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SCION

COMPANION



PART THREE



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Two unconscious Chaos Cultists flew through the temple doors before plummeting and landing at the green-robed master's feet. Tommy Li stepped through the hole they left and announced, "Emerald Duke of Toads, your evil schemes are at an end!"

He's really quite good at that, thought Zheng Tan. Even if he did take most of his lines from those wretched movies, Tommy knew how to make an entrance. None of the cultists massed below paid any attention to Tan as he sidled along the mezzanine above Tommy, gun in one hand, looking for a junction box. With all the neon this temple uses, it has to be wired like an arcade.

"I should have known those gunmen couldn't kill you," hissed the Duke, his voice slightly muffled by his emerald mask. Tan rolled his eyes. The bad guys always seemed to slide into wuxia roles and lines as easily as he did.

"But you are wrong, Tommy Li," the Duke continued. "You have come to your end, through the power of Hundun and the Devil-Scream Portal!" A huge device resembling an upright sarcophagus stood before the huge, faceless image of Hundun, the titan of Chaos. Eight slender, glittering legs radiated from the sarcophagus like a spider's legs, while spiraling glass tubes ran up its sides.

The traitorous Scion seized the nearest cultist and slammed him into the open sarcophagus. The man wailed as the device's arms snapped shut. They pierced his body and started to pump quicksilver into his body. The tubes along the device glowed yellow-green and violet, and the cultist's wail rose into a shrill scream.

Tan glanced down as the scream abruptly choked off. Two clawed hands, the pale yellow hue of bone, reached out of the cultist's mouth, gripped his cheeks and stretched... and stretched.... Tan winced and shut his eyes as the demon struggled out of the impossibly distended mouth, leaving a bag of torn and bloody skin to flop at the base of the device. In a rustle of green robes, all the remaining cultists dropped to the floor and prostrated themselves before this vile miracle.

Maybe it was just the clashing hues of the temple's neon lights that made Tommy look pale and sick, and maybe he only swallowed a few times because he was parched from all the fighting earlier. He sounded firm enough when he said, "That won't save you, sorcerer. I've defeated demons before. Chopsocky-hai!" Tommy didn't bother with the stairs



that swept down to the temple floor; he flipped over the rail and arced down to slam into the demon, feet first. The bone-hued demon staggered but did not fall.

Tan watched closely as Tommy bounced down to the floor. The cult's leader clenched his fists in rage before reaching into one capacious sleeve and pulling out a square of black paper bearing characters in vivid green ink. He held it up as Tommy backflipped around the flailing, roaring demon. "By imperial order!" the Duke shouted.

At the same time, Tan concentrated and imagined a current of his divine power, his Qi, spinning down to wrap around the Duke. "For every action, there is an equal and opposite reaction," he whispered. Not a traditional way to perform Yin-Yang Destruction, but it was high time a few traditions got updated.

The Emerald Duke of Toads was strong. Tan had never pitted his power against someone so strong, but Tan inhaled sharply and glared down at the Duke, imagining every great scientist of East and West at his back. Equal and opposite reaction! Sure enough, instead of bursting into flame to release the Duke's spell, the ebon paper merely smoldered. But the traitor Scion's gaze snapped up and met Tan's. Uh-oh....

No longer bothering to stay inconspicuous, Tan ran along the mezzanine to where he guessed a junction box ought to be. He also glanced up at the pipes and conduits that ran along the ceiling of the basement chamber. From below came smacks of fists and feet, growls and howls from the demon, and yelps from cultists who finally found the sense to flee.

A sound like the magnified croaking of a toad echoed through the temple. The Emerald Duke of Toads crouched down, knees and elbows splayed, and leaped up to the mezzanine in front of Tan. Damn it. I'll have to improvise. Backpedaling, Tan waved his gun in the Duke's direction and fired. The bullet passed yards from the Duke and struck a pipe, causing water to spray out and drench the cultists below. He hoped Tommy would remember the plan.

"How unskilled," sneered the Duke as he advanced on Tan. "Your Taiyi is strong, but I am a master of the physical as well as the spiritual!" He pounced forward. Tan prayed to his foster-mother that she would smile on this plan before it fell apart completely, grabbed two power cables running along the wall and threw himself off the balcony.



Half the neon on the wall came crackling with him, raining glass and spitting sparks as tubes and cables pulled away from the wall and snapped. He didn't land as gracefully as Tommy, but at least he landed on his feet with a splash. The spray had stopped, and the ruptured pipe now poured down a steady stream of water.



Tommy launched a roundhouse kick with a loud crack that took the demon under the jaw, snapping back its head and breaking its neck. The demon fell with a splash into the spreading pool. With a second splash, the Emerald Duke jumped down to land before Tan in his toadlike fighting crouch. "I can still kill you both," he snarled.



"I don't think so," Tan replied, and jerked the cables in his hands. One end spat sparks as it landed in the pool of water. The traitor Scion spasmed as high-tension current shot through the water into his feet. The last few cultists flopped around him. Tommy stood atop the Devil-Scream Portal, balanced on one foot. He leaped down to kick the Duke in the head as he had kicked the demon, and the Duke's green glass mask shattered. The Duke fell and flopped a bit more. The last lights in the temple went out as fuses blew.

Tommy pulled a penlight from his pocket and shone it at Tan. He asked, "Are you okay? That was dangerous!"

Tan smiled wanly as shock set in. Yes, that had been quite absurdly dangerous. He wasn't a kung fu master like Tommy. Still he kept his voice from shaking too badly as he said, "Well, I couldn't let you have all the fun. See why I asked you to wear rubber boots and coveralls? Insulation."

Tommy shook his head. "Engineering's too crazy for me. I'll stick to fighting demons." He hoisted the body of the Emerald Duke of Toads. Together, they squelched to the temple's exit.



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PART 1: THE TUATHA
DÉ DANNAN

PART 2: MAINIFESTATION
OF ICHOR

PART 3: CELESTIAL
BUREAUCRACY

PART 4: SECRETS OF THE WORLD

SCION: COMPANION



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SCION

CELESTIAL BUREAUCRACY

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THE MANDATE OF HEAVEN

The Chinese believe in thousands of Gods and spirits, whom they call shen. All these greater and lesser divinities form a civil service under the command of a divine Emperor, a Celestial Bureaucracy that resembles the mortal government of Imperial China. Or rather, the Imperial government followed the model set by the Gods – the Mandate of Heaven. The Celestial Bureaucracy has deities for every possible purpose, from great Gods who oversee wide areas of mortal society or natural phenomena, to petty spirits of individual households.

It also has Scions. Indeed, this immense and ancient pantheon includes a large proportion of Scions who achieved divinity. The current generation of Scions can do the same: They just need to perform sufficient deeds of merit. The Titans' escape should give them plenty of opportunities.

HISTORY

The Celestial Bureaucracy traces its dynasty back to the origin of the World. In the beginning, the giant Pangu emerged from the primordial chaos and chiseled it into order. Eventually, Pangu merged with his own creation to become the World. His flesh became the soil, his blood the seas and rivers, his breath the winds, his hair the trees and so on. The lice on his body became human beings.

The Gods become vague and change the subject when asked where they came from. Nevertheless, they claim Pangu as one of their number: China holds several temples to Pangu, including one on the mountain that shares his name. The shen also claim pride of place as the first pantheon to teach civilization to humanity. The boast is slightly tautologous, in that many shen deny that anyone outside China has ever been civilized.

The Celestial Bureaucracy began with a small number of primal Gods. The oldest Gods of Chinese myth were not quite human, at least in their early portrayals. The famed couple Nüwa and her brother-husband Fuxi have human heads on serpentine or dragonlike bodies, while Xiwangmu, the chatelaine of the Western Paradise, has a panther's tail and tiger's teeth. These early Gods taught mortals all the civilized arts. Three of them ruled the Middle Kingdom in remotest antiquity, and legend remembers them as the Three Sovereigns. After them came several generations of Scions who became legendary kings, heroes, nobles and sages in the ancient World. Many of them became Gods as well.

The shen continue to produce Scions who achieve divinity, and the Celestial Bureaucracy finds positions for them. The Celestial Bureaucracy has lasted millennia, with a few notable periods of reorganization; the Gods expect it to last forever.

NÜWA REPAIRS THE SKY

The greatest challenge to the Celestial Bureaucracy came long ago. The water-God Gonggong rebelled against Heaven and sought to make himself the supreme deity. Enraged by his defeat, Gonggong struck one of the mountains supporting the sky and broke it. The sky broke too, releasing dreadful chaos, and the Earth itself tilted. Floods and fires surged across the World, while terrible beasts roamed freely and devoured mortals.

The Goddess Nüwa restored order. She propped up the World using the legs of a divine tortoise, and melted stones of five colors into a paste to repair the sky. Nüwa also defeated a terrible Black Dragon and saved the World from disaster.

Yu the Great is also credited with stopping a terrible flood, perhaps the same one caused by breaking the sky. First his father Gun stole Xirang, the magical Growing Earth, from the Gods and tried using it to channel the floodwaters with dikes and levees. The Gods killed Gun for his presumption, but the infant Yu emerged from his corpse. Yu employed the Xirang as well. After many years of hard work, he built up dikes and dredged rivers (including the famous Three Gorges canyon) to channel the excess water to the sea. Yu eventually became Emperor for his great deed, and then a God in Nüwa's entourage.

THE INVESTITURE WAR

The Shang dynasty lost its virtue. After the Shang Emperor wrote a lecherous poem on the wall of Nüwa's temple, she decided the dynasty must end. Many Gods helped her in her plan to replace it with the righteous new kingdom of Zhou. Other Gods and immortals defended the Shang kingdom because they thought that rebellion could never be right. Their battles raged across the Middle Kingdom. The magical weapons and powers of the divine combatants destroyed whole armies in their battles. The supporters of Zhou won in the end, but many Gods and immortals died on both sides. The Celestial Bureaucracy never again faced such civil war, and the prospect of another such conflict is the pantheon's greatest fear. The war led to a reorganization of the Celestial Bureaucracy, and the promotion of many Scions to divinity.

