

ORE THAN anything, it is shared beliefs which hold a culture together. The Black-haired Race maintains the supremacy of the Middle Kingdom amid the barbarians of the borders through an unshakeable trust in the superiority of its civilisation. This civilisation stretches back through the various dynasties, and into the far reaches of the past to such divine figures as the Yellow Emperor, Yao and Shun. These are the archetypes who created the China of today: who set down the calendar, established agriculture, created the Book of Changes. It is the common history, more than anything else, that leads to the unity of the Black-haired Race.

However, although many beliefs are shared, there are others which differ. While most people accept the same religious ideas, and believe in the same gods, there are many disagreements. These are mainly between the followers of the three ways: Buddhism, Confucianism, and Taoism.

Every sect has its truth; every truth has its sect

RELIGION

For the majority of Chinese, there is only one religion. They venerate their ancestors and offer up sacrifices to a variety of spirits and deities. The religion has no name, and only the vaguest of tenets and principles. Some people, however, devote themselves to a more specific religion. It is a distinctive characteristic of China that whatever the opinions of the followers of the specific religions may be, the folk religion followed by the majority is indiscriminate in its adoption of the gods and customs of other religions.

The three main formal religions, Taoism, Buddhism

and Confucianism, too, are not quite as separate as you might expect. The scholar Li Shiqian wrote: 'Buddhism is the sun, Taoism the moon, and Confucianism the five planets.' There is even a doctrine that the three are one religion with three aspects. Certainly, both Confucianism and Taoism revere Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. Taoism and Buddhism too share many aspects. If there is any bad feeling, it is perhaps most evident between Confucians and Buddhists.

In all cases, religion is not conceived of as personal communication between Man and the Divine. Heaven is remote, and not to be dealt with directly. For the common people, local powers and local gods are of most importance. Household gods and ancestors can be addressed directly (though with respect).

The gods are listed after the religions have been described.

FOLK RELIGION

Reverence for ancestors permeates the religious beliefs and practices of the common people. For this reason, having children is a priority, for if you have no children, who will make offerings to your tablet, and that of your ancestors, when you are dead? The tablet, on which is written the name of the deceased, is placed on the family altar, and offerings to it should be frequent. At certain festivals, the graves of the ancestors must also be visited, and respects paid.

Next in importance is the worship of gods. There is a dazzling array of deities available to the worshipper, and clearly it is impossible to worship all of them. People will therefore tend to pay respects to those who are of some relevance to the current circumstances, or those which are local. In fact, the worship of the higher levels of deity is explicitly forbidden to the common people, and is the exclusive preserve of the higher ranks of society. No commoner should ever presume to make an offering to Shang Ti, The Jade Emperor, for example.

Finally, it is essential to propitiate demons and

restless ghosts. The difference between these and gods is by no means as clear-cut as you might think. All are dwellers in the Otherworld.

In all three cases, the method used is the same: offerings of incense and food. When worship or reverence is the aim, the offering is accompanied by kow-towing to show devotion.

There is no distinction made between the natural or supernatural powers inherent in things and creatures, and the things and creatures themselves. A spiritual dimension, the Otherworld, coexists alongside the world of mortal men, populated by spirits, genies, demons and ghosts. These include fantastic creatures in animal or human form, dogs, pigs or foxes in human form, mountains, trees, rivers and lakes, and vindictive ghosts. According to folk belief, they can be repelled by fireworks, drums and gongs, willow branches or artemisia. The stout of heart can use a weapon against them. This might be effective, but it will almost always cause them to assume their true form.

IMPORTANT GODS

Listed in ascending size of area of responsibility.

The Hearth God

The Local God

The City God

Confucius, Laozi and other deified heroes and sages Celestial Buddhas and Boddhisattvas

The Dragon Kings

The Jade Emperor and his court

MEIHAAUB

The religion of the Enlightened One was founded many years ago in the distant land of India. It is therefore, unlike Taoism and Confucianism, a foreign religion. The religion is founded on the Four Noble Truths discovered by the Buddha himself.

- ♦ All existence is suffering
- ♦ Suffering arises from desire
- ♦ Suffering can be eased by the elimination of desire
- The Eightfold Path leads to release from suffering

Thus, for followers of the Buddha, the ideal method of living is provided by the Eightfold Path (see below).

