythic traditions of China no longer have such a central place in the country's life, they do live on.

Hierarchy and order

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

The product was a pantheon organised just like the imperial administration on Earth, with departments to control every aspect of the world and human activities. Hierarchy and order were the guiding principles. The gods keep comprehensive records, make reports and issue directives. Depending on how well they perform their duties they may be promoted, lowered in rank or even dismissed, to be replaced in post by another. Earthly emperors, too, could issue decrees changing the rank, status and titles of deities. So the details of who did what in the pantheon changed over time – and different localities also had their own versions. The whole sweep is large and confusing, and only a few popular entities will be covered here.

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

Creation

The most common story (added as late as the third or fourth century CE) says that the universe began as an egg of primeval Chaos. From the heavy elements of the egg came Earth, from its lighter elements came Sky, and there also appeared the being Pan Gu (*pahn goo*), shown as a dwarf clad in a bearskin or leaves. For 18,000 years the gap between Earth and Sky grew ten feet a day, and Pan Gu grew to fill it in order to keep them apart. When he died the parts of his body became the various natural elements: rivers and seas from his blood, soil from his flesh, the wind from his breath, the sun and moon from his eyes, metal and stones from his bones.

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

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

The universe

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

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

Hell (or some variable number of hells) is controlled by ten law-courts, each presided over by one of the Shih-tien Yen-wang, the Yama Kings. Each king has jurisdiction for punishing a certain type of crime. The first among them, master of hell, is Yanluo Wang. He reports directly to the Jade Emperor and the Great Emperor of the

Southern Peak who governs all human affairs. His Court is the first port of call for the dead. Hell is like a country of its own, with its own towns. The chief town is Feng Tu. The souls of the dead enter through the great Gate of Demons. Inside are the palaces of the Yama Kings, the Law Courts, the places of torture and the dwellings of the various officials, servants and souls awaiting rebirth. Opposite the Gate the town adjoins a river, in which live bronze snakes and iron dogs that prey upon wicked souls who fall from the bridge.

Kun Lun Mountain in the far west is a mythical peak, but associated with the actual Kun Lun mountain range. It's the location of a Daoist paradise ruled by Xi Wang Mu, wife of the Jade Emperor. A jade palace of nine storeys is built on top of the mountain. Around it lie magnificent gardens, including the orchards that grow the peaches of immortality. Those who have become immortal, for instance by cultivation of the Dao or



being allowed to eat a magical peach, spend their time here in amusements and banquets.

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

Death

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

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

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

include boiling in oil and being ground up in mills. After each torture the soul reforms for the next. When the soul has been punished for all its sins it goes to the tenth King for reincarnation as a god, demon, human or animal. If a human is to return as an animal, it will retain full human sensibilities though not the power of speech.

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

Sources

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www.wikipedia.org

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GODS

Cheng Huang

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

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



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

There are also gods of Place, **Tu Di** (*too dee*), less important but more popular. There's one for every town, every village, every street and every building. They are the lowest ranked officials in the heavenly bureaucracy. In most cases they're anonymous, shown as an old white-bearded man in ordinary clothes, carrying a long knotted stick and accompanied by his kindly old wife. He acts as a sort of policeman, scaring off robbers or predatory animals, and generally looks after the fortune of the people. Most families have a statue in the house.

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

Aegis

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

Required Powers

- Switch: Read the Walls (things that occur in a building move and change its elements, and you can access this information - roll Awareness, BD 2 - first success gives an impression of current activity within a 10ft radius, further successes either increase the distance levels of a current impression or let you reach back duration levels to retrieve information about past events - impressions are always general and uninterpreted, eg buildings don't "get" detailed images or sounds but will pick up numbers and size of people, shouting, blood, lightning bolts etc - as you look further back, only the more significant events are retained)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Construction
- Skill: Home-making
- Switch: Blessing*
- Switch: Control Building (make parts of a building do simple things within their normal function, eg doors will lock, roof slates will fall off, sprinkler systems will activate - have to be inside or in contact with the building - roll with Presence, BD 2, Dis to influence modern technological systems - first success allows a

Optional Powers

- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Intimidation
- Skill: Security
- Skill: Tactics
- Switch: Knowledge of the Dead (learn things that a dead person knew when they were alive - roll Awareness, BD 2, number of successes indicates the number of facts and/or depth of knowledge gained - requires some sympathetic link to the deceased, their body being the best but a treasured possession, loved one, favourite place or scene of death being usable with a Disadvantage)
- Switch: See Righteousness (with an Awareness roll, BD 2, you can detect the proportions of "good" and "evil" in a person's soul and their general nature, eg a serial killer would show up as "murder", but most people would just have lots of little nameless bright and dark blotches - these are judged from a fairly absolute perspective, saying nothing about possible reasons for actions, eg killing an abusive husband would still be a dark stain of "murder")
- Switch: Subdue Demons (allows you to command spirit entities which have fully entered the earth plane, ie sprites - used on one at a time, takes a Full action, roll Presence, BD 2 opposed by mental Resistance, net successes show duration levels the control lasts - often used simply to command the spirit to leave its host - can also be used to sense the presence of sprites with an Awareness roll, BD 2, successes show radius of sensing area)
- Add: See Future (2)*

Disadvantages

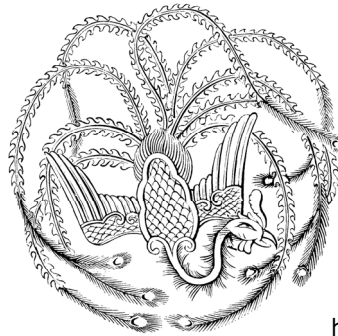
- Cannot Ignore Injustice (if you encounter an unjust situation your strong instinct is to fix it - if common sense indicates leaving it alone, roll Wisdom, BD 2 to do so)
- Red Face (your face is bright red, marking you as a Meta and possibly influencing social rolls)
- Unwanted Attention (you tend to attract people who want you to put something to rights, if they know who you are, or just to complain about it - you usually get at least one of these per session, and although they could be clues they're usually distractions from your main focus)

Guan Yin

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

Guan Yin is shown as a young woman in various situations: holding a fish basket, standing on clouds, riding the back of a dragon in front of a waterfall or sitting on a lotus flower draped in a white veil. She

often holds a child in her arms, and sometimes holds a willow branch and a vase of the dew of compassion.



She's said to live on a mountain or island in the Eastern Sea. The introduction of rice cultivation is credited to her, and she makes the grains wholesome by filling each

kernel with her own milk. She comes to the aid of all who need her help, especially when they're threatened by water, demons, fire or the sword. It's said she can release prisoners from their chains, remove poison from snakes, deprive lightning of its power, and cure almost every sickness. In *Journey to the West* she intercedes with the gods to free Monkey from imprisonment in order to assist in the pilgrimage to fetch the scriptures.

In one account she was the daughter of a human king and entered a religious order against his wishes. The king decided to kill her, but Yanluo Wang appeared and led her to his underworld domain. There she soothed the tormented souls and transformed hell into a paradise. Yanluo released her and she was reborn on an island where she protected seafarers from storms. When her father fell ill she cooked a piece of her own flesh for him to eat.