CHINA'S DECLINE

The nineteenth century was a trying time for China. The empire suffered defeat after defeat in the Opium Wars. The Taiping Rebellion and Boxer Rebellion caused even worse damage. The Celestial Bureaucracy suffered a similar decline: Numerous Gods pushed their Scions to become warlords or revolutionary leaders, in hopes of founding a new

imperial dynasty, and schemed against their rivals in Heaven. Occasional incursions from adventurous Aesir and other Western deities caused further disruption — only because the shen disagreed over how to deal with the incursions in China. By the twentieth century, office politics left the Celestial Bureaucracy virtually paralyzed and functionally impotent.

COMMUNISM AND BEYOND

When the Communists came to power, they declared China officially atheist and closed or destroyed many temples. Many shen were outraged but Guan Yu, the new Jade Emperor, forbade any retribution. The Cultural Revolution and its aftershocks ravaged China, but the Jade Emperor declared that mortals had to work this out for themselves. Instead, Guan Yu focused the Celestial Bureaucracy's efforts on reforming itself.

Some Gods now laud the Jade Emperor's foresight. They see the People's Republic as China's third Legalist dynasty, following the Qin and Sui and, like them, bringing strength and order after a period of chaos and weakness. Ironically, some Chinese now pray to Mao Zedong as a God. (The paperwork to promote his ghost into the Celestial Bureaucracy as a minor functionary should be complete in a few decades.) Other shen, however, despise the People's Republic of China and seek ways to restore imperial rule.

The escape of the Titans inspires concern among the Celestial Bureaucracy, but no real terror. They coped with Titans before and expect to do so again.

FOREIGN RELATIONS

For most of its history, the Celestial Bureaucracy didn't have foreign relations — or rather, it concentrated on the Gods of over fifty ethnic minorities within China, either destroying them or assimilating them into its own organization. All other Gods are barbarians, just like the mortals who worship them. If other pantheons try to move in on the Celestial Bureaucracy's turf, the Bureaucracy's spies stir up a third pantheon against the enemy: Use the barbarians to fight the barbarians.

The shen feel somewhat greater respect for the Amatsukami, mostly due to the mortal cultural ties fostered through Buddhism. Sun Wukong himself, for instance, helped bring Buddhist scriptures from India to China, and Guanyin is worshipped in Japan as Kwannon. The Amatsukami have the intellectual depth that the Celestial Bureaucracy finds conspicuously absent in the Aesir, the Dodekathemon and indeed most other pantheons. They even share most of the Celestial Bureaucracy's Virtues.

World War Two, however, gravely damaged relations between the Celestial Bureaucracy and the Amatsukami. When Japan invaded China, the Celestial Bureaucracy lost millions of mortal worshippers. The Jade Emperor of the time sent Amaterasu a beautifully calligraphed, elegantly phrased demand that she exercise her ancestral prerogatives over her descendant, the mortal Emperor Hirohito, and order him to withdraw his troops from the Middle Kingdom. Whatever Amaterasu thought of the mortal war, she did not like being

ordered about like a misbehaving child. She sent back a beautifully calligraphed refusal, involving some elegantly phrased suggestions of what the Jade Emperor could do with the Celestial Bureaucracy. Matters went downhill from there.

For the first time in millennia, the Celestial Bureaucracy faced a major threat from a rival pantheon. After the terrible atom-fire burned in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, however, the Amatsukami had grave issues confronting them in their homeland. The Celestial Bureaucracy, meanwhile, found plenty of turmoil in the Middle Kingdom and its own ranks. The resurgence of the Titans gives both pantheons problems of greater urgency than their grievances against each other. Nevertheless, the shen refuse to treat the Amatsukami as equals until they receive a formal apology from Amaterasu herself. Gods, lesser immortals and Scions may deal with the Amatsukami on an ad-hoc basis, but relations between the two pantheons stay tense and frosty.

Most shen believe they do not need allies, anyway. They are, after all, one of the largest pantheons in the Overworld, and disruptions in the mortal World did not weaken them too badly: Hundreds of millions of Chinese still show their reverence in great and small ways, from praying at Nüwa's temples to dabbing honey on the Kitchen God's mouth to sweeten his report in Heaven. More than once since the Titans escaped, the shen have set one Titan's servants attacking the minions of another: Use the barbarians to fight the barbarians.

No longer, however, does the Celestial Bureaucracy simply ignore all the mortal World beyond the Middle Kingdom. Millions of Chinese now live in distant lands (a migration sometimes called the Chinese Diaspora) and they do very well for themselves. Most significantly, perhaps, American Chinese began shipping the coffins of their ancestors overseas for reburial. Home is where your ancestors are buried, so these emigrants make it clear they intend never to return to the Middle Kingdom. On the other hand, they show their intent to maintain the central tradition of Chinese faith. A special commission now ponders how the Celestial Bureaucracy should respond. Does the Chinese Diaspora fall under the Mandate of Heaven? Does this impose a duty on the Celestial Bureaucracy to exercise its power in distant lands?

Some shen have already made up their minds. They use Chinatowns as an excuse to meddle abroad. Other Gods call the exodus of the dead a threat to the sacred harmony between the pantheon, the people and the soil. It's a small dispute, but many Gods fear how it might grow. The Celestial Bureaucracy's greatest enemy has always been Hundun, Titan of Chaos, who sets the pantheon warring against itself.

Hundun, who gave Gonggong the power to break the sky.

Hundun, who turned Chiyu against Heaven, lured the 10 suns to sporting and set the shen warring for and against mortal dynasties.

Hundun the Unmanifest — the Titan who was never bound!

THE CELESTIAL BUREAUCRACY

THE CHINESE GODS

Virtues: Duty, Harmony, Intellect, Valor

The Chinese pantheon consists of literally hundreds of Gods, plus thousands of lesser immortals and countless minor spirits. Relatively few of the Gods possess sufficient Legend to breed potent Scions. These Gods still number in the dozens, though, so only a selection of the most notable (or notorious) can be described here.

True to its name, the Celestial Bureaucracy organizes all its Gods and spirits into departments that oversee both mortal life and universal concepts. Originally, the Bureaucracy had just eight ministries. Over the millennia, other ministries were added as they became necessary, or through the vagaries of bureaucratic infighting. The Ministry of Thunder and Storms, for instance, monitors the weather, while the Ministry of Fire governs all manifestations of that element. The Ministry of Epidemics watches the spread of diseases; the separate Ministry of Smallpox was recently abolished and its personnel reassigned. The Ministry of Exorcisms acts as the Celestial Bureaucracy's internal affairs division, policing the demons who form the pantheon's least reliable agents and chastising lesser immortals who step out of line. The large and powerful Ministry of Hell governs the Chinese Underworld and sees to the punishment and reincarnation of sinners. (Storytellers can invent other ministries as needed.)

All these ministries answer to the Yu Di or Jade Emperor (also called the Pearly Emperor). Despite his monarchic title, the Jade Emperor merely holds executive power for a sixty-year term of office. Eight senior Gods appoint the Jade Emperor; while Gods often hold the office for several terms, replacement also happens frequently enough that few Gods treat the office as a sinecure.

The eight senior Gods, in turn, divide into the three Pure Ones and the five Heavenly Emperors, or Shang Di. Two of the Pure Ones — Yuan Shi Tian Zun, or “Universal Lord of the Primordial Beginning,” and Ling Bao Tian Zun, or “Universal Lord of the Numinous Treasure” — have never manifested in the World and usually remain

wholly disembodied. The third, Tai Shang Lao Zun, or “Supreme Elder Lord,” incarnated himself as Laozi, founder of Daoism. None of them father Scions (though Laozi occasionally acts as a Guide for promising demigods).

The five Heavenly Emperors taught civilization to humanity. Some of them ruled China in the most ancient times. Each of them is associated with a particular direction. Fuxi, Emperor of the East and Wood, taught divination, music, hunting, how to make clothing and other rudiments of civilization. As Empress of the North and Water, Fuxi's sister-wife Nüwa keeps watch over the patch of sky she mended. Shennong, the Divine Farmer and Emperor of the South and of Fire, taught agriculture and invented medicine. Xiwangmu, Queen Mother of the West, is Empress of Metal and mistress of reward and punishment. Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor of Earth and the Center, fought the World's first war against the rebel Chiyou and instituted the first mortal government. These five elders eschew day-to-day politics, but the Jade Emperor occasionally asks them for advice.

Gods tend to have multiple names or descriptive epithets, which makes it hard for mortals to tell how many there are or who's God of what. Some epithets are permanent; others change as a God moves from office to office in the Celestial Bureaucracy. Thus, Shennong has always been the Divine Farmer; but he took over the office of Yan Di, the Blazing Emperor of the South, after the previous Yan Di was executed for joining his son Chiyou's rebellion. Gods can also incarnate in the World to form new cults to themselves, under new or variant names. For instance, Huang Di recently became an immensely popular God in Hong Kong and Kowloon under a new Cantonese guise as Wong Tai Sin, “Great Immortal Wong,” a.k.a. the Red Pine Immortal.

Chinese myth claims that most Gods were born of mortal parents and lived in the World before attaining divinity (sometimes after death, sometimes after becoming immortal through Daoist or Buddhist studies). In the case of the eldest Gods, these tales are allegorical. Many of the younger Gods, however, are



Scions who attained divinity. (Indeed, the current Jade Emperor is one such God.)

