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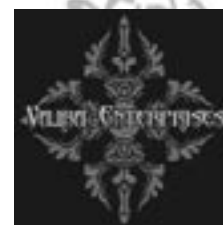
monastic edition



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# TIBET

the role playing game  
monastic edition



**ORGANIC  
RULE  
COMPONENTS**

*Author's Note: In writing this game, I attempted to reflect the beliefs of the Tibetan people as accurately as possible. The beliefs of all kinds of people, from illiterate peasants to scholastically educated lamas were taken in to account. When I encountered two mutually exclusive beliefs, I chose the belief that had greater possibilities for drama and exciting game play. I have tried not to play "favorites" by casting any people or belief system in a good or bad light*

## **About The Monastic Edition**

The monastic edition is a pared-down version of Tibet the RPG. It contains everything a GM and players need to play Tibet the RPG, but it only contains information necessary to play monastic characters. In the full version of Tibet there is setting information, character creation options and GM information for playing several types of non-monastic Tibet characters, including Aristocrats, Ascetics, Doctors, Foreigners, Gesar Bards, Merchants, Mirror Gazers, Nomads, Oracles, Revenants, Savages, Sorcerers, Treasure Finders, the Unclean, Weather Makers, White Robes and more. The full version of Tibet the RPG also contains an introductory adventure not available in this version. To purchase the full version of Tibet the RPG ask for it at your local game retailer or visit [www.TibetRPG.com](http://www.TibetRPG.com).

## **TIBET the Role Playing Game**

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...The monk gripped her phurba, a tri-cornered ritual knife. She began to chant a mantra she had learned from ancient books in her monastery library. The deep, powerful tones echoed against the stone walls of the ruins. She could not see the thing, but she knew it was here. She could feel its terrible hatred and pain.

She had been on her way to Lhasa. She was to have joined the crowds of refugees surrounding the Potala. She had heard disturbing rumors that the Chinese were preparing to arrest the Dalai Lama, and she would put her body between him and the Chinese if that's what it took. Yet on her way she had come to a village where the spirit had attacked. Seeing the damage it had done, she decided that visiting Lhasa would have to wait.

She had tracked the thing for weeks. She had traveled over freezing mountain passes, she had forged raging rivers, she had hidden from Chinese patrols. She had followed the trail of destruction and misery. When she lost the trail she had consulted village oracles and astrologers. She learned that this was once a simple spirit of the earth, before a Chinese mining operation drove it insane.

Suddenly she saw movement out of the corner of her eye. The thing hurled a huge piece of the temple wall at her. She dodged, rolling and coming up in a crouch. She did not dare to let the mantra waver. Then she could feel the thing on her, its touch like a draft against her body. It looked for some weak spot where it could enter her and destroy her from the inside. The young monk continued the mantra and tried to concentrate on compassion. She tried to concentrate on the lifetimes of suffering the demon was earning. She tried to think of how much suffering she could prevent by ending this current incarnation. She lashed out with the phurba. She felt it lurch in her hand as it pieced the creature's heart...

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# tibet in brief

**GAME TONE-** The game takes place in 1959, a time of great crisis for Tibet. All Tibetan magical and spiritual beliefs are assumed to be true. Player Characters (PCs) are more-or-less normal Tibetans (and a few foreigners) living in Tibet. The dangers characters will encounter depend on where in Tibet they are:

In areas under **Chinese Communist rule**, a cruel army allows no dissent and PCs are in danger of execution, brainwashing and torture.

In **war zones**, guerilla warfare between Tibetans and Chinese soldiers is a way of life. PCs may be conscripted to fight or may be noncombatants caught in the dangers of battle.

In **cities and villages** still under Tibetan control, Tibetans go on with their ancient way of life. Most of the dangers to PCs are from unscrupulous Tibetans using money, sorcery or politics to get their way.

In **monasteries** (many the size of cities), the quest for enlightenment and the spiritual health of the country is paramount, and monks will often undergo dangerous rituals to meet those ends. Even in monasteries there are dangers from sorcerers, criminals and political schemers.

In the **mountains** and on the frozen **plains**, traveling itself can be a danger. Strong weather, treacherous passes and rivers, wild animals, bandits and feuding nomadic tribes can threaten travelers.

In graveyards, ruins, old battlefields and other **haunted places**, the primary danger is from spirits, demons and other supernatural beings.

A major theme of the game is that nothing is as it seems. Demons take human form. Wise teachers reincarnate as children. Advanced practitioners can appear to be insane. Living, breathing humans can be created from the thoughts of a master.

**GOVERNMENT-** The Yellow Hat monastic sect of Tibetan Buddhism is the official government of Tibet. People all over Tibet depend on monks for their magical, spiritual and medical knowledge. The government is dedicated to Buddhist principles, yet half of government officials are laymen (mostly aristocrats) and the government maintains an army and prison. The head of the Tibetan government is the Dalai Lama, a tulku (reincarnated Buddhist master) and emanation of the Buddha of compassion. The capitol of Tibet is at Lhasa, Tibet's largest city. Tibet is divided into 53 prefectures, each with one monastic and lay prefect. Aristocrats and monastic abbots administrate local affairs on lands they own. Remote villages are ruled by a hereditary chieftain or by the most powerful person in the village.

**GEOGRAPHY-** Tibet is a landlocked country in Asia, about  $\frac{1}{3}$  the size of the US, bordering India, China and Nepal.

**Eastern Tibet** borders China and is home to the nomadic tribes currently at war with the Chinese. Eastern Tibet has only a few large towns, built along trade routes to China.

**Central Tibet** is the most densely populated area, with Tibet's two largest cities and most of Tibet's aristocracy.

**Western Tibet** is the most sparsely populated region, with the ruins of ancient Tibetan civilizations. Tibetans here are the last to experience social changes.

**The Chang Tang**, which stretches through the whole North of Tibet is made up mostly of mountains and barren plains with little population.

**CLIMATE/ECOLOGY-** Through most of the year, Tibet is cold, dry and constantly windy. Dust, snowstorms and highly destructive hailstorms are common. Flora is mostly sedges and wild grasses. Major herbivores are mountain goats, marmots, rodents, gazelles and wild yaks. Major predators are vultures, snow leopards, wolves and bears.

**RELIGION-** Tibetans do not simply follow one religion, they use a variety of techniques for different situations.

**Tibetan Buddhism** concerns itself with the fate of the soul. The goal for serious practitioners is to gain enlightenment (freedom from all prejudices, errors and suffering). Lay people usually don't seek enlightenment, they seek to gain enough good karma to have a pleasant rebirth. 10% of the population are male and female Buddhist monks who have studied in a monastery from an early age and taken lifelong vows.

The path of **sutras** uses meditation and a slow detachment from worldly desires to achieve enlightenment within about 10,000 lifetimes.

The path of **tantras** (the specialty of Tibetan Buddhism) uses dangerous secret rituals to achieve enlightenment in a single lifetime. Failure during a tantric ritual means madness or death. A lama (advanced teacher) transmits knowledge of secret rituals when the student is ready. Tantric rituals use powerful imagery, some even require the use of real corpses, the summoning of dangerous entities or sexual intercourse.

Tantric masters are known to gain supernatural powers (such as invisibility, levitation, intangibility, etc.) which may be used to measure their advancement towards enlightenment. People with large amounts of good karma can also perform miracles.

Tibetan **folk religion** is totally unorganized and has no priests (although some people make a living via special powers). Folk religion believes in many minor deities that contribute to every aspect of life. There are deities of every room of the home and spirits that live in the body and provide life force. These entities can be benevolent or malevolent depending upon how they are treated.

**Oracles** are a part of both Bön, Buddhism and folk religion. There are simple village oracles who have the power to open themselves up to possession by ghosts and other entities. Recognized oracles manifest important Buddhist protectors, live in their own palaces, observe strict codes of behavior and advise the Tibetan government.

In the Tibetan universe, ours is one of many worlds. Humans who die with bad karma are reborn as animals, as hungry ghosts or as hell beings. Hungry ghosts live in a realm of perpetual deprivation and desire. Hell beings live in one of sixteen hot and cold hells. Beings who escape from these realms in to ours cause great harm. Those who die with good karma are reborn in heavenly realms. Heavenly beings are very powerful, wise and live for thousands of years but are imperfect and will eventually die. Those who achieve enlightenment escape the cycle of rebirths and ascend to the highest heavens, where the duality between existence and non-existence is transcended.

**MAGIC**- When the supernatural is encountered in Tibet, it is rarely visible. Instead, the majority of supernatural happenings are invisible and intangible. They can only be sensed by the clues they leave in human lives. The use of magical knowledge to determine exactly what is happening in this invisible world is very important. For instance, a string of misfortunes could be from a curse, an infestation by malevolent spirits, a minor deity who has been inadvertently offended, bad karma from a previous life resurfacing, etc.

Tibetans believe in and use a variety of magic. Astrology and many forms of divination, simple and complex, are used to predict the future and gain clues about the supernatural. Holy charms (items which have absorbed good karma) cause good luck and keep malevolent spirits away. Sorcery releases the bad karma in certain items to cause illness, poor luck, bad weather and attacks by malevolent spirits. Sorcery is feared and practitioners are often banished. Magic to control weather is highly valued and taught in many monasteries. Exorcism and control of malevolent spirits is very important to Tibetans. Mantras (spoken and written prayers), thread crosses (devices that trap spirits) and gluds (dough facsimiles of humans) are used by monks and other magical practitioners to ward off, trap or dispel malevolent spirits. Sorcerers use these same devices to attract, capture and send malevolent spirits. The major Buddhist sects know complex, secret rituals that will end a person's life, yet try to use them only when it is a compassionate act.

**LIFESTYLE**- The majority of Tibetans live on land owned by another. Farmers raise crops (mostly

barley) and nomads keep herds of yaks, sheep and goats. Some very poor Tibetans live from begging, serving others and by doing unpleasant labor. A middle class exists only in cities and is made up of merchants, craftspeople and other professionals. Aristocrats live in large mansions with many servants and run their lands by remote. Their wealth comes from taxes levied from the peasants living on their lands. Aristocrats have a very cosmopolitan lifestyle.

More than 10% of Tibetans live in a men's or women's monastery. All monks undergo Buddhist training, yet only a few make a lifelong study of it. Other monks study medicine, astrology, exorcism, weather magic, crafts or martial arts. These skilled monks are often hired out from the monastery and have their own income and possessions. Other monks become simple laborers within the monastery.

Tibetans of all classes enjoy games (including archery and horse trick-riding), epic poetry, travel, picnics and dozens or festivals. Most Tibetans can read, at least a little. Tibetans in general are described as being humorous, hearty, curious and practical.

**POLITICAL SITUATION**- The new Communist republic of China recently invaded Tibet. Desperate to hold on to their way of life and avoid all-out-war, the Tibetan government and aristocracy have made a deal with the Chinese. In exchange, the Tibetan government and aristocracy have been left in charge (at least nominally). The Chinese have been allowed to enter Tibet and exert their influence. The Chinese are slowly converting Tibet in to a modernized communist state.

The **Chinese** do whatever they can get away with. In the East, they rule with an iron fist. In Central Tibet they threaten, manipulate and propagandize. As the number of Chinese troops in Tibet increases, they become more bold and their demands increase.

The **aristocracy** have made uneasy peace with the Chinese, meanwhile making secret plans to escape with their wealth when the Chinese become too intolerant to allow an aristocracy to exist

The **nomadic tribes** and rich merchants fight guerilla warfare against the Chinese. They have been surprisingly successful, driving the Chinese out of large areas of Tibet. Some rebels want to invade Lhasa (Tibet's capitol) and take control of the Tibetan government.

The **Tibetan government**, headed by the young Dalai Lama, is caught in the middle. They are trying to maintain a fragile peace with the Chinese. They have the Chinese watching their every move and there are indications that the Chinese are looking for an opportunity to arrest the Dalai Lama. The Dalai Lama has refused to send Tibetan troops to fight with or fight against the nomadic rebels.

The **Tibetan people** worry that peace cannot last long. They fear for the fate of the Dalai Lama.

# tibet

## HISTORY OF TIBET

### ORIGINS

In Brief- Tibetans descend from monkey and rock-ogress.

Long ago, before there were humans, Tibet was ruled by spirits and demons. A monkey, who was an incarnation of Chenrezig (male Buddha of compassion) came to Tibet to meditate. A rock-ogress (who was an incarnation of Dolma, the female Buddha of compassion) saw him and fell in love with him. She tried to seduce him but he refused to break his vow of celibacy. She became so angry she started smashing things. Fearing she might destroy the entire world, the monkey relented. They had six human children which were the first Tibetan people.

### KINGDOMS AND EMPIRES

In Brief- 527BC to 602AD, many powerful kingdoms.

Tibet had many ancient and powerful kingdoms that rose and fell. Included are: the enlightened kingdom of Shambhala (see p.134); a kingdom in Northern Tibet ruled by women (with fierce female warriors); and the Zhang Zhung empire, which ruled most of Western Tibet. Zhang Zhung helped make Bön (see p.27) the dominant religion of Tibet.

### SPREAD OF BUDDHISM

In Brief- 602AD to 838AD, king Songsten unifies Tibet, imports Buddhism from India.

In 602 AD, the Tibetan tribes were unified in to a single empire. This unification was started by Namri Songsten, the warrior king of Yarlung, and was finished by his son Songsten Gampo. Even the powerful Zhang Zhung empire was eventually conquered. Under Songsten's reign, Tibet was a formidable military power, controlling important trade routes and terrorizing nearby countries (including China). Among his wives, Songsten Gampo

had one wife from Nepal and one wife from China. Together, his wives converted Songsten from Bön to Buddhism. Songsten Gampo imported Buddhism from India. He made Sanskrit (the written language of India and the Buddhist sutras) the official written language of Tibet. He invited several Buddhist masters (called Gurus in India, Lamas in Tibet) to come to Tibet.

Padmasambhava was the most important Indian Buddhist teacher to come to Tibet. He was an Indian Tantric master who came to Tibet around 775 AD. He wandered around Tibet founding Buddhist monasteries and conquering spirits and demons. Some Bön priests felt threatened by this competitor and summoned spirits to attack Padmasambhava. He bound these spirits as well. Padmasambhava bound these spirits and demons to an oath to protect Buddhism and its followers.

### Two Views of Padmasambhava

As often happens, Bön and Buddhist stories credit different heroes and villains but the end result of the stories is the same. According to the Bön, Padmasambhava was an unscrupulous character who used sorcery (disease and death magic) to achieve his goals. The powerful demons he claims to have conquered and bound to an oath to be good were actually conquered and bound long before by Shenrab Mido, the great Bön teacher.

### DARK AGES

In Brief- 838AD to 1297AD, the empire breaks up, isolated Tibetans develop unique Buddhist traditions.

A period of three Buddhist kings of Tibet followed until, in 836 AD, one king was assassinated by his brother Langdarma. Landarma took power and persecuted Buddhism in favor of Bön. In 842 AD a Buddhist monk decided that Langdarma was doing such damage to his karma that it would be a compassionate act to stop him. This monk shot and killed Langdarma with an arrow. The monk is now deified as a hero-god. Tibet dissolved in to factions: different pockets controlled by monastic and lay leaders.

**Bön-** Tibet's pre-Buddhist organized religion; shares much in common with both Buddhism and shamanism.

**Chenrezig-** The male buddha of compassion, called Avalokitesvara in Sanskrit.

**Dolma-** The female buddha of compassion and consort to Chenrezig. Called Tara in Sanskrit.

**Padmasambhava-** The great Indian mystic who traveled across Tibet, conquering the native demons and gods, founding monasteries and hiding Terma.

**Sanskrit-** The ancient written language of India, the language of the Buddhist sutras, adopted as the official written language of Tibet.

**Shambhala-** A hard-to-find, utopian mountain kingdom where all are long-lived and wise. The basis for James Hilton's story of "Shangri-La."

**Songsten Gampo-** The first king of a unified Tibet.

**Sutra-** A traditional book of Buddhist teachings.

**Zhang-Zhung-** An ancient pre-Buddhist kingdom in Western Tibet.



When India was invaded by Muslims, the steady flow of Indian teachers and literature into Tibet stopped. Tibetan Buddhists were forced to develop their own Buddhist teachings. They discovered Termas, secret teachings that Padmasambhava had left for them. In his enlightened foresight, Padmasambhava had realized that Tibetans were not yet ready for some of his teachings, so he hid them to be discovered when Tibet was ready for them. These texts made up a huge part of Tibetan Buddhism, becoming essentially a second path towards enlightenment (one which was faster but more dangerous). These teachings gave Tibet a form of Buddhism completely different from any other practiced on the Earth.

### MONGOL RULE

In Brief- 1207-1717, Mongols rule, are converted to Tibetan Buddhism.

In the 13<sup>th</sup> to 16<sup>th</sup> centuries, the Mongols dominated Tibet. The Mongols were eventually converted to Tibetan Buddhism. Mongol influence put first the Sakyapa sect, then the Kagyupa, then the highly-reformed Yellow Hat sect in charge of Tibet. Atlan Khan created the position of the Dalai Lama (meaning “ocean of wisdom”), the spiritual leader of the Yellow Hat sect and the political leader of Tibet.

### AGE OF IMPERIALISM

In Brief- 1717-1950, many countries invade and dominate, Tibet gains independence and closes its borders.

In the centuries that followed, the Tibetan capitol suffered multiple invasions by foreign powers who wanted to exert their influence over the Tibetan government. The Chinese Manchus, the Nepalese and even the British invaded. The British ended up helping the Tibetans by modernizing their army. The Chinese held sway over Tibet for several different periods. They influenced Tibetan politics through an Amban (a permanent Chinese representative) and Chinese troops in Lhasa, the Tibetan capital.

In 1912, the last Chinese troops were removed from Lhasa. Now independent for the first time in centuries, Tibet immediately closed its borders to foreigners. It fought small battles with the Chinese to regain lost lands, but the strength of its armies slowly declined.

### CHINESE THREAT

In Brief- 1950-1959, Communist Chinese invade.

In 1949 the Communist Government assumed power in China. In October, 1950, the Chinese invaded Tibet. The Dalai Lama was accommodating to the Chinese, hoping to find a peaceful solution to the conflict. The Seventeen Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet was soon signed by Tibetan representatives. It established Tibetan autonomy but with Chinese military presence and modernizing influence. This peace was not to last as it became clearer and clearer that the Chinese had no intentions of letting Tibetans live their lives as they wished. Fighting started among the Khampa nomads and slowly spread, like a smoldering fire, across Tibet. For more, see p.47.



*the 13th Dalai Lama in 1921*

**Terma-** A discovered holy text or article that had once been hidden because people were not yet ready to have it.

**Langdarma-** The ancient Tibetan king who persecuted Buddhism in favor of Bön.

**Dalai Lama-** A tulku and reincarnation of Chenrezig who is the head of the Yellow Hat Buddhist sect and ruler of Tibet.

**Lhasa-** The capital and largest city in Tibet.

Era	Tibetan Timeline	Dominant Religion
<b>Kingdoms and Empires</b>	1500BC- Tibet becomes colder and drier.	Tibetan Folk Religion
	600BC- Beginnings of Zhang Zhung civilization. 563BC- Gautama Buddha born. 528BC- Buddha gains enlightenment. 527BC- King of Shambhala travels to India, learns Kalachakra tantra from Buddha. 500BC- Shernrab Miwo brings Bön to Tibet	Bön
<b>Spread of Buddhism</b>	602AD- Namri Songsten starts unifying Tibet. 641AD- Songsten Gampo converted to Buddhism. 641AD- Construction of first Potala starts. 774AD- Padmasambhava comes to Tibet. 800AD- Zhang Zhung empire falls. 779AD- Samye founded.	Nyingmapa
<b>Dark Ages</b>	838AD- Langdarma assassinates king, takes over Tibet, persecutes Buddhism. 842AD- Langdarma assassinated by Buddhist monk.	Bön
	1000- King Gesar unites Ling 1017- New Bön teachings by Shenchen Lusa, Bön monasteries built throughout Tibet. 1042- Atisha teaches, founds Kadampa order. 1073- Sakyapa monastery and order founded. 1027- Mongols dominate Tibet. 1096- Machig Labrang reveals Chod (Death Tantra).	Nyingmapa
<b>Mongol Rule</b>	1253- Sakyapa made the rulers of Tibet by Mongols, teach Tibetan religion to Mongols. 1330- 1st Christian friar in Tibet	Sakyapa
	1358- Kagyupa order rules most of Tibet. 1049- Tsongkhapa founds Gelugpa (yellow hat) order, Ganden is 1st yellow-hat monastery. 1414- Drepung monastery founded 1417- Sera monastery founded 1445- Tashilhunpo monastery founded.	Kagyupa
	1578- Altan Khan converted to Yellow-Hat Buddhism, creates Dalai Lama as leader of Tibet. 1642- 1 <sup>st</sup> Panchen Lama declared by 5 <sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama. 1643- Potala rebuilt.	Yellow Hat
<b>Dealing with Empires</b>	1721- Chinese create the position of Amban. 1800- Rimed becoming popular. 1904- British troops invade Lhasa. 1912- Chinese troops removed from Lhasa, Tibet enjoys independence. 1913- Tibet closed to foreigners. 1923- Panchen Lama flees to China. 1933- 13 <sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama dies, Reting Rimpoche named regent. 1940- 14th Dalai Lama declared. 1949- Communists take over in China.	
<b>Chinese Threat</b>	1950- 40,000 PLA soldiers enter Tibet. 1950- Dalai Lama takes power in Tibet. 1951- Chinese soldiers enter Lhasa. 1951- Fourteen Point Agreement signed. 1954- 222,000 PLA soldiers in Tibet. 1954- Dalai Lama and Panchen Lama visit Beijing. 1956- Kham and Amdo rebels fight Chinese. Refugees from war zones come to Lhasa. 1958- Four-Rivers-Six-Ranges founded. 1958- CIA secretly arms and trains Khampa rebels. 1959- Tibetans fear arrest of Dalai Lama imminent, amass near Potala.	

# TIBETAN PEOPLE

The Tibetan people have been described as cheerful, curious, self-reliant, hardy and humorous. They are also one of the most religious people on Earth, with religion and magic intertwined deeply in to every single part of their lives, even their government.

## WAYS OF LIFE

### MONASTIC LIFE

In Brief- Many men and women live in monasteries. Monasteries own land, run businesses and send skilled monks out to make money. Skilled monks can become wealthy.

Monasteries make up a huge part of the Tibetan way of life. Almost every family has at least one child who was sent off at a young age to become a male or female monk. Nearly a quarter of the male population of Tibet lives in a monastery as do a smaller percentage of the female population. Becoming a monk is one of the easiest ways for a Tibetan to raise his or her social class.

Monasteries make money in a variety of ways. Larger monasteries own farmland and pastureland and collect taxes from those who farm or graze there. Monasteries may also have lands that are farmed by monks. They may run shops and sell art and handicrafts. They may also own guest houses (inns). Monks can be hired out for astrology, exorcism, medicine or as a member of many other professions. In monasteries that teach martial arts, monks may be hired out as bodyguards. Some monks are hired to live in an aristocrat's home and pray for the well-being of the family. Some monks are sent out to beg for money, part of which goes to the monastery. Monastic administrators may engage in trade and investment as a way of earning profits for the monastery.

Individual monks who are sent out of the monastery to earn money can keep part of that money for themselves. Some monks are so good at what they do that they become wealthy. Others may be from wealthy families who send them money. These monks have the option to live in personal apartments in the monastery rather than shared cells.

## DRESS

**Monastic Garments-** Monks wear red woolen robes. Like chubas, one arm and shoulder may be kept outside the robes in warm weather. The color

can range from a light, pinkish, pastel-red to a dark brownish-crimson. Many monks wear a saffron colored undershirt. Monks may wear pants underneath their robes if it is cold.

**Footwear-** For almost all Tibetans, including monks, boots are a must when traveling. Boots are worn with high (ankle length) leggings made from waterproof skins.

**Hair-** Most male monks shave their heads. Depending upon their sect, female monks either shave their heads or wear their hair long.

**Hats-** Due to the cold and wind, Tibetans are seldom seen outside without a hat on. Fur hats are common.

Male monk's hats are peaked to distinguish them from lay hats. They have flaps that cover the ears and the back of the neck (can be folded up when it's hot). Among the Yellow Hat sect of Buddhism, longer flaps generally indicate a higher position in the church. Female monks typically wear skullcaps or shaggy, black wool hats.

**Personal Items-** Tibetans carry a number of common personal items in the upper half of a chuba or the folds of a robe. Almost everyone carries a charm box, a food bowl, a knife (used as a multi-purpose tool), chopsticks and a metal fire-starter. Nomads carry swords.

Most monks have a ritual water flask and a pen-case containing a quill-pen and ink. The pen case is made of iron with a leather thong and thus can double as a weapon.

Many travelers wear a portable shrine in a box held by a strap that goes over one shoulder and under the other arm. Small charm boxes are almost universal among Tibetan women.

## MONKS,

AS USED IN THIS BOOK,  
REFER TO BOTH MALE  
AND FEMALE MONKS  
UNLESS OTHERWISE  
SPECIFIED.

**Dobdob-** A monastic police officer.

**Geshe-** The highest degree in monastic scholastics, equivalent to a western PhD.

**Lama-** A teacher of Buddhist or Bön doctrines. Also, the person in charge of a monastery.



### Monastic Rank & Studies

**Joining-** At around 6 to 12 years old, a child's family will decide he or she should become a monk. Among boys, the first-born sons are the most likely to be sent to a monastery. A fee is usually required to join a monastery. Potential monks are checked for severe physical defects or other problems before they are allowed to enter.

**Genyen-** When children arrive they are classed as Genyen (a class made up of probationary young-monks and pious non-monks who wish to study briefly at a monastery). They are given a haircut and are dedicated to a teacher who teaches reading, ethics and etiquette. Corporal punishment is common at this stage.

**Getsul-** The monk becomes a Getsul (novice) after passing a test in which the young monk must memorize 125 pages of text. The monk must take an oath to observe 36 rules of behavior. After 3 years as a Getsul, the monk will get a private cell. During the latter part of their studies, novices are tested almost yearly. These tests take the form of public debates. If they fail they can be kicked out of the monastery. Most failed monks re-enter their families' vocations, but a few use the knowledge they have learned to become false lamas (see p.129).

**Gelong-** A monk must be 25 years old or older to advance to the next stage: Gelong. This is a fully ordained monk. Yellow Hat monks must observe 253 Vinaya rules, a code of rules created by Tsonkhapa. There are criminal codes (crimes that demand immediate banishment from the monastery, like sex, stealing, killing or falsely claiming supernatural powers; crimes that demand confession, like damaging a plant; and crimes that demand immediate apology, like rudeness). There are also rules of dress and care for clothing. The dimensions of ritual crafts and monastic housing are enumerated. The Vinaya tells monks how to conduct themselves in public. Monks should maintain a low voice, never laugh loudly, never raise a hand in anger, never smack or slurp while eating, etc. The Vinaya also sets forth rules for settling disputes and lists the possible defenses to crimes (innocence, insanity, invalid confession, etc.)

**Further Studies-** After the monk has achieved Gelong (fully ordained) status, they have many possible paths they can pursue. Only a small number choose to continue studying Buddhist scholastics. Others may be taught crafts, exorcism, astrology or medicine. Others may simply become laborers, cooks, minor secretaries or servants within the monastery. Some are sent out of the monasteries to act as tax collectors. Some spend time living as ascetics in caves owned by the monastery. Others will be trained as dobdob (monastery police).

**Geshe-** For those who decide to continue their studies, the paragon is a Geshe degree. It takes 10-20 years to earn a Geshe degree. The Geshe degree is a degree in Buddhist philosophy, scholarship and dialectic debate.

**Lamas-** Very accomplished monks may eventually become lamas (perfect teachers) and take on students in the more esoteric schools of Buddhist practice. Highly respected lamas may someday become the abbot of the monastery.

**Bön Monks-** Priests studying in Bön monasteries undergo a similar set of training. The Bön monasteries have Nyene and Genyen ranks (which include monks and laypeople), then the Tsangsug rank (a novice rank which includes 25 vows) and finally the Dransrong (full ordination) which entails 250 vows for male priests and 360 for females.





*female monks in wool hats*

## CUSTOMS

### ETIQUETTE

**In Brief-** Stick your tongue out, bow, give white scarves.

To salute and show respect to people of high station, Tibetans thrust out their tongue as far as they can. Travelers who meet in the road bow to each other. In Lhasa, two forms of speech survive: normal and honorific (though the honorific is becoming less well known). A Khata, a white ceremonial scarf, is a standard gift given by a visitor or pilgrim to a host.

### FOOD

**In Brief-** Meat dumplings, buttered tea, picnics.

Tibetans eat meat filled dumplings, noodles, dried yak cheese (it can last up to three years but is so dry that it must be dipped in tea in order to eat), rice pudding with currants, dried fruit and yak jerky.

Tibetans drink Chang (a milky beer made from barley) and salted, buttered tea.

The most unique of Tibetan foods is tsampa tea balls: tea (imported from China in huge bricks) is brewed, mixed with yak butter, then popped-barley flour is put in until the "tea" can be rolled up in to a ball and eaten.



*Tibetan greeting showing respect*

Tibetans will use any excuse to take picnics.

### READING

Tibetans are a very literate people. Almost all Tibetans can read at least a little. Monks and aristocrats routinely read for pleasure. Their favorite books are histories, biographies, plays, law books and books on morality. Printed versions of Gesar (see box, next page) are also popular.

Another lay favorite is the book Hundred Thousand Songs of Milarepa, from the famous magician-poet who fought for Buddhism against Bön priests.

### Books

Most books are created via wood-block printing on long strips of paper. The books are loose leaf. When not being used, the pages are sandwiched in between wooden blocks.

High quality books are written out by hand and have intricately carved covers (some even have jewels embedded in them).

The highest quality books are made with several sheets of paper pasted together and covered with black varnish. Gold and silver flakes are pressed in to create the text.



**Khata-** A white scarf used as a ceremonial gift.

**Tsampa-** Flour made from popped barley. A staple food in Tibet.

## MUSIC & POETRY

Music is also a large part of magical and religious ceremonies. Beautiful and harmonious music is used to summon peaceful beings, cacophonous music to summon wrathful beings, and deep booming music is used to frighten away lesser beings.

## TRAVEL

Tibetans of every rank are fond of traveling. Not only do they enjoy it, they believe that the occasional pilgrimage is essential for their spiritual health. In feudal Europe, most peasants never left their village, but in Tibet, most peasants have been to far off and wonderful places. Tibetans love to tell stories of the wonders and dangers encountered during their travels.

## DEATH

In Brief- Soul in danger for 49 days after death, then body disposed of in a variety of ways, inheritance to smartest son or to religion.

When a person dies, a monk or magical practitioner is needed to guide the soul through the dangerous period of Bardo. Bardo lasts 49 days, during which the soul is in great danger. An unlucky soul may be reborn in an unfavorable form, or it may get stuck in this world and become a malevolent spirit..

After this period, an astrologer determines which form of burial should be used. A body can be:

Returned to the **air** (left for vultures to eat, then the bones ground up and mixed with grain so the vultures will eat the rest).

Returned to the **earth** (buried, this is rare).

Returned to **fire** (burned, this is also rare).

Returned to **water** (buried underwater, this is usually done for small children and beggars).

Returned to **wood** (placed in a tree trunk).

Lamas are usually cremated and their ashes placed in a chorten (sacred pagoda) in a monastery. High lamas may be embalmed.

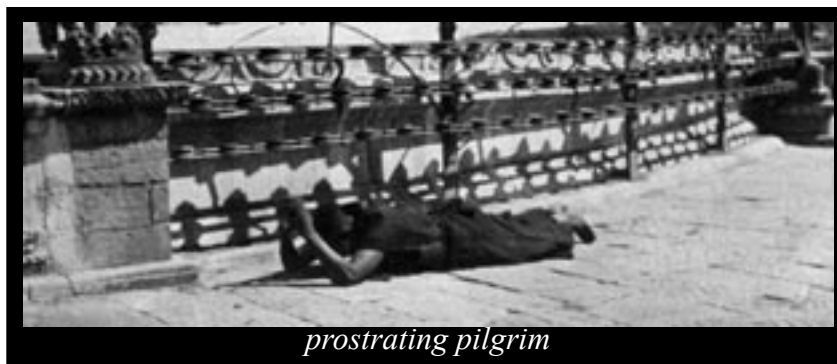
For lay people in Central Tibet, inheritance usually goes to the smartest son (or daughter if there are no sons). The property of monks is given away, by the monk's family, for religious purposes. When recognized tulkus own land, the land is passed to the tulku's next incarnation.

## TRANSPORTATION

In Brief- Few wheeled vehicles, instead Tibetans ride animals, walk or prostrate.

Wheels are rarely used in Tibet because it is believed that they will damage the Earth and anger the spirits who live there. There are a few wheeled carts used on the plains. The upper class in Lhasa keep a few cars but use them mostly for entertainment.

Most Tibetans walk or ride horses, donkeys or yaks. Some pilgrims do not even walk, they perform Kjangchag: moving by prostration. Such pilgrims throw themselves to the ground, get up, move to the end of where they last lay and do it all again, thus traversing the countryside by body-lengths. The most pious pilgrims cross the entire country this way, making clockwise circuits around famous temples, mountains, monasteries and Lhasa.



*prostrating pilgrim*

**Bardo-** The period of 49 days after a person's death where the soul wanders on this plane before the next rebirth.

**Tulku-** The reincarnation of a powerful lama or bodhisattva who has retained memories and powers from

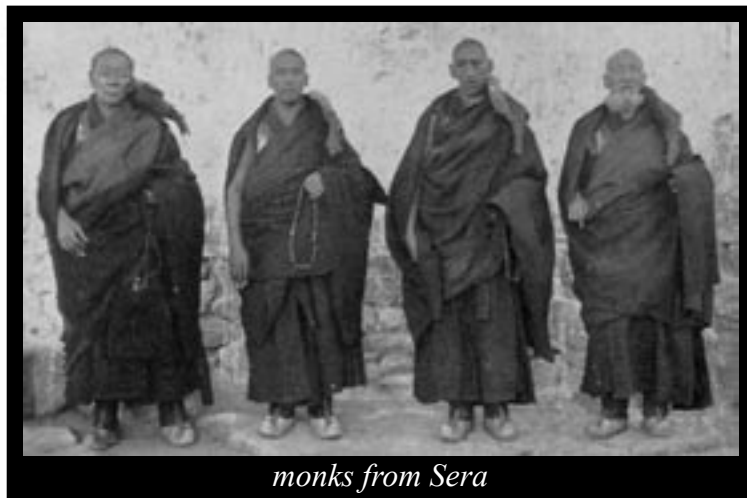


# MARTIAL ARTS

In Brief- Tibet has some martial arts, but not as important as in China.

Ever since the development of what is now recognized as martial arts, Tibetans have traded knowledge of these arts back and forth with China. Most martial arts studied in Tibet are of Chinese origin: karate, kung fu, tai chi, etc. yet there are a few of Tibetan origin or that have developed a distinctly Tibetan flavor. Martial arts are not as important in Tibetan culture as they are in China. One reason is that all Tibetans, including monks, are allowed to carry weapons; thus unarmed self-defense is less important. Another reason is that people, including monks and beggars, use magic or the threat of magic as self-defense. Martial Arts are usually taught only in a few monasteries which specialize in these arts.

The Yellow Hat monks are the most likely to learn martial arts. Yellow Hats need martial arts for two reasons: First, as the governing monastic order in Tibet, they use martial arts for law enforcement. Second, as a highly-reformed order they cannot use sorcery (or even the threat of sorcery) for self-defense. Sera, a Yellow Hat monastery, is the most renowned martial arts monastery.



*monks from Sera*

## CRANE KUNG FU

In Brief- Whirling kicks and strikes keep enemy off balance.

This is Tibet's most significant contribution to Asian martial arts and is the most widely taught martial art in Tibet. An older monk created this style in the late 1400's after observing a fight between a gorilla and a crane. Although physically vulnerable, the crane was able, to keep out of the path of the attacks and peck at the gorillas

vulnerable spots until the gorilla was forced to halt its attack.

This style makes evasions and counter-attacks part of the same movements. For instance, a whirling dodge's momentum is transferred in to a rake attack with the fingertips. Attacks are meant to cause pain or debilitate, not to do damage. High kicks and the "crane beak" (a point formed by holding the fingers together tightly) are used.

Crane Style practitioners are known to be hard to hit, always moving. Their attacks and blocks are used to confuse the opponent and put them off balance. Footsweeps are used to knock down the opponent. The final phase of attack, once the opponent has become tired or injured, is to move in close to the opponent and deliver strikes to their weak spots.

## TIBETAN TAI CHI

In Brief- Meditation on energy flow gives strength and immovability.

This art was developed in China. Although it is a martial art, meditating on Chi energy flowing through the body is as important as learning any physical moves. Although Tibetans do not share the same beliefs on internal energy as the Chinese do (Tibetans believe in the Indian concept of energy flowing between chakras) they recognized the power of this art and have developed their own unique version of it.

The Chinese use the slow version of this art as a physical and spiritual exercise. Tibetans use a full-speed version which is useful for actual combat. Tibetans learn to visualize the energies of force, allowing them to stay rooted and flow with attacks.

Most martial arts are unable to balance between moving fluidly and staying still, yet the Tai Chi practitioner sees no contradiction. Tai Chi fighters are able to move when they choose to yet almost impossible to push or knock over. Their meditation on the flow of force allows them to use opponents' force against them. For example: an opponent punches at a Tai Chi practitioner. The practitioner dodges to the side, grabbing the fist and pulling it towards the practitioner and to the side. The practitioner puts the palm of his or her hand out and the attacker is struck in the chest with a stunning blow.

## MAGIC &amp; RELIGION

## COSMOLOGY

In Brief- Our world, with heavens above and hells below, is only one continent surrounding a great mountain, one of endless worlds.

According to the Tibetan Bön religion, the universe has three layers: heaven, earth and the underworld. Tibetan Buddhists have expanded on this view, drawing on Indian myth:

This universe is one of limitless possible universes. Our universe is made up of a massive sea of air, on which floats a huge ocean surrounded by an iron wall. In the middle of that ocean is Mount Meru, a mountain 4,000 miles (6,437 km.) high.

Surrounding Mount Meru are 4 continents, of which our world is one. Each continent rests on the back of a giant golden tortoise. These continents are separated from Mount Meru by 7 concentric rings of alternating mountains and oceans. The mountains are made of gold and the oceans are made of such diverse elements as fresh water, milk and blood.

The Easternmost continent is Videha, an idyllic land with peaceful inhabitants whose faces are the shape of a crescent moon. The Westernmost is Gohanya, with inhabitants of great physical strength who eat cattle in tremendous quantities and have round faces. The Northernmost is Uttarn-Kuru, inhabited by savage, violent creatures with squarish, horse-like faces. They live their entire lives in trees and become tree spirits when they die.

The Southernmost continent, Jamudvip, is our own. Like the other three continents, our continent has two smaller subcontinents on each side. The Western satellite was traveled to by the great hero Padmasambhava. It is inhabited by Rakshasas (see Beings of Other Worlds).

## Beings of Other Worlds

**Rakshasas-** (aka Srinpo) Very large and very strong tiger-like humanoids with claws, fangs, flesh colored fur and catlike red eyes. They travel to our land occasionally in the form of shapeshifters to feed on human flesh and drink human blood, or as spirits to haunt cemeteries, disrupt ceremonies and eat other spirits. Each one has an innate knowledge of powerful sorcery. They are also featured in some Middle-Eastern Muslim myths.

**Yakshas-** These are deities associated with fertility and wealth. They are usually neutral to humans, but if they find themselves in this realm they may become malevolent spirits of incredible strength and speed who eat humans. They usually appear as voluptuous human figures who delight in sexual activity. Female Yakshas may sometimes come to this world to steal children.

**Garudas-** Giant birds who eat the largest of the Lu spirits (these Lu correspond to Chinese dragons). These birds are so massive that the beating of their wings produces enough wind to expose the ocean floor where Lu live. Garudas can take the form of humans with feathers and wings.

**Asura-** Beings who overcame every obstacle to enlightenment except pride are reborn as Asura. Asura are powerful gods who live for thousands of years in great pleasure. Yet they are doomed to jealously try to capture the bliss of enlightenment and die in hopeless battles against the Deva gods. Most Asura go to hell after they die.

**Devas-** These are gods who live on Mt. Meru and have transcended all desire (except the desire for physical being and existence in the physical world). They are bodhisattvas who once were beings of the continents or sub-continents below. They have nothing but compassion for other beings. Sometimes, however, they may act as mirrors. Someone who approaches them with anger may see that anger reflected back as a wrathful emanation. Those who confront these emanations may even be killed by their own violence being reflected back at them.

**Asura-** A type of heaven-being that lives on Mount Meru and battles against the Devas.

**Buddha-** An enlightened being; either one who became enlightened without the benefit of teachings or is an emanation of perfect enlightenment.

**Deva-** A heavenly being living on Mount Meru.

**Garuda-** A giant heavenly bird that preys on Lu.

**Lu-** A family of malevolent spirits, ranging from large dragon-like beings that live in the heavens to snake-human creatures living at the bottom of ponds.

**Meru-** A heavenly mountain far beyond this world, where heavenly being and enlightened entities live.

**Rakshasa-** A shape-shifting, human-eating monster from another world.

**Yaksha-** A type of heaven-being living on the lower levels of Mount Meru.

Mount Meru represents the heaven of the old Bön system. It is divided in to sections and the beings living on it are more spiritually advanced as they near the peak. The lowest level is inhabited by Yakshas holding begging bowls. The next level is inhabited by Garudas, giant birds. The next level is inhabited by Asura, vain gods who battle against the Deva gods who live above them. The Deva gods live in a realm where all beings have transcended every desire except the desire to have physical existence. Guarding this realm are the bodhisattva guardians of the four directions.

Above this is the realm of formlessness, where the beings have transcended even the desire for physical matter or being. Thus, this part of the mountain, and the Buddhas who live there, neither exists nor does not exist.

The Buddhists believe, as the Bön do, that under our realm are the hell realms. The hell realms are hot or cold (with a few that are neither). Each is graded by intensity and duration of stay of the tortured soul. The Buddhists believe that these hells are not created by some higher power as a punishment for sins, but by the bad karma of the deceased souls who are drawn there.

Western educated Tibetans would not argue against the Western belief that the world is round. The other worlds cannot be traveled to by land or sea. To reach them, one must leave one's body or travel through a portal (created by a powerful being).

## THE FUTURE

In Brief- Endless cycles, Buddhism will be lost and rediscovered.

The Buddhist universe happens in cycles. Since these cycles are known, the future can be predicted. The Tibetans even worship Buddhas who have not yet been born but whose coming and enlightenment is inevitable. By the 29<sup>th</sup> century, all knowledge of Buddha's teachings will be lost or will be corrupted beyond recognition. A human will rediscover enlightenment on his own, reinventing Buddhism and will become Champa, the buddha of the future. Shambhala (see p.134) will reappear in this world and the immortal king will ride down from his mountain fortress to help the new Buddhists defeat the enemies of Tibet.

## METAPHYSICAL BEINGS

Every being that exists, corporeal or non-corporeal, is just a mindstream (soul) in one incarnation. A soul will travel the wheel of life thousands or millions of times, being born as gods, demigods, humans, animals, hungry ghosts and hell beings. Some beings are powerful, others quite weak. Some beings are malevolent towards humanity and some are helpful. Most are neutral. If approached in the right way they can be helpful, if offended they can be harmful.







## BUDDHAS

In Brief- Aspects of infinite perfection, may emanate lesser beings.

These are beings beyond the duality of existence and non-existence. To say that they exist or that they do not exist would be both equally wrong. Some were never human, they emanated from enlightenment itself, others were human but achieved enlightenment (without the teachings of another buddha to guide them). They are all symbolic of different aspects of enlightenment.

Buddhas sometimes emanate: they put a spark of their perfection in to a less perfect being who has some important role to play in the destiny of sentient beings. The emanation may or may not know it is an emanation, but the emanations will have powers greater than most of its peers. Emanations might be bodhisattvas, demons, or even people. Powerful emanations may even have sub-emanations.

A great hero or influential lama is often the human emanation of a bodhisattva, who might in turn be an emanation of a buddha. The Dalai Lama, for instance, is a human emanation of Chenrezig, bodhisattva of compassion, who is an emanation of Öpame, buddha of light. Emanations do not need to be peaceful lamas: the warrior king Gesar is considered by some to be a reincarnation of the Buddhist teacher Padmasambhava, who is an emanation of Öpame.

Buddhas may occasionally take human form, often to teach someone an important lesson. Unlike emanations, these beings are not born, they appear fully-formed when they are needed and disappear immediately afterwards. They are infinitely wise and know exactly what is necessary to teach their point, even if it involves playing nasty tricks on the student. See Asanga and the Maggots (next page) for an example. Buddhas do not often appear to humans. There are beings which need much more help than humans and buddhas spend most of their time helping these beings.

### Popular Buddhas and Bodhisattvas

**Chenrezig:** Known as Avalokitesvara in Sankrit, the male buddha of infinite compassion.

**Champai Chang:** The buddha of infinite wisdom.

**Dolma:** known as Tara in Sanskrit, the female buddha of compassion.

**Öpame:** Celestial buddha of light and ruler of a kingdom of purity.

**Champa:** The buddha of the future.

**Manjusri:** a Bodhisattva of Wisdom

**Sangye Menla:** the medicine buddha, who first taught Tibetan medicine.

### Peaceful and Wrathful Manifestations

Many Buddhas and Bodhisattvas, and even a few Dharmapalas, have two different ways they can be seen. These two ways correspond to the two means of achieving enlightenment. The peaceful form shows the positive personality characteristics one cultivates on the path of sutras: compassion, wisdom, calmness. The wrathful form shows the harmful emotions that are turned on each other in the path of tantras: anger, fear and hatred. The wrathful buddhas are indistinguishable, to the untrained eye, from demon lords. Yet while a demon holds weapons for torturing or and killing other beings, the wrathful emanations hold weapons for capturing and destroying the harmful attachments of humans.

In other words: the peaceful manifestations represent what in the practitioner should be kept, the wrathful represent what in the practitioner should be destroyed. Seeing their own worst emotions reflected back at them can be too much for some beginning practitioners. Some beginning practitioners can panic and can even become mentally damaged.

**Tantra-** Any method of mystical training outside of the standard written transmission of Buddhist teachings. Tantras offer a quicker path to enlightenment but are much more dangerous.

## BODHISATTVAS

In Brief- Enlightened beings in this world to help others reach enlightenment.

These are beings that are lesser than Buddhas but are still enlightened beings. Some were once beings on the wheel of life who achieved enlightenment with the help of a Buddha. Others are emanations of Buddhas.

Bodhisattvas have vowed not to enter nirvana until all other beings have achieved enlightenment. Having surpassed the duality of reality/non-reality, these beings are not bound by the laws of physics: they can appear in multiple places at once, create emanations from their own being, let parts of themselves be reborn in to multiple tulkus and even travel through time. They are without any desire, their only motivation being infinite compassion. They intervene in human affairs rarely, but more often than Buddhas. The Bodhisattvas Dolma and Chenrezig (male and female Buddhas of compassion) are prayed to by Tibetans because of their propensity for directly aiding humans.

## YIDAM

In Brief- Models of perfection to meditate on.

A Yidam is a being which represents some aspect of enlightenment that a student wishes to meditate on. Yidams are most commonly buddhas, yet any being that has achieved some piece of perfection can be a Yidam, including powerful bodhisattvas, dharmapalas and gods.

A tantric practitioner meditates on seeing and feeling the Yidam's presence. Some practices involve seeing the teacher as the Yidam. More advanced practices let the practitioner temporarily become an embodiment of the Yidam. The practitioners acts, temporarily, as an enlightened being, and has some of the powers of that being.



## Asanga and the Maggots

Once a Buddhist practitioner named Asanga went to meditate in seclusion. After many years, without much progress, he became frustrated. However, when he walked outside he saw a rock on which many generations of birds had nested. As the birds took off from the rock, their wings brushed the rock, and Asanga saw that over the millennia their wings had created indentations in the rock. Imbued with hope that nothing was impossible, Asanga went back to meditate more. Yet, after many more years, he still had not seemed to progress.

He left his cave again and saw a dog with a terrible maggot-infested wound. He felt compassion for the animal and wanted to clean its wound so it could survive and prosper. However, he felt compassion for the maggots and did not want them to starve. He decided he would cut open his flesh and place the maggots in his flesh, so the dog could live and the maggots would not starve. However, he was afraid he might accidentally hurt the maggots as he picked them from the wound. So, he put his mouth to the dog to gently suck the maggots out.

The dog immediately disappeared, replaced by Champa, the Buddha of the future. The dog had been a lesson, designed to push Asanga over the edge to enlightenment.

**Bodhisattva-** A being who became enlightened via the teachings of a buddha but stayed in this world to help sentient beings.

**Yidam-** A type of buddha used in Tantric meditation as a model of enlightenment.

Practitioners seek to experience what it is like to be the Yidam being.

**Tantric-** An adjective referring to practices, teachings or rituals learned from a tantra.

## DHARMAPALAS

**In Brief-** Demons bound to an oath to be good.

These are malevolent spirits who were bound (using powerful mantras) to an oath to protect the teachings and followers of Buddhism or Bön.

The most powerful dharmapalas were great demon kings and queens bound by Gautama Buddha or the great Buddhist teachers. The weakest were simple malevolent spirits before being bound by monks and exorcists. Buddhist teacher Padmasambhava and Bön teacher Shenrab Mido are credited with the most bindings.

Dharmapalas are usually looked upon as benevolent beings, protectors from spiritual and physical enemies and imparters of wisdom. On the other hand, they constantly need to be reminded of their oath lest they go back to their old ways of causing damage and suffering. Whenever they can justify it (as part of their vows), they like to hunt down and kill other beings. Dharmapalas are known to destroy human enemies of Buddhism. Some even hunt down monks who have broken their vows. They are generally seen as monstrous beings with wrathful faces and multiple arms brandishing weapons (swords, knives, lances, tridents, bows and snares). See p.139 for a description of a powerful demon.

The most powerful dharmapalas, who were worshiped as deities before being bound, live in palaces in the metaphysical world. These palaces are filled with innumerable horrors. These dharmapalas have a whole court of servants who are emanations that the dharmapalas created from their own being. Some, but not all, also have a peaceful, benevolent aspect. The wrathful dharmapalas are given offerings of bone, blood, bile and skulls. Monks, who are opposed to killing, make vegetable or mineral facsimiles of these offerings. Raucous, discordant notes are played on thighbone trumpets to please the wrathful emanations. The peaceful emanations are offered medicines, sweet foods, incense and silk.

Dharmapalas are not stagnant beings. Many are progressing towards enlightenment just as some humans are. Some acquire enough good karma to pass out of the worldly realm. Among the most powerful Dharmapalas still in the plane of existence are Pehar and Dorje Shugden (see p.81 of the full version).

## DAKINIS

**In Brief-** Naked blue female angels.

This race of female beings travel through space and live in their own heavenly realm where men are not allowed. They appear to humans as beautiful naked blue women, some have wings. Dakinis delight in perpetual dancing. The Dakinis are keepers of their own secret "twilight language" which many terma (p.7) are written in. Dakinis can teach people to read this language, and thus interpret terma. Many men seek out sexual tantras in which the female embodies a Dakini so they can learn the language. Dakinis are also known to travel to this world to help Buddhist practitioners overcome obstacles to the achievement of enlightenment and to comfort those who have suffered great losses (much like angels in the west).

## GODS

**In Brief-** Mostly benevolent, though can be dangerous.

The word God, in Tibet, can refer to any number of beings that are benevolent or useful to humans. These beings range in power from petty minor-spirits to powerful entities that live in the heavens.

**Heavenly Gods:** These are beings who were worshipped before Buddhism came to Tibet. They live on Mount Meru but take occasional interest in human affairs.



*dharmapala*

**Dakini-** A race of beautiful, blue female heavenly beings, similar to angels in the west.

**Dharmapala-** A demon or native deity which has been bound by an oath to do good and to

protect Buddhism and its practitioners.

**Pehar-** One of the most powerful dharmapalas, his oracle is the most powerful oracle in Tibet and advises the Tibetan government.

They are much wiser and more powerful than humans, but are not enlightened (and thus are vulnerable to ignorance, suffering and, eventually, death). The worship of these gods has waned in post-Buddhist times.

**Country Gods:** Most of these beings were originally malevolent spirits who lived in the earth. Offerings were made to them to bribe them in to not doing harm. With these offerings they have grown in power and intelligence. They eventually became more than simply malevolent beings. They became neutral or benevolent gods, protecting people in exchange for worship and offerings. Some ghosts (especially of heroes) may become country gods.

**House Gods:** There are also a number of spirits protecting different facets of everyday life, especially different parts of the house. There are spirits of the hearth, the door, storehouse, etc. They are neutral beings: If appeased with small shrines, they will protect the house and its inhabitants. If angered they can make life very difficult.

**Personal Gods:** A person is born with five protector spirits associated with different parts of their body, including a male spirit in the right armpit and a female spirit in the left armpit. Shrines are also built in one's home for these spirits and incense is burned. Driving away these spirits (especially the two responsible for the person's life force) is a deadly form of sorcerous attack.

## MALEVOLENT SPIRITS

In Brief- Multitude of invisible beings that cause harm, ranging from weak and stupid to god-like.

The Tibetans know of countless classes and families of dangerous and neutral spirits. For instance there are fifteen types of spirits who try to injure children. Most of the time, spirits are invisible and intangible. It is only powerful spirits that can make themselves visible and tangible, and they rarely find need to do so.

The weakest spirits barely exist – they are wisps of desire and bad karma that float blindly through the world. They can make bad things more likely and good things less likely. They are not very intelligent and can not communicate with humans.

Those spirits that survive long enough grow more powerful and intelligent. They learn to unleash the power of nature or cause awful diseases. Very powerful malevolent spirits (demons) can overcome all the limitations of being a spirit: they can become visible, they can communicate with humans, they can touch the physical world. They build

## Benevolence and Malevolence

Always Help Humans:

Buddhas  
Bodhisattvas  
Yidams

Usually Help Humans

Dharmapalas  
Dakinis  
Heavenly Gods  
Devas  
Ancestor Spirits

Neutral

Country Gods  
Personal Gods  
Asura  
Garuda

Often Hurt Humans

Yakshas  
Hungry Ghosts

Almost Always Hurt Humans

Rakshasas  
Malevolent Spirits  
Demons  
Shinje  
Hell Beings

their own realms and palaces in the spaces beyond this reality and they keep lesser spirits as servants. They can even create lesser spirits as emanations of themselves.

See the section on Malevolent Spirits in the Adventures chapter (p.134) for more information.

## HUNGRY GHOSTS

In Brief- Desperate beings from a realm of constant desire.

Those who die clinging to a great deal of unhealthy desires (anger, laziness, vanity, etc.) will not be reincarnated on the earthly realm. Instead they will be reborn in the lower realms (in the realm of hungry ghosts or one of the hells). If they are reborn as a hungry ghost they are doomed to wander in a realm of endless need. A hungry ghost may suffer from endless hunger, thirst, cold, heat, fatigue or fear.

As the hungry ghost wanders in their realm they may see something in the distance that appears to be a target for their desire. When they approach, though, their hopes will be dashed. The food will be inedible, the water will be poison, or their throats will be blocked by a stone or cyst.

Sometimes hungry ghosts accidentally end up in this realm. In this realm they are typically invisible spirits. They will tear through our world in a desperate and mindless quest for the objects of their desire. They will consume food supplies, cause droughts, make milk spoil. If they notice the existence of humans they will torment the humans, trying to blackmail them in to giving food offerings.

## Good Demons?

As malevolent spirits grow more powerful, they grow more intelligent. Although they are beings made from bad karma, and their every instinct is to hurt sentient beings, they may realize that they only make themselves suffer with this behavior. It is rare, but these beings can decide, of their own accord, to stop doing harmful things (or to do some good things to balance it out). Many of the country gods were once malevolent spirits who grew to like the humans who gave them offerings. There are some Lu spirits who are purely malevolent and go around hurting as many people as they can. There are other Lu spirits that have communities, families and even practice Buddhism.

For those who can see hungry ghosts, they appear to be emaciated and dirty. They have huge heads and bellies, but tiny limbs and necks. Some have mouths the size of pinholes. Some are so dehydrated that they resemble bark or jerky. These dry ghosts can only move painfully and slowly, their flesh crackling with each movement.

The queen of the hungry ghosts is Hariti. She was a very powerful hungry ghost (the daughter of a Yaksha). She has 500 children and used to kill humans to feed them. She also used to send smallpox to unsuspecting victims. She was bound to an oath to protect humanity and Buddhism by Gautama Buddha himself.

## HELL BEINGS

In Brief- Torturers and tortured in the places where those with the worst karma are reborn.

The worst rebirth possible is as a hell being in the hell realms. The hell realms are worlds of torture and misery created by the negative karma and emotions of the souls that are drawn there. Hell beings may quickly lose all memory of humanity or human values. They become animal-like killers, their form turned grotesque and monstrous. They wreak havoc whenever they find their way to this realm.

The Shinje are a class of spirits who are born in the hell realms, created from the bad karma of those who live there. Their purpose for existing is to cause pain, and instead of hands they have pincers and other implements of torture that glow red hot (or crackle with cold). They also hunt those who try to escape from the hells. Shinje who find their way to this realm become spirits of death.

## The Hells

There are eight cold and eight hot hells. Each hell is the destination of someone who has accumulated a certain type of bad karma or has certain unhealthy attachments.

**Hot Hells-** The eight hot hells, in order from the mildest to the worst are:

- A hell where the beings fight each other in a perpetual rage, anything they pick up becomes a deadly weapon and as soon as they die they are revived again.

- A hell where black lines are drawn on prisoners and Shinje demons saw them to pieces.

- A hell where victims are continually smashed between two burning mountains.

- A hell where molten iron is poured down the throats of the victims.

- A hell where victims are cooked in molten iron.

- A hell that is like a giant oven.

- A hell where inhabitants are impaled on burning spears.

- In the eighth and worst hot hell, people burn perpetually in flames.

**Cold Hells-** The eight cold hells:

- A hell where victims live perpetually in ice filled water, their bodies eventually develop chilblains (cold blisters).

- A hell so cold that the chilblains continually form and burst.

- A hell so cold that inhabitants can barely talk, their teeth are chattering so much.

- A hell where the victims' tongues are frozen stiff and they can only mumble.

- A hell where so cold that the victims' teeth are permanently clenched.

- A hell where burst chilblains leave ragged holes so large they look like blue flowers.

- A hell where those sores are so deep that they run red with blood, giving the appearance of red flowers.

- In the eighth and worst of the cold hells, the victims are so cold that their flesh eventually falls from their bones in the pattern of a large flower. Their flesh is forever being eaten by birds and insects.

**Escaping Hell-** Each hell has two antechambers, each leads to two exits. Those who can somehow make it to these exits stand a chance of escaping, but first they must wander for thousands of years through terrible landscapes. In these landscapes they must walk over razors, through forests of evil trees who attack wanderers with bladed limbs, through swamps infested with insects who burrow in to the skin of wanderers, and even wade through hot coals for thousands of years before finding a way out. Time passes differently in the hell realms, and while it may take thousands of years from the point of the view of the hell being, only a few years may have passed among the living.

**Adjacent Hells-** There are also 84,000 adjacent hells, many of them are located on this plane of existence: in mountains, deserts and remote hot springs. These hells are the place where people go when they are unable to resolve a paradoxical nature. If someone has done good things which would send them to heaven and bad things which would send them to hell and they are unable to resolve their divergent parts, they will go to an adjacent hell on earth. They may be pampered as a king or queen during the day and tortured during the night. In other adjacent hells, humans are grotesquely twisted in to the shapes of inanimate objects which represent the evil they did during their lives.

**Shinje-** A torturer from the hell realms (or a death spirit in this realm).



## PROTECTION

With the large number of spirits and other entities who can cause damage to humans, Tibetans find protection vital. They use any means necessary, Buddhist or non-Buddhist, to protect themselves against malevolent beings. Some beings are reasonable enough that they can be placated with offerings. If they are inadvertently offended, people must figure out what they did to offend the being and make appropriate restitution. Others are always malevolent and must be driven away.

## KARMA

**In Brief-** Causing suffering will bring bad luck, easing suffering brings good luck.

Tibetans believe that good and evil deeds will come back upon the perpetrator. Thus there are two ways to protect oneself from misfortune: avoid doing bad and do good as much as possible.

Good karma can be gained by any act that eases suffering. Good karma can also be gained by making pilgrimages to holy places and going around them clockwise. The most pious of pilgrims move by prostration.

## PRAYER WHEELS

**In Brief-** Spinning wheel with prayer on/in it brings luck.

Good karma can also be gained by spinning prayer wheels. These are wooden wheels with pieces of paper in them or carved on them. The papers have prayers written on them. By spinning the wheel, the prayer is symbolically “read” (even if the spinner is illiterate). Some prayer wheels are hand-held wheels on sticks which one can spin while sitting or walking. Other, larger, wheels are built in to monastery walls. Some wheels are designed so that air, water or steam turns them, thus providing good karma for an entire area. Prayer flags or prayer beads (rosaries) also create good karma.

## CHARMS

**In Brief-** Many objects emanate good luck.

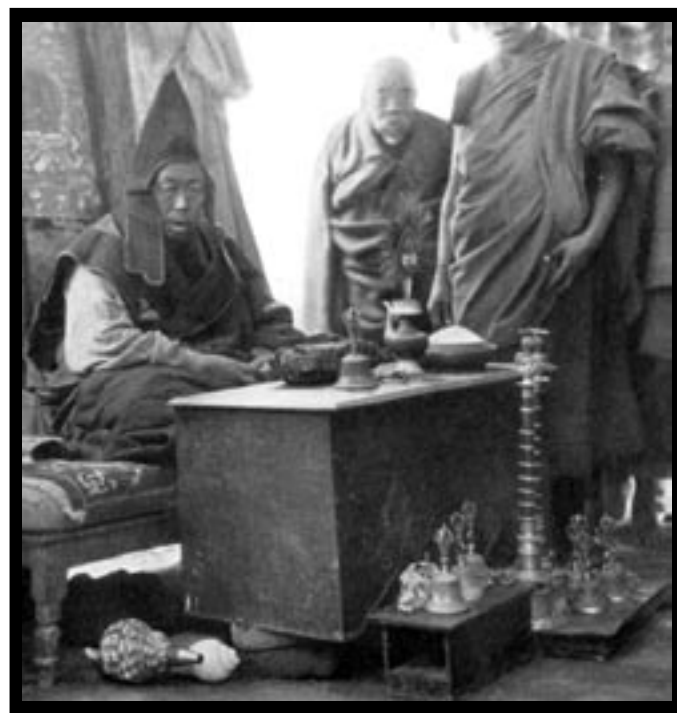
A large number of items are believed to possess protective abilities. Charms are important to every Tibetan and most carry a small charm box around their neck or in a topknot. Even animals are given protective charms and amulets.

Some charms are manmade (blessed by holy people or inscribed with magical formulae), others are ancient relics or occur naturally. Some charms are made from the ashes, hair, nail pairing or other excreta of very holy people. See Holy Objects in the equipment section (p.80) for a list of common charms.

## RINSILS

**In Brief-** Concretions of good or bad karma found on corpses; emanate good or bad luck or swallowed for powerful effect.

Rinsils are pearl-like bone concretions sometimes found in the bodies of dead lamas who had made great progress towards enlightenment. They are usually kept as a charm but may be swallowed if one is facing imminent death. Swallowed, the pills can cure the gravest illness or give the swallower the luck to survive situations of incredible peril. Some Rinsils multiply, especially when they are prayed over by monks. Some major Kagyupa monasteries have a steady supply of these multiplying Rinsils which they give or sell to the needy. The opposite of Rinsils are black Rinsils. They are concretions found in the meat of certain animals. They are bad karma crystallized in to solid form (animals being the lowest physical being on the karmic chain). Black rinsils are bad luck, poisonous and are used in many sorcerous preparations. A person who consumes a black Rinsil will gain such bad karma that he or she will almost certainly go to the hell realms after dying.



**Karma-** The accumulated momentum of the compassionate and cruel acts in which a person has participated in this and previous lives.

**Rinsil-** A bone concretion found in the remains of a dead lama. They are powerful charms and panaceas.

## OMENS

**In Brief-** Dreams, astrology and other omens used to avoid unlucky periods.

One means of protection is to foresee periods of ill fortune and thus avoid them. Astrology is one means used to determine what are the best days for each type of undertaking. Dreams can also provide omens that an undertaking should be attempted or avoided in the near future.

Hundreds of other chance events are recognizable as omens to a trained practitioner. Some omens pertain to individuals or families, others to the whole nation (recent omens for Tibet, including many deformed farm animals, are quite bad). Every year of a person's life which ends in 9 is an unlucky year (9<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, etc.). A special ceremony, called "Salvation from the Nine" can alleviate the danger.

## THREAD CROSSES

**In Brief-** Crosses with string in which spirits get trapped, also used for summoning and sorcery.

The Thread Cross is a special device designed to catch evil spirits who wander into the area. Its simplest form is that of a wooden cross adorned with feathers, with a web of string in which the spirits get caught. The spirits can then be dispelled by destroying the thread cross. Much more complicated thread crosses can be built to capture specific entities or classes of entities. These are multi-layered, incorporating the skull of a sheep, goat or dog, supported by a willow-rod framework.

People with magical knowledge can use these complicated thread crosses to jail spirits, demons or even gods. Some thread crosses are constructed to symbolize the heavenly palace of a benevolent god or goddess and are used to bring that god or goddess down to this plane.

Thread crosses are also used in sorcery. Malevolent spirits are called in to a sorcerer's thread cross, then the thread cross is broken in the direction of the enemy, unleashing the malevolent spirits upon the enemy.

## GLUD

**In Brief-** A decoy (made of dough, or a real person) that draws evil away from its target.

In its simplest form, a glud is a piece of noodle dough shaped like a person. Gluds contain different substances which represent bones and organs. The dough-person is dressed in cloth that a person has worn and has that person's smell on it. The glud is used to draw curses and malevolent spirits away from the person and in to the dough. There are different kinds of glud designed to draw out different forms of evil.

Animals can also be used as gluds: buying a live animal from a butcher and setting it free (with special ribbons tied to it) can draw away harmful forces.

Rich people sometimes even hire beggars to be human glud (glud gong) to absorb their misfortune. After having the evil drawn away by this decoy, rich people change their names and styles of dress so that the evil can not find them again.

Lhasa has its own official human glud. Every New Year the man who has chosen to take on this role goes around the city in a conical hat, with half of his face painted black, free to do whatever he wants without fear of being arrested. All the while he is absorbing the bad karma of the city. He carries a yak tail and anyone who he shakes it at will probably die. After 24 days he is chased out of the city. He goes on to other important cities to do the same thing.

The glud gong absorbs so much bad karma that he can not be allowed to live among people. He will likely die in the next year. If he survives, however, the bad karma is considered to have dissipated and he can live among people again.

## CEREMONIES

**In Brief-** Complex ceremonies use glud, thread crosses, music, offerings.

Gluds and Thread Crosses can be used together in complex ceremonies, along with mantras (magic chants) and torma (offerings, usually decorated pyramids of butter) to deal with more powerful entities. Burying the skulls of various animals can also protect against attacks by various spirits, but the person must know which type of spirit is attacking so they can determine what type of skull to bury. Blowing horns (especially long, deep horns) is believed to frighten away lesser malevolent spirits. Burning juniper branches can chase spirits out of buildings.

**Glud-** Any being or object used as a "decoy" to draw out curses or malevolent spirits, often a human-shaped piece of dough.

**Torma-** A building-shaped sculpture, made of mostly butter, used for ritual purposes.



*wheel of life*

*(top: deva, upper right: human, lower right: hungry ghost, bottom: hell being, lower left: animal, upper left: asura)*

## REINCARNATION

In Brief- Belief in rebirth as humans, animals and beings in other worlds permeates Tibetan life.

For the Tibetans, reincarnation is not simply a belief, it is a fact which permeates their lives. To Tibetans, every animal was or will be their mother in some incarnation. Thus, Tibetans avoid killing animals whenever possible. Tibetans even avoid digging during construction because it will kill worms. However, Tibetans are practical people and will kill if forced to by hunger or in self-defense.

Stray dogs are often the reincarnations of monks who did not achieve a higher rebirth and are now returning to places they knew in their previous lives. Stray dogs are tolerated in cities and monasteries. The large numbers of stray dogs can sometimes become dangerous and attacks are common.

Tibetans believe that human incarnations are very rare. This is important since the dharma (buddhist teachings) are available only to humans and certain higher beings, and the dharma is the only means of escaping samsara (the cycle of rebirth) and

attaining nirvana. Tibetans will thus do whatever they can to achieve enlightenment within this lifetime and achieve a favorable rebirth.

## BARDO

In Brief- Dead person's soul wanders 49 days before being reincarnated, faces many dangers.

For seven periods of seven days after people die, their souls are in danger. The souls have not yet gone on to their next rebirths. People's "ghosts" wander this plane in profound grief. They will try to re-enter their bodies or may try to take over other people's bodies. Apparitions will appear to the people: dazzling flashes of light, terrible roaring noises, frightening and alluring shapes. Buddhas may appear to people and try to reveal truths to them. Demons will appear and attempt to frighten or enslave the souls. Most of the visions the ghosts see are really manifestations of their own karma. Six lights will appear and try to suck the person in, these representing rebirth as a heavenly being, a human, an animal, a malevolent spirit, a hungry ghost or a hell being. Monks or Bön priests who read the bardo rites can help guide souls safely through this period.

Dharma- The teachings of Buddhism.

## MEDICINE

In Brief- Indian, Chinese and folk medicine. Manipulate humours, give medicinal herbs, exercise spirits and protect life force spirits.

Tibetan medicine is a conglomeration of aboriginal Tibetan folk medicine, medicine from China and medicine from India (including Indian humoral medicine, which comes from classical Greece). Traditional healers do not use surgery. Two diseases which the Tibetans know of no effective traditional cure for are influenza and smallpox.

## HUMOURS

In Brief- Treatments restore balance of 3 vital fluids.

Humans have three vital fluids: bile, wind and phlegm. When these humours are not in balance they can cause spiritual, psychological and physical illnesses. Too much bile is associated with greed, too much wind is associated with wrath and too much phlegm is associated with lethargy and apathy. Diagnosis of a humoral problem involves, first, finding out which flow has been blocked or is excessive and, second, using hot or cold compresses, changes of behavior, blood-letting, cauterization or herbs to restore balance.

## HERBS

In Brief- Imported and native herbs, with mantras, gathered in special places.

Herbs imported from China and India, as well as native Tibetan herbs, are used to treat symptoms and cure illnesses. These are usually accompanied by a mantra the patient must chant to make herbs more effective. The best herbs are those gathered at a mountain North of Lhasa, near the Sera monastery. There are also some substances regarded as panaceas (cure-alls). Included are pills made from the excreta of the Dalai or Panchen Lamas and a tonic made from a rare caterpillar (Aweto) found in the Alpine regions of Tibet.

## EXORCISM

In Brief- Find and suck out spirits that cause illness.

Sometimes, normal medicine is ineffective because a spirit or curse has entered the patient's body. Most medical practitioners know ceremonies and mantras to exorcise such disease causing spirits or curses. Bön and Nyingmapa trained medical practitioners are known to use ceremonial arrows to remove illnesses. A mirror is used to find the illness, then the arrow is placed at the point of infestation and used as a straw to suck out the illness, which manifests as blood or puss. The doctor must swallow this sickness in order to destroy it. Oracles who are possessed by a

dharmapala can also exorcise illnesses, sucking them out or beating them out with an arrow or the flat part of a sword.

## LIFE FORCE SPIRITS

In Brief- Re-summon lost spirit responsible for health.

Damage to a person's life force spirits (see Personal Gods, p.19) can also cause sickness. Families, nations and even gods have life force spirits. A human's life force spirits reside in the person's body but are attached to something external to the person. This point of attachment may be one or more rocks, bodies of water, large trees or animal species. Damage to the point of attachment in the physical world will weaken the life force spirit and can cause the person grave illness. For instance, if a sorcerer determines that a person's life force spirit is attached to a tree, then chops down that tree, it will probably kill the person.

Some people are lucky enough to have inherited a life force spirit. Its point of attachment in the physical world is a closely guarded family secret. Less lucky people do not know the point or points of location of their life force spirits until they consult an astrologer. Sometimes a person's life force spirit can wander off and become lost. The life force spirit must be brought back with a magical ceremony involving thread crosses (the lak'ug ceremony), otherwise the person will die.

## ASTROLOGY

In Brief- Astrologers help plan daily life, diagnose illness, tell how to dispose of bodies.

Tibetan astrology is a mix of Chinese and Indian astrology (Indian astrology has roots in classical Greece, as does Western astrology). Astrology is used to calculate many things: the best and worst times to travel, when and where to plant crops, medical diagnosis, finding a person's life force spirits, seeing if mates are compatible, etc. Bad karma from previous lives can suddenly resurface, and only astrologers can predict these patterns and tell how to protect against them. Astrologers can also tell what is the best way to dispose of a person's remains. Every village and monastery has an astrologer. Astrology is generally divided in to two types: Elemental and Zodiac Astrology, though these two types are often used in conjunction with each other.

## ELEMENTAL ASTROLOGY

In Brief- Simpler indigenous system, predicts good and bad luck.

This system is older, from Bön, and uses no mathematics. It studies the influence on a person of the five elements (metal, water, fire, earth and wood). When the influence of these elements are in balance, things will go well for the person. When

there is an imbalance of elements, there are potential dangers. An elemental astrologer, when consulting with a patient, makes a table combining the five elements, the person's animal sign, birth trigram and magic-square number. Each possible combination of forces a person may encounter is marked with a black or white stone representing good or bad luck. Charts can be made concerning the four categories of life events: life force, health, finances and success.