Aegis

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

Required Powers

- Add: Peace (3) (intensity acts as armour against all damaging factors, physical and mental, for everyone in the surrounding area - people may be thrown around, restrained, controlled and what have you but punches, blasts, venom, falls etc just don't hurt - roll Add + Presence, BD 2, first success gives 1 armour in 10ft radius, further successes add to armour or distance levels)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (M1)
- Skill: Medicine
- Skill: Psychology
- Switch: Fertility (either cause plants to spring up to their full growth or give an animal, including humans, increased vigour - roll Ingenuity, BD 2 - for animals, successes are spent first to remove physical Hurts and then to give an Advantage for active physical tasks for a round)
- Switch: Immunity to Negative Emotions* (10pts "armour" against attempts to induce sadness or anger)
- Switch: Liberation (with a successful Presence roll, objects that are imprisoning or restraining you or a designated target will move to give freedom, eg ropes will loosen and fall off, locks will open - won't work on things with no moving parts, like a solid rock wall, though a fall of loose rocks might tumble out of the way - Base Dice 2 for a simple restraint, down to 0 or even beyond for larger, stronger or more complex ones)
- Add: Healing* (2)

Disadvantages

- Compassionate (can't deliberately cause suffering - may need to roll Wisdom, eg to initiate a fight rather than waiting to defend)
- Raven's Curse (at the end of any round in which someone dies within your sight, take a physical Hurt - if a large number die at once, you might take an Injury and even fall unconscious)
- Too Protective (you tend to interfere in people's lives even if they could manage without your help - may need a Wisdom roll to avoid doing so)

Lei Gong

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

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

During storms Lei Gong's thunderous noise is assisted by Tian Mu, Mother Lightning, producing flashes with the mirrors she holds; Zhi Song-zi, the Master of Rain, sprinkling water from his pot; and Feng Po, the Count of the Wind, who carries the winds in a great sack.

Lei Gong has few temples and is rarely worshipped: most people who approach him ask him to take vengeance against another on their behalf. As well as his aversion to unclean things mentioned in the story above, he's said to be very prudish and will not enter a house where people are having sex - or even where there's a picture of this!

Aegis

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

Required Powers

- Switch: Storm Aura (this defensive power surrounds you with a 10ft radius area of dark clouds swirling in strong winds, lit by the occasional flash of lightning and accompanied by rumbles of thunder – it takes a Full action to activate, rolling Presence at BD 2 for intensity, and is a maintenance effect – anyone wishing to move through the area or stand in it must beat the intensity with Strength + Athletics, BD 2 or be forced out, and if they fail altogether they're knocked down – intensity also opposes perception and ranged attacks – it definitely helps with intimidation!)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Intimidation
- Switch: Claws*
- Switch: Immunity to Thunder and Lightning* (full 10pts "armour" against those specific weather effects, 5pts against other sound explosions and electricity)
- Switch: See Righteousness (with an Awareness roll, BD 2, you can detect the proportions of "good" and "evil" in a person's soul and their general nature, eg a serial killer would show up as "murder", but most people would just have lots of little nameless bright and dark blotches - these are judged from a fairly absolute perspective, saying nothing about possible reasons for actions, eg killing an abusive husband would still be a dark stain of "murder")
- Switch: Thunderbolt (a standard ranged energy attack, ie Awareness to hit, Presence base damage, but damage is explosive, half impact and half electrical)
- Add: Flight (Wings) (1)*

Drum

- Switch: Thunderclap (when struck as a full action it produces explosive sound damage of Presence, BD 2 – it doesn't cause property damage, but most normal animals will flee in fear and some other creatures including cowardly minions will do so unless they beat the intensity with Presence, BD 2)

Disadvantages

- Blue Skin (marks you as a Meta, probable social effects)
- Easily Offended (certain things trouble you so much that you have to roll Presence, BD 2 to stay in their sight or presence: excreta, the blood of certain animals, for instance dogs, actual or pictured sexual behaviour, anything tainted by powers of uncleanness - one success or a Presence point lets you tolerate a thing for a scene, but you should make faces)
- Ugly Appearance (social Dis)
- Weather Signs (strong emotions manifest as minor weather conditions nearby)
- Wings (tied to Flight, marking you as a Meta and possible social effects)

Long Wang

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



The dragon image still commands a lot of respect in Chinese culture. Chinese dragons are benevolent creatures with a long, snake-like body, scaled skin, horns like those of a deer, and taloned feet. They fly among the clouds without wings. It's said that Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, had the snake as his emblem and

every time he conquered another tribe he incorporated part of its totem beast into his own, creating the image of the dragon. He was immortalised in dragon form.

In droughts the people seek the help of the Long Wang. Sometimes there's a procession with a

dragon effigy. In villages the people visit the most important temple with an ample sacrifice. If that doesn't work within a few days they move the god's statue to the roadside on the basis that this will be unpleasant for a water creature, motivating it to act. If rain comes the god receives another sacrifice. The Long Wang are also approached to stop rain to prevent floods. They have jurisdiction over funerals too, and if a mistake is made in the rites the people appeal to them.

Aegis

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

Required Powers

- Switch: Underwater Survival (lets you breathe, and resist the pressure of the depths)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Geophysics
- Skill: Leadership
- Switch: Armour* (scales)
- Switch: Claws*
- Switch: Command Water Creatures (you can issue verbal commands to creatures that live in water, and they will understand and be inclined to obey, though their normal inclinations remain, eg most are wary of danger - use normal social skills if persuasion is needed)
- Add: Control Water (2)*
- Add: Flight (wingless) (1)*

Disadvantages

- Needs Water (you can't recover your Presence Pool until you have immersed yourself in water)
- Reptilian Appearance (tied to Armour, affects social interactions)
- Water Signs (your body oozes water when under emotional stress)

Nu Gua

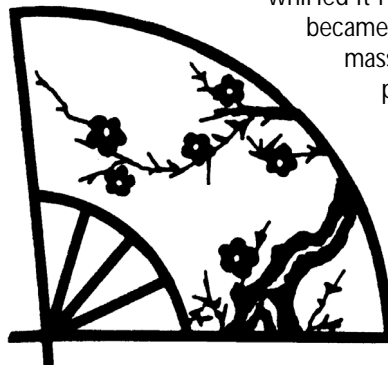
(*noo gwah*, also called Nü Wa, Nu-kua)

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

In the early days Nu Gua felt something was missing from the world and wanted some company. Idly playing with some clay from the river bed, she made a little figure, but gave it legs rather than a tail like her own. The figure came to life, and Nu Gua was very pleased. She worked hard to make many more figures. She soon realised she would never make enough to populate the whole earth, so she trailed a vine or rope in the mud and whirled it round – each drop of mud that fell

became a human being. (Some say these mass-produced ones became the poorer and less fortunate people.)

To make sure her little people wouldn't die out Nu Gua divided them into male and female so they could have children. (This creation of people is also ascribed to other beings, like Pan Gu and Huang Di. Nu Gua's version seems to be one of the oldest ones.)