There are two identifiable strands of Buddhism. The first, *Chan*, is primarily devoted to the achievement of Enlightenment through personal effort. Chan monks are particularly dedicated to the use of meditation in self-improvement. This teaching was introduced to China by the famous monk Da Mo, who taught the monks of Shaolin exercises to maintain their fitness for long periods of meditation. The exercises became the famous Shaolin Martial Arts.

The other main Buddhist teaching is that of the Pure Land. The founder of this school was Chinese, and he argued that while enlightenment through personal effort may have been possible in the past, in today's weakened moral climate the only way was through the intervention of a Buddha. Pure Land worshippers venerate Amituo, the ruler of the Pure Land, who helps those who invoke him. Worshippers' goal is to be reborn in the Pure Land, from which it is easier to attain Enlightenment.

While these two schools can be identified, they are not really separate 'sects' as such. The vast majority of Buddhists are simply Buddhists, and follow the Eightfold Path:

PERFECT VIEW

The Buddhist must understand the four noble truths completely, and also recognise the non-individuality of life.

PERFECT RESOLVE

The Buddhist must adhere to a code of good will toward others and practice non-violence.

PERFECT SPEECH

The Buddhist should avoid all lying, slander or gossip.

PERFECT CONDUCT

The Buddhist should follow the precepts:

- 1. Do not kill
- 2. Do not take that which is not freely given
- 3. Do not indulge in illicit sex
- 4. Do not speak unjustly
- 5. Do not drink alcohol
- 6. Do not take solid food after noon.
- 7. Do not indulge in any form of entertainment.
- 8. Do not wear perfume or jewellery
- 9. Do not sleep on a high, soft bed.
- 10. Do not use money or valuables.

The first five precepts should be followed by all practising Buddhists. The latter five apply only to Monks and Nuns, though they should also be followed by lay persons when observing Buddhist festivals.

PERFECT LIVELIHOOD

The Buddhist should avoid all harmful professions, such as those involving the taking of life.

PERFECT EFFORT

The Buddhist should work hard to cultivate wholesome karma and minimise bad joss.

PERFECT MINDFULNESS

The Buddhist should develop increased awareness of their surroundings. This is often practised through meditation.

PERFECT CONCENTRATION

The Buddhist should strive to focus their consciousness, avoiding distractions. This, too, can be practised through meditation.

Buddhists believe the world is an illusion. Life is suffering. Only abstention from evil will allow a soul to reborn in a higher form, eventually to attain enlightenment.

It should be noted that scholars are often sarcastic about Buddhism. It is considered fashionable to be anti-Buddhist in upper-class circles.

CONFUCIANISM

Confucianism is a religion with temples but no priests. Unlike Taoism and Buddhism, which are both concerned with metaphysics and the otherworldly, Confucianism confines itself to the necessities of everyday life in society. At its heart, as you'd expect from a religion founded by a teacher, is the firm belief that humans can be perfected through education.

Confucianism is founded on the five traditional relationships described by Kong Zi, Confucius himself.

- ♦ Father and son
- ♦ Husband and wife
- ♦ Older and younger brother
- ♦ Ruler and subject
- ♦ Friend and friend

If these relationships are all correctly observed, then society will be well ordered. Confucius also stressed the importance of Names. By this he meant that people should always conform strictly to their occupation and status. In other words, the ruler should behave like a ruler, a father like a father, and a son like a son. Conformity is the essence of harmony. The model for this conformity is to be found in the conduct of the ancients, especially enlightened rulers such as King Wen.

There are two other important lessons to be learned from Confucianism. The first is the notion of the Mandate of Heaven, which derives from the correction of Names. If a ruler should behave like a ruler, it follows that a ruler who *doesn't* behave like a ruler is at fault. According to Confucius, a ruler is divinely entitled to rule, and this is described as the Mandate of Heaven. Divine order is reflected in human order. However, should the ruler behave inappropriately, he will no longer be worthy of the Mandate of Heaven, which will be withdrawn.