## ZODIAC ASTROLOGY

**In Brief-** Scholarly, mathematical system, predicts influence of good or bad planets in different aspects of life.

This is the more complicated, more scholarly type of astrology, which requires some knowledge of math. The heavens are divided in to twelve houses, each of which has its own significance. The position of the planets in these zones is used to determine events. Planets are divided in to those which are peaceful (the moon, Jupiter, Mercury and Venus) and those which are violent (Sun, Mars, Drachen and Saturn).

The **moon** is associated with sleep, peace, wealth and friendship.

**Jupiter** is associated with intelligence, success and efficiency.

**Mars** is associated with diseases, fire, theft and conflict.

**Saturn** is associated with laziness, failure, separation from home and loved ones.

**Drachen** is an evil black planet which sometimes passes in front of the sun and the moon causing an eclipse. Eclipses are very bad omens as they show increased influence by this evil being.

## DIVINATION

Tibetans have a large number of means of divination. Divination is used to diagnose the cause of misfortunes as well as to see periods of future success or danger. Astrology and omen reading have already been mentioned. There is also:

### SIMPLE DIVINATION

**In Brief-** Random number means good or bad luck.

Some divination can be done by almost anyone with little equipment. A random number, generated by grasping beads on a rosary or rolling three six-sided die, can indicate good or bad luck for upcoming ventures.

Nomads know that if they put a juniper branch and a scapula in their pockets in the morning, the first words they hear after leaving their tents will be omens which will reflect on future events.

## BOOK DIVINATION

**In Brief-** Cards or pebbles have an entry in a book.

These forms of divination use painted cards, or black and white pebbles randomly sorted in to a row. A book gives an entry for each card or each combination of pebbles. Each entry contains lengthy commentary on that selection and all the symbolic opportunities and problems it foretells.

## DRUM DIVINATION

**In Brief-** Seed on a vibrating drum moves around.

One type of divination that Bön priests learn uses a seed placed on a drum-head. The drumhead (and the seed on it) is caused to vibrate in sympathy by beating another drum. The drum head has different boxes drawn on it. The section of the drum the seed moves to tells the cause of a person's illness and whether or not they can be cured.

## SCAPULIMANCY

**In Brief-** Read cracks on a bone from a fire.

This is a very ancient form of Bön divination where a sheep or a human scapula (rear shoulder bone) is thrown in to a fire. The pattern of cracks which appear in it can be read and interpreted by someone trained in this type of divination.

## GEOMANCY

**In Brief-** Arrange houses for good luck.

Tibetans also have a form of geomancy, akin to the Chinese feng shui. Practitioners determine which arrangements of architecture, furniture, color, etc. are good or bad luck.

## ORACLES

**In Brief-** Young people who are possessed may have the ability to summon helpful beings.

Some people will become possessed, around puberty, by an entity and will go in to a fit. The spirit is trapped (a string tied around the infested body part) so it can be studied. Diviners determine the nature of the spirit. If the spirit is a dharmapala or other benevolent being, the person possessed by it will be trained to be an oracle. Oracles have the ability to let benevolent or malevolent spirits speak and act through them. Most oracles are male and can only be possessed by male entities, a few are female and can only be possessed by female entities. Most oracles come from poor nomadic or farming families.



## VILLAGE ORACLES

**In Brief-** Peasants possessed by neutral spirits or human ghosts.

These are the lowest ranking oracles. They are not trained or recognized by any major church. Rather, they are trained by other village oracles, or they may train themselves. The lowest class of these oracles are possessed by neutral Lu and Zhidag spirits (see p.136) or minor dharmapalas responsible for protecting the local area. To facilitate possession they may wear a special headdress and carry around a chair designated as the "throne" of the spirit they are calling. Female oracles pass this ability to their daughters.

Another class of village oracles are the Pawo (male) and Nyenjomo (female) who are oracles in the old Bön tradition. They are possessed by the ghosts of recently deceased humans. These ghosts have contact with their own protective deities and thus act as go-betweens between the oracle and the dharmapalas. Pawo and Nyenjomo can use their powers for evil (contacting demons via their go-betweens) as well as good. The abbot of the Sakya monastery has the job of using magic to keep these oracles in line.

The next highest class is the Palbo, who are possessed by the gods of the heroes of local legends. These wear helmets and armor to facilitate possession.

## RECOGNIZED ORACLES

**In Brief-** Supported by monasteries, possessed by Buddhist entities.

Powerful dharmapalas will choose certain oracles to habitually possess. These oracles are trained by a monastery, live in or near a monastery and are given salaries by a monastery, although they are not monks.

Oracles usually have a special outfit for each class of being they want to call down in to them. The color of the outfit corresponds to the color associated with that class of entity. This outfit should not be touched by members of the opposite sex. The outfit includes a heavy helmet (adorned with precious metals and stones), the deity's favorite weapons and a steel-tipped lance. The oracle needs a special 'throne' to sit on (a decorated wooden chair kept in a temple and carried by servants).

## HIGH RANKING ORACLES

**In Brief-** Tested, celibate, very powerful.

The highest classes of oracles are those habitually possessed by the most powerful earthly dharmapalas. These oracles are trained by monks and their authenticity is tested by the Lhasa government. While lower ranking oracles can marry, these high ranking oracles must remain celibate, as only the "pure" will be chosen as habitual vessels.

The most powerful oracle in Tibet is the oracle of Pehar at Nechung. Pehar is the most powerful dharmapala, and through his oracle he advises the Tibetan government. Higher ranking oracles must pass a test before Pehar himself before they can become recognized. Minor spirits posing as great dharmapalas will flee in fear in the presence of Pehar.

## ACTIONS OF ORACLES

**In Brief-** Answer questions, exorcise demons, perform feats. Wrathful manifestations drain oracles.

While possessed by a powerful being, oracles answer questions about the future and about causes of misfortune. When oracles speak, they do so in a strange voice that often requires an interpreter. Possessed oracles may cure people of illnesses by beating them with a sword or using an arrow for sucking exorcism (see p.65). They may attack any person in the audience who has an abundance of bad karma. They may consecrate items for healing or protective purposes. To show their incredible strength they may bend swords in to corkscrew shapes or knots or impale themselves with swords then remove the sword to reveal that they are uninjured.

Being possessed by the wrathful manifestation of an entity (see p.16) is extremely draining. Oracles wheeze, growl and lurch around like wild demons. Most oracles go unconscious after the possessor leaves. A possessor may even do permanent damage to the oracle if it stays for too long.

### Oracle Testing

High ranking oracles must be tested for two reasons:

First, people occasionally masquerade as oracles and convince others they are being possessed by a powerful dharmapala.

Second, minor spirits may possess an oracle and pretend to be a powerful dharmapala, fooling even the oracle.

Peaceful emanations use less energy and can stay in the oracle's body longer. Some oracles learn the yidam mediation of the buddha Tagrin, who protects the oracle's body from damage by dangerous dharmapalas.

## BÖN

In Brief- Teacher Tonpa Shenrab taught Bön to the ancient Tibetan kingdom of Zhang Zhung. From there the religion was spread to all of Tibet. Bön competed against Buddhism (often quite violently) and has changed to keep up with developments in Tibetan Buddhism. Bön includes the practice of magic (prediction, exorcism, sorcery, etc.) as well as practices to achieve enlightenment. Bön codes of behavior are less strict than those of Buddhist monasticism: they require only that the practitioners avoid doing things from bad motives. Bön beliefs are much like that of Buddhists, except Bön believe in a supreme being, a hero god, that smoke carries prayers and in the swastika as a symbol of immortality. Bön is known for its powerful weathermakers.

## BUDDHISM

In Brief- Siddhartha Gautama, Indian prince, achieved enlightenment and taught others how to do the same.

Tibetan peasants can not be classed simply as Buddhist or Bön. They are a pragmatic mix of Buddhism, Bön and folk religion: whatever they think is appropriate for what they want to do. However, Buddhist religious leaders hold most of the power over the country. Buddhism is the official religion of the Tibetan state.

## ORIGIN

Siddhartha Gautama, an Indian prince born in 563 BC, was kept isolated from the harsh realities of life. When he finally saw people suffering, he decided to find a way to end suffering. He studied under a variety of Indian philosophers and mystics. He found that none of their teachings satisfied him. Meditating under a Bodhi tree, he achieved enlightenment. Gautama Buddha taught his students the means by which they could achieve enlightenment. He considered his way a middle path between self-indulgence and self-mortification.

## ENLIGHTENMENT

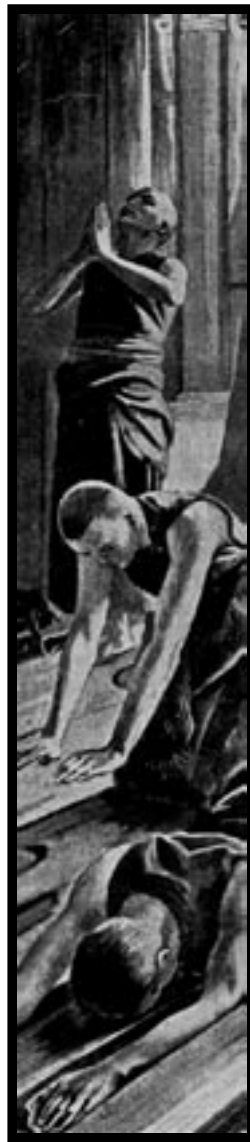
In Brief- Understanding that nothing is real and giving up on all attachments to things and ideas.

Huge texts have been devoted to the nature of enlightenment, but in simple terms, enlightenment is three things: First, a complete extinction of the mind's "grasping" on to thoughts, habits, beliefs and emotions. It is this grasping which causes the suffering of living beings. Second, infinite compassion. Third, an innate (thoughtless) knowledge of sunyata. Sunyata is the principle that all dualities are illusion and are really emptiness, including the dualities between reality and non-reality. If a person can stop wanting things, feel compassion for all beings, and realize that nothing exists (and nothing does not exist) that person will become enlightened. An enlightened person can escape the cycle of karma which causes souls to keep being reborn.

The goal for all Buddhists is to eventually reach enlightenment through training of the mind. Buddhist sects differ only in what is the best way to achieve enlightenment.

Many Buddhist symbols represent different aspects of enlightenment. For instance, the vajra (originally the lightning staff of the Indian god Vishnu) represents the male principle as well as the method (active working towards enlightenment). The vajra bell represents the female principle, the wisdom of the nature of enlightenment. The

Buddhas themselves represent different aspects of enlightenment: Chenrezig representing infinite compassion, Champai Chang representing wisdom, Öpame representing unclouded vision, etc.



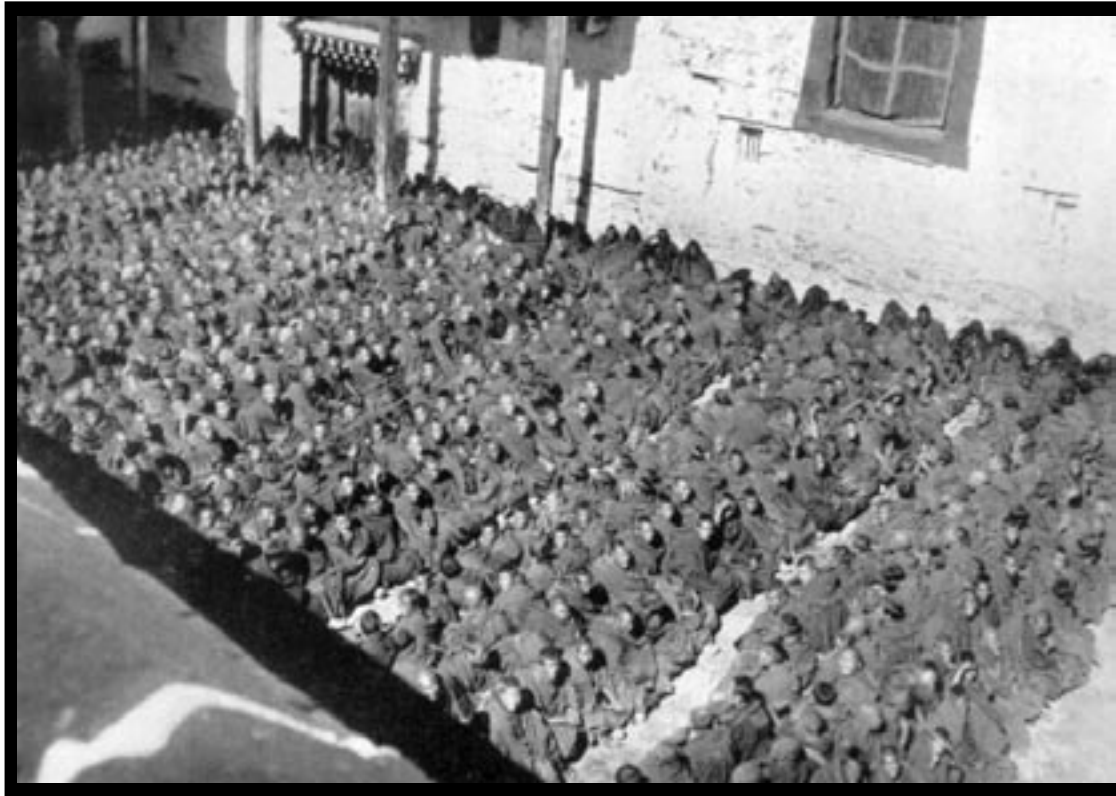
*vajra*

**Gautama Buddha-** The Buddha of the current age, an Indian prince that achieved enlightenment.

**Vajra-** A scepter or cross symbol representing enlightenment. Originally the thunderbolt

scepter of the Hindu sky god Indra.

**Sunyata-** The doctrine that all dualities are empty, that nothing exists, even non-existence itself.



### Inside a Monastery

Monasteries can range in size from huge city-sized complexes to a small compound in which a few monks live. Monasteries are divided in to those in which female monks live and those in which male monks live. The women's monasteries are smaller (because fewer girls are sent to become monks). Some are hidden in valleys to protect the female monks studying there.

**Defense-** Some monasteries are walled. Others are built on a mountain so that visitors can be seen coming. All visitors must gain the approval of monastic authorities. Dodbobs (monastery police) double as militias to defend the monastery and some even have rifles.

**Temples-** Every monastery has a buddha or bodhisattva it is dedicated to. The Lhakhang, usually the largest building or room in the monastery, is dedicated to that entity and may have a large statue. There is also a Dukhang, an assembly hall for monks. The Gongkhang is a chapel for the dharmapalas that protect the monastery and a "prison" for malevolent spirits the monastery has trapped. While it is fairly easy to visit the Lhakhang, visitors are usually not allowed in the Gongkhang. The Gongkhang is kept dimly lit. Monks keep up a constant vigil of deep chanting. This chanting creates good karma for the area and it keeps the trapped malevolent spirits at bay. Many Gongkhangs are underground.

**Library-** All monasteries have a library. In this room or rooms, the walls are covered with wooden pigeon-hole shelves. Each hole holds a single volume in it. Each volume is wrapped in cloth and placed between two heavy wooden blocks to protect it. Monastic libraries all contain at least one copy of the Kanjur and the Tenjur (see p.77). Each takes up more than 100 volumes. Most monasteries keep a history of that monastery, including the actions of dharmapalas and demons that the monastery has dealt with. This history is usually not available to normal monks or visitors.

**Other Buildings-** There are also kitchens, courtyards and storage rooms. There are dormitories where monks live in small cells. Larger monasteries have private apartments for wealthier monks.

**Abbot-** Each monastery is ruled by an abbot who is a lama (perfect teacher with secret ritual knowledge). In important monasteries the abbot is usually a tulku (reincarnated lama).

**Other Positions-** Every monastery has a marshal who is in charge of the dodbobs (monastery police) and has two deputies. The marshal reports to the abbot. Other important people who work directly under the abbot of the monastery are the master professor, the steward, the leader of the choir and the bursar. There is also an official entertainer of guests.

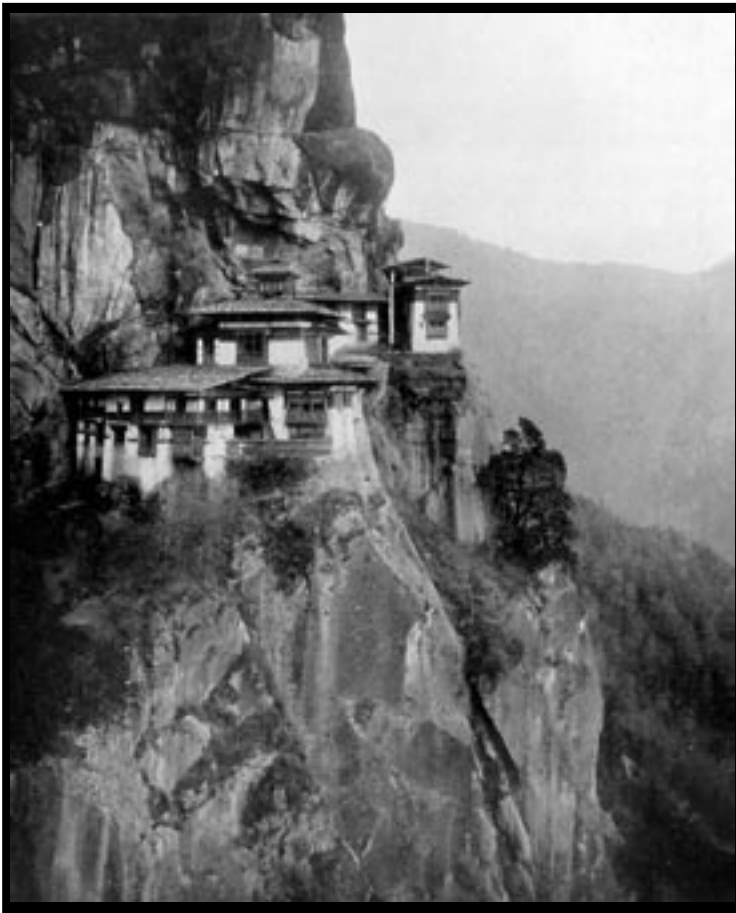
**Bursar-** Bursars are appointed for three-year periods. They are given a large sum of money which they must use to pay the upkeep and amenities of the monastery. They can do anything they like with this money, including trading and lending, but at the end of their term they must return it all. Any profit is theirs to keep.

**Colleges-** Large monasteries are divided in to separate colleges, each with their own officials. Each college is divided in to dormitories. Monks from the same region are usually housed together

## MONASTICISM

**In Brief-** Very many monasteries, for men and women, where monks go at a young age to learn and live simply.

One of the major systems through which people work towards enlightenment is the monastic system, which is especially prevalent in Tibet. There are more than 25,000 monasteries in Tibet for male and female monks. Children are sent at an early age to a local monastery where they are raised with the teachings of Buddhism. Monasteries can range from tiny habitations of a dozen monks to monastic cities of thousands of monks. The object of going to a monastery is so that one can live a simple life, free from temptations.



## SACRIFICE

**In Brief-** Monks have many duties to Tibetan people, including creating good karma, magic and government.

Monasticism in Tibet has become something more complex than just trying to live a simple life. Tibetan monks have sacrificed some of their detachment from

the world in order to help lay people with their problems.

The first and most ancient responsibility of monasteries is to increase the good karma of the area. They do this via prayers, keeping alters, maintaining prayer wheels and other means. This good karma has many practical effects, including reducing the actions of malevolent spirits in the area.

Monasteries are centers of learning. Monasteries produce skilled artisans, doctors, astrologers, exorcists, oracles and weathermakers. Some of these people are monks, some are lay people who paid to study in a monastery. Monks also know the rituals that help guide a soul safely through bardo (the period after death). Skilled monks serve the needs of the monastery's population. The same monks are sent out to perform services for the local lay community (and to earn some money for the monastery).

The greatest sacrifice of the monastic system is in taking over the government of the country. Each of the four major Buddhist sects have, at one time, ruled the country. The Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) sect has ruled the country for about 400 years. The Yellow Hat sect has hired laypeople to help run the government. Lay people help keep monks from having to do things like collecting taxes, imprisoning criminals and going to war. Yet monks of every sect can not always escape from the responsibilities of government. Monks can be called on to act as militias (especially in outlying areas that the Tibetan army can not get to). Monastic abbots must adjudicate crimes and disputes on lands that the monastery owns.

Monks know that these worldly matters impede their progression towards enlightenment. Most monks aspire to someday spend time secluded in a cave. The monks involve themselves in worldly matters for the greater good of humanity.

## LAMAS

**In Brief-** Having and trusting an advanced teacher is very important in Buddhist practice.

Tibetan Buddhism is known by some Westerners as lamaism because of the great importance Tibetan religion places upon lamas (perfected teachers of Tantra). Though there are many paths to enlightenment, some of the most favored in Tibet require a lama.

**Kanjur-** A book of the teachings of Gautama Buddha.

**Tenjur-** A book made up of commentaries on the teachings of Gautama Buddha.

**Gelugpa-** The "Yellow Hat" Buddhist sect, the newest of Tibet's 4 major sects, currently acting as the Tibetan government.

Many of the most powerful rituals are also the most dangerous, and only a lama can tell when a student is advanced enough to try them. In one tantra, students receive direct transmissions from the minds of their lamas about the unspeakable nature of consciousness. In other tantras, students meditate to the point that they are able to recognize buddha nature in their lama and can actually see their master as a buddha. Great importance is placed on obeying directives of a lama. Even orders that seem contrary to the path of enlightenment may be part of some important lesson. There are dharmapalas charged with the duty of punishing those who disobey their lamas.

## NYINGMAPA

In Brief- Oldest sect, most shamanistic, unorganized.

This is the oldest Buddhist sect in Tibet. It is also the most firmly based in shamanistic folk religion. About 30% of the monasteries in Tibet are Nyingmapa. It is one of the three sects known collectively as the red hats (to distinguish them from the newer, reformed Yellow Hats who do not allow their monks to drink or marry). Nyingmapa use the public teachings of Gautama Buddha, but add to them the teachings that were hidden around Tibet by Padmasambhava (the saint who first brought Buddhist to Tibet). The Nyingmapa sect is known to know a bit of sorcery (harmful magic). Like all red hat sects they are allowed, after a certain level of advancement, to marry and drink alcohol. However, they are strictly forbidden to smoke tobacco.

Nyingmapa is the second largest sect in Tibet. It holds the least political power because it has almost no unity. The Nyingmapa sect is made up of many autonomous sub-sects.

## SAKYAPA

In Brief- Older sect, focuses on logic and scholastics, once ruled Tibet but had bad reputation.

This is the second oldest sect in Tibet. About 10% of the monasteries in Tibet are Sakyapa. They are semi-reformed, having discarded some of Nyingmapa's more shamanistic practices. The Sakyapa pride themselves on the importance they place on learning logic and scholastics (unlike the Nyingmapa who give the tantras higher priority and the Kagyupa who give body-yogas higher priority). The Sakyapa consider their main

protective deity to be a Buddhist form of the Indian god Shiva. Many human emanations of Champai Chang (buddha of wisdom) have occurred within the Sakyapa sect.

The head of the Sakyapa (Sakya Trizin: Throne Holder) is a hereditary position. The Throne Holders were, at one time, the original rulers of Tibet (installed by Genghis Khan, who they converted) and would crush other sects that would make trouble for them. They had an unsavory reputation for using magic and sorcery. Then the Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) sect appeared. They denounced the unsavory reputation of the Sakyapas. The Yellow Hats convinced the Mongols that they were more virtuous and took over political control of Tibet. High level Sakyapa monks can marry and drink alcohol and the abbotship of monasteries is usually passed from parent to child.

## KAGYUPA

In Brief- Sect focuses on body heat and other body yogas.

This is the second newest Tibetan sect. Approximately 20% of monasteries in Tibet are Kagyupa. Its name means, literally, 'followers of successive orders,' meaning that they are a newer revision of Tibetan Buddhism. This Buddhist sect was founded by Marpa the great translator. Milarepa (the famous sorcerer turned Buddhist holy man, poet and folk hero) was a student and great proponent of this sect. The Kagyupa sect is known for putting more stress on the learning of body yoga meditations than they do on scholastics and logic. In these meditations, practitioners learn to control their bodily energies. Kagyupa monks start by learning breath control, then they learn tummo, the body-heat tantra. The Kagyupa sect is also known for its proficiency in divination.

The largest and most influential sub-sect of the Kagyupa is the Karmapa sub-sect. Its tulku (called the karmapa) is the Kagyupa's most holy and powerful tulku. He is called the "Black Hat Lama" because dakinis (p.18) created a magic hat from their own hair for a previous karmapa. Although the original hat is gone, facsimiles are used by the Karmapa in various rituals. The Karmapa rules from the Tsurphu monastery. The Karmapa tulku is Tibet's oldest recognized lineage of Tulkus. The second oldest is the Sharmapa, the second holiest tulku in the Karmapa sect, who is a manifestation of Öpame, the buddha of light.

**The Sects in Brief**

	<b>Nyingmapa</b>	<b>Sakyapa</b>	<b>Kagyupa</b>	<b>Gelugpa</b>
<b>Strong Points</b>	Large sect. Magical means of self defense.	Logic & philosophy.	Body-control tantras. Hermitage.	Large, well organized. Controls Tibet. Virtuous.
<b>Weak Points</b>	Unreformed. Poorly organized.	Unsavory reputation.	Don't stress logic and philosophy.	No magical self defense. Rejected many tantras.

**Nyingmapa-** The oldest of Tibet's 4 major Buddhist sects; the one closest to pre-Buddhist Tibetan religions.

**Sakyapa-** Second oldest of Tibet's 4 major

sects, specializing in logic and philosophy.

**Kagyupa-** The third oldest of Tibet's 4 major Buddhist sects, specializing in body-control tantras.



The Karmapa sect is the newest of the Kagyupa sub-sects.

However, the Karmapa sect adopted some tantra from the Nyingmapa sect. The older subsects (including Dugpa, Dikungpa and Talungpa) stress hermitage and may require periods of hermitage from their students.

## GELUGPA

In Brief- "Yellow Hats," newest sect, orthodox reformists, rule the country, use little magic, good at martial arts.

The Gelugpa are the largest sect in Tibet. 35% of monasteries in Tibet are Gelugpa and 60% of lay Tibetans would choose Gelugpa if forced to choose between the sects. The Gelugpa are the most recent of sects. Their name means, literally, "virtuous style." They are called Yellow Hats because they wear Yellow Hats with a red trim to distinguish themselves from the older sects (who wore red hats). The Yellow Hats are more prominent in central Tibet, while the red hat sects are more popular in outlying regions (especially Kham).

The Yellow Hats are an orthodox, reformist sect. They were founded by Tsonkhapa in the 11<sup>th</sup> century in an attempt to create a Buddhism that had been purged of non-Buddhist influences. Yellow Hat monks can never marry or drink any alcohol. The Yellow Hats are critical of the texts and oral traditions used by other sects. They do not accept texts unless their descent from the original teachings of Buddha can be established. They are the least grounded in shamanistic folk religion of all the Buddhist sects. They stress philosophy and purity rather than magical rituals. Since they have few means of magical self-defense, many Yellow Hat monks learn martial arts.

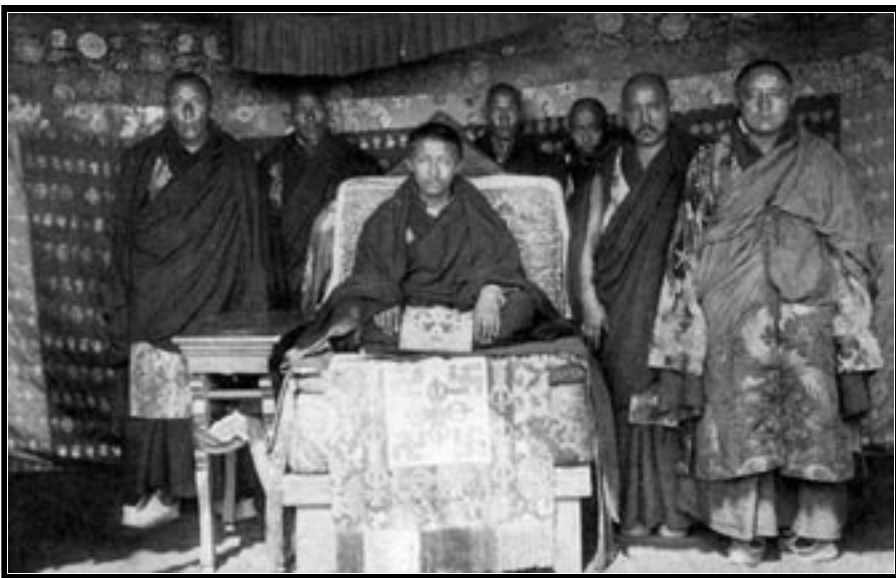
The Yellow Hats spread quickly because they had a more centralized system of power than the other sects. In 1578 they became the official government of Tibet. Despite their orthodoxy, they are tolerant of other sects and of Bön.

## MINOR SECTS

In Brief- Many smaller sects and a non-sectarian movement.

Apart from the main four Buddhist sects there are many tiny sects that do not fit in to any of the four main groups. Some are purely Tibetan inventions, others were imported directly from other countries, mainly India. Most of these sects do not own monasteries. Some require complete renunciation of all worldly goods and power. Their monks become ascetic wanderers. These groups criticize the whole monastic system and the worldly concerns that come with owning property and running a country.

Another notable group is Rimed, a synthesis of Bön and red hat teachings. Its followers believe that Buddhists should not divide themselves in to sects. Rimed peaked around the mid-19th century and has been declining ever since. There are still followers of Rimed in high positions in monasteries of the four sects.



## TULKUS

In Brief- Reincarnated lamas, often rule monasteries.

These are the reincarnations of very holy lamas who were able to choose their next incarnations. Many tulkus are reincarnations of human emanations of Buddhas or Bodhisattvas. Tulkus are often the heads of monasteries. Tulkus are especially important to the Yellow Hat sect, where abbots can not have heirs.

When an old Tulku dies, the search for his or her reincarnation soon begins. The new tulku may be recognized because he or she has some of the powers or memories of their last incarnation. Some tulkus come from virgin births. The two most important Tulkus in Tibet are the Dalai Lama (an incarnation of Chenrezig, the buddha of compassion) and the Panchen Lama (the incarnation of Öpame, the buddha of light). The search for these reincarnations is very important as they will be important leaders. Powerful tulkus own estates which are passed down from incarnation to incarnation. For more on finding tulkus, see p.133.

## TANTRA

In Brief- Secret rituals, dangerous, use powerful emotions, but can allow people to achieve enlightenment in a lifetime.

### ORIGIN

In Brief- Tibetans discovered secret teachings, hidden from those not ready for them.

The official Buddhist cannon, passed down from India, is the written record of Gautama Buddha's public teachings. These books are held sacred by all Buddhists. The Kenjur and Tenjur are the translations of Buddha's oral teachings and commentaries on those teachings, both of which take up as many as 108 volumes.

Following the path of the sutras, the path described in the Kenjur and Tenjur, the official Buddhist texts, it is possible to achieve enlightenment. It a slow process that

can take thousands of lifetimes, especially since human rebirths are so rare. An alternate path exists: the path of the tantras. The tantras are much more intense and dangerous, but they make it possible to achieve enlightenment in a single lifetime. These tantras are what differentiate Tibetan Buddhism (also called Tantric Buddhism or Vajrayana Buddhism) from the Buddhism predominant in other countries.

Tantras are teachings which were not part of the official Buddhist sutras. These teachings were hidden from most Buddhists because most beginning practitioners are not ready for them. Some are said to have been handed down orally, in secret, from the time of Gautama Buddha. Others are from texts hidden around the countryside by Padmasambhava or other Buddhist saints. Other tantras were hidden in realms beyond ours so that only practitioners capable of leaving their bodies and traveling to other worlds could find them. Others were hidden in the mindstreams of teachers so that their reincarnations would discover them.

### The Problem With The Panchen Lama

The Panchen Lama is a tulku, an emanation of Öpame, the buddha of light, and abbot of the Tashilhunpo monastery (in the town of Shigatse, in the province of Tsang). Tashilhunpo and Shigatse has long been a competitor to Lhasa as an economic and political power. It contains the second largest concentration of aristocratic families in Tibet.

The fourth Panchen Lama fled to China after a tax dispute with the thirteenth Dalai Lama. Several incarnations of the Panchen Lama, up to the tenth (the current Panchen Lama) were born and died in China. The Panchen Lama lived in a piece of country that was ethnically Tibetan yet was controlled by China. China was eager to host this Lama, since doing so gave it influence over a major Tibetan ruler. The Panchen Lama ruled his considerable estates by remote from China.

The latest Panchen Lama came in to Tibet with the People's Liberation Army in April 1952. It was clear from the start that the Panchen Lama would be pro-China. The Panchen Lama was one of the signers of the 17 Point Agreement (see p.48). He told the nomads and farmers under his control not to resist the Chinese and to peacefully convert to Communism. There was a little rebel activity in Panchen Lama controlled lands, but for the most part the people there followed the commands of the Panchen Lama.

Under Chinese rule, the area around Shigatse has become a semi-autonomous state. These lands are the largest pro-Chinese block in all of Tibet. The Tibetan Dzongpon (district official) in the area is required to submit all decisions to the Panchen Lama for approval.

The Chinese have been conducting a propaganda war to increase the religious power of the Panchen Lama, portraying him as a tulku equal in spiritual status (or greater than) the Dalai Lama.

Many doubt that the person currently being called the Panchen Lama is the real Panchen Lama. They fear that the real Panchen Lama is lost somewhere, perhaps undiscovered or perhaps imprisoned by the Chinese.



*an abbot and aristocrat of Shigatse*

**Panchen Lama-** The second most important of the Tashilhunpo monastery at Shigatse. Tulku in the yellow hat sect, he is the abbot. The current Panchen Lama is pro-Chinese.

There are about twenty-five tantras in widespread use. Some are passed down from teacher to student orally. Others are written down, yet they are written using such abstract symbolism that they only make sense when accompanied by an oral explanation from a lama. This is done to keep the tantras from falling in to the hands of those who would use them unwisely.

## THE DANGERS

In Brief- Powerful emotions can drive people insane or kill.

Rather than slowly eliminating the practitioner's attachments, the tantras use those attachments as a source of change. For example, anger may be used to eliminate, among other things, anger itself. Fear of violent death may be used to overcome the fear that prevents people from shedding the self. Like using explosives to put out a fire or using poison to cure a disease, tantric practices

must only be used at the right time, and even then there is a danger of things going terribly wrong. When tantric practice goes wrong, the practitioners can go insane or can even die.

## BODY CONTROL TANTRAS

In Brief- Some tantras teach control over one's body.

These are tantras that teach the student to control the flow of forces inside his or her own body. Physical powers are a by-product and not a goal of these tantras. Practitioners have been known to levitate, produce extreme body heat and run cross-country faster than horses can travel. The most popular of these tantras is Tummo ("Fire") Yoga, which comes from Indian Kundalini Yoga. Advanced Tummo practitioners are known by their thin off-white cotton garments (which they wear year round). Tummo practitioners demonstrate their powers by going outside in the winter, sitting in the snow and drying wet blankets using only their body heat.



mandala

## HARMFUL TANTRAS

In Brief- Some tantras can be used to kill. May not be legitimate Buddhist teachings.

Some of the tantras contain secret formulas for doing magic, even magic that harms other people. When tantras speak of murder by magic they call it an “enforced release of the stream of consciousness from the body.” There are stories of tantric rituals in which practitioners prolong their lives by stealing the vitality away from younger practitioners.

Some very reformed sects say that any tantra that tells how to kill can not be authentic. No buddha would teach people to kill, so these tantras must be primitive sorcery disguised as a tantra. Others explain these tantras are meant only for advanced practitioners who have the wisdom to only use them in the rare cases where it is a compassionate act to end an incarnation. The murder of king Langdarma, who was persecuting Buddhism, is generally considered a compassionate act. Not only did it help give countless Tibetans the opportunity to learn Buddhism, it also stopped Langdarma from accruing more bad karma (and damning himself to a longer stay in the hells).

Most of these harmful tantras work by calling dharmapalas to attack an enemy. Most dharmapalas were once bloodthirsty killers. Now they are happy to kill if tantric practitioners tell them it will be an act which protects Buddhism. The dharmapalas may be so eager that they will fail to check the validity of what the conjurers tell them. One discoverer of a harmful tantra immediately killed all of his enemies. If this tantra was hidden by a Buddha or ancient master, it was probably meant to be found by a person with more compassion and self-control than the person who found it.

## YIDAM TANTRAS

In Brief- Meditate on an enlightened being, learn to become that being.

These tantras focus on meditation on buddhas and other powerful beings as emanations of the nature of enlightenment. This practice often uses mandalas. Mandalas are circular sand paintings. Yidam beings are powerful enough that they can see the entire universe at once, and the mandala is a symbolic representation of how they see the universe. In the first stage of this practice, the student practices visualizing his or her lama

as a particular yidam. Next they learn to visualize themselves as that yidam. They work for Dagnang, “pure vision,” the ability to see the entire universe as the yidam sees it. In the end the practitioner actually becomes the yidam. While in this meditative state, the student has the yidam’s wisdom and powers. Though some yidams are too distant from worldly concerns to be of practical use, a few will perform useful functions. Nyingmapa practitioners who embody White Dolma consecrate pills and liquids which are used as cure-alls.

## SEXUAL TANTRAS

In Brief- Males can achieve enlightenment in the human body. Sometimes have secret, celestial or mind-made partners.

These tantras are reserved for practitioners who have great control over their internal energies. Sexual tantras are the only tantric means of achieving enlightenment while on the physical plane. Yellow Hats, who can not perform sexual tantra because of a vow of celibacy, are limited to achieving enlightenment directly after death.

In the sexual tantras, the sexual partners represent a buddha and that buddha’s consort. When they achieve union it represents sunyata (void, the extinction of dualities). By canceling out the incomplete nature of the human body with its counterpart, and by temporarily eliminating desire for sexual union by achieving sexual union, it is possible to overcome the body’s attachment to existence. Though both sexual partners benefit (progress on the path towards enlightenment), only one practitioner, who is the focus of the ritual, can actually achieve enlightenment. Unfortunately, the rituals which will allow females to become enlightened by these means have not yet been found.

When it comes to sexual tantra, the line between celibate and non-celibate monks is less than clear. Some otherwise celibate monks will receive visits from Dakinis or other celestial entities in order to perform sexual tantra. Others create sexual partners by means of meditation. These beings (tulpas) have temporary physical existence. Many other monks take on human sexual partners (usually monks of the opposite sex) but to preserve their special position as celibate practitioners, they may require their partners to take oaths of secrecy. These secret consorts are sometimes bound to oaths so powerful that high-ranking dharmapalas will attack those that break them.

**Mandala-** A magic painting, usually circular, symbolizing how an enlightened being views the universe.

**Tulpa-** A being, resembling a human,

created solely from mental energy by means of meditation and magical formulas. These beings may gain intelligence and self-consciousness.

## SECTS & TANTRAS

In Brief- Different Buddhist sects and Bön use different Tantras.

The tantras are designed to be used in a strict order, each one preparing the student for the next. Which tantras should be included in this chain and in what order is a difference of belief between sects and subsects. Some sects even have their own unique tantras that they keep secret.

The Nyingmapa sect and Bön make use of the largest variety of tantras. They accept nearly anything as a legitimate tantra. To them the dzogchen ("great perfection") tantra is the highest tantra. In this tantra, information on the nature of the mind is transmitted directly to the mind of a student by his or her lama.

The Sakyapa sect specializes in the Hevajra Yoga Tantra, a tantra which includes body control and some information on magic and sorcery.

The Kagyupa sect uses mostly newer lineages of tantra. Their tantric practice starts with breath control training and moves on to tummo yoga tantra (the body-heat control tantra). The goal is eventual control over every aspect of the practitioner's physical form.

The Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) sect is the most critical, rejecting all but a few tantras. They reject any tantra for which they can not prove descent from Buddha's teachings. The Yellow Hat tantras are mostly from the newer tantric lineages introduced by Virupa and Naropa. Tantra is only practiced after much traditional (sutra) Buddhist practice. The kalachakra tantra is considered the highest tantra by the Yellow Hats. Kalachakra practitioners seek to understand everything that one experiences as an emanation of one's own consciousness.

## GOVERNMENT & LAW

The Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) sect is the official government of Tibet. The Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the sect, becomes the ruler of the government when he comes of age. The Dalai Lama rules the country from his palace, the Potala, in Lhasa. Under the Dalai Lama is a host of lay and monastic bureaucrats, governors, representatives, scholars, accountants, diplomats, etc. In theory, every monastic government official has a lay counterpart and visa versa. There are no females in the central government of Tibet, though there are some female regional leaders whose power is neither endorsed nor denied by the Tibetan government.

## The Structure of the Tibetan Government

**The Dalai Lama-** The Dalai Lama is at all times the religious ruler of Tibet. When he assumes power (traditionally at age 18) he is also the political leader of Tibet. When the Dalai Lama is still a minor, a regent is the political leader of Tibet.

**Prime Minister and Kashag-** Under the Dalai Lama is a Prime Minister. He is a senior member of the Kashag, a council of ministers, made up of 1 monk and 3 laymen appointed by the Dalai Lama. The Kashag is responsible for appointing and dismissing officials. In 1951, China convinced the Dalai Lama to dismiss his Prime Minister, who was openly anti-Chinese. The post has since been vacant and without his traditional "go-between" the Dalai Lama has taken to dealing directly with the subordinate branches of government.

**Yiktsang-** Equal in level to the Kashag is the Yiktsang, a council of 4 monks in charge of the Gelugpa sect's affairs and records.

**Finance Office-** Also at the same level is the finance office. It is made up of 4 lay persons, from aristocratic families, trained in accounting. The finance office keeps records about the nobility of Tibet and is also responsible for training most major lay government officials.

**Tsong-du-** Taking orders from the Kashag is the Tsong-du. This is a national congress made up of nobility, monks and craftspeople representing their trade. They vote democratically but have little direct power, they are mostly a consultative body (asked for advice from other branches of government).

**Dzongpons-** The Kashag and Tsong-Du write orders which are distributed by a squad of mounted messengers. Orders go to the 53 dzongs (districts). Each dzong is run by two main officials (dzongpons): a lay-person and a monk. The two often consult each other, but typically divide the district in to two halves which they control separately.

The orders sent to the dzongpons are usually broad policy statements from the Dalai Lama, marked with his all-important red seal. These statements relate, in a general way, to how the dzongpons should conduct affairs within their dzongs.

**Chinese Changes-** The Chinese have caused a lot of changes to be made to the Tibetan government. The Kashag has established a 3 monk commission which is in charge of relations between Tibet and the commander of the Peoples Liberation Army in Tibet.

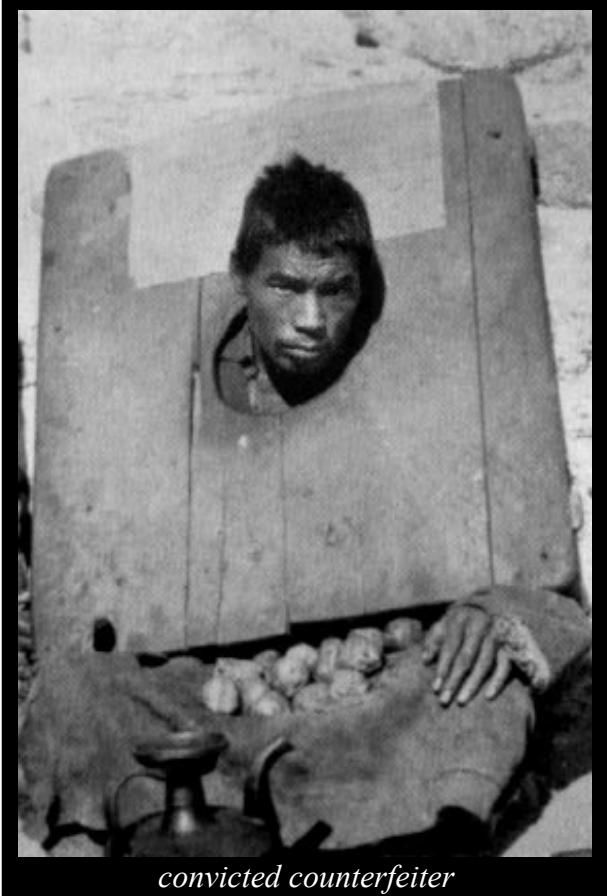
The Chinese have also created a Preparatory Committee for the Tibetan Autonomous Region. This committee is in charge of making policy changes to satisfy the demands of the Chinese under the 17 Point Agreement. It has the power to draft laws and appoint officials. The committee is stocked with pro-Chinese Tibetans. The Dalai Lama is the chairman of this committee. The Preparatory Committee has no established place under the hierarchy of the traditional Tibetan government, but it has taken over most of the functions of the Kashag.

**Chinese Rule-** The most fundamental decisions being made in Tibet right now, though, are by the Committee of the Chinese Communist Party in Tibet, a part of the normal hierarchy of the Communist Party. The Chinese have recently opened a Supreme People's Court in Tibet to try all cases that the Chinese choose to try.

**Dzong-** 1: One of 53 prefectures that Tibet is divided in to. 2: A fort.

**Dzongpon-** Local Tibetan government prefects, usually a monk and layman.

**Kashag-** A council of 3 ministers, who are directly beneath the Dalai Lama (or his regent) in the hierarchy of the Tibetan government.



*convicted counterfeiter*

## LAW

In Brief- Judges are land owners or appointed aristocrats; nomads use mediators; no death penalty; few police.

Law is administrated by whoever owns or is in charge in the area. Lamas are in charge in monasteries and the lands owned by those monasteries. Aristocrats are in charge of matters on their estates. In cities the judges are appointed aristocrats (shepbang). These judges can hear cases and assign fines

### A Last Resort for Legal Troubles

To tell the Dalai Lama about one's legal troubles is a crime. This law, and a throng of bodyguards armed with whips, are to prevent the Dalai Lama from being constantly barraged with legal concerns. If one was to manage to make it past the bodyguards and speak to the Dalai Lama, that person would be seized and thrown in prison. However, the Dalai Lama is an incarnation of the buddha of compassion. After meditating on a person's plight (over the course of days or weeks), the Dalai Lama will typically offer a full pardon, not just for the crime of bothering to the Dalai Lama but for all the previous crimes as well.

or physical punishment. Bribes are common. Disputes between landowners are adjudicated by the local dzongpon. Highly disputed cases go to the Prime Minister of Tibet. Ordinary people can also take their cases to Lhasa for adjudication if they are not satisfied with local justice.

For nomads, disputes are settled by force or the threat of force. Blood feuds are not uncommon. Mediators are important to the resolution of any nomadic dispute. Learned monks or nomads known for their oratory skills will be hired as mediators.

Punishments can include flogging, stocks and mutilation. Flogging is the most common. There is a prison below the Potala in which prisoners are kept. Some of the Potala's prisoners are allowed to wander around Lhasa in the daytime with heavy leg irons and metal bars chained to their wrists. The Dalai Lama has sent out word to avoid "severe punishments" whenever possible. Since this edict, the harshest punishment one will find in Lhasa (reserved for treason, mass murder and sorcery) is to be blinded and imprisoned for life.

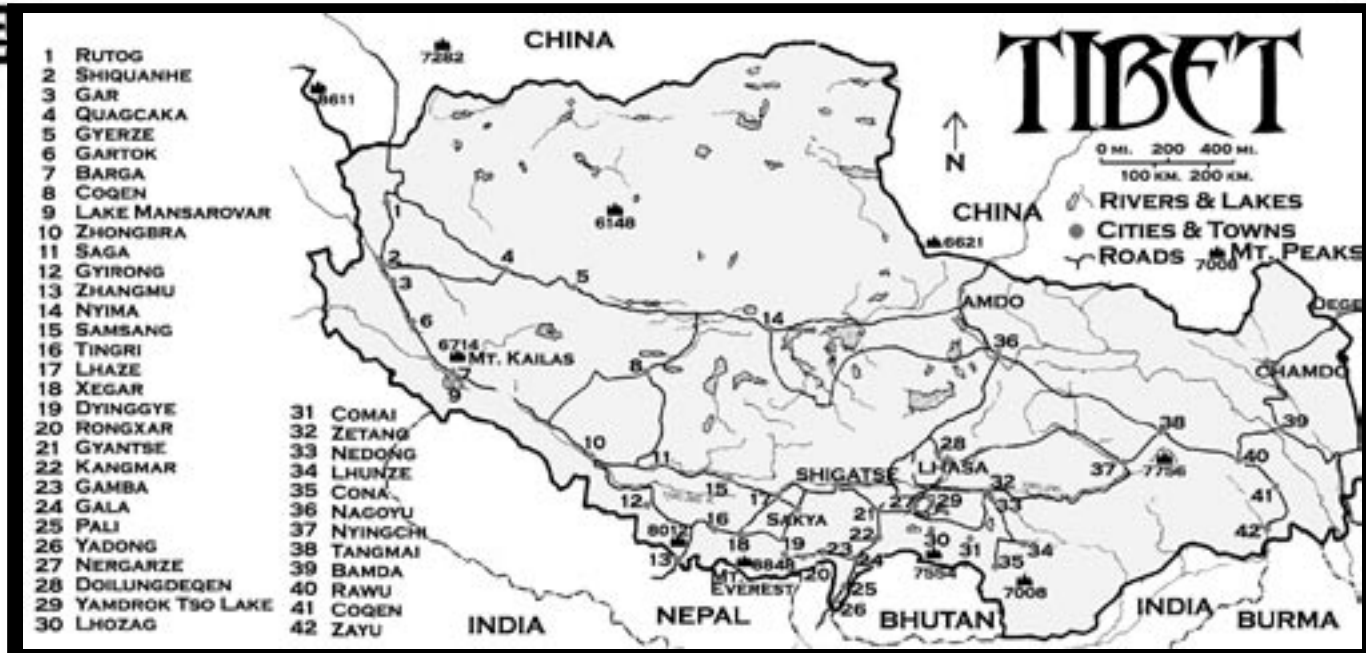
Monasteries will try and punish their own monks. The biggest crimes for monks are sex, theft, murder and false claims of magical powers. Corporal punishment is common and the biggest crimes lead to banishment from the monastery.

A lay police force exists only in Lhasa. Some larger estates have law enforcement employed by the estate owner. Large monasteries have their own form of monastic police, known as Dobdobs. These are usually monks whose personalities make it unlikely that they will benefit from the scholastic teachings of the monastery (see p.56).



*a Lhasa court*





# GEOGRAPHY

## GENERAL

In Brief- Large, high altitude, landlocked plateau between two mountain ranges.

Tibet is the highest country in the world. It is about a quarter the size of the United States and is larger than France, Italy, Spain, Germany and England combined. Tibet is a large plateau between two mountain ranges (the Himalayas to the South and the Kunluns to the North). It is made up primarily of mountains with a few river-valleys and lakes criss-crossing the interior. Agriculture is practiced in these river valleys and pastoralist nomads live on the plains. Because of the altitude and severe weather, different areas of Tibet are isolated from each other during the winter. Tibet borders India to the West and China to the East. Across the Himalayas to the South are the countries of Nepal and Bhutan. Across the Kunlun mountains to the North are culturally Mongolian areas of China. Tibet is made up of many regions with their own dialects, but those dialects are mutually intelligible (all Tibetans can understand each other).

## LHASA

In Brief- Most important city of Tibet.

Lhasa is the capitol city of Tibet, the seat of the Yellow Hat sect of Buddhism that currently rules the country. In many ways it is the center of modern Tibet: it is the biggest city, it is the

most important spot for spiritual pilgrims, it is a center of monastic learning and a major center of trade. Any foreign power that wanted to exert influence over Tibet had to invade Lhasa. In theory, Lhasa is currently closed to foreigners, but it is not hard for foreigners to get in.

Lhasa is in Central Tibet. It is built in a river valley on the North banks of the Lhasa river. Lhasa is bordered by mountains and rivers and has only a few entrances.

Lhasa and the nearby monasteries have a population of 20,000 to 30,000 people (not including the recent influx of Chinese soldiers).

The whole city of Lhasa is considered holy. Pilgrims travel from all over Tibet to gain good Karma by circumambulating Lhasa. Some move by prostration, moving only a body's length at a time.

## VARIETY

In Brief- Any kind of Tibetan can be found in Lhasa.

Lhasa abounds in variety: rich aristocrats and homeless beggars live in harmony. Chinese Muslims have their own section of the city with its own mosque. Nomads from Eastern Tibet and Mongolia camp on the outskirts of the city while trading. Adherents of the four major Buddhist sects, and Bön, practice here. Lhasa is also the center of monastic learning for Tibet. Monks come from all over Tibet to study medicine, astrology, martial arts, scholarship and more. Lhasa is dotted with dozens of small monasteries and monastic academies.

## JOKHANG

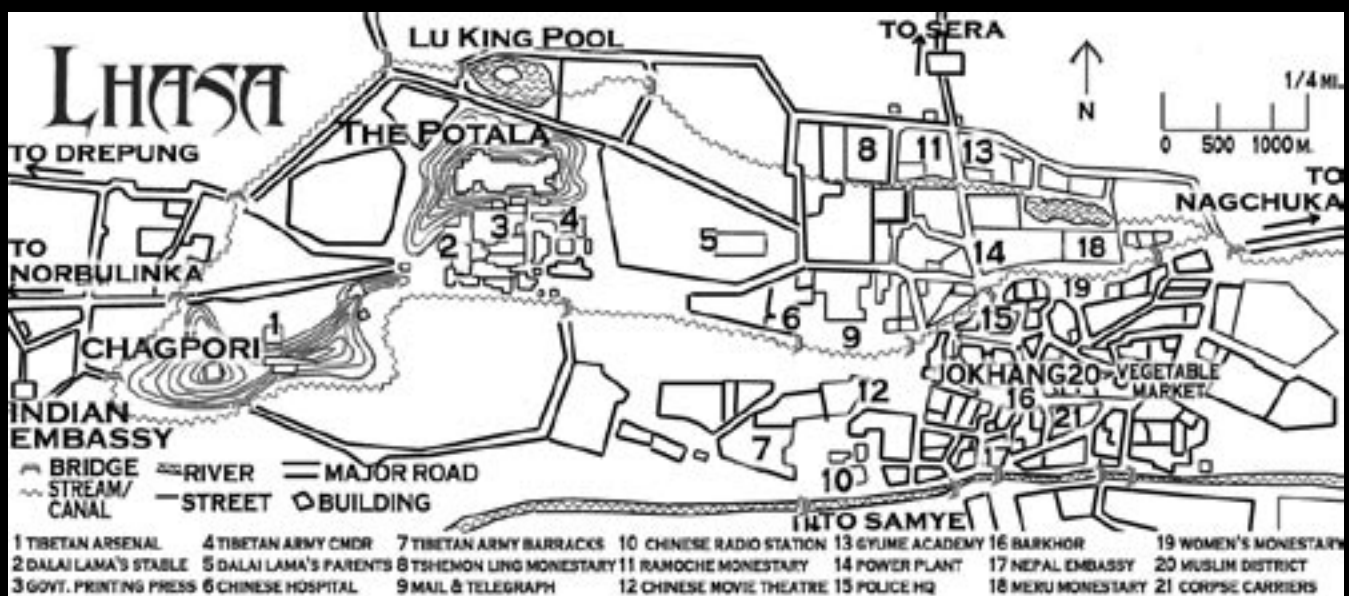
In Brief- Holy temple and government office, streets lined with shops and pilgrims.

In the middle of urban Lhasa is the Jokhang Temple, the main religious center for pilgrims from all over Tibet. It is used by practitioners of all four sects of Tibetan Buddhism. It is four stories high. The ground floor

contains twenty chapels to assorted Buddhist deities, Indian saints and Tibetan kings and queens. Attached to the Jokhang are offices of the Kashag and Finance Office (see Structure of the Tibetan Government, p.35). This circle of streets is the religious and mercantile center of Tibet. Shops along the streets and street vendors sell every conceivable item. In addition to circumambulating Lhasa, pilgrims also circumambulate the Jokhang.



*jokhang*



**Jokhang-** The biggest temple in urban Lhasa, the streets surrounding it are a center of pilgrimage and trade.

## THE POTALA

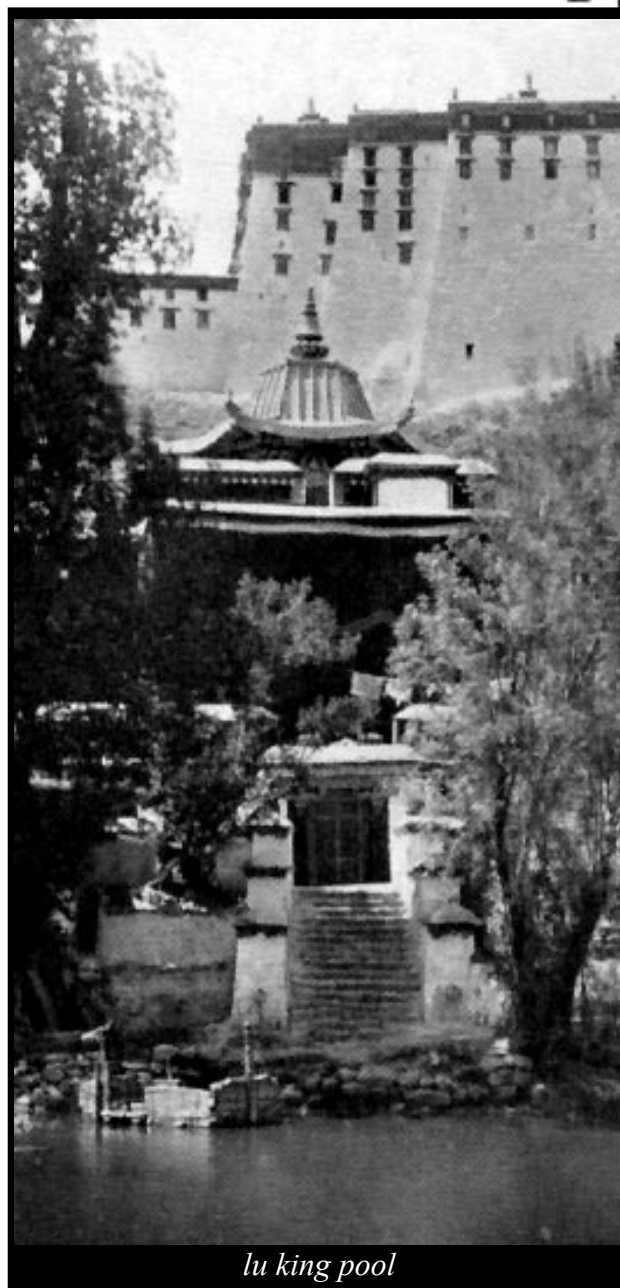
In Brief- Dalai Lama's impressive palace.

Rising above Lhasa on the nearby mountain of Marpori is the Potala palace, the home of the Dalai Lama and capitol building of the Tibetan government. This thirteen-story palace is made up of wood, earth, stone and copper. It was built without nails. It has over 1000 rooms and 10,000 shrines inside. There are many hidden hallways known only to those familiar with the palace. The palace is made up of two parts: the red palace rising up in the middle and the white palace enfolding it on either side. The red palace contains the remains of the fifth and seventh to thirteenth Dalai Lamas. Each of their salt-dried, clay covered bodies are stored in a golden, jeweled chorten (a pagoda-like mausoleum). The Potala also contains government offices, national assembly halls, a huge religious library, treasure rooms and storage rooms for armor and armaments. Underneath the Potala is a feared prison. The Dalai Lama lives in a private apartment on the roof. Every day monks blow huge horns on the roof to call all of Lhasa to prayer.

Behind the Potala is a pool named the Lu King Pool. It was once inhabited by a powerful Lu spirit (see p.136) who demanded a yearly sacrifice of a boy. One boy decided to try to fight the Lu. He fought it for seven days and seven nights and eventually killed it. Now, the pool is considered holy and is the source of prophetic visions for the Tibetan government.

Directly South of the Potala at the foot of the Marpori is a complex of Tibetan government buildings. Here the Tibetan government compiles and keeps records on everything happening throughout Tibet. Hundreds of years worth of minute details are stored here.

On a hill across from the Potala is Chagpori, a college of traditional medicine and astrology.



*lu king pool*



*potala*

## NORBULINKA

In Brief- Summer palace of Dalai Lama.

To the West, nearby, is the summer palace of the Dalai Lama. It is smaller and newer than the Potala, yet impressive nonetheless.

## SKY BURIAL SITE

In Brief- Where bodies are taken to be fed to birds.

North of Lhasa, near Sera, is Lhasa's sky burial site. When astrologers determine that a recently deceased person should be returned to the air element, the dismembered bodies are lain out here as food for vultures.

## CENTRAL TIBET

In Brief- Center of Tibetan culture.

Central Tibet contains the provinces of Ü and Tsang. Central Tibet is the base of power of the Tibetan government. Although the Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) sect of Buddhism is the official government of Tibet, the other Buddhist sects, as well as Bön, have men's and women's monasteries in central Tibet.

The economy of Central Tibet is based on a feudal system of farming. Peasant farmers work on the land and pay tribute to land owners (aristocrats, monasteries and the government).

## GANDEN

In Brief- Large monastery and monastic university.

The Ganden monastery, 64 miles (103 km.) Southeast of Lhasa, was the first Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) monastery. Ganden was built by Tsonkhapa, the founder of the Yellow Hat sect of Buddhism. Today it is home to 4,000 monks and is one of the three great monastic universities (Ganden, Drepung and Sera).

## DREPUNG

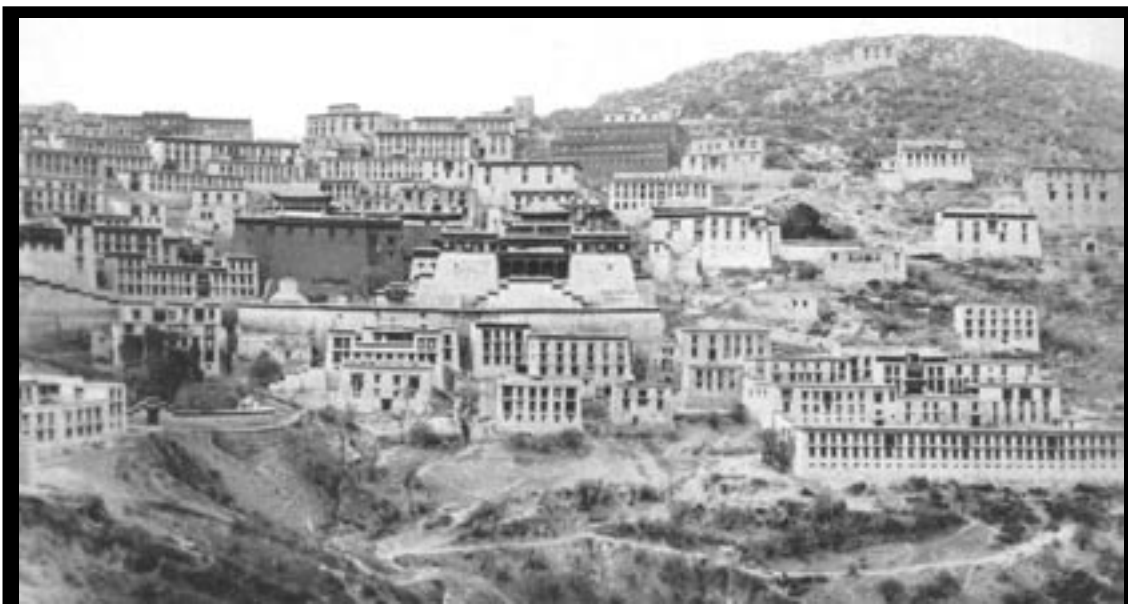
In Brief- Large monastery and home to Oracle of Pehar.

The Drepung monastery to the West of Lhasa is an important Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) monastery and monastic university. It has 10,000 monks, making it the most populous monastery in the world. Drepung is one of Tibet's three great monastic universities. The Nechung monastery, a half mile (0.8 km.) South of Drepung, is home to the chief oracle of the dharmapala Pehar, the official oracle and advisor to the Tibetan government (see p.26). Since Pehar is a wrathful dharmapala, Nechung is decorated in a wrathful motif: door handles shaped like demon heads, murals of flayed skins on the walls, etc.

## SERA

In Brief- Large monastery renown for fighting monks.

The Sera Monastery (a Yellow Hat monastery), two miles (3.2 km.) North of Lhasa, is known for its fighting monks.



*Ganden*

**Phurba-** A ritual dagger with a three or four cornered blade, usually with a vajra and deity image as a handle.



*Gyantse*

Monks at Sera are trained in Tibetan martial arts. They are often hired out as bodyguards. It is also one of the three great monastic universities. Sera keeps a very powerful phurba (ritual demon-slaying dagger) which flew to the monastery from India of its own accord.

Sera is criticized for the violent tendencies of its monks. The monks of Sera know they have the best martial arts skills of any monastery and they have been known to bully around other monks. The dharmapala Shangs Pad, who protects Sera, is believed by some to arouse violence in the monks.

## **GYANTSE**

**In Brief-** Dusty market town between Lhasa and China.

This is a market town and important military center under the control of a Gelugpa (Yellow Hat) monastery. It is the fourth most populous town in Tibet. Gyantse maintains a great fort used to guard the Lhasa-Gyantse road, the most important road in pre-invasion Tibet. Gyantse is also a major Telegraph station. Telegraphs coming from India to Lhasa go through Gyantse. Gyantse is plagued by dust and blinding dust storms.

## **SHIGATSE**

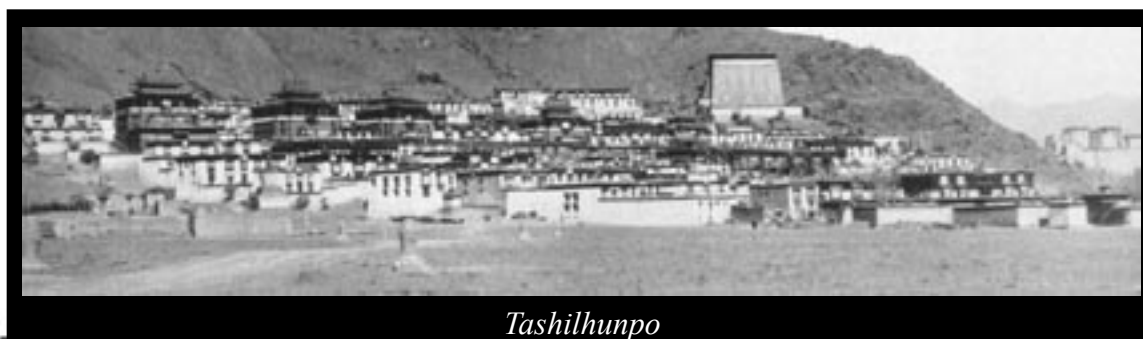
**In Brief-** Major competitor with Lhasa, home of Panchen Lama.

Southwest of Lhasa. This is a city built around the large monastery of Tashilhunpo. Shigatse is the second most populous town in Tibet and the second biggest center of trade in Tibet. It is also the only major competitor with Lhasa for economic, political and religious power. The whole area is ruled over by the Panchen Lama, the second most important spiritual leader of Tibet (see p.32). The Tashilhunpo monastery has 4,000 monks. It has a great hall of chortens, containing the remains of the former Panchen Lamas. There is also a hall containing a 74-foot-high gold plated statue of the buddha Champa (the buddha of the future). Shigatse also has a mighty and ancient fort called Samdup-tse Dzong.

## **YARLUNG VALLEY**

**In Brief-** Valley with holy ancient settlements.

East of Lhasa. This valley, through which the Yarlung river runs, was the first part of Tibet to be settled. On the North side of the river is the monastery of Samye. On the South side of the river from Samye is Mindolin, one of the most important monasteries of the Nyingmapa Buddhist sect.



*Tashilhunpo*



Zetang and Nedong are two ancient villages in the Yarlung valley. Zetang has the first field to ever be cultivated in Tibet. Farmers travel from all over Tibet to take away a handful of earth from this field, believing it will help their fields be fertile. In the mountains to the East is Monkey Cave, where the monkey-incarnation of the buddha Chenrezig, ancestor to all Tibetans, lived in meditation before being seduced by a mountain-demoness.

Southeast of Nedong is the monastery of Yongbulagong. On a nearby mountaintop are the ruins of the first building in Tibet, constructed for Tibet's first king. Southwest of Zedong is Qonggyai, the old capital of Tibet where there is a ruined palace and the tombs of the Tibetan kings. Some of these tombs are in plain view, others are hidden.

## SAMYE

In Brief- Major monastery with temples, holy masks and room for dharmapalas to chop up ghosts.

The Samye monastery contains a circular temple which is a model of the cosmos. It has a main temple representing Mount Meru (the center of the universe), surrounded by four colored chorten representing the four worlds and smaller temples representing the subcontinents between them. Altogether, Samye contains 108 temples (the same number of beads in a Tibetan rosary). One room in Samye contains many masks of various deities, demons and heroes used in sacred dances. The most powerful of these masks is known as "se'bag" ("leather mask"). Se'bag is said to be made from leather or coagulated blood and will sometimes come alive when worn, allowing the dancers to temporarily become the beings they represent.

One of the many temples in Samye is the Temple of the Vital Breath, a sealed room filled with weapons. At night, dharmapalas drag in ghosts who are having trouble letting go of this world and finding their next reincarnation. The dharmapalas chop up the ghosts to force them to release their attachment to this world.

## RONGBUK

In Brief- Highest monastery, staging for Everest expeditions.

Rongbuk is the highest monastery in the world. It is situated in a valley facing Mount Everest. It has been the staging grounds of several foreign expeditions to conquer Mount Everest. Hermits live in caves all around the valley of Rongbuk.

## SAKYA

In Brief- Center of Sakyapa sect, holds their treasures.

Southwest of Lhasa, past Gyantse, is the Sakya monastery. Meaning "Grey Earth," this is the main monastery of the Sakyapa sect of Buddhism. Many male monks live at Sakya and female monks live in smaller monasteries nearby. The fortress-like Sakya monastery is the storehouse of many great treasures owned by the Sakyapa sect, including a letter from Kublai Khan authorizing the Sakyapa to rule Tibet. Sakyapa itself is located on a valley floor and is bisected by a river. In the hills to the North are the ruins of many old monasteries.

## YAMDROK LAKE

In Brief- Holy lake, monastery with female abbot nearby.

This lake is in the middle of the triangle formed by Lhasa, the Yarlung valley and Gyantse. Yamdrok is a large lake which contains the life-force spirit of the Tibetan nation. If it dries up, every Tibetan will die. At the North end of the lake is Samding: "the Hill of Deep Meditation," a Kagyupa monastery built to contemplate the beauty of Yamdrok Lake. This monastery is significant because it is ruled over by the only important female tulku in Tibet, known to have great magical powers. She is called Dorje Phagmo (Thunderbolt Sow) because one of her incarnations once transformed all of the female monks studying under her in to pigs (and, later, back in



Everest



to humans) to hide from Tartar invaders. She is the human incarnation of Dolma, the female buddha of compassion and ancestress of the Tibetan people. Gelugpa, Kagyupa and Nyingmapa male monks live at Samding and study under Dorje Phagmo.

## MENRI

In Brief- Central monastery of Bön religion.

Menri is a small Bön monastery in the Tsang province. This monastery is built near the flood-damaged ruins of the first major Bön monastery. The abbot of Menri is generally considered the head of the Bön religion.

## CHANG TANG

In Brief- Harsh arctic grassland covers two thirds of Tibet.

The Chang Tang makes up more than two thirds of Tibet's land mass but only contains only a small portion of its population. It makes up much of Central and Northeastern Tibet and extends West all the way to India and East to the Qinghai province of China.

The Chang Tang has been described by foreigners as "the most terrifying desert in the world" or Tibet's "western plateau" though neither are technically accurate. The Chang Tang is a huge arctic grassland.

The Chang Tang is on the average 6,000 meters high, and huge mountains dwarf travelers at every turn. It contains patches of grassland during the brief summer growing season. It is huge and uncharted. One of the largest lakes in Asia lies somewhere in the Chang Tang, its exact location known only to a few natives.

The harsh climate and landscape of Chang Tang provides a barrier against China and is one of the reasons Tibet hasn't been totally overrun by Chinese soldiers yet. For most of the year, the Chang Tang is bitterly cold. During the Summer it can be as hot as 100°F during the day, but even from these temperatures it can drop below freezing at night. The Chang Tang is dotted with many large salt lakes and salt flats. Nomads make money by gathering salt and selling it.

## EASTERN TIBET

In Brief- Was mostly autonomous, mostly nomadic, mostly red hat. Now torn by war.

Eastern Tibet is made up mostly by the Kham province as well as the smaller provinces of Dô and Gang. The population of Eastern Tibet is not very dense. Eastern Tibet's cities have economies supported almost entirely by trade. This area is made up of small estates, each ruled

over by a hereditary lama or aristocrat. Like Northeastern Tibet, China has always tried to exert control over Eastern Tibetan affairs and leadership. Before the Chinese invaded, most of the area was controlled by warlords and rulers with almost total autonomy. Red Hat Buddhist sects are more powerful than Yellow Hats in Eastern Tibet. The three most powerful rulers of pre-invasion Eastern Tibet were the Buddhist Abbot of Litang, the nomad Chief of Batang and the noble Prince of Dêgê.

The landscape of Eastern Tibet is made up mostly of mountains and deep valleys formed by the actions of streams over millions of years.

## CHAMDO

In Brief- Third largest city, Khampa military base.

Chamdo is the third largest city in Tibet and the only major administrative center of the Tibetan government for the Eastern region. Chamdo is the official capital of the Kham province. Monks make up one quarter of the population. Chamdo has an ancient market and is a famous center for wood block printing of Buddhist literature. Chamdo is an unofficial military base for the Khampa rebels (p.48).



*northern nomad*

## DÊGÊ

In Brief- Monastery town famous for printing. Bandit tribe nearby.

This small town has a monastery famous for its printing works, where wood-block printed books of Buddhist texts are made. Some of these books have as many as 225 volumes (weighing about 5 lbs. or 2.3 kg each). The monastery of Dêgê is a Nyingmapa monastery run by the Kartokpa sub-sect.