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

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

Nu Gua is worshipped as the intermediary between men and women, and as a goddess who

grants children. She invented the flute, instituted marriage and instructed mankind in the art of building dams and channels for irrigation.

Aegis

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

Required Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (M2)

Optional Powers

- Skill: Natural History
- Switch: Create Homunculus (you can make humanoid figures out of found materials and imbue them with a semblance of life – they follow your spoken commands and are permanent unless destroyed - this is basically a cut-down version of Craft Wonders* and should be guided by that description for success spending etc, but it can't imbue powers, only human-type abilities – a figure takes [size levels] duration levels to make, from Small (2) to Human – constructs have armour of Hardness modified by size as usual and only a basic 2 dice for resistance, except that levels of negative Hardness give Adv instead)
- Switch: Dragon Tail (this vaguely reptilian appendage gives you an extra limb to make unarmed attacks, with an Adv to unbalance)
- Switch: Fertility (either cause plants to spring up to their full growth or give an animal, including humans, increased vigour - roll Ingenuity, BD 2 - for animals, successes are spent first to remove physical Hurts and then to give an Advantage for active physical tasks for a round)
- Switch: Jury Rigging (when constructing or repairing something you can use items, parts and materials that are only borderline suitable for the job and they'll function fine – this doesn't change the properties of the materials, just the way they fit as part of a whole - roll Ingenuity, BD 2, and the whole will hold together for [successes] duration levels)
- Add: Shapeshifting (1)*
- Add: Summon Minions** (3) (Mud People - humanoid figures of clay and mud, not yet set into proper humans - Str Tal, End Tal, no skills, Armour 1 basic and 3 vs blunt and piercing attacks due to consistency, Immunity to Toxins and Diseases, Dis to resist heat or water - Init 3, Unarmed 2/1, Defence 1, Damage 3/5/-)

Disadvantages

- Compulsive Fixer (you have a strong instinct to put things right and correct problems - may need Wisdom, BD 2 to avoid interfering)
- Parent Figure (people instinctively look to you for comfort and support, which can get in the way and hinders more equal relationships like romance)
- Ramshackle Genius (things you make never look neat and tidy and may draw derision from professionals in the appropriate fields, even though they work just fine)
- Tail (tied to Dragon Tail, marks you as a Meta and affects social interactions)

Shou Xing

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

Shou Xing decides the date of each person's death. Once written in his tablets it is unchangeable – except that he can fiddle with the writing a bit, for instance changing someone's lifespan from 19 to 91 years.

He forms a triad, the San Xing ("Three Stars"), with **Fu Xing**, god of happiness, and **Lu Xing**, god of salaries and status.

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

Aegis

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

Required Powers

- Add: Book of Life and Death (1)**

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Wisdom (+1)

- Switch: Blessing*
- Switch: Immortal**
- Switch: Sense Death's Presence (you can detect how much death there is in a person - someone who's young and healthy is "bright", someone old or with a terminal disease would be "dark" - you can also tell if someone's likely to be killed by some means in the near future, usually a few hours - may require an Awareness roll)
- Switch: Taste of Age (reduces the target's Strength by one level and increases their Wisdom by one level, which can help or hinder depending on circumstance - roll Presence, BD 2, lasts [successes] duration levels, maximum a day - opposed by Meta resistance, either type)
- Switch: Time Sense (you know what time it is, can detect the use of time-based powers, and can get an idea of something's age - often automatic, but may need an Awareness roll)

Disadvantages

- Big Giant Head (your forehead grows upwards by about 6 inches, and you become bald - it's quite noticeable and disconcerting, frequently bringing a social Dis)
- Leave It To The Young Folk (Dis for actions involving Athletics: running, lifting, etc)
- Signs of Age (eg white hair, wrinkled skin)

Wen Chang

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

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

examinations had to be repeated. He used the god's advice and passed.

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

Aegis

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

Required Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (M2)

Optional Powers

- Skill: Language - Chinese (in most LW games you can ignore the variety of Chinese languages – can take twice)
- Skill: Language - native (you can raise your own language one level)
- Skill: Research
- Switch: Assess the Candidate (you can get an idea of the mental abilities of a nearby person – roll Awareness, BD2, and learn the level of [successes] mental attributes in order from highest to lowest and from Wisdom to Awareness – you can also use a success to learn their general level of education)
- Switch: Characters in Motion (you can cause any nearby object bearing or containing writing to move around, including flying through the air at modest speed – use Ingenuity for accuracy and Presence for Strength/Motion Force)
- Switch: Master of Characters (you can cause a piece of writing to alter, changing its words and meaning – you must be within a few feet, but it usually requires just a simple Wisdom roll at BD 2 and is a permanent change – the GM might make it harder for a large or

complex document – works on physical writing, not electronic)

- Switch: Remote Reading (you can access the content of documents without needing to see it - the material must be within a few feet – you get an overall, general impression of subject matter very quickly and can sift through like high-speed skim-reading - you must take normal reading time to focus in on any passages you want to comprehend and retain in detail – a Wisdom roll might be needed for long or complex documents)
- Switch: Universal Reading (you can read and write the written form of any human language – gives no ability in the spoken form)

Disadvantages

- Neglected Speech (you are so oriented to writing you get a Dis for impressing people by speech)
- Obsessive Writer (you make lots of lists, and if distracted will tend to make notes or work things through on any available surface)
- Written Signs (when you are emotionally agitated, nearby written materials that are flexible, like paper or cloth, flutter and rustle)

Xi Wang Mu

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

Xi Wang Mu is shown as a beautiful woman in a royal gown, sometimes with a peacock or ladies in waiting, sometimes riding on a crane. She lives in a jade palace on Kun Lun, nine storeys tall, surrounded by a golden wall over a thousand miles long. It's also said to extend for nine storeys underground, connecting with hell at the bottom and heaven at the top. In her garden grow the

peaches of immortality, ripening every 3000 years – when this happens she invites the gods and immortals to a peach feast to renew their immortality. She has bestowed immortality on a number of humans.

Aegis

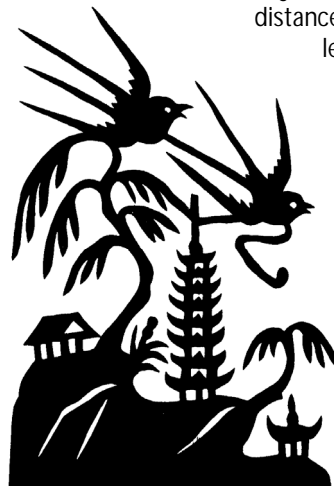
- Immortality (Adv where people are working for their own health or enlightenment; Dis in places with strong death resonance)