The huge number of Gods who have Legends ranging from 9 to 11 result in a corresponding number of Scions who lack any associated Purviews (because, as described on p. 79 of **Scion: God**, a Purview becomes associated with a God only when the God learns the Purview's avatar power). When such Scions show promise, a senior God may adopt them and provide a Visitation. The five Heavenly Emperors adopt far more Scions than they breed conventionally. Others of these low-potential Scions simply work to cultivate themselves despite their lack of associated Purviews. The Celestial Bureaucracy considers itself a meritocracy, where any Scion can advance himself through hard work and diligent study. No matter what disadvantages a Scion begins with, he can at least hope for later adoption by one of the greater Gods.

JUST FILL OUT THE PAPERWORK

At the Storyteller's option, the Celestial Bureaucracy can give a brand-new Scion any selection of associated Purviews, Epic attributes and Abilities, using a variation on the spell of adoption. Such a character — in a way, a Scion of the Bureaucracy as a whole — doesn't have a divine parent; she has a caseworker. The character can possess at most two associated Epic Attributes and two associated Purviews, plus the usual six favored Abilities.

This option gives players much greater freedom in designing the character they want. On the other hand, developing the character's power beyond the initial concept becomes more difficult.

THE MANY VIRTUES OF THE SHEN

The Virtues espoused by the Celestial Bureaucracy come from (or inspired) Daoism and Confucianism. The mystic doctrine of Daoism proclaims that all existence partakes of one indefinable essence — the Dao, or "Way," which manifests as the contrasting but interdependent principles of Yin (darkness, stillness, feminine) and Yang (light, activity, masculine), the Five Elements (Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water) and the Ten Thousand Things of actual existence. Nothing has existence entirely by itself: Everything changes, fast or slow, into something else. The doctrine of Confucius lays out the rules of proper social conduct, from family

relationships to affairs of state. Obedience to these rules enables people to live in harmony with each other and with the essentially benign order of the Universe. Careful thought and study help Gods and mortals to understand both Dao and duty. Passive understanding, however, is not enough: A hero must act to correct offenses to the natural and human order, whether by protesting an Emperor's unjust policies or battling a rampaging demon.

While Duty, Harmony, Intellect and Valor represent the broadest possible spread of the Celestial Bureaucracy's interests, the pantheon recognizes other Virtues as well. Obedience to authority and respect for the bureaucratic chain of command can shade into Order instead of (or as well as) Duty. The Chinese (and their Gods) formalize this Virtue as the doctrine of Legalism, which became the guiding philosophy for China's first historical emperor, Qinshihuang. On the other hand, Chinese heroes often fall deeply in love and find their passion conflicting with their responsibilities — an aspect of Loyalty. Chinese notions of Duty often fold in both of the other Virtues, but some characters might substitute Order or Loyalty for Duty, or replace another Virtue with one of these.

CHANG'E AKA. HENG-O, MANY OTHER VARIATIONS

Description: Chang'e has been up and down the three Worlds, from deity to mortal and back again. Through a complicated series of events, she ended up living on the Moon and becoming its presiding deity. Her marriage to the solar deity Houyi is complicated, but neither God seems ready to end it. While Chang'e is one of the younger Gods, she is also immensely popular among the Chinese people, who eat round "moon cakes" during her festival and ask her to make their offspring beautiful. The People's Republic of China named its first lunar probe for her, which she found immensely flattering.

Chang'e enjoys visiting the World incognito. She has run an ice cream stand and a beauty parlor, been a fashion model and a jewel thief. While she attracts admirers and likes being around people, she always seems a little distant. Her Scions likewise tend to be attractive and socially adept, but disinclined to show their own feelings or get deeply involved in mortal lives. Deep down, they know they belong in a different World.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Wits, Frost, Moon, Taiyi

Abilities: Awareness, Empathy, Integrity, Investigation, Larceny, Presence

Rivals: Houyi; Artemis, Bastet, Kalfu, Susano-o, Tezcatlipoca



THE FROST PURVIEW

Chang'e is associated with the Frost Purview detailed in **Scion: Ragnarok**. Storytellers who don't have access to that book can vary variations of the powers in the Fire Purview as needed, or simply ignore the use of this Purview in their cycle.

FUXI

AKA: FU XSI

Description: Long, long ago, Fuxi found humanity living like animals. He taught them to clothe themselves and to cook their food, to domesticate beasts and to craft musical instruments. Fuxi invented the first calendar and laid down the first laws, including the laws of marriage. He saw the mystic trigrams of the I Ching on the back of a dragon-horse and so discovered divination. For these and many other achievements, the Chinese call him the First Sovereign, and he remains widely worshipped to this day. Ancient pictures show Fuxi holding the sun or a knotted rope and carpenter's square. He now lets the younger God Houyi act as solar deity, however.

When his duty to the Celestial Bureaucracy permits, Fuxi works to advance human welfare and culture. Fuxi no longer simply hands new arts and sciences to humanity; instead, he slips suggestions to scientists, artists, legislators and other people who can do the work themselves. China remains the focus of his attention, but he also visits arts festivals, UN conferences and other international gatherings.

While Fuxi's ancient form was that of a serpentine dragon with a human head, he now prefers the form of an elderly Chinese man of gentle and scholarly mien. In Heaven, he wears silk robes embroidered with dragons, clouds and the Sun. On Earth, he chooses contemporary garb appropriate to his surroundings.

Fuxi's Scions take after their real or adoptive father in their wide-ranging interests and intellectual prowess. They often become known among fellow experts as skilled administrators, insightful scholars and wise advisors — near the centers of power, but guiding the rulers rather than ruling themselves.

Associated Powers: Epic Intelligence, Epic Perception, Epic Stamina, Fertility, Prophecy, Sky, Sun, Taiyi

Abilities: Animal Ken, Art, Awareness, Craft, Integrity, Occult

Rivals: Huang Di; Ares, Odin, Set, Shango, Tezcatlipoca, Zeus



GUAN YU AKA: GUAN DI (EMPEROR GUAN), MEI RAN GONG (LORD OF THE MAGNIFICENT BEARD), MARQUIS ZHUANGMOU

Description: The Celestial Bureaucracy points to Guan Yu as its great example of a Scion who made good. Guan Yu was born in 160 CE, and history books say he died in 219. The famous *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* recounts some of his adventures. After his death, people worshipped Guan Yu as a God, according him every-higher honors until he became one of the most popular Gods in the Celestial Bureaucracy. After the debacle of World War Two, the elder Gods chose Guan Yu as the new Jade Emperor — the youngest God ever to hold that office.

Guan Yu finds ruling the Celestial Bureaucracy a constant struggle to balance competing factions. Under Emperor Guan's stewardship, the Celestial Bureaucracy has rebuilt its power to an astonishing degree, paralleling China's return to world power in the mortal World.

His imperial duties leave little time for Guan Yu to visit the World, but he still found time to become a Triad soldier in Macau, a cop in Hong Kong and in California and a businessman in Taiwan. In all his guises, he keeps his ruddy face (deep red in his divine form) and magnificently bristling beard. Though not one of the strongest Gods, Guan Yu is a great sausage of

a man who looks more than ready to beat the stuffing out of any God who disobeys him. Which he has done, on occasion — not ideal Confucian rulership by virtuous example, but it gets the job done. Still, Guan Yu also has one of the keenest political minds in the pantheon, and his reputation for strict honor has few equals.

Guan Yu's Scions share their father's talent for strategic use of power. They become prosecuting attorneys or gangsters — sometimes in the same life — as well as military officers, spies, martial arts instructors, bodyguards and hard-driving business executives. They don't always follow the law, but they always follow a code that makes them highly trusted even by their enemies.

Associated Powers: Epic Charisma, Epic Manipulation, Epic Stamina, Guardian, Justice, Taiyi, War

Abilities: Command, Control, Fortitude, Integrity, Melee, Politics

Rivals: Sun Wukong; Amaterasu, Odin, Osiris, Zeus

GUANYIN AKA: OBSERVER OF THE CRIES OF THE WORLD, BODHISATTVA OF COMPASSION

Description: Guanyin is probably the most popular Goddess in all China, and people in Japan, Korea and southeast Asia worship her as well. She is also the Celestial Bureaucracy's leading exponent of Buddhism. Guanyin was born a princess, but sought only to become a nun. Family



troubles led to adventures that form the core of her legend. Guanyin's relentless compassion eventually triumphed over her father's wrath and elevated her to full divinity. Her countless kind deeds repeatedly draw her into danger, but her penetrating insight and help from other shen always get her out again. Just about everyone in the pantheon loves Guanyin, including most of the demons. She has many admirers in other pantheons, too. Guanyin's enemies are the cruel manipulators, brutal thugs and pitiless avengers among the Gods – and these Gods *hate* her, giving her an unusually long list of rivals. (Her fellow shen Houyi and Xiwangmu merely think the Goddess of Mercy is annoyingly naïve.)

Guanyin frequently visits the World to help suffering mortals. Recent guises include a hospital nurse, the director of an orphanage, a UNICEF assistant director and a Red Cross volunteer. Indeed, every major charity or humanitarian aid group in the World knows her under one alias or another. Guanyin prefers to use her divine powers sparingly, allowing mortals help themselves, but the death tolls from many natural disasters, famines and brush wars would be much higher without the Goddess of Mercy subtly facilitating international aid.

Scions of Guanyin tend to follow their mother's interests and methods. They are not great warriors, but are often superb persuaders. Whether as the relief worker facing down a warlord, a diplomat demanding to see political prisoners or the doctor who runs a clinic in a brutal slum, Scions of Guanyin show quiet courage in facing humanity at its worst. They bring the same quiet

courage to the Overworld War. While other Scions have slain titanspawn without number, a few Scions of Guanyin have convinced servants of the Titans to switch sides.