**Qinghai-** A Chinese province bordering East Tibet.

**Kham-** A large Eastern province of Tibet,

home of the Khampas.

**Khampa-** A nomad from Kham, known as fierce warriors and active rebels.



*Dêgê aristocratic family*

Pilgrims come to Dêgê to visit a special mop sticking out of the side of the monastery where black ink drips down to the ground. This ink is considered holy and pilgrims will rub it on themselves, put it in their hair and even drink it for good luck. The town of Dêgê is also known for the quality of its metal-work.

To the Northeast of Dêgê lives the Golok tribe, Nomads who are known to support themselves almost entirely by robbing travelers and neighboring tribes.

## TANGMAI

In Brief- Low altitude corner of Tibet with rainforest.

In the Southeast corner of Tibet the altitude dips to its lowest point. The town of Tangmai is the only major town in this area. The region around Tangmai has a very different climate from the rest of Tibet. Tangmai is surrounded by ferns, rainforest and hordes of monkeys. Because the rest of Tibet is so dry and cold, the region around Tangmai is the only region where diseases such as typhoid and cholera can thrive. Tibetans travelling here from other parts of Tibet, who have never developed immunities to these diseases and whose bodies are used to a dry climate, often have health problems.

## NORTHEASTERN TIBET

In Brief- Remote, often captured by China.

Most of Northeastern Tibet is taken up by the province of Amdo. This area is made up mainly of nomadic Tibetan and Tibetanized-Mongol tribes. There are also some isolated agricultural areas, many of these are inhabited by Chinese Muslims. Most of these agricultural areas are fairly independent from the Tibetan government, ruled over by "big man" leadership, where the

richest and most powerful person in the area assumes leadership (usually, but not always, a male). Since it is on the Chinese border, this area has suffered Chinese interference. The tribes in the area have had to fight encroachment by the Chinese several times. In 1928 a large part of Amdo was taken by China. Although its culture remained Tibetan, it stayed under Chinese control. The Tibetans fought and won back parts of this lost land.

## GUGE

In Brief- Ancient bastion of Buddhism.

The small kingdom of Guge was formed during the ancient persecution of Buddhism (p.6). Its purpose was to preserve Buddhism against its Bön persecutors. Guge was torn apart by factional fighting hundreds of years ago. Today it is mostly ruins with a complex of sacred caves. There are a few temples still in use.

## WESTERN TIBET

In Brief- Gateway to India. Once had powerful kingdoms, now sparsely populated and backwards.

Western Tibet was once home to powerful Tibetan kingdoms. Today its population is sparse and only ruins show its former glory. Western Tibet's largest major trading center is Shiquanhe, near the Indian border. Western Tibet is home to many Muslims and people of other ethnic groups who haven't completely adopted Tibetan culture. Changes impacting Tibet effect Western Tibet last. There is some cultivated land near India but the rest is barren mountains and desert with scattered pastureland. Western Tibet has always been important as a gateway to India, previously because of trade with India and now because of escape to India.

**Amdo-** A province in Northeastern Tibet.

## ZHANG ZHUNG

In Brief- Ruins of ancient Bön kingdom.

Western Tibet was once home to a great empire which was the birthplace of the Bön religion. Zhang Zhung is the source of many magic objects. Metalworkers of Zhang Zhung knew how to make a red metal called gtsa which contained evil magic. These objects are powerful objects of sorcery.

After disaster befell the king of Zhang Zhung, Tibet conquered this kingdom. Zhang Zhung's unique language and culture eventually died out, except where it was kept alive by Bön priests.

## MOUNT KAILAS

In Brief- Holy mountain with holy lake nearby.

Known as Tse Kang Rinpoche (Peak of the Jewel of Snows) by the Tibetans, this mountain is one of the holiest of Tibet's many holy mountains. It rises up to 6714 meters. For the Hindu pilgrims from India, it is the home to the god Shiva and his consort Devi. Tibetans say it is home to the god Demchog and his consort. Tibetans believe that the mountain was the scene of a great magical battle between Milarepa (the great Buddhist poet and magician) and Drenpa Namkha (that era's grand-master of Bön) to prove which religion was better. According to the Buddhists, Milarepa won. Many pilgrims, both Indian and Tibetan make long and dangerous treks to visit this mountain. Lake Manasarovar, directly to the South, is also considered a holy place. The water of lake Manasarovar has healing and protective properties.

## ECOLOGY

In Brief- Tibet is a cold, dry place where only the hardiest life can survive.

## Tibetan Stereotypes

**Eastern Tibetans-** Central Tibetans consider the nomadic tribes of Eastern and Northeastern Tibet to be uncouth, unintelligent and uncivilized. They are considered prone to violence and banditry. Eastern Tibetans see themselves as proud, independent and immune to domination by any military or political power.

**Central Tibetans-** The nomads call Central Tibetans "beautiful mouths," meaning they speak of great promises and high principles, but when it comes time to act they are either incapable or unwilling to take decisive action. Central Tibetans see themselves as the heart of Tibetan culture, civilized and moderate.

**Chinese-** The Chinese are seen mostly as overbearing and devious. One Dalai Lama described the "Chinese way" as to "do something mild at first... and if it passed without objection... to do or say something stronger."

**Westerners-** The standard epithet for Westerners is "White Eyes" (Tibetans consider light colored eyes ugly). Westerners are respected for their knowledge and technology. Tibet has sent young aristocrats to be educated in Britain. Tibetan Buddhism forbids showing disrespect for other people's religions and non-Buddhist Westerners are never criticized for their beliefs.

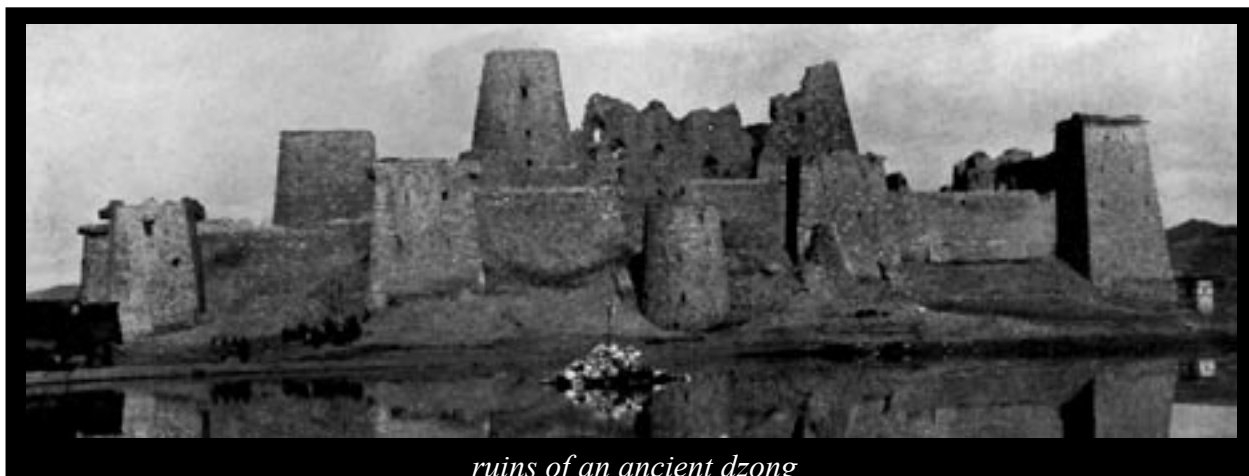
**Indians-** Tibetans have always had a deep respect for Indians and on many occasions have chosen to adopt Indian learning, religion and culture rather than that of China. Many Tibetans see India as something like an older brother or uncle.

## CHANG TANG

In the frozen desert of the Chang Tang, which makes up most of the country, live wild antelope, sheep, asses, gazelles and yak. Wolves, lynx and snow leopards are the major predators.

## ALPINE

In the alpine regions of Tibet, plant life is scarce but hardy. The few spots of green among the white are snow algae, lichens and cushion plants (thick low to the ground plants). Ibex (short, agile, bearded mountain goats with large horns) and Himalayan marmots (Tibetan prairie dogs) are the major wild herbivores.



*ruins of an ancient dzong*



Brown bears, vultures and snow leopards are the major predators. Snow leopards live in the mountains but will come down in to grasslands to stalk grazing animals. The most common bird in these regions is the snow grouse. The aweto, a brownish caterpillar, lives here. The aweto is highly valued because panacea tonics can be made from them.

### GRASSLAND

Grassland zones are covered primarily with sedges and wild grasses. The major wild animals are wild asses, gazelles, marmots, rodents and finches.

### FOREST

In the forest zones (found only in Southeastern Tibet) fir trees, birches, chinese hemlock, ash, maple, tropical oak, wild peach and rhododendrons grow. Ginseng, an important tonic herb, grow in these regions. Bamboo, an important construction material, grows in forest clearings. Musk deer, black bears, squirrels, rhesus monkeys, macaques and langur monkeys live here.

### MIGYU

In Brief- Mysterious intelligent primate, possibly dangerous, hunted for use in magic.

The Migyu, also known as Yeti, are rare and mysterious creatures seen primarily in the woodland areas. They are large (around 7ft. or 2m. tall) and very strong. Their bodies are shaped like a cross between a human and a monkey. Their bodies are covered with brown or golden colored fur and their egg-shaped heads are covered with reddish fur. They have the intelligence of a human toddler but are not known to speak or understand any language. They can climb trees and swing from branch to branch proficiently.

They are human-like enough that Migyu of both sexes will sometimes attempt to mate with humans. A living offspring may result from a Migyu-human union. Some report that Migyu are shy and harmless herbivores, preferring to eat salty moss. According to others they are predators who will eat humans, especially women. They are reported to smell strongly of garlic.

The Migyu are being hunted in to extinction by parties of criminals (in Tibet, all hunting is illegal) who kill them for their blood, which is a powerful component in magical ceremonies.

### WEATHER

In Brief- Cold and dry.

In the simplest terms, Tibetan weather can be described as dry and cold. Because of the altitude and surrounding mountains there is a near constant wind and little moisture. The strong clear sun can be quite warm during the day but temperatures drop drastically at night. Because it is so dry, heavy dust storms and sandstorms are common in Northern and Western Tibet.

In summer the snowline is at 5000 to 6000 meters. A large portion of the country is above that altitude and is thus permanently covered in ice. On the Chang Tang the wind can blow hard enough that the sand and ice it carries will cut the unprotected flesh of travelers. Hailstorms are a constant danger to farmers as they can rip through crops like machinegun fire.

Late Fall is the country's brief, but intense, growing season. During Fall, washouts, mudslides and flooding endanger travelers.

**Migyu-** A large, semi-intelligent, furry humanoid native to Tibet. Known as a Yeti outside of Tibet.

# CHINESE THREAT

## CHINESE COMMUNISM

In Brief- Used violence and propaganda to conquer their beleaguered nation.

For centuries, the Chinese have had a hostile, imperialistic attitude towards Tibet. Whether or not the Chinese know it, the Tibetans know that the Chinese have always been aided (especially in matters concerning Tibet) by an entity known as “the Nine Headed Chinese Demon,” a powerful being of the Zhidag class (see p.137). The existence of this demon helps to explain the success of China in manipulating Tibetan affairs.

In 1949, Mao Zedong and the Chinese Communist army took over China, making it the “People’s Republic of China.” Its stated goal was to liberate the common people from all the forces that would suppress and exploit them: imperialist nations (like England and Japan), capitalist robber-barons, intellectual elites, organized religion and China’s own hereditary nobility. The Chinese people had been exploited, starved and enslaved for centuries. They were desperate and hateful. The Communists turned that hatred in to a force for violent change. No revolution in history changed so much so quickly.

The Chinese Communist state is based on military force and propaganda. Military forces take over and force the people in an area to learn Maoist philosophy. Maoist philosophy dictates how people should act (and why), in any given situation. Maoist philosophy teaches that it is the only philosophy worth learning or speaking of. Any voices within the state who doubt this philosophy are quickly eliminated, hopefully in a way which shows to the rest of the community that they were wrong. This enforced Maoist worldview is essentially paranoid, viewing the Communist state as the only defender of the people against the oppressive and inherently evil forces of religion, aristocracy, colonial empires, industrial barons and intellectual elites.

Only a few leaders within the Communist party have the ability to criticize the party, and even then they must watch their boundaries and cloak their words with euphemisms. Every time they criticize the party, they risk being labeled an enemy of the people and imprisoned or executed.

## INVASION

In Brief- 1950, Chinese entered Tibet, forced them to sign an agreement, stationed troops in Lhasa.

On May 22nd, 1950, Peking Radio called on Tibet to surrender to a peaceful Communist liberation. The Chinese further claimed that they wished to free Tibet

from American and British imperialists. Even from the first broadcast, the Chinese were trying to rewrite history. Rather than being controlled by imperialists, there were exactly three British citizens and no Americans in Tibet.

The call to invade did not come as a surprise to the Tibetan government. For centuries the Chinese have tried to control Tibetan affairs, and have access to trade routes through Tibet. Only four decades ago had Tibet removed the Chinese troops from Lhasa.



On October 24, China announced that it was moving troops towards Tibet. Four days later, Lhasa confirmed that Chinese troops had entered through the Eastern borders, coming from the Chinese provinces of Qinghai and Sichuan. Tibet had a tiny standing army without the transportation abilities to head off the invasion. Eastern frontier posts and the city of Chamdo were taken. The Chinese were expected to advance forward, yet for months they stayed in that position. A Tibetan army party sent to stop the Chinese was quickly massacred. On hearing about this defeat, the Regent of Tibet (then the current ruler of the country) ordered the Tibetan army not to confront the Chinese.

**Zhidag-** A class of spirits, often malevolent, that protect the earth.

**Sichuan-** A Chinese province bordering East Tibet.

## TIBET ALONE

In Brief- Other nations ignored Tibet's pleas for help.

The Tibetans quickly lost any hope of intervention from a foreign power. British forces occupying India, once a deterrent to Chinese invasion, were gone with India's independence. The newly liberated India was too frightened of the power of Communist China to say or do anything that might anger Mao. The anti-Communist Western powers had a hands-off, somewhat racist, approach to Communist China. They never thought it was worth the trouble to save a country few people had even heard of. The UN voted not to hear about the Tibet problem.

## 17 POINT AGREEMENT

In Brief- Tibetans forced to sign agreement with China.

On May 23, 1951, a group of Tibetans were chosen by the Chinese to represent the Tibetan people. They signed the 17 Point Agreement for the Peaceful Liberation of Tibet. This document established that Tibet would have autonomy within (but as a part of) China, that it would keep its government and religion and could advance towards "liberation" at its own pace. China would have a military presence there and would build modern hospitals, schools and other institutions. By fall of 1951 there were Chinese troops permanently stationed in Lhasa.

## CHINESE PRESENCE

In Brief- Chinese propagandizing, torturing, modernizing. Much of the country has rebelled and is keeping outlying areas out of Chinese hands.

It was soon apparent that the Chinese had no intention of respecting Tibetan autonomy. When the teenage Dalai Lama visited China in 1954, Mao Zedong remarked "religion is poison." China was quick to chop off pieces of East Tibet, giving them to Chinese provinces. China

moved in thousands of Chinese immigrants, planning to eventually make Tibetans a minority. 15,000 Tibetan children were sent off to China to be trained to revolt against their religion and their parents. Chinese run schools in Lhasa are forcing progressively more Communist propaganda on the children.

Reports from the East make Chinese machinations in Central Tibet seem tame. The Chinese are doing everything they can to break down the monastic system and the people's dependence on it. They are having monks seduced. They are publicly humiliating lamas. In some places, lamas are being told to publicly repent their evil ways, and when they don't they are buried or burned alive.

Refugees soon flooded in to Lhasa from Chinese controlled areas. These refugees were traumatized by the terrors of Chinese occupation. They instinctively sought to be as close as possible to the Dalai Lama, the incarnation of compassion on Earth. Now Lhasa is dangerously crowded with desperate refugees.

## OPEN REBELLION

In Brief- Khampas rebelled in 1954, many Tibetans joined them.

The Khampas had long sought more autonomy from Central Tibet. When the Chinese entered Tibet, they thought they could recruit the Khampas as soldiers to help them fight Central Tibet. They gave arms to the Khampas. However, the Khampas were smarter than the Chinese anticipated. They saw through Chinese propaganda and realized that they would have less freedom, not more, under the Chinese. The Chinese tried to take the weapons back from the Khampas. In August 1954 the Khampas rebelled.

The Chinese called in troops from Russia (China and Russia were having good relations at that point). Even with these reinforcements, the Khampas forced the Chinese out of Kham within three months.



*Maoist propaganda mural*



Fearing that the Khampa rebellion would spread to Lhasa, the Chinese increased the number of troops stationed in Lhasa. The Dalai Lama remained carefully neutral about the revolt. He knew that if he endorsed the revolt he would be arrested by the Chinese and replaced. On the other hand, he knew that the Tibetan people would not tolerate Tibetan troops being sent to fight Tibetans.

The fighting quickly spread as North as the Kunlun mountains and as far West as the border to India. Many Tibetans joined the Khampa rebels. Most of the rebels were peasant farmers and nomads, but in some cases monks renounced their vows in order to join the rebellion. A few monasteries rose up as a whole, under the direction of the abbots, to fight the Chinese. Muslim priests in Tibet realized that they would have less religious freedom than the Buddhists under Chinese rule, and they joined the rebellion. The Muslims turned their mosques in to rebel strongholds. The Chinese responded by mercilessly bombing monasteries, mosques and rebel forts.

Reports from the East are that monks have gone so far as taking weapons out of the hands of statues of dharmapalas to defend themselves against Chinese attacks. Refugees from the war-torn East have flooded in to Lhasa, each bringing with them a story of Chinese atrocities.

## CHINESE CHANGES

In Brief- Chinese building technological infrastructure in Lhasa.

The Chinese have been very quick to institute changes in Tibet, and nowhere has it been felt more than in Lhasa. As early as 1952 the Chinese were bringing unheard of modernizations to Lhasa: a phone line between China and Lhasa, a western medicine "People's Hospital" in Lhasa and even branches of the People's Bank of China in Lhasa, Shigatse and Gyantse.

By the mid-50's, the Chinese had opened 60 elementary schools in Tibet to teach children modern knowledge and Chinese propaganda. Tibetans have also been given interim medical training (in western style medicine) until Western-style medical schools can be built.

Airfields are being built on the outskirts of Lhasa and Chamdo. There is a steam power plant in Shigatse. There is a hydroelectric plant and a blast furnace in Lhasa. A coal mine has been opened near Lhasa to feed the furnace.

## RESISTANCE

In Brief- Khampa nomads accepted weapons from Chinese, then routed them. Khampas are skilled warriors with home-turf advantage and decentralized structure. They are funded by Eastern Tibetan merchants. Also fighting Tibet are the NVDA (Eastern Tibetan rebels with ties to Lhasa) and the Mimang (a people's organization originally created by the Chinese who demonstrate against the Chinese in Central Tibet), Chinese anti-communist nationalists have been aiding the rebels.



*wealthy eastern Tibetan merchant*

**Mimang-** A people's organization in Lhasa currently protesting the Chinese.

## THE DALAI LAMA

In Brief- Has assumed power, trying to pacify Chinese nonviolently, taken active roles in the Tibetan government, questioned by rebels.

The young Dalai Lama, the incarnation of the Buddha of compassion, is now the official leader of Tibet. Dalai Lamas typically take power at the age of eighteen. However, the Oracle of Peihar (at Nechung) advised the Dalai Lama to take power early, at sixteen. He has been ruling the country from seclusion, afraid to leave the Potala because of the Chinese and the dangerous crowds of refugees.

The Dalai Lama is not infallible. He has human portions that can be corrupted. The Dalai Lama had visited China for quite a while and the Chinese tried their best to influence him. The Dalai Lama is committed to non-violence in dealing with the Chinese. Some say this is a natural position for an incarnation of a Buddha of compassion. Others say he has been brainwashed by the Chinese.

Many rebels have grown weary of the Dalai Lama's pacifist stance. They believe that it is only the Dalai Lama's refusal to support the rebels that is keeping the entire country from rising up against the Chinese. Some rebels openly question whether a Buddhist monk is the best person to lead the country.

Meanwhile, the young Dalai Lama has single-handedly redefined his own role as leader of the country. Previous incarnations had been kept somewhat distant from the worldly affairs of the government. The Prime Minister acted as a go-between and a shield from the harsher aspects of leadership. With no Prime Minister, the Dalai Lama has been working directly with subordinate branches of government. So far, the Dalai Lama has been able to balance the demands of the Chinese with the urgings of his Tibetan advisors.

## THE COMING STORM

In Brief- Rebels control much of Tibet, but the Chinese control the capital and have found new routes in to Tibet. Lhasa is in chaos, flooded with refugees. People are preparing for an all-out war against the Chinese and crowds stand ready to protect the Dalai Lama.

As it stands today, in the year 1959 AD, Tibet seems on the edge of chaos.

## REBEL FOOTHOLD

The rebellion seems ready to engulf all of Tibet. The rebels hold much of Eastern Tibet and many areas in the North, the West and even parts of central Tibet. Rebels now control most of the major routes in to Lhasa. Fighters from East Kham have destroyed the highway that connects Sichuan (in China) to Lhasa, temporarily halting the influx of ground troops. This has not stopped

Chinese air raids: rebel forts, monasteries and even rebel controlled villages are being bombed daily.

The death count is around 300 a day. Both sides are running out of food and medical supplies, the death toll is curving quickly upward.

## SURPRISE ATTACK

Because of the harshness of the Eastern Tibetan climate and topography, and because of rebel sabotage of roads, the Chinese found that it was easier to go around Tibet than through it. 30,000 Chinese soldiers have trespassed on Indian land to surprise attack rebels from the West.

## IN LHASA

Chinese soldiers are ready for violence in the Tibetan capital. They now have a full military camp (Yutok) near Lhasa. The influx of Chinese soldiers in to Lhasa has created a food shortage. Food prices in Lhasan markets are up to five times normal and poorer people are starving. A chain reaction has disrupted nearly every facet of Lhasa's economy.

## FEAR

Increasingly terrible stories of Chinese cruelty to monks and peasants have been filtering in from the West. Each new story incenses and frightens Tibetans even more. Fewer and fewer Tibetans can convince themselves that they will be spared from Chinese cruelty. Most Tibetans believe that peace with China can only last a few more months or weeks. They believe that some day the Chinese will arrest the Dalai Lama, abolish the Tibetan government and begin the full-scale conversion of Tibet in to a Chinese colony.

## READINESS FOR WAR

At the nearby Sera, Drepung and Ganden monasteries, monks have created a "People's Party" anti-Communist movement. Each of the 26,000 monks in the movement has access to a rifle. These rifles are hidden, buried on monastery grounds. Wealthy Tibetans are stockpiling weapons as fast as they can. Automatic weapons looted from the Chinese are being circulated in Central Tibet by rebel fighters. The Mimang rebel group is making plans for a full assault on the Chinese if (or when) Lhasa itself erupts in to warfare.

## PROTECTING THE DALAI LAMA

Refugees in Lhasa recently captured a communication being sent to the Dalai Lama. It was an invitation to a play in the Chinese military compound. The refugees have seen rebel leaders being captured by similar ploys. They worry that the Dalai Lama is too polite and naive to see an obvious trap. In response to these rumors, throngs of Tibetans from all over the country have swarmed around the Potala, a wall of flesh to keep the Dalai Lama from going to the Chinese camp. This wall of flesh has become a day-and-night vigil. The Dalai Lama has yet to be heard of and some are starting to believe that he has already been captured or killed.

The crowds around the Potala frighten both the Chinese and the Tibetan governments. The refugees are an unstable, unorganized force. They are a volatile wild card. Any moment they might storm the Potala to "rescue" the Dalai Lama, or they might attack the Chinese stronghold, or they might start rioting for food.

# character creation

## Character Creation in Brief

### Step 1

#### Character Concept

Your idea of the character: name, appearance, values, etc.

### Step 2

#### Attributes

Split 90 points between 9 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).

### Step 3

#### Choose Character Class

Choose the PC's place in Tibetan society.

### Step 4

#### Choose Skills

Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by character class.

### Step 5

#### Buy Equipment

Available money set by character class.

### Step 6

#### Personality

Choose 5 Attachments, including at least 1 universe attachment.

### Step 7

#### Bonus Characteristics

PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages or extra points must be balanced out by disadvantages or fewer points

### Step 8

#### Character Advancement

Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

## Women in Tibet

As of 1959, women in Tibet enjoy more freedom and status than in almost any of Tibet's neighboring countries. Tibetan women had equality in some arenas comparable to (or better than) American women.

**In Religion-** There are very few recognized female tulkus. Parents are much more likely to send a male child to study at a monastery (partly because girls are considered more useful around the home). One of the most important tantras, the Chod tantra (death tantra) was created by a woman. There are 270 women's monasteries in Tibet with over 15,000 female monks.

Many religious texts were written with male monks as their intended audience, and women are often referred to as possible sources of desire and attachment. Women are not even allowed to enter Yellow Hat men's monasteries. White Robes treat women better than celibate male practitioners: women are called "wisdom holders" and disparaging women is one of the one of the fourteen "root downfalls" of a practitioner.

The sexual tantras were written from the point of view of a male practitioner. Nobody has yet found the ritual that will allow women to achieve enlightenment in the physical plane via the sexual tantras.

Some Tibetan teachings state that women are lower on the karmic chain than men and thus less likely to achieve enlightenment. A few lamas refuse to teach female students.

# CHARACTER CONCEPT

In Brief- Your idea of the character: name, appearance, values, etc.

The first step to creating a character is to determine what you want your character to be. Note that in the Monastic Edition of Tibet, all characters are male or female monks.

Who the PC wants to be and what the PC wants out of life does not have to correspond with the PC's character class (their place in Tibetan society). There are many Tibetans who want to be something other than what they are (a farmer may dream of being a wealthy trader, a monk may want to break his vows of nonviolence and join the nomadic rebels, a doctor may secretly study sorcerous rituals). There are also many Tibetans whose personality and actions do not match the stereotype for that class (there are Buddhist monks who are greedy and hateful and there are sorcerers who do acts of great compassion).

Some common questions to ask when creating a character concept are:

## GENDER

Being male or female seldom limits what a character can be or achieve. See Women in Tibet, p.51 for the few exceptions.

## NAME

Choose a name for the PC. Most Tibetan names are interchangeable: equally likely to be used as a first or last name. Most Tibetan names are gender neutral, though a few are typically masculine or feminine.

**Buddhist Name:** When people join monasteries they are given new Buddhist names. They are names after desirable Buddhist qualities, e.g. Chodak (Buddhist Teachings Spreader), Choden (Devout), Dorje (Indestructible Wisdom), Kunchen (All-Knowing), Sangye (Buddha), Tenzin (Teaching Holder), Thubten (Buddha's Teachings).

**Surnames:** Common Tibetans have two unique names. It is only aristocrats who have family names.

**Honorifics:** A "la" may be added to the end of someone's first name as an honorific. A "mo" added to the end of a person's last name indicates that she is female while a "po" indicates that he is male.

## ETHNICITY

Where was the PC born and in what kind of community? See Tibetan Stereotypes (p.45) for more info on people from different areas of Tibet.

## Common Tibetan Names

### Gender Neutral

Chetsang	Dawa	Dhondup
Dorjee	Geshe	Gyalpo
Gyaltzen	Karma	Kelsang
Lhamo	Lobsang	Namgyal
Ngari	Ngawang	Norbu
Nyima	Palden	Pema
Phurbu	Sonam	Tashi
Tenzin	Thondup	Thubten
Tsering	Tseten	Tsewang
Wangdu		

### Typically Feminine

Bhuti	Choedon	Dechen
Deki	Dolma	Khando
Lhakiyi	Lhazom	Namhla
Norzom	Pelmo	Rinzin
Tsamchoe	Tsomo	Wangmo
Yangchen	Yangkyi	Youdon

### Typically Masculine

Bhuchung	Chemo	Gyatso
Jigme	Kalden	Lodoe
Rabgyal	Sawang	Tenpa
Tsetrunga	Tsong	Wangchuk
Wangyal		

## CHINESE

Decide what the PC's attitude towards the Chinese is. Does the PC welcome Chinese Communism? Does the PC think that peace can be made with the Chinese? Does the PC think that the only options are to fight the Chinese or flee Tibet?

## VIOLENCE

Does the PC believe in complete non-violence? Does the PC recognize rare instances where violence can be a "compassionate" act? Does the PC believe that people should not be afraid to fight for what it theirs? Is the PC's stance on violence a purely personal decision, or does the PC think others should act the same?

## RELIGION

What sect does the PC align himself or herself with? Does the PC have any religious goals (achieve enlightenment in this lifetime, gain enough good karma to avoid being reborn in the hells, keep local spirits and minor gods from causing trouble)? How seriously does the PC take religion (in comparison to the concerns of day-to-day life)? Is the PC willing to take on dangerous rituals to meet these goals?

## VOWS

Has the PC taken any special vows? A vow not to eat meat? A vow of chastity? A vow of non-violence?

# ATTRIBUTES

In Brief: Split 90 points between 9 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).

Characters have 10 points per attribute (90 points, total) to distribute between the nine attributes listed below.

**1** represents as low as the attribute can get without the person being actually disabled.

**10** represents the average for a healthy young person.

**20** represents the highest a normal human can achieve without something very special happening to them.

You must spend at least 1 point on each attribute and can spend a maximum of 20 attribute points on each attribute. Some advantages, disadvantages and character classes modify attributes and increase them to more than 20. Example: If a character buys 20 Strength with attribute points and then takes an advantage which gives her +5 Strength, she will have 25 Strength. Modifications can also make an attribute negative. GMs must define the effects of negative attributes (for instance, -5 Strength may mean that the character can not move or even breathe unaided).

## SUB-ATTRIBUTES

You can choose to have the PC be very good or very bad at one specific aspect of an attribute. Say, for instance, a PC is not very strong (5 strength) but his profession causes him to use his hands a lot. The player wants the character to have strong hands. For one extra attribute point the PC will have +3 to any Strength roll using hands alone. For an opposed strength roll to keep a hold of something, for instance, the PC would have 8 strength. The PC might also want a bad back (-3 strength) which would give one attribute point but the PC would have only 2 strength for lifting and carrying objects. Available sub-attributes are listed below each attribute.

Sub-Attributes can not be used to raise an attribute to more than 20 or reduce it to less than 1. Sub-Attributes move with the attributes, so if the character works out and increases his Strength by 7 (to 12 STH) he would now have 15 STH with his hands and 9 STH with his back.

## AGILITY (AGY)

This represents limberness, coordination, balance and speed of physical reactions. Agility is used when characters need to move silently, keep their balance, scale walls or get through a small spaces.

**Good/Poor Balance:**  $\pm 3$  to any save vs. loss of balance.

**Good/Poor Precision:**  $\pm 3$  to any roll which involves manipulation of small objects.

**Good/Poor Climbing:**  $\pm 3$  to any climbing roll.

**Good/Poor Prowling:**  $\pm 3$  to any prowling roll.

## AWARENESS (AWR)

This represents the ability to notice things going on around one as well as things going on in one's own mind. This is not the acuity of one's senses, but

the ability to be aware of important details.

Awareness is used whenever characters need to notice a clue, avoid an ambush or sense attempts at mental manipulation. AWR is also used for many skills that involve passive awareness or letting go and allowing things to happen (including much of Buddhist practice).

**Good/Poor Introspection:**  $\pm 3$  to any AWR roll to notice anything going on in the character's own head.

**Good/Poor People Sense:**  $\pm 3$  to any AWR roll to notice what people are doing, not doing or saying (this does not include sensing people prowling).

**Good/Poor Back Watching:**  $\pm 3$  to any AWR roll to notice anything happening behind the character.

**Good/Poor Detail Sense:**  $\pm 3$  to any AWR roll to notice small details on/in something the character is observing.

## CHARM (CHM)

This represents likeability, social presence, persuasiveness and ability to read people. Charm is used when a character needs to put on an act, convince an audience or seduce someone. Just as Intelligence doesn't represent cleverness, charm doesn't prevent a character from saying something that gets the group in trouble or something that saves the day.

**Good/Poor Self-Confidence:**  $\pm 3$  to first impression rolls to present himself or herself as self-confident.

**Friendly/Unfriendly:** The character is  $\pm 3$  to all first impression rolls to present himself or herself as a friendly or likeable person.

**Good/Poor Seduction:**  $\pm 3$  to any seduction roll.

**Good/Poor Actor:**  $\pm 3$  to any acting roll.

**Good/Poor With Children:**  $\pm 3$  to any CHM roll involving children.

**Good/Poor With Animals:**  $\pm 3$  to any CHM roll involving animals.

**Good/Poor With Authorities:**  $\pm 3$  to any CHM roll involving people in positions of power.

**Good/Poor With Simple Folk:**  $\pm 3$  to any CHM roll involving people who consider themselves simple or average.

**Good/Poor With Outcasts:**  $\pm 3$  to any CHM roll involving convincing people who consider themselves to be at the bottom of the social ladder.

## ENDURANCE (END)

This represents stamina for intense physical exertion as well as the body's ability to fight disease and resist toxins. Endurance is used when a character needs to hold his or her breath, go on a long hike or survive a serious illness.

**Good/Poor With Heat:**  $\pm 3$  to any save vs. heat exhaustion.

**Good/Poor With Cold:**  $\pm 3$  to any save vs. hypothermia.

**Good/Poor At Disease Contraction:**  $\pm 3$  to any save vs. disease contraction.

**Good/Poor At Fighting Off Diseases:**  $\pm 3$  to any save vs. disease progression.

**Good/Poor Lung Capacity:**  $\pm 3$  pooled END when the character is holding his/her breath.

## INTELLIGENCE (INL)

This represents the speed at which the mind reacts, abilities with abstract thought, learning, creativity and memory. Intelligence is used when a character wants to perform a knowledge based skill, understand a complicated philosophical text or win at a strategy game. Intelligence is not cleverness or wisdom: any PC can come up with a clever plan or completely miss the obvious no matter what their intelligence.

**Quick/Slow Thinker:**  $\pm 3$  to any roll based on the speed of mental reaction (not including combat).

**Good/Poor Memory:**  $\pm 3$  to any roll to remember or memorize something.

**Good/Poor Skepticism:**  $\pm 3$  to any roll to figure out deception, illusion, hallucination, etc.

## KARMA (KMA)

This is the sum total of all the things that the character has done, in this life and in previous lives, on-purpose or accidentally, which has caused or prevented the suffering of sentient beings. Karma is used, along with WIL, to break an attachment. Breaking attachments gets PCs closer to enlightenment and increases their maximum KMA. Very high KMA can be used to perform miracles.

### CHANGING

Karma can be changed by one's actions. Most changes to Karma are only temporary, and return to normal (base) KMA at a rate of 1 per day. Large changes to KMA can change base KMA (see p.106). PCs will not immediately know whether their actions have earned them good or bad karma.

### EMANATION

PCs with very good or very bad karma will emanate karma that can effect other people around the PC. Holy or cursed objects will also emanate KMA. To figure out the PC's emanation, divide current KMA by 10 and add or subtract KMA from any holy or cursed object the PC has on his or her person. When a group of PCs are working together closely, their separate KMA emanations add together in to one total.

If a PC's emanation is negative, that PC will attract malevolent spirits. When given a choice, malevolent spirits will attack the PC with the lowest KMA. The PC's emanation is also a modifier to magical skill rolls or rolls to resist invasion by malevolent spirits. Good KMA helps PCs do magic that has the immediate effect of easing suffering while bad KMA helps PCs do magic that has the immediate effect of causing suffering.

Karma has no sub-attributes.

## SPEED (SPD)

This represents the ability to run and leap as well as the damage a character can do with a

kick. The character's kick can do the following blunt damage:

SPD	1-5	6-15	16-19	20-30	31-40	41-50	51+
DMG	$\frac{1}{2}$ blunt	1	1 $\frac{1}{2}$	2	3	4	5

**Good/Poor Jumping:**  $\pm 3$  to any jumping roll.

**Good/Poor Kicking:** The character does kick damage as if he or she had  $\pm 3$  SPD.

**Good/Poor Long-Distance Running:**  $\pm 3$  to SPD when the PC is running long distances.

**Good/Poor Sprinting:**  $\pm 3$  to SPD when the PC is sprinting.

## STRENGTH (STH)

This represents upper body strength as well as the character's strength of grip and back muscles. A character would use strength to yank away someone's weapon, lift a heavy object or do damage with melee weapons. Characters with high or low strength get plusses or minuses with blunt weapons as follows:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-25	26-30	31-40	40+
+ to DMG	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

The character's punches do the following blunt damage:

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	25-30	31-40	40+
DMG	0	$\frac{1}{2}$	1	2	3	4	5

**Good/Poor Back:**  $\pm 3$  to any STH rolls to lift heavy objects.

**Good/Poor Hands:**  $\pm 3$  to any STH rolls using only the character's grip.

**Good/Poor Bulk:**  $\pm 3$  to any STH roll using the whole weight of the character's body (e.g. a football tackle, knocking down a door, etc.)

**Good/Poor Punching:** The character does punch damage as if he or she had  $\pm 3$  STH.

## WILLPOWER (WIL)

This represents the ability to resist emotions or discomfort and the strength of one's sense of self. Will would be used to control emotions, resist pain, stay conscious or battle against mind control. Some magic and tantric skills, especially those which require concentration or force of mind, use WIL.

**Good/Poor Drug Resistance:**  $\pm 3$  to any WIL roll to resist psychological addiction or drug cravings.

**Good/Poor With Drug Effects:**  $\pm 3$  to any WIL roll to save vs. drug effects.

**Weak/Strong Stomach:**  $\pm 3$  to any save vs. nausea.

**Good/Poor With Distracting Pain:**  $\pm 3$  to save vs. distracting pain (see p.109).

**Good/Poor With Shocking Pain:**  $\pm 3$  to any save vs. shocking pain (See p.109).

**Good/Poor Temper:**  $\pm 3$  to any save vs. anger.

**Good/Poor Sense of Self:**  $\pm 3$  to any opposed WIL vs. WIL roll.



## HEALTH ATTRIBUTES

Characters also have 12 points to divide up between three additional attributes: Body, Blood and Incapacity (minimum 1, maximum 6).

### BODY POINTS (BDY)

Represent the amount of blunt damage characters can take before they start losing Blood Points (when all BDY is gone, blunt weapons do double their normal damage to Blood).

### BLOOD POINTS (BLD)

Represent the amount of damage characters can take to their vital systems (heart, blood supply, etc.) before they are mortally wounded. When all BLD is gone, damage is done to INCY.

### INCAPACITY (INCY)

Represents the character's ability to act even after taking fatal injuries. After a mortal injury, damage is done to INCY (END is also lost). When a character's INCY reaches 0, he or she becomes incapacitated, unable to fight or perform any other useful action. See the section on Using Health Attributes (p.109) for more information.

## CHARACTER CLASS

In Brief- Choose the PC's place in Tibetan society.

Choose the character class your character will begin the game as. This will decide the character's standing in society, his or her money, educational resources and access to special training and abilities. Character classes can change in the course of the game (see Character Advancement, p.99).

Many character classes have special advantages and disadvantages that are only available to members of that character class. Some of these special advantages and disadvantages are mandatory. Others are optional (PCs can spend points or get points by taking them).

A few character classes have special skills that only members of that class can buy. They are bought with skill points, the same as regular skills (see p.94 of the full version).

### Character Classes in Brief

**Aristocrat:** Wealthy land owner and noble, making dangerous deals with the Chinese.

**Ascetic:** Homeless monk, having given up all property and status, traveling and begging for food.

**Astrologer:** Learned scholar, making astrological predictions about medicine, magic and the future.

**Bön Priest:** A priest of the magic-heavy pre-Buddhist religion, seeking enlightenment and power.

**Craftsperson:** Respected creator and restorer of traditional clothing, houses, holy and secular art.

**Dobdob:** Monastic police officer, soldier and bodyguard, molded from a violent and uncontrollable child.

**Doctor:** A learned practitioner of traditional Tibetan herbal, magical and humoral medicine.

**Farmer:** A simple peasant working the land, the heart of central Tibetan culture and economy.

**Foreigner:** A person from outside Tibet who has become caught up in Tibet's struggle.

**Gesar Bard:** Tellers of the saga of King Gesar, which has magic powers when told.

**Kagyupa Monk:** Male or female monk from a sect known for skills in divination and use of the body-heat tantra.

**Merchant:** Traveling businessperson, amassing wealth, trading and selling goods of all kinds.

**Mirror Gazer:** Born with the innate ability to stare in to a mirror and see other places and times.

**Nomad:** One of the fierce nomadic tribes, most of whom are currently at war with the Chinese.

**Nyingmapa Monk:** Male or female monk from the most ancient and shamanistic Buddhist sect.

**Oracle:** Able to call powerful gods & spirits down to speak through him or her.

**Revenant:** Sent back from hell with powers and the mission to warn others of hell's suffering.

**Sakyapa Monk:** Male or female monk from a Buddhist sect that stresses logic and the tantra.

**Savage:** Primitive hunter and warrior from secluded rainforest valleys at the foot of the Himalayas.

**Sorcerer:** Using knowledge of malevolent magical rituals for pay and for personal gain.

**Treasure Finder:** Able to find holy objects and sacred texts hidden throughout Tibet and beyond.

**Unclean:** Families of butchers, blacksmiths and morticians able to withstand dangerous bad karma.

**Weathermaker:** Uses secret rituals to control the weather for good or ill, often trained in monasteries.

**White Robe:** Lay tantric practitioner, using secret family rituals, skilled in sorcery & exorcism.

**Yellow Hat Monk:** From the "reformed" conservative Buddhist sect currently ruling the country.

## DOBDOB

In Brief- Monastic police officer, soldier and bodyguard, molded from a violent and uncontrollable child.

This is a police officer for a monastery. Most Dobdobs live in huge monasteries that are the size of cities. These cities have a complex internal bureaucracy and monks taking on all sorts of roles, from doctors to janitors.

Most dobdocs start their lives as violent, hyperactive or disobedient youths, sent to the monastery because their parents couldn't control them. When teachers decided they were not able to benefit from traditional Buddhist training, they were selected to become Dobdobs. A few Dobdobs were selected because of their physical size rather than their temperament. Most Dobdobs have accepted the precepts of Buddhism, including the basic monks' oaths, even if they know very little of Buddhist meditation and philosophy.

Dobdobs are sometimes called black monks. In some monasteries the Dobdobs dress just like normal monks. In other monasteries they wear a black stripe on their forehead and around their right arm to signify their status. Some Dobdobs model themselves after the wrathful aspects of dharmapalas, trying to look as frightening as possible. They rip their robes, wear their hair long and disheveled, paint themselves black with soot, and make their monks' robes stiff with grease and ash.

The first responsibility of Dobdobs is to maintain order within the monastery. They watch other monks, making sure that

they follow the rules. When monks gather in large numbers, Dobdobs are present to act as crowd control. When monks break rules the dobdocs, at the direction of abbots, carry out corporal punishment. The wiser Dobdobs investigate crimes committed within monasteries.

Dobdobs are also the first line of military defense for any monastery. Every monastery possesses at least a few rifles, kept for defense from bandits, and the Dobdobs are trained to use them.

Dobdobs are also bodyguards for lamas when they travel outside of the monastery. They can also be hired out as bodyguards for aristocrats. Dobdobs are trained in non-lethal combat using whips and bare hands.

In Lhasa, dobdocs carrying whips accompany the Dalai Lama when he goes out in public (25 armed soldiers are his escort when he travels long distances). The dobdocs protect the Dalai Lama from over-eager crowds. They use their whips to keep people at a distance.

### Skills

**Skill Costs:** Combat 4, Crafts 8, Divination 12, Exorcism 12, Folk Knowledge 7, Medicine 14, Scholarship 15, Sorcery 15, Tantra 17, Travel 10, Weathermaking 15

**Money-** 1000 Srang + 30 per month.

**Suggested Skills-** Acrobatics, Rifle, Tai Chi, Whip.

**Suggested Equipment-** Boots, Leather Armor, Monk's Robes, Whip.

**Suggested Reading-** Dark Ages (p.6), Monastic Life (p.9), Dharmapalas (p.18), Government and Law (p.35).



## The Trouble With Dobdobs

Dharmapalas were once powerful demons, beings of rage and violence. Knowing that they could not be destroyed or permanently restrained, the ancient Buddhist teachers bound them to oaths to only use their violence to protect Buddhist and Bön teachings and the Tibetan people. Dobdobs are based on the same principle: when violence and rambunctiousness can not be trained out of a monk, that energy is redirected to useful ends. Like dharmapalas, though, the violence of dobdbos sometimes escapes from its boundaries.

At their best, dobdbos are compassionate police officers who use intimidation to keep the peace but rarely have to resort to violence. At their worst, the dobdbos are a gang of bullies that terrorize the monks and the local laypeople. They take what they want. They beat each other up in violent contests. They refuse to follow anyone's orders and care little about the health and safety of anyone but themselves. They care nothing for Buddhist practice or monastic life. They spend their days playing sports and wrestling with each other.

Some monks believe that it does not technically break their vow of chastity if they achieve orgasm by putting their penis between the clenched thighs of another person (avoiding any orifices). Some monks participate in this practice by mutual consent. Some dobdbos, however, have been known to force people to engage in this activity. It is even known for dobdbos to kidnap young boys to engage in this practice with them.

## KAGYUPA MONK

**In Brief-** Male or female monk from a sect known for skills in divination and use of the body-heat tantra.

This is a male or female monk of the Kagyupa sect. The Kagyupa sect was founded by Marpa, a translator who studied under 108 spiritual teachers. One of his main students was Milarepa, the famous sorcerer turned poet and Buddhist holy man. Although there are several sub-schools of Kagyupa, each stresses meditation and periods of ascetic hermitage.

All Kagyupa monasteries practice the Tummo (Fire Yoga) tantra and consider it an important step towards the achievement of enlightenment in one lifetime. Fire Yoga students are tested by being asked to dry out wet blankets in the snow. Those highly accomplished in Fire Yoga are very respected. They distinguish themselves by wearing a thin off-white cotton garment, even in the coldest weather.

The Kagyupa say that gaining powers should never be the purpose behind Buddhist practice. Yet they do see control over one's body as a good hallmark of advancement towards enlightenment. They often speak of their most respected lamas in terms of their abilities to levitate, change size, pass through solid objects, spend days without breathing, etc.

The hermitage and the body control tantras go hand in hand. It takes many hours of concentration to develop the body tantras. It is easiest to achieve this concentration in the solitude of a cave.

Young monks have many choices. They can study a wide variety of subjects, including advanced Buddhist practice. They can leave the monastery, traveling around the country. They can study at various colleges and monasteries and with various lone teachers. Whatever skills they have they can use to make money for themselves and for their monasteries.

### Skills

**Free Skills:** Fire Yoga (1)

**Skill Costs:** Combat 13, Crafts 6, Divination 5, Exorcism 6, Folk Knowledge 7, Medicine 6, Scholarship 7, Sorcery 15, Tantra 8, Travel 9, Weathermaking 10.

**Money-** 750 Srang + 50 per month.

**Starting Karma-** PC starts with +10 to current KMA.

**Suggested Skills-** Breath Yoga, Lightness Yoga, Subtle Self.

**Suggested Equipment-** Boots, Fire Yoga Garment, Prayer Beads.

**Suggested Reading-** Monastic Life (p.9), Buddhism (p.27), Buddhism: Kagyupa (p.30), Tantra (p.32), Tantra: Body Control Tantras (p.33).



## NYINGMAPA MONK

In Brief- Male or female monk from the most ancient and shamanistic Buddhist sect.

This is a male and female monk from the Nyingmapa sect. The Nyingmapa sect is the oldest sect of Tibetan Buddhism. Nyingmapa has as much in common with Bön and with ancient Tibetan shamanism as it has with non-Tibetan Buddhism. Nyingmapa teachings are descended from the teachings of Padmasambhava, including those texts he hid around the country to be found when the people were ready for them. Nyingmapa uses more and a wider variety of Tantras than the other sects. It focuses more on the development of pure vision, pure thought and the pure yogic body than on scholarship and philosophy. One of the most highly regarded tantra is the Dzogchen tantra (which the Nyingmapa share with Bön practitioners). Dzogchen teaches students to understand that their true nature is perfect awareness without thought.

Nyingmapa monks are known to have magical powers, including harmful sorcery. Most only use those skills for self defense, though some may secretly use them for personal gain. The Nyingmapa are the most liberal of all sects about allowing monks of high status to marry and drink alcohol. Most abbotships are hereditary.

Young monks have many choices. They can study a wide variety of subjects, including advanced Buddhist practice. They can leave the monastery, traveling around the country. They can study at various colleges and monasteries and with various lone teachers. Whatever skills they have they can use to make money for themselves and for their monasteries.

### Skills

**Skill Costs:** Combat 12, Crafts 6, Divination 6, Exorcism 5, Folk Knowledge 7, Medicine 6, Scholarship 9, Sorcery 9, Tantra 8, Travel 9, Weathermaking 8.

**Money-** 875 Srang + 40 per month.

**Starting Karma-** PC starts with +10 to current KMA.

**Suggested Skills-** Breath Tantra, Dagger Exorcism, Death Tantra, Fire Yoga, Literacy, Pantheons, Pure Vision, Sorcery Tantra, Yidam Tantra.

**Suggested Equipment-** Boots, Monk's Robes, Pen & Ink, Phurba.

**Suggested Reading-** Monastic Life (p.9), Buddhism (p.27), Buddhism: Nyingmapa (p.30), Tantra (p.32).



*nyingmapa monk*

## SAKYAPA MONK

In Brief- Male or female monk from a Buddhist sect that stresses logic and the tantra.

This is a male or female monk from the Sakyapa sect. The Sakyapa sect's teachings can be traced back to a lineage which was originally derived from celestial beings. The Sakyapa were the leading sect in Tibet at the time of the Mongol invasion and Kublai Khan named them the official rulers of Tibet. They were known for ruling the country a little too strictly, using sorcery to enforce their will. Their reputation became so bad that the reformed Yellow Hat sect overthrew them, convincing the Mongols and the people of Tibet that they should be in charge.

The Sakyapa emphasize logic and scholastics more than the other Red Hat sects. They use Tantras, but only after a long period of study in logic.

Young monks have many choices. They can study a wide variety of subjects, including advanced Buddhist practice. They can leave the monastery, traveling around the country. They can study at various colleges and monasteries and with various lone teachers. Whatever skills they have they can use to make money for themselves and for their monasteries.

### Skills

**Free Skills:** Literacy (1), Logic (1).

**Skill Costs:** Combat 13, Crafts 6, Divination 7, Exorcism 6, Folk Knowledge 7, Medicine 6, Scholarship 4, Sorcery 10, Tantra 9, Travel 9, Weathermaking 11, Western Knowledge 13.

**Money-** 750 Srang + 50 per month.

**Starting Karma-** PC starts with +10 to current KMA.

**Suggested Skills-** Abidharma, Indifference, Literacy, Logic, Mathematics, Philosophy, Teaching, Tibetan History.

**Suggested Equipment-** Boots, Monk's Robes, Pen & Ink, Iron Pencease.

**Suggested Reading-** Monastic Life (p.9), Buddhism (p.27), Buddhism: Sakyapa (p.30), Tantra (p.32).

# YELLOW HAT MONK

In Brief- From the "reformed" conservative Buddhist sect currently ruling the country.

This is a male or female monk of the Gelugpa order. This order is often known as the Yellow Hats because they wear yellow hats with a red trim to distinguish themselves from the older sects of Buddhism (the Red Hats). The Yellow Hat sect started as an orthodox, reformist movement. They believed the other sects were corrupted by false tantras (Bön and primitive sha-manism disguised as Buddhist teachings) and lax morality (sex, alcohol and sorcery). This sect enjoyed a centralized power structure and a good reputation. Back when the Mongols controlled Tibet, the Yellow Hats were able to convince the Khan that they were the most worthy and were given control of the entire country.

The Yellow Hat sect is very strict about following codes of celibacy, abstinence from drugs and avoiding any appearance of impropriety. They have not been afraid, however, to take on governmental duties, including raising armies and running prisons.

Since Yellow Hat abbots cannot have heirs, abbotship is passed down to a tulku (reincarnation) of the abbot. Every major Yellow Hat monastery has a tulku who was raised, from an early age, to run the monastery. Since abbots have quite a bit of power, finding a tulku can be important for political as well as spiritual reasons.

The Yellow Hat sect is very critical of terma (discovered texts). Before the sect will teach a set of teachings it makes absolutely certain that those teachings are descended from a buddha or bodhisattva.

The Yellow Hats practice only a select few tantras, and only after strict training in the more traditional forms of Buddhist meditation and scholarship. Yellow Hats believe, as the other sects do, that sexual tantra is the only known way to achieve enlightenment while still in this physical body. Unlike the other sects, instead of breaking their vow of celibacy, the Yellow Hats choose to achieve enlightenment

directly after death during the bardo period when their physical bodies are no longer an impediment. The Yellow Hats believe the highest tantra is the kalachakra tantra. Its rituals help practitioners realize that all phenomenon are products of their own minds. The kalachakra tantra resembles the public teachings of Buddha (the path of sutras) more than the extreme tantric rituals of other sects.

By strongly discouraging teaching of harmful magic or tantras, the Yellow Hats lost the ability to defend themselves using magic (or the threat of magic). Instead, the Yellow Hats have put increased stress on the study of martial arts. The Gelugpa monastery of Sera is famous for its martial arts training and its monks are hired out as bodyguards by Tibet's nobility.



Young monks have many choices. They can study a wide variety of subjects, including advanced Buddhist practice. They can leave the monastery, traveling around the country. They can study at various colleges and monasteries and with various lone teachers. Whatever skills they have they can use to make money for themselves and for their monasteries.

## Skills

**Skill Costs:** Combat 6, Crafts 7, Divination 7, Exorcism 7, Folk Knowledge 8, Medicine 5, Scholarship 5, Sorcery 18, Tantra 10, Travel 9, Weathermaking 11.

**Money-** 1000 Srang + 55 per month.

**Starting Karma-** PC starts with +15 to current KMA.

**Suggested Skills-** Abidharma, Indifference, Literacy, Philosophy, Tai Chi.

**Suggested Equipment-** Boots, Iron Pencease, Monk's Hat, Monk's Robes, Pen & Ink.

**Suggested Reading-** Monastic Life (p.9), Buddhism (p.27), Buddhism: Gelugpa (p.31), Tantra (p.32), Government & Law (p.35).

# SKILLS

In Brief: Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by character class. Can buy 1 to 5 levels of any skill.

Every character begins with 100 skill points to buy skills with. Each character class has a list of skill costs. Each category of skills has a cost for members of that class. These costs are based on how easily characters of that class have access to teachers of those skills or can teach themselves. Skills are bought in levels from 1 to 6 with 1 representing a hobby level and 6 representing mastership of the skill. PCs can not buy level 6 without special permission from the GM. Each level above the first gives +4 to skill rolls using that skill.

Some skills have prerequisites: one or more levels of another skill must be taken before any levels of this skill can be taken. These skills are marked with a \* on the following skill list.

Example: *A Weathermaker character, who can buy Weathermaker skills for 5 points each, buys 3 levels of Weather Prediction. This costs 15 skill points and gives him a skill level of 3 (meaning he will have +8 on all skill rolls).*

See the section on using skills (p.114) for more information.

Available skills are as follows:

## Combat

Archery (N/A)  
Brawling (N/A)  
Crane Kung Fu (N/A)  
Key Throwing (N/A)  
Knife (N/A)  
Lance (N/A)  
Pistol (N/A)  
Rifle (N/A)  
Sling (N/A)  
Snake Boxing (N/A)  
Snare (N/A)  
Specific Training (N/A)  
Staff (N/A)  
Sword (N/A)  
Tai Chi (N/A)  
Whip (N/A)  
Wrestling (N/A)

## Crafts

Architecture (INL)  
Blacksmithing (INL)  
Carving (INL)  
Cooking (AWR)  
Dancing (AGY)  
Forgery (INL)  
Music (INL)  
Painting (INL)  
Printing (INL)  
Storytelling (CHM)  
Tailoring (INL)  
Textiles (INL)

## Divination

Drum Divination (INL)  
Elemental Astrology (INL)  
Geomancy (INL)  
Mirror Gazing (AWR)\*  
Omen Reading (AWR)  
Scapulimancy (INL)  
Simple Divination (INL)  
Zodiac Astrology (INL)\*

## Exorcism

Dagger Exorcism (WIL)\*  
Demon Shield (INL)  
Fire Exorcism (INL)  
Glud Ceremony (INL)  
Harrying Exorcism (INL)  
Funerary Rites (INL)\*  
Oath Binding (WIL)\*  
Protective Mantras (INL)  
Sound Exorcism (INL)  
Sucking Exorcism (WIL)  
Thread Crosses (INL)

## Folk Knowledge

Acrobatics (AGY)  
Animal Training (CHM)  
Butchery (INL)  
Farming (INL)  
Gambling (INL)  
Gun Repair (INL)  
Meditation (AWR)  
Oratory (CHM)  
Prowling (AGY)  
Seduction (CHM)  
Sleight of Hand (AGY)  
Tracking (AWR)  
Trading (INL)  
Trick Riding (AGY)\*

## Medicine

Death (INL)  
Emergency Medicine (INL)  
Herbalism (INL)  
Humoural Medicine (INL)  
Medical Diagnosis (INL)  
Medical Mantras (INL)  
Wildcrafting (INL)

## Scholarship

Abidharma (INL)\*  
Cryptography (INL)\*  
Etiquette (CHM)  
Hell Realms (INL)  
Iconography (INL)  
Indifference (INL)  
Literacy (INL)  
Logic (INL)\*  
Mathematics (INL)\*  
Pantheons (INL)  
Philosophy (INL)\*  
Teaching (CHM)  
Tibetan History (INL)  
Tibetan Law (INL)\*  
Torture (INL)

## Sorcery

Animation (WIL)\*  
Bird Control (WIL)\*  
Demon Sorcery (INL)\*  
Disease Sorcery (INL)  
Gantad Horn (INL)  
Life Force Sorcery (WIL)  
Love Magic (INL)  
Poisons (INL)  
Simple Curses (WIL)  
Zor (WIL)

## Tantra

Breath Yoga (AWR)  
Dakini Language (INL)\*  
Death Tantra (WIL)\*  
Fire Yoga (WIL)\*  
Invisibility (WIL)\*  
Lightness Yoga (AWR)\*  
Pure Vision (AWR)\*  
Sexual Tantra (WIL)\*  
Sorcery Tantra (INL)\*  
Subtle Self (INL)\*  
Tulpa Creation (WIL)\*  
Wind Voices (AWR)\*  
Yidam Tantra (WIL)\*

## Travel

Animal Packing (INL)  
Foreign Language (INL)  
Mountain Climbing (INL)  
Riding (AGY)  
Swimming (SPD)  
Tibetan Geography (INL)  
Wilderness Survival (INL)

## Weathermaking

Weather Mantras (WIL)  
Weather Prediction (AWR)  
Weather Propitiation (INL)  
Weather Sorcery (INL)



# COMBAT

**Combat Skills In Brief:** Each combat skill gives the following plusses to the listed actions and reactions, and an extra +4 for each skill level above the first. See p.115 for more details.

**Archery-** Gives the following with bows only:

- +4 to Split Action: Draw and Strike
- +0 to Strike
- +4 to Vital Strike
- No penalty for Targeted actions
- Double Aim (takes 2 actions, +10 to next action)

**Brawling-** This is the art of unarmed fighting as learned by the common Tibetan. There is no special discipline or philosophy to it. It is merely the art of doing damage quickly to an opponent.

- +2 to Tackle
- +4 to Pain/Stun
- +4 to Knockdown
- +0 to Grab (Wrestling)
- +2 to Strike (with fists)

**Crane Kung Fu-** This form of Kung Fu originated in Tibet. It is designed to let a quick (yet physically vulnerable) opponent defeat a slower, yet stronger, opponent. It combines evasions and “pecking” attacks on vital areas in to a continuous motion.

- +8 to Split Action: Jump and Pain/Stun
- +0 to Knockdown (with feet)
- +0 to Crippling Attack (with hands)
- +0 to Special Reaction: **Whirling Dodge** (AGY +AWR vs. 30, PC dodges with a whirling motion. If successful the PC takes no damage and has the momentum to do another action quickly. Gives +7 to the next action if that action is a wing, strike or pain/stun attack.)

**Lance-** Gives the following with lances (a traditional weapon of the nomads because lances can be used from horseback).

- +0 to Parry
- +0 to Strike
- +8 to Vital Strike
- +4 to Simultaneous Action: Strike
- No penalty to actions while riding an animal.

**Key Throwing-** This weapon was once popular among the dobdobs, but has lately been replaced with less lethal weapons. It is a large key-shaped piece of metal with sharp edges, attached to a thick cord. The weapon is thrown at an enemy, then pulled back so it can be thrown again. Gives the following with throwing keys:

- +2 to Strike
- +4 to Pain/Stun
- +2 per level to initiative with throwing keys
- As one action the PC can retrieve a thrown key and get it ready to be thrown again.

**Knife-** Gives the following with large knives (including Kukuri).

- +8 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
- +4 to Jump
- +4 to Split Action: Jump and Strike
- +0 to Dodge

**Pistol-** Gives the following with pistols only.

- +2 to Strike
- +4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
- +8 to Split Reaction Dodge and Simultaneous Strike
- +2 per skill level to initiative with handguns

**Rifle-** Gives the following with rifles only.

- +4 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
- +6 to Simultaneous Strike
- +2 to Strike
- No penalty for Targeted actions
- Double Aim (2 actions, +8 to next action)

**Sling-** The character has trained in the use of slings, usually used by nomads to guide animals by remote. Gives the following with slings only:

- +4 to Pain/Stun
- +0 Blinding Strike
- No penalty for Targeted actions
- Double Aim (2 actions, +8 to next action)

**Snare-** The character has trained in the use of a snare: a rope with a noose on the end used to capture animals.

- +4 to Grab
- +2 to Grab: Strangulation
- +4 to Knockdown

**Specific Training-** The character trains in the use of one weapon which is not included in any of the other available skills (Blow Gun, Horned Shield, Tiger Claws Trident or War Axe). The character gets the following with that weapon:

- +4 to Strike
- +4 to Vital Strike -or- +4 to Pain/Stun Attack (choose one)
- +4 to Parry -or- +2 per level to initiative (choose one)

**Snake Boxing-** Originally created by a lama after witnessing a fight between a monkey (who rolled to evade) and a snake (who made quick jabbing attacks). This art teaches students to drop and roll on the ground to evade attacks, then make vicious jabs from a kneeling or crouching position. Gives the following:

- +4 to Crippling Strike (with hands)
- +4 to Pain/Stun (with hands)
- +4 to special reaction **Drop and Roll** (AWR + AGY vs. 25. Like the Drop, the PC evades an attack by falling, but instead of ending up flat on the ground the PC rolls and ends up in a kneeling position).

## CRAFTS

**Staff-** This is a skill often taught in martial arts academies. Gives the following with staves only:

- +4 to Parry
- +2 to Strike
- +8 to Split Action Jump and Strike

**Sword-** Training in the use of Asian style swords (which would be considered short swords by westerners). Gives the following with swords only:

- +2 to Strike
- +4 to Vital Strike
- +4 to Parry
- +0 to Wing

**Tai Chi-** Although the slow exercise and meditation version of this art is popular in China, Tibetans use the original full-speed version as a defensive art. Tibetan Tai Chi focuses on using vital energies to stay rooted and flow through attacks.

+8 to Split Reaction Parry and Simultaneous Crippling Attack

+4 to Knockaway Strike (with the palm of the hand)

+4 to Grab (Pain)

+0 to Special Reaction: **Parry**

**Pull** (INL+AGY vs. 30, if successful attack is parried and the opponent is pulled off balance: is at -5 to his or her next action or reaction).

+0 to Special Reaction: **Stay Rooted** (STH+WIL vs. 20, this reaction is used to oppose any knockdown, knockaway, tackle or knockout).

**Whip-** The whip is valued in Tibet as a non-lethal means of crowd control. The PC gets the following with whips only:

- +2 to Pain/Stun
- +4 to Entangle
- +2 to Wing
- +0 to Slash

**Wrestling-** Common Tibetans (and their neighbors, the Mongolians) love wrestling as a sport. Gives the following to unarmed combat:

- +0 to Grab
- +4 to Grab (Wrestling)
- +4 to Knockdown
- +6 to Tackle
- +0 to Flip

**Architecture-** Uses INL. PC can design and build Tibetan style buildings. A failed roll means that the project must be scrapped

Easy (10): Construct a yak hair tent.

Moderate (20): Construct a 2 story Tibetan house.

Hard (30): Construct a full-sized temple.



*house construction*

**Blacksmithing-** Uses INL. PC can make weapons, tools and art. In combination with the Carving skill, the PC can cast metal figurines and machine parts.

Easy (10): Create a simple metal tool.

Moderate (20): Create a precise tool or weapon.

Hard (30): Create a machinery part.

**Carving-** Uses INL. PC can carve in wood, stone or bone.

Easy (10): Carve a short prayer in to a stone.

Moderate (20): Carve a likeness of someone.

Hard (30): Carve a phurba out of brittle wood.

**Cooking-** Uses AWR. PC can create enjoyable dishes.

Easy (10): Cook a tasty meal of momos (yak meat dumplings).

Moderate (20): Cook an Indian-style meal using imported spices.

**Dancing-** Uses AGY. The PC knows the exact formulas for traditional Tibetan dances.

Moderate (20): Flawless performance of a folk dance.

Hard (30): Flawless performance of a religious dance.

**Forgery-** Uses INL. PCs can forge documents (or money) or make crafts look like they are antique. Note that paper money is of limited value in Tibet.

Moderate (20): Recognize forgeries (opposed roll) or forge ancient crafts (requires the appropriate craft skill).

Difficult (30): Forge paper currency notes or official government documents.



**Music-** Uses INL. PC must choose one instrument (including human voice) to be proficient in.

Easy (10): Play a pleasant traditional song.

Moderate (20): Play a song with the exactness requires for magical rituals.

**Painting-** Uses INL.

Easy (10): Paint a symbol of good luck on a rock.

Moderate (20): Paint someone's likeness.

Hard (30): Paint a thankga (traditional religious painting on cloth).

**Printing-** Uses INL. The PC can make paper, prepare ink, create wooden blocks and print Tibetan style books.

Easy (10): Make paper.

Moderate (20): Make an average quality book.

Hard (30): Make an ornamental (black paper) book.

**Storytelling-** Uses CHM. The character can tell entertaining or absorbing stories. The story's interestingness does not help persuade listeners that it is true.

Easy (10): Entertain children.

Moderate (20): Entertain peasants.

Hard (30): Entertain lamas or battle-weary soldiers.

**Tailoring-** Uses INL.

Easy (10): Make a chuba or monk's robes.

Moderate (20): Make a fancy chuba.

Hard (30): Make Western style clothing.

**Textiles-** Uses INL. The PC has all the skills necessary to take a herd of sheep and create a roll of dyed woolen cloth suitable for sale.

Easy (10): Make rough, undyed wool cloth.

Moderate (20): Make smooth, colored wool cloth.

Hard (30): Make fine, dyed silk cloth.

## DIVINATION

**Drum Divination-** Uses INL. The PC uses two drums: one is beat, the other vibrates in sympathy, causing a mustard seed to move around on the drum head. Squares painted on the drum head represent different dangerous influences the subject of the divination may encounter.

Easy (10): Tell a subject's prospects for recovery.

Moderate (20): Tell the class of misfortune effecting the subject.

Hard (30): Tell the remedy (if any) for the subject's misfortune.

**Elemental Astrology-** Uses INL. From the subject's date of birth, the PC can create a complex luck chart. On the chart, white or black stones represent good or bad luck within each of the five elements: metal (cutting), water (wetness), fire (heat), earth (solidity) and wood (movement).

Easy (10): Determine that ten days from now will be unlucky for the subject.

Moderate (20): Determine that the subject would benefit from acting in a more earth-like way in her business dealings.

Hard (30): Determine that a person will soon become ill from lack of the wood element.

**Geomancy-** Uses INL. The PC knows how to arrange anything, from fields to furniture, to maximize (or sometimes minimize) luck for that area.

Easy (10): Recognize and correct an obviously unlucky design.

Moderate (20): Arrange an area to increase good luck.

Hard (30): Arrange an area to increase bad luck.

**Mirror Gazing-** Uses AWR. Prerequisite: Meditation (1), p.66. The PC can stare in to a mirror until he or she goes in to a light trance and sees visions. The amount of time the trance takes to succeed depends on the success: 1 success would mean hours, 10 success would mean minutes, 20 success would mean seconds, etc. Mirror divination can be used without a mirror at +20 difficulty.

Easy (10): Get brief, random flashes that are related (in an unknown way) to the question at hand.

Moderate (20): See through an illusion. -or- Find a lost object.

Hard (30): See an invisible spirit. -or- See a brief glimpse of the future.

Legendary (40): See any place and time that the PC chooses.

**Omen Reading-** Uses AWR. By interviewing a person about what the person has dreamt about what (seemingly random) events have occurred in the person's life, the PC can foretell the approach of harmful or beneficial influences.

Easy (10): Recognize a dream that means something bad is coming.

Moderate (20): Recognize a nightmare that is being caused by a nearby Gyelpo spirit.

Hard (30): Recognize that a dropped bowl and the sighting of a strange bird means the imminent arrival of a tyrant.

**Scapulimancy-** Uses INL. The PC can read the cracks on a sheep or human scapula (back shoulder bone) which has been thrown in a fire.

Easy (10): See good or bad influences approaching.

Moderate (20): Recognize the nature of unseen influences effecting the situation.

Hard (30): Receive clairvoyant visions about forces affecting the situation.

**Simple Divination-** Uses INL. This skill covers the many simple folk methods for foretelling the future. These methods are quick and cheap, but give little specific information. See p.25 for more.

Easy (10): Using dice or a rosary, tell whether any given undertaking is more likely to be successful or unsuccessful.

Moderate (20): Using Divination Cards, give general information about the problems a person faces and what approaches he or she should take to succeed.

**Zodiac Astrology-** Uses INL. Prerequisite: Literacy (1), p.68. From the subject's date of birth, the PC can calculate, for each date in the person's life, the influence of the peaceful and violent planets in each of the person's twelve houses (representing birth/body, wealth, relatives, friends/colleagues, children, enemies, spouse/home-life, life/death, fortune/religious study, work/profession and gain/loss).

Easy (10): Determine that ten days from now will be unlucky for the subject.

Moderate (20): Discover that, in the next month, the evil planet Drachen will have an effect on the house of fortune and religious study while the moon will have a peaceful and prosperous effect on the house of children.

Hard (30): Find someone's life force spirit. -or- Discover a "bubble" of bad karma from a previous life that is about to resurface.

## EXORCISM

**Dagger Exorcism-** Uses WIL. Prerequisite: Meditation (1), p.66. The PC knows the meditation and mantras that will empower a phurba (magic dagger) to damage and destroy intangible spiritual beings. The PC must make a strike, as with a normal weapon. A successful strike does 5 damage to the entity's Magical STH.

Easy (10): Phurba will do damage, but only while the holder chants and maintains complete concentration. PC must make a WIL roll after any distraction to maintain concentration.

Moderate (20): Phurba will do damage within the next hour, whether the PC is concentrating or not.

Hard (30): Phurba will do damage within the next 24 hours, even if the PC is not the one holding the phurba.

**Demon Shield-** Uses INL. First, the PC must identify a malevolent entity's specific class (typically with Divination skills). Next, the PC buries a skull, inside it is a piece of paper with a prayer written on it. The skull and prayer will create a magical barrier that entities of that class can not pass or attack through. The demon must make a legendary difficulty opposed WIL roll to pierce the wall.

Moderate (20): Create a demon shield.

**Fire Exorcism-** Uses INL. With mantras and offerings, the PC can make a ritually pure fire inhabited by benevolent fire spirits. Offerings burnt in this fire send messages directly to the heavens. If an object that has a spirit trapped inside it (a glud or thread cross) is thrown in the fire, the spirit will be destroyed. Cursed objects can also be burned without fear of releasing dangerous amounts of bad karma.

Moderate (20): Create a fire capable of destroying spirits or curses.

**Glud Ceremony-** Uses INL. A glud is literally a scapegoat. It appears, to the senses of a spirit, to be the spirit's intended victim. The spirit goes in to the glud, giving the actual victim a chance to escape. Most glud are made from barley flour dough and are clothed in scraps of the patient's clothes.

Easy (10): Create a simple noodle-dough glud (can fool Minor Spirits).

Moderate (20): Create a sophisticated dough glud with different foods inside representing bones and organs (can fool Dangerous Spirits).

Hard (30): Use an animal (bought from a butcher and set free) or a willing human as a glud (can fool Demons).

### **Harrying Exorcism-**

Uses INL. The PC knows a ritual which can bless small objects which are stored in a horn carved with magical symbols (p.82). These objects can be thrown at an intangible spirit to cause damage to it. They can be thrown one at a time or a whole handful can be used to cover an area (see the Area Attack action, p.118). A horn holds around 50 seeds or stones.

Easy (10): Bless white pebbles to act as a Pain/Stun attack against spirits.

Moderate (20): Bless white mustard seeds to do ½ damage each to a spirit's Magical STH.

Hard (30): Bless black mustard seeds to do 1 damage each to Magical STH.

Legendary (40): Bless a piece of rhubarb so that it explodes when it hits, doing 1d4 burn and 1d4 blunt damage (and 1d6 MSTH damage to spirits) within 3 ft. or 1 m.

**Funerary Rites-** Uses INL. Prerequisite: Meditation (1), p.66. The PC knows how to pray for and speak to the ghost of a recently deceased person in order to help guide the ghost through the bardo period. The PC must stay with the body until the ghost finds a rebirth (up to 49 days). The rites can be performed remotely, but at +10 difficulty.

Easy (10): Prevent malevolent forces from possessing the body

Moderate (20): Keep a person's soul from becoming a malevolent ghost trapped in this plane.

Hard (30): Guide the soul to a more favorable rebirth than it would have achieved otherwise.