Required Powers

- Switch: Confer Immortality (you can give someone else nearby the *Immortal* power – can't use it on yourself - roll Presence, BD 2, lasts [successes] duration levels)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Skill: Leadership
- Skill: Socialising
- Switch: Attractive Appearance
- Switch: Tiger Monster Form (with an effort you can resume your ancient part-tiger, part-human form for a short period – Full action and Presence, BD 2 to change, lasts [successes] rounds or up to a scene if you spend a Presence Point – Strength, Agility and Awareness are raised by one, Wisdom is lowered by one, Claws and Fangs give +1 sharp damage)
- Add: Control Disease (1)**
- Add: Ruler of Kun Lun (1) (works as a Switch, costed as an Add - you have access to a strange physical pocket dimension, the same one for all users of this power, taking the form of a great jade palace and grounds bounded by a gold wall, with mountains visible in the distance but unreachable – you can enter and leave at will with a Full action and a successful Ingenuity, BD 2, with any items you can carry on you, but each transition costs a mental Hurt – you can also send others here with a similar roll, one per success, opposed by Meta resistance – you have an intuitive understanding of the place, but others can become lost - it is kept neat and tidy and food is usually available, but no beings are seen - the layout of Kun Lun maps to locations on Earth in a way that seems to shift over time, so by walking to a different part of



the palace you can emerge in any part of the planet, though not a specific location - items that are part of Kun Lun can't be brought out - anyone can enter the Dead Zone from here by passing through the Door of the Dead in the lowest level, which sends their spirit through and holds their body in limbo, but disembodied spirits from the Dead Zone can't normally come through)

Disadvantages

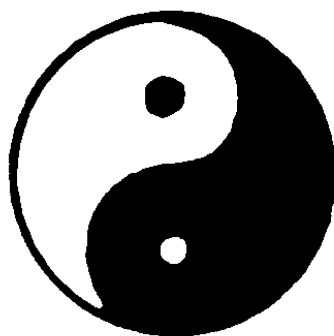
- Monstrous Past (when emotional, especially angry, elements of your old tiger monster form become visible briefly - eg eyes, teeth, claws)
- Regal (you're concerned about keeping up a respectable appearance - possible Dis for frivolous or disreputable activities)
- Unwanted Attention (you tend to attract people who want to serve and assist you, especially in a situation like a shop or restaurant - this can be annoying, and makes it hard to be low-key)

Yanluo Wang

(*yahn luaw wahng*, also called Yen-lo, Yan-lo) He is the ruler of the dead and the underworld, first among the ten Kings of Hell. He reports directly to the Jade Emperor and the Great Emperor of the Southern Peak who governs all human affairs. The souls of those who die come first to him - he investigates their actions in their past life and sends good souls to their proper reward and sinful souls to the other Kings for punishment and eventual reincarnation.

Hell is envisaged as a country much like earthly China, except that it's populated by the dead, many of whom are undergoing horrible tortures to work off their sins.

The Kings of Hell are shown dressed like Emperors, and all look pretty much the same. They have many servants to carry out their will: these are shown stripped to the waist with stubby horns on their foreheads, bearing a spiked mace or a trident.



Aegis

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

Required Powers

- Switch: See Righteousness (with an Awareness roll, BD 2, you can detect the proportions of "good" and "evil" in a person's soul and their general nature, eg a serial killer would show up as "murder", but most people would just have lots of little nameless bright and dark blotches - these are judged from a fairly absolute perspective, saying nothing about possible reasons for actions, eg killing an abusive husband would still be a dark stain of "murder")

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Skill: Business
- Skill: Law
- Switch: Breach the Wall of Death*
- Switch: Command the Dead (any death-based creature must listen to your words - you can use this to alter their behaviour using Leadership + Presence, BD 2, possibly opposing another Meta's influence - or roll Presence, BD 2 as a simple warding to keep them out of a 10ft area for [successes] duration levels, appropriate Dis for larger areas)
- Switch: Hell Vision (forces a mental illusion on the target, in which they experience one or more horrible punishments appropriate to the misdeeds they've committed in life, apparently completely real - it's an opposed Presence roll, with the effect lasting [net successes] rounds during which the target is completely absorbed in the illusion, generally writhing in agony, and they take [net successes] mental damage with no further resistance roll - victims sometimes find this a life-changing experience, especially if they're easily swayed)
- Switch: Knowledge of the Dead (learn things that a dead person knew when they were alive - roll Awareness, BD 2, number of successes indicates the number of facts and/or depth of knowledge gained - requires some sympathetic link to the deceased, their body being the best but a treasured possession, loved one, favourite place or scene of death being usable with a Disadvantage)

- Add: Summon Minions (3)** (Servants of Hell - demonic-looking shirtless men with stubby horns, bearing spiked maces and tridents - End Tal, Awa Tal, Guard, Security 2, Fighting 1, Immunity to Death Powers, Immunity to Horror and Fear - Init 5, Weapon 3/2, Defence 1, Damage 2/4/-)

Disadvantages

- Judge's Curse (tied to *See Righteousness* - that power is on at a basic level all the time, and you can't avoid seeing people's basic characters - this can give a Disadvantage when you need to display friendliness, trust, etc)
- Lawful (you try to follow the letter of the law - if you deliberately embark on unlawful actions you're at a Disadvantage from hesitation and doubt)
- Ruler of the Dead (it's your duty to see that the dead are in their proper place - if you encounter an earthbound ghost or perhaps other spirits you'll try to send them on - if you have Breach the Wall of Death you'll be disinclined to use it to bring someone else back, and suffer a Dis on any attempt to do so)

Yi

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



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

This was the time of the legendary emperor Yao. He called on the gods for help but they could not persuade the suns to return. So the divine archer Yi was given a magic bow and told to frighten the suns into submission and kill the wild animals. However, Yi decided the situation was so serious

that the suns had to be killed. He shot an arrow high into the sky – a great ball of fire fell to earth and landed as a three-legged raven (each sun had a raven living in it). In some versions Yi became too enthusiastic and Emperor Yao, afraid of losing light and warmth entirely, had a servant steal an arrow so Yi could only shoot down nine of the suns.

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

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

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

Aegis

- Sun (Adv in direct sunlight; Dis in total darkness)

Required Powers

- Skill: Fighting - Archery (may be taken twice)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Tactics
- Switch: Call Heat (roll Presence, BD 2 - first success gives intensity 1 in a 10ft area, further successes add to intensity or area)
- Switch: Elemental Resistance (4 points of "armour" against all elemental forces - heat, cold, wind, lightning, etc)
- Switch: Far Shot (you can make a ranged attack at any target you can see clearly, regardless of normal range penalties or limits - takes an extra Free action of aiming)
- Switch: Monster Slayer (+1 damage on attacks vs beings imbued by monster sources and other hostile unnatural creatures)
- Switch: Pacify Elements (your arrows carry the ability to reduce, overcome or disrupt elemental effects - roll Presence, BD 2 for intensity)
- Switch: Sun Immunity* (the usual 10 point "armour" against light attacks, 5 points against heat)

Bow

- Switch: Effectiveness*

Disadvantages

- Exiled From Heaven (Dis to resist aging, life drain or death powers)
- Faithless Companions (the source's influence spreads into your personal relationships, giving a Dis for you to inspire loyalty and for those close to you to resist betraying you)
- Monster Target (monsters will attack you in preference to other targets)



Yu Huang

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

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

Yu Huang is said to be one of the earliest gods to appear, and is one of those credited with making humans from clay. He was preceded in office by the Heavenly Master of the First Origin and will one day be succeeded by the Heavenly Master of the Dawn of Jade of the Golden Door. He came to be regarded as the supreme ruler of heaven, determining events in the heavens and on earth, with a vast number of underlings to carry out his commands in a replica of the earthly bureaucracy.