In this way, a dynasty may change, and as with the glorious Song dynasty, an Emperor may arise from the common people, and by dint of his superior virtue (and military prowess) ascend to the Dragon Throne.

Confucius also stresses the importance of personal conduct. His watchword is 'Do not do anything to other people which you would not have them do to you'. This defines virtue, a humane quality in which a person shows benevolence where it is deserved. The virtuous man conquers his baser instincts by showing benevolence, and is thus recognised as a man of principle.

This should not be confused with the wishy-washy

pacifism of the Buddhists, however. A virtuous man, in achieving principle, also conquers his weaker emotions. In the governance of man there are some occasions where strong action is called for. Confucius's first act, upon being elevated to the post of Prime Minister, was to order an execution. What is important is that such actions are taken, not from evil motives such as jealousy or greed, but from a recognition of social necessity. What's more, taking the proper action is what marks out the proper man. Success or failure are not of primary importance. While this may be related to the Master's own failure to persuade an erring ruler of the folly of his ways, it is nevertheless important. If you have obligations to others, striving to fulfil them marks you out as a virtuous man whether you succeed or fail.

A new movement has recently been growing among Confucians which infuses these ideas with more religious expression. Some say that it takes ideas from both Taoism and Buddhism and applies them to its own ends. This movement of New Confucianism seems to oppose the social Reform movement started by Wang Anshi. While asserting that man is essentially good, it stresses the importance of the Ethics, morals and beliefs of the past.

Although there are temples which could be described as Confucian—in particular the Imperial Shrines at which the Emperor performs the Rites, and the Temple of the City God—there are no Confucian priests. Their role is filled by the magistrates and mandarins of the bureaucracy, who occasionally have to perform temple ceremonies as a part of their duties.

It is perfectly possible to be an upright Confucian, and nevertheless dabble in Taoism. Lao Zi is regarded as highly by Confucians as by Taoists. Buddhism is a different matter. As a foreign religion, which encourages citizens to abdicate their social ties and responsibilities and lead an unproductive life in a monastery, it is not considered worthy of respect.

Meiort

The religion of Taoism glorifies chaos, the primordial, childlike state of affairs before human society evolved. Thus, for the Taoists, nature is worthy of more respect than human society, and the ultimate goal of a Taoist is withdrawal from the world of Man.

It goes beyond this, however. Taoism has taken up the popular quest for Immortality. Although sages have searched for the secrets of longevity for centuries, it was the success of the first Celestial Master Zhang Daoling which led to that search becoming associated almost entirely with Taoism. Zhang was adept at driving out demons and performing other miracles, finally ascending to Heaven in broad daylight, a particularly spectacular method of achieving immortality. Since then, there has been a continual line of Celestial Masters living on Dragon and Tiger mountain in East Jiangnan.

What is the Tao? It is not an entity. It cannot be

described with words. It is the 'something' which makes the Universe work. A Taoist does not pray to the Tao or invoke it in any way. Instead he strives to be 'natural', for only by doing so can he get closer to the purity of the Tao.

Although their monasteries are structured very similarly to those of the Buddhists, Taoists are not as rich as Buddhists. Perhaps this is because the Buddhist religion received so much Imperial and other sponsorship during the Tang Dynasty. The current Emperor, is fond of Taoism, however, so perhaps its fortunes are on the rise.

TAOIST PRECEPTS

No less than the Buddhists, Taoist priests and monks are expected to do good, though plenty of them are unable to fulfil this. They are also subject to restrictions on their behaviour. Taoists should avoid excess. There is no necessity to follow the path of vegetarianism (though some do). Rather than abstaining from meat, strict Taoists refrain from eating grain. The reason for this is that grain is considered the food of the Three Worms. The worms dwell within each human body, and are the receptacle of bad joss. The Taoists believe that by starving the Three Worms they can reduce their susceptibility to bad joss.

RELIGIOUS & PHILOSOPHICAL TAOISM

Taoism as a religion owes many of its ideas to the great sages, Lao Zi, Zhuang Zi and their successors. Those ideas, however, are primarily philosophical, and do not encourage the formation of an organised religion. It is therefore possible to isolate two strands of Taoism.

One is the religious Taoism founded by the first Celestial Master. This is a Taoism of gods, talismans, rituals and observance.