Associated Powers: Epic Appearance, Epic Charisma, Epic Perception, Health, Mystery, Taiyi

Abilities: Academics, Awareness, Empathy, Investigation, Medicine, Presence

Rivals: Houyi, Xiwangmu; Aphrodite, Ares, Hel, Isis, Kalfu, Set, Tezcatlipoca, Tlaloc, Vidar

HOUYI AKA: ARCHER YI

Description: Yi the Archer saved the World, and he expects to get a little respect for it. Like his wife Chang'e, he's both been exiled to the World and allowed back in Heaven, but not allowed into the pantheon's centers of power. While Houyi does possess some talent for leadership, he became a tyrant when for a time he ruled part of ancient China. Houyi does not apologize for this and remains the pantheon's leading advocate for Legalism. The pantheon values Houyi for his ability to take swift, direct action – but Houyi needs cajoling. He insists on having things done his way and he no longer agrees to help others until he has a solid contract for repayment.

This last attitude serves Houyi well in the modern World. While he sometimes exercises his hunting prowess as a safari leader, Houyi has also been a high-priced



archery instructor, a mercenary, an assassin for hire, a millionaire architect (one of his less well known talents), a bounty hunter and a venture capitalist in solar energy. Various spy movies in the 60s entranced Houyi with laser weaponry's potential, so he backs this technology as well. In every identity, Houyi looks like a hard-bitten Asian man with the unnerving, thousand-yard stare of an experienced sniper. His Scions likewise tend to be hardcases who do the dirty work for other people – but expect their due reward.

Associated Powers: Epic Dexterity, Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Sun, Taiyi

Abilities: Athletics, Command, Craft, Marksmanship, Stealth, Survival

Rivals: Chang'e, Guanyin, Yanluo; Apollo, Baldur, Huitzilopochtli, Set.

HUANG DI **AKA: YELLOW EMPEROR, WONG** **TAI SIN**

Description: The Yellow Emperor still involves himself in war and politics, in both Heaven and the mortal world. Although Huang Di no longer rules the shen, he cannot resist advising the Jade Emperor (whether that officeholder wants it or not) as Heaven's most visible policy fanatic. Currently, Huang Di debates strategies for fighting the Titans. The Jade Emperor also sends him on regular diplomatic missions to other pantheons. The Yellow

Emperor believes that China has the right and duty to dominate the world – all three Worlds – but he knows better than to express such sentiments around barbarians.

Huang Di is too busy and restless to keep mortal identities for long. Instead, he uses his Epic Manipulation to mingle with mortal movers and shakers without anyone realizing that they don't actually know him. He regularly visits the Chinese Congress of People's Deputies as a nameless (but highly respected) Party official or retired general, though he also visits and advises the government of Taiwan. Huang Di takes guises ranging from an international security consultant to the great-uncle you never heard of before.

Scions of the Yellow Emperor show the same restless intellectual energy. Like their father, they tend to take over by sheer force of personality, and by presenting coherent plans while everyone else wonders what they should do. Huang Di actively steers his Scions toward positions where they can shape world events and public opinions, in occupations ranging from the military to the media.

Associated Powers: Epic Intelligence, Epic Manipulation, Epic Stamina, Earth, Guardian, Mystery, Taiyi, War

Abilities: Academics, Awareness, Command, Integrity, Melee, Politics

Rivals: Fuxi, Sun Wukong; Athena, Huitzilopochtli, Ogoun, Quetzalcoatl, Tyr

NEZHA AKA: NO CHA, ZHONGTAN YUANSXUAI

Description: As a rising demigod, the Scion Nezha became so arrogant and troublesome that the Jade Emperor commanded his suicide. Nezha had a Fated role to play in the Investiture War, though, and so his teacher resurrected him. While Nezha became one of the great heroes of that war and one of the great adventurers of the Celestial Bureaucracy, the rest of the pantheon neither forgot nor forgave his past misdeeds until the Handsome Monkey King gave them a new standard of comparison.

Whether as a God or in mortal guise, Nezha looks and acts like a teenager around 16 or 17 – frequently, a smartass teenager. He’s the young soldier whose CO swears he will never become an officer, the brash kung fu student, the fresh-faced collegian, the novice firefighter or the obsessive hang-glider. Flight, fire and combat attract him.

Nezha’s Scions are usually accidental, but he tries to do right by them when he finds out about them. He tends to Visit them in their teens, though, which ensures that they experience youthful adventures just as he did. While Nezha’s Scions tend to be quick studies, they also tend to overestimate their capacities and become impatient with anyone who says they’re too young. Like their true father, they also tend to have issues with their mortal stepfathers and other aged authority figures.

Associated Powers: Epic Dexterity, Epic Strength, Epic Wits, Fire, Sky, Taiyi, War

Abilities: Athletics, Brawl, Control, Larceny, Melee, Thrown

Rivals: Sun Wukong; Athena, Damballah, Horus, Izanagi, Odin

NÜWA AKA: NU KUA

Description: One Chinese legend credits Nüwa with creating humanity from yellow clay, but her most famous deed was to repair the broken sky and restore order to the World. She shares her role as lunar deity with the newcomer Chang’e.

Nüwa still takes great interest in boundaries, travel and management of land and water. Like her husband Fuxi, she once took the form of a human-headed dragon. Nowadays, though, she visits the World as an elderly but vigorous woman, in guises such as a village farm-wife, a tour guide, a civil engineer specializing in flood control or an old lady selling fish from a sampan. Nüwa prefers to take socially invisible roles as she watches for the Titans’ influence in the World. When she finds it, she appoints lesser immortals or Scions to deal with the problem.

The lesser immortals of the Three Gorges region hold Nüwa responsible for the great dam that is drowning their homes and will change the balance of natural forces throughout China. Nüwa did not devise

the Three Gorges Dam, but she blocks every petition for the Celestial Bureaucracy to act against it. Nüwa takes a great interest in all flood control projects; she wants the Celestial Bureaucracy to take covert control of New Orleans dike repairs and similar projects around the world, to make sure they’re done right.

Scions of Nüwa often become builders, nurturers or (all too often now) cleaners of other people’s messes. They tend to be good at finding things out and designing innovative solutions to problems, whether as sewage-treatment engineers, psychiatrists, computer hackers or high-tech assassins.

Associated Powers: Epic Intelligence, Epic Stamina, Epic Wits, Fertility, Magic, Moon, Psychopomp, Taiyi, Water

Abilities: Academics, Awareness, Craft, Integrity, Investigation, Science

Rivals: Xiwangmu; Isis, Kalfu, Poseidon, Tlaloc, Tsuki-Yomi

SHENNONG AKA: DIVINE FARMER, YAN DI

Description: As the second of China’s three mythic sovereigns, Shennong invented medicine by finding every plant in the world, eating it and identifying what it did to his body. He also invented agriculture. His favored mortal identities include ethnopharmacologist and agronomist, though Shennong has also appeared as a medical researcher, an agribusiness tycoon, a fertilizer dealer and a hermit in the mountains.

Some Gods don’t like the amount of time Shennong spends on projects to improve mortal agriculture and health care, especially outside China. They believe he should confine his efforts to the Middle Kingdom. The Divine Farmer brushes aside such criticism by saying that what’s good for the wider World is good for China, too.

Like their divine father, Shennong’s Scions tend to speak bluntly and do things themselves. They also naturally gravitate to the same occupations that interest the Divine Farmer himself. While Shennong does not order his Scions about, he encourages them to help the World through direct action, particularly in the Third World: Shennong has Scions in a variety of non-governmental organizations devoted to improving agriculture, public health and education. Operating on the ground, close to the people, they sometimes spot malign forces that escape the notice of other Gods. Then, Shennong expects his Scions to deal with the problem on the spot. This does not endear them, or their father, to shen who insist on acting through proper channels – and Shennong doesn’t care if he or his Scions trespass on the turf of other pantheons.

Associated Powers: Epic Intelligence, Epic Perception, Epic Stamina, Fertility, Fire, Health, Prophecy, Taiyi

Abilities: Awareness, Command, Fortitude, Integrity, Medicine, Survival

Rivals: Guan Yu; Amaterasu, Atum-Re, Geb, Huitzilopochtli, Shango, Xipe Totec

SUN WUKONG

AKA: HANDSOME MONKEY KING,
GREAT SAGE EQUAL TO HEAVEN

Description: The Handsome Monkey King hatched from a stone egg, and his adventures became the subject of the famous *Journey to the West*. Sun Wukong is trouble, especially because the shen believe Hundun created him. His passage from titanspawn to God was turbulent, to say the least, but the shen learned to accept him. Usually. On good days. Indeed, more shen enjoy seeing the Great Sage Equal to Heaven flout the pantheon's famous decorum than would care to admit it. An equal number of Gods want to strangle him, but Monkey is one of the most unkillable entities in Heaven – the Celestial Bureaucracy has tried. Now they're just glad he's on their side.

Monkey is vain and impulsive. Though clever, he is not half as clever as he thinks. Hard lessons somewhat reduced his kleptomania and gluttony. He learned manners, though he sometimes forgets them. He's also one of the pantheon's greatest fighters, with an awesome talent for driving his enemies mad with sheer irritation.

The Handsome Monkey King often visits his simian subjects in the World. Now and then he takes human form, usually to go to a party. He never maintains a mortal entity for long (usually just for one day or night). He is the boisterous guy, immune to put-downs and rejections, who seems incredibly funny and charming if you've had enough to drink. Sun Wukong never checks to see if a dalliance results in a Scion, but he always Visits his Scions if another God discovers them and calls them to his attention – and then he says he planned it all along.

Sun Wukong's Scions can be born into any social stratum. They take after their father in their combat prowess and their ability to get in trouble. Whether pickpockets or playboys, they collect arrests and slapped faces, but laugh it off and dive into the next adventure. They show great loyalty to their friends, though, especially when standing up for a friend means a good scrap.