At the beginning of each year Yu Huang summons all the deities to his palace in the highest heaven to hear their reports.

Based on how well each has performed during the previous year they might be promoted or transferred to another department. The Jade Emperor was said to deal directly with the Emperor of China, and his assistants dealt with less important people. At the winter solstice and in spring the earthly Emperor made a grand procession to make offerings at Yu Huang's temple.

Long ago Yu Huang was a mortal prince. He succeeded his father on the throne but abdicated after a few days, retiring to the mountains to study the Dao and achieving perfection. Thereafter he instructed the sick and poor in the Dao and eventually became an

immortal. After millions more years he became the Jade Emperor.

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

Aegis

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

Required Powers

- Add: Summon Minions (3)** (you have access to two minion types, but can't call both at once:
Ghostly Officials - cultured oriental gentlemen in robes - Wis Tal, Pre Tal, Bureaucrat, Research 2, Socialising 1, Armour for being dead, Immunity to Death Powers and Life Drain - Init 4, Unarmed 2/0, Defence 1, Damage 4/6/-
Heavenly Host - soldiers with archaic armour, swords and spears, disciplined but not overly bright - Str Tal, End Tal, Soldier, Fighting 2, Armour - Init 5, Weapon 4/3, Defence 2, Damage 4/6/-)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Presence (M2)
- Skill: Business
- Skill: Leadership
- Switch: Blessing*
- Switch: Curse*
- Switch: Immunity to Mind Control*
- Switch: Subdue Demons (allows you to command spirit entities which have fully entered the earth plane, ie sprites - used on one at a time, takes a Full action, roll Presence, BD 2 opposed by mental Resistance, net successes show duration levels the control lasts - often used simply to command the spirit to leave its host - can also be used to sense the presence of sprites with an Awareness roll, BD 2, successes show radius of sensing area)
- Add: Master of the Gate (2)*

Disadvantages

- Elevated (Dis on social interactions with ordinary working class folk)
- Official Responsibilities (you often hear ghostly voices asking you to make decisions and give opinions - gives -1 initiative in any scene where you don't take a few minutes to deal with them by speaking out loud)
- Someone Comes In To Do That (Dis for ordinary everyday activities like cooking, cleaning, shopping, driving...)

Zhang E

(*jahng uh*, also Heng O or Chang O or other variations)

She is the goddess of the moon, where she lives in the Palace of the Great Cold. She is shown as a very beautiful young woman; so much so that in poetry a pretty woman is said to be as if she had come down from the Moon. She often wears regal garments and carries the disc of the moon. She's regarded as an embodiment of yin.

Zhang E was the sister of an unruly water god driven off by Yi the Archer. Yi was entranced by her beauty and they were married.

After Yi shot down nine of the ten suns, the pair were exiled from heaven and condemned to live as mortals (see Yi's entry). Zhang E persuaded Yi to ask Xi Wang Mu, the Queen Mother of the West, for the elixir of immortality. She provided enough to let two people live forever, but only enough to make one person truly

immortal. Zhang E thought about taking it all herself, but worried the gods might be angry if she abandoned her husband. An astrologer suggested that she could escape to the moon. On swallowing the elixir she floated up to the moon but found she had been turned into a toad.

On the moon she kept company with a white hare or rabbit, more anciently said to live there preparing the elixir of immortality, and a woodcutter who'd been banished there for offending the gods. In some accounts Yi pursued his wife furiously and the hare fought him, making him promise not to harm her. Some say Zhang E did regain her human appearance and thenceforth lived in the palace of the moon (she's certainly shown as a woman, not a toad). The most common



version of Yi's story says that the gods restored his divine nature and installed him in the Palace of the Sun as the yang to balance Zhang E's yin. He visits his wife once in each lunar cycle, causing the moon to shine with an extra brilliance.

Aegis

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

Required Powers

- Switch: Attractive Appearance**

Optional Powers

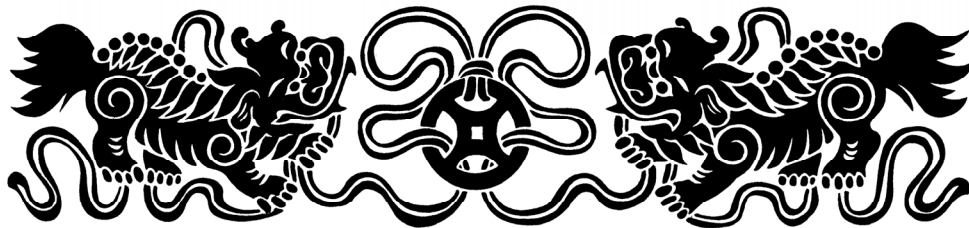
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Subterfuge
- Switch: Call Cold (roll Presence, BD 2 - first success gives intensity 1 in a 10ft area, further successes add to intensity or area)
- Switch: Immortal**
- Switch: Moon Immunity* (10 points "armour" vs darkness-based attacks, 5 points vs cold)
- Switch: Night Vision
- Switch: Shapeshift* (Toad - Small (2), Str Av, Agi Pr, End Tal, Adv for swimming, exudes distasteful poison)

Rabbit (pretty much has to be a rabbit or hare - a normal one would be Agi Tal, Wis Pr, Pre Pr, Awa Tal, Athletics 2, Stealth 1, Sensitive Hearing)

- Skill: Fighting
- Switch: Confer Immortality (you can give someone else nearby the *Immortal* power - can't use it on yourself - roll Presence, BD 2, lasts [successes] duration levels)
- Switch: Intelligence (the power of speech, Talented Ingenuity and Average Wisdom, Presence and Awareness)
- Switch: Size* - Small (1)

Disadvantages

- Nocturnal (your natural rhythm is to be active at night and sleep during the day)
- Unwanted Admirers (your beauty tends to attract attention wherever you go, bringing gifts, marriage proposals, and sometimes obsession)
- Vulnerable to Dryness (as a former water spirit and, let's face it, amphibian you have a Dis to resist harm that has a drying effect)



HEROES

Huang Di

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

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

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



In one story Huang Di arose from the mingling of the energies that instigated the beginning of the world. He then made humans by leaving earthen statues exposed at the cardinal points of the world for 300 years, during which they absorbed the energy of creation. Huang Di gained his magical powers when he was 100 years old. He achieved immortality and rose to heaven on a dragon or became one himself, becoming the ruler of the fifth cardinal point, the centre. Some say that as God of the Centre he had four faces, one facing each of the cardinal points, and could not be defeated or outwitted because he could see every direction at once.