The second is a philosophical Taoism, a contemplative way derived from the sages and fuelled by metaphysical speculation.

There is no question that the majority of Taoists you meet will be followers of the former. Here and there you may meet the odd philosopher. It is even possible that you may meet someone who manages to combine both approaches.

Those who follow religious Taoism will attach considerable importance to the *Daocang*, the Taoist canon. This collection of writings not only codifies Taoist doctrine but contains copious notes on such varied subjects as medicine, botany and astronomy. Work began on compiling the *Daocang* in the Tang dynasty; between 111 and 1118 it undergoes its final major revision.

TAOIST CEREMONIES

There are four main ceremonies practised by religious Taoists: communal fasts, collective confessions, healing rituals and rituals for the veneration of the deities. The functions of these ceremonies in game terms are up to the referee to decide. A combination of all of them is usually required for the purification rituals which rid a character of bad joss.

OTHER SECTS

The Demon Worshippers were a Manichaean cult which arose in the south-east. Its head was called The Demon King, and he was assisted by the Demon Father and Demon Mother. Their principles included a form of communal ownership, prohibition of meat and alcohol, refusal to utter the names of their associates and the saint of the sect (Zhang Jiao), belief only in the sun and the moon (the 'true Buddhas').

Here and there other ideas sprung up, often strange fusions of Chinese beliefs with western creeds, such as Christianity. There are also those within China and beyond its borders who follow Islam. Although the heyday of their traders is long gone, there are still a few remaining in certain southern ports.

Three feet above your head the air is thick with spirits

THE GODS

The most important thing to remember about the many gods worshipped in China is that they are generally not believed to be omnipotent, abstract beings. Some abstruse Taoist or Buddhist philosophers may spin some sophistry that hints as much, but the common man knows better. The gods exist on a continuum of existence: they are beings not greatly different from humans, who have, for whatever reason, acquired the power to be recognised as deities.

Although the Jade Emperor, for example, is widely regarded as the most powerful god, there are clear limits on even his powers and knowledge.

The closest China has to the concept of the single God of the barbarians is the notion of Heaven. This demonstrates the superiority of Chinese thought. Where the barbarians are unable to escape the notion that destiny is ordained by a single entity, the superior philosophy of the black-haired race has reasoned that destiny is a *force* not a *being*. 'Heaven' embraces the gods, but means rather more. The gods, even the Jade Emperor himself, could be said to be agents of Heaven.

Heaven and Earth, the ten thousand things, constitute the manifestation of the Tao.

THE JADE EMPEROR

XI WANG MU

MY LORD THUNDER

DRAGON KINGS

DOOR GODS

SNIFFING & PUFFING GENERALS

CAI SHEN, GOD OF WEALTH

YAN LUO, LORD OF HELL

KUAN YIN, BODDHISATTVA

PU XIAN, BODDHISATTVA

DI CANG, BODDHISATTVA

WEN SHU, BODDHISATTVA

There is no highway to the heavens, there is no doorway to the earth

THE OTHERWORLD

Heaven, Yan Luo's Underworld, the Dragon Realms, the Islands of the Immortals and Mount Kunlun—all of these realms comprise the Otherworld. It is the dwelling place of spirits, ghosts, deities and immortals. It is all around us, invisible, inaccessible, but...there.

The topography of the Otherworld is complex, and certainly beyond the grasp of mere human intellect. However it is clear that it comprises a number of Realms, as mentioned above. Most philosophers also argue that the Land of Dreams, which is visited by the human spirit-soul, the *hun*, during sleep, is a part of the Otherworld

One of the most important principles regarding the Otherworld is that the incorporeality of what we call 'spirits' is merely a product of their separation from our own world. If you are physically transported to the spirit

world, you find that 'spirits' have an existence fully as corporeal as your own.

However, communication between the realms is limited. Under normal circumstances, the Otherworld is entirely inaccessible from our world, the Mortal World. Contact can only be established by exceptional—supernatural—means.

CONTACTING THE OTHERWORLD

There are three levels of contact of the underworld. The lowest, and most common, is *communication*. This may be initiated from either world. No physical effect, or energy, is transferred between the worlds. However beings may become aware of sensory information from the other world: visions, smells, voices and so on.