Associated Powers: Epic Dexterity, Epic Stamina, Epic Strength, Animal (monkeys), Chaos, Taiyi, War

Abilities: Athletics, Brawl, Fortitude, Larceny, Melee, Survival

Rivals: Guan Yu, Huang Di, Nezha; Hermes, Kalfu, Loki, and all other tricksters. Plus, all the more humorless Gods loathe him.

XIWANGMU

AKA: XSI WANG MU, QUEEN
MOTHER OF THE WEST,
WANGMU NIANGNIANG

Description: Few Gods in the Celestial Bureaucracy changed so much over the millennia as the Queen Mother of the West. Long ago, Xiwangmu was a deity of cataclysm and divine vengeance, a woman with tiger's teeth and panther's tail. At the same time, she grew the peaches of immortality.

Later, she adopted gracious manners, elegant gowns and a gift for extemporized poetry. Xiwangmu became the chatelaine of Mount Kunlun and queen of the Daoist sages who achieved immortality. As such, she remains one of the most important members of the Celestial Bureaucracy, whose authority extends as far as she wishes it to go. When the Gods desire a subtle yet savage Fate for an enemy, they hand the job to Xiwangmu, and bid her show her teeth.

Acting in the mortal World, Xiwangmu has been a secret agent, a lion tamer in a circus, a fortune-teller and the mistress of a Triad leader. Wherever she goes, people tend to receive amazing good fortune or horrible deaths, depending on how the Queen Mother judges their merits. Her Scions tend to be similarly subtle and ruthless, particularly in their benevolence. Whether the World knows them as a secretary in Shanghai, a martial arts sifu in Hong Kong or an exorcist in Taiwan, Xiwangmu bids her Scions to see that mortals receive the consequences of their actions. Thus does the Queen Mother uphold the harmony of the World.

Associated Powers: Epic Dexterity, Epic Stamina, Epic Wits, Animal (panther, tiger), Health, Justice, Magic, Taiyi

Abilities: Animal Ken, Awareness, Brawl, Integrity, Occult, Presence

Rivals: Guanyin, Nüwa; Athena, Frigg, Quetzalcoatl, Susano-o, Shango

YANLUO

AKA: YEN-LO-WANG,
KING YAMA RAJA

Description: The Celestial Bureaucracy's second great exponent of Buddhist compassion became overseer of Di Yu – the Chinese Hell (pp. 34-37) – so that he might help the dead to expiate their sins instead of being weighed down by them for lifetime after lifetime. Every few centuries, the Celestial Bureaucracy demotes Yanluo for excessive kindness to his charges and letting them reincarnate too soon. However, no other God of Yanluo's Legend wants the job, and the other nine Yama Kings of Di Yu lack Yanluo's power. Eventually, the Bureaucracy gives Yanluo his old job back.

The Chinese Diaspora extends Yanluo's interests beyond traditional Chinese territory. He advocates increased involvement of the shen in world politics (all three Worlds). He treats with other death-Gods and meddles in mortal affairs far more than the Jade Emperor authorizes.

In mortal guise, Yanluo has been an undertaker, a Buddhist monk, a grief counselor, a homicide detective and a prison psychologist. His Scions likewise feel attracted to occupations that deal with death, spirituality, captivity or reform, from priest to forensic pathologist. Spiritual pride is a frequent character flaw: Convinced that they act for the best, they neglect to ask mere mortals if they *want* to be enlightened or improved.

Associated Powers: Epic Manipulation, Epic Perception, Darkness, Death, Justice, Taiyi

Abilities: Empathy, Integrity, Investigation, Occult, Politics, Presence

Rivals: Houyi; Ares, Hades, Hel, Mictlántecutli, Osiris

PANTHEON PURVIEW: TAIYI

This Purview's name means "Great Principle." It refers to the universal law of transformation: Nothing stays the same forever, and everything eventually changes into something else. The universal force called Qi flows and changes according to the principles of Yang and Yin – the active and passive, archetype of all polarities and oppositions – as well as the Five Elements of Fire, Earth, Metal, Water and Wood, and the trigrams and hexagrams of the I Ching. One who masters these principles of change can transform anything into anything. The shen regard all their powers as exercises of Qi. Their study of the Great Principle, however, leads to a unique set of Boons dedicated to transformation.

A Scion who wants to learn Taiyi must engage in mystic exercises to develop her sense of how supernatural power flows and changes form. The martial arts are one way to learn Taiyi: Many shen perform special taolu (similar to Japanese katas) when they wield the Purview's Boons. Scions can also meditate and imagine their Qi flowing between different parts of their bodies. Special diet, herbal medicines and many other disciplines can also enable a Scion to learn Taiyi.

FIVE-CYCLE AUGMENTATION (TAIYI) •

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 1 Legend

The first art of Taiyi is learning to pass Qi to another being to augment his own supernatural force. The Scion concentrates, touches another character who is using a Boon or spell, and spends a point of Legend. This enhances the target character's use of the Boon or spell as if his Legend were one higher than its actual value. For instance, a dice pool that included the character's Legend would gain one die, or the recipient's Legend would be treated as one higher than its real value (for purposes of Boons whose effectiveness depends on the attacker's Legend being equal or higher than his target's).

Shen can perform Five-Cycle Augmentation in a series, each character passing her point of Legend to the next in line until the final character receives the boost in effective Legend from all of them. This boost cannot exceed the highest Legend value of any of the participants, though, and it cannot raise anyone's effective Legend above 12. Thus, if four Scions used Five-Cycle Augmentation in series on a fifth, and they all had Legend 2, the final recipient's effective Legend could not rise above 4.

YIN-YANG DESTRUCTION (TAIYI) ••

Dice Pool: Legend + Occult or Science

Cost: 1 Legend (+ 1 Willpower)

After learning how to enhance the Qi of another legendary being, a Scion learns how to counter the supernatural force in powers directed against him. He shapes his own Qi into the perfect negation of the power used against him, the Yin to its Yang. This is much easier, however, against powers the Scion has experience at using himself.

When someone uses an All-Purpose Purview Boon or spell against the Scion, and he has a tick free to engage in a Guard action, he may spend a point of Legend while his player rolls (Legend + the highest of the character's Occult or Science). Sufficient successes mean that the Boon or spell does not affect the Scion. If the Scion knows any Boon from the Purview that was used against him (or a spell, in the case of the Magic Purview), the roll's difficulty equals the attacker's Legend. Otherwise, the difficulty becomes twice the attacker's Legend.

Yin-Yang Destruction can be used at range to counter a Boon or spell that isn't specifically directed at the Scion, but this requires the character to spend a Willpower point and take a Miscellaneous Action (Speed 5, -1 DV) instead of a Guard Action. If you can perceive the character's use of the spell or Boon, you can negate it. Of course, nothing keeps your enemy from re-using the Boon or spell on her next action.

FIVE-CYCLE CONJUNCTION (TAIYI) ...)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: None

Increasing mastery of Yin, Yang and the Five Elements enables a student of Taiyi to protect his own All-Purpose Purview Boons from Yin-Yang Destruction. She does this by altering the effect of a Boon so that it falls within two Purviews at once. She must know at least one Boon from each Purview, and still needs to carry a Birthright for at least one of the two Purviews.

The altered Boon still has the game effect of its original Purview, but a visual effect based on the other Purview. For instance, a Scion who knew Unseen Shield (Guardian ••••) and at least one Fertility Boon could manifest her Unseen Shield as a celestial lotus that grows from her mouth to block incoming attacks. Or, a Scion with Heavenly Flare (Sun •••) and Animal Communication with snakes (Animal •) could conjure a host of glowing spiritual snakes that bite the eyes of nearby people, dazzling them for a time. A Scion with Wind's Freedom (Sky ••) and a Fire Boon could define his flight as riding on a wheel of fire, like Nezha. Some combinations of Purviews may seem quite peculiar, but if the player can come up with some flamboyant effect to justify the linkage of the two Purviews, the Storyteller should allow it.

On buying this Boon, the Scion defines one of her All-Purpose Purview Boons as conjoined to another All-Purpose Purview she knows. Each time she gains another dot of Taiyi, she can define another one of the Boons she already knows as conjoined to another Purview. A Boon cannot be part of more than two Purviews.

Aside from looking cool, Five-Cycle Conjunction protects a Boon from Yin-Yang Destruction: Since the Boon has two Purviews, a defender's player must roll twice the character's Legend to negate the Boon, unless the defender knows Boons from *both* Purviews. Magic, unfortunately, cannot be conjoined with another Purview.

EIGHT TRIGRAM TRANSFORMATION (TAIYI)

Dice Pool: Wits + Craft

Cost: 3 Legend

Matter constantly takes new forms, from water vapor condensing into rain to rock's slow decomposition into soil. All matter is just a particularly dense form of Qi, and the Five Elements and Eight Trigrams govern all their transformations. A scholar of the Great Principle of Change can nudge this potential for change into new paths, and so transform matter into new forms and substances. To do this, she need merely touch the object and trace out the trigrams that represent the sort of change she desires. For a small change, she can trace the trigrams with her finger. Large objects (anything larger than person-sized) requires drawing trigrams on the object using ink, chalk or some other means. Transforming an object takes as many miscellaneous actions as the difficulty set by the object's size.

With this Boon, a Scion can transform inanimate objects. The size of the object sets the difficulty of the player's roll.

Difficulty	Size
1	Hand-sized (pistol, book, bowling ball, briefcase)
2	Person-sized (bicycle, store mannequin, chair)
3	Horse-sized (horse, big motorcycle, sofa)
4	Car-sized (auto, bank vault door)
5	House-sized (small house, panel truck; maximum for this Boon)
+1	Create object with moving parts (pistol, bicycle, car)
+2	Create complicated object (calculator)
+3	Create substances with exotic properties (nuclear fuel rod)

The character can only transform discrete objects into other discrete objects of the same size class, such as turning a rock into a flashlight, or turning a bank vault door into a very large block of cheese. A Scion cannot simply disintegrate an object, or create something from air or water.