**Oath Binding-** Uses WIL. Prerequisite: Meditation (1), p.66. The PC knows the secret mantras which will bind a spirit to an oath it can not willingly break. Note that many spirits are too stupid to notice that they are doing something that breaks an oath, and must be reminded. Humans can also be bound by oaths. Humans retain free will but will be attacked by dharmapalas if they disobey an oath. Bön priests in ancient times would bind whole armies to an oath of loyalty.

Moderate (20): Bind a spirit to any oath it will take willingly.

Hard (30): Bind a human to any oath he or she will take willingly.

Legendary (40): Bind a spirit to an oath even if the spirit does not agree to it (spirit can make an opposed moderate WIL roll to resist).

**Protective Mantras-** Uses INL. The PC knows mantras and symbols which keep malevolent spirits away. The same symbols, painted on a box, will keep a spirit trapped.

Moderate (20): Spirit must make an opposed moderate WIL roll to come in to an area where protective symbols are painted or where people are chanting protective mantras.

**Sound Exorcism-** Uses INL. The PC knows what sounds will frighten away evil spirits. Spirits hearing these sounds must make an opposed moderate save vs. fear to avoid fleeing. The difficulty is based on what resources the character has to make noises with:

Easy (10): 15 horn and gong players or 30 chanters.

Moderate (20): 5 horn and gong players or 10 chanters.

Hard (30): 1 horn or gong player or 2 chanters.

Legendary (40): One chanter.



**Sucking Exorcism-** Uses WIL. First, the PC must use divination to discover where a curse or malevolent spirit is hiding in a person's body. Next, the PC uses a Ceremonial Arrow (p.82) to suck out the evil (moderate difficulty). The evil manifests physically as blood or puss. Unless disposed of, the blood or puss will turn incorporeal, in a few hours, and try to find the victim again. The PC can swallow the blood and puss and make a second skill roll to "digest" the poison without injury to himself or herself.

Moderate (20): Suck out a spirit or curse. -or- Digest a poison or curse which has been made physical.

**Thread Crosses-** Uses INL. The PC can make small wooden frames, with interwoven string, adorned with straw and feathers. These frames will capture spirits. Spirits which are captured are typically burned (see Fire Exorcism) but they can also be set loose on an enemy (see Demon Sorcery). Very sophisticated thread crosses can be used as "luxury hotels" to entice a god to come down from the heavens.

Easy (10): Make a simple thread cross which will capture any minor spirits which come around.

Moderate (20): Make a larger multi-level thread cross to attract and capture a specific demons or lost life force spirits.

Hard (30): Create ornate thread crosses, built to resemble the heavenly palaces of powerful beings, that will summon those beings.

## FOLK KNOWLEDGE

**Acrobatics-** Uses AGY. The PC has been trained in doing physical tricks (involving swinging, jumping, rolling and balancing) primarily for the purposes of amusing others. Additional STH based rolls may be necessary for some stunts. Acrobatics adds +2 to jumping rolls and +2 to save vs. loss of balance per level.

Easy (10): Do cartwheels.

Moderate (20): Swing from an archway, do a somersault in midair, and land on one's feet.

Hard (30): Backflip off a cliff and land on a rope.

**Animal Training-** Uses CHM. The PC can turn animals in to useful servants.

Easy (10): Train an animal to not be scared of a single person.

Moderate (20): Train an animal to understand one spoken command.

Hard (30): Change an animal's basic temperament.

**Butchery-** Uses INL. The PC can kill and cut up animals such that the animal feels little pain, the butcher is not in any danger and no usable parts of the animal are wasted.

Easy (10): Kill an animal with a sword (some blood will be spilled, which could otherwise be used to make sausages).

Moderate (20): Kill an animal by piercing its spine with a needle (no blood is spilled).

**Farming-** Uses INL. With seeds, tools and decent land, the PC can make things grow.

Easy (10): Grow a small garden on good soil.

Moderate (20): Grow enough food to feed oneself.

Hard (30): Irrigate and grow a commercial crop.

**Gambling-** Uses INL. PC can play mah jongg, dice and sho (a dice and shell game).

Easy (10): Know the rules of a game of chance.

Moderate (20): Win a game of chance (opposed roll).

Hard (30): Size up an opponent's skill and strategy.

**Gun Repair-** Uses INL. The PC can take care of modern or antique firearms and can create ammunition.

Easy (10): Clean a weapon.

Moderate (20): Repair a gun. -or- Make bullets.

Hard (30): Modify a weapon.

**Meditation-** Uses AWR. The PC knows the most basic and common forms of meditation. The PC can sit, without thinking, in a state of perfect relaxation. Two hours of meditation is equivalent to a full day's rest. PCs are +10 to AWR rolls while meditating.

Easy (10): Enter in to a meditative state after two hours in a temple.

Moderate (20): Enter in to a meditative state after 10 minutes in a quiet guest house.

Hard (30): Enter a meditative state immediately in a crowded marketplace.

**Oratory-** Uses CHM. The PC is trained in speaking and arguing persuasively. The PC also knows how to speak in the particular styles of argument expected in nomadic mediation or in monastic debate.

Easy (10): Write a speech designed to work on a particular audience (+4 to persuasion rolls).

Moderate (20): Notice when a strategy isn't working and change gears (PC can re-roll a bad persuasion roll).

Hard (30): Predict the arguments an opponent will make and pre-argue against them (-7 to the opponent's persuasion roll).

**Prowling-** Uses AGY. The PC has practiced sneaking up on people, moving silently, quickly finding hiding places, crawling through shadows and blending in with the environment. Gives +4 per level to prowling rolls (p.104).

**Seduction-** Uses CHM. The PC is very practiced at seducing people. Every level of the skill gives +4 to seduction rolls (p.105). The PC can also use this skill to notice body language cues that tell how easy it would be to seduce someone and how well the PC is doing at a given seduction (moderate difficulty).

**Sleight of Hand-** Uses AGY. The PC can manipulate objects so quickly that people fail to notice it. The target gets an opposed AWR roll. Fooling multiple targets has a higher difficulty.

Easy (10): Hide a pebble in one's own hand.

Moderate (20): Secretly exchange a coin.

Hard (30): Hide a slip of paper in someone's chuba.

**Tracking-** Uses AWR. The PC can identify, follow and examine tracks in the wilderness. The difficulty generally goes up by approximately 1 per hour after the tracks were made (depending on the weather).

Easy (10): Follow tracks through snow.

Moderate (20): Follow tracks made in dirt and identify species.

Hard (30): Identify speed and health by examining tracks.

**Trading-** Uses INL. The PCs knows what different items are worth to different people and in different areas.

Easy (10): Recognize the worth of a common item.

Moderate (20): Recognize the worth of an esoteric item.

Hard (30): Figure out when an item will be worth more in one area than another.



**Trick Riding-** Uses AGY. Prerequisite: Riding (1), p.74. The PC can do acrobatic tricks while riding horses. This skill is often performed in contests at Tibetan festivals.

Easy (10): Stand up on the back of a moving horse.

Moderate (20): With a running start, mount a horse as it gallops by at full speed.

Hard (30): Lean over, from a galloping horse, and grab a rifle from the ground.

## MEDICINE

**Death-** Uses INL. The PC has studied the physiological effects of death.

Easy (10): Tell when decomposition has started (the only way to tell if a soul has permanently left the body).

Moderate (20): Perform one of the types of burial listed on p.12.

Hard (30): By watching a body decompose, tell how the person died.

**Emergency Medicine-** Uses INL. The PC can deal with immediate dangers to physical health.

Easy (10): Bind wounds (prevent post-combat bleeding).

Moderate (20): Cauterize a wound (prevent post-combat infection).

Hard (30): Remove a bullet.

**Herbalism-** Uses INL. The PC knows the medical effects (including the effects on humours) of native and imported herbs. Note that successful herbal treatment requires a correct diagnosis (see Medical Diagnosis).

Easy (10): Temporarily alleviate the symptoms of an illness.

Moderate (20): Identify the possible side effects of an herb.

Hard (30): Cure an illness.

**Humoural Medicine-** Uses INL. First, the PC must successfully diagnose a problem (see Medical Diagnosis). If it a problem caused by blocked or excessive flow of humours (vital bodily fluids), the PC can prescribe a treatment that will correct the problem. When used in combination with the Herbalism skill, PCs can give herbal treatments for humoural problems.

Easy (10): Recognize which humoural flow is causing a physiological problem.

Moderate (20): Recognize which humoural flow is causing a psychological problem.

Hard (30): Prescribe compresses, blood-letting, cauterization or behavioral therapy to correct the humoural flow.

**Medical Diagnosis-** Uses INL. The PC can identify the nature of a medical problem. Diseases can be caused by unbalanced humours, physical injury or infection, psychological trauma, bad karma,

sorcery or malevolent spirits.

Easy (10): Diagnose a common illness via complete physical examination and patient interview.

Moderate (20): Diagnose an illness via examination of tongue, heartbeat and urine.

Hard (30): Diagnose a rare illness just by looking at a patient.

**Medical Mantras-** Uses INL. Given an accurate diagnosis, the PC knows beneficial mantras that the patient or the PC can chant.

Easy (10): Mantra that alleviates pain (+7 to save vs. pain).

Moderate (20): Mantra that doubles the rate of healing. -or- Mantras that help other medical treatments take effect (+5 to medical skill rolls).

Hard (30): Mantras that help fight disease (+10 to save vs. disease progression).

**Wildcrafting-** Uses INL. The art of gathering medicinal plants.

Easy (10): Recognize and gather wild medicinal plants.

Moderate (20): Find rare medicinal or poisonous herbs.

Hard (30): Recognize the times and places to pick herbs to give them maximum healing power.

## SCHOLARSHIP

**Abidharma-** Uses INL. Prerequisite: Literacy (1). This is the Buddhist study of the nature of consciousness and the mind.

Easy (10): Identify the mental abilities of a class of beings.

Moderate (20): Recognize and describe the nature of another's attachment and how that attachment causes that person suffering.

Hard (30): Describe the levels of consciousness achieved during different types of meditation.

**Cryptography-** Uses INL. Prerequisite: Mathematics (1). The PC can create written codes for the secure transfer of information.

Easy (10): Devise a simple cipher.

Hard (30): Break a simple cipher.

**Etiquette-** Uses CHM. The PC knows the proper signifiers and means of addressing people from every social class.

Easy (10): Recognize someone's rank by dress and jewelry.

Moderate (20): Address a person in a fashion proper for that person's specific position in society.

Hard (30): Use honorific speech (a rare, formal form of speech).

**Hell Realms-** Uses INL. The character has studied the nature, geography and inhabitants of the different hell realms and hungry ghost realms.  
 Easy (10): Describe the horrors of the hells.  
 Moderate (20): Describe the beings that live in each realm and the sins they committed to end up there.  
 Hard (30): Draw a map of a hell realm.

**Iconography-** Uses INL. Tibetan Buddhist art and rituals are filled with hundreds of tiny details that each have symbolic meaning: a hand gesture on one hand of a multi-armed Buddha may mean that this Buddha can grant longevity; a small figure in a mandala may represent the land of the Dakinis.

Easy (10): Recognize a buddha, bodhisattva, heavenly being or dharmapala by its painting (or by actually seeing it).

Moderate (20): List the details which should be put in to a proper painting of a being.

Hard (30): List the properties of an unknown being by recognizing the symbols it uses.

**Indifference-** Uses INL. The PC has trained himself or herself to believe, both viscerally and intellectually, the non-existence of all phenomena. Since nothing exists, feeling emotion (pain, fear, anger, lust, etc.) in reaction to anything that happens is illogical. A successful skill roll means that the PC has avoided feeling emotions (except compassion) in a given situation. This gives the character +20 to any WIL based savings roll (save vs. pain, save vs. fear, save vs. nausea, etc.) stemming from that event.

Easy (10): Feel indifference to something happening to a stranger.

Moderate (20): Feel indifference to something happening to a friend.

Hard (30): Feel indifference to something happening to oneself.

**Literacy-** Uses INL. The PC can read or write the written language of Tibet.

Easy (10): Read and write simple messages.

Moderate (20): Read and write complicated texts.

Hard (30): Write beautiful calligraphy.

**Logic-** Uses INL. Prerequisite: Literacy (1). The PC has learned the complex systems of formal symbolic logic taught in Buddhist monasteries. Most of it is inherited from Indian systems of logic.

Easy (10): Construct a logical argument.

Moderate (20): Argue logic (opposed roll).

Hard (30): Prove that all dualities are false.

**Mathematics-** Uses INL. Prerequisite: Literacy (1).

Easy (10): Perform arithmetic.

Moderate (20): Perform simple algebra.

Hard (30): Perform complex algebra.

**Pantheons-** Uses INL. The PC knows about each of the hundreds of buddhas, bodhisattvas, emanations, dharmapalas, earthly spirits, malevolent spirits and other spiritual entities.

Easy (10): Describe a class of entities and their characteristics.

Moderate (20): Tell the traditional names, titles, duties, retinue and preferred offerings of a powerful dharmapala.

Hard (30): Describe, in detail, the home realm of an entity.

**Philosophy-** Uses INL. Prerequisite: Logic (1). The PC understands the concepts of Buddhist and Bön philosophy.

Easy (10): Identify a philosophical system.

Moderate (20): Prove the non-existence of all things.

Hard (30): Recognize the purpose and meaning behind esoteric practices.



# SORCERY

**Teaching-** Uses CHM. PCs can impart skills that they have to willing pupils. PCs can not teach skills they do not have to teach skills at a level equal to or greater than their own.

Easy (10): PC with 5 levels in a skill teaches someone 1 level in that skill within 6 months.

Moderate (20): PC with 4 levels in a skill teaches someone 2 levels in a skill within 1 month.

Hard (30): PC with 1 level in a skill teaches someone 1 level in the skill within 1 week.

**Tibetan History-** Uses INL. The study of written Tibetan history, from the ancient historical texts in the language of Zhang Zhung to modern day events.

Easy (10): Name the 12<sup>th</sup> Dalai Lama.

Moderate (20): Name the 10<sup>th</sup> century kingdom in a given valley.

Hard (30): Give the date that an obscure monastery was built.

**Tibetan Law-** Uses INL. Prerequisite: Literacy (1). The PC has studied the ancient codes that guide Tibetan legal decisions. These codes list crimes and punishments and give advice for solving disputes. There are different codes for lay people and for monks. There are few legal professionals in Tibet and the people with the most need for this skill are people who act as judges.

Easy (10): List the suggested punishments for theft.

Moderate (20): List all the defenses against crimes in the monastic Vinaya code.

Hard (30): Quote an abbot's advice on solving disputes from a five hundred year old book.

**Torture-** Uses INL. The PC has learned how to cause pain without doing permanent damage or causing the person to pass out. The victim gets an opposed WIL roll.

Easy (10): Force someone to do or say something when he or she has no real reason not to.

Moderate (20): Force someone to betray his or her country or friends.

Hard (30): Force someone to do or say something that will cause his or her own death.

**Animation-** Uses WIL. Prerequisite: Meditation (1), p.66. By meditating and focusing his or her will, the PC can imbue an object with the power to move. This makes possible the tongue-dagger ritual (see box). Takes about 10 hours of meditation on the object (less with very high success on the skill roll).

Easy (10): Cause an object to rattle or lurch.

Moderate (20): Cause a knife to hit a target up to 20 miles (32 km.) away (knife hits as a vital strike with 1d10 success).

Hard (30): Set an item to act upon a condition (e.g. set a knife to hit anyone who enters a hallway) or upon a timetable (e.g. set a box to sit at the bottom of a lake for 100 years and then float to the surface).

## Sorcerous Components Table

01-06: Human Blood
07-11: Human Flesh
12-16: Human Bone
17-21: Human Skull
22-25: Sandalwood Phurba
26-29: Juniper Wood Phurba
30-33: Turmeric Wood Phurba
34-38: Poison Paper
39-43: Khram Sing (notched hexagonal stick)
44-48: Goat Blood
49-53: Dog Blood
54-58: Corpse Hair
59-63: Human skin
64-67: Live Poisonous Spiders
68-71: Menstrual Blood of a Prostitute
72-75: Death Blood Wiped From a Sword
76-78: Thighbone of an Indian Brahmin
79-81: Blood From a Leprous Corpse
82-84: Brain Blood of an Insane Person
85-86: Rhino Meat
87-88: Black Stones From a Haunted Place
89-90: Right Horn of a Black Yak
91-92: Blood of a Child Born From Incest
93-94: Object Used to Commit Suicide
95-96: Flesh of woman who died in childbirth
97-98: White Mustard
99-00: Charcoal from a Funeral Pyre

## Tongue Dagger Ritual

Using the Animation skill at moderate difficulty, a PC can animate a corpse. The corpse will stand up and lurch violently. The PC must grab a hold of the corpse and not let go (takes a STH feat of 30 difficulty or an AGY feat of 35 difficulty). If the PC breaks contact with the corpse for even a second he or she will die. If the PC can bite off the corpse's tongue, the PC will have a powerful magical weapon. The weapon kills whoever it is pointed at. (Does 2d6 BLD damage, functional range 5 ft. (1.5 m.) max range 200 ft. (60 m.), works 10 times).

**Bird Control-** Uses WIL. Prerequisite: Meditation (1), p.66. The PC knows the secret mantra which can call birds of prey (ravens and vultures) to act as his or her servants. Summoned birds will follow commands from the PC for 24 hours. The birds can understand any instruction, but may not be able to remember complex plans. The birds can not communicate back to the PC.

Easy (10): Call one bird of prey the PC can see.

Moderate (20): Call up to 10 birds of prey from within 1 mile (1.6 km.).

Hard (30): Call every bird of prey within 2 miles (3.2 km.).

Legendary (40): Call every bird of any kind within five miles (8.5 km.).

## Typical Bird Flock

**Composition-** 30 ravens and vultures.

**Attributes-** AGY 15, AWR 15, END 10, KMA -5, SPD 40 (flying), STH 1, WIL 3, BLD 1, BDY 0, INCY 2.

**Appearance-** A jumbled horde of large birds: black ravens with intense yellow eyes and vultures with long bony necks. The sky is filled with flapping wings and screeching.

**Special Powers-** 1 bladed damage talons and beaks.

**Typical Attack-** The flock attacks en-masse (see Swarms, p.121), doing slash, blinding, pain/stun and vital strike attacks.

**Demon Sorcery-** Uses INL. Prerequisite: Thread Crosses (1), p.65. Demon Sorcery is the most immediately deadly form of sorcery, but it is also the most dangerous to the practitioner. The PC builds special thread crosses, then takes the crosses to places frequented by malevolent spirits (graveyard or crossroads). Then the PC uses spoken invocations to summon and trap a demon. The PC tells the demon that it will be let free if it will attack a target victim. The thread cross is then broken in the direction of the enemy. The demon hunts down and tries to destroy the enemy. The PC must roll twice, once to summon the demon and again to trap it. Roll once on the Sorcerous Components Table to use this skill.

Easy (10): Summon or trap a Dangerous Spirit (see p.137).

Moderate (20): Summon or trap a Demon (see p.137).

Hard (30): Summon a Demon Lord (see p.148).

### Sorcerous Battles

Sometimes two sorcerers fight each other, either in personal battles or on the behalf of feuding clients. These battles use demon sorcery. When one sorcerer learns another has dispatched a demon, that sorcerer also dispatches a demon. The two demons fight (opposed skill rolls). Most of the time, the demons fight to a stalemate, then come back to the sorcerers, ready to attack those who sent them. To defend themselves, the sorcerers must recapture and resend the demons. They must do this again and again until one of two things happens: Sometimes one demon enslaves or destroys the other, then goes on to destroy its intended target. Sometimes a sorcerer fails to recapture a returning demon and is destroyed by it.

**Disease Sorcery-** Uses INL. The PC knows the complex ceremonies used to send different debilitating diseases to humans or livestock. These diseases can be deadly if the victim fails enough disease progression rolls (see p.111). Each ceremony takes at least an hour to complete and takes exotic components (roll twice on the sorcerous components table).

Easy (10): Send fever and weakness (-5 STH, -5 END).

Moderate (20): Send fainting spells or lameness.

Hard (30): Send insanity or idiocy.

**Gantad Horn-** Uses INL. The PC can make a terrible horn, which is buried near where a person lives, which will cause bad luck and death. Creating the horn requires a moderate difficulty skill roll. If the PC's bare skin touches the ingredients of the horn during its creation the PC will take 1d6 BLD damage. The horn must be buried near the person's home at dawn or dusk. The residents of the house will face increasingly bad luck and within 3 months a horde of Srung Ma demons will destroy them.

Anyone who had any contact with the victims will pick up some of that bad luck (the PC is not immune). The victims' bad luck makes it very unlikely that they will ever find the horn or get help. If a victim does somehow find the horn, he or she can throw

it in to the river and dispel the bad effects. Otherwise, the only thing that can save the victim is a 40 difficulty miracle (see p.108). Roll 5 times on the sorcerous components table to create a horn.

Moderate (20): Create a Gantad Horn.

**Life Force Sorcery-** Uses WIL. If the PC can find the physical location of someone's life force spirit (requires Divination skill rolls), he or she can use secret words to drive the spirit away. Without a life force spirit, the victim withers away and dies (-1 END per day, after END is gone then -1 BLD per day). The skill can be used on superhuman beings (who live on the earthly plane) or even on countries, but at a much higher difficulty. A thread cross ceremony can bring the life force spirit back.

Easy (10): Drive away a Yak's life force.

Moderate (20): Drive away a human's life force.

Hard (30): Drive away a dharmapala's life force.

### Sorcery Fear Scale

For many in Tibet, the ability to threaten sorcery is a valuable resource. When the highly reformed Yellow Hat sect disavowed any type of sorcery, they found they had to learn martial arts to keep from being bullied. The following is how much the average Tibetan fears members of various groups for their possible access to sorcery:

**Run Away:** Professional Sorcerers.

**Don't Piss Them Off:** Bön Priests, Oracles (Unrecognized), Sakyapa Monks, Weathermakers, White Robes, Unclean.

**Keep an Eye on Them:** Doctors, Kagyupa Monks, Nyingmapa Monks, Savages.

**Not a Danger:** Aristocrats, Ascetics, Astrologers, Craftspeople, Dodbobs, Farmers, Foreigners, Gesar Bards, Merchants, Mirror Gazers, Nomads, Oracles (Recognized), Revenants, Treasure Finders, Yellow Hats.

### Defending Against Sorcery

The following is how people under attack can defend themselves against or alleviate the damage of sorcery.

Animation	physical defenses
Bird Control	physical defenses
Demon Sorcery	Demon Sorcery or various exorcism
Disease Sorcery	Humoural Medicine, Medical Mantras or Herbalism
Gantad Horn	none
Life Force Sorcery	Thread Crosses
Love Magic	none
Poisons	none
Simple Curses	Glud Ceremony or Sucking Exorcism
Zor	Glud Ceremony

# TANTRA

Easy (10): Capture the lust of a man using the ashes of menstrual blood smeared on the man's forehead or put in his food.

Moderate (20): Prepare water, with the use of a Black Rilzin (p.82). The water is sprinkled in the eyes or put in the food or drink of a victim. The victim will fall in love with the person who administered the water. The love is instant if sprinkled in eyes, eventual if consumed.

Hard (30): Perform a ceremony on a person's footprint which will make him or her fall madly in love with someone else. If the victim is prevented from being with the target of his or her infatuation, the victim will go insane (unless another ceremony is done by the sorcerer to release the victim).

**Poisons-** Uses INL. The PC can prepare deadly poisons from common natural substances.

Easy (10): Create a poison that works via digestion.

Moderate (20): Create a poison to coat a blade with.

Hard (30): Create a poison that works via skin contact.

Legendary (40): Poison food by meditating and saying mantras over it.

**Simple Curses-** Uses WIL. The PC knows simple folk curses. These curses only increase the probability of misfortune, but they can be done quickly without the need for rare substances.

Easy (10): Women can recite a formula, shake their apron and throw dirt over their shoulder. Men can write the name and age of a victim on a piece of paper, along with secret mantras, and wear it inside their boot. Does 2d6 damage to current KMA.

Moderate (20): Hide specially prepared footprint dirt or nail clippings of the victim under the pedestal of a wrathful dharmapala in a monastery. Does 3d6 KMA damage.

Hard (30): A small simulacrum is made of someone using scraps of their clothing, nail clippings or hair. Anything done to this figure is likely to happen to the victim.

**Zor-** Uses WIL. The PC can create Zor: pieces of dough filled with objects that have bad karma. Throwing Zor away while reciting a short mantra will release the destructive powers on the victim (1d6 damage to current Karma). Actually hitting someone with a Zor will cause its destructive effects to happen immediately (2d20 Karma damage). Zor can also be made from eggs, containers of water, spindles and other objects. Roll once on the Sorcerous Components Table to create a Zor.

Moderate (20): Create Zor.

**Breath Yoga-** Uses AWR. The PC has learned meditation upon breath and subtle control of breathing. While staying still, the PC can stop breathing and lower his or her own pulse so low that it can not normally be perceived. Breath Yoga is also used to help control pain.

Easy (10): Stop breathing for 10 minutes (+5 to save vs. pain).

Moderate (20): Stop breathing for 1 hour (+10 to save vs. pain).

Hard (30): Stop breathing for six hours (+15 to save vs. pain).

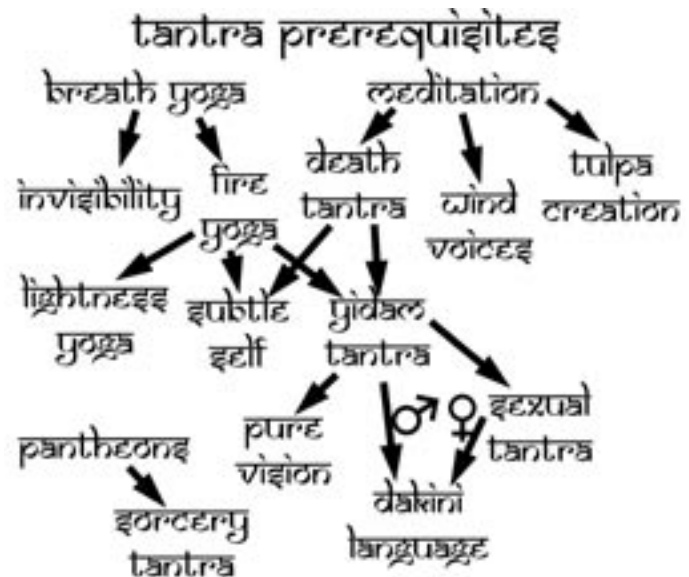
Legendary (40): Stop breathing for 24 hours (+20 to save vs. pain).

**Dakini Language-** Uses INL. Prerequisite: Yidam Tantra (1 level) for females or Sexual Tantra (1 level) for males. The PC has been initiated by a dakini and taught the secret mystical language of the dakinis. This language is what many terma (hidden tantric texts) are written in. The language cannot be taught from one human to another.

Easy (10): Figure out, basically, what a text is about.

Moderate (20): Read and translate a script.

Hard (30): Write a script in dakini language.



**Death Tantra-** Uses WIL. Prerequisite: Meditation (1), p.66. The PC learns a meditation where he or she envisions dying. The PC uses a thighbone trumpet to summon malevolent spirits to come kill and consume the PC. The PC envisions being destroyed and consumed. This vision is so powerful and realistic that the PC and the spirits believe it. The PC

does not actually die, but his or her ego (sense of self) does. Spirits infesting PCs will think the PC has died and will go elsewhere. A successful skill roll gives +15 to removing attachments of the Self type (see p.91).

Moderate (20): Experience the sensations of death and serve one's ego to malevolent spirits.

**Fire Yoga-** Uses WIL. Prerequisite: Breath Yoga (1). The PC can meditate on the fire snake goddess Tummo (Kundalini in India) coming up the spine as all of the body's energies come together in to a single channel. A side effect of this meditation is the creation of extreme amounts of body heat. PCs also learn to chant the syllable for fire, the mantra for this meditation, with enough power to alter reality.

Easy (10): Keep warm in the coldest weather.

Moderate (20): Dry a wet blanket in minutes with body heat.

Hard (30): Set flammable inanimate objects on fire by pronouncing the syllable for fire.

Legendary (40): Cause a person to burst in to flames (2 burn damage every round) by pronouncing the syllable for fire.

**Invisibility-** Uses WIL. Prerequisite: Breath Yoga (1). By silencing the "self" that projects itself on to other people's consciousness, the PC can become hard to notice. A person specifically looking for the PC can make an opposed AWR roll.

Easy (10): Become less noticeable (-7 to AWR rolls).

Moderate (20): Become unnoticeable while keeping still.

Hard (30): Become unnoticeable while moving.

Legendary (40): Become unnoticeable while manipulating the environment.

**Lightness Yoga-** Uses AWR. Prerequisite: Fire Yoga (1). The PC can make his or her body extraordinarily light. The PC can jump great distances, levitate, or run across country with little effort. When running, the PC moves at 15 SPD with no END loss. They weigh so little that they can not "run," instead they seem to bounce. They do not need to sleep or rest and so they can travel cross-country faster a team of horses.

Easy (10): Go in to a running trace, in the evening, in a featureless landscape. -or- Jump 7 ft. (2 m.) up.

Moderate (20): Go in to a running trance in any landscape. -or- Jump 15 ft. (4.5 m.) up.

Hard (30): Walk on water. -or- Jump 30 ft. (9 m.) up.

Legendary (40): Levitate up to 10 ft. (3 m.) -or- Jump 50 ft. (15 m.) straight up.

**Pure Vision-** Uses AWR. Prerequisite: Yidam Tantra (1). The PC learns to see the universe as the Yidam does. A Yidam being can see anything and everything. The Yidam's view of the universe is represented by a mandala (circular sand painting). This tantra requires the creation of a simple mandala (takes about 1 hour). PCs can use the skill without the mandala, but at +20 difficulty.

Easy (10): See through illusions

Moderate (20): See through walls or obstructions.

Hard (30): See invisible things or metaphysical qualities. -or- See events happening miles away.

Legendary (40): See things happening in the hells, heavens or other worlds.

**Sexual Tantra-** Uses WIL. Prerequisite: Yidam Tantra (1). This is the ultimate tantric practice, and one that Tantric Buddhists believe is necessary to achieve enlightenment while in the physical body. During ritual





meditation, the PC becomes a Yidam and a partner of the opposite sex becomes the Yidam's consort. A Yidam's consort is that Yidam's counterpart, together they represent complete perfection. By satisfying the body's every need, the PC can temporarily transcend the need for a body altogether. A successful sexual tantra ritual gives +30 to removing attachments (see p.125).

Moderate (20): Conduct a successful sexual tantra ritual.

**Sorcery Tantra-** Uses INL. Prerequisite: Pantheons (1), p.68. These are the secret tantric rituals which allow practitioners to call wrathful dharmapalas (demon lord class) to attack enemies of Buddhism. If a dharmapala finds that it has been sent to attack someone who is not an enemy of Buddhism, it is likely to attack the sender.

Easy (10): Invoke the presence of a dharmapala.

Moderate (20): Invoke and send the dharmapala to attack a genuine enemy of Buddhism.

Hard (30): Invoke a dharmapala and trick it in to attacking a person who is not an enemy of Buddhism.

**Subtle Self-** Uses INL. Prerequisites: Breath Yoga (1), Death Tantra (1). By learning to control the subtle self (the metaphysical counterpart to the physical body), the PC can change the nature of his or her physical body. The PC can also cause the subtle self to leave the physical body and travel around as a spirit. Like a malevolent spirit, the PC's subtle body is intangible and invisible. The subtle self can go inside and take control of other bodies. The subtle self can be effected by all the same things that effect spirits. While the subtle body is gone, the PC's physical body appears unconscious. Calling the PC's name or hurting the PC's body will call the PC back.

Easy (10): Shrink enough to fit through a one foot opening.

Moderate (20): Leave the physical body and travel around as a powerless spirit.

Hard (30): Travel, physically, through solid objects.

Legendary (40): Leave the physical body and inhabit and animate a corpse or a living human (humans get opposed will rolls).

**Tulpa Creation-** Uses WIL. Prerequisite: Meditation (2). With hours of meditation the PC can create things from pure mental energy. Inanimate objects are easiest, but advanced practitioners can create animals or even humans. A tulpa is a human created using these meditations. Tulpas may be created by sorcerers as servants or by tantric practitioners who cannot find a normal consort for sexual tantra.

Easy (10): Create a small object made from base materials (2 hours meditation).

Moderate (20): Create a human who will perform simple actions (STH 1) and disappear within 1d6 minutes (4 hours meditation).

Hard (30): Create a human who will last 24 hours and perform complex actions, including talking (6 hours meditation).

Legendary (40): Create a permanent real human. The tulpa has no self-consciousness and can only follow orders. For each year that the Tulpa is around, there is some chance it may gain true consciousness. (8 hours meditation).

**Wind Voices-** Uses AWR. Prerequisite: Meditation (2). By recognizing that the differences between human minds are illusory, the PC can send and receive words or images to or from other minds. Direct mental communication gives +10 to teaching rolls.

Easy (10): Communicate with the lama who taught the PC this skill.

Moderate (20): Communicate with someone who has this skill.

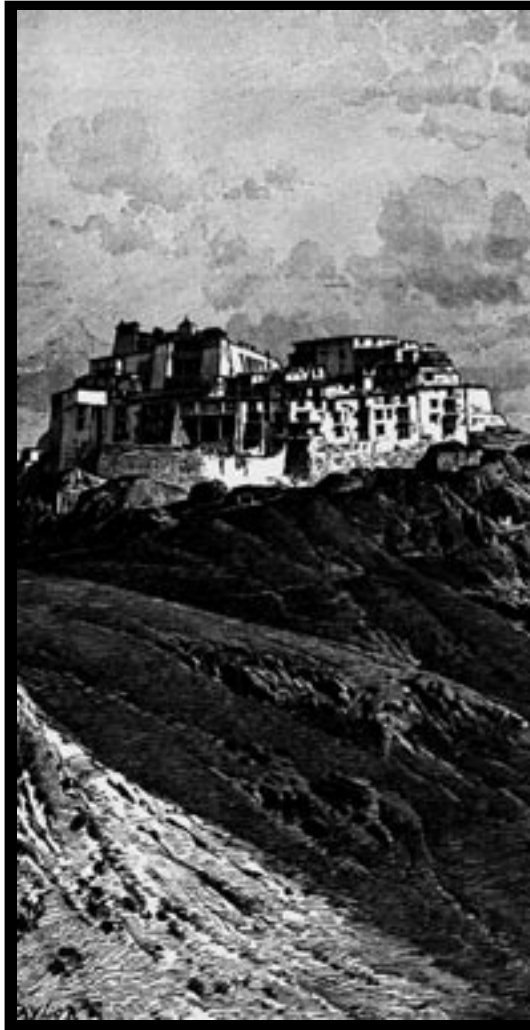
Hard (30): Communicate with ordinary people

**Yidam Tantra-** Uses WIL. Prerequisites: Fire Yoga (1), Death Tantra (1). The PC meditates upon Yidam: buddhas, bodhisattvas and great dharmapalas who represent aspects of enlightenment the PC wishes to attain.

Easy (10): Perceive the character's lama as a Yidam. Yidam may give advice. Gives +5 to rolls to remove attachments.

Moderate (20): Perceive oneself to be a Yidam. Gives +10 to rolls to remove attachments.

Hard (30): Completely become the Yidam in all but physical form (GM controls character's actions). Gives +20 to rolls to remove attachments.



## TRAVEL

**Animal Packing-** Uses INL. The PC can pack the maximum amount an animal can carry.

Easy (10): Pack a horse.

Moderate (20): Pack a yak without danger to the PC (yaks tend to flick their horns).

Hard (30): Pack a yak so that it can not buck its load.

**Foreign Language-** Uses INL. The PC can speak any one language (choose one). If the PC has the Literacy skill, the PC can also read and write the language. The skill can be taken multiple times for multiple languages.

Easy (10): Broken speech.

Moderate (20): Fluent speech.

Hard (30): Speak without an accent.

**Mountain Climbing-** Uses INL. The PC had learned Western or native techniques to apply knowledge, strategy and technology to climbing a mountain. This is not the same as AGY based climbing rolls. A successful skill roll means that the PC can:

- Estimate the time and resources needed to climb a mountain.

- Pace himself or herself for maximum efficiency and acclimatization.

- Find the easiest way to ascend a mountain.

- Make the climb easier with the use of pitons (Westerners) or wooden boards (Tibetans).

- Find the safest way to secure climbers so that a fall (failed AGY roll) does not mean the climber falls to his or her death.

Easy (10): Steep hill face.

Moderate (20): Very steep, snow-covered mountain.

Hard (30): Completely vertical rock face.

**Riding-** Uses AGY. The PC can ride a horse or yak. The PC can ride bareback (without a saddle) at +10 difficulty.

Easy (10): Ride a horse at an easy pace.

Moderate (20): Ride a horse at a fast pace. -or- Ride a yak at an easy pace.

Hard (30): Jump a horse. -or- Ride a yak on rough terrain.

**Swimming-** Uses SPD. The PC is skilled at swimming for speed, distance and agility.

Easy (10): Swim at  $\frac{1}{4}$  SPD -or- swim a long distance at 75% of normal END loss.

Moderate (20): Swim at  $\frac{1}{3}$  SPD -or- swim a long distance at 50% of normal END loss.

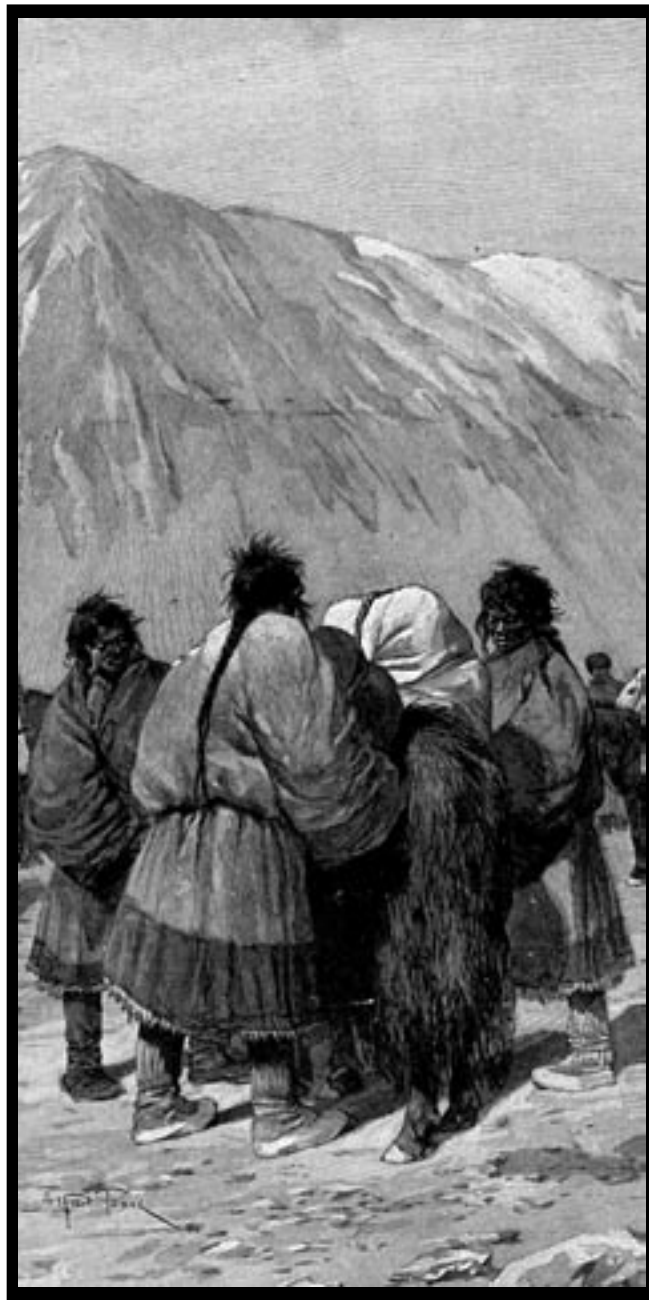
Hard (30): Swim at  $\frac{1}{2}$  SPD -or- swim a long distance at 25% of normal END loss.

**Tibetan Geography-** Uses INL. The PC knows Tibetan geography by landmarks.

Easy (10): Recognize common travel routes.

Moderate (20): Recognize one's location by landmarks.

Hard (30): Name obscure mountain passes.



**Wilderness Survival-** Uses INL. With a successful skill roll, the PC can survive for one day in the wilderness without use of any equipment. A successful skill roll represents finding food, water and shelter. Each day the character must re-roll.

Easy (10): Survive in a rainforest

Moderate (20): Survive in pastureland.

Hard (30): Survive in the Chang Tang.

## WEATHERMAKING

**Weather Mantras-** Uses WIL. By going to the top of a mountain or to a spring, the PC can perform mantras (chants) and mudras (hand gestures) which will summon good weather. This skill can not be used to end bad weather caused by angry spirits.

Moderate (20): Cause good weather.

**Weather Propitiation-** Uses INL. Often, bad weather is caused by a spirit or dharmapala that has been inadvertently offended. If the PC can discover what the problem is (using Weather Prediction or other forms of divination) the PC can prescribe a ritual to make restitution. Different spirits will require different sacrifices. Some malevolent spirits want animal sacrifices, but may be fooled by vegetable simulacrums (like gluds, see p.22).

Moderate (20): Prescribe the proper ritual to end bad weather.

**Weather Prediction-** Uses AWR. By beating on a drum and listening to its sound, the character can predict what the weather will be like in the near future. By looking at the reflection of clouds in a vessel of water, the PC can see "inside" the clouds. The PC can tell if the clouds are about to release rain, hail or snow. The PC can also see if magic or an invisible spirit is controlling the action of the clouds.

Moderate (20): Predict weather for next few days with a drum.

Hard (30): Look into clouds with a vessel of water.

**Weather Sorcery-** Uses INL. Using mantras, mandalas, meditation, burnt mustard seed offerings and a human thighbone trumpet, the PC can summon spirits which cause bad weather.

Easy (10): Cause drought.

Moderate (20): Cause a blizzard.

Hard (30): Cause driven hail (capable of destroying crops).

## MONEY & EQUIPMENT

Next, determine the amount of Srang (Tibetan money) the character starts with, based on his or her character class. The character can buy equipment with this money. The PC must get permission from the GM before buying any equipment which is listed as "Limited Availability." If the PC has any money left, determine how and where it is stored. City dwellers often have paper currency notes and Srang coins on their persons and in the religion rooms of their houses. County folk typically have a combination of jewelry and Srang coins. Nomads typically have all their wealth worn as jewelry.

The PC starts with a dwelling appropriate to that character class. The PC has the items necessary for life at home (furniture, butter lamps, shrines, etc.). Purchase any and all equipment that the PC will have while traveling, including clothing.

### Starting Money for Character Classes

**Dobdob:** 1000 Srang

**Kagyupa Monk:** 750 Srang

**Nyingmapa Monk:** 875 Srang

**Sakyapa Monk:** 750 Srang

**Yellow Hat Monk:** 1000 Srang

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**Mudra-** Magical hand gestures with mystical or magical effects.

# ANIMALS

**Dzo-** A crossbreed between a Yak and a cow.  
 Females produce 4 Srang/month of milk year round.  
 Carries up to 200 lbs. or 90 kg. (with animal packing skill)  
 3 bladed damage horns (males only)  
 70 Srang worth of meat  
 40 Srang worth of hide  
 AGY 5, SPD 12, BLD 4, BDY 5  
*Costs 200 Srang (female), 150 Srang (male)*

**Goat-** A wiry grazer with short but thick fur. It has a split hoof which allows it to climb steep hillsides. Nomads usually keep a few goats. Although they are less productive than a sheep or yak, they are very hardy (+7 to all health based rolls) and are kept as insurance against plagues, droughts and famines.

Females produce 2 Srang/month of milk in Summer  
 Carries up to 100 lbs. or 45 kg. (with animal packing skill)  
 2 blunt damage horns (males only)  
 2 bladed damage bite  
 10 Srang worth of meat  
 10 Srang worth of hide  
 AGY 16, SPD 15, BLD 3, BDY 4  
*Costs 35 Srang (female), 30 Srang (male)*

**Hunting Dog-** This is a long, wiry dog which looks much like a greyhound. These dogs are used by those few Tibetans who hunt. They are bred to be fast. They are trained to frighten and confuse animals, prevent them from fleeing while the hunter takes aim.

2 bladed damage bite  
 Split Action Jump and Wing at 1d20 vs. 6  
 AGY 17, END 7, SPD 20, BLD 1, BDY 3, INCY 3  
*Costs 90 Srang*

**Horse-** A horse suitable for a human rider. Horses are used solely for riding. In Tibet, horses are considered luxury items. They are not milked or eaten. Tibetan horses are generally smaller than Western horses.

Can carry 200 lbs. or 90 kg. (with animal packing skill)  
 Approximately 25 SPD (depending on weight of rider)  
 AGY 10, END 20, BLD 5, BDY 7  
 4 blunt damage trample attack  
*Costs 750 Srang*

**Mastiff-** This Tibetan breed of dog has been bred to be both a herder and a guard dog. Mastiffs are large, black and long haired. When used as guard dogs, they are chained to the ground and attack any stranger who comes too close. Mastiffs are often able to perceive when invisible malevolent spirits come near and alert their masters. They are easy to train (+10 to Animal Training rolls).

AGY 15, STH 8, SPD 15, BLD 4, BDY 3  
 AWR 5 sight, 20 smell, 15 hearing, 5 spiritual.  
 3 damage bladed bite  
 Split Action Jump/Vital Strike at 1d20 vs. 7  
*Costs 75 Srang*

## Common Tibetan Equipment

Almost every Tibetan carries the following:

### Clothing:

monastic robes or tummo garment (monks)  
 chuba or lokbar (lay people)  
 boots  
 hat

### Personal Items:

knife (a good multipurpose tool)  
 food bowl and chopsticks (guests are expected to bring their own dinnerware)  
 fire starter  
 a few small charms (to prevent ill luck)  
 jewelry (for personal ornamentation and to trade with)  
 khata (white scarves given as traditional gifts)  
 pen and ink set (if literate)



*mastiff*

## BOOKS

**Pony-** A smaller breed of horse. Because it eats less it is often taken places where larger horses could not find enough food to survive.

Can carry 150 lbs. or 68 kg. (with animal packing skill)  
Approximately 20 SPD (depending on weight of rider)

AGY 12, END 18, BLD 4, BDY 5

4 blunt damage trample attack at 1d20 vs. 10

*Costs 650 Srang*

**Sheep-** To nomads, sheep are the most valuable animal because they serve so many purposes: they provide wool, dung, hide and meat and they carry loads. They also reproduce more quickly than nomads' other animals.

Can carry 30 lbs. or 13 kg. (with animal packing skill)

Females produce 1 Srang/month of milk in Summer

Produce 1 Srang/month worth of wool

Produce 1 Srang/month worth of dung

6 Srang worth of meat

4 Srang worth of hide

2 blunt damage curved horns

Split Strike/Knockdown Attack at 1d20 vs. 8

*Costs 20 Srang (female), 15 Srang (male)*

**Yak (Domestic)-** A thick, heavily furred animal. It is so well adapted to mountain life that it can die if taken below 2,000 meters. Males weigh 440-550 lbs. (200-250kg.) females 300-400 lbs. (136-180kg.).

Carries up to 200lbs. or 90kg. (with animal packing skill)

Females produce 2 Srang/week of milk year round

60 Srang worth of meat

40 Srang worth of hide

AGY 6, SPD 15, BLD 3, BDY 5

*Costs 150 Srang (female), 125 Srang (male)*

**Yak (Wild)-** The Wild Yak is much larger than a domestic Yak (can weight up to twice as much). The males can be up to 6 ft. (1.8 m.) tall and have 3 ft. (.9 m.) long black horns. It is harder to train (+10 difficulty to Animal Training rolls). It gets sick if brought below 4,000 meters.

Can carry 500lbs. or 225kg. (with animal packing skill)

Females produce 4 Srang /week of milk year round

70 Srang worth of meat

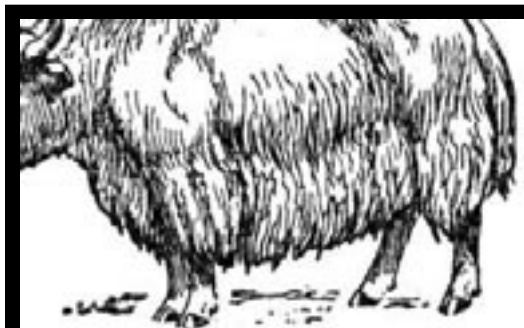
50 Srang worth of hide

AGY 12, SPD 16, BLD 5, BDY 7

5 bladed damage strike with horns at 1d20 vs. 8

5 blunt damage trample attack at 1d20 vs. 12

*Costs 135 Srang (female), 125 Srang (male)*



*domestic yak*

**Books in Brief-** Many books can be used on one of three ways:

**Ref** books supplement a pre-existing skill.

**Intro** books substitute for having a skill.

**Intro/Ref** do both.

See the section on Using Skills (p.114) for more info. Tibetan books come in multiple volumes, each of which weighs about 1 lb. (.45 kg.) without a covering, 5 lbs. (2.25 kg.) with a wooden cover.

**100,000 Songs of Milarepa-** A popular book of poetry which contains the life-story and teachings of the great Buddhist saint Milarepa. See p.85 of the full version for the story of Milarepa. Reading it to a group generates +1 KMA. 180 volumes. *16 Srang*

**Gantad Horn Book-** An elicit book giving instructions on the creation of the terrible gantad horn. The book is painted on black paper. Acts as an Intro/Ref book for the Gantad Horn skill. Limited availability. *120 Srang.*

**Gesar Epic-** The written version of the Tibetan epic story of king Gesar of Ling and his travels through Tibet and beyond. See p.73 of the full version for the story. 110 volumes. *30 Srang*

**Kanjur-** This is the words of Gautama Buddha, as transcribed by his followers. It contains many famous sutras, including the heart sutra, which has a powerful mantra. Its presence emanates +1 KMA and reading it aloud gives +2 KMA to the current karma of the reader and listeners. It is usually printed in 108 volumes. *200 Srang*

**Pebble Divination Book-** This book tells the meaning of the 32 possible combinations made from randomly sorting 5 black or white pebbles in a row. This acts as an introductory/reference book for pebble divination (see Simple Divination skill). 1 volume. *5 Srang*

**Tenjur-** This book is made up of commentaries of the teachings of Gautama Buddha. Its presence emanates +1 KMA and reading it aloud gives +2 KMA to the current karma of the reader and listeners. It is usually printed in 225 volumes. *200 Srang*

## CLOTHING



bookseller

**Other Texts-** Tibetan texts exist for other skills:

Skill	Type	Cost	Vols.
Card Divination	Intro/Ref	30 Srang	1
Disease Sorcery	Introductory	90 Srang	3
Elemental Astrology	Intro/Ref	25 Srang	2
Funerary Rites	Intro/Ref	20 Srang	3
Geomancy	Reference	30 Srang	2
Glud Ceremony	Intro/Ref	30 Srang	3
Hell Realms	Introductory	15 Srang	3
Herbalism	Reference	20 Srang	7
Humoural Medicine	Reference	25 Srang	6
Medical Diagnosis	Reference	30 Srang	5
Medical Mantras	Introductory	15 Srang	2
Omen Reading	Introductory	20 Srang	3
Pantheons	Introductory	25 Srang	6
Protective Mantras	Introductory	20 Srang	1
Scapulimancy	Reference	45 Srang	3
Thread Crosses	Intro/Ref	30 Srang	4
Tibetan Geography	Introductory	40 Srang	6
Weather Mantras	Introductory	15 Srang	2
Zodiac Astrology	Reference	35 Srang	4
Zor	Intro/Ref	45 Srang	2

**Boots-** Tibetans who travel, including monks, wear heavy knee-length boots. *25 Srang*

**Fire Yoga Garment-** Worn by advanced practitioners of Fire Yoga. It is a thin, off-white, cotton robe. *20 Srang*

**Hat (Monk's)-** A peaked cloth hat. It is either red with yellow lining or yellow with red lining, depending upon the sect. There are ear-flaps which can be folded up in hot weather. *10 Srang*

**Lokbar-** Worn by nomads in the coldest parts of Tibet. This is like a Chuba but made with a heavy sheepskin. It is waterproof and very warm. It has long sleeves to protect hands (in lieu of gloves). Gives +7 to save vs. hypothermia. Women's Lokbar are decorated with colored stripes, men's with black stripes. *45 Srang*

**Monk's Robes-** Worn by male and female monks. A long piece of crimson or maroon cloth is wrapped around the body and tied with ties. Like a chuba, one shoulder can be bared when it is hot. Includes a set of underclothing. *20 Srang*

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*loom*

## CRAFT TOOLS

**Book Making Materials-** Blank wooden plates, paper, ink and wooden covers for use with the Printing skill. Enough to make 100 copies of 5 volumes. *100 Srang*

**Brushes & Paints-** A set of traditional brushes and paints for use with the Painting skill. *20 Srang*

**Carving Tools-** A set of metal tools for carving stone or rock. Has tools which can be used as 2 bladed or 1 blunt damage weapons. *30 Srang*

**Cloth-** A roll of cloth, enough to make 10 chubas or monk's robes. *150 Srang*

**Forge-** A billows, coal and an anvil stone for use with the Blacksmithing skill. An earth-brick oven must also be made whenever the character wishes to use the forge. *120 Srang*

**Loom-** A wooden framed loom, used for making cloth. *100 Srang*

**Pen & Ink-** A calligraphic pen and powdered ink (with wooden mixing tray) to write calligraphy. *10 Srang*

**Sewing Needle-** 3 to 5 inch thick metal needle. In addition to tailors, butchers kill animals painlessly by inserting needles in their spines. Although seldom used as a weapon it could be used as a ½ damage improvised poking weapon (see p.121). *5 Srang*

## FOOD

**Barley Beer-** A clay jug full of beer made from fermented barley. It contains eight doses of alcohol. See p.84 for the drug profile for alcohol. *10 Srang*

**Barley Flour-** A cloth bag of ground barley-meal. Enough for five full meals. It is usually mixed with water or milk to make dough, the dough is then cooked in to noodles or dumplings. *1 Srang*

**Butter-** A sewn up sheep's stomach full of butter. Is still edible after 1 year unrefrigerated. Enough for 20 full meals or to run a butter lamp for 10 days straight. *10 Srang*

**Dried Apricots-** One meal's worth of dried apricots, imported from the Tibetan lowlands. *3 Srang*

**Dried Molasses-** This is powdered, dried molasses. It is added as a flavoring and sweetener to rice, broth and other foods. Enough for 1 full meal. *4 Srang*

**Horse Food-** A ten lb. (4.5 kg.) bag of hay, boiled grain, lentils and used tea leaves. Tibetans purchase such a bag to feed animals when they are not able to graze. This will feed a yak or horse for two days or a sheep for four. *7 Srang*

**Jar of Yogurt-** A clay jar of yogurt. One full meal. Can be purchased at any market. *1 Srang*



*Lhasa fruit shop*

**Rice-** A cloth bag full of rice. Enough for five full meals. *2 Srang*

**Tea Brick-** A pressed brick of black tea imported from China. It is enough for 20 cups of tea. A strong cup of tea gives +4 to save vs. unconsciousness for 3 hours. *15 Srang*

**Wind Dried Meat-** One meal's worth of yak meat jerky. *3 Srang*

**Yak Cheese-** A piece of hard yak-milk cheese, enough for 10 full meals. It is so hard it must be dipped in hot tea before it can be eaten. It can last up to 3 years without going bad. *15 Srang*

**Yak Milk-** A clay pitcher full of Yak milk. Provides one meal's worth of nourishment. *1 Srang*

## HOLY OBJECTS

**Holy Objects in Brief-** See p.108 for the rules on emanation of karma. Having more than one holy object of the same type has no extra effects (e.g. two Dalai Lama pictures does not emanate twice the good karma).

**Charm (Bird of Prey)-** A special prayer written on a piece of paper which is folded up and sealed in to a small container. The wearer is +5 to any roll to avoid attack by a bird of prey (e.g. the character makes an AGY roll to sneak past sleeping birds). *30 Srang*

**Charm (Cattle)-** This is a small piece of paper with a prayer on it designed specifically to protect animals. The charm is usually tied to the horn of a yak to keep it safe from accidents, predators and malevolent spirits. *15 Srang*

**Charm (Clawing Animal)-** A folded piece of paper, with a prayer on it, sealed in to an amulet. Gives +5 to any roll to avoid attack by animals who attack with claws (bears, cats, etc.). *30 Srang*

**Charm (Demon)-** An amulet containing a prayer that gives +5 to any roll to avoid attack by malevolent spirits of the demon class. *35 Srang*

**Charm (Dogbite)-** An amulet containing a prayer that gives +5 to any roll to avoid attack by dogs. *30 Srang*



*demon charm*

**Charm (Plague)-** An amulet containing a prayer that gives +5 to save vs. contraction of communicable diseases. *30 Srang*

**Charm (Rebel)-** A magical charm made by red hat monks in Kham, created specifically to help protect rebels from Chinese bullets. The wearer is +7 difficulty to hit when the shooter is Chinese. *50 Srang*

**Dalai Lama Picture-** A small, faded, black and white picture of the Dalai Lama, printed in India. It emanates +3 KMA. Limited Availability. *250 Srang*

**Dalai Lama Amulet-** An amulet made with the hair or nail clippings from an incarnation of the Dalai Lama. Emanates +5 KMA. Limited Availability. *500 Srang*

**Dêgê Ink-** A small bottle of sacred ink from the monastery and famous printing works at Dêgê (see p.43). To swallow or rub the ink on one's body gives +2 to current KMA. To use the ink for any magical skill which involves writing gives +5 to the skill roll. *20 Srang*

**Hand Prayer Wheel-** A wooden or bone handle supports a cylinder. A small weight on a chain allows the cylinder to be easily spun. Wrapped up inside the cylinder is a prayer written on a long piece of paper. Spending the majority of a day spinning the wheel will give +1 to current KMA. *85 Srang*

**Ivory Ring-** A simple ivory band. It is used as defense against Söndrema spirits who sometimes attack males wandering alone at night (see p.137). *10 Srang*

**Knotted Thunderbolt-** A sword which been twisted in to a corkscrew shape by an oracle being possessed by a dharmapala. Emanates +2 KMA. The blade is still sharp and can be used as an improvised slashing weapon (see p.121). *500 Srang*

**Lake Manasarovar Water-** A vial of water from the sacred lake near Mt. Kailas. Drinking it gives +2 to current KMA and +5 to save vs. disease contraction and progression. *25 Srang*

**Oracle Ring-** A thick, hollow metal ring with rattling bits of metal inside which has been worn by a powerful oracle when he or she was possessed by dharmapalas. It emanates +2 Karma and gives +3 to Oracular Ability skill rolls. *200 Srang*

**Pins-** Leaving a pin in a temple under the statue of a buddha will temporarily increase one's mental sharpness (+1 INL, not cumulative, max 11 INL) for 1d6 weeks. *1 Srang*

**Poison Sensing Bowl-** A wooden bowl with carved prayers on it that rattles violently when poisoned food is placed in it. Can detect physical or magical poisons. Limited Availability. *200 Srang*

**Portable Shrine-** A small box which is carried against the chest via a shoulder strap. Holy objects are put in it to make it a tiny portable temple. Commonly used by Tibetans on pilgrimages to holy sites. *12 Srang*

**Prayer Beads-** A rosary of 108 wooden beads. The beads are used for counting off mantras (such as Om Mani Padme Hum). Spending the majority of a day praying will give +1 to current KMA. *4 Srang*



*prayer wheel*

**Prayer Flag-** A string of simple cloth flags with Buddhist prayers printed on them. Monks print the flags with a wood block during a small ceremony. When the flags flap in the wind, the prayers are symbolically "read" and good Karma is created. Emanates +1 KMA when the wind is blowing. *10 Srang*

**Prehistoric Beads-** A string of ancient stone beads which are lucky. Some say they are fossilized worms and can sometimes come to life and escape from their owners. Emanates +3 KMA. *120 Srang*

**Rilzin-** A small pearl-like object found in the ashes of holy men and women who have been cremated. They are powerful magic charms: they emanate +3 KMA. They can also be swallowed in an emergency (gives +5 to current KMA, gives +7 to save vs. disease progression and heals 1 lost BLD). *150 Srang*

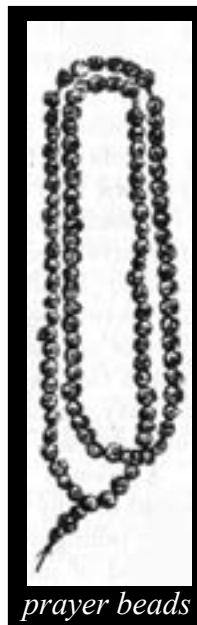
**Thangka-** A rolled up cloth painting with a picture of a buddha, bodhisattva or dharmapala on it. Emanates +1 KMA while unrolled. *25 Srang*

**Statuette-** A small statue of a famous buddha, bodhisattva, dharmapala or holy person. Making offerings to the statuette (lighting incense and a butter lamp) will give the person +1 to current KMA. Often used in Portable Shrines. *40 Srang*

**Turquoise Ring-** Lucky for travelers (gives +2 to any roll to avoid common non-human travel dangers). *30 Srang*

**T'sa T'sa-** Clay tablets with holy images and prayers on them. Inside the tablet is a pinch of the ashes of a cremated holy person. Emanates +3 KMA. *250 Srang*

**Written Prayer-** A prayer for good luck, written on a piece of paper, folded up and kept in a locket. Emanates +1 KMA. *3 Srang*



*prayer beads*

## MAGICAL COMPONENTS

**Black Rilzin-** A black concretion found occasionally in pig, fish and fowl meat. Swallowing one reduces base KMA by 20 (virtually guaranteeing rebirth in the hell realms). *200 Srang*

**Ceremonial Arrow-** A specially prepared arrow, adorned with feathers, charms and colored ribbons. It is stored point down in a small container of grain. The arrow is used for Sucking Exorcism ceremonies. *40 Srang*

**Cham Mask-** A mask made of wood, leather or metal which represents a famous figure (human or spirit) important to Tibetan Buddhist history. It is used in the masked dances performed at Buddhist monasteries. *100 Srang*



*cham mask*

**Conch Shell Trumpet-** This type of trumpet is used to drive away lesser malevolent spirits. For use with the Sound Exorcism skill. *200 Srang*.

**Dice-** A set of three, six-sided, carved wooden dice used for use with the Simple Divination skill. *3 Srang*

**Divination Cards-** A selection of thick paper cards with magical words and images painted on them. Used for divination. Their meanings must be interpreted using the Card Divination book (p.115) or the Simple Divination skill. *35 Srang*

**Glud Mold-** A magic mold for making Gluds with. Gives +5 to Glud Ceremony skill rolls. *35 Srang*

**Harrying Horn-** A yak horn carved with scorpions and other magical symbols, used for storing blessed seeds or pebbles with the Harrying Exorcism skill. *40 Srang*

**Human Blood-** Small clay jar of human blood. Must be purchased from merchants who secretly deal in sorcerous components. Limited Availability. *25 Srang*

**Human Blood (Special)-** Like normal human blood, but it comes from a special source and is much rarer. E.g. menstrual blood of a prostitute, blood from a leprous corpse, brain blood of an insane person. Limited Availability. *150 Srang*

**Human Flesh-** The flesh of a dead human, used in certain sorcerous ceremonies. Like Human Blood, it is not sold openly. Limited Availability. *90 Srang*

**Human Skull-** Human skulls are used in many types of ceremonies, both benevolent and malevolent. Buddhists use them to remind them of the impermanence of life, Sorcerers because they can release the bad Karma trapped in them. Every 1 in 20 skulls has either very good or very bad karma. A skull with extreme karma gives plus or minus 10 to benevolent or malevolent ceremonies. There is no way of "testing" a skull's karma without using it. *50 Srang*

**Long Trumpet-** 7 ft. (2 m.) long metal trumpet weighing 100 lbs. (45 kg.) for use with the Sound Exorcism skill. Its deep resonating sound will drive away lesser malevolent spirits. Even someone without the Sound Exorcism skill can sometimes drive away spirits with it (spirits must save vs. fear, difficulty 10). It requires so much lung capacity to blow that the person blowing must make a moderate difficulty END roll. *75 Srang*

**Oracular Chair-** A decorated wooden chair designed for use by Oracles. *40 Srang*

**Oracular Outfit-** An ornate, colorful costume with a long apron and a mirror in the chest. There is a very heavy, broad-brimmed, conical hat. Oracles wear these outfits while attempting to call an entity to possess them. *75 Srang*

**Phurba (Bone)-** A magical dagger with a three or four cornered blade, carved from human bone. A vajra is carved in the middle and the image of a deity at the end. Bone phurbas are used in some magical rites. Against physical opponents, the phurba does 1½ bladed damage and for each strike that connects the phurba has a 1 in 2 chance of breaking. 50 Srang

**Phurba (Brass)-** Brass phurbas are the most commonly used type, typically used in exorcism. It does 2 bladed damage and has a 1 in 2 chance of being ruined (bent out of shape) with each strike. 40 Srang

**Phurba (Wood)-** A phurba carved from juniper, tumeric or sandalwood. Wooden phurbas are commonly used for sorcerous ceremonies. Does 1 bladed damage and has a 1 in 2 chance of shattering upon a successful physical attack. 20 Srang

**Poison Paper-** One piece of paper made from the fibers of poisonous plants and doctored with other poisons. Does 1d6 BLD damage if ingested. Its primary use is in sorcerous ceremonies. 10 Srang

**Mirror-** A small hand mirror, for use with the Mirror Gazing skill. 20 Srang

**Mirror (Silver)-** A small hand mirror made of silver. Gives +5 to Mirror Gazing rolls. 200 Srang

**Scapula (Human)-** The scapula (rear shoulder bone) of a human being. It has a large spoon shaped surface which will crack if thrown in to a fire. Using a human scapula gives +5 to Scapulimancy skill rolls. 65 Srang

**Scapula (Sheep)-** The scapula of a sheep for use with the Scapulimancy skill. 3 Srang

**Simple Thread Cross-** A pre-constructed thread cross made by someone with the Thread Cross skill. It will capture minor malevolent spirits that wander in to the yarn threads. Thread crosses are then burned to dispel the spirits. 20 Srang

**Skull Beads-** This is a set of 108 prayer beads made from 108 different human skulls. Gives +2 to Sorcery and Oracular Ability rolls. 100 Srang

**Skull Cup-** This is a cup made from the very top of a human skull. It is used to drink from in some Tantric rituals. Gives +2 to Death Tantra skill rolls. 30 Srang



brass phurba

wood phurba



## MEDICINE

**Skull Drum-** Like the Two Headed Drum, and used for the same purposes, except this is made from the tops of two skulls. Gives +4 to Drum Divination, Weather Prediction and Sound Exorcism. *300 Srang*

**Thigh Bone Trumpet-** This trumpet is made from a human thighbone (usually that of a monk) and is blown to subdue angry gods or demons. Gives +4 to Sound Exorcism or Death Tantra skill rolls. *250 Srang*

**Two Headed Drum-** A drum with a handle, two heads and balls on leather thongs. The drum is spun back and forth and the balls strike the drum heads. Ancient Bön magicians were able to fly on these drums, though today this art is lost. Can be used with the Drum Divination, Weather Prediction and Sound Exorcism skills. *35 Srang*



*skull drum*



*thighbone trumpet*

**Anti-Nausea Herbs-** A small bag of powdered herbs. When made in to a tea they reduce sensations of nausea (+7 to save vs. nausea) for 4 hours. *6 Srang*

**Blood Cleansing Herbs-** A tiny packet of herbs which, when made in to tea, encourages the body to clear itself of toxins. Protects from 2 damage from diseases and poisons. Drugs exit the system at twice the rate. *8 Srang*

**Dalai Lama Pills-** Medical pills containing the hair, fingernail parings and other excreta of a Dalai Lama. When ingested, gives +10 to save vs. disease contraction and progression and +4 to current KMA. Limited Availability. *100 Srang*

**Dolma Pill-** A pill blessed by a tantric practitioner manifesting the buddha Dolma. Ingesting the pill gives +7 to save vs. disease progression and +3 to current KMA. *60 Srang*

**Distilled Alcohol-** A small glass flask with 4 doses. Although not a traditional Tibetan medicine, its use as a disinfectant and general anesthetic has been adopted in recent times. It can be thrown in someone's eyes as a pain/stun attack. *25 Srang*

### Alcohol Drug Profile

**Effects:** +4 to save vs. fear, +2 to save vs. pain, clumsiness (-2 AGY), slower reactions (-2 to INL rolls based on speed of thought), pleasant buzz for 4 hours.

**Withdrawal Effects:** The next day, sensitivity to stimuli (-10 to save vs. pain/dose), nausea (10 difficulty/dose), headache (10 difficulty/dose) for 6 hours.

**Tolerance:** +1% for every dose (max. +500%).

**Addiction:** Physiological Addiction Difficulty 15, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 15, Craving Difficulty 15 (cravings triggered by anxiety).

**Long Term Effects:** For every two years of daily use: brain damage (-1 INL, -1 AWR), permanent Retrograde Amnesia and Anterograde Amnesia (at 2 cumulative difficulty), liver damage (-1 to save vs. drug/poison effects).

**Long Term Withdrawal:** After 1 month or more of daily use the user experiences delirium tremens: Hallucinations (30), Delusions (30), Panic (20), confusion (-10 INL), Insomnia (30), fever, sweating, Seizures (10), dizziness (-10 to save vs. loss of balance), Cardiac Arrest (10).

**Overdose (2x):** Vomiting (20), +10 to save vs. fear, +6 to save vs. pain, clumsiness (-10 AGY), confusion (-10 INL) and loss of inhibitions for 5 hours.

**Overdose (4x):** Vomiting (30), Coma (20), Seizures (20) for 6 hours.



## Drugs In Brief

See p.112 for more details.

**Effects:** The effects of one dose of the drug and how long they last. Some common symptoms include:

**Anterograde Amnesia:** Failure to save (on INL) means the PC cannot remember anything about his or her past.

**Cardiac Arrest:** Failure to save (on END) means the PC takes 1 BLD damage per round.

**Coma:** Failure to save (on END) means the PC is unconscious and unable to waken. Failure of 10+ means Cardiac Arrest.

**Delusions:** Failure to save (on WIL) means the PC believes without reservation some bizarre thought or idea.

**Euphoria:** Failure to save (on WIL) means the PC is overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

**Hallucinations:** Failure to save (on WIL) means the PC senses things he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations.

**Headache:** Failure to save (on WIL) means the PC is at a -1 penalty to all rolls per point of failure.

**Insomnia:** Failure to save (on WIL) means the PC takes sleep deprivation damage (see p.111) as 1 night without sleep.

**Panic:** Failure to save (on WIL) means the PC will do anything to escape danger. Failure of 10+ means the PC makes random counterproductive actions.

**Retrograde Amnesia:** Failure to save (on INL) means the PC will not later remember anything that happened.

**Seizures:** Failure to save (on WIL) means the PC loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

**Stupor:** Failure to save (on WIL) means the PC is unable to think, remember or make decisions (INL = 0, WIL = 0).

**Unconsciousness:** Failure to save (on END/WIL) means the PC is unconscious for 1 round per point of failure.

**Vomiting:** Failure to save (on WIL) means the PC is vomiting and is at -20 to all other actions.

**Withdrawal Effects:** The effects the user experiences when all the Effects have ceased.

**Tolerance:** How much more of the drug an experienced user has to take.

**Addiction:** When PCs take a potentially addictive drug, they must roll to save vs. psychological and/or physiological addiction. The difficulty is +1 difficulty for each consecutive dose taken. If PCs become addicted, they must make craving rolls (at the listed Craving Difficulty) to avoid using the drug. See p.112 for the complete rules of addiction.

**Long Term Effects:** These are the additional effects of using a lot of the drug over a long period of time.

**Long Term Withdrawal Effects:** The effects of suddenly stopping using the drug after using it for a long time.

**Overdose:** "Overdose (2x)" would be the effects of taking two doses at once, "Overdose (4x)" would be the effects of 4 doses, etc.

**Emetic Herbs-** A packet of powdered herbs which, when swallowed, causes immediate vomiting at 30 difficulty to be saved against. 4 *Srang*.

**Ether-** A small bottle (10 doses) of a highly flammable liquid which puts off anesthetic and deliriant fumes. A cloth, wet with ether and held over a patients face, has the following effects: anesthesia (+10 to save vs. pain and shock), Stupor (30), weakness (-10 STH). 60 *Srang*

**Field Surgery Kit-** A Western-style kit with sterilized bandages, sutures and surgical tools. Contains tools which can be used as improvised slashing and poking weapons (see p.121). Note that surgery is not a normal part of traditional Tibetan medicine. 80 *Srang*

**Glasses-** A pair of prescription glasses, usually ordered from abroad. 150 *Srang*

**Hashish-** The dried resin of marijuana plants. It is ingested (or occasionally smoked) as a pain reliever and appetite stimulant. Gives -5 INL, -5 AGY, -15 AWR, -10 to all memory rolls, +10 to save vs. pain/fear/anger and increased appetite for 6 hours. 25 *Srang*

**Hearing Aide-** A large, ugly, pink plastic device which is held in the outer ear. It can be easily disrupted by background noises or high volume. A battery lasts for 20 hours of continual use. 250 *Srang* + 25/*battery*

**Medical Charm-** This is a prayer written on a small piece of paper. This paper is then eaten by the patient to give a temporary +4 to save vs. disease progression. 25 *Srang*

**Opium-** A resin obtained from the seed-pods of the poppy plant. Although Chinese medical practitioners held this in high esteem as a pain reliever, it wasn't until the British opium wars that it became a commonly abused drug throughout Asia. 15 *Srang/dose*

## Opium Drug Profile

**Effects:** +7 to save vs. pain/fear, -3 INL, -3 AGY, Euphoria (10) for 6 hours.

**Withdrawal Effects:** Difficulty sleeping, -4 to save vs. pain/fear.

**Tolerance:** +10% per week of daily use (max +200%).

**Long Term Withdrawal Effects:** After daily use for a month: cramps (roll vs. distracting pain), Insomnia (20), flu-like symptoms, diarrhea for 5 days.