Required Powers

- Add: Master of Skills** (3)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (M1)
- Skill: Tactics
- Switch: Centred Awareness (you are aware of what's happening in a 10ft circle on all sides of you - it's very like vision but somewhat less detailed, so for instance to read a book you'd have to switch back to normal sight)

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

- Switch: Damage (+1 base damage)

Disadvantages

- China Signs (wherever you go, little bits of Chinese culture and its trappings crop up, like written characters, ba gua mirrors, dragon images, Chinese shop assistants - it's not always clear whether they're "coincidences" or new objects popping into existence)
- Innovation (given the choice between a solution that involves inventing new things or procedures and one that makes straightforward use of existing elements, you need a Wisdom roll to choose the latter)
- Troubled by Demons (in a confrontation with beings that could be construed as demons, such as minions or some imbued people, you are a preferred target)

Monkey

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

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

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

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

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

Buddha's fingers. Defeated, he was imprisoned under a mountain range for centuries.

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

Brother Sand (Sha Wujing) was another celestial general transformed into a water monster, actually quite polite and intelligent but with a habit of devouring travellers.

The group had eighty adventures on the way, mostly against various monsters and spirits, succeeding through holiness, wit and brute force.

After fourteen years they gained the scriptures and returned to China magically. The pilgrims ascended into the presence of the Buddha. Pigsy was given a post in heaven, Brother Sand became a saint, and Xuanzang and Monkey became buddhas themselves - the Great Sage had overcome his animal nature.

Required Powers

- Boost: Endurance (M3)

Optional powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Agility (M1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Skill: Athletics
- Skill: Fighting (staff)
- Skill: Fighting (unarmed)
- Switch: Animal Connection (you have two Advantages for dealing with particular animal types, and they will not harm you of their own volition - monkeys and apes)
- Switch: Immortal**
- Switch: Leaping (4x normal distance for jumping)
- Add: Shapeshift* (2)
- Add: Summon Minions** (3) (Monkeys - hairy ape-people in Chinese peasant garb - Agi Tal, End Tal, Ing Tal, Adventurer, Athletics 2,



Fighting 1 - Init 6, Unarmed 4/0, Defence 2,
Damage 2/4/-)

Magic staff

- Add: Size* (3) (a special version as you get reduced utility out of it - the Add level gives you the maximum change larger and smaller rather than requiring separate powers)

Flying cloud (classed as an item because you can be separated from it - when under the open sky you can summon a small cloud as a Full action - it can carry one or two people and fly around on your command, behaving rather like a loyal dog - when your journey is finished it disappears again - the GM could allow this to be applied to a suitable object you carry around instead, in which case it will be nonsentient - GMs should be aware of the whimsy factor when deciding what to allow for this power)

- Add: Flight* (2)

Disadvantages

- Headache Sutra (if an authority figure, like a priest or civic leader, rebukes you for bad behaviour, like harming others without just cause or being ill-mannered, take a physical Hurt)
- Pride (seek to prove your mettle - roll Wisdom to refuse a challenge)
- Restless (you are easily bored and seek excitement - roll Wisdom to avoid pursuing an opportunity to escape inaction like stake-outs and research)



Pan Gu

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

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

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

Required Powers

- Add: Size – Growth (3)*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (M1)
- Boost: Endurance (M1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Switch: Immortal**
- Add: Creation (2)**

Disadvantages

- Creation From Own Flesh (tied to Creation power - when you create something you take damage, or have to resist doing so)
- Primitive Fashion (your clothes rapidly deteriorate, becoming ragged and untidy, until they're just doing the basic job of covering you up - normally this takes an hour or two, but synthetic fibres rot in minutes)
- Squat (your body shape alters so that you're shorter and broader - not unusually so, but enough to be noticeable)

THE EIGHT IMMORTALS

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

They are counted as Heroes for character creation.

(*Designer notes*: The Immortals might make a pretty good pulp-style team. Apologies if some of these programmes seem a bit thin - information for a number of them is really limited. I've left out the cloud flying and such to keep their powers lower key as heroes, and because He Xiangfu has flight as her distinctive schtick. See *Monkey* if you want it.)

Cao Guojiu

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

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

Required Powers

Tablet (take at least one)

- Switch: Liberation (with a successful Presence roll, objects that are imprisoning or restraining you will move to give freedom, eg ropes will loosen and fall off, locks will open - won't work on things with no moving parts, like a solid rock wall, though a fall of loose rocks might tumble out of the way - Base Dice 2 for a simple restraint, down to 0 or even beyond for larger, stronger or more complex ones)
- Switch: Stamp of Authority (when shown, gives 2 Advantages for persuading people to let you stay or pass - they won't remember it clearly afterwards)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Socialising
- Skill: Subterfuge
- Switch: Immortal**
- Add: Magic (1)*

Disadvantages

- Atonement (an ill-defined sense of shame about the past makes you very sensitive to people questioning your moral character - Dis to resist provocation or embarrassment on those grounds)
- Someone Comes In To Do That (Dis for ordinary everyday activities like cooking, cleaning, shopping, driving...)

Han Xiang

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

Han Xiang was a student of Lü Dongbin. Lü took him to heaven and he fell from a heavenly peach tree, becoming immortal just before crashing to Earth. He's usually shown as a young man with a

basket of flowers or a flute (and is the patron of flautists).

Required Powers

- Add: See Future (2)*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Music (Flute)
- Switch: Immortal**
- Add: Magic (2)*

Disadvantages

- Impetuous (you have a tendency to wander and explore in places where it's not entirely safe, driven by curiosity and arrogance - possible Wisdom check if one wouldn't normally be needed, or a Dis on a roll to check the wisdom of a course of action)
- Temper (Dis to resist deliberate attempts to provoke you, and may have to roll Wisdom to avoid getting involved in an argument)

He Xiang

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

Required Powers

- Add: Flight (1)*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Natural History

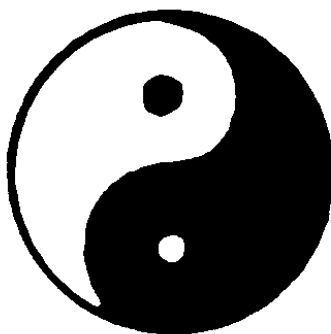
- Switch: Immortal**
- Switch: Immunity to Emotional Control* (6 points "armour" against all attempts to alter emotions – lesser effect than usual because it covers a wide range)
- Switch: Internal Nourishment (you no longer need to eat, drink or excrete)
- Add: Magic (1)*

Disadvantages

- Chaste (Disadvantage to flirting, seduction, etc)
- Ground Repulsion (your feet are always a hand's breadth above the ground – you can spend a Presence Point to overcome this for a scene)
- Urban Discomfort (you can only regenerate Presence Points in natural surroundings)

Lan Caihe

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



In his mortal life he was a poor wandering street musician, playing cymbals and flute and singing. He acted like a madman, wearing a thick coat in summer and light clothing in winter, a belt of black wood and only one shoe. His songs told of the vanity of life and its pleasures, urging people to seek the Dao, and often he threw away the money he received so those who needed it more could have it. One day

he passed out drunk in a tavern and was wafted away to Penglai island, leaving his clothes and instruments behind.