The second level of contact is that of *energy*, perhaps best understood as the manifestation of spirit. In this case, a being manifests in the other world in the form of energy only. This is the most common way in which spirits or ghosts manifest in the Mortal World. In this case, physical action is not possible, unless the being is capable of using their energy to achieve magical effects. Also, perhaps because of the unusual topography of the Otherworld, spirits manifesting in the form of energy are only able to travel in straight lines.

The most absolute level of contact is *physical transference*. In this case, the whole being is transferred into the other world. This usually requires a very high level of magic to achieve.

HTREG

Death is, of course, the great mystery. Thus the following should be taken as a guide to the most common beliefs concerning death in Song China. In the end the referee has the final say on what happens to the dead.

Human beings consist of three elements: the *xing*, or physical form, the *po* or body-souls, and the *hun* or spirit souls. The seven *po* represent the *yin* element of humanity, and they keep the body alive. The three *hun* represent the *yang* element of humanity, and they regulate the higher functions.

Death may occur for a number of reasons. The *xing* may sustain such a lot of damage that the *po* can no longer inhabit it. The *po* may be attacked directly and driven from the body. Or perhaps a person of high spiritual advancement may have refined himself to such an extent that his *po* wither away, and the *xing* is no longer necessary.

In any case, a person dies when his *po* souls leave his body. It is perfectly possible for *hun* souls to leave the body (this happens when a person dreams, for example). If by some accident the *hun* souls are prevented from returning to the body, the body will continue to live, its functions regulated by the *po*, but it will usually be in a coma, or, at best, incoherent and incapable of the higher functions.

In most cases, after death the *po* hover near the corpse for some time—up to three years—before rejoining the Yellow Springs of the Earth (which is pure *yin*). The *hun*, on the other hand, will travel onward, its path being determined by its religious beliefs and its spiritual advancement. In some cases, the *hun* may be insufficiently developed, and may dissipate after death.

In most cases, the *hun* of a recently deceased person will become a *shen*, and acquire a *xing* in the Otherworld. Ordinarily, this form will appear in the ordinary Realm of the Spirits, or, if there is a karmic debt to be paid, in Yen Lo's Underworld. It will remain there until it is reborn in another form in the mortal world. Some *hun* spirits, however, are destined for greater things: the Isles of the Immortals, or even a position in the Heavenly Hierarchy.

Sometimes things go wrong. A person who drowns, or who is hanged, or who is possessed by some overbearingly powerful emotion of revenge or hatred, is unbalanced in favour of *yin*. Thus, upon death, the *po* will dominate, the *hun* will wither away, and a hungry ghost will be created. This is also the fate of those who have no family to worship their ancestral tablet.

Hungry ghosts can be dangerous, partly because they are lacking the higher faculties of reason, and partly because their unresolved karma often enables them to acquire the means of penetrating from the Otherworld to the mortal world.

It is widely believed that *hun* spirits also wither away if the deceased's body is incomplete at the point of death. This is why the death penalties which involve mutilation, such as decapitation, are more serious than strangulation, which keeps the body intact. It is also the reason why most Eunuchs 'buy back' their missing parts from the surgeon who performs the operation. When they die, they are sewn back on in the hope that the *hun* will not dissipate.

FUNERALS

Bad Loss

For the majority of the Black-haired race, who live in a world inhabited by spirits, very little is coincidence. Bad fortune arises from a complex set of causes, principally the influence of malignant spirits. The Buddhists preach that all human suffering is caused by attachment to the world. The Taoists strive for an ideal of *wu-wei*—spontaneous unmotivated action. All of these explanations for bad fortune are represented in the game by *bad joss*.

Bad joss may be acquired by characters in a number of ways: any time a player claims points of **motivation** for their character, they will acquire bad joss, which should be noted by the referee; offending deities; oathbreaking; incurring the wrath of evil spirits; being in the wrong place (relative to the Dragon Veins, the energy flows beneath the earth) or having one's ancestors buried in the

wrong place (again, relative to the Dragon Veins).

Bad joss is noted down by the referee, and should not be disclosed to players unless they use the appropriate magic to discover it. It is used by the referee to provide bad fortune for player characters.