**Addiction:** Physiological Addiction Difficulty 1, Psychological Addiction Difficulty 1, Craving Difficulty 20.

**Overdose (2x):** +12 to save vs. pain, +5 to save vs. fear, -5 INL, -5 AGY, Euphoria (20), Unconsciousness (20) for 6 hours.

**Overdose (4x):** Cardiac Arrest (10), fluid in lungs (-10 END).

**Penicillin-** A popular antibiotic which gives +10 to save vs. disease progression from bacterial illnesses. 7 *Srang/dose*

**Stretcher-** A 20 lb. (9 kg.) military, canvas and metal, folding stretcher. 200 *Srang*

**Tonic Herbs-** A packet of herbs. When made in to a tea it strengthens the body, making it more capable of fighting off disease and staying healthy under stress. Gives +1 END and +3 to save vs. disease contraction progression for 1 day. 15 *Srang/dose*

## MISCELLANEOUS

**Bamboo Wristguards-** Pieces of bamboo to protect the wrists during archery. Costs 2 Srang.

**Beggar's Staff-** This is a staff used by begging monks. It has jingling metal rings on it to drown out the sounds of the every-day world. Can be used as a 2 blunt damage weapon (range 2). 30 Srang

**Begging Bowl-** This is a distinctive metal bowl with a wide rim, traditionally used by beggars. 2 Srang

**Bellows-** A small sheepskin device used to pump air in to a fire to keep it burning brightly. 25 Srang

**Butter Lamp-** A small metal dish with a wick in it. Butter is put in the dish and then the wick lighted. This provides a long burning flame, like a candle but with more soot. 10 Srang

**Canteen-** A yak-skin container capable of holding four days worth of water (10 lbs. or 4.5 kg. when full) or other liquids. 6 Srang

**Chopsticks-** Standard Tibetan utensils. 1 Srang/pair

**Coracle-** Yak-skin boat, can carry up to 9 people when piloted by a skilled pilot. Since Yaks had to be butchered to create it, it emanates -1 KMA. 150 lbs. or 68 lbs. (200 lbs. or 90 kg. when wet). 200 Srang



coracle

**Dried Rhubarb-** Smoked in central Tibet as a substitute for tobacco. 1 Srang/pouch

**Fire Starter-** A small metal device. It is grated against stone to create sparks and set kindling afire. 12 Srang

**Iron Pencase-** A heavy case with a leather strap used to hold pens and ink (see Craft Tools). Primarily used by monks. Can be used as a 1½ blunt damage weapon (range 2). 20 Srang

**Khata-** A white scarf ceremonially presented by guests to their hosts to show respect and thanks. 10 Srang

**Pack-** A leather pack with a shoulder strap for carrying items while traveling. 10 Srang

**Pack Frame-** A wooden pack frame that straps on to a yak. When used with the Animal Packing skill, it can be used to put very large loads on a yak. 30 Srang



yak with pack frame

**Prostration Gloves-** Large padded gloves for use by pilgrims who are moving across the country by body-lengths. 2 Srang

**Rope-** Heavy, coarse Tibetan tope. Can hold up to 200 lbs. (90 kg.). Weighs 1 lb. per ft. (or 1.5kg./m.) ½ Srang/ft. (1½/m.)

**Saddle-** A leather saddle for riding a horse. 150 Srang

**Sheep Dung-** Dried sheep dung is the most valued fuel in Tibet because it weighs less and burns hotter than any other type of dung. However, a bellows must be used to keep it burning or else it will go out. *1 Srang/night's worth*

**Tent-** A large, black, yak hair tent. It is roomy enough for five people to sit around a fire inside. There is a smoke hole in the top. Has long wooden rods for support. A skilled animal packer can pack a tent onto one Yak. 150 lbs. or 68 kg. *100 Srang*

**Tsampa Bowl-** A small wooden bowl Tibetans carry with them everywhere (guests are required to bring their own bowl to eat from). Can also used as a teacup. It is traditionally licked clean after every use. *2 Srang*

**Wool Blanket-** Colorful wool blanket, used to keep horses warm in the winter. *20 Srang*

## SERVICES

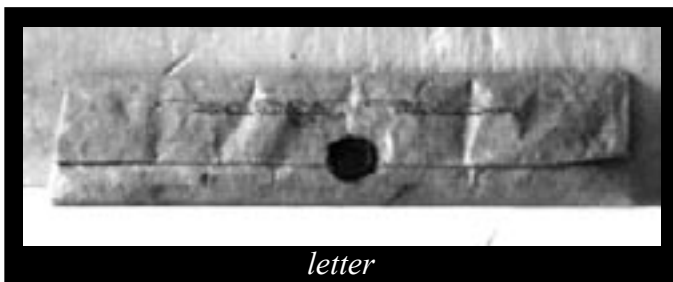
**Ferrying-** Ferrying for up to nine people across a calm river. *5 Srang*

**Guide-** This is the cost to hire a common person from a village to guide the PCs through the area. A guide will flee from any sort of danger and will not carry heavy burdens. *15 Srang/day*

**Prostitute-** The services of a prostitute. *7-40 Srang*

**Quartering-** This is the cost to keep and feed an animal overnight. In cities, it will be done by professionals, in villages there is always a farmer willing to do it. *7 Srang/night*

**Lodgings-** A nice place to sleep for the night. Cities have hotels and inns, villages have a person with a guest room, large monasteries have a guest house. Note: PCs can often gain free lodgings from farmers and nomads (see p.146). *10 Srang/night*



letter

**Mail-** Tibet has a small postal system. A letter can be delivered in 1d20 weeks to any city or moderately large town. It is given to the central authorities of the town (usually a monastery) who will attempt to contact the recipient. There is no mail service in areas with fighting between rebels and the Chinese. *4 Srang*

**Opera Troupe-** A private performance from a traveling troupe of Tibetan opera performers. These masked performers play instruments, sing, dance and act out dramas and comedies all in one performance. *30-200 Srang*

**Porter-** This is the cost to hire a peasant or beggar to carry a load for travelers. They are often hired to help carry supplies on mountain climbing expeditions. They only travel part of the way, turning back when the supplies they carry are expended. PCs must pay more if they are going on a dangerous expedition. *10-50 Srang/day*

**Rented House-** A small, two-story house in a Tibetan city. *50 Srang/month*

**Servant-** The cost to retain a personal servant who will follow the PC around to assist him or her and run errands. Servants will flee dangerous situations. *40 Srang/month*

**Mercenary (Monk)-** A monk of the Yellow Hat sect, hired out as a bodyguard. The monk will not protect enemies of Tibet or Buddhism. The monk will only fight in self-defense (or the defense of another person). The average monk has STH 14, END 16, SPD 12, AGY 13 and either Crane Kung Fu (3) or Tai Chi (3). The monk has a staff, club or whip. *10 Srang/day*

**Mercenary (Tribesman)-** A nomadic warrior hired to wage war. He will not kill non-combatants. Has a horse, a WWI rifle and a sword and the skills Riding (3), Rifle (3) and Sword (3). *40 Srang/day*

**Sorcery-** This is the cost to hire a sorcerer to harm an enemy. PCs may have to spend a lot of time chasing rumors and talking to disreputable people to find a sorcerer. If the sorcery fails there is no refund (and in many cases the sorcerer is already gone). *Minor Misfortune: 30 Srang, Serious Illness: 80 Srang, Murder: 150 Srang*

**Telegraph-** Available in Lhasa and Gyantse. Telegraphs can be sent to people living in either of those two cities or to people in other counties. Telegrams are subject to Chinese censorship. *1 Srang/word*

**Tibetan Medical Care-** Medical care from a level 2 Tibetan doctor with several levels in Medicine, Divination and Exorcism skills. *40-100 Srang*

**Western Medical Care-** Available in major cities where the Chinese have built modern hospitals. These hospitals are so poorly staffed that a bribe is necessary to get any real care. The practitioner will have Western Medicine (1) and access to vaccines, basic pharmaceuticals, optometric and surgical equipment. *Standard Bribe: 30 Srang*

# WEAPONS

## Weapons in Brief

For more, see p.121.

**Range:** Every weapon has a range within which it will work. If a weapon has range 1-2, it can be used normally if the opponents are 1 or 2 range levels apart. However, if the opponents are three range levels apart the weapon is too short to hit and if the opponents are 0 range levels apart the opponent is too close to do full damage. Ranges are as follows:

- Range 0: Touching (biting, headbutts, knives).
- Range 1: Arm's Length (punches, kicks, knives)
- Range 2: 4 ft. or 1.2 m. (swords, clubs)
- Range 3: 6 ft. or 1.8 m. (whips, chains, lances)

Some weapons might do different things at different ranges. A lance, for instance, might do bladed damage if used at one range (where the blade can hit the enemy) and blunt damage if used at another range (where the enemy can only be hit by the pole).

**Damage:** The amount of damage done by the weapon on a normal strike.

**Special Actions/Reactions:** The design of some weapons makes it easier or harder to do certain actions and reactions. Example: If a sword gives "easy strike" then the holder gets +4 whenever making a strike with it. These actions and reactions are listed with the following nomenclature:

- Very Easy: +8 on rolls.
- Easy: +4 on rolls.
- Hard: -4 on rolls.
- Very Hard: -8 on rolls.

**Pierces As:** When a weapon is good at piercing armor, this is the amount of damage to use when calculating how much damage surpasses armor. Note that the max. damage that can hit the human inside the armor is the normal damage listed.

**Projectile Weapons:** These weapons have the following special features:

**ROF:** Rate of Fire. This is how many projectiles can be fired as a single action (as a burst, with a -4 penalty, or as an Area Attack, see p.118).

**FR:** Functional Range. For every functional range unit away the target is, the shooter suffers a -1 penalty. So, if a weapon has an FR of 10 ft. and a victim is 70 ft. away the shooter is at -7 to hit the victim.

**MR:** Maximum Range. Weapons can not do damage beyond this range.

**Clip Holds:** How many times the weapon can fire without being reloaded.

**Bow (Long)-** A large bow, most often used during archery competitions and by soldiers. Takes one action to draw an arrow. 10 difficulty STH feat to use.

- Damage: 3 bladed (pierces armor as 5)
- Functional Range: 6 ft. (2m.) / Max. Range: 125ft. (38m.)
- Costs 150 Srang (+3 Srang/arrow)

**Bow (Short)-** A smaller bow, often used for hunting. Takes one action to draw an arrow.

- Damage: 2 bladed
- Functional Range: 5 ft. (1.5m.) / Max. Range: 100 ft. (30m.)
- Costs 120 Srang (+3 Srang/arrow)

**Club-** A heavy wooden club.  
Damage: 3 blunt  
Range: 1-2

Costs 15 Srang



**Iron Spear-** A heavy iron shaft with a spear point. Very versatile: it can be used as a thrown weapon, a stabbing weapon or as a staff weapon. This type of spear is often carried by travelers in the Amdo area for defense against bandits.

- 3 bladed damage as a thrown weapon
- Functional Range 2ft. (2/3m.) / Maximum Range 30ft. (9m.)
- 2 blunt 1 bladed damage as a staff weapon (range 0-1)
- 4 bladed damage as a stabbing weapon (range 1-2)

Costs 80 Srang

**Knife-** A simple Tibetan knife.

- 2 bladed damage
- Range 0-1
- Costs 25 Srang

**Kukuri-** A large, heavy knife used by the Gurka peoples of the Himalayas. A heavy, forward curved blade concentrates the force of a swing to a single point.

- Damage: 3 bladed (pierces as 5)
- Range: 1
- Hard Strike (-4)
- Costs 170 Srang

**Lance-** A long metal pole with a steel tip, used for spearing enemies from horseback.

- Damage: 3 bladed (pierces armor as 5)
- Range: 3
- Costs 250 Srang

**Pistol (Automatic)-** A modern pistol that fires from a clip (takes 1 action to reload a new clip). Pistols are not very common in Tibet, except when used by the Chinese (Tibetans are more likely to have rifles).

- Damage: 4 bladed
- Rate of Fire: 3
- Functional Range: 7ft. (2m.) / Maximum Range: 300ft. (91 m.)
- Clip Holds 8 Bullets
- Costs 1000 Srang (+5 Srang/bullet)

**Rifle (Matchlock)-** A very old rifle from the previous century. A ball must be put in the barrel (takes 1 action) and gunpowder added (takes 1 action) and a lit wick put against the gunpowder to fire. This is the kind most likely to be kept for defense against bandits in remote villages and monasteries.

- Damage: 4 bladed
- Functional Range: 6ft. (2m.) / Max. Range: 300ft. (91m.)
- Holds 1 bullet
- Costs 300 Srang (+4 Srang/bullet)

**Rifle (WWI)-** The most common type of rifle found in the hands of Tibetans. Some are German Mausers and some are British and Russian types dating back to 1914.

Damage: 5 bladed  
Rate of Fire: 2  
Functional Range: 8ft. (2.5m.)  
/ Max. Range: 500ft. (152m.)  
Holds 15 bullets  
Costs 400 Srang (+3 Srang/bullet)

**Rifle (WWII)-** A standard rifle from the WWII era. Tibetan Army soldiers carry rifles of this type.

Damage: 6 bladed  
Rate of Fire: 3  
Functional Range: 10ft. (3m.) / Max. Range: 700ft. (213m.)  
Holds 25 bullets.  
Costs 800 Srang (+4 Srang/bullet)

**Rifle Horns-** This is a Tibetan invention. It is a bipod rifle stand made from wild antelope horns. When folded down, it braces the rifle for sharp-shooting (+4 to aimed actions), when folded up the horns act as bayonets (2 bladed damage, range 2).  
20 Srang

**Sling-** A leather thong with a cup. Often used by nomads.

Damage: 2 blunt  
Functional Range: 4ft. (1m.) / Max. Range: 75ft. (23m.)  
Costs 9 Srang

**Staff-** A long, straight wooden pole, used primarily as a parrying weapon. The staff will be broken if it is hit with 5 bladed or blunt damage.

Damage: 3 blunt  
Easy Parry (+4)  
Range: 1-2  
Costs 30 Srang

**Sword (Chinese)-** An imported, traditionally crafted sword. It is sharper and fancier than the standard Tibetan sword.

Damage: 5 bladed (pierces armor as 7 bladed)  
Range: 1-2  
Easy Strike (+4)  
Costs 600 Srang



rifle horns



### **Sword (Tibetan)-**

A traditional Tibetan sword. It is designed for utility as a weapon, not to be aesthetically pleasing. It consists of a simple handle and straight, plain iron blade with a slightly rounded end.

Damage: 4 bladed  
Range: 1-2  
Costs 200 Srang

**Throwing Key-** Once a popular weapon among dobdobs, although lately

dobdobs have taken to using less lethal weapons. This is a large key-shaped piece of metal with sharp edges, attached to a long cord. The wielder throws the weapon at an opponent and uses the cord to pull the weapon back so it can be thrown again.

Damage: 2 bladed  
Functional Range: 2 ft. (.5 m.) /  
Maxi-mum Range 10 ft. (3 m.)  
Costs 150 Srang

**Trident-** This weapon is seldom used in battle anymore, yet blacksmiths continue to make it because it is a favorite weapon of many dharmapalas.

Damage: 2 bladed (pierces armor as 4 bladed)  
Range: 2  
Easy Entangle (+4)  
Costs 100 Srang

**War Axe-** An axe with a long handle, mostly used to fight from horseback.

Damage: 3 bladed (pierces armor as 5 bladed)  
Range: 3  
Hard Strike (-4), Easy Vital Strike (+4)  
Costs 200 Srang

**Whip-** A long leather whip designed to be a non-lethal weapon.

Damage: 1 bladed  
Range: 3  
Easy Pain/Stun Attack (+4)  
Costs 35 Srang



# PERSONALITY

In Brief- Choose five attachments for the character, with at least one universe attachment.

*Two monks are traveling and see a beautiful woman stranded on one side of the river. Although they are forbidden to touch women, one monk picks her up and carries her across. The other monk is horrified and spends the next several hours ruminating on what happened. Finally he decides to speak. He asks "why did you carry her across, even though we are forbidden to touch women?" The other monk replies "I put her down at the other side. Why are you still carrying her?"*

Buddha taught that suffering and bad karma are caused when people "grasp" on to beliefs, emotions and desires. Enlightened beings do not grasp on to anything, they do not want, feel or believe in anything any longer than is necessary. It is the grasping on to existence that keeps people in the cycle of rebirths.

Attachments measure both what separates a PC from enlightenment and what gives them unique personalities. There are three types of attachments: those worldly pleasures we grasp (or worldly pains that we avoid), those ideas of self that we grasp and those ideas of the way the universe works that we grasp. Attachments can be changed easily, but are difficult to actually destroy (see p.125). The process of becoming enlightened is the process of shedding attachments.

**Using Attachments-** Unenlightened beings can sometimes find attachments useful. When PCs are making a WIL based roll, and when a defeat would mean a major blow to an attachment, the PC gets +5 to the roll. The GM can deny this bonus if the PC has not roleplayed the attachment in this game session. Examples: *A PC with the Prized Possession attachment is trying to resist a Pain/Stun attack by a bandit trying to take away the PCs prized golden Buddha statuette. A PC with the Brave advantage is making a save vs. fear to avoid running away from a powerful sorcerer.*

**Dark Attachments-** Some attachments are listed as "dark." In the pursuit of enlightenment, all attachments are bad. When it comes to being a member of society, however, some attachments are worse than others. Dark attachments are those that have a significant likelihood of causing problems for the PC. Each attachment of this type that the PC has gives 1 Bonus Point (see Bonus Characteristics, p.93).

Dark attachments can develop naturally, in the same way as other attachments. They can also be created by traumatic events, sorcerous attacks or botched tantric rituals. A roll is necessary to change a dark attachment to a normal one (see p.125).

# PHYSICAL ATTACHMENTS

These are attachments to worldly possessions, pleasures or abilities. The PC does not necessarily ever achieve the subject of the attachment, but he or she does think about it often. Example: a poor farmer may have an attachment to Money, and may think night-and-day about ways to gain wealth, but never actually achieve it. Or, a monk may believe that money is a bad thing and may feel irrational hatred towards it.

**Alcohol-** An alcohol attachment could denote addiction, prejudiced abstention or simply a strong enjoyment of alcohol's effects.

**Authority-** The PC enjoys having power over other people. Power could come, for example, from threats of sorcery, from being a ranking government official, or from being a respected teacher.

**Danger-** The PC is attached to the feelings that come from being in dangerous situations.

**Death (Dark)-** The PC is attached to the possibility of death. The PC is driven to attempt to eliminate all possible dangers; to seek magical means of immortality; or to remove doubt by exposing oneself to constant threats.

**Detail (Dark)-** The PC must either ignore every detail, no matter how important, or obsess over every detail, no matter how insignificant. Example: If given a request, one PC with this attachment will do it all wrong. Another will refuse to do it at all because of a minor grammatical error in the request.

**Disease (Dark)-** The character is attached to the idea of sickness and infirmity, so much so that even death is not as frightening. The PC takes every minor fluctuation as a sign or serious illness; or the PC might act like he or she is invulnerable to disease and will ignore his or her own health.

**Fame-** An attachment to being known and respected by other people.

**Gambling-** An attachment to any sort of betting.

**Emotional-** An attachment to recognizing and acting upon emotions.

**Independence-** An attachment to depending upon other people for survival.

**Intoxication (Dark)-** The PC is always seeking a state of heavy intoxication.

**Prized Possession-** The PC is attached to a object or collection of objects that the PC



possess and thinks has great value. A child could be a prized possession if that is how the parent thinks of the child.

**Magic Power-** An attachment the idea of having magic powers.

**Manic (Dark)-** The PC is attached to the feeling that comes with acting without pause or introspection.

**Money-** An attachment to the idea of having money.

**Past (Dark)-** The PC is attached to an event in his or her past and what could have happened differently. The PC is driven to collect details about what happened and how. The PC is often attached more to what has happened than to what is currently happening.

**Safety-** An attachment to the idea of safety from obvious physical dangers.

**Sex-** An attachment to sexual intercourse as either a source of pleasure or as a temptation.

**Sexual Dominance (Dark)-** The PC is attached to controlling sexual impulses, sexual behaviors and the targets of sexual desire. The attachment is so strong that PCs will either avoid any form of temptation or will act on sexual impulses in unhealthy ways.

## SELF ATTACHMENTS

People with these attachments are committed to an idea about themselves. The idea is not merely trivia to the attached: they believe they are different and they believe it is an important difference.

**Ascetic-** The PC is attached to the idea that he or she is able to live without worldly pleasures and comforts.

**Brave-** The idea that the PC is unaffected by fear.

**Clown-** The idea that the PC can keep a sense of humor no matter how grim the situation.

**Beautiful-** The idea that the PC is physically attractive.

**Empathetic-** The idea that the PC understands other people's feelings better than most.

**Forgiving-** The idea that the PC is never petty or vengeful.

**Helpless (Dark)-** The PC obsesses over the idea of not being in control of his or her own life.

**Humble-** The PC takes pride in his or her own humility. The PC never brags or shows enjoyment in having advantages and may look down on those who do. For those seeking enlightenment, this is the most

dangerous attachment to have. People with this attachment often believe that it is evidence of advancement, not an attachment.

**Logical-** The idea that the PC is rational and has no irrational beliefs.

**Loyal-** The idea that the PC is unbendingly loyal and trustworthy.

**Moral-** The idea that the PC adheres strictly to some moral code.

**Philosophical-** The idea that the PC constantly seeks a more supreme level of truth and understanding.

**Respectable-** The idea of being someone worthy of respect.

**Ruthless-** The idea that the PC will go farther than others are willing to in order to achieve his or her desires.

**Sadistic (Dark)-** The PC is attached to the idea that he or she can and will cause other people suffering and misfortune.

**Self-Control (Dark)-** The PC is attached to the idea that he or she has a superhumanly strong will that does not bend, neither from internal desires nor from the machinations of others.

**Sexual-** The idea that the PC is sexually desired by others.

**Skeptical-** The idea that the PC can not be easily tricked and seldom adopts a belief based on bad facts.

**Strong-** The PC is attached to the idea that he or she has strengths (physical, mental or magical) that can be used to enforce his or her will over others.

**Tricky-** The idea that the PC can make other people believe whatever he or she wants.

**Trusting-** The idea that the PC always chooses to give people the benefit of the doubt.

**Truthful-** The idea that the PC can be depended upon, without exception, to tell the truth.

**Weak-Willed (Dark)-** The PC is attached to the idea that he or she will give in to impulses and the will of others more easily than other people.

**Willful-** The idea that other people and beings can not dominate the PC's will.

**Worthless (Dark)-** The idea that the PC's life and well-being has less value than that of other people.

## UNIVERSE ATTACHMENTS

This is an attachment to an idea about how the universe works. Universe attachments are often the most difficult to remove because it is nearly impossible to prove or disprove their validity and worth. Also, unenlightened people need to feel that the universe makes enough sense that they can predict what is about to happen.

**Aesthetics-** The idea that everything in the universe, from people to places to ideas, has worth depending upon an inherent beauty.

**Brutality-** The idea that the universe is such that all beings must hurt others if they wish to survive and prosper.

**Duty-** The idea that all beings are born with duties and if they do not fulfill them they are bad.

**Egocentric (Dark)-** The PC is attached to the idea that the only things that matter in this universe have something to do with the PC.

**Fate-** The idea that the events of our lives are predestined and unchangeable. See p.15 for Tibetan ideas about the future.

**Humor-** The idea that everything that happens, if looked at dispassionately, is pretty funny.

**Irrational (Dark)-** The idea that the universe doesn't make any sense, that nothing can be predicted from what happened before, that there is no inherent logic or aesthetic to the universe.

**Justice-** The idea that bad deeds should be punished and that good deeds should be rewarded. Some are content to let Karma serve this function, others think justice should be enforced by humans.

**Paranoid (Dark)-** The PC is attached to the idea that anything that happens is connected, in some way, to some dangerous plot against the PC.

**Pessimistic (Dark)-** The PC is attached to the idea that bad events are always occurring and the worst possible outcome is the most likely.

**Rational-** The idea that the universe works by simple rules of logic and all knowledge can be obtained by intellectual investigation.

**Social-** The idea that the only things in the universe that are important are important because of the importance that human society attaches to them.

**Tired (Dark)-** The PC is attached to the idea that whenever any entity in the universe tries to do anything it will always be an uphill struggle. Beings get out of life less than what they put in to it.



*Lhasa family*

**Truth-** The PC is attached to the idea that certain beliefs and statements are true and others are not and that the truth can ultimately be known.

**Utilitarian-** The PC is attached to the idea that some truths and ideas are more useful than others.

**Unknowable-** The PC is attached to the idea that no one can ever be completely certain of anything.

# BONUS

## CHARACTERISTICS

In Brief: PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages or extra points must be balanced out by disadvantages or fewer points.

In addition to the advantages and disadvantages that follow, you can adjust the PC (by gaining and spending Bonus Points) in the following ways:

### Extra or Fewer Attribute Points

1 Bonus Point = 1 Attribute Point

### Extra or Fewer Health Attribute Points

3 Bonus Points = 1 Health Attribute Point

### Extra or Fewer Skill Points

1 Bonus Point = 3 Skill Points

### Extra or Fewer Money

1 Bonus Point = 250 Srang

### Gaining or Losing Bonus Characteristics in Game Play

The simple rule to remember here: character creation is meant to be fair, game play is not.

Advantages and disadvantages can be rewarded or taken away during game-play as part of the adventure with no points being exchanged at all. Examples:

A player may buy the PC the Lama advantage, only to have that Lama killed during the first five minutes of game play. That advantage is permanently lost and the points spent are wasted.

In the first five minutes of gameplay the PC may save the life of an Aristocrat and be gifted with land, gaining the in-game equivalent of the Land Owner advantage.

A PC might start with Opium Addiction, and declare in the first minutes of game play that he or she is quitting. Assuming the PC can resist the cravings rolls, he or she will be rid of that disadvantage.

To reiterate: Anything that the PC does or anything that happens to the PC in-game can remove advantages and disadvantages, or can give the equivalent of advantages and disadvantages to the PC, regardless of the points spent during character creation.

Example: *Tashi, the Mirror Gazer, starts with only 70 Skill Points (-30 Skill Points = +10 Bonus Points), 750 less Srang than normal (-750 Srang = +3 BP) but starts with 7 Health Attribute Points (+1 Health Attribute Point = -3 BP) and 100 Attribute Points (+10 Attribute Points = -10 BP).*

*It all evens out and Tashi doesn't have to take any disadvantages.*

### Advantages

Brawler	-8 BP
Creative Genius	-4 BP
Dūd Tormented	-5 BP
Good Reputation	-4 BP
Lama	-5 BP
Lu Crossbreed	-7 BP
Mamo Crossbreed	-10 BP
Migyu Crossbreed	-6 BP
Philosophical Prodigy	-5 BP
Physically Attractive (Minor)	-2 BP
Physically Attractive (Major)	-6 BP
Special Charm	-4 BP
Special Weapon	-4 BP
Tulku: Adult	-10 BP
Tulku: Child	-10 BP

### Disadvantages

Alcoholism	+10 BP
Bad Previous Life	+8 BP
Bad Reputation	+4 BP
Blind	+15 BP
Clumsy	+2 BP
Deaf	+10 BP
Deeply Attached	+5 BP
Known Enemy of Chinese	+4 BP
Missing Arm	+5ea. BP
Missing Leg	+5ea. BP
Mute	+7 BP
Opium Addiction	+12 BP
Physically Unattractive (Major)	+4 BP
Poison Bearer	+6 BP
Poor Hearing	+6 BP
Poor Vision	+5 BP
Sickly	+5 BP
Tra'menma	+5 BP
Trauma	+5 BP
Tulpa	+3 BP

## ADVANTAGES

**Brawler-** The PC has been getting in fights since he or she was a little kid and fighting comes naturally to the PC. The PC gets +2 to strike, parry and dodge, +5 to initiative, and a +3, a +2, and a +1 to any actions or reactions of the character's choice (the pluses can not be put on the same action and reaction). *Costs 8 BP.*

**Creative Genius-** This advantage gives no plusses to creative skill costs and give no plusses to skill rolls. However, when the PC does succeed at a creative skill, the effect is beautiful or evocative in a way that no one else in the world could produce. For example: A PC has the Cooking skill and decides to create a new recipe for Momos (dumplings). That recipe will be as good as the success of the roll, but there will not be any Momo recipe in the world like it. *Costs 4 BP.*

**Düd Tormented-** Occasionally, a malevolent spirit of the Düd class will enter a person who is about to die and prevent that person from dying. The spirit gains strength by prolonging the person's suffering. Düd especially love doing this to people who would otherwise have achieved a favorable rebirth. While lingering in pain, the person typically accrues enough bad karma to cause a poor rebirth.

Most of the düd tormented linger in disability and semi-consciousness, but some recover their faculties. The PC is one of those people. The PC is still mortally wounded, and would die without the düd's continuing influence. The PC still suffers constantly from the injuries. If the person ever stops suffering, the düd will leave and the person will die. The only hope for the PC is a miraculous healing that happens so quickly that the düd can not leave fast enough to kill the PC.

The PC will die if the düd is killed, exorcised or decides to stop keeping the character alive. If the düd is being exorcised, the PC can add his or her own WIL to the düd's roll to resist the exorcism.

The düd has a Magical STH of 10. It costs 1 Magical STH per round to keep the PC alive, but the düd gains 1 Magical STH per round from the PC's suffering (see p.135).

The PC starts with:

+8 INCY

PC does not lose END after being at 0 BLD (can only be incapacitated if he or she

loses all INCY, see p.110).

-10 to current KMA

-5 to END, SPD, STH or INL (choose one), due to the injury, and a reduced max. cap on that attribute.

Must make a daily save vs. distracting pain (20 difficulty).

*Costs 5 BP.*

**Good Reputation-** Sometime in the past the PC has done something (or been credited with doing something) which has made the PC acclaimed in his or her circles. Example: A weathermaker is believed to have preformed a feat that had made him known as brave and skillful by other weathermakers. *Costs 4 BP.*

**Lama-** The PC has a lama, an advanced teacher of tantric practice, who has agreed to train the PC. The PC is obligated to follow the teacher's guidance and do errands for the teacher. During character creation, the PC can buy Tantra skills at 5 points per level. After character creation, the PC can take the Tantric Student discipline (p.101) at any time. *Costs 5 BP.*

**Lu Crossbreed-** One of the PC's parents was a Lu spirit taking physical form. See p.136 for more on the Lu. The PC can usually pass for a normal human (although the PC is unusually tall, thin, pale and cold). The Lu are water spirits with innate skills of sorcery and control of the weather. The weathermaker of Drepung, one of the greatest in Tibet, is known to be a Lu Crossbreed. Full-blooded Lu spirits may recognize the PC as one of them and may give the PC more respect than a normal human. The PC gets:

+1 INL, +1 WIL, +1 BLD, -5 KMA.

Swimming (3)

-4 to Sorcery skill costs, min. 6

-3 to Weathermaking skill costs, min. 6

*Costs 7 BP.*

**Mamo Crossbreed-** The character's mother was a black mamo spirit who took physical form in order to seduce a human male. The PC can usually pass for a normal human (although the PC is unusually large and has unusually dark skin). Mamo Crossbreeds are known for having a terrible temper and having an aptitude for combat, seduction and sorcery. Some of the fiercest warriors in Tibet's history are believed to have



Düd- A type of malevolent spirit especially associated with lingering illness.

been Mamo Crossbreeds. The PC gets the following:

- 10 to save vs. fear
- 10 KMA, +2 STH, +2 BDY
- +5 to Seduction rolls
- 3 to Combat skill costs, min. 6
- 3 to Sorcery skill costs, min. 5
- Costs 10 BP.*

**Migyu Crossbreed-** The PC is the product of mating (usually rape) between a human and a Migyu (a large, intelligent primate, see p.46). Some crossbreeds are not intelligent or human-looking enough to fit in to human society, but the PC is one of the lucky ones who can “pass.” The PC is 5’6” to 6’6” tall and weighs 200-300 lbs. (90- 136 kg.). The hair on the PC’s head is reddish and the PC has unusually thick body hair which is golden colored. The PC has sharp teeth and strong jaw muscles.

Most Migyu crossbreeds were abandoned by parents and raised in monasteries. The PC must keep his or her heritage a secret or face discrimination.

The PC gets:

- Max. cap on attributes: 15 INL, 24 STH
- +6 STH, +4 AGY, +2 SPD, +2 END, +3 BDY, +2 BLD
- +10 to climbing and leaping rolls
- 7 to save vs. fear/anger
- 2 bladed damage bite with a hard strike (-4)
- Costs 6 BP.*

**Philosophical Prodigy-** The PC was born with a special facility for understanding abstract philosophical concepts. The PC gets:

- 1 to skill costs for Medicine (min. 7)
- 3 to Scholarship (min. 4)
- 2 to Tantra (min. 9)
- 3 to Western Knowledge (min. 8)

The skills Philosophy and Political Philosophy can be purchased for 4 skill points per level.

*Costs 5 BP.*

**Physically Attractive (Minor)-** The PC has features which makes him or her more attractive to Tibetans who are interested in members of the PC’s gender. Gives +4 to seduction rolls. *Costs 2 BP.*

**Physically Attractive (Major)-** The PC has features which make him or her very attractive to Tibetans who are interested in members of the PC’s gender. Gives +8 to seduction rolls. *Costs 6 BP.*



*lu crossbreed*

**Mamo-** A class of malevolent spirits, female with jet-black skin, known for sorcery and disease.

**Special Charm-** The PC has, at some point in the past, acquired a powerful holy charm. This is something that was blessed by a powerful historical Tibetan (e.g. Padmasambhava, King Gesar, Songsten Gampo). The charm emanates +5 Karma and may have magic powers that the PC is unaware of. *Costs 4 BP.*

**Special Weapon-** At some point the PC was lucky enough to gain possession of a very special weapon. This weapon is much better than anything the PC would normally have been able to acquire. Because the PC has trained almost exclusively with this weapon, he or she gets +4 to any roll using the weapon. Choose from:

**Long Bow:** As per p.88 but does 4 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6) and has a Functional Range of 5 ft. (1.5m.)

**Kukuri:** As per p.88 but due to an exceptionally sharp blade and well-weighted design it does 4 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6) and does not have a Hard Strike.

**Lance:** As per p.88 but does 4 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6) and has an Easy Strike (+4).

**Samurai Sword:** As per the Chinese Sword (p.89) but pierces armor as 8 bladed and has an Easy Vital Strike (+4).

**War Axe:** As per p.89 but does 4 bladed damage (pierces armor as 6) and does not have a Hard Strike.

*Costs 4 BP.*

**Tulku (Adult)-** In the previous life, the PC was a very advanced Buddhist or Bön practitioner. The PC was able to choose to be reborn as a human in Tibet (or a human who would one day come to Tibet). The PC has not been officially recognized as a tulku (owns no special property, has no special social position).

Most of the PC's memories from the previous life have faded away. The PC may occasionally feel déjà-vu or get a dim flash of memory. Each adventure there is a tiny chance (1 in 20) the PC may have a flash of memory that is useful in the current situation (e.g. the PC remembers going through a secret trap door in the monastery the PC is exploring).

The PC gets:

Only 4 attachments (rather than 5).

+15 KMA.

-3 to skill costs for Scholarship and Tantra skills (min. 5).

*Costs 10 BP.*

**Tulku (Child)-** The PC is a 9 to 11 year old reincarnation of an advanced Buddhist or Bön practitioner. The PC is not officially recognized (has no special property or status). As the PC ages he or she will lose memories from the past life and will become more like a

normal Tibetan (see Tulku: Adult). Memories will fade, new attachments will appear and KMA will reduce.

PC starts with:

Only 2 attachments (rather than 5).

+30 KMA.

Max. caps for attributes: END 10, SPD 10, STH 8, BLD 4, BDY 3.

Only 60 attribute points and only 50 skill points.

-5 to skill costs for Scholarship and Tantra skills (min. 3).

For every level advancement until the PC reached level 5, the PC will gain 4 attribute points, will lose 3 KMA, and will have a 1 in 2 chance of gaining an attachment (max. 4 attachments). By the time the PC reaches level 5 he or she will be an adult.

*Costs 10 BP.*



*young tulku*



## DISADVANTAGES

**Alcoholism-** The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to alcohol (which has a craving difficulty of 15). See p.112 for addiction rules and p.84 for the drug profile of alcohol. The PC has been using alcohol daily for 1 year so far and so does not yet suffer from any appreciable long term effects. Note that it costs an alcoholic approximately 20 Srang per month to buy enough alcohol to avoid withdrawal, although alcoholics may buy and consume much more. *Gives 10 BP.*

**Bad Previous Life-** The character was a very bad person in one of his or her previous lives. The PC has a lot of bad karma. The PC gets -10 KMA. About once a per experience level, when certain astrological events happen, karmic patterns from the past will suddenly come to fruition and have a powerful effect on the PC's life. They could manifest as a sudden illness, a period of very bad luck, or the appearance of a dark attachment. If an astrologer predicts these events, they can be prevented with a ritual. *Gives 8 BP.*

**Bad Reputation-** At some point the PC did or was blamed for something bad. People within the PC's character class are likely to have heard of the PC and to have a negative impression of the PC. *Gives 4 BP.*

**Blind-** The PC is completely unable to see. The PC is -15 to all combat actions and reactions (see p.117). PCs who perform Buddhist miracles (p.108) or have high levels in the Tantric skills Pure Vision or Subtle Self or the Divination skill Mirror Gazing may be able to overcome some of the limitations of this disadvantage. *Gives 15 BP.*

**Clumsy-** When the PC is not paying attention to what he or she is doing the PC drops things, knocks things over, bumps in to things, etc. At least once in a game session, while the PC is not trying to be careful, he or she will make some clumsy movement (a hard AGY roll can help the PC recover from or lessen the damage done). *Gives 2 BP.*

**Deaf-** The PC is completely unable to hear. He or she can speak. The PC can spend 10 skill points per level

to be able to Read Lips (an AWR based skill). PCs who perform Buddhist miracles (p.108) or have high levels in the Tantric skills Pure Vision or Subtle Self or the Divination skill Mirror Gazing may be able to overcome some of the limitations of this disadvantage. *Gives 10 BP.*

**Deeply Attached-** In western terms, the PC is neurotic, obsessive or eccentric. The PC starts with 7 attachments, at least 2 of those must be dark. The PC gains no additional BP for these 2 dark attachments. *Gives 5 BP.*

**Known Enemy of Chinese-** The PC is wanted by the Chinese. The Chinese most likely think that the PC is organizing anti-Chinese forces. Chinese secret police in major cities and the generals operating in the countryside will have a full dossier on the PC. The Chinese will offer rewards (often desirable government positions) for the capture of the PC. If captured, the PC will be interrogated, tortured and executed. *Gives 4 BP.*

**Missing Arm-** The PC is missing an arm or has an arm that is not functional. There are no prosthetics available in Tibet. See the section on crippling on p.118 for the game effects of a missing limb. *Gives 5 BP each.*

**Missing Leg-** If taken once, the PC can walk only using wooden crutches (there are no prosthetics available in Tibet) and can move at his or her SPD divided by 4 (rounded up). If taken twice, the PC has no legs and can move at his or her SPD divided by 8 (rounded up). *Gives 5 BP each.*

**Mute-** The PC can not speak at all. The PC can make hissing or choking or clucking noises. PCs who perform Buddhist miracles (p.108) or have high levels in the Tantric skill Wind Voices can "speak" to others telepathically. *Gives 7 BP.*

**Opium Addiction-** The PC is physiologically and psychologically addicted to opium (which has a craving difficulty of 20). See p.112 for addiction rules and p.85 for the drug profile of opium. The PC has been using opium daily for 1 year. Note that it costs an opium addict approximately 40 Srang per month to buy enough opium to avoid withdrawal, although addicts may buy and consume much more. *Gives 12 BP.*



**Physically Unattractive (Major)-** The PC has features which have a very strong tendency to make him or her unattractive to Tibetans interested in members of the PC's gender. Gives -8 to seduction rolls. *Gives 4 BP.*

**Poison Bearer-** The PC has inherited a curse. It was either passed down from the parent of the same sex, or it was magically bequeathed to the PC by a dying poison bearer. The curse causes the PC to create poison, whether the PC wants to or not. The only way to prevent the PC from creating poisons is to either keep the PC in a field of +7 KMA emanation or for the PC to gain 1 point of current KMA per day.

Otherwise, the PC must poison someone. The PC can choose to poison a stranger. If he or she refuses to poison someone on purpose, the PC will spontaneously poison a friend or family member. If the PC avoids contact with others, the PC will poison himself or herself.

When the power is activated, food that the PC has handled, even if the PC has only held a bowl, will become poisoned. This poison is tasteless, odorless and invisible and does 3d6 BLD damage and 2d20 KMA damage within 24 hours after being consumed. The need to poison is only relieved if a human actually consumes the poison.

The PC must poison people at least once per experience level and must poison people once for every 5 points of negative KMA the PC gains.

If the PC dies without heirs he or she must bequeath this curse to another person. The bequeathing is done as a thought and the victim does not know he or she has the curse until it activates.

See p.146 for more on Poison Bearers.

*Gives 6 BP.*

**Poor Hearing-** The PC can understand speech as long as the other person is talking clearly and loudly and there is not much background noise. The PC is at -15 to hearing based AWR rolls. If the PC can get a Western Hearing Aide (p.122 in full version), and keep it in batteries, it will make his or her hearing almost normal. *Gives 6 BP.*

**Poor Vision-** Without glasses, the PC is either nearsighted (can only examine things held right next to the PC's face) or farsighted (can see far-off details but anything close is blurry). The PC can typically travel on a marked path without injury. Without glasses the PC is -7 to all actions and reactions during combat and is -15 to vision based AWR rolls. If the PC can be seen by an optometrist (there are not many in Tibet) and can afford to have glasses made, the PC's vision can be corrected. *Gives 5 BP.*

**Sickly-** The PC was born with a susceptibility to many types of diseases. The PC has had more serious illnesses by his or her teens than most people do in 80 years. The PC starts with -7 to save vs. disease contraction and progression and -10 to save vs. shock. The PC regains lost END and heals from injuries half as fast. *Gives 5 points.*

**Tra'menma-** Limitation: Females only, cannot be taken with the Poison Bearer disadvantage. The PC was born with a physiological peculiarity such that she emanates bad karma much more than normal people do. The PC emanates KMA as if she had 50 less KMA. If discovered, the PC is likely to be shunned or banished. The PC has learned how to do things which cause bad karma (like thinking jealous or hateful thoughts). By doing these things the PC can increase (temporarily double) the emanation and do damage to people around the PC. For more about Tra'menma, see p.146. *Gives 5 BP.*



*prison under the Potala*

**Trauma-** The PC recently experienced a very bad emotional trauma. The PC has not yet shown psychological damage, but whenever the PC is under stress he or she must make a save vs. WIL (difficulty 30) to avoid one of his or her normal Attachments turning in to a Dark Attachment. After five such experiences the effects of the trauma will end (though the PC may be completely insane by then). The PC starts with -10 to current KMA. *Gives 5 BP.*

**Tulpa-** The PC was not born a true human being. He or she was created by the meditations of a sorcerer or tantric practitioner with the Tulpa Creation skill. The PC starts the game with no home, no family and no friends. Although the PC was created as a servant, he or she has long-ago gained free will and left his or her creator. The PC has a normal human biology, permanent physical existence and normal Tibetan knowledge and skills. The PC may sometimes have trouble empathizing with people since he or she has not experienced many of the experiences common to normal people. *Gives 3 BP.*

## CHARACTER ADVANCEMENT

In Brief- Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

**Level One, Adventure One-** At the first adventure using a new character the PC is at Level One, Adventure One. What that means is that the PC has just gained Level 1 status in his or her character class. The PC is no longer a trainee and is (just barely) a full fledged member of that character class. This does not mean that the PC has had no life experiences, just that this is the first time the PC has been able to stand on his or her own two feet as his or her current profession. There are many Tibetans who never reach level 1. They depend on others for their well-being throughout their lives.

The average age for a character at level one, adventure one is 19.

**Gaining XP-** Experience allows the PC to grow as a person and improve himself or herself. Experience is measured by Experience Points (XP). XP is awarded at the end of an adventure, based on the PC's performance in the adventure. Some things player characters can do during a game to gain experience points:

**Completing Adventure Goals-** Whatever the goals of the given adventure are, the PCs should be awarded points to the degree that they completed the goals successfully. (5 to 25 XP)

**Staying Alive-** In some adventures, the PCs are thrown in to dangerous situations and the PCs get XP by surviving. (1 to 5 XP) The PC may also get points if every PC involved in the adventure survives. (2 XP)

**Making Friends-** When any two PCs become good friends they both gain XP. If several PCs make friends with each other, there will be a large reward. (5 XP each)

**Discovering Secrets-** Tibet has a number of secrets waiting to be discovered. Whenever a PC finds out a major secret about the game world, he or she will earn XP. (5 XP)

**Personal Growth-** This is awarded when something happens that makes the PC wiser or more mature or when the PC realizes something important about his or her life. Usually this means that the character has overcome (or has decided to overcome) some personal flaw. It could also mean a wider outlook. XP should only be awarded if this is a permanent change, not just a temporary deviation. This is used to award depth and change in PCs. (5 XP)

**Good Roleplaying-** GMs can award experience points to players who show empathy for, or commitment to, the psychology and worldview of their PCs. XP is awarded when the PC does something that fits in very well with the PC's unique personality. This is a good way for GMs to compensate players that hurt their characters for the sake of realism (e.g. not using knowledge that the player has but the character wouldn't). It can also be used to reward players who use a PC's attachments to the PC's advantage. (2 XP)

**Making The World A Better Place-** The PC will earn XP any time he or she significantly helps some sentient being. This could mean saving a life, providing food to hungry people, teaching someone to read, etc. This can also mean helping people by less direct means. If a PC eliminates a serial killer, that will save all of the killer's potential future victims. Making the world a better place doesn't always correspond with what causes good KMA, but the two will often be correlated. (1 to 10 XP)

**Benefiting Group/Cause-** The PC will earn XP whenever he or she does something that benefits the PC's group or cause (e.g. PC finds a valuable artifact for her monastery, or a member of the rebel movement finds a Tibetan aristocrat willing to join them). (1 to 10 XP)

**Clever Plan-** Whenever a PC comes up with an idea which is both clever and ends up making good things happen, the GM will award XP. (1 to 5 XP)

**Worked Well as Group-** The GM will award XP whenever the PCs show that they can work together well and do things they would be unable to do alone. (2 XP)

**Losing XP-** Just as various types of successes will add to the XP earned in an adventure, some failures can cause the PCs to get less XP than they would have otherwise. XP for an adventure can not drop below zero (PCs will not end an adventure with less XP than when they started).

**Failing at Adventure Goals-** The GM may deduct XP if the PC fails at the goals of the adventure (especially if the goals were very easy or very important). (1 to 5 XP)

**Splitting Up Group-** If the PC chose to split up the party and it did not benefit the party to do so, the PC will lose XP. (5 XP)

**Making the World a Worse Place-** Anything that hurts sentient beings or otherwise makes the world worse will cost XP. (1 to 5 XP)

**Player Character Death-** If one of the PCs in the party dies, each surviving PC will lose XP. (10 XP)

**Spending XP-** Generally, XP can be spent as soon as it is received. There is one exception: when so little time has passed in the game universe between one game session and another that it is ridiculous to think that the PC might have achieved that particular improvement. Example: *The PCs are traveling through the brutal Chang Tang, with a party of Chinese trying to catch them. When a game session ends, the GM awards 16 XP. One player decides that her character will gain one level in the skill Western Medicine. Since the PC doesn't have study materials or access to a person trained in Western Medicine, the GM rules that the player must at least wait until the PCs get to a town before she can increase the skill.*

**Level Advancement-** In addition to spending XP, keep track of how much the PC has earned in total so far. When the PC has earned 100 XP, whether those points have been spent or not, the PC advances an Experience Level.

Experience Levels are simply an easy way of keeping track of how much experience the PC has. The following is what people tend to think about character of various experience levels:

**Level Zero:** Immature, untrained, skill-less, a dependent. About 30% of people in Tibet at this level.

**Level One:** Inexperienced, Green. 30% of people at this level.

**Level Two and Three:** Moderately experienced, average. 23% of people at this level.

**Level Four to Six:** Veteran, Experienced, Teacher. 10% of people at this level.

**Level Seven to Ten:** Very experienced, advanced teacher. 4% of people at this level.

**Level Ten to Thirteen:** Wise and powerful, leader, abbot, master. 2% of people at this level.

**Level Fourteen or more:** Legend, important historical figure. Less than 1% of people at this level.

Level Advancement can also be used as a rough estimate of time. On average, an experience level will equal a year, more or less, depending upon how intense the action has been. Certain things are "timed" based on Experience Levels. The growth of a child (see Dependent Child, p.138 in full version) or young tulku (see Tulku: Child, p.96) occurs with the PC's experience levels.

**Disciplines-** A PC's character class is what the PC does every day. For some, a character class is solely a means of making a living (e.g. Merchant, Craftsperson, Astrologer, Sorcerer, Unclean). For others, the character class is a cause or path that just happens to include a means of making a living (Ascetic, Revenant, the Monks, White Robe).

With each character class comes a discipline. While the PC is spending his or her days being the character class, the PC is also gaining experience as a member of that character class. For example: *Dolma is a first-level sorcerer. She spends her days traveling throughout Tibet, making a living by hiring herself out. While she travels, she also seeks out books and teachers that would help her improve her skills. Because she is a sorcerer, she has contacts in the world of sorcery and has an easier time finding books and teachers. She can gain new sorcery skills with less work than a non-sorcerer could. Being a sorcerer is her character class (what she does for a living) and her discipline (what she is getting better at). When she gains 100 XP she will become a level 2 sorcerer.*

However, a PC can choose to have a different discipline from his or her character class. In order to do this, the PC must work out certain problems during game-play:

Finding a teacher or study materials.

Finding any equipment which is necessary for the discipline. E.g. one needs sorcerous components if one is studying to be a sorcerer.

Dealing with the social consequences of having another discipline. E.g. if the PC is an aristocrat but is studying to be a sorcerer, the PC must keep this fact hidden or may face being disowned by the family.

As soon as the GM rules that the PC has adopted another discipline, the PC can spend XP on skills with the skill costs specific to that discipline. When the PC gains 100 XP, the PC will gain a level as that discipline.

Once a PC has gained one level in a discipline, the PC has all the knowledge and skills to switch to that as his or her character class. Again, the PC may have to deal with a number of social problems. Once the PC has adopted a new character class he or she gets the income, lifestyle and duties associated with that character class.

If a PC loses his or her ability to be one discipline before gaining 1 level in another discipline, the PC will have to deal with being jobless. The PC will have to deal, in game, with finding food and shelter.

**Discipline Requirements-** There are some character classes (and by extension, some disciplines) that require the PC have been born with a special ability (Oracle, Gesar Bard, Mirror Gazer, Unclean, Treasure Finder). PCs can not just choose to study to become one of those. The Revenant character class requires that the PC dies and happens to be one out of thousands of Tibetans that are chosen to come back to life. The Aristocrat character class requires the PC to be given noble rank (see p.65 for some ways this can happen). Other character classes have easier discipline requirements: all PCs have to do is pay for the necessary equipment and find a skilled member of that character class willing to train them.

**Special Disciplines-** There are also a few special disciplines that do not have a character class associated with them. Think of these as an optional specialty. They are something a person may do as a hobby or to gain a little extra money, but cannot make a living from. For example: some monks and nomads are part time nomadic orators. They are sometimes hired to help warring nomadic tribes make peace. A skilled and well-known orator can make some extra money, but not enough that the orator can stop herding animals or working for the monastery.

Some disciplines available to PCs are:

**Exorcist-** The PC has made a special study of scaring away or eliminating malevolent spirits and curses. The PC makes extra money performing exorcisms. Character classes most likely to study exorcism are monks, Bön priests, white robes, doctors and astrologers.

**Discipline Requirements:** The PC must find a master (level 3 or better) exorcist to train the PC or the PC must purchase 100 Srang worth of study materials.

**Skill Costs:** Combat 12, Crafts 10, Divination 5, Exorcism 4, Folk Knowledge 8, Medicine 8, Sorcery 12, Scholarship 12, Tantra 12, Travel 12, Weathermaking 12, Western Knowledge 20. The skill Weather Propitiation costs 5 skill points per level.

**Level Requirements:** For level 1, the PC must have at least 5 skill levels in Exorcism skills. For level 2, the PC must have at least 8 skill levels in Exorcism skills and must own either a brass phurba or a harrying horn or a ceremonial arrow.

**Special Opportunities:** At any level, the PC can get a free cursed exorcism implement (either a brass phurba, harrying horn or ceremonial arrow). These implements have been used so often that they have picked up bad karma from the spirits they

have exorcised and now emanate -1 KMA.

At level one, the PC can make +30 Srang per month doing occasional exorcisms. At level two, the PC can make +50. At level 3, the PC can make +60.

**Tantric Student-** Most people join monasteries or white hat communities if they want to study tantra. Some people, however, go to lone practitioners for training. These students are not allowed to join a monastery (e.g. an Unclean or a wanted criminal) or who don't think they could benefit from orthodox teaching methods.

**Discipline Requirements:** The PC must find a master (level 6 or better) tantric practitioner. The PC must take an oath (bound with the Oath Binding skill, see p.99) to obey the master at all times. There is always a chance that the PC will encounter a false lama, who pretends at being a tantric teacher but really knows nothing. If this happens then the PC does not get the benefits of this discipline and may be in danger when following the rituals prescribed by the lama (see p.173).

**Skill Costs:** Combat 18, Crafts 14, Divination 10, Exorcism 9, Folk Knowledge 10, Medicine 10, Sorcery 15, Scholarship 12, Tantra 5, Travel 12, Weathermaking 13, Western Knowledge 24.

**Level Requirements:** For level 1, the PC must have 5 levels in Tantra skills. For level 2, the PC must have 10 levels in Tantra skills. For level 6, the PC must have 30 levels in Tantra skills.

**Special Opportunities:** At level 6, the PC can take on students of his or her own and make up to +30 Srang per month.

**A Complex Advancement Example-** *Ngawang starts the game as a level 1 Aristocrat. Her character class and discipline are both Aristocrat. She participates in many adventures and gains a lot of XP. She spends the XP to raise attributes and get more skills. Her skill costs are based on the costs listed for Aristocrats. When she has earned 100 XP, she goes up a level and is now a level 2 Aristocrat. However, Ngawang has a thirst for power and starts buying illicit books on sorcery and practicing the rituals within. Her character class is now Aristocrat, but her Discipline is that of Sorcerer. When she gains XP, she can buy skills at the costs listed for Sorcerers, thus Sorcery skills are very cheap. However, in the course of an adventure she is forced to use one of her new sorcery skills for self defense on the streets of Lhasa. Word gets back to her aristocratic family and they disown her. Ngawang can no longer be an Aristocrat, since she does not have aristocratic rank, and she can not yet be a Sorcerer because she does not have enough skills. Her discipline is still Sorcerer, but she has no character class. She makes no income, except what she gains during game-play. Ngawang gets by, mostly by selling personal property and depending on the charity of her*

she has earned another 100 XP, though, she goes up a level as a Sorcerer. Now she is a **level 2 Aristocrat, level 1 Sorcerer**. Her character class and discipline are now both Sorcerer: she gets a Sorcerer's income and gets the skill costs of a Sorcerer. Ngawang runs in to a master Exorcist, who offers to teach her to save lives instead of taking them. Ngawang has, by this time, realized that sorcerous power is not as great as she had imagined, so she agrees. The other Sorcerers she associates with don't know she is studying exorcism and don't care, so there are no social hurdles to deal with here. At Ngawang's next level advancement, she becomes a **level 2 Aristocrat, level 1 Sorcerer, level 1 Exorcist**. She still must work as a Sorcerer to make a living, but occasionally she helps rid people of curses and malevolent spirits and makes a little extra money.

#### Bonus Point/Experience Point Conversion

3 skill pts.	= 1 BP	=10 XP
1 attribute pt.	= 1 BP	=10 XP
1 BLD/BDY/INCY pt.	= 3 BP	=30 XP
250 Srang	= 1 BP	N/A



*lamas attired for death  
tantra*



# rules

## BASIC MECHANICS

Rolls are made during game play for one specific reason: to see if a character can do something he or she is trying to do. Rolls should only be made if a doubt exists as to whether the character can do it. When a roll does need to be made, the basic form is this:

**Applicable attribute + 1d20 (one twenty sided die)  
Vs. Action Difficulty**

For instance: *Norbu wishes to climb the side of a building to get to the roof. AGY is the attribute and the GM decides that the difficulty will be 20. Norbu has an AGY of 9 and so needs to roll 11 or higher on his d20 in order to succeed. Say, however, that Norbu has special gloves that gives him +4 to climbing – now he would roll AGY (9) +4 (gloves) + 1d20 vs. 20 (now Norbu only needs to roll a 7 or better).*

**Dual Attribute Rolls-** Some rolls use two attributes. For instance, to save vs. unconsciousness a PC uses Endurance (for physical energy) and WIL (for mental energy). When using two attributes, add the attributes together and divide by half (rounding up). So, if a PC with 3 END and 12 WIL wants to save vs. unconsciousness with moderate difficulty,  $END+WIL/2$  is 7.5, rounded up it's 8, so the PC would roll  $8 + 1d20$  vs. 20.

**Opposed Rolls-** When characters are competing, two rolls are made and whoever has the best success (total minus difficulty) wins. This represents that people competing may have different levels of ability but may also be trying things of different difficulty. A character trying to do a complicated martial arts maneuver must get a much higher roll to get the same amount of success as someone trying to do a simple punch. Opposed rolls take the following form:

**Character 1's Attribute + 1d20 vs. Difficulty 1  
opposing**

**Character 2's Attribute + 1d20 vs. Difficulty 2**

**Deliberate vs. Chance-** GM's decide whether a roll is a "deliberate" or "chance" roll. This depends upon how quickly the PC must get the action done and how much chance influences the outcome of the event (as opposed to skill and talent). On a chance roll, a roll of 1 on the 1d20 means automatic failure, a roll of 20 means automatic success. If a roll could not have succeeded except for rolling a 20, the roll should be considered to have succeeded by 1. In almost all cases, fighting rolls are chance.

**Chance Actions:** An action a PC needs to get done immediately, or when an action must either succeed or fail the first time the PC does it. Example: a climbing roll where the PC leaps from one building and grabs on to the windowsill of another. No matter the AGY and climbing skills of the PC, the PC might succeed or might fail on a 1 or 20.

**Deliberate Actions:** The PC is trying to do something, but can stop if he or she is about to fail. These are typically slower actions. Example: PC is at the bottom of a wall and makes a climbing roll to see if he can climb up it. A failure here does not necessarily mean that the PC falls, it might just mean that the PC couldn't find a safe way to get up the wall. There are no automatic successes or failures here.

**Savings Rolls-** Save vs. X rolls are difficulty rolls to keep something from happening that will happen unless the roll succeeds. If a PC is making a save vs. unconsciousness then the PC will become unconscious unless he or she can meet the difficulty. A basic table of savings throws follows. See the section on using attributes for more information.

### Sample Difficulties

**0- Automatic Success**

**5- Walk down stairs briskly.** (AGY)

**10- (Easy)** Notice a mosquito on PC's skin. (AWR)

**15- (Easy-Moderate)** Paint ceiling from flimsy ladder. (AGY)

**20- (Moderate)** Win a game of mah-jongg. (INL)

**25- (Moderate-Hard)** Catch paper flying in the wind. (AGY)

**30- (Hard)** Get burned and not flinch. (WIL)

**40- (Legendary)** Lift a pony over one's head. (STH)

Save vs.	Rolled on
Disease Contraction	END
Disease Progression	END
Drug Effects	WIL (or WIL+INL)
Fall/Skid Damage	AGY
Fear	WIL
Heat Exhaustion	END
Hypothermia	END
Loss of Balance	AGY
Nausea	WIL
Pain	WIL
Paralysis	END
Physiological Addiction	END
Psychological Addiction	WIL
Shock	END
Spirit Invasion	WIL
Unconsciousness	WIL+END

**Opposed Savings Rolls-** Occasionally, a PC will be required to make opposed savings rolls. This means that even if the PC does meet the difficulty, the PC will fail if he or she does not beat the difficulty by an amount equal to or better than the amount the opponent succeeded by. Example: *Pema hits Wangdu with a knockout strike. Pema beat her difficulty by 5. Now Wangdu not only has to beat the normal difficulty for a save vs. unconsciousness, he has to beat it by 5 or more to avoid going unconscious.*

## USING ATTRIBUTES

### AGILITY (AGY)

Use AGY for athletic type rolls: catching things, throwing things, blocking things (other than strikes), skipping rope, etc.

**Balance-** Use AGY for rolls to keep one's balance: walking a tightrope, moving on ice-covered streets, racing down stairs, etc.

**Climbing-** Use AGY for climbing. See table for sample difficulties.

#### Climbing Difficulties (with no equipment)

- 10 (Easy) Tree with low branches.
- 20 (Moderate) Rocky cliff face.
- 30 (Hard) Sheer cliff face.
- 40 (Legendary) Glacial ice.

**Landing-** Characters can use AGY to save vs. falling or skidding damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.152). The first point of damage can be saved against at 10 difficulty, the second point at 20 difficulty, the third at 30, etc.

#### Prowling difficulties

- 10 (Easy) Crawling through a field of tall grass with a wind to cover noises and an unsuspecting person nearby.
- 20 (Moderate) Sneaking up behind someone who isn't expecting anything.
- 30 (Difficult) Crawling in a gutter at night with several people searching for you.
- 40 (Legendary) Avoiding someone who is searching for you by staying directly behind them (may also require SPD based rolls).

**Prowling-** AGY is also used when the PC is attempting to move through an area while not being noticed. The difficulty is based on several factors: the number of people and their proximity, how distracted or attentive they are, the amount of cover and whether there is darkness or a weather condition obscuring the PC. The person being prowled against should get an opposed awareness roll.

### AWARENESS (AWR)

**Noticing-** Use AWR when characters need to notice a detail too small to be included in the GM's description of the surroundings (e.g. the man standing next to you has a small buzzard feather in his hair). AWR should not be used as a substitute for directed attention. If a player says "I'm looking carefully at the man next to me," he or she should be given every detail about that person, with no AWR roll needed. AWR is also used to save vs. prowling (see above).

**Manipulation-** An AWR roll is also made when something is trying to manipulate the PC's mind (typically this will be a malevolent spirit). The normal difficulty is 20. If the PC's success is better than the manipulator's success, the PC realizes that he or she is being manipulated, and now can try to resist the manipulation (usually with a WILL roll).

### CHARM (CHM)

**Acting-** Use CHM whenever a PC needs to put on some sort of act to fool other people.

#### Acting difficulties

- 10 (Easy) Making people think the PC is bored.
- 20 (Moderate) Making people think the PC is in pain.
- 30 (Difficult) Making people think the PC is not scared.
- 40 (Legendary) Making people think the PC is a genius.

**First Impressions-** CHM rolls can also be made to "modify" an NPC's reaction to the PC. The most common usage is to try to make people like the PC. A PC meeting a stranger who beats 20 on a CHM roll comes off as slightly more confident, friendly, intelligent and likeable than he or she would have otherwise. Note that this is "first impressions" only. After the PC has had more interaction with an NPC, the PC's actions and words become what the PC is judged by. Instead of trying to come off as likeable, PCs can also try to modify their first impressions in other ways, e.g. to come off as tough/mean/scary or as lowly/loser/wimp/nothing-to-be-worried-about.

**Persuasion-** CHM is used to persuade NPCs to agree with an argument. First, PCs must roleplay arguing his or her case. Next, the GM decides the difficulty of the persuasion based on the logical strength of the argument. A very reasonable argument, which makes a lot of sense, might have a difficulty of 10. A very improbable argument, that asks the listener to make a lot of assumptions, might have a difficulty of 30. Note: Don't even bother rolling if an argument is so strong or so weak that it is ridiculous to believe that someone would or wouldn't agree with it.

**Seduction-** Use CHM for seduction rolls. A successful roll means that the target wants to have sex with the PC but it does not mean that the target will have sex with the PC. How the target deals with these desires, and whether or not he or she acts on them, is up to the GM. The normal difficulty for a sexually healthy adult who has a preference for the PC's gender is 20 (moderate). GMs can also force players to make "passive seduction" rolls to see if a person is attracted to the PC even without the PC trying to seduce the person. Passive seduction rolls typically have +10 difficulty.

## ENDURANCE (END)

**Pooled Endurance-** Endurance is also used as a measurement of the amount of energy a PC has to expend. The PC starts with a "pool" of points equal to his or her END. Any of the following removes 1 point from this pool:

**Exertion:** Any round in which the PC is doing some strenuous physical action, including combat or anything that uses at least half the PC's STH or SPD.

**Oxygen Deprivation:** Any round in which the PC can't or won't take in oxygen.

**Mortal Injuries:** Any round in which the PC is mortally wounded (is at 0 BLD, see p.151).

Other miscellaneous things (e.g. toxins) can also remove pooled END.

When Pooled END reaches 0, the PC is incapacitated. The PC can not stand, can not make fighting actions or reactions and can not initiate any kind of communication. The PC will fail at any roll involving AGY, END, SPD or STH.

Example: *Tsong has 12 END. He was just shot (bringing his BLD to 0) and he is in a room filled with mustard gas. He is holding his breath and running as fast as he can (he hopes to jump out of the window). Each round he loses 3 pooled END, which*

*means he has 4 actions before he becomes incapacitated. After two rounds he gets hit in the head with a rock and must make a save vs. unconsciousness. He rolls 1d20 plus an average of his WIL and END (his END is currently 6).*

**Fatigue-** END can also be used more slowly by activities which do not use half the PC's STH or SPD but are tiring nonetheless (e.g. jogging, manual labor, even standing for long period of time). Example: *Lhamo has a SPD of 10. If he runs at 5 or higher he will lose 1 END per round, so he decides to run at SPD 4 (an easy jog, for him). The GM decides that he will lose 1 pooled END for every 5 minutes running at this speed.*

**Rest-** When Pooled END is lost to strenuous activity, it returns at 1 point per round when the PC is resting. Pooled END lost to oxygen deprivation returns at 1 point per round when the PC begins receiving oxygen again. Pooled END lost to fatigue returns at the same rate it was lost (e.g. if Lhamo loses 4 END by jogging for 20 minutes, he will regain it with 20 minutes of rest). If a PC ever reaches 0 END (is incapacitated) that PC is -1 END for the next 24 hours. If a PC reaches 0 END several times, the PC will be very tired (have multiple penalties) until the next day.

**Health-** END is used to represent the body's general health. It is used to save vs. things like hypothermia, heat exhaustion, cardiac arrest (heart attack), shock and (along with WIL) unconsciousness. See Other Types of Damage (p.152) and Symptoms/Effects (p.152) for more.

**Disease-** END is also used to save vs. disease contraction and progression. See Diseases (p.xx) for more.

## INTELLIGENCE (INL)

**Speed of Thought-** Among other things, INL represents how quickly a PC thinks (as opposed to AWR, which can measure how quickly a PC notices things, or AGY which represents how fast the PC's body reacts). A GM might sometimes ask PCs and NPCs to make opposed INL rolls to find out who figures out something first. INL (along with AWR) is used to determine initiative in combat (see p.XX).

**Skills-** Intelligence is used to perform intellectual or creative skills. See Skills (p.XX) for more. In Brief: roll INL +1d20 +4/skill level above the 1<sup>st</sup> vs. the difficulty for whatever the PC is trying to do.

# KARMA (KMA)

## What is Karma?

When people's thoughts or actions cause suffering to happen, things will tend to happen to those people that will cause them to suffer. Similarly, if people reduce suffering, they will tend to have good things happen to them.

Karma is like a magnetic field: it is an invisible tendency that draws bad or good things to a person. Karma doesn't always effect the person who created the karma. The good and bad things can happen to someone near the person, someone who just happened to be in the way. The effect is like a field of karma that emanates from a person. Luck gets worse, or greater, the closer you get to a person.

Karma does not just exist in sentient beings. It can build up in inanimate objects that were used to create or ease suffering. Some karma can remain in corpses or it can even build up as pearl-like concretions (rinsils, see p.26). Karma can spontaneously form in to a sentient being. In this realm, these beings are malevolent spirits (see "The Origin of Spirits", see p.184).

In the game, karma is recorded as a single number for each individual and object. If the karma is mostly good, it will be a positive number. If the karma is primarily bad, it will be negative. Doing good things adds to karma, while doing bad things reduces it.

Karma is **effect, not intention**. It doesn't matter what the PC was trying to do, all that matters is that beings were prevented from suffering or were caused to suffer.

Example: *A PC tries to stab someone and ends up lancing an infection that would have killed the person. The PC gains good +5 KMA.*

Karma is the same whether **you do it to yourself, or do it to someone else**. If you make yourself suffer, you'll gain just as much bad karma as if you make someone else suffer.

Example: *In a fit of guilt, a PC cuts off his own left hand. The PC has caused a person to be mutilated and gains -3 KMA.*

**Sufferings is in the mind.** PCs gain good or bad karma by easing or causing suffering even if that suffering is purely mental. A PC can gain bad karma just by having a painful emotion (hatred, strong desire, sadness, fear). Similarly, physical actions only effect karma so much as they effect mental suffering.

Example: *A PC pokes out the eyes of a wise Bön priest. The priest is advanced enough on the path of enlightenment that he doesn't let the pain and disability make him suffer. The PC does not lose KMA.*

**Future karma** is equal to the likelihood times the amount of KMA of the outcome. If a 4 KMA event has a 1 in 2 chance of happening in the future, then the PC gains 2 points.

Example: *A PC buries a land mine and leaves. The GM figures there is a 1 in 5 chance it will kill someone someday (-5 KMA / 5 = -1 KMA) and a 1 in 2 chance it will mutilate someone (-2 / 2 = -1 KMA). The PC gains -2 KMA.*

If an event **both causes and eases suffering**, add up the good and bad karma to calculate whether the act gave good, bad or neutral karma in total.

Example: *The PC's murder a serial killer. They receive -5 KMA for taking a human life, but they also gain +10 KMA for the potential future lives they saved. The PCs gain +5 KMA in total.*

**Less culpability means less karma.** A PC who immediately caused the thing takes full karma damage, but people who merely contributed take less karma damage.

Example: *One PC slaughters a yak, another PC provided the knife and a third pays for some of the meat. The PC who did the killing would take the full karma damage, the one who provided the knife and paid for the meat take less damage (in this case, negligible damage).*

## CURRENT VS. BASE KARMA

In Brief- Current KMA returns to base, 1 per day.

The PC's base KMA represents the sum total of all the events, from this life or the last, that have not yet been punished or rewarded. Current Karma represents temporary fluctuations based on the PC's recent actions. The relationship between the two is like the relationship between pooled END and base END: the current KMA is what the PC has right now; the base is what the PC will eventually return to.

When current Karma is more or less than base karma, it will return to normal at a rate of one per day.

## CHANGING CURRENT KMA

In Brief- Doing good or bad things changes current KMA. Effects, not intentions matter. Possible future effects give less KMA. Helping Buddhism gives a lot of KMA. Taking an oath can give KMA.

Characters can increase their KMA by doing compassionate acts and decrease it by doing acts which cause suffering in the world.

Anything that helps or hinders **Buddhist practice** or teaching will have a strong effect on karma. The reason is because Buddhist practice is the only way a being can be permanently freed from suffering. Destroying a holy book can cause as much suffering as gouging out someone's eye, although destroying the book has its effect over many lifetimes.

Example: *A PC kills a lama. In addition to the -5 KMA caused by killing a human, the PC suffers another -8 KMA because of all the Buddhist teachings she has deprived people of.*

**Killing any being** causes bad karma, because it causes the being to suffer (both while they are dying and in the bardo period after death) and also if it causes grief or fear to other beings. Killing a human is even worse because it robs a person of one of the rare few incarnations where it is possible to study Buddhist teachings.

Example: *A PC kills a rampaging migyu to save the life of a human. The PC suffers -4 KMA for killing an animal but gains +5 KMA for saving a human.*

Future karma is **awarded at the end of the adventure**. Karma for things a PC has actually done (e.g. killing someone, spinning a prayer wheel) can be given as they happen. Karma for future effects of PC's actions should be awarded when the PCs have concluded their affairs for this adventure. This gives PCs a chance to obviate their previous actions, and it doesn't give away information to PCs about the effects of their actions that they shouldn't realistically have.

Example: *At the end of the adventure, the GM thinks about the PCs' actions, their varying levels of culpability and the likely future effects of their actions. In the end the GM decides to award each PC +5 KMA.*

### Current KMA and Most Likely Rebirth

What rebirth one will achieve is not solely based on amount of good or bad karma. Strength of will, performance of the bardo rites, random chance and the particular types of things a person has done can effect rebirths. However, the most common rebirths, according to current KMA upon death, are:

-15 or worse	Hell Being
-5 to -15	Hungry Ghost
5 to -5	Animal
5 to 20	Human
20 or better	God

### Some Karma Causing Actions

#### +1 KMA or -1 KMA

Cause lust, anger or envy or help someone overcome lust, anger or envy.

Help support a holy person (ascetic, revenant, holy pilgrim, monk) or hinder a holy person.

Give someone a gift they enjoy or take away a person's prized possession.

Insult someone or tell a lie to someone.

#### +2 KMA or -2 KMA

Create or destroy a beautiful piece of artwork.

Feed the hungry or cause people to go hungry.

Give a large contribution to a monastery.

#### +3 KMA or -3 KMA

Make a pilgrimage to a holy place.

Help a killer reform or turn someone in to a killer.

Mutilate someone or save someone from being mutilated.

Print or destroy a common holy book.

#### +4 KMA or -4 KMA

Cause or cure a debilitating or possibly fatal illness.