The change is permanent, unless the Scion decides to reverse it. To do this, she need merely touch the object and will it to revert; this does not cost Legend. Magical objects are immune to Eight Trigram Transformation unless they are the character's own Relics.

QI HAND (TAIYI)

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 2 Legend per item per action

As demigods master the Great Principle, they can manipulate objects using currents of Qi in a form of telekinesis. A Scion could wrestle someone without touching him, wield one weapon while another dances in the air beside her, or type at a computer keyboard while peeking in through a window. Anything a person can do by hand, the Qi Hand can do as well. Actions involving the Qi Hand use the same dice pools as they would if the character performed the action himself. For instance, wielding a sword using the Qi Hand would call for a (Dexterity + Melee) roll. The Strength of the Qi Hand equals the character's Legend, so a physically frail Scion could use her Qi Hand to send burly bikers flying.

A character can manipulate one or several objects using the Qi Hand. If the character uses the Qi Hand on just one object, she can also perform other actions at the same time. However, these do count as multiple actions and take the appropriate penalties (**Scion: Hero**, pp. 179-180). For example, a character could hold one shotgun in her hands and wield another in her Qi Hand, but would roll the (Dexterity + Marksmanship) attack for both guns at a -4 dice penalty. Any Knacks that permit multiple actions without penalty apply as much to actions done using Qi Hand as they would to actions the character performs herself.

Alternatively, a character can simultaneously manipulate as many objects as the sum of her Wits and Epic Wits (though the cost in Legend points can mount up quickly). For instance, a Scion with Wits 4 and Epic Wits 3 could telekinetically pick up and hurl seven spears at once. All the telekinetically-controlled objects must perform the same basic task, though, so while the Scion could use Qi Hand to hurl seven spears (using Thrown) or stab with them (using Melee), she could not hurl three and stab with four. The player's dice roll also takes a single multiple action penalty, and the character cannot take any other actions while directing all these objects – the Qi Hand takes her full attention.

The multiple action penalty that results from using Qi Hand to attack can render this a dubious tactic. On the other hand, a character can take a Coordinate Assault action (**Scion: Hero**, p. 190) to reduce her target's DV against her multiple attacks. Since she coordinates with herself, however, this requires no dice roll: The target's DV penalty equals the number of simultaneous attacks.

LIVING HEXAGRAM METAMORPHOSIS (TAIYI))

Dice Pool: Wits + Medicine

Cost: 5 Legend

Tales of Gods and sages often describe them transforming people and animals as well as inanimate objects. For instance, Wong Tai Sin turned the sheep he was supposed to tend into white boulders, and back again. This Boon functions like Eight Trigram Transformation, but can affect living targets. This includes creating life from the inanimate. However, the Scion cannot create intelligence or a soul where none existed before.

Shen can use this Boon to transform themselves into a demonic creature, an application called the Devil-Sage Body. The demonic form has skin colored some vivid hue such as scarlet, green or indigo, claws, jutting fangs and, very often, up to three heads and six arms. The chief practical effect is to enable the character to inflict lethal damage with unarmed attacks. The character also gains one dot of negative Epic Appearance and the Dreadful Mien Knack (if she did not have these already). Positive Epic Appearance and associated Knacks are unusable while the character is in Devil-Sage form. Characters cannot use Living Trigram Metamorphosis to assume other forms. Shen often assume the Devil-Sage Body for battle, as a way to scare off weaker foes or innocent bystanders.

RESURRECTION ANCHOR (TAIYI))

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 10 Legend

Most creatures of Legend return from death only if they possess Ultimate Stamina. The shen, however, regard death itself as just another change of form and state. Even a demigod can return from death... with help, and at cost.

To use this Boon, a Scion must form a permanent Fatebinding with another Scion, God or creature with a minimum Legend of 5. Establishing this connection costs 10 Legend points, which the character cannot regain unless he renounces the Fateful link (and with it, his chance for resurrection). If he dies, this other character can bring him back. This requires persuading at least 50 people to worship at a shrine to the deceased character, within a year from the character's death. The massed worship recalls the character and re-creates his body. However, his Legend score drops by 1. Any Boons or Epic Attribute ratings that exceed the new (Legend - 1) limit are lost — the character must buy them all over again (if he chooses) once he regains his former Legend.

A Scion with this Boon can also serve as an anchor to resurrect another character, who need not possess this Boon but must have a minimum Legend of 5. This too costs 10 legend points to forge the Fatebinding between them, constructing a shrine and persuading people to worship the slain character. However, the resurrected character loses the dot of Legend, not the Scion who performed the resurrection.

DIVINIZE KUEI (TAIYI))

Dice Pool: None

Cost: 10 Legend

To a great sage of Taiyi, the difference between ghosts and Gods is more one of degree than of kind. At will, the character can transform a ghost into a lesser immortal with a maximum Legend of 4. This can be a demon, an Earth God (see p. 23), the Chinese analogues to nymphs or alfar — whatever the Scion wants. To perform this feat, the Scion walks in a circle around the ghost she intends to transform, placing her feet so her steps form stylized images of various groups of stars, a practice called “pacing the constellations.” The transformed ghost may feel some gratitude for his promotion to lesser immortal, and the exercise of Legend has the normal chance of Fatebinding, but the Boon does not intrinsically grant the Scion any control over the lesser immortal he just made.

GRAND UNITY TRANSFORMATION (TAIYI))

Dice Pool: Willpower + Legend + Craft, Occult or Science

Cost: 15 Legend

A divine master of the Great Principle can create whatever surroundings she wants, in a wide area centered on herself. As a dramatic action taking five minutes to complete, the character can create whatever simple, inanimate objects she wants. She can also create living creatures, natural forces such as flames and storm-winds, or virtually anything else she can imagine, depending on what other Boons she knows. The Scion's player rolls the dice pool and allocates the successes to various transformations:

- **Area:** Each success gives 5 yards of radius if the Scion uses this Boon in the World, or 50 yards' radius in the Overworld or Underworld. At least one success must go to area.

- **Followers:** The Scion can create people (or person-like creatures) by allocating successes to dots of Followers. For instance, the Scion could allocate four successes to create a demon, five successes to create a squad of five demons, or 10 successes to create two squads of five. The character needs at least five dots in Fertility or Health Boons to create living Followers or in Death Boons to create ghosts, but no specific Boon in any of those three Purviews is needed.

- **Creatures:** Successes can also be allocated to dots of Creatures. Every Creature must be bought separately. Again, the character needs Fertility or Health Boons to create living Creatures.

- **Powers and Environmental Effects:** This requires spending successes on a Boon with some connection to the desired effect. For instance, spending two successes on Wind's Freedom (Sky ••) would create an area in which everyone could fly, while six successes for Inferno (Fire •••••) could fill the area with that effect — but another success, allocated to Fire Immunity (Fire •) would

make everyone in the area immune! The Scion can only allocate successes based on the Boons she herself knows. Use of Mystery can even imbue the transformed area with information the Scion herself does not know equivalent to one use of the Mystery Purview (so this offers no advantage compared to using the Mystery Purview by itself).

- **Complexity:** The Scion must allocate one success to create objects with moving parts, or two successes for notably intricate shapings, such as giving everyone in the area a notebook computer or covering every surface with immaculate calligraphy of the poems of Li Po.

Storytellers can come up with additional ways the character can spend successes to customize a zone of Grand Unity Transformation. The wondrously shaped reality of the zone lasts for one scene. Then everything the Scion transformed reverts to its former state and any animals, people, spirits or the like disappear. A Scion can make the change permanent, but this costs the character a dot of permanent Willpower. If the Scion permanently transforms part of the World into someplace visibly magical, the transformed zone becomes a small terra incognita.

RESHAPE SHEN (TAIY))

Dice Pool: Willpower + Legend + Command

Cost: 20 Legend

Ultimate mastery of the Dao enables a God to transform other Gods, spirits or lesser immortals. The other God must be willing or somehow compelled not to resist. The greatest Gods in the Celestial Bureaucracy use this Boon to reshape lesser Gods so they can better fulfill the duties of a new office, or as the ultimate threat of punishment by taking away a God's former identity. The Celestial Bureaucracy also used this Boon to assimilate the Gods of China's conquered ethnic minorities: It forms the pantheon's ultimate threat against foreign deities.

To use this Boon, the character's player must win a contested roll of the Scion's (Willpower + Legend + Command) versus the target's (Willpower + Legend + Integrity), even if the subject is willing. The process is a one minute, -2 DV dramatic action. If the roll succeeds, the Scion can turn his subject into a different character. The Scion's player defines the transformed entity's Legend, Attributes, Abilities, Epic Attributes, Boons, Virtues – everything.

The chief limitation is that the Scion cannot create a character of greater power than the subject was before. This is defined as possessing more dots in a class of trait than the character had before. Thus, the subject cannot gain a greater Legend, more total dots of Attributes, more total dots of Abilities, more total dots of Virtues, more total dots of Boons or more total dots of Epic Attributes. (Birthrights are largely malleable, since characters may gain and lose them in the course of play, without any use of experience points.) Also, the subject cannot be made mortal: she must remain a creature of Legend (though a God could be turned back into a hero).

The God who uses this awful power can alter his subject's memories along with everything else. While the physical and supernatural change is permanent and irreversible by anything less than The Wyrd (*Scion: God*, p. 111), however, erased memories may return. This may happen when the transformed character channels Willpower through a Virtue, faces a situation that calls for a Virtue roll or any other stressful situation that the Storyteller considers appropriate. Under these circumstances, the transformed character's player rolls (Charisma + Integrity) as a reflexive action for the character; the player cannot apply bonus successes for Epic Charisma, spend Willpower for a bonus success or apply Legend. With five successes, a memory from the subject's former existence returns.