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

Required Powers

- Skill: Music (Singing)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (M1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Medicine
- Skill: Music (Flute)
- Skill: Subterfuge
- Switch: Carefree Resilience (2 points "armour" against environmental-type conditions like heat, cold and weather, and toxins including drink and drugs)
- Switch: Immortal**
- Switch: Immunity to Negative Emotions* (10pts "armour" against attempts to induce sadness or anger)
- Switch: Uplifting Song (your words and music make people feel better and bring out their nobler, more spiritual side – it's a maintenance effect, with intensity of Singing + Presence, BD 2 – others in direct hearing range heal one mental Hurt each round, or recover a Presence Point if they have no Hurts – they must also beat the intensity with Presence, BD 2 to commit any base or immoral act, and if they fail completely can do nothing but listen – a lingering feelgood effect tends to persist for [intensity] duration levels, with no rules effect but possibly reflected in the story background)
- Switch: Wild Luck*
- Add: Magic (1)*

Disadvantages

- Androgynous (it's not quite clear from your appearance whether you're male or female – this makes some people uncomfortable and can cause difficulties in some social situations, especially with the opposite sex)
- Contrary Dress (if your clothing is appropriate for the setting you're in, over the course of five minutes or so it alters so that it isn't, probably giving a social Disadvantage or two – a mismatch or inappropriate item is enough to satisfy the condition, as long as people will notice it – it's usually best to do it yourself, as at least you have control over what you get)
- Signs of Youth (you appear to be a young person, probably late teens/early twenties, and it can be difficult to convince people of your skills and experience)

Li Tieguai

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



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

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

Required Powers

- Switch: Spirit Travel (you may separate your spirit form from your body and travel the physical world as if you had Flight (1) – you are invisible and incorporeal, unable to interact physically with the world although most powers work, using Presence as Strength/Endurance and Ingenuity as Agility – you can manifest a ghostly image and voice for a scene with a Presence Point – those with Meta levels of Awareness can perceive you and you're vulnerable to abilities affecting minds or spirits - roll Presence, BD 2 to separate or rejoin if under stress – it is hard for observers to tell that your physical body is still alive)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)

- Skill: Medicine
- Switch: Immortal**
- Switch: Recalling the Dead (you can bring the spirit of someone recently dead back into their body through your healing skills – the body must be sufficiently intact to support life – roll Medicine + Wisdom, BD 2, successes show the maximum duration levels they can have been dead, no more than a week – you can try to bring the spirit into someone else's corpse, but that's BD 0 and uses the greater of the two durations – the power does work on yourself - in other relevant situations this power gives 2 Adv, eg getting yourself back from the Dead Zone)
- Add: Magic (1)*

Iron Crutch

- Switch: Density (+1 base damage)

Gourd (can apply to most containers)

- Add: Healing (2)*

Disadvantages

- Chaste (Disadvantage to flirting, seduction, etc)
- Lame (even if your legs appear completely functional, you still have difficulty using them – Disadvantage for running, fast footwork, etc, and halves your movement per action)
- Ugly (Dis for many social tasks)

Lü Dongbin

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

He came from a family of high officials, and was set for a high rank in the civil service himself after graduating with honours. However, in an inn he encountered Zhongli Quan disguised as a retired army officer. They drank together till late. Lü drifted off to sleep and had a strange dream. He saw his future career, rising from an obscure posting to high office, proving wise and just and receiving great honours. But just as he was looking forward to retirement someone complained to the Emperor about some misdemeanour. He was exiled in disgrace, his family was executed and he was eventually killed by a brigand. Waking in horror, he was convinced of the futility of his plans and gave up everything to follow Zhongli.

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

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

Required Powers

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

- Switch: Immunity to Detection Powers* (10pts “armour” against meta powers that would perceive or locate you - normal abilities are unhindered, so using your own stealth as well is often useful)
- Switch: Virtuous (wielding it gives 2 Advantages for any action in opposition to ignorance, aggression or passion)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (M1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Skill: Investigation
- Skill: Research
- Switch: Immortal**
- Switch: Master of Lore (acts as a cluster of skills, giving an Advantage for any archaic knowledge)
- Add: Magic (1)*

Disadvantages

- Cannot Ignore Injustice (Presence check if you wish to avoid helping innocents)
- Too Virtuous (Dis if you try anything criminal or disreputable like breaking in to a property or blending in with criminals)
- Unwanted Attention (your air of scholarly authority tends to attract people who want you to answer questions, make decisions for them or otherwise help - you usually get at least one of these per session, and although they could be clues they're usually distractions from your main focus)

Zhang Guolao

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

Some years later the Emperor asked a famous Daoist, Fa-shan, to reveal the secret of Zhang's longevity. Fa-shan said that this would cause his own death, and agreed only when promised that Zhang himself would be brought to revive him. He related that Zhang's true form was that of a white bat (an animal of health and luck) that came from the chaos that existed at the beginning of time, and then he fell dead. The Emperor begged forgiveness of the sage, who restored the Daoist by sprinkling his face with water. A little later Zhang returned to his mountains and finally died – but when his disciples opened the tomb it was empty.

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

Required Powers

- Switch: Reincarnation** (revive in a safe, familiar natural setting)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Chemistry
- Skill: Ride
- Switch: Immortal**
- Switch: Primeval Nature (power-based attempts to see your true nature or make deep contact with your mind, for instance to

control you, fail and cause mind-damaging feedback unless you deliberately damp down your energy – the other party takes mental damage of 3 + your Presence)

- Add: Magic (2)*

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

- Switch: Portable (can become small so as to be easily carried and hidden – changing size responds to will and takes a round to complete – it won't shrink with passengers, though you can store modest supplies and equipment)
- Add: Speed (3)*

Disadvantages

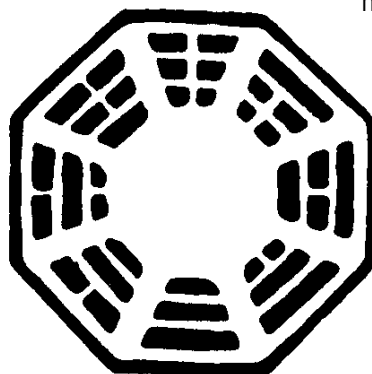
- Eccentric (you're frequently distracted from the matter at hand by other trains of thought, giving a Dis for some problem-solving, investigation and social interaction)
- Signs of Age (eg white hair, wrinkled skin)
- Unwanted Admirers (stories of your age, wisdom or powers cause people in positions of authority and status to seek you out)