Save the life of an animal or kill an animal.

Torture a being or save a being from torture.

#### +5 KMA or -5 KMA

Bind a dharmapala to an oath to be good or free a dharmapala from an oath to be good.

Cause a person to abandon a vow or cause a person to take a vow (vows include nonviolence, celibacy, poverty and vegetarianism).

Convert someone to Buddhism or cause someone to stray from Buddhism.

Save a human life or kill a human.

Save or destroy the only copy of a holy book.

### CHANGING BASE KARMA

In Brief- 1d20 plus difference between base and current karma vs. 20, if successful then base KMA changes by 1.

At the end of an adventure, after the final KMA awards/penalties have been given, if any PCs' current KMA is different from their base KMA, the PCs should roll to see if the base KMA is changed.

The PC rolls 1d20 plus the difference between base and current KMA (always a positive number). If the result is more than 20, the PCs base KMA changes by one, moving one point towards current KMA. Such a roll can only be made once per adventure.

Karma can also be raised using experience points in the same way as any other attribute.

Example: *Norbu starts an adventure with a base KMA of 5 and a current KMA of 2. The adventure takes 2 days, each day his one of his lost current KMA returns. At the end of the adventure, the GM awards the Norbu +7 KMA. Norbu now has 11 current KMA, 6 more than his base. Norbu rolls 1d20 + 6. He rolls a 15, so his total is 21. Norbu's base KMA is increased to 6. His current KMA remains 11.*

## MAXIMUM KARMA

In Brief- Max. base KMA is 100 divided by num. of attachments.

A PC's base KMA can not be raised higher than the max. cap for that person. The max. cap is equal to 100 divided by the number of attachments.

Number of Attachments	Max. Cap. for KMA
0	None
1	100
2	50
3	33
4	25
5	20
6	17
7	14

## KARMA EFFECTS

In Brief- People/things emanate a modifier of one-tenth KMA. This modifier effects the current KMA of others, helps with malevolent or benevolent magic, and if negative it attracts malevolent spirits.

**Emanation-** When people or objects have a lot of good or bad karma, they emanate a field that effects the karma of people around them. This effect only occurs when people are in the area, and goes away instantly when they leave.

People and objects emanate plus or minus 1 KMA for each 10 positive or negative karma points the person or object has, rounded down. So, if a Sorcerer has -23 KMA, everyone around the Sorcerer is at a -2 KMA penalty. The radius of an emanation field is equal to a quarter mile (.4 km.) per point of emanation. So, the sorcerer's bad karma could hurt people half a mile away.

**Magic-** When a PC does magic that is clearly malevolent (e.g. trying to kill innocent people) or clearly benevolent (trying to remove an illness for an innocent person) that person gets a bonus or minus equal to that person's KMA emanation. If a magical ceremony is more neutral (e.g. helping people by hurting someone, or saving the life of someone who would go on to cause suffering) it does not get a bonus or penalty.

**Malevolent Spirits-** Spirits are attracted to people with bad karma. Any spirit within the person's KMA emanation range will find themselves attracted to the person. When malevolent spirits try to attack or invade a person, they get a bonus or minus equal to that person's KMA emanation.

## Karma in Objects

**Human Remains-** When a human dies, half the person's karma stays with the corpse. So, if a lama with 40 KMA dies, that lama's remains will have 20 KMA and will emanate 2 KMA.

**Destroying Objects-** If an object with a lot of KMA is destroyed, the karma is released and attaches itself to everyone in the area. The damage is twice that of emanation: 2 per 10 KMA (with a range of one quarter mile, or .4 km., per point of damage). This is not emanation, it is an actual change to current KMA that remains even after the people leave the area.

## MIRACLES

In Brief- People with very high karma can break the laws of physics.

Very high KMA can allow a character to perform miracles. The character is so close to enlightenment, so close to complete freedom from the illusion of reality, that the PC can bypass the laws of physics. No skill is necessary. Miracles can only be done for completely compassionate purposes (GMs should be able to trust their players to reveal a PC's true intentions). Miracles are rolled for on KMA + 1d20. Miracles can not change people's bodies or minds against their will, yet they can indirectly effect people. For example, a PC could not turn an enemy in to a pig, but could cause an earthquake that causes a building to fall on an enemy. Miracles cannot free people from KMA or attachments (if this were possible than buddhas could just go around making everyone enlightened). The difficulty of a miracle is based on how extreme the violation of natural laws is. Some common miracles are:

Miracle	Difficulty
See in the dark or while blinded	40
Feel someone's true emotions	45
See invisible beings	50
Reincarnate as a tulku	55
Read another's mind	60
Talk with animals	60
Heal someone of an injury or disease	60
Glow with light	65
Teleport	70
Live without food	70
Longevity	70
Transmute objects	75
Burst in to flames but not get hurt	75
Shrink or grow to giant sizes	80
Invisibility	80
Look like another person	80
Cause earthquakes	80



## SPEED (SPD)

**Leaping-** SPD is used for leaping rolls. The difficulty for making a leap is the distance, in feet, times two (or meters times 7). A ten foot leap would have 20 difficulty. Height differences, inclines, etc. can increase the difficulty.

**Running-** SPD also sets the maximum speed the character can run. For convenience's sake, we use SPD as its own measurement of speed and we rate everything in the game (e.g. cars, people, tidal waves) in terms of SPD. If you need to determine miles per hour, it is approximately half of SPD.

## STRENGTH (STH)

STH is used in opposed strength rolls, for instance, if two people are grabbing for an object.

**Strength Feats-** Strength is used for lifting heavy objects or any other "feat" of strength. Assuming a character can get a good grip on an object, the difficulty to lift the object should be the weight in lbs. divided by 10 (or kg./4), so a 200 lb. object would be 20 difficulty to lift. Some example STH feats:

### STH Feat Difficulties

- 10 (Easy) Prying open a nut.
- 20 (Moderate) Breaking a wooden door
- 30 (Difficult) Pushing a horse around.
- 40 (Legendary) Pulling apart a cheap padlock

**Encumbrance-** STH also determines the amount that the PC can carry on his or her person without suffering a detriment to attributes. A PC's "Base Encumbrance" is equal to his or her STH times 5 lbs. (2.25 kg.). If the PC is carrying his or her base encumbrance, well distributed over the body, the PC is at -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 Pooled END per hour. For every 10 lbs. over Base Encumbrance, the PC is at an additional -1 AGY, -1 SPD and loses 1 additional Pooled END per hour. Example: *Norbu has a STH of 7. His base encumbrance is 35 lbs (7 x 5lbs). If Norbu is carrying 25 lbs., so long as it is packed well, he suffers from no minuses. At 35 lbs. he is at -1 to AGY and SPD and loses 1 Pooled END every hour. If Norbu is carrying 85 lbs. (35 lbs. plus 50 lbs, or 5x10 lbs. over his Base Encumbrance) he is at -6 to SPD and AGY and loses 6 Pooled END per hour.*

## WILLPOWER (WIL)

**Mind Control-** Will is used for opposed rolls involving attempts at mental manipulation (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the attack roll of the

being) or brainwashing (1d20 + WIL vs. 20 opposing the skill roll of the brainwasher). In order to resist mental manipulation, the PC must first realize that some person or thing is trying to manipulate him or her (see AWR, p.145).

**Resistance-** Will is used to resist anything that would cause the PC to act (or not act) against his or her will. PCs can make WIL bases saves to resist, among other things: pain, nausea, fear, amnesia, hallucinations, delusions and euphoria. See p.152 for a list of drug/disease/poison symptoms and the consequences for failing saves against them.

**Pain-** One of the most common things PCs will have to resist is pain. Pain comes in two types:

**Shocking Pain:** This is pain that comes on suddenly (sometimes unexpectedly). It only lasts a second but it is so strong that it can cause the PC to be unable to act. A PC who fails to save by 1-9 loses his or her next action. A PC who fails by 10 or more loses his or her next action and reaction. Losing an action and reaction means that the PC cannot act and cannot defend himself or herself for a round (see Actions and Reactions, p.159).

**Distracting Pain:** This is pain that comes on more slowly and stays around longer, causing the PC to be distracted from anything he or she tries to do. When a PC fails a save vs. distracting pain, the PC suffers from a penalty equal to the amount he or she failed by. This penalty applies to any roll the PC has conscious control over (e.g. it would apply to an attempt to catch a ball, but would not apply to a save vs. disease contraction). Example: *Wangyal fails a save vs. distracting pain by 3. Wangyal now suffers from -3 to skill rolls, actions, reactions and anything else he has conscious control over.*

**Drug Cravings-** WIL is also used to by PCs who are addicted to drugs save vs. drug cravings (the difficulty based on the drug). See Drugs (p.153) for more.

## HEALTH ATTRIBUTES

In Brief- Blades remove BLD. Crushing removes BDY (then double BLD). 0 BLD = mortally wounded, but PC can keep going until INCY or Pooled END = 0.

The three health attributes, BLD, BDY and INCY are used whenever a character takes any kind of damage which moves the PC progressively closer to death. Anything that cripples, disfigures or causes pain but does not move the PC significantly closer to death is not considered "damage" as the term is used when dealing with health attributes. The two main types of damage are blunt and bladed.

**Blunt Damage-** Blunt damage comes from anything that does crushing damage to the PC's tissues, like a club or a punch. Things like falling, being crushed or being rammed by a vehicle do blunt damage. Blunt damage is subtracted from BDY. Once all BDY is gone, blunt damage is removed from BLD but the effect is doubled. Example: *A person with 2 BDY is hit with something that does 5 blunt damage, all 2 BDY are taken away and the character suffers 6 damage to BLD (the remaining 3, times 2).*

**Bladed Damage-** Bladed damage comes from anything which cuts, pierces or spills blood, including knives, guns, barbed wire, skidding, etc. Bladed damage goes straight to BLD. Any other type of damage which causes the PC to lose blood, be unable to take in oxygen, or does damage to the heart and lungs also do damage to BLD.

### Damage and Medical Effects

These are some sample medical effects one might observe in a PC who has taken bladed or blunt damage during combat:

#### 1 blunt

A few ribs broken, a few internal organs bruised.

#### 1 bladed

A large or deep cut which did not pierce internal organs but caused significant blood loss.

#### 3 blunt

Several bones broken, internal organs badly damaged and bleeding heavily.

#### 3 bladed

Internal organs lacerated, heavy blood loss.

#### 6 blunt

Crushed skull or broken spine, massive internal bleeding.

#### 6 bladed

Major arteries severed, internal organs pierced, massive blood loss.

#### 9 blunt

Most bones broken, most internal organs destroyed, tissues pierced by jagged bone fragments.

#### 9 bladed

Vital organs cut in half, blood spurting.

**0 BLD-** When a PC reaches 0 BLD it means he or she has been mortally wounded and without medical intervention he or she will eventually die. Even at 0 BLD or below, a PC can still do things, even fight, for a limited period of time. END effects how long the PC can continue to act, and INCY (Incapacity) effects how much more damage a PC can take before being immediately incapacitated.

**Incapacity-** If a PC has Incapacity and END left, the PC can still act normally, even if the PC has been mortally wounded.

When damage reduces a PC's BLD to 0, any further damage is done to INCY. INCY represents the character's last reserves of energy to act even after being mortally wounded. All further blunt damage does double damage to INCY. When a PC reaches 0 INCY it means he or she is incapacitated. An incapacitated person can not stand, make fighting actions or reactions, or initiate any kind of communication. An incapacitated PC may make moderate (20 difficulty) WIL

rolls to be able to do very simple things (e.g. answer a question, crawl away from a fire) but cannot do anything that would require a roll (e.g. perform a skill).

As soon as a PC reaches 0 BLD, he or she loses 1 point of pooled END every round (in addition to END lost from other activities/circumstances). When pooled END reaches 0, the PC is incapacitated.

After being incapacitated, the PC has his or her INCY + END number of rounds before brain death occurs and no known means can revive the PC.

## ARMOR

In Brief- AR is how much success a strike needs to bypass armor, PR is subtracted from any strike that hits the armor.

A piece of armor has two factors:

**Armor Rating (AR)** represents how much of the body the armor covers (or how difficult it is to hit an unprotected spot on the PC).

**Protection Rating (PR)** represents how much damage each type the armor can absorb.

Example: *Yangkyi has a leather vest with an AR of 7 and a PR of 2 bladed. A strike (a combat action, see p.159) with a success of 7 or below will hit the armor and 2 bladed damage will be subtracted from the damage the strike would normally do. If the strike was with a weapon that does 4 bladed and 2 blunt damage, it would only do 2 bladed and 2 blunt damage. A strike with a success of 8 and above would hit an unprotected spot and do full damage.*

AR of 20 represents total coverage and no amount of success can bypass the armor.

**Multiple Layers-** When a PC is wearing multiple layers of armor, each layer acts upon the damage independently. One strike may hit one piece of armor and lose some of its damage, hit another piece of armor and lose more, then bypass a third piece of armor and not lose any more. In order for damage to reach a PC, it must either bypass or cut through every piece of armor the PC is wearing.

**Armor Piercing-** Some weapons and types of damage cut through armor better than they cut through other things (like people). An armor piercing bullet may be listed as doing: "5 bladed damage (pierces as 10)". When subtracting damage absorbed by the armor, treat the damage as if it is 10. When the damage gets to the PC, however, it can't do any more than 5. Note that poisons on a bladed object do full damage if any bladed damage gets through to the victim.

**Non-Damaging Attacks-** There are attacks which do not do damage, but do things like cause pain, cripple joints, knock people out, etc. Armor can protect from these attacks too. To determine whether armor protects from such an attack, figure out how much damage the attack would have done if it were a normal strike, then figure out if any of that damage would have gotten through. If none would have gotten through, then the non-damaging attack has no effect. Also, some attacks have a minimum damage (e.g. a knockout strike requires an attack that would do at least 2 blunt damage if it was a normal strike) and if armor reduces the “would be” damage to less than this then the knockout strike doesn’t work.

Example: *Karma is trying to shoot Dorjee in the testicles (a pain/stun strike) with a long bow. Dorjee is wearing leather armor that has AR 7, PR 2 bladed 2 blunt. Karma’s difficulty for the strike is 25, and he gets a 30, meaning he succeeds by 5. This success is less than the AR of the armor, so the armor’s PR is subtracted. Had this been a normal strike, the bow would have done 3 bladed damage (pierces armor as 5). So, 3 bladed PR is subtracted from 5 bladed (the pierces as) damage. 3 bladed damage would have gotten through had this been a normal strike. This is more than enough for the pain/stun attack to effect Dorjee.*

## DRUGS, DISEASE AND POISONS

### SYMPTOMS/EFFECTS

A few drugs, diseases and poisons only do damage to BLD, just like a knife. The majority, however, have symptoms that vary with the amount taken (or how bad the victim has the disease).

Some symptoms are simply annoying and can not be saved against (e.g. red puffy skin).

Some symptoms reduce attributes and can not be saved (e.g. a disease might cause “exhaustion” and reduce STH and SPD by 5).

Some symptoms can be saved against (e.g. a poison might cause Vomiting, which can be saved against at 10 difficulty). A failure might be annoying, incapacitating, or deadly.

### Other Types of Damage

**Burn:** When a person is burned, 4 effects happen:

- BLD damage (1 point per point of burn damage).
- Distracting Pain (save vs. with WIL+1d20 vs. 10/pt. of damage).
- Shock (save vs. with END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage).
- Increased chance of infection (-5 to save vs. disease contraction/point of damage).

**Cold:** Make saves vs. hypothermia hourly. 1<sup>st</sup> failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

**Crippling Damage:** ½ damage will make a hand unusable or badly damage a foot. 1 damage will make an arm or leg unusable. See Crippling Attack (p.159) for more.

**Dropped Objects:** Do blunt damage equal to the weight (divided by 10 lbs. or 4 kg.) times number of stories. Example: a 20 lb. object dropped 5 stories does 10 blunt damage (20 / 10 x 5 = 10).

**Electricity:** When harmful levels of electricity run through a person, four effects happen:

- Paralysis (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20/point of damage), paralysis only lasts while the electricity is running.
- Unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 10 per point of damage)
- Cardiac Arrest (END+1d20 vs. 5/point of damage), see Symptoms/Effects (this page).
- Burn Damage: 1 point of burn damage for every 4 points of electrical damage.

**Explosion:** Explosions can do one, two or all three of the following:

- Incendiary Damage (same as Burn damage)
- Concussion Damage (same as Blunt damage)
- Shrapnel (same as Bladed damage, the amount is usually expressed as a dice roll and typically pierces armor)

**END Damage:** Some toxins do END damage. Every point of damage takes away 1 pooled END. When pooled END is at 0, damage is done to BLD.

**Falling:** 2 blunt damage for each story fallen (a story is ~10 ft.). Armor cannot protect from this damage. See also Landing, p.145.

**Heat:** Make saves vs. heat exhaustion hourly. 1<sup>st</sup> failure halves all attributes, each additional failure does 1 BLD damage.

**Hunger:** For every two days without food: -½ BLD, -4 END.

**Radiation:** For every point of damage: 1 BLD damage, Vomiting (10), Headache (10), fatigue (-2 END), confusion (-1 INL, -1 AWR). Effects develop over 24 hours. BLD damage is permanent (bone marrow is destroyed). Strong likelihood (25% per point of damage) of developing cancer and cataracts within the next year.

**Ragged:** Like bladed damage, but with an increased chance of infection after the battle (see p.163). For each point of ragged damage taken, PC gets -5 to save vs. disease contraction.

**Skidding:** For each 20 SPD the PC is moving at: 1 bladed and 1 blunt damage. Less if the ground is very soft, more if it is rocky.

**Sleep Deprivation:** For every 24 hours without sleep: -3 to AWR, CHM, INL and END. Must save vs. hallucinations and delusions (3 difficulty per 24 hours). Must make saves vs. unconsciousness (15 difficulty per 24 hours) when not doing anything.

**Strangulation/Loss of Oxygen:** PC loses 1 pooled END per round (in addition to pooled END being lost for other reasons). The PC can not regain pooled END by resting. When END reaches 0, PC loses 1 BLD per round. When the PC can breathe normally again, lost END and BLD returns 1 per round.

**Thirst:** ½ BLD damage per day.

The following lists some common symptoms and effects, what attribute is used to save against them, and what happens to a PC who fails such a save:

**Anterograde Amnesia (INL):** Cannot remember anything about his or her past.

**Cardiac Arrest (END):** 1 BLD damage per round.

**Coma (END):** Unconscious and unable to waken. With a failure of 10+ the user suffers cardiac arrest.

**Delusions (WIL):** Believes, without reservation, some thought or idea (e.g. I am impervious to bullets).

**Dysphoria (WIL):** Overwhelmed by unhappiness/depression and unable to initiate any activity.

**Euphoria (WIL):** Overwhelmed by pleasure and unable to initiate any activity.

**Hallucinations (WIL):** Senses things which he or she is unable to distinguish from real sensations.

**Headache (WIL):** -1 to all rolls per point of failure.

**Insomnia (WIL):** Sleep deprivation damage (see p.152) as 1 night without sleep.

**Obfuscating Hallucinations (WIL):** Unable to see, hear or feel real stimuli because of hallucinations.

**Panic (WIL):** Does anything to escape danger. With failure of 10+ the user makes random counterproductive actions.

**Paralysis (WIL):** Unable to move. With a failure of 10+ user is unable to breathe.

**Pulmonary Arrest (END):** 1 END damage per round, then 1 BLD damage per round.

**Retrograde Amnesia (INL):** Will not later remember anything that happened during intoxication.

**Seizures (WIL):** Loses consciousness for 1d6 minutes, loses all pooled END. With a failure of 5+ there is possible physical injury. With failure of 10+ there is brain damage (-1 INL, AWR or AGY).

**Shock (END):** END = 0, all other attributes halved. 1 BLD damage per minute.

**Stupor (WIL):** Unable to think, remember, concentrate or make decisions (INL = 0, WIL = 0).

**Sudden Amnesia (WIL):** Forgets where he or she is and what's going on, takes 1d6 rounds to remember.

**Unconsciousness (END/WIL):** The person is unconscious for 1 round per point of failure unless specified otherwise.

**Vomiting (WIL):** -20 to all other actions while vomiting.

## DRUGS

A drug can have different effects based upon when and how it is used. A drug can have:

**Normal Dosage Effects:** a normal person taking one dose of the drug.

**Overdose Effects:** the effects of taking 2 times, 4 times and/or 8 times the normal dose.

**Withdrawal Effects:** the effects when the drug exits the user's system.

**Long-Term Effects:** the general effects of the drug for a habitual user.

**Long-Term Withdrawal Effects:** the effects of withdrawal after habitual use.

**Tolerance:** how much more a long term user must use to get the same effect.

**Addiction-** Drugs can be addictive in one or both of the following ways:

**Physiologically Addictive:** Using the drug enough times changes the chemical balance of the brain and body such that the drug is needed for normal functioning. Without the drug, the brain does not work right and addicts are driven to take more of the drug in order to "fix" things.

**Psychologically Addictive:** The addict's personality adjusts to the effects of the drug such that he or she can no longer handle reality (day to day life) without the drug.

**Saving vs. Addiction-** Each addictive drug lists the addiction difficulty for physiological and/or psychological addiction. To this difficulty is added the number of doses the person has taken without a significant break (of at least 24 hours). Saves are thus made as follows:

**WIL + 1d20 vs. Psychological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken**

**END + 1d20 vs. Physiological Addiction Difficulty + number of doses taken**

**Cravings-** Cravings first appear within 24 hours after an addicted character tries to stop using. PCs who are both psychologically and physiologically addicted must deal with 2 separate cravings. Cravings are saved against on WIL+1d20 vs. the Craving Difficulty of the drug. On the first successful save, the PC will not have another craving for 1 day. For each subsequent success, the time between cravings doubles. Some drugs do have special "triggers" which can cause a craving at any time, no matter how long it's been since the last craving.

Physiological cravings go away after a number of days equal to the Craving Difficulty. Psychological cravings never go away, they just get farther and farther apart.

If a PC fails a craving, he or she must do anything within his or her power to seek out the drug. If the PC gets a hold of the drug, he or she will use it immediately and will be back to a one day period between cravings. If a PC is searching for his or her drug of choice but cannot find it, the PC can make a new save vs. cravings every hour to give up searching.

**Example:** *Kalden is trying to ingratiate himself to Chinese officers in order to steal secret plans from them. They insist that he smoke opium with them. Kalden smokes eight doses of opium over the course of three days. When he stops smoking (because he has fled the Chinese encampment) the GM requires that he roll a save vs. psychological and a save vs. physiological addiction. Both the saves are at 9 (1 physiological and psychological difficulty +8 consecutive doses). Kalden makes 2 WIL +1d20 rolls. Kalden fails the psychological roll. Within 24 hours, Kalden experiences a craving for opium. He decides to resist, and makes a roll of 1d20 + WIL vs.20 (the craving difficulty of opium). He succeeds and will not experience another craving for 2 days. If he succeeds again, he will not have another craving for four days, then eight days, then sixteen days, etc.*

## DISEASE

**Contraction-** When a PC is exposed to a disease, the PC must make a save vs. Disease Contraction (END + 1d20 vs. the Disease Contraction Rating of the disease). Diseases will have different contraction ratings depending upon how the PC is exposed. Breathing the same air as an infected person may have a Contraction Rating of 10 while sharing body fluids with a person may have a Contraction Rating of 40. If the PC makes the save, he or she does not catch the disease. If the PC fails then the PC has the disease at 1x symptoms.

**Progression-** Once a PC has a disease, the PC must fight to keep the disease from getting worse. Each disease has a Disease Progression Speed, which represents how quickly the disease will get worse. If the disease progression speed is 8 hours, then every 8 hours the PC must save vs. Disease Progression. Each disease has its own Disease Progression Rating (the difficulty to save vs. disease progression). For every consecutive failure to save vs. disease progression, the symptoms increase by 1 level (1x to 2x, 2x to 3x, etc.). For each increase in level, the severity of the symptoms increases.

*Example: If a disease causes Vomiting at 10 difficulty, the a person with the disease at 3x will suffer from Vomiting at 30 difficulty (10 times 3).*

*If the PC succeeds at a save vs. progression, the disease is "halted": it can no longer progress. From this point onward, a failed save vs. progression has no effect, but a successful save means the symptoms level is reduced (3x to 2x, 2x to 1x). When the symptoms level reaches 0, the PC is cured.*

**Treatments-** Treatments can do two things. Some treatments help the PC fight the disease (give the PC plusses to save vs. disease progression). Other treatments only help reduce the severity of symptoms.

**Immunity-** Once a PC has defeated a disease, the PC has immunity to it, and gets +10 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from the same disease. The PC also gets +6 to save vs. disease contraction and progression from closely related diseases.

**Example:** *Deki was stabbed in a battle and the wound was exposed to an infection. The disease is as follows:*

*Disease Contraction Rating: 20*

*Disease Progression Rating: 20*

*Disease Progression Speed: 12 hours*

*Can be treated by antibiotics.*

*1x Symptoms: Fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD).*

*1 BLD damage per progression.*

*12 hours after being stabbed, Deki makes a save vs. disease contraction at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20. She fails. She now has 1x symptoms. She is -10 to save vs. heat exhaustion, has -5 STH, -5 SPD, takes 1 BLD damage and must save vs. vomiting at 10 difficulty. 12 hours later she must make a save vs. disease progression (at END (7) + 1d20 vs. 20). She fails, and now she has 2x symptoms: -20 to save vs. heat exhaustion, -10 STH, -10 SPD, an additional 1 BLD damage and she must save vs. vomiting at 20 difficulty. Since Deki started with 8 SPD, she is now at -2 and cannot even stand. Deki's friends trade for some penicillin and give it to her. The penicillin gives her +10 to save vs. disease progression. After another 12 hours she saves again at END (7) +10 (antibiotics) +1d20 vs. 20. She succeeds: the disease is halted (does not progress), but she is still at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later she rolls again and fails. Since the disease is halted, the failure means that nothing happens, she remains at 2x symptoms. 12 hours later she rolls again and succeeds. Now her symptoms are reduced to 1x. 12 hours later she rolls again and succeeds again, now the disease is gone.*

# SKILLS

## BASIC SKILL USE

There are certain activities that anyone can try to do without being trained: prowling, climbing, jumping, seducing, etc. Most skills are things that someone can not even try to do without some sort of special training. A person doesn't have to be a trained long-jumper to try jumping over a hole (though it helps), but someone really does have to have some physics training to try to calculate the speed and acceleration of an object sliding down a smooth incline.

The majority of skills are "intellectual" and are rolled using INL. Other skills use the other attributes. Skills are purchased in levels, and are purchased with skill points at a cost per level set by the character class (see p.93). For every level above the first, the PC gets +4 to any skill roll. Each skill has six possible levels which can be achieved:

**(1) Interest:** Characters have studied only the basic levels of the skill. They know enough to try anything, can succeed at most easy tasks, but their chances of succeeding at difficult tasks are very low.

**(2) Hobby:** Characters keep up on the skill but are far from masters in it. (+4 to skill rolls)

**(3) Pursuit:** Characters have spent a large portion of their time practicing the skill or keeping up with the subject. They have a respectable knowledge of the skill. (+8 to skill rolls)

**(4) Study:** Characters have spent a significant portion of their lives studying the skill. They know almost everything an average person studying the skill could be expected to learn. Characters have a professional level of knowledge about the skill. (+12 to skill rolls)

**(5) Expertise:** Characters know subtleties about the skill that few people know exist. Characters could write books or teach classes about the skill. (+16 to skill rolls)

**(6) Mastery:** This is everything a person could possibly know about the skill. A person with Mastery in a skill will rarely, if ever, meet a person as skilled or knowledgeable as them. Starting PCs may not have level 6 in any skill without special permission from the GM. (+20 to skill rolls)

Example: *Tim has Western Medicine (3). Tim wants to remove someone's appendix. The GM says that this will be a hard (30) difficulty use of the skill. Tim rolls INL +8 (because he has level 3) + 1d20 vs.*

30.

## SKILLS & TIME

When a PC uses a skill, it is assumed that a PC is taking as long as he or she needs to. This might mean one round (e.g. using Trading to realize that a small statuette is worth about 20 Srang) or weeks (e.g. using Architecture to design and build a house). PCs gain no plusses from taking extra time to complete a skill, but they do take a penalty if they are trying to rush.

## WORKING TOGETHER

Two PCs with equal levels in a skill can often work together, giving +4 to the skill roll (one PC makes the roll). PCs with unequal levels in the skill cannot work together (one knows so much more than the other that the other can't do anything to help).

## BOOKS

Books are manuals for using a certain skill. Using a skill with a book generally takes four times as long as using the skill unaided. There are three types of books:

**Introductory Texts:** Useless to PCs who already have the skill, but can temporarily give the equivalent of level one (hobby) in the skill to people who do not have the skill.

**Reference Texts** Unusable by people who do not have the skill, but for those who do have the skill they increase the skill level by one (max. 6).

**Introductory/Reference Texts:** Can be used either way.

Not every skill has a book available. For many skills a book would be useless.



monastery library



## COMBAT SKILLS

Each combat skill lists fighting actions and/or reactions which are learned as part of the skill. In addition to any plusses listed in the skill, the PC gets +4 for every skill level above the first to each of these actions and reactions. Most combat skills only allow the plusses to work on certain weapons.

Some skills start with a negative on one of the actions/reactions. This does not mean that a PC with one level in the skill has a penalty. It only means that this is something that the PC doesn't benefit from until he or she gets multiple levels of the skill. For instance, if a skill gives -4 to Blinding Strike, then at level 1 the PC gets no benefit, at level 2 (-4 +4) the PC still gets no benefit. At level 3, however, (-4 +8) the PC does get +4 to blinding strikes.

**Example:** *Wangyal has Knife (4). The skill lists the following plusses when using knives:*

- +8 to Vital Strike (Bladed)
- +4 to Jump
- +4 to Split Action: Jump and Strike
- +0 to Dodge

*Because Wangyal has 4 levels in the skill, he gets +12 to all of these, so Wangyal's actual plusses are:*

- +20 (+8 +12) to Vital Strike (Bladed)
- +16 (+4 +12) to Jump
- +16 (+4 +12) to Split Action: Jump and Strike
- +12 (+0 +12) to Dodge

If a PC has different skills that give plusses on the same action with the same weapon then the PC takes only the highest bonus for each action (the plusses do not combine).

## MAGIC SKILLS

For the most part, magical skills are treated just like any other skill: it is the knowledge of how to manipulate the proper materials to get the desired effect. Just as one cannot use the painting skill in the dark or without paint, one cannot use magic skills without the proper ingredients or in appropriate circumstances. The procedures may involve meditation, chanting, mudras (hand gestures), offerings, creation of mandalas and the manipulation of ritual objects. Most magic skills can be performed with one of the components missing (e.g. a character wishes to use the Pure Vision without making a mandala) at much higher difficulty (usually +20).

## NON-SKILLS

A PC can try anything without using a skill. The PC simply narrates what he or she does. Example: *Norbu has no demolitions or electronics skills of any kind and he's trying to disarm a bomb. The GM doesn't make him roll a skill roll, doesn't even make him roll INL. The GM simply describes the bomb and asks Norbu*

*what he does. Norbu decides the best thing to do is grab a handful of wires and yank them out all at once. The GM narrates the result...*

Unless they have some special disadvantage, all PCs are expected to be able to do a certain number of normal things, including: eat, dress, keep clean, use a bow and arrow, read a map, cook a meal, tie a knot, tell a lie, recognize symptoms of serious illness, etc.

# FIGHTING

## IN BRIEF

Combat begins by determining initiative (who acts first), then proceeds through a number of rounds until combat is finished. Each round, each participant gets one action (used in order of initiative) to use against an opponent and one reaction to react defensively to something done to them. There are many types of combat actions and reactions, each with a different intended result, different difficulty and using different attributes. There are also many factors that can modify the difficulty for an action or reaction, including skills, properties of the weapon, and environmental variables.

## INITIATIVE

### Attributes in Combat

The following gives a basic idea of how attributes figure in to various combat maneuvers:

**AGY-** Adds to the speed and accuracy of an action/reaction.

**AWR-** Adds to actions that require noticing and reacting to an attack or a flaw in the enemy's defenses.

**INL-** Adds to actions that require the use of knowledge (e.g. knowing where to strike to hit a vital organ).

**SPD-** Adds to actions that involve quick and powerful footwork.

**STH-** Adds to the damage and pure force of an attack.

At the beginning of combat, each participant makes an AWR + INL + 1d20 roll. The fighter with the highest roll will get the first action in the round, the second highest will go next, etc. The next round, initiative is the same. Initiative must be re-rolled every time there is a break in the action (e.g. fighters stop to taunt each other).

**Surprise-** The fighter who initiates combat should get a bonus to initiative, from +5 to +15, depending upon how much of a surprise the combat was to the other fighters. Also, characters who are completely unaware that they are the victims of an action (e.g. are hit unaware by a sniper) do not get a reaction.

## A COMBAT ROUND

A combat round is a period of time during which each participant gets one action and one reaction. The character's reaction is made in response to any attack against them at any time during the round.

**Converting Actions & Reactions-** Characters do not have to use their actions and reactions at the designated time; they can do any of the following:

**Wait** and use their one action at the end of the round.

Give up their action for that round in order to gain an **extra reaction** (no penalty).

Turn a **reaction in to an action** (at extra difficulty, see Simultaneous Action, below).

## RANGE

Each weapon has a range. This is how close to or how far away from an opponent a character must be to use that weapon against that opponent. A sword might have a range of 1-2, this means that at range 0 you are too close to use it and at range 3 you are too far away. Jumps (see Noncombat Actions and Reactions) can be used to get in to the proper range.

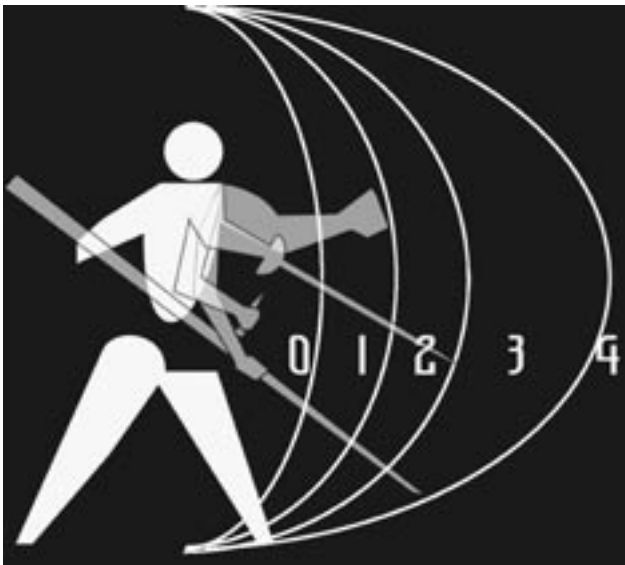
**Range 0:** Short knives, biting and clawing, minimum range for small pistols.

**Range 1:** Punches, kicks, knives, short swords, disarm and crippling strikes.

**Range 2:** Long swords, chain weapons, minimum range for shotguns & rifles.

**Range 3:** Pole arms, broadswords, whips.

**Range 4:** Projectile weapons.



Why keep track of range? First, because range gives a benefit to opponents with longer weapons.

Second, range gives a benefit to opponents who are defending (since the opponent must use an action to step forward).

## RESOLVING COMBAT

A combat action is an attempt to do something to someone else during combat. Like other attempts that require a dice roll, the character's action fails if the player cannot match the difficulty. If the player matches or exceeds the difficulty, the action will succeed unless it is opposed. Like any opposed rolls, the defender must make an opposing reaction and succeed (beat the difficulty) by more than the attacker succeeded. In other words, whoever does a better job, the attacker or defender, wins.

### Action/Reaction Example

Attacker's Action:  
Strike (Handheld)

Defender's Reaction:  
Dodge

*The attacker declares the action first: an attack with some handheld weapon. The defender then chooses to use his or her reaction to dodge the blow.*

Attacker's attributes:  
STH+AGY = 23

Defender's Attributes:  
AWR+AGY = 30

*Each action or reaction uses specific attributes, a handheld strike uses STH and AGY, a dodge uses AWR and AGY. The combatants add those attributes.*

Attacker's 1d20 roll:  
14

Defender's 1d20 roll:  
5

*Attackers add their attributes to the result of their roll on a 20 sided die. If attackers had applicable skills or situational modifiers, those would be added in as well.*

Attacker's Roll vs.  
Difficulty:  
Total of 37 vs. difficulty  
25

Defender's Roll vs.  
Difficulty:  
Total 35 vs. difficulty 25

*Each combatant's combined attributes plus 1d20 rolls are compared to the difficulty of the given action. Both the attack and dodge have a difficulty of 25. Here, both combatants beat the difficulty for their respective actions.*

Attacker's Success:  
 $37 - 25 = 12$

Defender's Success:  
 $35 - 25 = 10$

*Success is the amount by which a player beats the difficulty for the action. Since the strike and dodge are opposed, the person with the most success wins. Here, the attacker's success is more than the defenders (by 2 points, making it an opposed success of 2). The attacker wins and inflicts damage upon the defender (the goal of that particular action).*

## NONCOMBAT ACTIONS

These are actions which are useful during combat but they do not directly effect opponents and so the opponents can not react to them. The GM usually won't require a player to make difficulty rolls for these actions.

**Draw-** Ready a weapon for attack (may take more than one round if the weapon is not readily available).

**Aim-** Aim a projectile weapon at an enemy and follow any movement the enemy makes. If the character later makes an attack against the enemy with that weapon (without his or her aim having been interrupted) the character gets +4 to the roll.

**Rise-** Rise to standing from a prone state.

**Jump-** Move a specified number of units closer to or farther away from the opponent. See Range (p.157).

## MODIFIERS

Any factor can realistically modify the difficulties for actions and reactions in a combat. GMs will determine bonuses and penalties for each situation. Some common modifiers are:

<b>Aim</b>	+4 to action	The attacker has just aimed at the target (see Noncombat Actions)
<b>Blinded (Full)</b>	-15 to actions/reactions	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is completely obscured.
<b>Blinded (Partial)</b>	-7 to actions/reactions	This is the penalty when a fighter's vision is partially obscured or blurred.
<b>Burst</b>	-4 to actions	The character is firing more than one shot at once (up to the max. Rate Of Fire listed for that weapon). If the action is successful, each shot does damage.
<b>Extended Action</b>	+5 to action -10 to next action or reaction	The character puts his or her whole body in to an action (+5) but in doing so sacrifices his or her balance (-10 to next action or reaction). Not possible with projectile weapons.
<b>Improvised Weapon</b>	-8 to most actions/reactions	See Improvised Weapons (p.162) for more.
<b>Leaning</b>	-10 to actions/reactions	While leaning over to attack something below the character's knees, a character is at -10 to his or her roll for any action or reaction.
<b>Mounted</b>	-4 to actions/reactions	Penalty only applies when the animal is moving. Note that in order to hit opponents with hand-held weapons, mounted PCs must typically lean (see above). When the PC is moving he or she is at +4 difficulty to hit.
<b>Paired</b>	-4 to actions	The character is attacking with two weapons simultaneously. If the action succeeds, both weapons do damage.
<b>Prone</b>	-8 to actions/reactions	Penalty does not apply to kicks or projectile weapons. Because of their reduced profile, prone characters are -8 to hit with a projectile. See also Stomp (p.160).
<b>Simultaneous Action</b>	-20 +WIL to action	The character makes an action as a reaction: he or she reacts to an action directed towards him or her with another action. Both actions happen simultaneously and neither are opposed. -20 to the roll, but WIL is added in as a third attribute.
<b>Split</b>	-10 to actions/reactions	The character splits one action in to two actions or one reaction in to two reactions but gets -10 to each. Actions created in this way must be used at the same time; reactions can be saved for later in the round.
<b>Targeted</b>	-4 to action	The damage done by a successful attack is done to a specific part of the enemy predefined by the attacker (depending upon the part, the attack might do less damage than normal, but never more).
<b>Underwater</b>	-8 to actions/reactions	Because water reduces momentum, all attacks do half damage underwater. Characters without any swimming skills can only move at 1 SPD underwater.

## COMBAT ACTIONS

These are actions that every person can attempt, even people with no combat training whatsoever. Actions that only people with special training can do can be found in the combat skills section (p.156).

### AREA ATTACK

**Goal-** Hit everything in a given area with bullets or other projectiles.

**Roll-** INL + Number of shots fired + 1d20 vs. 25 + size of area in feet (or +3 per meter).

**Weapon-** Any that can shoot more than once per action

-Each victim can react separately to the attack.

-This is the only action which doesn't suffer from blindness penalties: the character can fire at an area without seeing it. Distance penalties for projectile weapons do apply.

-When declaring, define an area to spray. Roll a separate success roll for each person in the area.

-Each victim hit takes damage from one projectile.

### BLINDING STRIKE

**Goal-** Damage victim's eyes to blind him or her.

**Roll-** INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

**Weapon-** Anything that damages eyes or flesh around the eye or any substance that can obscure vision or makes eyes shut involuntarily.

-Most weapons only partially blind (a nail can only poke out one eye at a time, sand will only partially damage vision).

-Some weapons fully blind on a successful strike (e.g. a caustic chemical spray). See Improvised Weapons: Blinding Substances (p.163) for more.

### CRIPPLING ATTACK

**Goal-** Damage a limb so as to make it unusable.

**Roll-** STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30

**Weapon-** Anything that can cut tendons, break bones or dislocate joints (must be able to do at least ½ point of damage had this been a normal strike).

-A successful crippling attack cripples one limb.

-A person can continue to stand on one leg but is at SPD 1, -7 to all actions and reactions, and is -20 to save vs. loss of balance.

### DISARM

**Goal-** Knock the opponent's weapon from his or her hand.

**Roll-** STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

**Weapon-** Fists, kicks or anything which can cause a wrist to lose tension.

-Usually a strike to the wrist, though it may be a strike to the weapon itself.

-The victim can resist with an opposed STH feat (STH+1d20 vs. 20) as a reaction.

### GRAB

**Goal-** Immobilize one limb or one weapon.

**Roll-** STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

**Weapon-** Hands, or anything which can grab (e.g. a snare).

-Once a limb or weapon is successfully grabbed, the grab remains until it is broken. The grabber can choose to let go, or the victim can use an action to make an opposed STH roll against the grabber. Any successful pain/stun attack against the grabber will also cause the hold to be broken.

### GRAB (PAIN)

**Goal-** Immobilize a limb so that the victim can not move without pain.

**Roll-** STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35

**Weapon-** Hands

-The victim's arm is simultaneously grabbed and twisted so that the victim must make a save vs. pain (WIL+1d20 vs. 20) to move in any way.

-The victim's free limb is still usable but usually on the opposite side of the body from the grabber.

### GRAB (STRANGLE)

**Goal-** Cut off blood and air flow through the neck.

**Roll-** STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

**Weapon-** Hands, anything that can be wrapped around the victim's neck, or anything hard that can pin the neck against a stable surface.

-Grab can be broken by opposed STH roll or pain/stun attack.

-During the hold, the victim takes 1 BLD damage per round. If the hold is broken before the victim dies, the lost BLD returns one per round.

-Both the victim's hands are free during the grab.

### GRAB (WRESTLING)

**Goal-** Use multiple limbs to immobilize the victim's limbs.

**Roll-** STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30

**Weapon-** Hands

-Goal is to get the victim in a hold that is easier to maintain than it is to break free from. To break a hold the victim must make hard (30) STH feat while holder makes an easy (10) feat.

-Takes one limb to immobilize a limb (e.g. to immobilize both the victim's arms, attacker must use both of his or her arms).

## KNOCKAWAY

**Goal-** Do damage and knock the victim backwards.

**Roll-** STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

**Weapon-** Anything capable of inflicting two or more points of blunt damage over a wide area.

-Victim takes 1 point of blunt damage and is knocked back one range unit per point of opposed success.

-Even if the damage is absorbed by armor, the victim is still pushed backwards.

-Victim must make a moderate save vs. loss of balance (AGY+1d20 vs. 20) to avoid falling down.

## KNOCKDOWN

**Goal-** Knock the opponent to the floor.

**Roll-** STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

**Weapon-** Anything capable of hooking legs or pushing the victim over through sheer force.

-If successful, the victim is knocked down with no save. See p.158 for more on prone fighters.

## KNOCKOUT

**Goal-** Knock the victim unconscious

**Roll-** STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30

**Weapon-** Anything capable of doing significant blunt damage.

-If successful, the victim can make an opposed save vs. unconsciousness (WIL+END+1d20 vs. 20). If they can not successfully oppose the knockout, the victim is knocked unconscious for one round per point of the attacker's opposed success.

-For every successful knockout, there is a chance of serious damage to the victim, whether the attacker desires it or not. Generally, if the attacker's opposed success is more than 10, the attack also does 1d6 damage to BLD.

## PAIN/STUN

**Goal-** Stun the victim by causing him or her pain.

**Roll-** INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

**Weapon-** Nearly anything capable of blunt, bladed or burn damage or otherwise capable of causing pain.

-If the attack is successful the victim must make an opposed save vs. shocking pain (difficulty 20). If the victim fails by a difference of less than 10, the victim loses his or her next action. If the victim fails by 10 or more, the victim loses his or her next action and reaction.

## SLASH

**Goal-** Cause damage, distracting pain and disfigurement by an attack on the face or any other sensitive area.

**Roll-** INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

**Weapon-** Anything capable of cutting or tearing long gashes in flesh.

-Does ½ point BLD damage and the victim must make an opposed moderate (20 difficulty) save vs. distracting pain. Victim suffers a -1 penalty for each point of opposed failure on the save.

## STOMP

**Goal-** Do 2x damage to victims lower than the attacker.

**Roll-** SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25

**Weapon-** Feet.

-The victim must be below the knees of the attacker.

-Because this attack uses the full weight of the attacker against the victim, it does double the damage of a normal kick.

## STRIKE (HANDHELD)

**Goal-** Do damage to the victim.

**Roll-** STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

**Weapon-** Any handheld weapon capable of doing damage.

-If successful, it does the normal damage listed for the weapon.

## STRIKE (PROJECTILE)

**Goal-** Damage to the target.

**Roll-** INL+AGY+1d20 -1 per functional range unit vs. 25

**Weapon-** Any projectile weapon.

-For every one Function Range (FR) unit away the victim is, the character takes a -1 penalty to the roll (see Projectile Weapons, p.162).

## TACKLE

**Goal-** Knock both the attacker and the atackee to the ground.

**Roll-** SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20

**Weapon-** Body.

-If the tackle is successfully dodged, the attacker must make a save vs. loss of balance to avoid ending up on the ground.

-A tackle does no damage.

## VITAL STRIKE (BLADED)

**Goal-** Use a bladed weapon to damage vital areas.

**Roll-** INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35

**Weapon-** Any weapon that does bladed damage.

-Bladed damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Blunt damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where bladed damage is especially harmful (e.g. neck, heart).

## VITAL STRIKE (BLUNT)

**Goal-** Use a blunt weapon to damage vital areas.

**Roll-** INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40

**Weapon-** Any weapon that does blunt damage.

-Blunt damage that penetrates armor is doubled.

-Bladed damage is not doubled.

-This is an attack on an area where blunt damage is especially harmful (e.g. neck, temples).

**WING**

**Goal-** Damage easy to hit, but non-vital parts.

**Roll-** INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

**Weapon-** Any weapon capable of doing damage.

-Aimed at exposed yet non-vital body parts (e.g. arms, thighs and ribs).

-Any damage which gets through the armor is cut in half.

**REACTIONS****DODGE**

**Goal-** Sidestep the path of the weapon.

**Roll-** AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-After a successful dodge, the defender is still in roughly the same place as he or she was before.

**ENTANGLE**

**Goal-** Stop and trap the weapon.

**Roll-** INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30

-Requires something that can stop and trap the weapon (e.g. chain, meat hook, trident, jacket, folding chair).

-If successful, the action is blocked and the attacker must use another action to unentangle the weapon.

**FLIP**

**Goal-** Dodge attack and knock over attacker.

**Roll-** AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35

-This requires that the attacker make a lunge (punch or attack with a handheld weapon) and that the defender must be close enough to use the momentum to flip the attacker over a pivot point (usually the defender's shoulder).

-If successful, the attacker is knocked down with no save.

**DROP**

**Goal-** Drop below the path of the weapon.

**Roll-** AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

-Whether successful or unsuccessful, the defender ends up on the floor at the end of the reaction.

**JUMP**

**Goal-** Jump out of weapon's range.

**Roll-** SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Unlike the Noncombat Action: Jump, this is in reaction to a specific attack.

-Determine how many range levels the character needs to move to be out of the range of the weapon.

-+10 difficulty for every range level beyond the first.

-If the defender beats the difficulty but doesn't beat the opposed action, the PC gets hit but ends up out of weapon's range at the end of the reaction.

**MENTAL BLOCK**

**Goal-** Resist attempted mind control (especially by magical means).

**Roll-** WIL+1d20 vs. 20

-This is only useful against attacks that go directly to the character's mind.

**PARRY**

**Goal-** Block the attacker's weapon.

**Roll-** STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

-Be sure to declare what you are blocking and with what. If you block a knife blade with your bare hands, for instance, you will take some damage (though not as much damage as if the strike was unopposed).

**Actions vs. Reactions****Actions**

- Each character gets only one per round.
- Characters get to use their actions in an order determined by initiative.
- Actions can be traded for reactions at no extra difficulty.
- Characters can wait until the end of the round to use an action.

**Reactions**

- Each character gets only one per round.
- A character can only use a reaction when he or she is the target of an action.
- A character can use a reaction as an action at extra difficulty (+20 -WIL).
- If the character is not acted upon in a round, he or she gets no reaction.



## PROJECTILE WEAPONS

**Range-** When making any action with a projectile weapon, add to the normal difficulty the number of range units away the target is. For example, if a weapon has a FR (Functional Range) of 5 ft. then for every 5 ft. away the opponent is (rounded down) there is an extra point of difficulty. A target 60 ft. away would be at +12 difficulty to hit with that weapon. Weapons also have a Maximum Range (MR) beyond which the weapon can not do damage.

**Cover-** A character who lies flat, facing the enemy (reducing his or her profile) is very hard to hit with projectile weapons (-8 to hit). Any type of cover can give the enemy a minus to hit, depending upon how much of the character's body is protected. Treat this as armor: standing partially behind a tree might have an AR of 5 and a PR of 15 bladed/blunt (from that one direction only).

## FIGHTING NON-HUMANS

**Machines-** Mechanical devices do not have BDY, BLD or INCY. Instead, each device has an amount of blunt or bladed damage that, if it takes, will cause it to cease functioning. A military jeep, for example, may be able to take 30 blunt or 15 bladed damage before it stops working.

**Size-** Animals and machines which are bigger or smaller than humans are easier or harder to hit (see table). Also, very small opponents can only take limited blunt damage because, instead of absorbing the damage, the opponent goes flying (unless the opponent is crushed against something).

Size	To hit
Bee	-20
Rat	-10
Cat	-5
human	0
horse	+5
elephant	+10
house	+20

**Special Attacks-** Sense should be used in fighting non-humans. For instance: a blinding strike would be silly against an animal that does not depend upon its eyes; a rhinoceros would not be very susceptible to a knockdown attack by a human; without some knowledge of mechanics, a vital strike against a machine would be impossible.

**Swarms-** A swarm is a group of small animals attacking the character that are so numerous we treat them as one entity. A swarm can not be parried or dodged, only run from.

Armor can help the character: any portion of the character's body which is covered by armor can not be attacked. The amount of the character's body which is protected is the ratio of the AR to 20. So, a character with AR 10 could only have half his or her body attacked at once.

Most swarms do not dodge and instead make simultaneous strikes at no minuses (for convenience's sake, assume that all swarm animals which can attack make a successful strike). Characters, on the other hand, usually can't kill more than a few swarm animals with each strike, except with certain weapons like poison sprays or flame throwers.

## WEAPON SPECIFIC DIFFICULTIES

The difficulties listed for the various actions and reactions represent the difficulty with the "typical" weapon someone might use to do that action or reaction with. A handheld strike is listed as 25 difficulty, because that would be the difficulty to hit someone with a club or a knife or a sword. This might not be the difficulty to hit someone with a hand-saw or with a folding chair.

Some weapons have a structure such that some actions or reactions are easier, while others are much harder. For instance, a sledgehammer is so heavy and awkward that it is hard to make a strike with it. On the other hand, a whip is designed for pain/stun attacks and so such an attack would be easier. In weapon profiles, special actions and reactions are listed as:

**Very Easy (+8 to roll)**

**Easy (+4 to roll)**

**Hard (-4 to roll)**

**Very Hard (-8 to roll)**

## IMPROVISED WEAPONS

Normal objects can be used as weapons but since they are not designed as weapons they have higher difficulties to use. Many will also break after the first attack.

**Slashing Weapons:** Any object with a cutting edge strong enough to cut flesh does 1 bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except pain/stun, blinding and slash.

**Poking Weapons:** Objects with a point on them strong enough to be driven into flesh do only ½ a point of bladed damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with this weapon except blinding strike, pain/stun and vital strike.

**Blunt Weapons:** Blunt objects with a good handle can do between 1 and 3 blunt damage. The PC is at -8 to any actions with these weapons except strike and pain/stun.

**Thrown Objects:** Any heavy object without a handle can be thrown at an enemy. If a character attacks someone with a huge rock at point blank range, we can simply say that it was a throw at 0 ft. They have normal difficulties but the following ranges:

Weight	Functional Range	Dmg
1-2 lbs. (½-1kg)	3 ft. (1 m.)	½
3-5 lbs. (1-2½kg)	3 ft. (1 m.)	1
6-10 lbs. (2½-4½kg.)	2 ft. (½ m.)	2
11-20 lbs. (4½-9kg.)	1 ft. (⅓ m.)	3
20-99 lbs. (9-45kg.)	½ ft. (⅛ m.)	4
100+ lbs. (45kg.+)	½ ft. (⅛ m.)	1 per 20lbs.

**Blinding Substances:** Any substance which can be thrown in the eyes. PCs can make a blinding attack with these substances at no minuses. They can be thrown only within a range of 5 ft. (1.5m.). Most of these substances can be avoided by closing one's eyes (a very easy dodge). A successful attack, though, will fully blind the opponent (-15 to all actions/reactions) for a length of time depending upon the causticity of the substance. Extremely caustic substances (like bleach) will not only blind but act as a pain/stun strike on a successful blinding attack.

## AFTER COMBAT

After combat is finished, PCs who have taken injuries should seek out medical attention. The best case scenario is that someone with the Emergency Medicine skill and proper medical equipment can immediately treat wounded PCs. This will eliminate the following effects. If the medical care PCs are given is late in coming, or the medic doesn't have the proper equipment, or the medic doesn't have the proper skills, the following effects are only reduced.

**Bleeding-** For each point of bladed damage a PC has taken, that PC will lose another ½ point of BLD over the next 15 minutes unless the wound is cared for (cauterized, stitched up, bandaged).

**Pain-** When the endorphins the body produces in an emergency wear off, the PC will feel every bit of damage done. The PC must save vs. distracting pain with a difficulty of 5 for each point of damage done.

**Infection-** Unless a wound is disinfected, the victim risks a serious infection. For every point of bladed damage a PC has taken, the PC must make a save vs. disease contraction with a difficulty of 10 per point of damage (max. 30). Note that burns and ragged damage (see Other Types of Damage, p.152) increase the chances of infection and are very difficult to treat medically. If the PC fails the save vs. contraction, he or she suffers from a disease with the following profile (see p.154 for more on fighting diseases):

Disease Progression Rating: 20.

Disease Progression Speed: 12 hours.

Treatments: Antibiotics.

1x Symptoms: For each 1x the victim suffers from an aggregate fever (-10 to save vs. heat exhaustion), Vomiting (10), weakness (-5 STH, -5 SPD). For each progression the PC takes 1 BLD damage.

## COMBAT EXAMPLE

The two opponents are:

### Norbu

**Applicable Attributes-** AGY 10, AWR 14, END 14, INL 7, SPD 6, STH 12, WIL 8, BLD 1, BDY 4, INCY 1

**Applicable Skills-** Staff (2) (gives +8 to parry, +6 to strike, +12 to split action jump and strike)

**Armor-** None

**Weapon-** Staff (3 blunt damage, easy parry (+4), range 1-2)

**STH Bonus To Blunt Damage-** +1

### Tashi

**Applicable Attributes-** AGY 12, AWR 12, END 6, INL 14, SPD 12, STH 6, WIL 7, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 2

**Applicable Skills-** None

**Weapon-** Knife with Arrow Poison (range 0-1, damage: 2 bladed +2 damage/round for 3 rounds).

**Armor-** Leather Armor (AR 7, PR 2 bladed 2 blunt)

**GM-** Roll initiative.

**Norbu-** Okay, I rolled 2, plus 7 INL, plus 14 AWR, that's 23.

**Tashi-** I got 29.

**GM-** Right now you are in range 3, just outside of striking range of Norbu's staff. Tashi, you get the first action.

**Tashi-** I'm going to draw my knife and jump in to range 1 so I can hit him.

**GM-** You know you'll be in his weapon's range too.

**Tashi-** Yeah, but I don't want him to move to range 2 because he'll be able to hit me with his staff but I can't hit him with my knife.

**GM-** Yeah.

**Norbu-** Can I react to him moving forward?

**GM-** You can't react because nothing was done to you. You see Tashi step forward and draw a normal knife, but something grayish-green is on the edges of the blade. He used his action, though, so now it's your turn to use your action.

**Norbu-** Uh oh, that's probably poison, I'd better rethink my strategy.

**GM-** Make it quick.

**Norbu-** If I were him, I'd go for a simultaneous strike – since he can probably kill me with one strike and I can't kill him in one strike. So, I'm going to split my action in to two. One will be a strike, the other will be a parry in case he tries to take the blow and stab me.

**GM-** Okay, but remember that you're at -10 to each. Tashi, your reaction?

**Tashi-** Minus 10, eh? Does he look like he knows how to use that staff?

**GM-** He does not look awkward with it, that's all you can tell.

**Tashi-** I'll go for it then, I'm doing a simultaneous strike: I'll let him hit me with the staff and I'll try to stab him with the knife... No, wait, I'll do a wing, because even though it does half damage it will still do full poison damage.

**GM-** Okay, roll. Norbu, roll your staff strike.

**Norbu-** Okay, STH + AGY, that's 22, plus 1d20 is... 30. Oh, and +6 because I have a skill, so 36. Versus a difficulty of 25... eleven success. Minus ten from the split action is one. Wow, I just barely made it.

**Tashi-** My armor has a seven armor rating, your success was 1, so you hit the armor. How much damage do you do?

**Norbu-** The staff does three, plus one because I have a high strength.

**Tashi-** Okay, my PR is 2 blunt, so I take two points of blunt damage. I'm at one BDY now. And at the same time, I'm swinging at you with my knife.

**GM-** Tashi, roll your wing.

**Tashi-** INL + AGY is 26, plus 1d20 is 36. Now I add my WIL in because it's simultaneous, right? That makes it 43. The normal difficulty is 20, but this is a simultaneous strike so it would be 40. So, I beat my difficulty by three.

**GM-** Norbu, roll your parry roll. Don't forget you're at -10 because you split your action.

**Norbu-** Okay, STH plus AGY is 22, plus 8 from my skill, plus 4 because a staff has an easy parry. That's 32. I rolled ten, so that's 43. Minus 10 is 33. I beat my difficulty by eight. That's more than he beat his difficulty by, so I parry the blow.

**Tashi-** So all this happens at the same time, right? He's hitting me with one end of the staff and with the other end he's parrying my knife attack?

**GM-** Yep.

**Tashi-** Damn, he's good with that thing, I'd better change strategies.

**GM-** Okay, end of round. Both of you should lose END because you were involved in combat, but... Well, let's only worry about it if the combat goes on a long time. Tashi, you're first again, what's your action?

**Tashi-** Well, I only need to hit him once, but he can probably parry any strike I make against him. He's got range on me, and since my END is lower than average, he will probably outlast me in a long fight.

**GM-** So what's your action?

**Tashi-** I'm going to do an extended wing.

**GM-** Okay. Norbu, what's your action?

**Norbu-** I feel like I should play it conservatively and just concentrate on parrying. I'll parry.

**GM-** Okay, Tashi make your wing roll.

**Tashi-** Okay, my INL + AGY is 26, plus 5 because it's extended, plus 1d20 is... hey, I rolled a 20, that's an automatic success, right?

**GM-** A 20 would only help you if you wouldn't have succeeded on the merits of your roll. If you got a 20 but still didn't meet your difficulty, I would have said you succeeded by one. As it is, you definitely met your difficulty, so just add it up.

**Tashi-** Okay, that's 51 total. So I beat my difficulty by 31.

**Norbu-** Ouch. I'll roll my parry... My STH plus AGY plus skill plus the easy parry from the weapon is 32, plus 1d20... I rolled a fifteen, that makes it 47. 47 versus 25 is 22 success. Less than his 31 success.

**GM-** Well, his knife slices in to your arm.

**Tashi-** Take 1 bladed damage.

**Norbu-** Uh, oh, I'm at zero.

**GM-** You can still keep going until your END or INCY hits zero. But now, you're going to lose an additional point of END every round in addition to those you lose for making combat actions. Let's see, you should mark off that one END you used last round, and at the end of this round you'll lose two – one from combat and one because your BLD is at 0.

**Norbu-** And the poison?

**GM-** That takes effect next round. Next round you'll take 2 damage.

**Norbu-** When in the round?

**GM-** I don't know, end of the round I guess. But this round is not even over yet, you get an action now.

**Norbu-** I'm doing an extended strike with the staff. Hopefully... well, we will see what happens.

**Tashi-** And I'm minus 10 to my reaction, right?

**GM-** If you choose to make a reaction.

**Tashi-** Hell yeah. Dropping has the lowest difficulty, so I'll do that.

**GM-** Norbu, roll your strike.

**Norbu-** My attributes plus skill is 28, and I rolled 11, so that's 36, plus 5 because it's extended is 41. My difficulty is 25, so I succeeded by 16.

**GM-** Tashi, make your Drop roll.

**Tashi-** AWR plus AGY is 24. Plus 1d20 is... 26. I beat the difficulty to drop by six.

**Norbu-** And my 16 success minus your 6 success is ten, I beat you by ten.

**Tashi-** Well, my armor only has a PR of 7, so you bypassed the armor. So I take four blunt damage, right?

**Norbu-** Do I get anything extra because I got ten success?

**GM-** I would consider it, except I don't think it will be necessary. Tashi, what does 4 blunt damage do to you?

**Tashi-** Well, one point of that blunt damage removes my last body point. That leaves three, and that does double damage to my BLD. That's six points of damage to my BLD, but I only have two BLD points, so four damage is done to my INCY. I only have two INCY, so that reduces my INCY to below zero. So I just die, right?

**GM-** You are knocked unconscious, if someone comes along and performs extraordinary first aid on you, you might live. Okay, Norbu, since this is the end of the round, you lose 2 END. What are you at now?

**Norbu-** Three.

**GM-** Once you run out, you'll go unconscious, just like Tashi. And you've also been poisoned, so at the end of this round you'll start taking damage to your INCY. When your INCY is reduced to 0, you'll go unconscious. And if you should somehow survive the poison, you've got to deal with the possibility of bleeding, disease and pain after combat. So, what are you going to do?

### Tips for GMs: Keeping Combat Quick

1. Never let the PCs get in to a fair fight. Either the PCs should be ambushed, or the PCs should be doing the ambushing, or the PCs should be vastly superior to the people they are fighting, or the PCs should be vastly inferior to their opponents.
2. Enemies run away, surrender or play dead when they realize they are getting their asses kicked.
3. Figure out the NPC fighter's typical reaction and typical reaction ahead of time and calculate it (e.g. this opponent strikes at 1d20 vs. 3).
4. NPC fighters only make simple actions (e.g. strike and dodge, no extended simultaneous split actions).
5. Don't bother keeping track of END if the battle is only going to last a few rounds.
6. Give opponents weapons with the same range as that of the PCs – this makes for a lot less jumping around during battle.
7. Start PCs and opponents in weapons' range of each other.
8. Give each player only a limited amount of time to declare an action or reaction.



*red hat monks*

# ENLIGHTENMENT

## IMPEDIMENTS TO ENLIGHTENMENT

Two things prevent people from achieving enlightenment. One is karma, the inevitableness of our actions coming back upon us. The other is the attachments, inflexible ideas or feelings about the universe.

Attachments keep our minds stiff, unable to flow freely in to the perfect form for the moment. Attachments keep us attached to our bad karma. Karma, on the other hand, clouds our minds and corrupts clarity of purpose. Attachments drag us down when we try to achieve good Karma and Karma drags us down when we try to let go of our attachments.

## REMOVING ATTACHMENTS

A PC is enlightened when he or she gives up all attachments. This is an increasingly difficult achievement. Characters can attempt to remove an attachment once per adventure. At least one hour of uninterrupted meditation is necessary.

There are two steps to removing an attachment:

**Discovering the Attachment-** The PC must realize that he or she has an attachment. This requires an INL or AWR roll (whichever is higher). The difficulty is:

- 10 for physical attachments
- 20 for self attachments
- 30 for universe attachments.

**Eliminating the Attachment-** Tantric skills are not necessary to eliminate an attachment, but can give large bonuses. An attachment can be removed with a roll of KMA + WIL + 1d20. The difficulty increases by 10 for each attachment, as follows:

### Attachment Difficulty

Last	100
2 <sup>nd</sup>	90
3 <sup>rd</sup>	80
4 <sup>th</sup>	70
5 <sup>th</sup>	60
6 <sup>th</sup>	50
7 <sup>th</sup>	40
8 <sup>th</sup>	30

PC's can exchange one attachment for another quite easily. However, if a PC wants to change a dark attachment (see p.129) to a normal attachment, he or she must make a roll of KMA+WIL+1d20 vs. 40.



## DANGERS

While the path of sutras emphasizes a slow, steady detachment from the world of desires, the tantra use those desires against themselves. The PC uses powerful symbols and excites dangerous emotions. A failure can mean a person gains another attachment or goes insane.

If the PC makes a roll to eliminate an attachment and fails, the following effects happen.

Failure	If Tantra Used*	Tantra Not Used
0 to -5	PC gains 1 normal attachment (PC's choice).	No effect.
-6 to -10	PC gains 1 normal attachment (GM's choice).	No effect.
-11 to -15	PC gains 1 normal attachment and 1 dark attachment (GM's choice).	Attachment is replaced with another attachment (PC's choice).
-16 to -20	All of PC's attachments are replaced with dark attachments (PC's choice).	Attachment is replaced with another attachment (GM's choice).
-21 or less	PC dies.	Attachment is replaced with a dark attachment (GM's choice).

\*The effect happens if a tantric skill was attempted before trying to eliminate the attachment, regardless of whether the tantric skill roll succeeded or failed.

### A Tale of Enlightenment

There are many paths towards enlightenment and the changes a person undergoes varies greatly between paths and between individuals. The following is one example of a Buddhist practitioner and the changes that he undergoes as he approaches, and finally achieves, enlightenment.

**5 attachments-** Norbu studies at a monastery. He learns Buddhist philosophy and meditation. He is around highly advanced teachers and is in awe of their wisdom and seeming infallibility.

**4 attachments-** Norbu learns to examine his own thoughts and emotions closely. He has seen that emotions like anger and lust only make him suffer. Those emotions are only useful in combating other emotions (for instance, anger to counteract laziness). He tries to take a logical approach to his actions, making decisions based on what would best benefit sentient beings. He tries to act calm and compassionate at all times. During meditation he is able to feel compassion for even the most vile beings. Norbu still makes many mistakes and still feels anger, pride, jealousy, desire and other emotions.

**3 attachments-** Norbu studies tantric meditation and rituals. Norbu realizes that his motives for seeking enlightenment were petty and egocentric. He now wishes to become enlightened so that he can help ease the suffering of other beings. Norbu has eliminated much anger and lust from his mind. The primary emotion he feels is despair at the suffering of other beings, but he tries to eliminate this despair, reminding himself that if he suffers it will increase the bad karma in this world.

**2 attachments-** The philosophical concepts that Norbu struggled to learn as a student now seem plain and simple. Norbu realizes that distinctions such as existence and non-existence are essentially meaningless. Through meditation, he can briefly become his Yidam Buddha and experience what it is like to live outside of the world of distinctions. Norbu enjoys many hours of meditation where he stills all thoughts and feels complete contentment towards everything. Norbu's compassion is obvious to all beings and his very presence increases luck and eases suffering. Norbu is always calm and full of energy. His mind is quick and his awareness is intense.

**1 attachment-** Norbu no longer feels emotions like anger, lust, desire or sadness. He laughs and smiles often, finding the universe to be a beautiful and funny place. He has compassion for all who suffer, but does not suffer with them. Norbu no longer feels attached to the world of cause and effect. He is constantly aware that every thing and every law of the universe is an illusion. Karma, good or bad, has little effect on him. Norbu can read minds, create illusions, walk through walls, and other miracles, simply because he doesn't believe that these things are impossible. Norbu's physical body and subtle self (soul) begin to change, to become more perfect. Rilzin (concretions of good karma) begin to grow in his bones. Norbu lives completely in the moment, he rarely thinks about the future or the past.

**Enlightenment-** Norbu sheds his last attachment. Norbu is no longer alive or dead, he can exist on any plane of existence, in physical or spiritual form. He no longer has any personality. He acts exactly as every other bodhisattva does. His form and mind change instantly to meet the needs of the current situation. His only desire, the only thing keeping his incarnation existing from one moment to the next, is a desire to help end the suffering of other beings.

### PCs and Enlightenment

As a character nears enlightenment, what happens to the unique personality of the character? The path of sutras emphasizes a slow distancing of oneself from worldly concerns and attachments, and thus a character on this path will slowly lose his or her individual personality. The path of tantras, though, takes a more radical approach. It uses one's attachments to emotions and worldly things as tools to destroy the grip of those attachments. Practitioners change quickly and at times they may seem emotional or even crazy.

A being with no attachments has no unique personality. Its actions are dictated by the situation, not by beliefs, emotions, opinions and habits. A nearly enlightened being still has a unique personality, but it is only a few very weak tendencies. One nearly-enlightened master may act crazy and impetuous, while another may act calm and emotionless, yet each could act completely differently if the situation dictated.

In other words, characters who advance themselves towards enlightenment (especially on the quicker path of tantra) do not lose their personality, but that personality has less control over them.

Once a character actually becomes enlightened, it is time to retire the character. An enlightened being is freed from all prejudice, including the prejudice of friendship or loyalty to specific people. The enlightened being will be just as concerned about the well-being of a flea as it is about the residents of Tibet.



# adventures

## PC PARTIES

The most powerful PC groups are those with a wide variety of characters. However, it can sometimes be hard for people with different backgrounds, philosophies and goals to trust each other and work together. In most cases, it is an enjoyable and challenging part of roleplaying to have PCs meet and gain each other's trust. Some ways to get PCs working together are:

**Travelers Meeting-** The easiest way to form the party is to have PCs traveling and meet each other on the road. Explain to the players that travelers in Tibet who meet on the road often travel together to give mutual protection from bandits and other travel dangers. This gives PCs a chance to get to know each other and possibly make friends. GMs can "help along" this process by throwing in a few minor travel dangers that PCs can work together to defeat.

**Altruism-** One suggestion is for the GM to require all players to have a desire to help people and make the world a better place. This does not mean that PCs cannot be selfish, rude, violent, cynical, vengeful, ignorant, mentally ill, or whatever other character flaw players enjoy – it only means that given a choice between helping people out or sitting around doing nothing, the PCs will choose helping people out. If all characters conform to this requirement, the GMs job will be much easier. GMs can simply have the PCs all happen to be in the same place at the same time when the opportunity to help someone comes about.

**Hired or Assigned-** Most PCs have someone who has influence over them, whether it is a monastic abbot, a wealthy merchant willing to pay for services, or a dharmapala possessing an oracle. If

PCs are reluctant to work together on some problem, have people ask, pay or order the PCs to work together.

**Example:** *A small town is being ravaged by a hungry ghost. The aristocratic family that owns these lands sends a young aristocrat to go oversee the exorcism. The family hires a White Robe with exorcism skills to come with him. A local monastery sends a young monk with medical skills to help. A young astrologer is reading her fortune and sees that it is imperative that she travel to this town and help subdue the hungry ghost.*

**Shared Danger-** The PCs are suddenly thrown (against their will) in to some situation and they have to work together to escape with their lives. **Example:** *The PCs are all arrested by Chinese soldiers and thrown in to a makeshift jail cell in an old ruined fort. The PCs overhear the guards saying that the prisoners will be interrogated and executed.*

**Shortcut-** If PCs don't want to deal with any of this, the simplest thing you can do is have every player agree that the game starts with the PCs all being friends and traveling companions who trust each other and work together.



# POLITICAL ADVENTURES

Some adventures do not involve direct use of violence, but rather involve attempts to win over the allegiance of a person or people. In some cases, this can mean a battle over the fate of someone's soul. This is a good type of adventure for parties with non-violent members.

## GOOD CHINESE

### UNDERSTANDING THE CHINESE

**In Brief-** Chinese are victims of misfortune, exploitation and brainwashing.

The Chinese people are not evil and it misses the entire point of the game to portray them as such. When people do bad things it is either because they are ignorant that they are hurting themselves, or because their minds are too clouded by emotion to care. The same could be said of a country. China was enslaved by industrial powers, suffered through terrible wars, famine and poverty. They were desperate, they were full of hate, and they blindly accepted communism. Communism has great goals, but the means it chooses to achieve them (war, torture, propaganda, intolerance) only make things worse.

From a Buddhist point of view the Chinese people are just as much a victim of the Communist government as the Tibetans. The Tibetans are suffering now, but karma will ensure that the Chinese will suffer later, either in this life or the next.

The Chinese are both the victims and perpetrators of brainwashing. In revolutionary China, educated people were slaughtered so that no one had the authority to question Communist dogma. Chinese peasants were indoctrinated in to a system of thought that never provided two sides to an argument. The Chinese learn not to question state propaganda, not even in their own thoughts.