In certain cases players must roll to suffer the effects of their bad joss. This has the effect of reducing the total of bad joss, but it does mean the character suffers from misfortune.

There are other ways in which bad joss may be lost or averted. The pursuit of religious practices, the purchase of Talismans and charms and so on may serve to dissipate the bad joss a character has acquired.

Bad joss is explained further in the *Games* chapter.

Even if he lives his whole life up a date tree the man destined to drown will drown

ASTROLOGY

The Chinese system of astrology connects *yin-yang* theory, the five elements, and several other systems of thought. It is a complex area, going far beyond the simple 'animals signs' known to ordinary people. Skilled astrologers will usually also have experience at divination, and will combine their knowledge in order to predict, and even to change the future. The use of Astrological skills in this manner are provided in the *Magic* chapter. For your reference, here are some details which can assist in providing background and atmosphere to astrological activities.

YEAR SIGN

The year in which a character is born determines their birth sign. The birth sign follows the most important cycle in Chinese astrology: the cycle of 60 years. The 60-year cycle is constructed by combining two elements: the Heavenly Stems (which derive from *yin* and *yang*, and the five elements) and the Earthly Branches (which are associated with animal signs).

Heavenly Stem	Element	Aspect
甲	Wood	Yang: Older Brother
乙	Wood	Yin: Younger Brother
丙	Fire	Yang: Older Brother
丁	Fire	Yin: Younger Brother
戊	Earth	Yang: Older Brother
己	Earth	Yin: Younger Brother
庚	Metal	Yang: Older Brother
辛	Metal	Yin: Younger Brother
壬	Water	Yang: Older Brother
癸	Water	Yin: Younger Brother

Earthly Branch	Direction	Time	Animal
子	North	11pm-1am	Rat
丑	East	1am-3am	Ox
寅	North	3am-5am	Tiger
卯	East	5am-7am	Rabbit
辰	South	7am-9am	Dragon
已	East	9am-11am	Snake
午	South	11am-1pm	Horse
未	South	1pm-3pm	Sheep
申	West	3pm-5pm	Monkey
酉	West	5pm-7pm	Rooster
戌	North	7pm-9pm	Dog
亥	West	9pm-11pm	Boar

The cycle always starts from the Heavenly Stem \P (Young Wood) and Earthly Branch \mathcal{F} (associated with the Rat). Each subsequent year takes the next Stem and Branch on the list. Thus in a full 60-year cycle the Heavenly Stems will each appear six times, while the Earthly Branches will each appear five times.

ANIMAL SIGN

The Earthly Branch for the year in which a character is born suggests an animal, and this is often considered to influence the character's personality. The personalities associated with the animals are as follows:

Earthly		
Branch	Animal	Personality
子	Rat 鼠	Smart, quick-witted, bold and
		daring, optimistic, open.
丑	Ox 牛	Grumbles but big-hearted, long-
		suffering, honourable.
寅	Tiger 虎	Keeps promises, becomes angry if
		others don't, fierce, independent,
		proud.
卯	Rabbit 兎	Clever and talented, moderate,
		gentle, inoffensive.
辰	Dragon 龍	Energetic, direct, enthusiastic
		dreamer, achiever.
已	Snake 蛇	Opportunistic, wise, fighting
		spirit.
午	Horse 馬	Hardworking, broadminded,
		irresponsible.
未	Sheep 羊	Quiet, restful, patient, gentle,
		social.
申	Monkey 猿	Energetic, full of plans,
		mischievous, fickle, dishonest.
酉	Rooster 鶏	Punctual, thorough, tactful, fond
		of dressing up.
戌	Dog 狗	Secretive, a natural follower,
		intuitive, loyal.
亥	Boar 猪	Comfortable, home-loving, lustful,
		greedy.

These personalities are the stereotypes associated with the animal types. Sophisticated astrologers do not set much store by them, relying instead on the complex interactions between the Heavenly Stems and Earthly Branches.

KOITRKIYIQ

There are many methods of divination, stretching back to the use of tortoise shells. By the Song dynasty, much serious divination was done by means of the *Book of Changes* (also known as the *I Ching*). This book was so respectable that even upright Confucian scholars who scoff at superstition will set great store by its advice.