BIRTHRIGHTS

Over the millennia, the shen have granted a prodigious variety of mythic beasts, demons, spirits and magical items to their Scions. These are only a few examples.

CREATURES

ZOUWU (CREATURE ..., OPTIONAL RELIC .)

Chinese legend includes many different creatures that could be described as "unicorns." The qilin (or Japanese Kirin; see *Scion: Hero*, p. 326) is only one of them. The zouwu is another. This beast resembles a deer or horse with one short horn on its head – too short for any possible use as a weapon. Its coat is dappled red, black, blue, white

and yellow; the beast's mane, fetlocks and tail can be any one of those colors. A zouwu's tail extends longer than its body, with a tuft of long hair at the end. The beast is most notable, however, for its extraordinary running speed.

A zouwu has the same traits as a horse (*Scion: Hero*, p. 331) but has a Legend of 3, Epic Attributes and Knacks: Epic Strength 1 (Holy Bound) and Epic Dexterity 2 (Lightning Sprinter, doubled). By spending a point of Legend, the beast's running speed quadruples (instead of the normal doubling from Lightning Sprinter) to about 100 miles per hour. A zouwu can keep this up as long as a horse can gallop. Temperamentally, the zouwu is about equal to a horse as well. Mere mortals perceive the zouwu as a smallish horse, until it spends Legend to reach its full running speed.

Paper Horse: A Scion can simply keep a zouwu as she would a horse. Shen, however, often keep their zouwu in the form of a scroll of a painted horse. Spending a point of Legend turns the paper figure into the zouwu; another Legend point returns it to paper form. The scroll is a one-dot Relic.

FOLLOWERS

HORSEFACE AND OXHEAD (FOLLOWERS TO, OPTIONAL RELIC .)

The Chinese Hells are staffed by demons who resemble brawny men with the heads of horses or oxen. Some accounts say there are only two such demons, named Ma Mien (Horse Face) and Niu T'ou (Ox Head), but that's ridiculous – two demons couldn't do all the work for dozens of hells! All the demons answer to the names of Oxhead and Horseface, though. They used to wear tiger-skin loincloths. Nowadays, Yanluo dresses them in spiffy military uniforms. The demons wield large clubs (equal to a Quauhlolli) or various Chinese polearms (equal to a trident or naginata, depending on the form – see **Scion: Hero**, p. 202 for mechanics on all of these). Only a few elite squads train with machine guns and other modern military hardware.

Now and then, Scions receive a squad of Oxheads and Horsefaces as Followers, but they must file reports on any mission they assign to these demons. The demons' first loyalty is to Yanluo and the Jade Emperor, however, so they may desert or turn on a master who uses them against the interests of the Celestial Bureaucracy. A Scion typically needs some sort of Relic in order to call the demons, such as properly signed and stamped authorization papers for their use.

Oxheads and Horsefaces have the traits of an experienced soldier or mercenary (**Scion: Hero**, p. 283) but have Duty 4, Harmony 1, Intellect 1 and Valor 4, making them tremendously brave and dedicated to their jobs and to anyone they are assigned to obey. They are also immortal and can perceive immaterial ghosts (as the Death Senses Boon). These supernatural benefits raise their value as Followers by one dot.

TERRACOTTA WARRIOR (FOLLOWERS TO, OPTIONAL GUIDE .)

The tomb complex of Qinshihuang yielded some seven thousand terracotta figures of men and horses. Each figure of a soldier has an individualized face, suggesting they are genuine portraits of actual soldiers and officers in the First Emperor's army. The statues have suffered damage over the millennia, but for effigies buried more than 2,000 years, the preservation is amazing.

The Celestial Bureaucracy managed to steal an additional three thousand figures without the archeologists ever knowing they were there. Each statue imprisons the actual soul of a long-dead soldier. The shen now have a small army of colossi animated by battle-tested ghosts. Gods may grant these warriors to their Scions. A single soldier is a four-dot Follower.

Terracotta warriors are immensely strong and quite difficult to damage, though they move stiffly. These soldiers can also function as Guides, in that some of them can train Scions in swordsmanship, crossbow archery and other archaic military skills. Terracotta warriors are highly loyal to their assigned superiors, but also can think for themselves.

As long as a terracotta warrior doesn't move, only supernatural senses (such as Death Sight or The Unlidded Eye) reveal it as a colossus. A Scion can easily pass off the statue as a reproduction.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 2, Stamina 5; Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 1; Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Virtues: Duty 4, Harmony 1, Intellect 1, Valor 3

Abilities: Academics 1, Animal Ken 2, Athletics 1, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Command 1, Empathy 1, Integrity 3, Marksmanship 3, Medicine 1, Melee 3, Survival 1, Thrown 1

Supernatural Powers:

Epic Attributes: Epic Strength 1 (Crushing Grip), Epic Stamina 1 (Self-Healing)

Made of Brick: Terracotta warriors do not need to eat, drink or breathe. They ignore the harshest winter chill or the heat of a furnace. Poisoning them works about as well as poisoning a brick. They do chip, but can hold broken-off pieces in place and use their Self-Healing to counter Crippling effects. As long as a Scion can recover most of the pieces, a "destroyed" terracotta warrior can be repaired with clay and a kiln to make it good as new; this requires an (Intelligence + Craft) roll at difficulty 3.

Join Battle: 6

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 5, Damage 4B, Parry DV -, Speed 6

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 4, Damage 7B, Parry DV 2, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 6, Damage 4B, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Xiphos: Accuracy 6, Damage 7L, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Hankyu: Accuracy 6, Damage 6L, Range 30, Speed 5

Soak: 1A/4L/6B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 3 **Willpower:** 7

Legend: 2 **Legend Points:** 4

Other Notes: These mechanics represents a basic infantryman trained at both archery and

melee combat. Instead of a shortsword and bow, it could carry a spear, a crossbow or other weapons. You can also customize the terracotta warrior by adding up to two dots of additional skills: Control (Horse) for a cavalry soldier (not useful unless a divine parent also supplied one of the terracotta horses, but the soldier could train Scions); Command for an officer; Thrown for a slinger or javelineer; and so on.

GUIDES

ANCESTRAL GHOSTS (GUIDE ..., RELIC •)

The Chinese worship their Gods, but they revere their ancestors. Duty to one's parents does not end upon death; parents, grandparents and remoter ancestors can wield powerful influence from beyond the grave. Ancestors who receive proper reverence and offerings can bless their descendants, while neglected ancestors can curse them with all manner of bad luck.

As children of the Gods, Scions *potentially* outrank the ghosts of their ancestors. That does not excuse them from filial duty. Indeed, a Scion who continues to show due respect to her ancestors after becoming a God sets an example of propriety that other Gods can envy and admire.

The ghost of an ancestor therefore makes an excellent Guide, as advising (and if necessary, correcting) descendants is proper conduct for a ghost. Naturally, the Gods try to select dead relatives of great virtue and sagacity; failing that, they select ancestors of great cunning and lack of virtue, and offer the post of Guide as a chance to atone for past misdeeds and reduce their punishments in Hell.

To contact an ancestral Guide, a Scion needs a memorial tablet inscribed with the ancestor's name, preferably housed in an ornate shrine. To summon the ghost, burn an offering of incense and spend a point of Legend.

IMMORTALS (GUIDE ... TO)

Chinese legend includes its own versions of nymphs, the alfar and other nature-spirits, with no clear distinctions as to their categories; they are all just lesser shen. The word "immortal" instead refers to a wide variety of partially divinized humans. These immortals perform much of the Celestial Bureaucracy's scutwork, including service as Guides.

Earth Gods and City Gods

Some "immortals" are ghosts of mortals transformed into low-grade spirits as a reward for deeds of surpassing virtue. For instance, a civil servant who kills himself to protest the unjust policies of his superiors might receive appointment as the local City God (Cheng Huang). Other classes of minor spirits

include the local Earth Gods (To Di) who report to the region's City God. A ghost brought into the Celestial Bureaucracy as a lesser immortal (Legend 3-5) is typically a three-dot Guide.

All these Earth Gods and City Gods report to Confucius, who after death became the Earth God for the Chinese state as a whole. Significantly, even though Chinese tradition ranks Confucius as equal to Laozi, the Buddha and even the Jade Emperor, he is still described as kuei (a ghost) rather than shen (a God).

Xian

Other immortals are Scions who never received a Visitation but nevertheless became famous sages, heroes and magicians. Through devoted practice of martial arts, asceticism, meditation or occultism, these Scions attained a minor degree of Legend. In life, such legendary mortals are called xian. A living xian is a three-dot Guide.

After death, the Celestial Bureaucracy transforms xians into lesser shen. Unlike Earth Gods and such ilk, however, divinized xians occasionally continue to gain Legend. A xian posthumously adopted as a shen (Legend 5-7) is typically worth four dots.

An immortal who achieved true divinity, such as the celebrated Eight Immortals, is worth five dots. Such exalted Guides tend to be Daoist masters of immense enlightenment, as well as Gods: They are notorious for telling Scions what they *need* to know for their own spiritual advancement, instead of what they *want* to know to get a job done.

RULES FOR XIAN

You can write up a xian using the same character creation rules as for a heroic Scion, with these modifications: The xian receives only five dots to spend on Epic Attributes and Boons; the only permissible Purviews are the Special Purviews and the Pantheon-Specific Purview of Taiyi; and buying an additional dot of Legend costs 10 bonus points instead of 7. They have no favored Epic Attributes or Purviews. Xian gain experience points, but Legend, Epic Attributes, free-standing Knacks and Boons cost double the number of experience points as they do for a Scion.