### SAVING THE CHINESE

**In Brief-** Helping educate Chinese would be good.

Characters may kill Chinese soldiers at some point, but it is also possible to save some of them. Most Chinese want to do the right thing and want to help people, but they have no resources to discover the truth. If a character can help a Chinese soldier overcome brainwashing and hatred and see the truth, then that soldier can cease his accumulation of bad karma. Such an action would earn PCs several points of good KMA.

The Chinese are trained to react violently to any arguments against Chinese communism. They have a trained litany of arguments they can rattle off in response to any criticism. They could be severely punished for even listening to such criticisms without reporting them to their superiors. It would provoke fear in any Chinese soldier to hear blatant criticisms, even if that was exactly what they secretly desired to hear.

Some Chinese soldiers and officers have seen the incredible peace, compassion and willpower of learned lamas. Many have come to secretly envy and respect these lamas. A few have left the army and gone to study with Buddhist or Bön teachers.

### NON-MILITARY CHINESE

**In Brief-** Some Chinese are just common people, trying to get by, have much in common with Tibetans.

There are also many Chinese in Tibet who are not associated with the army. They are simple traders and farmers who were starving in China and went to Tibet to find a way to keep their families fed. Some are recent immigrants, encouraged by the Chinese to come to Tibet, others have been living in Tibet for some time and have gained respect for the Tibetan people. Many ethnically Chinese people are Muslims. The Muslims have come to Tibet to find religious tolerance they couldn't find in China.



## EVIL TIBETANS

In Brief- Tibetans can be just as dangerous as the Chinese.

Just as there are good Chinese, or Chinese who can become good, PCs may also run in to Tibetans of all kinds who are malevolent and dangerous.

Tibet is not a perfect place. The Chinese have many criticisms of Tibet, and most of them are not completely false. Some Tibetans with power do not use that power for purely compassionate purposes. There are government officials who are corrupt. There are aristocrats who are cruel to the farmers that live on their lands. There are dobdobs who bully people around and ignore the commands of their lamas (see p.70). There are also people with power in the Buddhist church who use their power selfishly.

### FLAWED LAMAS

In Brief- Everyone thinks they are wise and infallible, but they are actually petty and dangerous.

Some lamas think that their motives are purely compassionate. They don't understand that greed, pride and a hunger for power influences their actions. These lamas have learned to act like wise and compassionate teachers, and have fooled themselves and their students. When someone challenges their authority or power, these lamas see attachments and bad karma at work in their enemies. They use this as an excuse to punish, denigrate or banish their enemies, in the guise of teaching them a valuable lesson or protecting their other students. To someone who is not the target of the lamas, the decisions may seem reasonable. Yet if the PCs are seen as a challenge the lama's power, it will be quite obvious to the PCs that the lamas are vengeful and self-serving.

Just because a lama is flawed, does not mean that he or she hasn't made real advancements. Even a flawed lama can have powerful tantric skills, can have important things to teach students (and even PCs), and can do more good than harm to the communities. The lamas may be much more advanced than the PCs, but they have one attachment that, combined with their power and popular belief in their infallibility, can be very dangerous.

### FALSE LAMAS

In Brief- Con-artists pretend to be learned teachers.

There are also a few lamas that knowingly and deliberately fake wisdom and advancement. They use base magic and sorcery to simulate the magic powers that are the sign of an advanced lama. Their teachings are the most simplistic of Buddhist truths that any Tibetan knows. Their tantric rituals are



### Typical Flawed Lama

**Attributes-** AGY 7, AWR 16, CHM 13, END 10, INL 17, KMA 25, SPD 4, STH 6, WIL 18, BLD 3, BDY 2, INCY 3.

**Appearance-** An old male in monk's robes, with a white beard and an ornate hat with very long flaps.

**Motivations-** He has proceeded far on the path to enlightenment but has very dangerous attachments which he has not been able to notice. He is power-hungry and vengeful but he believes that he is beyond such petty motivations. He believes that everything he does, no matter how selfish, is a compassionate act.

**Methods-** The lama demands strict obedience from his followers, telling them that any deviation from his orders could result in disaster for their souls. The lama believes that he has a miraculous ability to read minds, but what the lama "reads" is whatever he wants to believe. If the lama doesn't like someone, he may "read" that they are trying to kill him (and have them banished). Any mistake the lama's enemies make is emphasized as proof of their unenlightenedness and any mistake the lama makes is quickly explained away as a compassionate act in disguise. The lama may inflict all manner of cruel punishments on people he doesn't like in the guise of "lessons."

**Special Skills-** Breath Yoga (3), Fire Yoga (1), Invisibility (2), Pure Vision (2), Sorcery Tantra (3), Subtle Self (3), Wind Voices (2), Yidam Tantra (1), Philosophy (4), Logic (3), Oration (3).

**Typical Attack-** Summoning a wrathful dharmapala and sending it to attack the enemy (at INL(18)+8+1d20 vs. 30 or 1d20 vs. 4).

random mumbling and pointless visualizations with no real effect. These lamas fool their students in to thinking that they have achieved some portion of enlightenment when the students have really achieved nothing. If the fake lama knows some genuine tantric rituals they are even more dangerous. When they let their students practice tantric rituals before they are ready for them, the students are likely to go insane. Of course, a lama can always pass off an insane student as a "mad saint" (see p.183).

## POLITICAL INFIGHTING

**In Brief-** Struggles between people and groups can hurt Tibet.

The lamas and aristocrats that rule Tibet are not immune to the problem of power struggles. The most famous is the struggle between Lhasa and Shigatse. The Panchen Lama, the tulku of the Shigatse area, was in a struggle for power with the Dalai Lama and was forced to flee the country and rule by remote from China. Now, his current incarnation has sided with the Chinese and the territory owned by the Panchen Lama is the largest pro-Communist block in Tibet (see p.38 for more). Other power struggles have gone on between noble families, between sects and between monasteries. In the recent past, the monks of the Sera monastery near Lhasa, who are renowned for their proficiency in martial arts, have been known to bully nearby monasteries to get what they want.

The most dangerous result of political infighting would be the defection of a major lama, aristocrat or government official to the side of the Chinese. Both the Tibetan government and the rebel forces have an interest in making peace between feuding parties before it comes to this point. Monasteries may send monks in as arbitrators in these situations.

## CEREMONIAL ADVENTURES

**In Brief-** PCs can help with important ceremonies.



*a government official*

Tibet has many ceremonies which are important to the health and safety of the Tibetan people. If these ceremonies are disrupted by the Chinese invasion, the results could be disastrous. There are other ceremonies which have been hidden or banned. They were created not for the day-to-day problems of Tibetans, but for times of extraordinary crisis.

### MARSOMA LAKE

There is a lake in the barren, **In Brief-** Dalai Lama must travel to this lake to see his future.

deserted regions of Takpo province, at the foot of the Himalayas. Every Dalai Lama visits this lake once in his lifetime. Gazing upon the waters, the current incarnation gains a vision of his future and of his own death. The current Dalai Lama has not yet visited the lake. There are Chinese troops in the way. Many want the Dalai Lama to visit this lake. People think that if the Dalai Lama could see his future, it might prompt him to take more decisive action against the Chinese.

On the shores of Marsoma Lake is a small temple dedicated to the fierce dharmapala Marsoma. Marsoma guards the lake from hostile intruders and will kill anyone except the Dalai Lama who enters the temple.

### RELEASING KSETRAPALA

The Tibetan people know that the Nine Headed Chinese **In Brief-** Summon dharmapala to fight demon that aids China.

Demon, of the Zhidag class, aids the Chinese in matters concerning Tibet. This demon continues to help the Chinese Communists, even though they are not aware of its existence. There might be one or two Communists, out of thousands, who have been trained in ancient Chinese sorcery who know of the demon.

The demon's mortal enemy is the dharmapala

The demon's mortal enemy is the dharmapala Ksetrapala. Given the opportunity, Ksetrapala will do battle with the Nine Headed Demon. The Nine Headed Demon is too powerful to be destroyed, but Ksetrapala can weaken it and keep it busy.

Ksetrapala can only be dispatched to the border with the ceremony of the Torma of Ksetrapala. This ceremony is known to only a few Yellow Hat monks. It is practiced in two small Yellow Hat monasteries near Lhasa.

**The Torma-** This is a ten foot tall pyramid constructed of barley flour dough on top of a huge iron pan. It is adorned with a skull, a painting of Ksetrapala and ornamental designs of butter and silk ribbons. It is surrounded by two smaller pyramids, skull cups with offerings, inflated animal bowels, a fence made from a special type of wood and several types of Zor. The Torma will become the earthly counterpart to Ksetrapala's heavenly palace, but only after days of strict ceremony and invocations. Rare and ancient books hold the details of the ceremony, and are guarded zealously. At the end of the ceremony, the Torma is burned and Ksetrapala and his servants race from it to the Chinese border.

**Character Involvement-** It takes four days to complete the ceremony. If anything interrupts the ceremony, almost everyone involved in the ceremony will die. PCs may be enlisted to protect the monastery from interruptions. PCs might also be enlisted to find the ingredients needed to complete the ceremony. Some ingredients may only be found in distant corners of Tibet or in haunted charnel grounds.

## TSEN THREAD CROSS

**In Brief-** Samye monastery creates huge thread crosses to unleash tsen demons on an enemy.

There is another ceremony which can be used to damage Chinese troops, called the "Tsen Thread-Crosses of the Four Continents." This ceremony can only be performed at the monastery of Samye. Samye is like a giant mandala, with hundred of temples which represent the many worlds of the cosmos. In the ceremony, monks built four 18 ft. (5.5m.) tall thread crosses that represent each of the four continents. The thread crosses are burned, unleashing an army of Tsen demons on an enemy. Unlike the ceremony of Ksetrapala, which is only useful for combating the Chinese (and their supernatural helpers), this ceremony can target any enemy. This makes it much more dangerous.

Many rare components are needed to perform the ceremony, including dirt from 108 cemeteries, water from 108 springs, cloth and silks from a king's

treasury and the flesh and bones of many types of people. Advanced lamas must meditate for 7 days to make the ceremony work.

In 1950 the monks at Samye tried to perform this ceremony against the Chinese. It had no effect on the Chinese troops. No one has yet determined why it failed and some are afraid to try it again until they can solve the mystery.

## MILL OF SHINRYE

**In Brief-** Advanced lamas can destroy people's life force spirits by remote.

This mill is located in the Kardo monastery near Lhasa. It is an old-style grain mill with powerful mantras carved in to the millstones. Anyone who uses the mill will die unless they are very close to enlightenment. To use the mill, a lama transfers the life force spirits of enemy leaders in to mustard seeds. The mustard seeds are ground up by the mill while the lama chants secret mantras. The victims' life force spirits are destroyed and the victims will quickly become ill and die.

## WHEEL OF EIGHT SWORDS

**In Brief-** Illegal, secret ceremony creates spinning, flying, wheel of blades.

Long ago, the Yellow Hat sect knew a ceremony for making a devastating magical weapon. Eight swords were stuck through a wooden wheel, with the blades pointing outwards. At a command, the wheel would fly towards the enemy, spinning at incredible speeds and cutting down whole armies. The devastation from this magical weapon was so terrible that the Yellow Hat sect outlawed its use and burned all known copies of the books which told how to construct it.

The Yellow Hats were probably not able to destroy every copy of this book. Tibetan saints had a habit of hiding powerful books around Tibet, hoping they would be found by the right people at the right time. Texts which can be easily misused, like the ceremony of the wheel, are guarded. They are hidden on inaccessible peaks, in haunted mountains, guarded by merciless dharmapalas. Even if found, the ceremony is likely to require many rare components and be very dangerous to whoever practices it.

Most Yellow Hats will attempt to stop anyone trying to resurrect this lost ritual. Even if it is constructed, it may be able to decimate foot soldiers, but may be ineffective against tanks and heavy artillery.

**Tsen-** A class of malevolent spirits, often associated with illness, misfortune and hatred.

# MYSTICAL ADVENTURES

In Brief- Adventures can revolve around PC's religious activities or helping others with religious activities.

For Tibetans, everything is part of a bigger picture. As they go about their day-to-day lives they are aware that their actions will determine their next incarnation. They know that each human incarnation gives them a chance to escape the cycle of rebirths and become a Bodhisattva.

Tibetan Buddhists who seek enlightenment do so with a sense of urgency uncommon in Buddhists from other countries. Tibetan Buddhists are urgent because they know that the tantra makes enlightenment within a single lifetime possible, but that an incarnation where one can practice tantra is incredibly rare. To be born in a place where tantra is known, at a time after it has been created but before it has been corrupted beyond recognition, in a body capable of learning tantra is a one-in-a-million chance. This is why some Tibetans continue to seek enlightenment even as war rages around them and their country is in danger of being destroyed. Many adventures will revolve around PCs or NPCs seeking enlightenment despite the many distractions and dangers.

## MAD SAINTS

In Brief- Some advanced teachers act crude or crazy, may give students dangerous or pointless tests.

Although they do not act like it, mad saints have achieved near-enlightenment. Most have used obscure tantric rituals. Mad saints are known for rejecting normal codes of behavior, wearing bizarre clothing, being rude and obscene and showing total disdain for scholastic wisdom. When they teach, it is hard to tell they are teaching at all. Their teaching techniques include poems, songs and even miming. They can perform miracles, including reading minds.





A mad saint can be a great advantage to PCs trying to achieve enlightenment. The first challenge for PCs, however, is to realize that the person is not actually an imbecile or crazy person. The second challenge may be a bizarre, dangerous or impossible test given to a potential student by a mad saint. Mad saints use such tests to weed out students who are not serious. For instance, a PC may be asked to go to a nearby monastery and urinate on a statue of a Buddha, or lift a several-ton boulder. If a PC refuses the test, he or she will probably be told to go find a traditional Buddhist teacher.

Buddhist teachings take many forms because there are many different barriers to enlightenment that people must overcome. Many people benefit from the scholastic training one receives in a monastery. Some people cannot benefit from such training. Perhaps they have learned all the scholastic concepts but have not learned to live them. Perhaps they have minds such that they can not easily learn from books and lectures. Perhaps they have a prejudice against the scholastic system that would prevent them from benefiting from that path.

In Brief- Reincarnations must be found to head monasteries, keep captured spirits at bay, keep the reincarnations from being corrupted. Many ways to find and test tulkus. Some tulkus reincarnate in multiple bodies.

A black and white photograph of an elderly man with a long white beard and glasses, wearing a dark robe and a head covering. He is holding a small, ornate object in his right hand and standing outdoors on a dirt path. A wooden fence and trees are visible in the background.

With the chaos in Tibet, finding the reincarnations of recently deceased tulkus can be very hard. PCs may be recruited to help find a tulku. Such a quest may involve going in to war-torn areas or even areas under the control of the Chinese.

A dying lama may give clues about where and when he or she will be reincarnated.

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powers or unusual knowledge.

Strange phenomenon or omens may occur near a birth.

Oracles may give instructions on finding the tulku.

When PCs find what they suspect is a tulku, the tulku is tested. Tulku finders often present a child with items that belonged to a previous incarnation (along with several that did not). The true tulku recognizes his or her old items. Oracles can also help confirm a tulku.

Powerful Tulkus usually reincarnate as children in aristocratic families. Some very powerful lamas may choose to reincarnate parts of themselves in different incarnations. For instance one piece may be born in to a family of aristocrats, another in to a family of Unclean butchers. Each incarnation makes it possible for the tulku to help sentient beings in a different way.

## SHAMBHALA

In Brief- Hidden mountain city full of powerful, wise people. May be hidden from unenlightened minds. Many seek it for the great rewards within.

The Tibetans have a legend that there is a city hidden in impenetrable mountain peaks to the Northwest. The leaders and residents of this city have incredible wisdom and Buddhist knowledge. In this city there is no crime, poverty or suffering and people live to be 100 years old. In the far future, when all of the world's Buddhists are thought to be destroyed, the King of Shambhala will ride down and conquer the barbarians.

Tibetans disagree about the true nature of Shambhala. Some believe that it is a real physical place, others that it is a mental state one can achieve. Some say that it is both: it is a place hidden both in space and in the realms of consciousness. To find it would require both skill and luck as a mountaineer and high levels of tantric skills (e.g. Pure Vision, Subtle Self or Yidam Tantra).

Shambhala may even be an adjacent heaven. Like the adjacent hells (see p.25) this is a "bubble" of another realm that exists in our plane of existence.

Many Tibetans seek Shambhala. Shambhala's teachers and libraries would be of incredible use to a person seeking enlightenment. Shambhala's doctors, and the good karma of the place, could cure any illness. Shambhala's leaders may even give visitors powerful magic weapons to fight the Chinese with.

# MAGICAL DANGERS

## MALEVOLENT SPIRITS

In Brief- Many classes of beings, normally invisible or intangible. Range in power from wisps to demon kings. Instinctively cause suffering.

Spirits are concretions of karma which have gained some level of intelligence and will. All spirits are invisible and intangible to normal humans unless they become visible or tangible via an act of will. Just as humans have different skills, spirits have different abilities, from causing diseases to tripping people. As spirits grow older and more powerful they learn more abilities.

In Tibet, malevolent spirits have always plagued humanity. Some spirits are the equivalent of gnats: minor annoyances that can be removed via a simple prayer. Other spirits become powerful demon kings and queens who can bend the fabric of the universe to their will.

Some spirits wander randomly through the world. Others have a home area. Some (like Lu) stay in their home area as a matter of preference, but can go wandering if they desire. Others (like Zhidag) are bound to a particular place and cannot go far from it.

### The Origin of Spirits

Some spirits were once the ghosts of dead humans (p.193). Other spirits may be souls that were reincarnated in this realm as malevolent spirits because of the particulars of their karma. When spirits reproduce, this is where the souls of the babies come from. The majority of spirits, however, are created spontaneously from bad karma.

Karma can randomly form in to desire to exist. Desire is what created everything in the universe, from karma to the laws of physics, so as soon as a spark of desire exists it creates a being that is chained to the world of desires until it can give up desire (reach enlightenment). It is likely that all the souls in this universe started out as such beings.

The new spirit is a mindless wisp, but over time it will grow more and more powerful. It may be eaten or destroyed, and go on to another incarnation, or it may become a powerful spirit or even a demon.

Since the karma the being is made of is mostly bad karma, the spirit is born with an instinctual desire to cause suffering.

## Special Rules for Spirits

**Magical Strength-** Spirits have an attribute called Magical Strength (MSTH). Every action they take, whether physical, mental or magical, uses MSTH. MSTH is also the power that keeps them in this current existence. If MSTH reaches 0, the spirit disperses. A spirit can not use any attribute at a level higher than its current magical STH. So, if a spirit's MSTH is reduced to 3, so is its INL, AWR, CHM and even WIL.

**Using MSTH-** A spirit uses up 1 point of MSTH any time it makes an opposed WIL roll. A spirit uses 1 or more MSTH any time it tries to effect the universe in any way. See p.189 for a list of possible spirit powers and the MSTH used by each. Anything that "damages" a spirit reduces its MSTH. A spirit will not willingly use its last point of MSTH. When resting, lost MSTH returns at a rate of 1 MSTH per round. Spirits also gain MSTH any time they cause suffering in another being or any time they are worshipped or spoken of.

**Entering Humans-** Some spirits are capable of entering a human body and causing the person misfortunes from within. The spirit rolls WIL + 1d20 (remembering that WIL cannot be higher than the current MSTH). The victim can save with an opposed WIL + 1d20. The spirit gets a bonus or penalty that is the opposite of the victim's KMA Emanation (see p.149). If the spirit succeeds, the victim is not aware that he or she has been entered by an evil spirit. Once inside, the spirit is very difficult to dislodge and can easily cause all kinds of problems to happen to the victim (see p.189), also with the same KMA bonus or penalty. The spirit can even make an opposed WIL roll to try to gain control of the PC's physical movements. See *Sharing Minds*, p.79, for more.

**Example-** *A Tsen (with 20 MSTH, 10 AGY, 7 AWR, 5 INL, 17 STH, 10 WIL) tries to invade the body of Dawa, a young White Robe. It rolls WIL + 1d20 vs. 20 to try to invade Dawa's body. Dawa's KMA is high, but she is carrying a cursed phurba and is in a haunted graveyard, making her total KMA Emanation -3. This means the Tsen gets +3 to its roll. Dawa rolls WIL + 1d20 vs. 20. Dawa succeeds by more: the spirit is rebuffed and Dawa is aware that something tried to enter her. The attempt used 1 MSTH.*

*Dawa says "your actions have taught me much about the nature of ignorance - I owe you thanks for this great gift you have given me." This enrages the spirit and it begins picking up 20 lb. rocks and hurling them at Dawa. Just like a human would, the Tsen rolls INL + AGY rolls to hit Dawa. Dawa dodges the rocks. Each time the spirit throws a rock it uses 2 MSTH. After throwing three rocks, the spirit's MSTH is down to 13, meaning its STH is effectively 13. It fails the STH feat necessary to pick up a large rock. Dawa taunts it again, calling it weak. In a rage, it desperately tries to lift the rock, using more MSTH each time. After four more tries the spirit's MSTH is down to 4. Its low MSTH is now affecting its INL and AWR, making it stupider and less aware of its surroundings.*

*It does not notice Dawa reach in to a harrying horn and grab a handful of seeds which have been blessed to harm spirits. She hurls the seeds at the spirit, surprising it and doing 3 damage to MSTH. The spirit now has 1 MSTH and its attributes are effectively 1. It could try to dodge Dawa's attack, but would almost certainly be too clumsy and slow to succeed. Dawa throws another handful of seeds and the spirit's current incarnation ends.*



*tsen*

Unpopulated wilderness areas, where nobody has bothered to exorcise the native spirits (or turn them to dharmapalas) are rife with spirits. If these spirits find travelers, some will follow them, hoping to be led to a population of victims. Travelers coming from distant places are often avoided because they may have a train of curious spirits following them.

All spirits are instinctively drawn to bad karma and instinctively want to cause suffering to other beings. Only a minority of spirits are able to overcome these instincts and act neutrally or benevolently towards humans.

## CHINESE PROBLEMS

In Brief- Chinese presence causes many disruptions which can cause spirits to attack.

Wherever the Chinese have been there is a rash of attacks by malevolent spirits. The spirit attacks are caused by:

Bad karma created by Chinese actions, which attracts or can even create malevolent spirits.

Zhidag spirits driven insane or in to a rage by Chinese mining, road building or bombing.

The peasants may be too distracted by war to perform the folk-magic ceremonies which keep the normally-neutral local spirits appeased.

Many monasteries have trapped malevolent spirits which they are unable to destroy. If a monastery is abandoned, there are no longer monks to perform the ceremonies that keep these spirits at bay.

Even dharmapalas can be driven mad by the Chinese. They are driven to such rage that they may attack innocent people without realizing it.

## MINOR SPIRITS

In Brief- Tiny wisps, blind and stupid, cause minor misfortunes.

1 to 5 MSTH (see p.185). When seen (by those who have the power to see such things) these spirits appear as nothing more than small transparent wisps. They float around aimlessly, like gnats, congregating in places where there is bad karma. These spirits are blind, except for the ability to sense bad karma. Peasants purchase thread crosses and put them around their dwellings. The spirits get caught in the threads and are trapped there.

They have little or no intelligence and only have the ability to cause minor misfortunes. They may cause food to spoil, or frighten animals, or cause small accidents. If they enter a body, they may cause fevers, headaches, tiredness, irritability, nervousness or minor bad luck.

## Classes of Malevolent Spirits

**Crossbreeds-** Spirits are capable of reproducing with each other. Crossbreeds are rare, but have their own unique names, characteristics and rituals. E.g. the Lumân are the white offspring of Lu spirits and Mân goddesses.

**Düd-** These spirits are black colored, openly malevolent and opposed to Buddhism. They eat human flesh and send illnesses. Persecutors of Buddhism may become düd when they die. There are 360 düd. They live in the earth, in fires, in the water and in the sky. Some will enter a sick or mortally wounded person's body and torment that person by not letting him or her die (see p.134). Their primary goal is to cause ignorance.

**Gyelpo-** Folk heroes, evil lamas and kings who persecuted Buddhism became Gyelpo after death. The dharmapala Pehar is in charge of these spirits. They are white and appear in full armor. A Gyelpo may be worshipped by local people.

**Lu (Heavenly)-** These resemble Chinese dragons. Some live in the heavens, where they guard the houses of gods. Others live in the hidden realms of consciousness, where they guarding tantric teachings hidden there by Buddhist saints. Others live in the sky and cause great storms. They are giant, reptilian quadrupeds with long snake-like bodies. Their feet have clawed, prehensile toes. They have long alligator-like snouts. The Lu guard great riches. Sorcerers and Bön priests often worship Lu, hoping to gain small portions of their wealth. The Lu are preyed-upon by garudas (see p.19).

**Lu (Water)-** This type of Lu resembles the Indian naga. They have the bodies of snakes, the torsos and heads of humans but with a cobra-like hood. The Lu live in bodies of water and often cause floods and droughts. The Lu have communities much like humans, with Lu that are good and evil, noble and common, Buddhist and non-Buddhist. Heavenly and Water Lu occasionally take human form to explore the world from a human viewpoint, and may create offspring. The Lu are associated with the color blue.

**Mamo-** Worshipped as mother goddesses in ancient times, these goddesses control disease. They sometimes appear as beautiful young women with dark skin and black hair. Other times they appear as hideous, half-naked monsters with drooping breasts, jet black skin and matted hair. Mamo carry sacks full of diseases and magic weapons. They can occasionally help those who please them, but have awful tempers and can go quickly from helpful to deadly.

**Minor Classes-** Apart from crossbreeds, there are hundreds of minor classes of spirits. They are "minor" because they are rare, not because they are any less

## DANGEROUS SPIRITS

In Brief- Smarter and more dangerous, but can still be fooled.

6 to 10 MSTH. These spirits do have some intelligence and self-awareness, yet are not as smart as the average human. They can remember humans and carry grudges. They can recognize places and objects. They are sometimes smart enough to avoid, or to escape from, thread crosses. Their primary sense is an ability to smell the unique karma of a being. They can be fooled to going in to a glud (see p.27) if some of the human's karmic "scent" has been transferred in to the glud. They will believe they are inside their chosen victim, attacking him or her, when they are actually inside a piece of dough.

Some dangerous spirits cause poor weather, others cause objects to become lost, others start or put out fires. Inside the body, dangerous spirits can cause vomiting, weight loss, nightmares, clumsiness, confusion or bad luck.

## DEMONS

In Brief- Human intelligence, range of deadly powers, have learned patience and self-interest.

11 to 15 MSTH. These have the range of intelligence of a normal human. They have some of the same senses as humans (e.g. sight, hearing or touch) as well as the ability to sense and track karma. Although malevolent, they have the intelligence, willpower and self-awareness to control their murderous impulses when it benefits them to do so. A demon, for instance, would probably avoid chasing a victim in to a monastery. Demons are more patient and more selective about who they prey on. They often wait until someone makes the mistake of provoking them somehow. Some demons have grown to enjoy offerings and obeisance and will not attack humans who propitiate them. Although intelligent, demons are full of hatred and can be easily provoked in to doing something stupid.

Some demons have realized that attacking Buddhism, even though it does not cause much immediate suffering, creates much more suffering in the long-term. These demons became enemies of Buddhism. A few demons have actually realized that their lives are horrible and have tried to turn to Buddhist practice to escape from suffering.

Demons have a whole range of abilities which they can use, and they are capable of teaching themselves new abilities. Demons can cause destructive weather (droughts, hailstorms, blizzards, flooding), can ruin crops, can control or kill animals and can make people see illusions. If they can enter a human, they can take control of the human's body or they can cause epilepsy, internal bleeding, extreme bad luck or madness. Thread crosses rarely work on demons. They might be trapped by a thread cross if forced in to one by a skilled magical practitioner or if they become stupid after expending a lot of MSTH.

dangerous. Included are the Balmo (flesh eating goddesses), the Mu (appearing as bloated, dark purple monsters) the Gags (demons who create obstacles to get in the way of those seeking enlightenment), Zah (deities associated with planets who cause disease and epilepsy) and the Citipati (graveyard demons, appearing as dancing skeletons).

**Nyen-** These spirits live in the sky, on plains, in trees, in rocks or in springs. They appear as yellow or green colored bovines. They cause diseases which cripple limbs.

**Söndrema-** These spirits make themselves visible to peasant men they find walking in lonely places at night. When they first appear they look like beautiful women, but as they approach they turn in to old women with tusks. A Söndrema will destroy the victim with sorcery unless the victim can touch the Söndrema on the forehead with an ivory ring without feeling any fear (make a hard save vs. fear).

**Sri-** Appear as giant monsters with human bodies and animal heads. Many live underground, feeding on corpses. Some come above-ground to feed on the life-force of humans or other animals. There are many subtypes of Sri with different preferred victims and different methods of extracting life force, e.g. "weapon Sri" cause physical wounds to appear on victims, "suicide Sri" put thoughts of suicide in people's minds, "water Sri" lurk in rivers and grab and drown waders.

**The'u Rang-** These beings are born from the fat of the turtle that this world is sitting on the back of (see p.19). They cause quarreling, make children sick and send hailstorms and lightning.

**Trickster Spirits-** These spirits enjoy playing humorous tricks on humans. Trickster spirits do not necessarily gain power from causing misery, but from having stories of their tricks told and retold. They usually take physical form as small birds or rodents.

**Tsen-** The Tsen appear as red warriors with full armor and monstrous faces. They ride terrible horses through the sky, shooting people with disease-causing arrows. Sometimes when Tsen make themselves visible to humans their backs are transparent, showing their entrails. A human who sees the entrails of a Tsen will become deathly ill. Many monks who reject their vows become Tsen after death. They often haunt the monasteries they lived in during life. Some live in rocks, others live in the sky. In pre-Buddhist Tibet the king was the human representative of the Tsen.

**Zhidag-** These are spirits of the Earth. They control the fertility of the soil and are provoked to attack whenever anything damages the soil (e.g. mining or heavy traffic). The Zhidag can even help repair portals to hell that appear in the earth (see p.195). They are associated with the color green.

## DEMON LORDS

In Brief- Have slaves, very powerful, have a wide range of interests and plans.

16 to 20 MSTH. Can be as smart (or as stupid) as any human. They have every sense that a human has and they can sense karma and read minds. Demon lords enslave other spirits (as well as ghosts, cursed objects and other magical beings), making them in to personal servants. In pre-Buddhist times, the Demon Lords were worshiped. In remote villages, some still are worshipped as gods.

Demons Lords have a complex agenda. They could easily run around killing humans, but they have evolved beyond the need to cause immediate suffering. Instead, they have complex plans for how to cause long-term, global suffering. In addition to the need to cause suffering, they have many of the same motivations humans do: curiosity, pride, boredom, greed. A demon lord may have a liking for music or riddles. Some demon lords even take human form to engage in sexual intercourse (occasionally leading to half-human offspring).

Demon lords grant favors to worshippers because worship gives them power. They may toy with humans for their own personal amusement. Whenever possible, they trick humans in to doing harmful acts. A human who does bad things gains bad karma and will suffer in many future reincarnations, not just in the current one.

Demon Lords can do any and all of the following: cause earthquakes and landslides, physically attack humans, cause instant and irrevocable madness and manipulate people's thoughts or memories. Gluds do not work on Demon Lords and thread crosses may hold them only if the thread cross was specially prepared for that particular lord.

## DEMON KINGS AND QUEENS

In Brief- Godlike and subtle, in charge of whole armies, most are dharmapalas.

20+ MSTH. The kings and queens are all of above-average intelligence. They can read minds and see things happening in any of the worlds. Some can see the future and past. They each have their own "kingdoms." A few have kingdoms on Earth or in one of the hells, but most have created their own levels of reality.

Demon kings and queens can create lesser malevolent spirits who are splinters of their own essence. These entities act as independent intelligences, though can be reabsorbed later. A demon king or queen has a complex retinue of servants, soldiers and ministers, made up of entities they created and entities they enslaved. These hierarchies have politics and bureaucracy, just like any government or military. Each major demon king and queen is also recognized as the lord of some class of malevolent spirit. They can command entities of that class and very few entities would have the courage or willpower to resist.

Most of the demon kings and queens have been turned in to dharmapalas (bound to oaths to protect humanity). They try to encourage the spirits under their control to do as little harm as possible

and they fight against the non-dharmapala demon kings and queens. Yama (the lord of the hells) is one of the most powerful demon kings turned dharmapalas. There are still demon kings and queens who have not submitted to be bound and are at war with the Dharmapala demon kings and queens. Many of these dharmapala demon kings and queens are smart enough to realize that being bound to do good is a good thing. They are on their own path towards enlightenment, utilizing the same Buddhist teachings meant for gods and heavenly spirits. Some have almost achieved enlightenment and passed out of this world. The dharmapala Pehar is so advanced that he will soon be reborn in a higher heaven, above the realms of desire.



*anti-demon charm*



Just like Buddhas, demon kings and queens rarely intervene directly in human affairs. A single human life is typically too petty for them to deal with. Demon Kings and queens concern themselves with pivotal points in history. When Padmasambhava brought Buddhism to Tibet or when Namri Songsten tried to unite the warring empires of Tibet, the demon kings and queens tried to interfere directly. Otherwise, they allow their servants and ministers to meddle in human affairs.

### Possible Spirit Abilities

Outside People	MSTH used
Any WIL Roll	1
Cause Food to Spoil	3
Appear Visually	3/round
Communicate Telepathically	3/round
Create an Illusion	4/round
Manipulate Coincidence ( $\pm 10$ to any one chance based roll)	5
Start Fires	5
Trip People	5
Cause Crop Blight	5
Control Animals	5/round
Animate a Corpse	6 +1/round
Cause Draught	7
Cause a 1 Bladed Damage Cut	8
Send Disease	10
Lift/Throw an Object	10/round
Cause Hail	10
Create a Lesser Spirit Emanation	10 +desired MSTH
Cause Blizzard	15
Take Physical Form	20
Cause Floods	20
Create a Physical Gateway Between Realms	20
Create Physical Objects	25
Cause Earthquakes/Landslides	25
Transmute Inanimate Objects	30
Inside People	MSTH used
Enter a Human	1
Cause Nightmares ( $\frac{1}{2}$ sleep deprivation damage)	2
Cause Headaches (20 difficulty to save)	3
Cause Anger (20 difficulty to save)	3
Cause Clumsiness (-7 to AGY rolls)	3
Cause Weight Loss (-2 END, $-\frac{1}{2}$ BDY)	3
Cause Bad Luck (-4 on all rolls)	4
Cause Temporary Insanity (+3 dark attachments)	5/day
Cause Vomiting (30 difficulty to save)	5
Cause Confusion (-10 INL, -10 AWR)	5
Cause Seizures (20 difficulty to save)	7
Cause Extreme bad luck (-10 on all rolls)	7
Cause Internal Bleeding (3 BLD damage)	10
Cause Permanent Insanity (+3 dark attachments)	15
Manipulate Thoughts & Memories	20
Mutate Host Body	25

### Seeing Demons

Demon kings and queens do not have physical bodies (although they can temporarily create physical bodies if they desire). When people "see" them, they are seeing the minds and personalities of these creatures (as well as a bit of the viewer's mind reflected back on him or her). Similarly, the realms that the demon kings and queens live in are reflections of the minds of the demons.

In his or her own realm, a demon king or queen stands in the middle of an endless sea of blood. The demon is a giant, dwarfing everything else. The sky is black and starless, the only light comes from fires that leap up spontaneously from the bloody sea. The demon itself may also be on fire. Floating in the sea are pieces of fat and parts of bodies.

The demon has many arms, each holding a large, blood-encrusted weapon. It has thick, muscular limbs, claw-like fingernails, a bloated belly and a beast-like face. It wears clothing made from flayed skins and ornaments made from human bones. It has a third eye in the middle of its forehead, flared nostrils, a huge fang-filled mouth and hair matted with blood or grease.

The demon king or queen is a blur of ceaseless motion. Live victims (appearing as humans and other creatures) are constantly appearing in the sea of blood in front of it. With some hands it hacks the victims to pieces with its weapons. With other hands it grabs corpses and eats them whole. With other hands it thrashes the water, creating huge tidal waves. The demon lets out a scream of rage that never stops.

The demon may be riding on a giant animal (e.g. bear, frog, tiger) or may be standing on a pile of corpses and dying victims. Surrounding the demon are hundreds of lesser servants, smaller but equally monstrous, waiting for any command from their master.

Even when demon kings and queens do choose to intervene in human affairs, their actions are often confusing. This is probably because they have knowledge that humans do not. If demon kings and queens seem reluctant to help the Chinese smash Buddhism in Tibet, perhaps it is because they know that Chinese invasion of Tibet may have beneficial effects decades or even centuries from now.

Demon kings and queens can open physical gateways between the realms of the universe. They can transform animate or inanimate objects in to other things. If they can enter a human they can control the human's mind and mutate the human's body. Only a very special thread cross, built by a master exorcist and with rare and dangerous components, can hold a demon king or queen.

### Typical Mamo Demon

**Attributes-** MSTH 12, AGY 5, AWR 12, INL 10, KMA -20, SPD 5, STH 10, WIL 10.

**Appearance-** Normally invisible. If seen it looks like an ugly old woman with jet black skin, drooping breasts, matted hair and fangs.

#### Abilities

- Cause Food to Spoil (uses 3 MSTH)
- Appear Visually (uses 3 MSTH/round)
- Create an Illusion (uses 4 MSTH/round)
- Cause Crop Blight (uses 5 MSTH)
- Animate a Corpse (uses 6 MSTH +1/round)
- Send Diseases (uses 10 MSTH)

**Motivations-** The Mamo is willing to leave people alone (or even help them occasionally) if treated with respect and given offerings. However, this doesn't stop the Mamo from preying on strangers who wander in to her home territory or killing worshipers who displease her.

**Special Plusses/Minuses-** The mamo is at -15 to any save vs. anger.

**Typical Attack-** The mamo throws a disease at the victim, this uses 10 MSTH and requires a strike roll (INL + AGY + 1d20 vs. 25, or 1d20 vs. 10). If the disease hits the victim, the victim must make a save vs. disease contraction (difficulty 30) or come down with a deadly illness (disease progression rating: 20, disease progression speed: 1 day, symptoms: -5 END, -5 STH, -5 SPD, vomiting (10), 1 BLD damage).

### FALSE DHARMAPALAS

**In Brief-** Malevolent spirits pretend to be dharmapalas to gain worshipers.

One way in which spirits can gain MSTH is to have worshippers. Prayers, offerings, even the telling of stories about a spirit can add to its power. Some malevolent spirits pretend to be good dharmapalas in order to gain worshippers. These spirits lead a double life: in one guise they do good deeds, yet in their true form they continue to wreak havoc.

Many false dharmapalas start by possessing an Oracle. They give useful advice or solve problems of petitioners. As they grow more powerful, they become able to manifest themselves visually to worshipers.

A false dharmapala may reveal its true nature if it loses its temper. For example, if a worshiper forgets to give a daily offering, the false dharmapala may fly in to a rage and attack this worshiper. False dharmapalas will try to kill (or drive insane) anyone who discovers their true natures.

False dharmapalas can range in MSTH from 6 to 20.

## UNEARTHLY BEINGS

**In Brief-** Many beings in other worlds, with many different powers.

Malevolent spirits are native to this plane of existence. This plane of existence is one of the few that has both physical and spiritual beings living in it. There are many other beings living in other worlds and planes of existence. Some of these beings are weak, some are incredibly powerful, some are benevolent and some are malevolent. Even the benevolent beings have their flaws and may be dangerous to PCs if PCs get on their bad sides. Many of these beings have the power to travel to this world, or may end up here due to a cosmic accident.

### HUNGRY GHOSTS

**In Brief-** Beings from a world of constant desire, can be placated with food offerings, can attack out of desperation, cause food to spoil.

Between our realm and the hell realms is the realm of the hungry ghosts. It is a realm where people are reborn when they have caused themselves great suffering with a self-destructive obsession. The hungry ghost realm is a realm of constant and unending hunger. The hungry ghosts' bodies prevent them from ever getting enough food or water.



*hungry ghost*

If a hungry ghost finds itself in this realm, it will be intangible and invisible like a malevolent spirit. The ghost will be too hungry and thirsty to care where it is. It will go around trying to find food and drink. If it finds no food or drink, it will start attacking humans out of desperation. A small offering of food and drink will not satiate the spirit but will typically keep it from attacking people. If the hungry ghost gets in to a store of food or drink it will cause the food to spoil and liquids to turn to poison. Many of the hungry ghosts were once beings of this realm. They have memories of this life, although they are typically too distracted to use them. If captured, there is some chance that a hungry ghost can be reasoned with.

### Typical Hungry Ghost

**Attributes-** MSTH 8, AGY 3, AWR 3, INL 5, KMA -20, SPD 2, STH 2, WIL 1.

**Appearance-** Although typically invisible, those who can see a hungry ghost will see an emaciated human with thin limbs and a huge head and belly. Its mouth is a tiny pinhole and it can only squeak. Its skin is so dry and leathery that it cracks and oozes fluid when the being moves. It is dressed in rags or is naked and its eyes are wide with desperation.

**Motivations-** The being is tortured, without stop, by terrible hunger and thirst. It is desperate to the point of madness and will do anything to get even a drop of liquid or a crumb of food.

**Methods-** The hungry ghost will wander the land looking for food or drink. If it finds humans it will be unable to communicate with them and may attack them out of desperation. If it finds a large supply of food or drink that food or drink will turn to poison. If the hungry ghost is very lucky it will figure out how to go inside a person. Once inside someone, the hungry ghost sucks up any food or drink the person eats. Without help, the victim will die of thirst or starvation.

**Typical Attack-** The hungry ghost will make an extended strike at STH + AGY +5 vs. 1d20 (or 1d20 vs. 15). Each attack uses 5 MSTH (the ghost will have to wait 5 rounds before attacking again). Each successful attack causes 1 blunt damage and 1 day's worth of starvation damage (see p.152).

Hell beings arrive in the hells with memories of their last incarnation, but the suffering of the hells quickly drives them insane. It is very rare for a hell being to give any thought to who it is or what its future goals are. They act like animals, fleeing or fighting out of fear, pain and rage.

Hell Beings may accidentally flee in to our world through a portal to hell (see p.195). In this world they will typically be invisible and intangible, like malevolent spirits. They may still think they are in hell and may attack humans out of fear.

### Typical Hell Being

**Attributes-** MSTH 10, AGY 10, AWR 10, INL 1, KMA -30, SPD 10, STH 10, WIL 1.

**Appearance-** Invisible and intangible, but to those who can see it, the hell being appears as a 10 ft. (3m.) tall, naked, badly deformed human, covered with sores and injuries. It carries weapons and its eyes bulge with fear and hatred.

**Motivations-** The hell being is completely insane, and is acting out of instinct. It thinks it is in hell and it thinks anything it sees is a threat. It will attack any being that comes near it. It is difficult to frighten away because it perceives danger in every direction.

**Methods-** The hell being does not understand that it is a spiritual being in a physical world. Though it will attack anything and anyone it comes across, it is a matter of chance whether an attack will actually do anything to the target. The hell being also emanates bad karma (-3 KMA emanation) which will cause problems all around it.

**Typical Attack-** The hell being will attempt an extended strike with one of its weapons at STH + AGY + 5 (extended) +1d20 (or 1d20 vs. 0). The strike uses 5 MSTH, which means the being must rest for 5 rounds before it can strike again. Each strike only has a 50% chance of doing any real damage. If it does damage, it causes 1d6 bladed damage.

## THE HELLS

**In Brief-** The tortured (insane monsters) and the torturers (cruel beasts with torture implements instead of hands) may end up in this realm as invisible spirits.

There are two types of creatures living in the hells:

**Hell Beings-** These are beings from other realms who have been reincarnated in the hells with some of their memories still intact. Their form is determined by their karma and is particular to the hell they end up in. For example: In the first hot hell (where inhabitants are forced to continually fight and kill each other) the hell beings look like wrathful demons. In the eighth hot hell (where inhabitants are perpetually on fire) the hell beings look like mountains made up of charred and flaming flesh.

**Shinje-** The Shinje are the torturers of hell. They are created by the bad karma of the hells' residents. They are created with minds and bodies perfectly suited to torturing hell beings. They are the ones who saw hell beings in to pieces, pour molten metal down their throats or impale them on burning skewers. They also guard the hells to prevent escapes and hunt down hell beings who do manage to escape.

If a Shinje finds itself in this realm, it will become a spirit of death. It will find and kill humans with karma bad enough to cause reincarnation in the hells. It will also hunt down ghosts who have avoided reincarnation and torture them until they give up this incarnation.

Shinje look like huge muscular humanoids with the heads of animals. They either hold torture implements or have torture implements instead of hands. They may have pincers, claws, spikes, or saws on their limbs. These torture implements will either glow red with heat or will be so cold they will crackle.

### Typical Shinje

**Attributes-** MSTH 18, AGY 12, AWR 7, INL 4, KMA -30, SPD 12, STH 18, WIL 5.

**Appearance-** A 20 ft. (6m.) tall humanoid with the head of a donkey. Instead of hands it has red hot pincers on one hand and a red-hot saw on the other.

**Motivations-** This being was born with an instinct to torture the denizens of the hells. If it comes to this realm it will continue to seek out and torture those with bad karma. As it spends more time in this world it may adjust to the rules of this place and become another malevolent spirit.

**Typical Attack-** The Shinje attacks with its pincer or saw at 1d20 vs. 0. If successful, the victim takes 1 burn damage and must save vs. distracting pain (difficulty 40). The attack uses 5 MSTH.

## RAKSHASAS

In Brief- Giant, shape-shifting, predators from a nearby world; come here to eat humans.

Our world is one of four “continent” worlds that surround Mount Meru (see p.19). Each of these worlds has intelligent inhabitants. Each of these worlds also has two satellite worlds to either side of it. Rakshasas are beings from the satellite to the left of this world. They are the only beings close enough and powerful enough to regularly visit our realm. Humans have also been known to visit their realm, accidentally or on purpose.

Rakshasas are cruel and bloodthirsty. They enjoy tormenting humans, killing them, drinking their blood and eating their flesh. Rakshasas are also accomplished sorcerers. Rakshasas may appear in this realm as invisible spirits or as physical beings. When they are physical beings they have the power to change shape. They take on benign physical forms (e.g. sheep, dogs, children). When they get close to their prey, though, they enjoy frightening the prey by reverting to their original forms. In their true form they are giant cat-like humanoids.

In the past, Rakshasas have put together small armies to attack our realms. In each instance, some powerful saint, hero or god drove them back.

## HEAVENLY BEINGS

In Brief- Advanced, but imperfect, may involve humans in their wars.

Some beings have such good karma that they are reincarnated in the heavens. These beings are generally superior to humans: smarter, stronger, wiser, longer-lived. When humans encounter them they are typically benevolent. However, they are not perfect. They have flaws which can cause them to be dangerous to humans.

**Yakshas:** Still revel in the pleasures of human form: sex, athletics and eating. Some enjoy eating so much that they develop a taste for human flesh.

**Garudas:** Incredibly powerful bird-like creatures. They have not surpassed the predatory instinct. Their chosen prey is the largest of the Lu spirits.

### Typical Rakshasa

**Attributes-** In their true form: AGY 15, AWR 13, END 16, INL 10, KMA -10, SPD 15, STH 25, WIL 14, BLD 4, BDY 6, INCY 5.

**Appearance-** A large (10 ft. or 3 m. tall) humanoid with fangs, claws and skin that has the appearance of raw flesh. The eyes, nose and mouth are feline.

**Motivations-** The Rakshasa is a predator. It sees humans as prey to be toyed with, then killed and devoured.

**Methods-** The Rakshasa can change shapes. It will change in to a small child and come up to a lone human, asking for help. It may converse with the human, just for the thrill of interacting with unknowing prey. When it is close enough it will revert to its true form. It will grab the human, bite open the human's veins, drink the blood and then bite the flesh from the bones.

#### Special Abilities

Good sense of smell (+7 to smell based AWR rolls)

Shape-shifting (requires a moderate WIL roll, the Rakshasa can not increase its physical abilities).

Enhanced healing (heals 1 BLD or BDY point per hour).

**Special Skills-** Animation (2), Bird Control (2), Disease Sorcery (4), Poisons (2), Simple Curses (2), Zor (2).

**Typical Attack-** At range 3 it can grab a human (at 1d20 vs. 7) and then pick up and bite the human (doing 5 bladed damage). The Rakshasa is +5 to hit because of its size.

**Devas:** Heavenly beings that live in a realm very close to enlightenment. The Devas only flaw is pride, but this flaw prevents them from entering the higher heavens. They think they are being barred from these heavens. They do not realize that they are keeping themselves from these realms. Out of frustration, they wage war against the beings of the higher heavens. These wars are futile and will ultimately end in painful death. The Devas may live thousands of years in paradise, but in the end they will die painful deaths and be reborn in the hell realms.

They may occasionally recruit humans to help them in the war. They hope that humans might be able to go places and do things that the Devas can't.

## THE UNDEAD

**In Brief-** The souls of the deceased and animated corpses can cause danger for the living.

### GHOSTS

**In Belief-** People who avoid rebirth have the powers of, and will eventually become, malevolent spirits.

Usually, when a human dies, that human's soul goes on to another rebirth. Sometimes the soul remains in this realm. There are many possible reasons:

- The soul did not have someone doing the bardo ceremony to guide it and it got lost.
- A sorcerer sabotaged the soul's path towards rebirth.
- A demon lord captured and enslaved the soul before it could be reborn.
- The person had some unfulfilled need in this realm and resisted rebirth by pure force of will.

A ghost who spends enough time as an invisible spirit in this realm will become one of the many classes of malevolent spirits (see p.186). Persecutors of Buddhism and (other great villains) will become Dūd spirits. Monks who have rejected their vows will become Tsen. Evil lamas will become Gyelpo spirits.

Until they become malevolent spirits, however, ghosts are unique beings. They have the memories and personalities of humans, but the potential to do anything a malevolent spirit can do. As they learn abilities that let them effect the physical world, they may attempt to help or hurt humans. Most of the people who become ghosts were not peaceful or content people. They may have pre-existing grudges, or they may resent the living for not respecting their memories. They may even get mad at the living because they resent the fact that they are still alive.

It is often useful to try to placate a ghost with apologies, prayers and offerings. If that doesn't work, the same means of exorcism that work on malevolent spirits will work on ghosts.

## WALKING CORPSES

**In Brief-** Ghosts or malevolent spirits can animate a corpse. A corpse animated by a malevolent spirit is slow and blind, but anyone who touches it will die.

Sometimes a ghost will attempt to re-enter his or her body. Most times the ghost fails, but every once in a while the ghost succeeds. The decomposing body gets up and starts walking around. The person is still doomed, and being in a rotting body drives him or her insane. They have poor control over their bodies (are clumsy). They also must expend MSTH to make their bodies move, and if they lose too much MSTH they will fall out of the corpse.

An even more dangerous occurrence is when a malevolent spirit enters and animates a human body. This is most likely to happen when someone dies during a thunderstorm. At some random point, the body will suddenly sit up, then stand and start walking. The minor spirit that has inhabited the body is too stupid to do anything but make the body walk. The corpse cannot communicate, cannot see, and it can only walk in a straight line. By some bizarre side effect of the possession, though, anyone who touches or is touched by the corpse will die instantly (only a legendary difficulty save on KMA can save the person). The walking corpse can be defeated by normal means of exorcism. For some unknown reason, hitting the corpse very hard with a boot (a successful blunt vital strike) will knock the spirit out of the corpse.

Most malevolent spirits possessing a corpse will become exhausted or bored. They will leave the body in a few hours or days. The longer the spirit stays, however, the more chance the spirit will learn to use the body more efficiently. If this happens, the spirit may learn to see and to turn. This makes the walking corpse doubly dangerous because it can now search for and go after prey.

## HAUNTED PLACES

**In Brief-** Have bad KMA and attract malevolent beings.

Beings and objects can have karma, good or bad. Places can also have karma. When a place has bad karma, it attracts all kinds of malevolent beings. Humans in these places are in extreme danger of being attacked by malevolent beings.

## CROSSROADS

In Brief- Spirits get lost easily, hang around crossroads. Sorcerers summon demons at crossroads.

KMA Emanation: -1 to -2. Malevolent spirits get lost easily. Many lost spirits wait around at crossroads, hoping for a traveler come by and lead them back to civilization (where the victims are). When Tibetans reach a crossroads, they try to cross them as quickly as possible before the malevolent spirits there notice their presence.

Demons can find crossroads easily. For this reason, sorcerers often perform their ceremonies at crossroads. Sorcerers get +4 to skill rolls to summon demons.

Both graveyards and charnel grounds are places where malevolent beings congregate. Graveyards are the worst, since there are more intact corpses there.

A portion of a person's karma remains in the body after death, and when many remains are present the bad karma typically outweighs the good. Sometimes the bad karma is enough that objects (typically skeletons) become animated (see Cursed Objects, p.195). Other common evils found in graveyards are Shinje (p.191), Ghosts (p.193) and Walking Corpses (p.193).



*sky burial site*

## GRAVEYARDS AND CHARNEL GROUNDS

In Brief- Corpses emanate bad KMA, attract ghosts and spirits.

KMA Emanation: -1 to -5. In ancient Tibet, people used to bury their dead, or place them in chortens (small pagoda-shaped stone structures). In modern times, most bodies are disposed of by "sky burial" (see p.17) in charnel grounds. These grounds are typically grassy fields or plateaus, surrounded by a low rock wall, with large flat rocks for laying out bodies. People often string up prayer-flags around these sites to try to obviate the bad karma.

## HAUNTED MOUNTAINS

In Brief- Some mountains ruled by demons.

KMA Emanation: -4 to -6. Almost every mountain in Tibet has some entity ruling over it. Many are benevolent beings who are worshiped by Tibetans. Others are ruled over by malevolent spirits of the demon or demon lord class.

These demons cannot leave their mountains. If they want victims they must wait for unwary travelers to come to them. The bad karma of the mountain causes other malevolent beings to congregate there as well.



## DOOR TO THE EARTH

In Brief- Portal to hell or hungry ghost realm, can only be closed with thread cross ceremony.

KMA Emanation: -5. Occasionally, an invisible and intangible “hole” will open up in the borders between this realm and the hungry ghost and hell realms. Hungry ghosts or hell beings will crawl out of the hole and terrorize the nearby countryside. The only way to close the hole is with a special thread cross ceremony. In the ceremony, Zhidag spirits are summoned to repair the hole. It takes a moderate difficulty Thread Cross skill roll to perform this ceremony. The ceremony must be performed at the hole, which puts the practitioner in extreme danger.

## ABANDONED MONASTERIES

In Brief- Trapped spirits escape when monks stop saying prayers.

KMA Emanation: -1 to -3. Sometimes, monastic exorcists cannot destroy or bind a malevolent being and must trap it. A constant vigil of prayers (and the good karma of the monks) keeps the trapped spirits dormant. However, if a monastery is suddenly abandoned, the malevolent beings may escape. The most common beings prowling abandoned monasteries are cursed objects and malevolent spirits of the Demon level.

## CURSED OBJECTS

In Brief- Objects that have absorbed much bad KMA can become self-aware and have spirit-like powers.

Just as karma floating around in the universe can spontaneously form in to a malevolent spirit (see p.184) the karma trapped in an object can sometimes become an intelligent being. The object becomes aware. If the karma was bad (as is usually the case), the being will be malevolent. The being is permanently trapped within the object, but can learn to do many of the things malevolent spirits can do. Cursed objects cannot go inside humans like a spirit can, but can effect humans and the environment from without (see Possible Spirit Abilities: Outside People). Any object that has been used to cause much suffering can become self-aware. Weapons, ritual implements or sorcery or exorcism and the bones of killers or tyrants are the most common things to become self-aware.

The problem with malevolent objects is that the only way to deal with them is to destroy the object. The spirits can resist destruction and destroying the object will unleash a dangerous wave of bad karma (see p.149). Most monks do not try to destroy the objects, but instead keep malevolent objects trapped in temples, kept dormant with prayers.

## PHURBAS

In Brief- Daggers used for exorcism often become self aware, are often trapped in the wilderness by monks.

The most common cursed object is a phurba (ritual dagger). Phurbas are used for destroying malevolent spirits. Each time the phurba destroys a spirit, it picks up a bit of that spirit’s bad karma. Over the centuries a phurba will pick up enough bad karma that it will almost certainly become self-aware.

The most powerful cursed phurbas are kept by powerful lamas. The lamas emanate enough good karma to weaken the phurbas and keep them dormant. If the lama dies, however, the remaining monks have few options. If they can destroy the phurba, it will injure everyone around. Monks often choose to take the phurba out in to the wilderness, lock it up and hide it. Unfortunately, a powerful cursed phurba can manipulate chance, influence people’s minds or create emotion even from a distance. Most cursed phurbas will eventually cause someone to find them and release them from their prison.

### Typical Cursed Phurba

**Attributes-** MSTH 25, AGY 15, AWR 10, INL 10, KMA -50, SPD 25, STH 5, WIL 5.

**Appearance-** A normal looking brass phurba with a tri-cornered blade, a vajra on the handle and a representation of a wrathful emanation of Chenrezig on the end of the handle. Found in a small locked box with charms carved in to it.

**Motivations-** The phurba’s mind is made up of bits and pieces of every malevolent entity that was ever executed with it. It is a being of pure malevolence with no personal needs except to cause suffering.

**Methods-** If the phurba is trapped, it will use its abilities to cause someone to come release it. It can move on its own accord, but finds it easier to trick a human in to carrying it to civilization. Once in civilization it will stay hidden and will cause serious diseases and misfortunes.

**Abilities-** The phurba can levitate and fly around (25 SPD) at a cost of 2 MSTH per round. The phurba can do the following in a range of 20 ft. (6 m.):

Cause Food to Spoil (uses 3 MSTH)

Create an Illusion (uses 4 MSTH/round)

Manipulate Coincidence (gives  $\pm 10$  to any one chance based roll, uses 5 MSTH)

Send Disease (uses 10 MSTH)

**Typical Attack-** If facing a serious threat, the phurba will fly straight at the enemy, trying to pierce internal organs. The phurba makes a vital strike at 1d20 vs. 0. If it strikes successfully, it does 4 bladed damage. The phurba can also dodge at 1d20 vs. 0. It uses up 2 MSTH per round while attacking or dodging.

## HUMAN DANGERS

In Brief- Humans can harm others through magic, either on purpose or unknowingly.

### SORCERERS

In Brief- People with harmful magical skills, either professionals or people with a grudge. The challenge is to figure out who the sorcerer is and gain proof.

A sorcerer is a person who has learned magical skills designed to hurt or manipulate other people. Some sorcerers try to use their skills for good, or have complex motivations for learning these skills. The majority of sorcerers, though, are cruel people who enjoy hurting and having power over others. Some sorcerers are professionals (who work for hire or extort victims). Others sorcerers use sorcery only to settle personal grudges.

Teaching and performing sorcery is illegal. Sorcerers can be banished (or worse) when discovered. So, sorcerers tend to stay underground and keep their identities hidden. Sorcerers come from all social classes. Often a person finds out he or she is being attacked by a sorcerer but has no idea who the sorcerer is. Even when someone discovers the identity of a sorcerer, they find they need to get proof. If they attack the sorcerer without getting proof of sorcery, it will appear they are attacking an innocent person. Another way to deal with sorcery is to hire another sorcerer. The two sorcerers engage in a dangerous sorcerous battle (p.104).

### TRA'MENMA

In Brief- Some women born such that they emanate much more bad karma than normal. Some learn to control this, others become dangerous wanderers.

Every once in a while a plague of death and misery will be tracked back to one seemingly-pious woman. A remote village with no astrologer or mirror gazer may be plagued by misfortune for years before the source is discovered. The woman, known as a Tra'menma, is usually unaware that she is at fault. She was born with a particular defect such that her bad karma and malevolent thoughts cause harm to others. The tra'menma emanates around -5 KMA and can double this emanation by thinking angry or jealous thoughts. This bad karma emanation will manifest as disease, malevolent spirit attacks and bad luck for everyone in the area.

If a tra'menma is discovered, she may be able to stay relatively harmless. If she can keep her karma very good and avoid harmful thoughts,

she is safe to be around. If not, she will be banished and become a wandering beggar. Banished tra'menma are very dangerous: they resent the hardships they have suffered and grow to hate everyone. The more hateful and insane they become, the more damage they do to anyone they come near. They might even learn to control their powers. By purposefully filling their minds with evil thoughts they can cause terrible misfortunes.

### POISON BEARERS

In Brief- Some people issue magical poison, they live in the wilderness and poison travelers who stay the night with them.



Tibetans are very hospitable to travelers. Poor farmers and nomads are especially hospitable to traveling monks or religious pilgrims. This is their way of contributing to the religion (and thereby gaining good karma). Travelers often look for a house or tent where they can ask for food and a place to stay for the night. However, travelers eating with strangers are in danger of becoming victims to poison bearers.

Poison Bearers are people who have inherited a particular curse. Like the tra'menma, this curse effects the way they emanate bad karma. Unlike the tra'menma, however, the poison bearers emanate bad karma in the form of a real poison.

A poison bearer who can not maintain unusually good karma has two choices: poison others, or poison themselves. Most choose to poison others. After they poison everyone they know they are forced to live in the wilderness and trick travelers in to dining with them. The poison bearer can poison food just by touching the bowl. The poison doesn't take effect right away, the victims usually die the next day while on the road. After killing, the poison bearers usually experience a brief period of good luck and prosperity.

There are few defenses against poison bearers. A poison sensing bowl (p.118) can protect a traveler, but these magical bowls are rare and expensive.

### WILD TULPAS

In Brief- Some people can create humans from mental energy.

Buddhist practitioners and sorcerers learn a skill which allows them to create physical objects from mental energy. It is a long and difficult process, requiring many hours of meditation.

The highest accomplishment of this art is the creation of intelligent, living beings. These beings are called Tulpas. A tulpa looks and feels just like a normal human. However, a tulpa is not created with sentience or self-awareness. It is a mindless automaton that can only follow orders. Buddhist practitioners often create tulpas so they can have partners for sexual tantra. Sorcerers often create tulpas as assassins.

## SELF-AWARENESS

**In Brief-** Some tulpas become self-aware, can become normal people.

Although they are not born with self-awareness, every day that a tulpa is alive there is a small chance it may become self-aware. If a tulpa is separated from its master, that chance increases. If a Tulpa gains self-awareness it will wander off on its own, no longer caring about its master's wishes. If it can survive it can become an intelligent person who looks and acts perfectly normal.

## MADNESS

**In Brief-** If tulpa creation is interrupted, a crazy, uncontrollable tulpa can result.

If the creation of a tulpa is interrupted before the tulpa is fully formed, what results is a wild tulpa. Instead of following orders, the tulpa acts randomly. It may attempt to carry out its original purpose, but do so in the wrong way (e.g. a tulpa created to assassinate a particular victim may go around killing people at random). If it becomes self-aware, it will be panicked, confused and in pain. It will want to become a whole being but will not know how.

## PHENOMENA

**In Brief-** Partially made tulpas can interact with physical matter in strange and unpredictable ways.

The wild tulpa exists in a state somewhere between being a physical being and being a being made of mental energies. The effects will be random and bizarre: a tulpa may have parts which are invisible or are intangible. A tulpa may

be visible if viewed from one angle, invisible if viewed from another. A tulpa may fade in and out of existence, or may spontaneously move from one place to another. Wild tulpas may have other errors in the way they interact with the physical world: they may make no noise, or have no reflection, or may float an inch off the ground, or may be able to pass through one type of solid matter but not any other. These bizarre effects make a tulpa unpredictable, and therefore hard to capture or kill. However, every wild tulpa will have tangible physical portions (at least some of the time) and if PCs can cause enough injuries to these then the tulpa will die.

### Typical Wild Tulpa

**Attributes-** AGY 10, AWR 5, END 20, INL 5, KMA 0, SPD 15, STH 15, WIL 15, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 6.

**Appearance-** Looks like a well-groomed young Tibetan male. Has clean, symmetrical features. Is wearing monk's robes. Parts of its body is invisible. There are holes in its arms head and neck that PCs can see right through.

**Motivations-** The tulpa was created by a tantric master to be a servant, but the master died and the creation was unfinished. The tulpa doesn't understand what it is or how it came to be. It only knows that it is supposed to be a human but that this was never quite accomplished. It thinks that other humans can help. If it finds humans it will try to beg for help, but if help is not forthcoming it may try to force humans to help by grabbing them and strangling them.

**Methods-** The Tulpa will talk, but only short, meaningless burst of sounds will come out. After the first few failures in communication, the tulpa will do anything it can to gain attention: rushing at the characters, waving its arms, breaking things, etc. If PCs try to run away it will chase them and will strangle them to prevent them from leaving.

### Special Abilities

Any successful strike has a 1 in 2 chance of passing right through the tulpa's body and not doing any damage.

Every round, the tulpa has a 1 in 6 chance of phasing out of reality. It will return in 2d6 minutes 1d20 feet (or 1d6 m.) away.

Every time the tulpa phases in and out of reality, any injuries it had are completely healed.

**Typical Attack-** The tulpa attacks with an extended Grab: Strangulation at STH (15) + AGY (10) + 5 + 1d20 vs. 25 (or 1d20 +5 vs. 0). If successful it will try to keep hold of the victim until it gets what it wants or until the victim goes unconscious.



# CREATING NPCs

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 Typical Hunting Party (p.180)  
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## LEVELS RECONSIDERED

A good way to look at levels is as a rough measurement of how well characters have proven that they can survive by doing whatever it is they do.

At level 0, the person doesn't have the skills necessary to survive for any length of time by themselves. They are either in the care of older and wiser characters, or they survive by pure luck alone. Most children are level 0.

Level 1 characters have some thing they do to survive and make a living. If they can stay out of the way of major dangers, they have a good chance of surviving. They don't need to be under the special care of any other person.

Subsequent levels simply represent more mastery of whatever it that person's class does, and they are increasingly rare. Most people become "content" around level 3 or 4 and do not seek to improve their skills further. A level 10 Farmer, for instance, would be someone who has spent decades trying to become a better farmer. He or she would probably one of the wisest, wealthiest, most influential and most well-traveled farmers in Tibet. He or she may have written books on farming and may have more money than some aristocrats. There are probably less than 5 level 10 farmers in all of Tibet. A level 10 Farmer would likely be literate, have some weathermaking skills, know a little divination. He or she would probably have several magic objects (including soil from Zetong, see p.50) and would have enough weapons to fight off a bandit raiding party.

The point here is that a level 10 farmer is still a farmer. If the farmer could not farm, he or she would have a hard time finding some other way of making a living. The farmer would need some very intensive training (e.g. taking on a discipline) to be able to make a living doing anything else. When it comes to farming, though, there isn't much the farmer can't do.

## BONUS POINT NPC CREATION

Using this method, you create NPCs from a pool of bonus points, based on the level you want the PC. First, figure out what level you want, then look on the following table to find the number of bonus points, then spend those bonus points on attributes, skills and money. For example, to build a level 3 NPC you would start with 180 Bonus Points. You might spend 100 points to get 100 attribute points, 50 to get 150 skill points and 21 to get 7 health attribute points and 9 to get 2250 Srang.

Level	Bonus Points
0	130
1	150
2	165
3	180
4	195
5	210
7	240
10	285
15	360
20	435

## CORE NPC CREATION

When you create NPCs using this method you:

First, figure out what the three most important attributes and handful of most important skills are for that NPC's character class.

Second, use the following table to figure out the NPC's attributes and core skills. Use the random skills table to get some more skills. Then spend the money on appropriate equipment.

Level	Attributes		Skills		Core Equip.
	Core	Other	Core	Other	
0	10	7	2 at level 1	None	125 Sr.
1	11	8	all at level 1	None	250 Sr.
2	11	9	all at level 1	2 at level 1	375 Sr.
3	12	9	all at level 2	2 at level 1	500 Sr.
4	12	10	all at level 2	3 at level 1	625 Sr.
5	13	10	all at level 3	3 at level 1	750 Sr.
7	14	11	all at level 3	5 at level 2	1000 Sr.
10	15	12	all at level 4	7 at level 3	2000 Sr.
15	17	13	all at level 5	10 at level 3	3500 Sr.
20	18	14	all at level 6	15 at level 4	5000 Sr.

## Chinese Soldier

**Core Attributes:** STH, END, WIL

**Core Skills:** Military Science, Political Science, Rifle, Gun Repair, Foreign Language: Tibetan.

**Core Equipment:** Chinese Military Clothes (40 Srang), Boots (25 Srang), Knife (25 Srang), Rifle: WWII (800 Srang), Binoculars (85 Srang), Gasoline Lamp (60 Srang), Helmet (500 Srang), Horse (750 Srang), Saddle (150 Srang), Grenade (400 Srang), Flak Jacket (3000 Srang), Pistol: Automatic (1000 Srang).

## Criminal

**Core Attributes:** AWR, INL, CHM

**Core Skills:** Prowling, Sleight of Hand, Knife, Poisons.

**Core Equipment:** Chuba: Common (35 Srang), Boots (25 Srang), Hat: Fleece (17 Srang), Knife (25 Srang), Charm: Dogbite (30 Srang), Pack (10 Srang), Kukuri (170 Srang), Butter Lamp (10 Srang), Rope: 30ft./9m. (15 Srang), Rifle: WWI (400 Srang), Leather Armor (300 Srang).

## Monk

**Core Attributes:** INL, WIL, AWR

**Core Skills:** Literacy, Logic, Indifference, Breath Tantra, Protective Mantras, Medical Mantras, Simple Divination.

**Core Equipment:** Monk's Robes (20 Srang), Hat: Monk's (10 Srang), Boots (25 Srang), Prayer Beads (4 Srang), Pen & Ink (10 Srang), Thangaka (25 Srang), Medical Charm (25 Srang), Iron Pencease (20 Srang), Kanjur (200 Srang), Knife (25 Srang), Tenjur (200 Srang).

**Example:** The GM wants to make a level 7 Chinese Soldier. Looking on the table, we see that a level 7 NPC has core attributes at 14 and all others at 11. Since the Core Attributes for a Chinese Soldier are STH, END and WIL, all these are 14 and the rest are 11. Referring again to the table, we see that all of the core skills are at level 3. The soldier also gets 5 additional skills at level 2, so the GM rolls 5 times on the random skill table. Finally, the soldier gets 1000 Srang worth of equipment. If we start at the beginning of the list and add it up we get Chinese Military Clothes, Boots, Knife, Rifle: WWII and Binoculars. We stop before Gasoline Lamp because that would go over 1000 Srang. So now we have attributes, skills and equipment for our soldier.