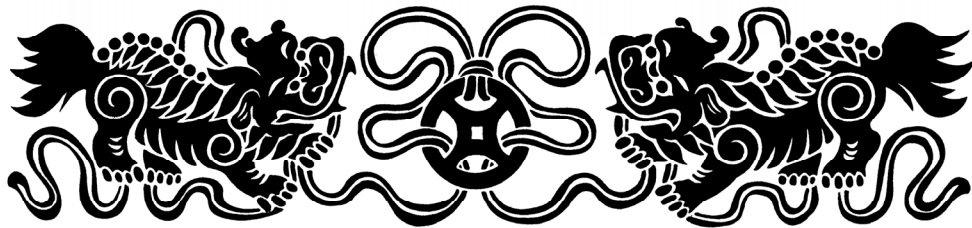
Zhongli Quan

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

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

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





MONSTERS

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

Feng Huang

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

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

Required Powers

- Add: Flight* (2) (wings)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Switch: Animal Connection (you have two Advantages for dealing with particular animal types, and they will not harm you of their own volition - all birds)
- Switch: Blessing*
- Switch: Fire Immunity*
- Switch: Uplifting Song (your words and music make people feel better and bring out their nobler, more spiritual side – it's a maintenance effect, with intensity of Singing + Presence, BD 2 – others in direct hearing range heal one mental Hurt each round, or recover a Presence Point if they have no Hurts – they

must also beat the intensity with Presence, BD 2 to commit any base or immoral act, and if they fail completely can do nothing but listen – a lingering feelgood effect tends to persist for [intensity] duration levels, with no rules effect but possibly reflected in the story background)

- Add: Control Fire* (1)

Disadvantages

- Feather Hair (gives Disadvantage in some social situations)
- Too Virtuous (Dis for criminal or dishonest activities)
- Wings (an obvious Meta mark, tied to Flight)

Gui

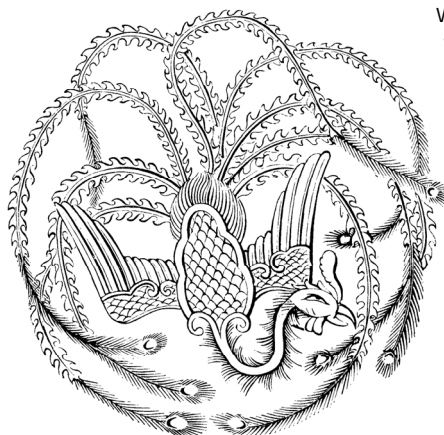
(*gwee*) These are ghosts; usually those whose allotted lifespans were cut short by accident or suicide or who had no relatives to tend their graves. They are doomed to wander as restless spirits. Gui are cut off from the cycle of rebirth unless they can find someone who died the same way to replace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

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

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

Required Powers

- Add: Intangibility (1) (acts as a Switch, costed as an Add - allows you to become immaterial, able to pass through solid objects - most forms of physical harm will pass through you without



ill effect, but you are unable to interact with the physical world - becoming intangible takes a free action and a roll of Add + Ingenuity, BD 2, lasting a maximum of [successes] rounds)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Subterfuge
- Switch: Death Immunity* (usual 10pts vs death powers and life drain, 4pts vs poison and disease)
- Switch: Limited Possession (you can phase into another body, taking complete control - on a living person you must overcome their mental resistance, it only lasts [remaining successes] rounds, and any physical damage the host takes is also taken by you when you leave - on a reasonably fresh corpse it lasts [successes] duration levels)
- Switch: Sense Premature Death (with Awareness, BD 2 you can sense life cut short by accident, suicide or murder on a corpse or a location - you get a sense of which it was and roughly how long ago, but no details)
- Add: Invisibility (1) (acts as a Switch, costed as an Add - makes you undetectable by sight, but doesn't block other senses - roll Ingenuity, BD 2 to activate, successes indicate duration levels)

Disadvantages

- Dead (you are noticeably gaunt and pale)
- Fixed Intangibility (tied to Intangibility - reverses the power so that your normal state is intangibility and it takes an effort of will to become solid for a short time)
- Fixed Invisibility (tied to Invisibility - reverses the power so that your normal state is invisibility and it takes an effort of will to become visible for a short time)
- Life-Hunger (you can't heal or recover Presence Points unless you successfully attack a living person at least once)
- No Shadow (you don't cast one any more)

Jiang Shi

(*hjeeang shuh*, also kuang shi, geung si)

These are basically Chinese zombies: corpses with the power of movement but no true intelligence or will, said to be created when a person's soul fails to leave the body at death or is called back into it. They are known as hopping corpses for their distinctive way of moving. Their touch can kill a living person.

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

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

Required Powers

- Switch: Dead (the only form of physical damage you take is Injuries - Hurts and Unconsciousness do not apply - you can be rendered ineffective or stunned by accumulated Injuries)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Skill: Athletics
- Switch: Breath Sense (you have a supernatural awareness of the exhalations of nearby living creatures, giving you their precise location and a general idea of their type)
- Switch: Death Immunity* (usual 10pts vs death powers and life drain, 4pts vs poison and disease)
- Switch: Death Touch (unarmed attack roll if necessary to touch the target, then roll Presence, BD 2 for damage - this is a life energy draining attack, and can only be

opposed by Physical Meta Resistance - victims grow pale and withered - you gain a Presence Point if the attack does damage)

- Add: Autonomous Physiology (you no longer need to breathe, sleep, eat, drink or excrete)

Disadvantages

- Dead (taken once, you are noticeably gaunt and pale - taken a second time, probably linked to Autonomous Physiology, your body is no longer capable of breathing and certain other processes strongly connected with being alive)
- Hopping (you can no longer walk in the normal way but must travel using a curious hop, like a small jump with both feet - you can manage ordinary walking speed like this, but can't run or get over an obstruction more than a few inches high)
- Life-Hunger (you can't heal or recover Presence Points unless you successfully attack a living person at least once)

Qilin

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

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

Qilin embody all that is good, pure, and peaceful. They live in heaven and only visit the world in connection with some great man, for instance at the birth of a philosopher or in areas ruled by a wise and benevolent leader. They do not eat meat and take care not to tread on any living thing. Their steps are so light that they can walk on grass without trampling the blades, and even walk on water. A qilin only becomes fierce if a pure person is threatened by someone wicked: then it may spout flames from its mouth or use other miraculous powers.



Required Powers

- Switch: See Righteousness (with an Awareness roll, BD 2, you can detect the proportions of "good" and "evil" in a person's soul and their general nature, eg a serial killer would show up as "murder", but most people would just have lots of little nameless bright and dark blotches - these are judged from a fairly absolute perspective, saying nothing about possible reasons for actions, eg killing an abusive husband would still be a dark stain of "murder")

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Switch: Animal Connection (you have two Advantages for dealing with particular animal types, and they will not harm you of their own volition - all mammals, but not humans)
- Switch: Fire Blast (a damaging gout of flame, working as an explosion confined to a 90-degree arc with damage determined by Presence, BD 2)
- Switch: Horn or Antlers (+1 unarmed damage)
- Switch: Light Tread (you can walk or run at normal speed across any surface, even a liquid, without disturbing it - you're affected normally by gradients and such - can give [Presence + 2] Adv for moving silently or opposing being tracked)

Disadvantages

- Animal Features (for instance scaly skin or a tail - can be taken multiple times - one pick is tied to Horns if taken - these are obvious Meta marks)
- High Standards (the guilt from any significant wrongdoing causes your Presence to drop a level until you do something to atone for it - multiple failings don't drop Presence by multiple levels, but they must all be atoned for before it'll go back up)
- Pacifist (you always try to find out what's really going on and work out a peaceful solution even when it's not appropriate - you never make the first attack in a confrontation, and suffer a mental Injury if you ever kill anyone)