The main part of the book consists of 64 hexagrams. The hexagrams are each made up of six lines, which may be *yin* or *yang* (represented by broken or unbroken lines). The hexagrams derive from eight trigrams, the *bagua*, which are sets of three lines.

An appropriate hexagram is usually chosen by tossing coins or manipulating yarrow stalks. The coin option is the simplest: first incense is burned, and the question to be answered addressed to the oracle. Next a prayer should be offered with the inquirer introducing themselves and stating their circumstances. The three coins to be used should be passed through the smoke of the incense.

One side of the coins, decorated with writing, is the *yang* side (the illustration of a coin in the *Society* chapter is the *yang* side) while the other is *yin*. A throw of all three coins is made for each line, working from the bottom up.

A throw of one yang and two yins is a simple *yang* (unbroken) line.

A throw of one yin and two yangs is a simple *yin* (broken) line.

A throw of three yangs is a moving *yang* line, while three yins is a moving *yin* line. Moving lines should be marked.

Once you have drawn the hexagram, you can consult the simple list below for a reading. You will soon notice that much of the skill of the *Book of Changes* lies in interpretation. More detailed readings can be found in any book on the *I Ching*.

If the hexagram includes moving lines, then you should first read the hexagram as you have drawn it. This is the initial state. Then redraw it, with moving yins changing to yangs and vice versa. You will have a new reading. This is the final state. Thus the reading shows a change which will take place.

CULTURE

For a thousand or more years, China has been the most civilised nation on earth. Its science, administration and customs mark it out as a highly sophisticated culture in a world of barbarism. At the same time, it has developed a rich heritage of folklore, and a carefully maintained

history which stretches back into the furthest reaches of the past. Awareness of this heritage, and observance of the various usages and customs appropriate to one's station are essential to smooth relations with one's neighbours.

THE CALENDAR

Song China actually employs two calendars: the official (lunar) calendar and the farmer's (solar) calendar. The official calendar corresponds to the phases of the moon. Its months are either 29 or 30 days long. However, because it slips out of phase with the solar year it has to be corrected: in each 19 year period seven years require the addition of an intercalary month to square things up. The farmer's calendar, on the other hand, consists of 24 'solar terms', referred to as the 'joints and breaths' of the year. Because these are based on the solar year, they are useful for gauging nature. For this reason they are named according to the season.

Keeping track of two separate calendars requires an unnecessary level of effort, so for the purposes of this game the two have been reconciled. Please forgive the resulting inaccuracy in the length of a year.

THE FARMER'S CALENDAR

The farmer's calendar gives a fairly accurate description of what is happening in the country at a particular time of year. The year is considered to start with the beginning of spring, the start of the annual cycle of birth, growth and death.

Beginning of Spring	15 days
Rain Water	15 days
Waking of Insects	15 days
Spring Equinox	15 days
Pure Brightness	15 days
Grain Rain	15 days
Beginning of Summer	16 days
Forming of Grain	15 days
Grain in Ear	16 days
Summer Solstice	16 days
Slight Heat	15 days
Great Heat	16 days
Beginning of Autumn	16 days
End of Heat	15 days
White Dew	16 days
Autumn Equinox	16 days
Cold Dew	15 days
Frost's Descent	15 days
Beginning of Winter	15 days
Slight Snow	14 days

Great Snow	15 days
Winter Solstice	15 days
Slight Cold	15 days
Great Cold	14 days

THE OFFICIAL CALENDAR

The official calendar has twelve months, which are simply referred to by number. For convenience, we will consider each of these months to match two of the solar terms. Thus, month 1 is the Beginning of Spring and Rain Water (and therefore has 30 days) and so on.

FESTIYALS

The following festivals are celebrated during the year. They are divided into major and minor festivals. In additional to the minor festivals listed, places often have local festivals specifically for some local deity, or based on an ancient tradition. Minor festivals are not universally celebrated.

MONTH 1

1 New Year

A general celebration and feast that lasts for 15 days. Of particular importance are the Kitchen God and the God of Wealth.