## RANDOM SKILL TABLE

Roll 1d1000

	Laity	Magical Profes- sional	Religious Profes- sional
Archery (N/A)	1-7	1-6	1-6
Brawling (N/A)	8-15	7-12	7-13
Crane Kung Fu (N/A)	16-22	13-18	14-19
Lance (N/A)	23-30	19-24	20-26
Knife (N/A)	31-37	25-31	27-32
Rifle (N/A)	38-44	32-37	33-39
Sling (N/A)	45-52	38-43	40-45
Snare (N/A)	53-59	44-49	46-51
Specific Training (N/A)	60-67	50-55	52-58
Staff (N/A)	68-74	56-61	59-64
Sword (N/A)	75-82	62-67	65-71
Tai Chi (N/A)	83-89	68-73	72-77
Whip (N/A)	90-96	74-80	78-84
Wrestling (N/A)	97-104	81-86	85-90
Architecture (INL)	105-116	87-96	91-100
Blacksmithing (INL)	117-128	97-107	101-110

Carving (INL)	129-141	108-117	111-120
Cooking (INL)	142-153	118-128	121-130
Dancing (AGY)	154-166	129-138	131-141
Forgery (INL)	167-178	139-149	142-151
Music (INL)	179-190	150-159	152-161
Painting (INL)	191-203	160-170	162-171
Printing (INL)	204-215	171-180	172-181
Storytelling (CHM)	216-227	181-191	182-191
Tailoring (INL)	228-240	192-201	192-201
Textiles (INL)	241-252	202-211	202-211
Drum Divination (INL)	253-261	212-224	212-221
Elemental Astrology (INL)	262-271	225-236	222-231
Geomancy (INL)	272-280	237-248	232-242
Mirror Gazing (AWR)	281-289	249-260	243-252
Omen Reading (AWR)	290-298	261-273	253-262
Scapulimancy (INL)	299-308	274-285	263-272
Simple Divination (INL)	309-317	286-297	273-282
Zodiac Astrology (INL)	318-326	298-309	283-292
Dagger Exorcism (WIL)	327-335	310-320	293-302
Demon Shield (INL)	336-345	321-330	303-312
Fire Exorcism (INL)	346-354	331-341	313-322
Glud Ceremony (INL)	355-363	342-351	323-332
Harrying Exorcism (INL)	364-373	352-362	333-343
Funerary Rites (INL)	374-382	363-372	344-353
Oath Binding (WIL)	383-391	373-383	354-363
Protective Mantras (INL)	392-400	384-393	364-373
Sound Exorcism (INL)	401-410	394-404	374-383
Sucking Exorcism (WIL)	411-419	405-414	384-393
Thread Crosses (INL)	420-428	415-425	394-403
Acrobatics (AGY)	429-440	426-437	404-413
Animal Training (CHM)	441-453	438-449	414-423
Butchery (INL)	454-465	450-461	424-434
Farming (INL)	466-478	462-474	435-444
Gambling (INL)	479-490	475-486	445-454
Gun Repair (INL)	491-502	487-498	455-464
Meditation (AWR)	503-515	499-510	465-474
Oratory (CHM)	516-527	511-523	475-484
Prowling (AGY)	528-539	524-535	485-494
Seduction (CHM)	540-552	536-547	495-504
Sleight of Hand (AGY)	553-564	548-559	505-514
Tracking (AWR)	565-576	560-572	515-524
Trading (INL)	577-589	573-584	525-535
Trick Riding (AGY)	590-601	585-596	536-545
Death (INL)	602-610	597-605	546-555
Emergency Medicine (INL)	611-620	606-614	556-565
Herbalism (INL)	621-629	615-624	566-575
Humoural Medicine (INL)	630-638	625-633	576-585
Medical Diagnosis (INL)	639-647	634-642	586-595
Medical Mantras (INL)	648-657	643-651	596-605
Wildcrafting (INL)	658-666	652-660	606-615
Abidharma (INL)	667-672	661-666	616-621
Cryptography (INL)	673-677	667-672	622-627
Etiquette (CHM)	678-683	673-677	628-633
Hell Realms (INL)	684-689	678-683	634-639

Iconography (INL)	690-694	684-688	640-645
Indifference (INL)	695-700	689-694	646-651
Literacy (INL)	701-706	695-700	652-657
Logic (INL)	707-712	701-705	658-663
Mathematics (INL)	713-717	706-711	664-668
Pantheons (INL)	718-723	712-717	669-674
Philosophy (INL)	724-729	718-722	675-680
Teaching (CHM)	730-734	723-728	681-686
Tibetan History (INL)	735-740	729-734	687-692
Tibetan Law (INL)	741-746	735-739	693-698
Torture (INL)	747-751	740-745	699-704
Animation (WIL)	752-757	746-751	705-712
Bird Control (WIL)	758-763	752-757	713-719
Demon Sorcery (INL)	764-769	758-763	720-727
Disease Sorcery (INL)	770-774	764-769	728-735
Gantad Horn (INL)	775-780	770-776	736-743
Life Force Sorcery (WIL)	781-786	777-782	744-751
Love Magic (INL)	787-791	783-788	752-759
Poisons (INL)	792-797	789-794	760-767
Simple Curses (WIL)	798-803	795-800	768-774
Zor (WIL)	804-808	801-806	775-782
Breath Yoga (AWR)	809-813	807-811	783-789
Dakini Language (INL)	814-818	812-817	790-796
Death Tantra (WIL)	819-822	818-822	797-804
Fire Yoga (WIL)	823-827	823-827	805-811
Invisibility (WIL)	828-832	828-832	812-818
Lightness Yoga (AWR)	833-836	833-838	819-825
Pure Vision (AWR)	837-841	839-843	826-832
Sexual Tantra (WIL)	842-846	844-848	833-839
Sorcery Tantra (INL)	847-850	849-853	840-846
Subtle Self (INL)	851-855	854-859	847-853
Tulpa Creation (WIL)	856-859	860-864	854-860
Wind Voices (AWR)	860-864	865-869	861-867
Yidam Tantra (WIL)	865-869	870-874	868-874
Animal Packing (INL)	870-878	875-883	875-882
Foreign Language (INL)	879-887	884-893	883-890
Mountain Climbing (INL)	888-897	894-902	891-898
Riding (AGY)	898-906	903-911	899-906
Swimming (SPD)	907-915	912-920	907-914
Tibetan Geography (INL)	916-924	921-929	915-921
Wilderness Survival (INL)	925-934	930-939	922-929
Weather Mantras (WIL)	935-940	940-945	930-936
Weather Prediction (AWR)	941-946	946-952	937-943
Weather Propitiation (INL)	947-952	953-959	944-950
Weather Sorcery (INL)	953-958	960-965	951-958
Agriculture (INL)	959-963	966-969	959-962
Criminology (INL)	964-968	970-973	963-967
Electronics (INL)	969-972	974-977	968-972
Mechanics (INL)	973-977	978-981	973-976
Military Science (INL)	978-981	982-985	977-981
Political Science (INL)	982-986	986-988	982-986
Science (INL)	987-991	989-992	987-991
Western Medicine (INL)	992-995	993-996	992-995
World History (INL)	996-1000	997-1000	996-1000

## RANDOM NPC CONCEPT

Magical Religious			
Laity	Profes- sional	Profes- sional	
Gender			
01-40	01-60	01-75	Male
41-00	61-00	76-00	Female
Ethnicity			
01-21	01-30	01-26	Eastern Tibetan
22-47	31-65	27-59	Central Tibetan
48-65	66-90	60-82	Western Tibetan
66-75	91-93	83-87	Chinese
76-85	94-96	88-92	Mongol
86-95	97-98	94-96	Indian
96-00	99-00	97-00	Other
Attitude Towards Chinese Communism			
01-04	01-03	01-02	Welcomes the Chinese
05-33	04-32	03-38	Hopes For Compromise
34-62	33-61	39-79	Hopes to Peacefully Resist
63-91	62-90	80-91	Hopes to Violently Resist
92-00	91-00	92-00	Hopes to Flee Tibet
Violence			
01-05	01-04	01-30	Completely Non-Violent
05-50	05-44	31-74	Violence is Occasionally Compassionate
51-95	46-93	75-98	Fight For What's Yours
96-00	94-00	99-00	Hurt People For Fun
Religion			
01-02	01-07	01-05	Trying to Achieve Enlightenment (Bön)
03-07	08-14	06-16	Trying to Achieve Enlightenment (Red Hat)
08-13	15-17	17-27	Trying to Achieve Enlightenment (Yellow Hat)
13-16	18-21	28-36	Trying to Achieve Enlightenment (Whatever Works)
17-21	22-34	37-42	Trying to Achieve Favorable Rebirth (Bön)
22-34	35-49	43-56	Trying to Achieve Favorable Rebirth (Red Hat)
35-49	50-58	57-72	Trying to Achieve Favorable Rebirth (Yellow Hat)
50-60	59-69	73-85	Trying to Achieve Favorable Rebirth (Whatever Works)
61-63	70-75	86-87	Nominally Religious (Bön)
64-70	76-81	88-90	Nominally Religious (Red Hat)
71-78	82-85	91-94	Nominally Religious (Yellow Hat)
79-84	86-92	95-97	Nominally Religious (Whatever Works)
85-90	93-97	98-98	Non-Religious
91-96	98-98	99-99	Muslim
96-00	99-00	00-00	Other Religion
Vows			
01-78	01-65	01-05	No Vows
79-91	66-78	06-17	Vow of Vegetarianism
92-94	79-88	18-29	Vow of Chastity
95-97	89-94	30-42	Vow of Poverty
98-99	95-97	43-67	Vegetarianism and Chastity
00-00	98-00	68-00	Vegetarianism and Chastity and Poverty



# INTRODUCTORY ADVENTURES

## STRUGGLE SESSION

### PLAYER INFORMATION

A common practice of the Communist Chinese is the so-called Thamzing ("Struggle Session"). In Thamzing a person who strays from Mao's dictates is subjected to public torture until they repent. Not all struggle sessions are the same, but most are as follows:

The victim is tied up in a public place. Neighbors, friends and even family are encouraged to come up to the person and try to persuade the person to repent. They scream at, insult and even beat the person. The victim is only released when he or she has publicly admitted to the crimes, explained how they were wrong and how Mao was right, and promised never to do it again. If the victim is literate, he or she is forced to make a written confession.

Thamzing combines techniques used by cult brainwashers (social pressure, public confessions) and techniques used by military torturers (being tied in uncomfortable positions, being deprived of food and sleep, being periodically beaten). To many Tibetans, the Thamzing is nothing but sorcery: it is a calculated attempt to destroy a person's free will. For the Chinese, who are fighting on both military and psychological fronts, the Thamzing is one of their most powerful weapons. Although Thamzing has proven itself to work very well on peasant farmers, the Chinese are only starting to try to use this weapon against the trained minds of monks.

*The following information is for GMs only.*

### SYNOPSIS

Characters traveling in Eastern Tibet will come to a small trading town that was once dominated by a Yellow Hat men's monastery. A Garrison of Chinese soldiers have taken over this town. The Chinese are trying to break the monks of their religious devotion by any means possible. A small army of prostitutes has been brought in to seduce the monks and cause them to break their vows of chastity. The Chinese have run in to resistance in the form of Rigzin Gyampo, lama of the monastery. Lama Rigzin has been steadfast in opposing the Chinese and has given courage and conviction to the other monks. The Chinese have begun a struggle session, a fight for the lama's very soul. Unknown to the Chinese, a sorcerer specializing in love magic (in the guise of a prostitute), and two Tsen (spirits of monks who died after rejecting their vows) have come to help destroy the Lama. PCs must take the role of the monk's protector's in this spiritual battle. Several stray dogs (who are the

reincarnations of monks from the monastery) prowl the town square nervously.

### CHARACTER INTRODUCTIONS

The PCs will be in Eastern Tibet traveling West. Some may be fleeing war, some may be returning home, some may be taking goods to Lhasa to sell, some may be on religious pilgrimages. Most of the PCs will have seen war, famine and Chinese atrocities in the East.

In Tibet, travelers who meet on the road travel together. They do so to help protect against bandits and other dangers. If characters are reluctant to travel together, have them hear rumors of bandit raiders (or find bodies). Once they are traveling together (and have had some time to get to know each other) they will arrive at the town of Hunpyo.

### HUNPYO

Hunpyo is a small town. Unless PCs are from this region, they will not have heard of it. The majority of the town's population is monks living in a Yellow Hat men's monastery (which has the same name as the town). The monastery has about 100 monks and there are about 75 farmers, merchants and craftspeople who live nearby. Most of the lay people live on parcels of monastery-owned land near the road that the PCs are traveling on. Before the Chinese, Hunpyo was a peaceful town and a minor trading post. Now, the town is being forced to house and feed a garrison of Chinese soldiers. The soldiers are waiting for an official assignment. While they are waiting they are trying to break the peoples' reliance on the monastery and turn Hunpyo in to a Communist village. The lands owned by the monastery have been divided up among the people and the monks have been forced to work these lands in work groups.

The town itself exists in a small valley that follows the road the PCs are on. There are small Tibetan style farmhouses scattered along either side of the road. The monastery is on a small hill overlooking the road. The monastery is a compound surrounded by a short wall of stones. The monastery has several small buildings: a kitchen, meditation hall, shrine hall, monks' quarters and a small house for the head of the monastery, Rigzin Gyampo. These buildings are now being used to house the Chinese. The monks have either found housing in the village or have been forced to sleep along the side of the road. Huyan Chen, Commander of the Chinese, now sleeps in Lama Rigzin's house.

In the middle of the town is a small flat area normally used for festivals, games and other public events in the village. The Chinese teach political lessons here every day. It has also been the site of struggle sessions that have broken monk after monk. The Chinese have lashed together a small wooden frame to tie victims to. The victims are tied, bent at the waist with their arms outstretched.

## THE CHINESE

There are 95 Chinese soldiers staying in the town (five were killed by rebels and disease on the way to Hunpyo). They all carry rifles at all times and they are the undisputed rulers of Hunpyo. Only two (the commander, Huyan Chen, and one other private) speak Tibetan. Most of the villagers and monks speak a little of the Kan Chinese dialect. Most of the soldiers have seen serious battles and are quick to act if threatened. They enjoy being in a position of power and will order people around. If the soldiers see anyone they think might be a rebel fighter, they will likely shoot the person at first sight.

The Chinese have one machine-gun and a covered jeep that Huyan Chen drives in when the army is on the move. The Chinese have guards with rifles posted at key points 24-hours a day: two at the machine-gun, one each on the road on either side of the village, two watching over Lama Rigzin in the struggle session area, and four guards at the walls of the monastery.

Chinese commander Huyan Chen is a very observant man. He knows that there are things going on in the village that aren't direct result of Chinese actions. He knows that when he pays prostitutes to seduce monks, a portion of that money ends up in the hands of one particular prostitute (he does not know her name). He thinks they are perhaps paying her for advice. Huyan also knows that the dogs in the town are acting strange. He has thought of exterminating them, but he has not yet done so because he has seen how protective the monks are of the dogs.

## THE PROSTITUTES

Shortly after the Chinese came to Hunpyo, rumors started to spread that the Chinese were paying anyone who could seduce a monk. Ten prostitutes from nearby cities traveled to Hunpyo to try to get some of this money. They understand that they are being used as tools to turn monks in to ordinary peasants, but they do not care. They are being paid 100 Srang for each monk they seduce, more if the monk is respected and of high status. The prostitutes know, but the Chinese do not, that one of the "prostitutes," Minla, is really a sorcerer specializing in love magic. The other prostitutes have been paying Minla to give them love spells to cast on the monks.

Minla has been staying in the house of a local merchant. The other prostitutes have been spending their nights sleeping on the side of the road with the monks. The prostitutes spend their days and nights with the men. When the monks sleep, the prostitutes snuggle up next to them. Every once in a while a prostitute will lead a monk off in to the hills for sex. The prostitutes have also been having sex with Chinese soldiers in exchange for money, goods and favors. Commander Huyan Chen disapproves of this but has done little to stop it.

Minla has recently arranged with the Chinese for them to give her a fee of 200 Srang if she can seduce Lama Rigzin. Every evening, after the Struggle Session has ended for the day and everyone has gone home, she walks past the guards and up to Lama Rigzin. She spends hours whispering in his ear and caressing him, all the while using her most powerful love magic on him. So far, Lama Rigzin has resisted all of her magic, yet she believes that it is only a matter of time before he falters.

### Commander Huyan Chen

**Attributes-** AGY 9, AWR 16, CHM 14, END 10, INL 11, KMA -20, SPD 16, STH 13, WIL 16, BLD 2, BDY 3, INCY 3

**Appearance-** Huyan Chen is in his early thirties yet he has the practiced air of an experienced leader. Most under his command believe he is older than he really is. He has small, beady eyes and his face is slightly lopsided (the result of malnutrition while he was a child). He has short black hair and wears a red scarf around his neck over the army uniform.

**History-** Huyan Chen was recruited from a poor peasant family during the Communist revolution in China. He was charismatic and became an accomplished student of Maoist political philosophy. He has spent two years in Tibet. He has only recently been promoted to the head of a regiment of 100 men. The regiment is a mix of soldiers new to Tibet and soldiers from other regiments who suffered serious losses.

**Personality-** Huyan believes that Mao is right, but he also knows that some people must be forced or tricked in to agreeing with Mao. He doesn't really care if people really agree with Mao or just pretend to, as long as they act like they do. He doesn't mind if some of the Chinese propaganda is lies because he believes that the basic facts are true. He hates people who resist Maoism and cause disunity and he enjoys torturing and breaking them.

**Attachments-** Authority, Humble, Moral, Skeptical, Justice.

**Special Skills-** Rifle (3) (+12 to vital strike, +10 to strike), Torture (2)

**Special Equipment-** Rifle (6 bladed, ROF 3, FR 10 ft./3 m.), Helmet (AR 2, PR 8 bladed 2 blunt)

### Minla

**Attributes-** AGY 7, AWR 16, CHM 17, END 6, INL 16, KMA -35, SPD 3, STH 4, WIL 18, BDY 1, BLD 2, INCY 4

**Appearance-** Minla is tall, thin and attractive. She is clearly older than the other prostitutes (in her thirties or forties). She keeps herself wrapped up tightly in a large sarong and wears sparse but expensive looking jewelry.

**History-** Minla was a prostitute in a larger trading town to the East (a town now laid to waste by the Chinese). She studied sorcery in her spare time. She paid to learn love magic from old female sorcerers in the town. Eventually she became proficient enough to become the concubine of wealthy nomad merchants. When the war started, the merchants left for war. Minla traveled the countryside, preying on people who had been made physically and psychologically susceptible by the chaos. She has traveled to several villages where the Chinese have paid her to seduce monks and she knows the procedure well.

**Personality-** Minla lived most of her life in desperation. She did whatever she could to get food and a place to stay the night. Even though she is now a skilled sorcerer, making good money, the sense of desperation still clings to her. The only time she feels peace or happiness is when she is breaking someone's will. The stronger the will of the person, the greater sense of power she gets when she breaks him.

**Attachments-** Brutality, Sexual Dominance, Willful, Tricky, Ruthless.

**Special Skills-** Disease Sorcery (1), Love Magic (4), Poisons (2), Simple Curses (2), Zor (2).

**Special Equipment-** Poisoned knife (1 bladed damage, 1 BLD damage per round for 4 rounds), Black Rilzin, Menstrual Blood, water prepared for love magic, Dough Zor (2d20 KMA damage to anyone hit by it).

**Typical Attack-** Thrown attack with a Zor at INL (16) + AGY (7) + 1d20 -1 per 3ft. (1m.) vs. 25 (or 1d20 -1/3ft. vs. 2). On a successful hit, the Zor does 2d20 KMA damage.

## THE TSEN

Two young monks were studying at Hunpyo and were good friends. They were both adept at meditation and philosophy and received praise from their teachers. However, Lama Rigzin did not praise them. He criticized them for being too prideful and suggested that they should spend more time developing compassion. When the Chinese came, these monks decided that Tibet and the Tibetan religion was coming to an end. They decided that it would be best for them to side with the Chinese as soon as possible. They repented their vows and slept with prostitutes. Soon afterwards they started preaching to the other monks how they had "discovered" that Mao was right and Buddhism was a tool of oppression. The monks gained favor with the Chinese. About a week before the PCs arrived, the two ex-monks participated in the Struggle Session against Lama Rigzin. They berated him verbally and beat him with sticks. Later that same day, the two men wandered too

far from the village and were confronted by a pack of dogs who tore them apart.

When monks break their vows, they earn a lot of bad karma. If they die without having worked off this karma, they will likely be reborn in the hell realms. If the souls stay in this realm and escape rebirth, they become malevolent spirits of the Tsen class (p.187). The two monks became two Tsen spirits who live in two large boulders near where they died. The spirits can leave these boulders for short periods of time but will always return to them. If a PC can see the Tsen (e.g. with Mirror Gazing or Pure Vision skill) they appear as men dressed in tattered monk's robes, with red skin, brandishing red clubs, and with their faces twisted in to angry masks.

The Tsen are full of hatred and will unleash their anger on anyone they come across. They are specifically angry at Lama Rigzin. They want him to share their fate: they want him to reject his vows and then die. To help achieve this, the Tsen have been frequenting the area of the struggle session. They try to enter people. If they can get inside a person they fill that person full of rage, driving that person to beat Lama Rigzin.

### The Tsen

**Attributes-** MSTH 12, AGY 8, AWR 12, INL 12, KMA -30, SPD 7, STH 10, WIL 12.

**Appearance-** Red monks wearing red robes, brandishing red clubs, with angry, demonic faces.

#### Abilities

Start Fires (Uses 5 MSTH)

Trip People (Uses 5 MSTH)

Throw Small Rocks (1 blunt dmg., Uses 5 MSTH)

Enter a Human (Uses 1 MSTH)

Cause Anger (20 difficulty to save, uses 3 MSTH)

Cause Bad Luck (-4 on all rolls, uses 4 MSTH)

Cause Temporary Insanity (+3 dark attachments, uses 5 MSTH/day)

Cause Confusion (-10 INL, -10 AWR, uses 5 MSTH)

**Motivation-** Rage towards everyone, specifically Lama Rigzin. Desire to pull others down with them.

**Typical Attack-** If confronted with a threat they cannot enter, they will hurl small (5 lb.) rocks at the person. They strike at AGY (8) + INL (12) -1/3 ft. (1m.) vs. 25 (or 1d20 vs. 5). Each attempt to hurl a rock uses 5 MSTH.

## THE DOGS

If a stray dog is seen hanging around a monastery, Tibetans believe that it is a monk who once studied at the monastery. The monks may have studied here for one or more lifetimes. Even though the monk was unable to achieve rebirth as a human, it was drawn to its old home. Monks are thus very kind to stray dogs, thinking of them as alumnus of the monastery, perhaps even old friends.

The monastery at Hunpyo has half a dozen stray dogs. They survived mostly on scraps fed to them by the monks. Now that the monks have been moved down in to the village, the dogs have congregated there. They are no smarter than normal dogs, but they do remember certain things: the monastery is their home, the monks are their friends, Lama Rigzin is kind and beloved. All of the dogs once studied under Lama Rigzin, or one of his previous incarnations. Ever since Lama Rigzin was brought to the public area for Struggle Session, the dogs have been keeping a near constant vigil. In the night they keep people awake with their mournful howling. When two ex-monks participated in the beating of Lama Rigzin, a group of dogs followed them when they left the village and tore them apart.

The dogs can sense the Tsen. They don't know what they are, but know they are dangerous. When the Tsen are around, the dogs will appear to bark angrily at the air.

The Chinese soldiers are afraid of the dogs and have already shot a few. The monks were so angry when they found out that they almost took up arms against the Chinese. Commander Chen has ordered the soldiers not to kill any more dogs, except in self-defense. The monks know that the dogs are former monks and that the dogs will help protect Lama Rigzin from anyone who tries to kill him.

Anyone who has participated in beating Lama Rigzin is in danger from the dogs. The dogs will not attack them in the middle of a crowd. Instead, the dogs will follow the person around, hoping to corner the person in some lonely place.

### Typical Stray Dog

**Attributes-** AGY 13, AWR 10, END 8, KMA 5, SPD 16, STH 8, BLD 1, BDY 2, INCY 5

**Appearance-** Large brown mutt with fleas and hairless patches. Weighs 60 lbs. (27 kg.).

**Special Powers-** Good hearing and smell (+7 to AWR rolls).

**Typical Attack-** Teeth do 3 bladed damage. They do an extended split jump and strike at 1d20 vs. 8 (and -10 to next action or reaction).

## THE MONKS

Most of the monks at the monastery were young men in their teens and twenties. About a third of these young men have given up on their vows and joined the side of the Chinese. They have publicly spoken out against the Tibetan government and religion during the daily propaganda sessions. Some have been seduced; others gave in to the constant Chinese propaganda. Either way, hunger, exhaustion and fear contributed to their fall.

Some of the ex-monks have tried to recede in to the background and live life as ordinary peasants. Others have decided to "live it up": they vie for

positions as leaders in the new commune, they wearing Chinese army jackets and they shamelessly consort with prostitutes.

Of those who have not yet given up their vows, some are lucky enough to have friends or family in town. Those monks sleep on the floor in houses. Others sleep propped up next to houses or on the side of the road. They have only their dirty robes and a few spare blankets to keep them warm at night.

### Lama Rigzin Gyampo

**Attributes-** AGY 9, AWR 18, CHM 13, END 10, INL 14, KMA 45, SPD 4, STH 3, WIL 18, BLD 1, BDY 1, INCY 4

**Appearance-** Lama Rigzin is a chubby old man, with leathery, wrinkled skin and a round pleasant face. His short white hair is now greasy with sweat. Due to dehydration his eyes are sunken and dull. He still wears his monk's robes.

**History-** Rigzin Gyampo is a minor tulku, a reincarnation of the lama who has been ruling the monastery for generations. This incarnation has been the peaceful ruler of the monastery and the town for more than forty years. When the Chinese came, he instructed his monks not to resist with violence. He was captured and imprisoned. Even though forbidden to speak, his demeanor gave courage to the other prisoners. Commander Chen met with him several times to try to talk him in to rejecting Buddhism, but Lama Rigzin showed no signs that he was weakening. Commander Chen ordered that Lama Rigzin be the subject of a struggle session. Rigzin has been tied to a wooden frame, given only enough food and water to keep him alive, and has been beaten and berated. Lama Rigzin has figured out that there are two Tsen trying to get him and that Minla is a sorcerer who has been trying to use love magic on him.

**Personality-** Lama Rigzin has never reached enlightenment, yet he has hovered close for many lifetimes. He is accomplished at many Buddhist arts (including a little Tantra) and is a wise and benevolent teacher. He enjoys being a teacher (perhaps this is why he has never achieved enlightenment, he is too content in his current position).

**Attachments-** Authority, Forgiving, Truth.

**Special Skills/Equipment-** Breath Tantra (1), Dagger Exorcism (3), Elemental Astrology (2), Indifference (2), Medical Mantras (1), Meditation (5), Omen Reading (2), Philosophy (3), Protective Mantras (2), Pure Vision (1), Wind Voices (1), Yidam Tantra (1), Zodiac Astrology (2). Rigzin keeps rosary beads (smuggled to him during struggle session) in the sleeve of his robe and counts prayers on them when no one is looking. When the Chinese arrived, Rigzin had some items buried: 76 Srang worth of jewelry, two WWI rifles, and a phurba. He has the location memorized and can tell people where to find the items if he thinks it will help them.

During the day they are forced to work in the fields. At high noon they are forced to sit, with the rest of the villagers, and watch the Struggle Session being conducted against their lama. The monks fear and despair for their own fate and the fate of their beloved lama. They try to remember the teachings of impermanence and they spend most of their time in silent or audible prayer.

## POSSIBLE OUTCOMES

Without intervention by the PCs, Lama Rigzin will eventually falter and give in to Minla, the Chinese brainwashing or the Tsen. Every monk and most of the villagers look up to Lama Rigzin. If he rejects Buddhism, they will all lose any hope of resisting the Chinese. If the Lama falls, the rest of the monks will quickly follow. The bad karma the village will accrue will doom it to misfortune for generations.

Rescuing the lama will probably be the first thought of players. However, there are never any less than two guards watching over the lama. When there is not a struggle session going on, the Tsen and Minla circle him. Minla will attack PCs with sorcery if they try to steal Rigzin, and the Tsen will do anything to alert the Chinese.

Many ex-monks and farmers are desperate to gain favor from the Chinese and will turn in PCs that they know to be acting against the Chinese.

Rigzin knows breath tantra and may be able to simulate death.

Lama Rigzin would much rather die than be forced to reject Buddhism. If he dies with his good karma intact he can be reincarnated as a human, become a Buddhist teacher, and continue to help humanity. Rigzin will allow PCs to kill him if it the only option. If done from completely compassionate motives, the damage to the PC's karma should be relatively minor.

	Player:	Player:	Player:	Player:
Rigzin rejects his vows and dies (-30 XP)				
Rigzin rejects his vows and lives (-20 XP)				
Rigzin dies without rejecting his vows (5 XP)				
Rigzin escapes without rejecting his vows (15 XP)				
Rigzin gains enlightenment (30 XP)				
The Tsen are defeated or driven away (5 XP)				
Minla is defeated or driven away (5 XP)				
The Chinese are persuaded to leave (15 XP)				
PCs stops a monk from breaking vows (3 XP/ea.)				
Worked well as a group (2 XP)				
PCs made friends with each other (5 XP/ea.)				
Personal growth (5 XP)				
Clever Plan (1 to 5 XP)				
Exceptional role-playing (2 XP)				
Succeeded in line with a self-attachment (1 XP/ea.)				
Made correct prediction based on universe attachment (2 XP/ea.)				
Made the world a worse place (-1 to -5 XP)				
Split-up group (-5 XP)				
Player Character Death (-10 XP)				
Total:				

# GLOSSARY OF TIBETAN TERMS

**Amdo**- A province in Northeastern Tibet.

**Asura**- A type of heaven-being that lives on Mount Meru and battles against the Devas.

**Bardo**- The period of 49 days after a person's death where the soul wanders on this plane before the next rebirth.

**Bodhisattva**- A being who became enlightened via the teachings of a buddha but stayed in this world to help sentient beings.

**Bön**- Tibet's pre-Buddhist organized religion; shares much in common with both Buddhism and shamanism.

**Buddha**- An enlightened being; either one who became enlightened without the benefit of teachings or is an emanation of perfect enlightenment.

**Cham**- Masked religious dances reenacting Buddhist history.

**Chang Tang**- The inhospitable frozen plains that make up most of Northern Tibet.

**Chenrezig**- The male buddha of compassion, called Avalokitesvara in Sanskrit.

**Chuba**- A belted toga-like garment, the standard unisex clothing of lay Tibetans.

**Dakini**- A race of beautiful, blue female heavenly beings, similar to angels in the west.

**Dalai Lama**- A tulku and reincarnation of Chenrezig who is the head of the Yellow Hat Buddhist sect and ruler of Tibet.

**Deva**- A heavenly being living on Mount Meru.

**Dharma**- The teachings of Buddhism.

**Dharmapala**- A demon or native deity which has been bound by an oath to do good and to protect Buddhism and its practitioners.

**Dharmasala**- A town in India hosting Tibetan refugees.

**Dobdob**- A monastic police officer.

**Dolma**- The female buddha of compassion and consort to Chenrezig. Called Tara in Sanskrit.

**Dorje Shudgen**- A powerful dharmapala of questionable loyalties.

**Düd**- A type of malevolent spirit especially associated with lingering illness.

**Dzo**- A yak/cattle halfbreed.

**Dzong**- 1: One of 53 prefectures that Tibet is divided in to. 2: A fort.

**Dzongpon**- Local Tibetan government prefects, usually a monk and layman.

**Garuda**- A giant heavenly bird that preys on Lu.

**Gautama Buddha**- The Buddha of the current age, an Indian prince that achieved enlightenment.

**Gelugpa**- The "Yellow Hat" Buddhist sect, the newest of Tibet's 4 major sects, currently acting as the Tibetan government.

**Gesar**- An ancient king, subject of a popular (and magical) Tibetan epic.

**Geshe**- The highest degree in monastic scholastics, equivalent to a western PhD.

**Glud**- Any being or object used as a "decoy" to draw out curses or malevolent spirits, often a human-shaped piece of dough.

**Jokhang**- The biggest temple in urban Lhasa, the streets surrounding it are a center of pilgrimage and trade.

**Kagyupa**- The third oldest of Tibet's 4 major Buddhist sects, specializing in body-control tantras.

**Kanjur**- A book of the teachings of Gautama Buddha.

**Karma**- The accumulated momentum of the compassionate and cruel acts in which a person has participated in this and previous lives.

**Kashag**- A council of 3 ministers, who are directly beneath the Dalai Lama (or his regent) in the hierarchy of the Tibetan government.

**Kham**- A large Eastern province of Tibet, home of the Khampas.

**Khampa**- A nomad from Kham, known as fierce warriors and active rebels.

**Khata**- A white scarf used as a ceremonial gift.

**Kukuri**- A heavy curved knife, used for chopping.

**Lama**- A teacher of Buddhist or Bön doctrines. Also, the person in charge of a monastery.

**Langdarma**- The ancient Tibetan king who persecuted Buddhism in favor of Bön.

**Lokbar**- A heavier version of the Chuba, worn in extreme weather.

**Lhasa**- The capital and largest city in Tibet.

**Lu**- A family of malevolent spirits, ranging from large dragon-like beings that live in the heavens to snake-human creatures living at the bottom of ponds.

**Mamo**- A class of malevolent spirits, female with jet-black skin, known for sorcery and disease.

**Mandala**- A magic painting, usually circular, symbolizing how an enlightened being views the universe.

**Mantra**- A chanted formula that has mystical or magical meaning.

**Meru**- A heavenly mountain far beyond this world, where heavenly beings and enlightened entities live.

**Migyu**- A large, semi-intelligent, furry humanoid native to Tibet. Known as a Yeti outside of Tibet.

**Milarepa**- Tibetan sorcerer turned Buddhist teacher and poet, a popular Tibetan folk hero.

**Mimang**- A people's organization in Lhasa currently protesting the Chinese.

**Mudra**- Magical hand gestures with mystical or magical effects.

## Pronunciation Guide

All Tibetan words are spelled phonetically. In some cases, special characters had to be used, they are pronounced as follows:

â- like "a" in "father"

é- like "ye" in "yet"

ê- like "ai" in "paid"

ó- like "o" in "sole"

ö- like "ur" in "urgent"

ü- like "w" in "wind"

û- like "oo" in "moon"



**Nyingmapa-** The oldest of Tibet's 4 major Buddhist sects; the one closest to pre-Buddhist Tibetan religions.

**Padmasambhava-** The great Indian mystic who traveled across Tibet, conquering the native demons and gods, founding monasteries and hiding Terma.

**Panchen Lama-** The second most important Tulku in the yellow hat sect, he is the abbot of the Tashilhunpo monastery at Shigatse. The current Panchen Lama is pro-Chinese.

**Pehar-** One of the most powerful dharmapalas, his oracle is the most powerful oracle in Tibet and advises the Tibetan government.

**Phurba-** A ritual dagger with a three or four cornered blade, usually with a vajra and deity image as a handle.

**Qinghai-** A Chinese province bordering East Tibet.

**Ragyapa-** A caste of unclean corpse carriers.

**Rakshasa-** A shape-shifting, human-eating monster from another world.

**Rimpoche-** A title of respect given to learned spiritual leaders. It means blessed or jewel.

**Rinsil-** A bone concretion found in the remains of a dead lama. They are powerful charms and panaceas.

**Sakyapa-** Second oldest of Tibet's 4 major sects, specializing in logic and philosophy.

**Sanskrit-** The ancient written language of India, the language of the Buddhist sutras, adopted as the official written language of Tibet.

**Shambhala-** A hard-to-find, utopian mountain kingdom where all are long-lived and wise. The basis for James Hilton's story of "Shangri-La."

**Shigatse-** The second largest city in Tibet; Lhasa's only major economic and political competitor.

**Shinje-** A torturer from the hell realms (or a death spirit in this realm).

**Sichuan-** A Chinese province bordering East Tibet.

**Songsten Gampo-** The first king of a unified Tibet.

**Srang-** Tibetan currency, in coins or printed on paper notes. Srang coins are accepted throughout Tibet.

**Sunyata-** The doctrine that all dualities are empty, that nothing exists, even non-existence itself.

**Sutra-** A traditional book of Buddhist teachings.

**Tantra-** Any method of mystical training outside of the standard written transmission of Buddhist teachings. Tantras offer a quicker path to enlightenment but are much more dangerous.

**Tantric-** An adjective referring to practices, teachings or rituals learned from a tantra.

**Tenjur-** A book made up of commentaries on the teachings of Gautama Buddha.

**Terma-** A discovered holy text or article that had once been hidden because people were not yet ready to have it.

**Thangka-** A holy painting on cloth which can be rolled up for transport.

**Torma-** A building-shaped sculpture, made of mostly butter, used for ritual purposes.

**Tsampa-** Flour made from popped barley. A staple food in Tibet.

**Tsen-** A class of malevolent spirits, often associated with illness, misfortune and hatred.

**Tulku-** The reincarnation of a powerful lama or bodhisattva who has retained memories and powers from his or her last lives; usually the head of a monastery.

**Tulpa-** A being, resembling a human, created solely from mental energy by means of meditation and magical formulas. These beings may gain intelligence and self-consciousness.

**Vajra-** A scepter or cross symbol representing enlightenment. Originally the thunderbolt scepter of the Hindu sky god Indra.

**Yaksha-** A type of heaven-being living on the lower levels of Mount Meru.

**Yama-** The demon lord of death, a powerful dharmapala.

**Yidam-** A type of buddha used in Tantric meditation as a model of enlightenment. Practitioners seek to experience what it is like to be the Yidam being.

**Zhang-Zhung-** An ancient pre-Buddhist kingdom in Western Tibet.

**Zhidag-** A class of spirits, often malevolent, that protect the earth.

## GLOSSARY OF GAME TERMS

**#D#-** A code for rolling dice, the first number means the number of dice rolled and the second number is the denomination of the dice. 2D6 means that you must roll 2 six-sided dice and add the values.

**Action-** In combat, anything the character initiates (as opposed to a Reaction). An action could be anything from a strike (a fighting action described in the rules) to scratching one's nose.

**Adventure-** A story characters play in, with a beginning, end, conflict, drama and a chance for the characters to succeed and a chance for them to fail and perhaps die.

**Armor Rating (AR)-** A numeric rating of the amount of the character's body a piece of armor covers, one being the smallest amount and twenty being coverage of the entire body. A strike must have a success greater than the armor rating in order to hit an unprotected portion of the victim.

**Attachment-** A dependence, preference or prejudice for an idea or sensation. Attachments describe personality. The fewer attachments, the closer a character is to enlightenment.

**Attributes-** Numeric ratings for each character that enumerate their abilities in mental, physical and other areas. Although base attributes are relatively stable over time, events can temporarily change any of them.

**Bladed-** Damage that cuts or pierces flesh such as a knife or pick-axe. Does damage to Blood Points.

**Blunt-** Damage that crushes flesh, such as a club or punch. Blunt damage subtracts first from Body Points, then (when they are gone) it does double damage to Blood Points.

**Chance Action-** An action that the GM determines is heavily influenced by chance (a 1 on the 1d20 roll will always fail, a 20 will always succeed). Typically a spur-of-the-moment activity.

**Character-** A character is a fictional person created by a player. The character has his/her own personality, past, characteristics, experiences, and life. It is through the character that the player plays the game. A character is a participant in the adventure.

**Character Class-** A character creation option that describes the character's place in society. Character Class sets the character's income, the costs to buy skills and may also give special plusses, skills, equipment and disadvantages during character creation. Character class can change during game-play.

**Character Creation-** The process of describing a character before game-play starts. Points are used to buy attributes, skills, advantages and disadvantages. Equipment is also bought.

**Damage-** A rating of the capacity of a weapon to do damage to humans. Specifically, it is damage which will move a person progressively closer to being dead.

**Deliberate Action-** An action that has no automatic success or failure (as a Chance Action does). This is typically a well-considered action that leaves as little as possible to chance.

**Difficulty-** The rating of the difficulty for anything a character attempts to do. To succeed, a character must make a roll of the applicable attribute plus 1d20 and get a result higher than the given difficulty. Typical difficulties: Easy (10), Moderate (20), Hard (30) and Legendary (40).

**Discipline-** A system of study (usually, but not always associated with a character class) that sets a character's skill costs and the effects of level advancement.

**Easy-** A difficulty rating of 10 for an attribute + 1d20 roll (or -4 difficulty when dealing with weapon specific difficulties).

**Enlightenment-** In game terms, this is when a character has removed the last Attachment and is now a perfect being.

**Experience Levels-** As a PC does more he or she gains more experience, and through experience and practice the PC becomes more powerful. The system of Experience Levels is an easy system for rating this growth. Characters start out at an experience level of 1 and as they do more and experience more they gain experience points and raise experience levels.

**Experience Points (XP)-** As a PC completes each adventure the GM assigns them Experience Points based on their performance in that particular adventure. Each adventure should have a checklist of things PCs can do to gain or lose XP. XP can be spent at the end of an adventure to buy skills and to raise attributes.

**Functional Range (FR)-** A unit of distance in which a projectile weapon suffers a -1 penalty. For instance, if a weapon has a functional range of 3 ft., the character is at -4 to hit a target 12 ft. away.

**Game Master (GM)-** The Game Master is a player but does not have a character. The GM is an impartial intermediary between the game as it appears on paper and the game as played by characters. The GM is the universe, he or she decides, based on his or her knowledge of the game universe, what happens for whatever action the players take.

**Hard-** A difficulty rating of 30 for an attribute + 1d20 roll (or +4 difficulty for weapon specific difficulties).

**Incapacity-** When a PC is at 0 END or 0 INCY and can no longer stand, initiate communication or make any roll.

**KMA-** Karma, an attribute that represents how a character's past actions are effecting his or her luck.

**KMA Emanation-** A measurement of how much a person's karma effects other people nearby. Typically one-tenth of current KMA.

**Legendary-** A difficulty rating of 40 for an attribute + 1d20 roll.

**Maximum Range-** For a projectile weapon, this is the actual range that the character can not do damage beyond (as opposed to Functional Range).

**Moderate-** A difficulty rating of 20 for an attribute + 1d20 roll.

**Non Player Character (NPC)-** This is a character, can be a friend, enemy, both or neither, with a personality and intelligence, but this is not a player character: he or she is controlled by the GM. Mostly they are tools to help the plot along.

**Player-** The player is the real human being that participates in the role playing game as a character.

**Player Character (PC)-** A character created by and controlled by a player.

**Protection Rating (PR)-** A numeric rating that describes how much damage a piece of armor is capable of protecting from. Any damage that hits the armor has the Protection Rating's worth of damage removed from it.

**Reaction-** The thing a PC can do once in a combat round in reaction to being attacked (includes Dodge).

**Roll-** A dice roll with an attempt to get the highest number possible. An "agility roll," for example, is the character's AGY plus 1d20 with an attempt to get higher than the difficulty for the given action.

**Role Playing Game (RPG)-** A game where people play fictional characters (roles) having adventures together. Players narrate what their characters do and the GM narrates what happens in response.

**Save Vs.-** A roll made of 1d20 plus appropriate attributes in an attempt to avoid something that would otherwise happen, such as falling down or catching a disease.

**Scenario-** A scenario is a series of adventures linked together by a common plot element or group of PCs (much like a book trilogy).

**Simultaneous-** When a character reacts to being attacked by making an action of his or her own (e.g. let someone punch you, but stab that person at the same time).

**Skill-** A level of training or knowledge that allows the character to do something they would be otherwise unable to do. The majority of skills are INL based (roll 1d20 + INL + any plusses from having more than one level in the skill), yet there are skills based on other attributes.

**Skill Roll-** A roll of 1d20 plus the appropriate attribute plus four for every level the character has in the skill above the first.

**Split-** When one action or reaction is turned in to two, at +10 difficulty to each (e.g. do a split action jump and strike).

# RANDOM WILDERNESS ENCOUNTER

Mountains	Plains	Major Roads	Haunted Place		
01-01	01-02	01-02	01-03	Ancient Ruins	A pre-Buddhist site, may contain hidden treasures or magical objects.
	03-04	03-04	04-04	Battlefield	The site of a recent battle between rebels and Chinese. There may be working weapons that can be scavenged.
02-04	05-06		05-05	Bear	Will attack humans if startled or if cubs are threatened.
05-07	07-10		06-06	Chinese Exploratory Party	A small group of Chinese trying to map Tibet and find exploitable resources.
08-08	11-13	05-08	07-07	Chinese Regiment	A large convoy of Chinese soldiers trying to move without rebels noticing.
09-09	14-16	09-12	08-08	Chinese Roadbuilding Crew	Chinese and Tibetan laborers trying to create a new road.
10-10	17-17		09-10	Cursed Bones	Evil, intelligent, animated human remains. May try to attack PCs.
11-12	18-18		11-13	Cursed Phurba	An evil, intelligent, animated ritual dagger. May try to trick a PC in to freeing it and/or carrying it back to civilization.
13-18	19-19		14-14	Difficult Climb	To continue, PCs must climb a steep mountain-face and must make climbing rolls.
19-20	20-25	12-19	15-15	Farmhouse: Friendly	Farmers will welcome PCs to stay the night, will feed them, and if any PCs are literate will ask them to read holy books.
21-21	26-27	20-22	16-18	Farmhouse: Poison Bearer	Looking like a friendly farmhouse, if PCs try to stay the night the lone inhabitant will try to feed the PCs poison.
22-25	28-28	23-23	19-19	Gorge	To continue, PCs must travel through a deep gorge which can easily flood or be the scene of an ambush.
26-28			20-22	Haunted Mountain	To continue, PCs must travel on a mountain that is ruled by a powerful malevolent spirit attached to the peak.
29-31	29-31		23-23	Hunting Party	A group of criminal hunters with hunting dogs.
32-32	32-32	24-24	24-25	Lost Hell Being	May attack PCs out of fear and anger.
33-33	33-33	25-25	26-28	Lost Hungry Ghost	May attack PCs for their food supplies.
34-34	34-34	26-26	29-29	Lost Wild Tulpa	May attack PCs out of madness.
35-35	35-36	27-27	30-33	Malevolent Spirit: Dūd	Will attempt to prey upon any PC with low Karma.
	37-38	28-28	34-37	Malevolent Spirit: Lu	Will attempt to prey upon any PC with low Karma.
36-36	39-40	29-29	38-42	Malevolent Spirit: Mamo	Will attempt to prey upon any PC with low Karma.
37-37	41-42	30-30	43-45	Malevolent Spirit: Sōndrema	Will appear physically to male party members, will attempt to paralyze and kill them.
38-38	43-44	31-31	46-49	Malevolent Spirit: Sri	Will attempt to prey upon any PC with low Karma.
39-39	45-46	32-32	50-50	Malevolent Spirit: Trickster Spirit	Will attempt to play mischievous tricks on the party in the form of a small animal.
40-40	47-48	33-33	51-54	Malevolent Spirit: Tsen	Will attempt to prey upon any PC with low Karma.
41-41	49-51	34-35	55-58	Malevolent Spirit: Zhidag	Will attempt to prey upon any PC with low Karma.
42-45	52-52		59-61	Migyu	A large, humanoid primate, possibly dangerous.
46-50		36-37	62-62	Mountain Pass	To continue, PCs must travel high in to the mountains and face the dangers of freezing or altitude sickness.
51-52	53-58	38-38	63-63	River	To continue, PCs must forge a river and make rolls to avoid being swept under.
53-58	59-61	39-40	64-64	Rockslide/Avalanche	PCs must make SPD or AGY rolls to avoid getting hit with rocks (1d6 blunt damage) or buried under snow (suffocation and hypothermia).
59-61	62-66	41-48	65-65	Small Bandit Group	A group of bandits looking to politely rob anyone they meet.
		49-49		Traveling Aristocrat	Level 1d6. Probably traveling with servants or bodyguards.
62-62	67-68	50-51	66-66	Traveling Ascetic	Level 1d6.
		52-53		Traveling Astrologer	Level 1d6.
63-63	69-69	54-54	67-67	Traveling Bön Priest	Level 1d6.
64-64	70-70	55-57		Traveling Craftsperson	Level 1d6.
65-65	71-71	58-58		Traveling Dobdob	Level 1d6.
		59-59		Traveling Doctor	Level 1d6.
		60-60		Traveling False Lama	May try to get PCs to pay for tantric lessons.
66-67	72-72	61-64	68-68	Traveling Farmer	Level 1d6.
68-68	73-73	65-66		Traveling Gesar Bard	Level 1d6.
69-69	74-74	67-67	69-69	Traveling Kagyupa Monk	Level 1d6.
70-70		68-68	70-71	Traveling Mad Saint	Will appear mad, but will likely have an important lesson for at least one of the PCs.
71-71	75-75	69-71	72-72	Traveling Merchant	Level 1d6.
		72-72		Traveling Mirror Gazer	Level 1d6.
72-73	76-78	73-75	73-73	Traveling Nomad	Level 1d6.
74-74	79-79	76-76	74-74	Traveling Nyingmapa Monk	Level 1d6.
		77-77		Traveling Oracle	Level 1d6.
		78-78		Traveling Revenant	Level 1d6.
75-75	80-80	79-79	75-75	Traveling Sakyapa Monk	Level 1d6.
76-77		80-80		Traveling Savage	Level 1d6.
78-78	81-81	81-81	76-78	Traveling Sorcerer: Disguised	Level 1d6. Will be disguised as a member of another class.
79-79	82-82	82-82	79-82	Traveling Sorcerer: Undisguised	Level 1d6. Caught red-handed gathering sorcerous components or doing a sorcerous ritual.
80-80	83-83	83-83		Traveling Treasure Finder	Level 1d6. There is a 1 in 10 chance he or she is seeking treasure in a trance.
81-81	84-84	84-85	83-84	Traveling Unclean	Level 1d6.
82-84	85-85	86-86	85-86	Traveling Weathermaker	Level 1d6.
85-85	86-86	87-87	87-87	Traveling White Robe	Level 1d6.
86-86	87-87	88-89	88-88	Traveling Yellow Hat Monk	Level 1d6.
87-90	88-89		89-89	Unstable Bridge	To continue, PCs must cross a poorly maintained bridge that may break.
91-91	90-90	90-90	90-93	Walking Corpse	A dead body walking blindly. Can kill a PC by touch.
92-92	91-93	91-93	94-95	Weather: Dust-Storm	Lasts 3d6 hours, PCs are blinded.
95-95	94-96	94-96	95-97	Weather: Hailstorm	Lasts 3d6 hours, PCs without protection take ½ blunt damage and must save vs. hypothermia (20 difficulty).
96-99	97-98	97-99	98-99	Weather: Snowstorm	Lasts 3d6 hours, seeing and moving is difficult, PCs must save vs. hypothermia (30 difficulty).
00-00	99-00	00-00	00-00	Wolf Pack	A pack of wild wolves, will attack sick or wounded humans.

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# TIBETAN (CIRCA 1959) VS. AMERICAN (MODERN) CULTURES

Aspect	Americans (today)	Tibet (circa 1959)
Religious Identity	Most belong to religious group or belief-system that is part of their Identity (e.g. I am a Catholic, I am an atheist, I am non-religious, etc.)	See different religions (folk religion, Bön, Buddhism) as having different uses in different situations, adhere to each as appropriate.
Religious Freedom	It is an individual's right to practice any religion they like as long as it doesn't interfere with the rights of others.	Most Tibetans believe in religious freedom and believe it's wrong to denigrate anyone else's religious beliefs.
Gender	Narrowing difference between men and women in occupations. Women generally considered equal to men, but still subject to prejudice, especially by small groups.	Some occupations almost all male and almost all female, yet exceptions exist and are not stigmatized. Women generally considered equal to men (as smart, as assertive, as athletic), except in central Tibetan politics (no women in the government) and with some religious teachers who refuse to teach females.
Travel	Common. People travel for their job or for vacation. Travel is fast and safe.	Common. For job, religious pilgrimages. Slow and filled with many dangers, but surviving these dangers is bragged about later.
Medicine	Practiced by university-educated professionals. Most diseases explained as organic injuries and infections. Drugs and surgery are common treatments.	Practiced by university-educated professionals. Most diseases explained as bad karma, sorcery, malevolent spirits, humour imbalance. Herbs, behavioral changes, exorcism are common treatments. Surgery very rare.
Population	Majority in cities. Majority are middle class. Very rich and very poor usually in cities.	Majority in countryside. Majority are lower class. Very rich and very poor usually in cities. Much of population in monasteries (some the size of cities).
Marriage	Premarital sex common. Most seek out a mate themselves and choose to enter in to a monogamous relationship. Non-monogamous relationships and marriages exist, but frowned upon. Extra-marital affairs and divorce are common, not heavily stigmatized.	Tibetans seek own mate, but choice approved by an astrologer. Monogamy most common, yet polyandry (multiple husbands) and polygyny (multiple wives) is legal. Extra-marital affairs and divorce common, not heavily stigmatized.
Death	Most Americans bury their dead, mourn them, and feel that the soul has gone on to some form of afterlife.	Most Tibetans dispose of their dead in a way chosen by an astrologer. They perform ceremonies to help guide the dead to the most favorable reincarnation.
Celebrations	Few holidays. During holidays: no work, visit with family, presents, spend money.	Many holidays and festivals: mass community celebrations, religious performances by monks.
Food	High in protein & fat. Wide range of foods. Fresh (refrigerated) foods common. Taste is valued.	Mostly barley flour noodles and breads. Yak meat, butter, milk and cheese, imported tea common. Long lasting (doesn't go bad quickly) is valued.
Sports/Games	Team sports, especially ballgames. Gambling: card games. Intelligence/creativity based games common.	Sports: Archery, horse trick riding. Gambling: mah jong, dice games. Riddles common.
Ideal Attributes	Independent, not gullible, socially skilled, wealthy, attractive, strong-willed.	Intelligent, easy to get along with, compassionate, wise, entertaining.
Etiquette	To strangers: hand shaking, pleasantries. To superiors: formal language, use formal pronouns (sir, dr., prof.). To hosts: spoken thanks, bringing food or wine.	To strangers: bowing. To superiors: thumbs up, tongue out, use official titles. To hosts: white scarf gift.
Weapons	Carrying concealed weapons generally illegal. Most weapons can be carried with proper permits.	All weapons legal for all classes to carry. Most carry knives (as tools).
Economy	Large companies. Paper and electronic money. Most money stored in banks. Many financial institutions (banks, credit card companies, investment firms). Little bartering.	Much bartering & coin money. Most money stored as jewelry. Paper money only in cities. Few financial institutions.
Crime	Existence of "criminal class." Most revolves around drug addictions. Crime usually for money, but also recreation, hatred, sexual gratification. Gangs, career criminals, organized crime agencies. Also, "white collar" crime (fraud, embezzlement, industrial espionage).	Groups of bandits (even bandit tribes) operate in areas with little govt. presence. In cities, minor street crimes by very poor. Some bribery, forgery, embezzlement by educated.
Relationships	Mostly defined on a one-on-one basis. Primary is nuclear family (close relatives living together). Also: relatives, coworkers, neighbors, friends.	Many relationships of duty, family, friendship and love. Most people have wide circle of friends of every class.
Animal Rights	Thought of as sub-human. Right not to be tortured. Can be killed for sport or consumption.	Thought of as pre-human. Can not be hunted. Butchering looked down upon but acceptable as necessity.
Pets	Cats, dogs, birds.	Dogs (mostly mastiffs), horses.
Violence	Idealized in the media but feared in real life. Some Americans armed, others not.	Some Tibetans are strictly nonviolent, but most believe violence is reasonable (even compassionate) in some situations. Almost all Tibetans armed with at least a knife or iron pencease.

### Weapon Specific Difficulties

Very Easy (-8 difficulty)

Easy (-4 difficulty)

Hard (+4 difficulty)

Very Hard (+8 difficulty)

### Improvised Weapons

**Slashing Weapons** : 1 bladed damage, -8 to actions except pain/stun, blinding and slash.

**Poking Weapons**: ½ point bladed damage, -8 to actions except blinding strike, pain/stun and vital strike.

**Blunt Weapons**: 1 to 3, -8 to any actions with these weapons except strike and pain/stun.



### Combat Modifiers

Aim	+4 to roll
Blinded (Full)	-15 to roll
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to roll
Burst	-4 to roll
Extended Action	+5 to roll (-10 to next reaction)
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most rolls
Leaning	-10 to roll
Paired	-4 to roll
Simultaneous Act	-20 +WIL to roll
Split	-10 to rolls
Targeted	-4 to roll
Underwater	-8 to rolls, half damage

### Actions

Area Attack	INL+#of shots+1d20 vs. 25+area in ft. (or +3/m.)
Blinding Strike	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Crippling Attack	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Disarm	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Grab	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Pain)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35
Grab (Strangle)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Wrestling)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Knockaway	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Knockdown	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Knockout	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Pain/Stun	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Slash	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Stomp	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Handheld)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Projectile)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Tackle	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20
Vital Strike (Bladed)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35
Vital Strike (Blunt)	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40
Wing	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

### Reactions

Dodge	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Entangle	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30
Flip	AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35
Drop	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20
Jump	SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Mental Block	WIL+1d20 vs. 20
Parry	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

### Character Creation in Brief

**Step 1: Character Concept**- Your idea of the character: name, appearance, values, etc.

**Step 2: Attributes**- Split 90 points between 9 attributes (min 1, max 20). Choose optional sub-attributes (costs or gives 1 bonus point).

**Step 3: Choose Character Class**- Choose the PC's place in Tibetan society.

**Step 4: Choose Skills**- Spend 100 Skill Points, skill costs set by character class.

**Step 5: Buy Equipment**- Available money set by character class.

**Step 6: Personality**- Choose 5 Attachments, including at least 1 universe attachment.

**Step 7: Bonus Characteristics**- PC starts with neutral balance. Advantages or extra points must be balanced out by disadvantages or fewer points

**Step 8: Character Advancement**- Use XP to gain experience levels and improve the PC.

### Spending BP/XP

3 skill pts.	= 1 BP	=10 XP
1 attribute pt.	= 1 BP	=10 XP
1 BLD/BDY/INCY pt.	= 3 BP	=30 XP
250 Srang	= 1 BP	N/A

### Sample Difficulties

0- Automatic Success

5- Walk down stairs briskly. (AGY)

10- (Easy) Notice a mosquito on PC's skin. (AWR)

15- (Easy-Moderate) Paint ceiling from flimsy ladder. (AGY)

20- (Moderate) Win a game of mah-jongg. (INL)

25- (Moderate-Hard) Catch paper flying in the wind. (AGY)

30- (Hard) Get burned and not flinch. (WIL)

40- (Legendary) Lift a pony over PC's head. (STH)

### Common Tibetan Names

#### Gender Neutral

Chetsang	Dawa	Dhondup	Dorjee
Geshe	Gyalpo	Gyaltsen	Karma
Kelsang	Lhamo	Lobsang	Namgyal
Ngari	Ngawang	Norbu	Nyima
Palden	Pema	Phurpu	Sonam
Tashi	Tenzin	Thondup	Thubten
Tsering	Tseten	Tsewang	Wangdu

#### Typically Feminine

Bhuti	Choedon	Dechen	Deki
Dolma	Khando	Lhakiyi	Lhazom
Namhla	Norzom	Pelmo	Rinzin
Tsamchoe	Tsomo	Wangmo	Yangchen
Yangkyi	Youdon		

#### Typically Masculine

Bhuchung	Chemo	Gyatso	Jigme
Kalden	Lodoe	Rabgyal	Sawang
Tenpa	Tsetrunc	Tsong	Wangchuk
Wangyal			

### Some Altitudes

0 m.	Sea level (no part of Tibet exists at this altitude).
3000 m.	Only the Southeast corner of Tibet dips below this altitude.
3860 m.	Lhasa
4000 m.	The average altitude of Tibet.
4588 m.	Lake Mansorovar, the highest fresh water lake in the world.
5000 m.	Rongbuk, the highest monastery in Tibet.
5600 m.	Mt. Kailash pilgrimage route
5-6000 m.	Summer snowline (above this it is cold enough to snow year-round).
7600 m.	Death zone.
8848 m.	Peak at Everest.

Save vs.	Rolled on
Disease Contraction	END
Disease Progression	END
Fall/Skid Damage	AGY
Fear	WIL
Heat Exhaustion	END
Hypothermia	END
Loss of Balance	AGY
Nausea	WIL
Pain	WIL
Paralysis	END
Physiological Addiction	END
Physiological Drug Effects	END
Psychological Addiction	WIL
Psychological Drug Effects	WIL or INL
Unconsciousness	END/WIL
Shock	END

### Conversions

1 ft. = 0.3048 m. or ~1/3 m.
1 mi. = 1.6093 km. or ~1 1/2 km.
1 lb. = .4536 kg. or ~1/2 kg.
1 m. = 2.7431 ft. or ~2.75 ft.
1 km. = .6213 mi. or ~2/3 mi.
1 kg. = 2.2046 lbs. or ~2 lbs.

### Prowling difficulties

10 (Easy) Crawling through a field of tall grass with a wind to cover noises and an unsuspecting person nearby.

20 (Moderate) Sneaking up behind someone who isn't expecting anything.

30 (Difficult) Crawling in a gutter at night with several people searching for you.

40 (Legendary) Avoiding someone who is searching for you by staying directly behind them (may also require SPD based rolls).

### Climbing Difficulties (with no equipment)

10 (Easy) Tree with low branches.

20 (Moderate) Rocky cliff face.

30 (Hard) Sheer cliff face.

40 (Legendary) Glacial ice.

### Kick Damage

SPD	1-5 SPD	6-15	16-19	20-30	31-40	41-50	51+
DMG	½ blunt	1	1½	2	3	4	5

### Plus to Damage With Blunt Weapons

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-25	26-30	31-40	40+
+ to DMG	-1	0	+1	+2	+3	+4	+5

### Punch Damage

STH	1-5	6-10	11-15	16-20	25-30	31-40	40+
DMG	0	½	1	2	3	4	5



The Sects in Brief				
	Nyingmapa	Sakyapa	Kagyupa	Gelugpa
<b>Strong Points</b>	Large sect. Magical means of self defense.	Logic & philosophy.	Body-control tantras. Hermitage.	Large, well organized. Controls Tibet. Virtuous.
<b>Weak Points</b>	Unreformed. Poorly organized.	Unsavory reputation.	Don't stress logic and philosophy.	No magical self defense. Rejected many tantras.

Defending Against Sorcery	
Animation	physical defenses
Bird Control	physical defenses
Demon Sorcery	Demon Sorcery or various exorcism
Disease Sorcery	Humoural Medicine, Medical Mantras or Herbalism
Gantad Horn	none
Life Force Sorcery	Thread Crosses
Love Magic	none
Poisons	none
Simple Curses	Glud Ceremony or Sucking Exorcism
Zor	Glud Ceremony

### Sorcerous Components Table

01-06: Human Blood  
07-11: Human Flesh  
12-16: Human Bone  
17-21: Human Skull  
22-25: Sandalwood Phurba  
26-29: Juniper Wood Phurba  
30-33: Turmeric Wood Phurba  
34-38: Poison Paper  
39-43: Khram Sing (notched hexagonal stick)  
44-48: Goat Blood  
49-53: Dog Blood  
54-58: Corpse Hair  
59-63: Human skin  
64-67: Live Poisonous Spiders  
68-71: Menstrual Blood of a Prostitute  
72-75: Death Blood Wiped From a Sword  
76-78: Thighbone of an Indian Brahmin  
79-81: Blood From a Leprous Corpse  
82-84: Brain Blood of an Insane Person  
85-86: Rhino Meat  
87-88: Black Stones From a Haunted Place  
89-90: Right Horn of a Black Yak  
91-92: Blood of a Child Born From Incest  
93-94: Object Used to Commit Suicide  
95-96: Flesh of woman who died in childbirth  
97-98: White Mustard  
99-00: Charcoal from a Funeral Pyre

### Discovering an Attachment (INL or AWR + 1d20)

10 for physical attachments  
20 for self attachments  
30 for universe attachments.

### Eliminating an Attachment

(KMA + WIL + 1d20)

Attachment Difficulty

Last	100
2 <sup>nd</sup>	90
3 <sup>rd</sup>	80
4 <sup>th</sup>	70
5 <sup>th</sup>	60
6 <sup>th</sup>	50
7 <sup>th</sup>	40

### Current KMA and Most Likely Rebirth

-15 or worse:  
Hell Being

-5 to -15:  
Hungry Ghost

-5 to 5:  
Animal

5 to 20:  
Human

20 or better:  
God

Num. of Attachments	Max. Cap. for KMA
0	None
1	100
2	50
3	33
4	25
5	20
6	17
7	14

### Some Karma Causing Actions

#### +1 KMA or -1 KMA

Cause lust, anger or envy or help someone overcome lust, anger or envy.

Help support a holy person (ascetic, revenant, holy pilgrim, monk) or hinder a holy person.

Give someone a gift they enjoy or take away a person's prized possession.

Insult someone or tell a lie to someone.

#### +2 KMA or -2 KMA

Create or destroy a beautiful piece of artwork.

Feed the hungry or cause people to go hungry.

Give a large contribution to a monastery.

#### +3 KMA or -3 KMA

Make a pilgrimage to a holy place.

Help a killer reform or turn someone in to a killer.

Mutilate someone or save someone from being mutilated.

Print or destroy a common holy book.

#### +4 KMA or -4 KMA

Cause or cure a debilitating or possibly fatal illness.

Save the life of an animal or kill an animal.

Torture a being or save a being from torture.

#### +5 KMA or -5 KMA

Bind a dharmapala to an oath to be good or free a dharmapala from an oath to be good.

Cause a person to abandon a vow or cause a person to take a vow (vows include nonviolence, celibacy, poverty and vegetarianism).

Convert someone to Buddhism or cause someone to stray from Buddhism.

Save a human life or kill a human.

Save or destroy the only copy of a holy book.

Miracle	Difficulty
See in the dark or while blinded	40
Feel someone's true emotions	45
See invisible beings	50
Reincarnate as a tulku	55
Read another's mind	60
Talk with animals	60
Heal someone of an injury or disease	60
Glow with light	65
Teleport	70
Live without food	70
Longevity	70
Transmute objects	75
Burst in to flames but not get hurt	75
Shrink or grow to giant sizes	80
Invisibility	80
Look like another person	80
Cause earthquakes	80

Skills and Equipment	
skills	equipment
Animal Packing	Pack Frame
Archery	Bow: Long, Bow: Short
Architecture	Carving Tools
Blacksmithing	Forge
Butchery	Knife, Rope, Sewing Needle
Carving	Carving Tools
Dagger Exorcism	Phurba: Brass
Death Tantra	Thigh Bone Trumpet
Demon Sorcery	Sorcerous Components Table (p.103)
Disease Sorcery	Sorcerous Components Table (p.103)
Drum Divination	Skull Drum, Two Headed Drum
Gantad Horn	Sorcerous Components Table (p.103)
Glud Ceremony	Glud Mold
Harrying Exorcism	Harrying Horn
Knife	Knife, Kukuri
Lance	Lance
Mirror Gazing	Mirror, Mirror: Silver
Mountain Climbing	Climbing Equipment, Climbing Rope, Climbing Tent
Music	Long Trumpet, Skull Drum, Thigh Bone Trumpet, Two Headed Drum
Painting	Brushes & Paints
Pistol	Pistol (All)
Printing	Book Making Materials
Scapulimancy	Scapula: Human, Scapula: Sheep
Sling	Sling
Snare	Rope, Climbing Rope
Sound Exorcism	Long Tumpet, Thigh Bone Trumpet
Staff	Staff
Sucking Exorcism	Ceremonial Arrow
Sword	Sword (All)
Tailoring	Sewing Needle
Textiles	Loom
Weather Prediction	Two Headed Drum
Weather Sorcery	Thigh Bone Trumpet
Whip	Whip
Zor	Sorcerous Components Table (p.103)

# tibet the role playing game

## CONCEPT

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Character Class \_\_\_\_\_  
 Player Name \_\_\_\_\_ Gender \_\_\_\_\_ Home Area \_\_\_\_\_

**KMA  
Emanation**  
 \_\_\_\_\_

Attachments

Appearance

Advantages

Disads

## ATTRIBUTES

	Base	Current	Plusses/Minuses
AGY	_____	_____	_____
AWR	_____	_____	_____
CHM	_____	_____	_____
END	_____	_____	_____
INL	_____	_____	_____
KMA	_____	_____	_____
SPD	_____	_____	_____
STH	_____	_____	_____
WIL	_____	_____	_____
Health Attributes			
BLD	_____	_____	_____
BDY	_____	_____	_____
INCY	_____	_____	_____

## SKILLS

Skill	Attribute	Type	Levels	AV
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____
_____	_____	_____	000000	_____

## EQUIPMENT

_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

## ADVANCEMENT

**Skill Costs:** Combat \_\_\_\_\_ Crafts \_\_\_\_\_ Divination \_\_\_\_\_ Exorcism \_\_\_\_\_ Folk Knowledge \_\_\_\_\_ Medicine \_\_\_\_\_  
 Scholarship \_\_\_\_\_ Sorcery \_\_\_\_\_ Tantra \_\_\_\_\_ Travel \_\_\_\_\_ Weathermaking \_\_\_\_\_ Western Knowledge \_\_\_\_\_  
 Special Skill Costs \_\_\_\_\_  
 Unspent XP \_\_\_\_\_ Total Earned XP \_\_\_\_\_ Levels/Disciplines \_\_\_\_\_

# tibet the role playing game

Combat Sheet for \_\_\_\_\_

## ARMOR

Armor Name \_\_\_\_\_

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

PR \_\_\_\_\_

Penalties \_\_\_\_\_

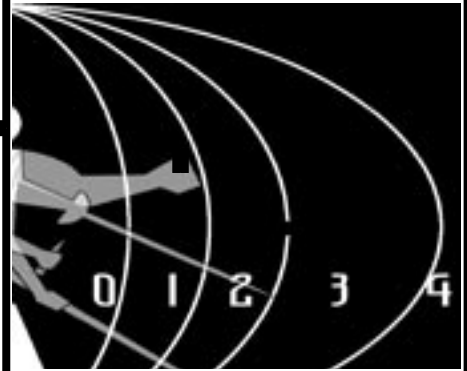
## COMBAT SKILLS

Skill \_\_\_\_\_

Levels \_\_\_\_\_

Actions/Reactions \_\_\_\_\_

## COMBAT RANGES



## UNARMED

Punch Dmg \_\_\_\_\_ Kick Dmg \_\_\_\_\_ Unarmed Plusses \_\_\_\_\_

Action/Reaction Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Misc = Total + 1d20 vs. Difficulty

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## MELEE WEAPONS

Weapon \_\_\_\_\_ Dmg \_\_\_\_\_ Range \_\_\_\_\_ Pierces As \_\_\_\_\_

Action/Reaction Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Misc = Total + 1d20 vs. Difficulty

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Weapon \_\_\_\_\_ Dmg \_\_\_\_\_ Range \_\_\_\_\_ Pierces As \_\_\_\_\_

Action/Reaction Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Misc = Total + 1d20 vs. Difficulty

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## PROJECTILE WEAPONS

Weapon \_\_\_\_\_ Dmg \_\_\_\_\_ FR \_\_\_\_\_ MR \_\_\_\_\_ ROF \_\_\_\_\_

Pierces As \_\_\_\_\_ Clip Holds \_\_\_\_\_ Amount of Ammo \_\_\_\_\_

Action/Reaction Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Misc = Total -1/FR+1d20 vs. Difficulty

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Weapon \_\_\_\_\_ Dmg \_\_\_\_\_ Range \_\_\_\_\_ Misc \_\_\_\_\_

Action/Reaction Att1 + Att2 + Skill + Misc = Total + 1d20 vs. Difficulty

_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

## COMBAT MODIFIERS

Aim	+4 to roll
Blinded (Full)	-15 to roll
Blinded (Partial)	-7 to roll
Burst	-4 to roll
Extended Action	+5 to roll (-10 to next reaction)
Improvised Weapon	-8 to most rolls
Leaning	-10 to roll
Paired	-4 to roll
Simultaneous Act	-20 +WIL to roll
Split	-10 to rolls
Targeted	-4 to roll
Underwater	-8 to rolls, half damage

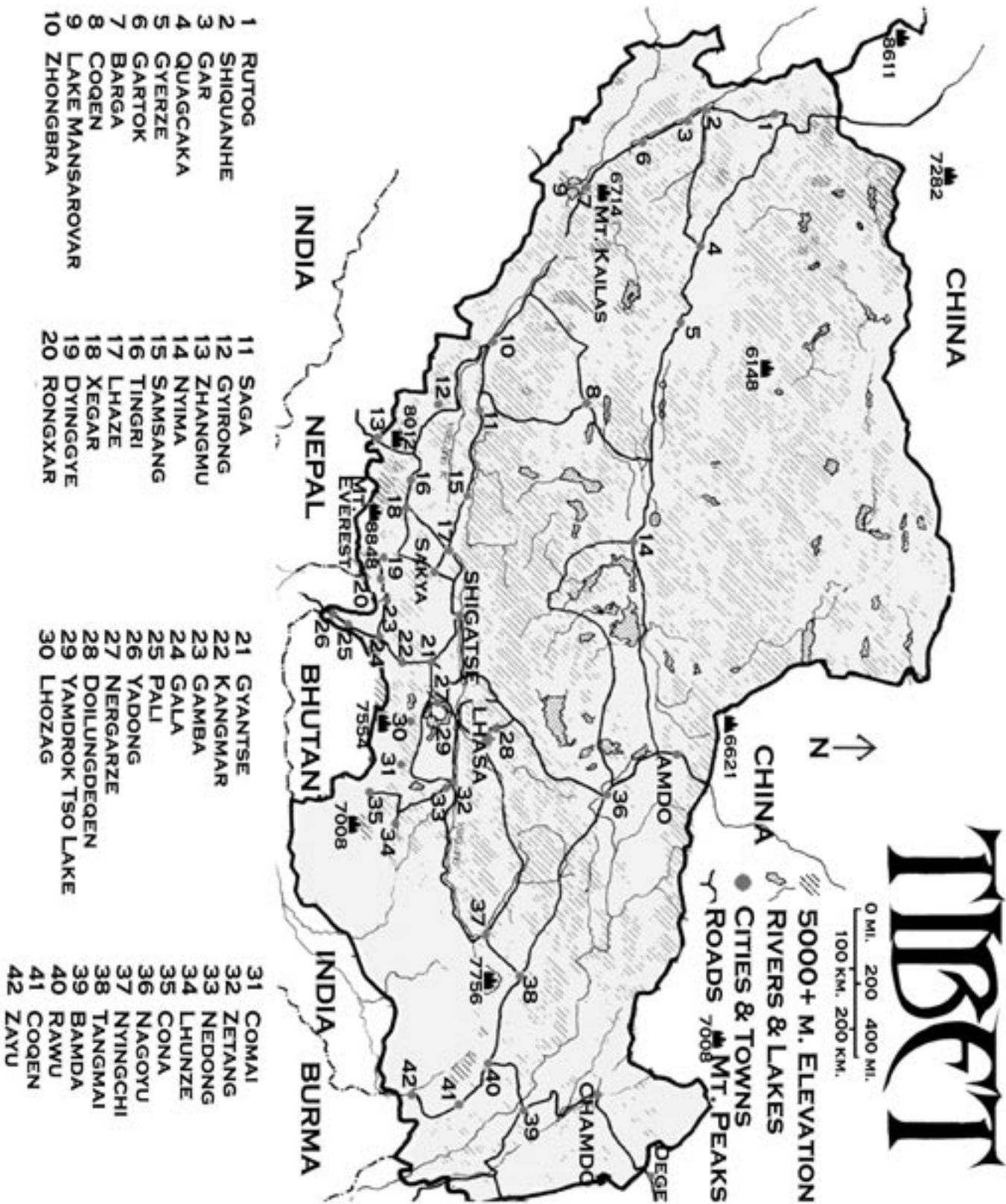
## ACTIONS

Area Attack	INL+#of shots+1d20 vs. 25+area in ft. (or +3/m.)
Blinding Strike	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Crippling Attack	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Disarm	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Grab	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Pain)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 35
Grab (Strangle)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Grab (Wrestling)	STH+INL+1d20 vs. 30
Knockaway	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Knockdown	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Knockout	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 30
Pain/Stun	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Slash	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Stomp	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Handheld)	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Strike (Projectile)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Tackle	SPD+STH+1d20 vs. 20
Vital Strike (Bladed)	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 35
Vital Strike (Blunt)	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 40
Wing	INL+AGY+1d20 vs. 20

## REACTIONS

Dodge	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Entangle	INL+STH+1d20 vs. 30
Flip	AGY+STH+1d20 vs. 35
Drop	AWR+AGY+1d20 vs. 20
Jump	SPD+AGY+1d20 vs. 25
Mental Block	WIL+1d20 vs. 20
Parry	STH+AGY+1d20 vs. 25

丁巳年正月



# TIBET

the role playing game



ਲਗਛੋਟ, ਲਪੁਡੀਟੋਇਲ ਆਦਿ ਯਾਰ in 1959 ਟੀਬੇਟ  
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POWER AND RETREAT IN TO YOUR  
GATED COMMUNITIES TO  
WAIT FOR US TO DIE OUT.

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EVERYTHING WE DO MEANS SOMETHING.  
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