- 5 Cai Shen (God of Wealth) Festival (minor)
- 7 Birthday

Everyone celebrates their birthday on this day, rather than keeping track of specific dates.

- 9 Jade Emperor's birthday (minor)
- 10 Earth God Festival (minor)
- 15 Lantern Festival

The end of New Year is marked with a day on which offerings are made to ancestors and lanterns are strung out.

MONTH 2

- 1 Festival of the Sun. It's traditional to give presents of little green bags full of grains, melon seeds and the like to wish many descendants (minor)
- 15 Lao Zi's birthday. Entry into nirvana of the Buddha (minor)

MONTH 3

1 Pure Brightness

Heralds the change in weather. It is a Festival of the Dead, when families restore the graves of their ancestors and make offerings. It's also the day of coming of age: twenty-

year-old boys are ceremonially capped; fifteen-year-old girls have hairpins placed in their hair.

16 Holy day of Jun Ti, Goddess of Light (minor)

MONTH 4

- 8 Buddha's birthday (minor)
- 15 Buddhist monks return to their monasteries and remain confined there for the summer months (minor)

MONTH 5

5 Duanwu

From this day the power of the sun is declining, and evil spirits lie in wait to trap the unwary. This is the day, therefore, to hang out talismans and bottle gourds for protection. It is also the occasion of the Dragon-boat races.

MONTH 7

7 Weaver-girl Festival

Celebrated with banquets, and many traditions concerning women's skill at handicrafts.

15 Hungry Ghosts Festival

On this day, all the gates of Hell are opened, and ghosts are allowed to return to earth for thirty days. It is important to make offerings to the departed, including those who have no descendants. Lanterns and lanternboats are common decorations.

MONTH 8

- 3 Day of worship for the Hearth God (minor)
- 15 Moon Festival

The mid-autumn festival is celebrated by throwing balls, and eating moon cakes as well as drinking lots of rice wine.

MONTH 9

9 Double yang Festival

Another occasion to visit the graves of ancestors.

MONTH 11

11 Winter Festival

A family occasion, primarily celebrated with a feast.

MONTH 12

- 24 Hearth God's Report To Heaven. Offerings are made to improve the report. (minor)
- 25 Zhong Kui talismans and peachwood amulets are hung up (minor)

YEAR NAMES

This table shows the Emperors and the titles for their reign periods. The name for any given year is the number

of the reign name. For example 1095 is God's Welcome 2. Note that the name given for each Emperor is that used *after* death. While alive, the Emperor is simple 'The Emperor'.

Year	Emperor	Reign Name
1064	Ying Zong	Governed Calm
1068	Shen Zong	Bright Peace
1078		Original Plenty
1086	Zhe Zong	Original Boon
1094		God's Welcome
1098		Original Symbol
1101	Hui Zong	Strong Centre Pacifying the Nation
1106		Reverent Peace
1107		Great View
1111		Political Harmony
1119		Proclaimed Harmony
1126	Qin Zong	Pacified Security
1127		Northern Song overrun by Qidan
		from Liao

OTHER SOCIAL EYENTS

Boxing competitions on Mt Taishan. Prizes include a flag, a silver cup, lengths of silk, a brocade robe and a horse.

HISTORY

In the beginning all was chaos. Nothing separated the world from space, yin from yang. On this point, all agree. Philosophers differ, however, on what happened next. If you ask the average farmer, however, you will learn that the most ancient deity, Pan Gu, hatched from a mysterious egg and created the earth from his own body. He fixed the earth and heaven in their places, and then died, his body parts becoming the features of the earth and sky.

THE LEGENDARY MONARCHS

The first of the legendary Monarchs of ancient times was Fu Xi, who ruled with his sister and consort, Nu Wa. Both had human heads on serpent bodies. Fu Xi discovered the Eight Trigrams that laid the foundation for the Book of Changes. Nu Wa created humanity.

Nu Wa ascended into Heaven, and Fu Xi was succeeded by Shen Nong, the son of a Princess and a dragon. The second legendary Monarch extended the Eight Trigrams to the 64 hexagrams of the Book of Changes.

ANCIENT TIMES
Huang Di
Yao the Flood
Shun
Yu conquered the Flood
Xia dynasty