In ancient times, xian sometimes became powerful enough to challenge demigods, though they could not actually make the transition as Scions do. Modern times are less friendly to Legend, so a xian cannot raise her Legend above 4.

RELICS

EXORCISTIC SWORD

Relic ••• or higher (2 Purviews, 1 Unique 1-Dot Power)

Chinese exorcists menace spirits with swords made of peach and plum wood, “cash swords” whose blade consists of coins strung on a loop of wire, or real swords engraved with the stars of the Big Dipper (this last called a Seven Stars Precious Sword). The shen make exorcistic swords that really work. Whatever their form, the sword inflicts damage on ghosts and other dematerialized spirits as if it were a spatha (**Scion: Hero** p. 202); the wooden or coin-swords do not inflict damage on material foes (except as lightweight truncheons). The sword does not itself enable its possessor to see spirits, but it can serve as a Birthright for channeling the Death and Magic Purviews. (To cast spells, a Scion would use the sword’s point to trace mystic characters in the air.) An exorcistic sword could also carry bonus traits above the spatha template or could permit use of additional Purviews.

FIRE-CROW GOURD

Relic ••••• (1 Purview, 1 Unique 4-Dot Power)



This potent yet unassuming item looks like a bottle made from an ordinary gourd. This bottle, however, holds a spirit called a fire-crow. The gourd’s owner can uncork the bottle and call out the fire-crow to attack his enemies.

The fire-crow is just a special effect for a flame-based ranged attack that inflicts +4L damage, plus bonus levels of damage equal to the Scion’s Legend (an attack comparable to the Sun •••• Boon, Flare Missile). Each attack by the fire-crow costs a point of Legend. The magical gourd also permits a Scion to wield Fire Boons.



GREEN DRAGON CRESCENT BLADE

Relic ••••• (1 Purview, 4 Item Enhancements)



The famed weapon that Jade Emperor Guan Yu wielded as a Scion is a polearm called a guan-dao; Westerners sometimes call it the “Chinese halberd.” Guan Yu’s weapon has +2L damage, +1 Accuracy and +1 Defense above the

naginata template (**Scion: Hero**, p. 202); it also permits a Scion to use the War Purview. The respect that the Green Dragon Crescent Blade inspires in spirits obedient to the Celestial Bureaucracy is balanced by the hatred it inspires among servants of the Titans and other enemies of the shen.

SPIRIT MASTER’S SEAL

Relic ••• (3 Birthright Connections)



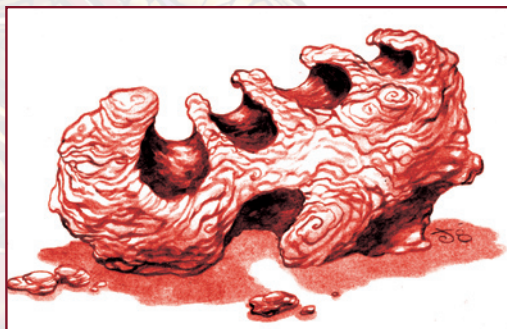
A Scion can have a wide variety of spirits as Creatures, Followers or Guides. A spirit master’s seal enables the Scion to call spirits no matter what sort of Birthright represents them.

The seal consists of a wood or stone cube three inches square, carved with archaic symbols. When the Scion wishes to summon spirits, she writes out an appropriate talisman on colored paper, stamps it with the seal, commands the spirit to appear and spends a point of Legend. The command typically ends with a phrase such as, “By imperial order!” or “Quickly, quickly! In accordance with the statutes and the protocols!” to remind the spirits that the Scion acts with the backing of even higher powers.

XIRENG

Relic ••••• (1 Purview, 1 Unique 4-Dot Power)

The legendary “Growing Earth” looks like an ordinary lump of mixed clay and loam, squeezed hard. It performs a limited version of Earth Creation (**Scion: God**, p. 87): It only creates compacted soil or clay. On the other hand, once a character acquires that Earth Boon, she may use the Xireng to produce unlimited quantities of rammed earth at no Legend cost at all. The Scion can shape the rammed earth as it appears to create simple shapes such as dikes or platforms. Xireng incidentally permits a Scion to channel the Earth Purview, but only works for a character who already knows at least one Earth Boon.



SCIONS OF THE CELESTIAL BUREAUCRACY

The Scions of the Celestial Bureaucracy vary as much as the shen themselves. They can range from government bureaucrats to occult sages to butt-kicking kung fu fighters and master swordsmen. In fact, Scions of the shen tend to combine roles that Westerners find incongruous, such as butt-kicking kung fu bureaucrat. Presented here as examples are two Scions of the Celestial Bureaucracy: Zheng Tan, a heroic-level Scion of Nüwa still learning to combine his training as an engineer with nascent divinity and occult power; and Tommy Li, a Scion of Sun Wukong first seen in **Scion: Hero** (p. 252), now graduated to demigod.

ZHENG TAN

SCION OF NÜWA

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Description: Zheng Tan had almost completed his Master's in electrical engineering at UCLA and looked forward to going home to Taiwan when he received his Visitation from Nüwa. The mender of the sky explained that a minor God in the Ministry of Thunder had taken the place of Tan's father for a time. Nüwa was adopting him as her foster-son because Tan's talents lay more in her direction. The Celestial Bureaucracy needed agents and Nüwa hoped Tan would see the value in not letting the Titans destroy the World. He did. The Goddess briefed him on the Overworld War, made a few adjustments to his notebook computer, introduced him to an ancestral spirit and told him that other shen and Scions would be in touch. To them he would be T'ien Sheng, the Lightning Sage.

Tan quickly figured out that far from being called to fight mighty battles against dread monsters, Nüwa recruited him as tech support for other Scions. A bit later, he found that tech support often meant field work, which was not safe at all. Tan has not settled into a Band, but he's already assisted several Scions and lesser immortals.

Although Tan's nascent powers focus on information, he is also a highly skilled engineer. Given time, he can prepare a battleground with a variety of electrical, incendiary and mechanical death-traps. (His usual strategy is for an ally to lure cultists or titanspawn into a trapped location, while Tan stands ready to throw the switch.) Since the forces of evil do not always obligingly fall for Tan's schemes or give Tan a chance to learn their goals and weaknesses, he also carries a Glock pistol and has become moderately good at using it. Tan also discovered a talent for Taiyi by approaching the Purview as a scientific study of forces. He has become quite skilled at boosting other Scions' Boons or countering the Boons of others.

The Lightning Sage is short, slight and quick, with black hair worn short. He fidgets, rapidly walks back and forth while thinking, and tends to speak in rapid technobabble. (Sometimes he makes it up just to see if anyone can tell the difference.) While he prefers to dress in a suit and tie as befits a serious-minded professional, he dons a gorgeously embroidered silk robe and hat when he must speak to his great-great-great-grandfather, or when dealing with particularly formal and old-fashioned spirits.

Roleplaying Hints: You exemplify the Celestial Bureaucracy's tradition of intellect and invention, carried into the twenty-first century. You try to research every situation, using any natural or supernatural sources of information available, from your ancestor to the World Wide Web: The better you know what the bad guys are up to, the better your chance of defeating them and saving the lives of your fellows and innocent bystanders. Most of all, though, you want to prove that technology is the key to defeating the Titans – especially when you encounter Scions of oafish Gods who think it's all about huge muscles and magic weapons. You carry a gun for occasions when plans don't work quite right, and might carry pepper spray or a taser for cases where enemies must be captured alive or you must get past people who don't actually deserve to die.

Birthrights: Nüwa gave the Lightning Sage's notebook a special chip made from the same paste of five-colored stones she used to mend the sky. It enables Tan to channel Magic, Moon, Mystery and Psychopomp Boons. He casts spells, for instance, by writing calligraphy on the touch-sensitive screen, while Mystery involves a simulated I Ching. Tan doesn't know any Moon Boons, but Nüwa thinks he might want to learn them someday.

Nüwa also gave Tan the embroidered robe of an ancestor who was a corrupt court official in the later Manchu dynasty. Said ancestor, Zheng Gongquan, recently completed his sentence in Di Yu and seeks to gain posthumous merit by helping his descendant. Gongquan has the social and political savvy that Tan largely lacks; his advice sometimes prevents Tan from making serious social gaffes. The old ghost also knows a great deal about demons and the Chinese Underworld, though painful experience. To summon Gongquan, Tan must wear his ancestor's robe and burn an offering of hell-money and gold paper.



SCION

HERO

Zheng Tan
Name

Player

Tech Support
Calling

Visionary
Nature

The Celestial Bureaucracy
Pantheon

Niwa
God

ATTRIBUTES

Physical

Strength ●●○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Dexterity ●●●○○○○○○○
■□□□□□□□

Stamina ●●○○○○○○○○○
■□□□□□□□

Social

Charisma ●●○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Manipulation ●●●○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Appearance ●●○○○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Mental

Perception ●●●○○○○○○○
□□□□□□□□

Intelligence ●●●○○○○○○○
■□□□□□□□

Wits ●●●○○○○○○○
■□□□□□□□

ABILITIES

■ Academics ●●●○○○

□ Animal Ken ○○○○○

□ Art ○○○○○

□ ○○○○○

□ Athletics ●○○○○

■ Awareness ●●●○○

□ Brawl ○○○○○

□ Command ○○○○○

□ Control ○○○○○

□ ○○○○○

■ Craft (Mechanical Engineering) ●●●○○○

■ Craft (Incendiaries) ●○○○○

□ ○○○○○

□ Empathy ●○○○○

□ Fortitude ○○○○○

■ Integrity ●●○○○

■ Investigation ●●○○○

□ Larceny ●●○○○

□ Marksmanship ●●○○○

□ Medicine ○○○○○

□ Melee ●○○○○

□ Occult ●○○○○

□ Politics ○○○○○

□ Presence ○○○○○

■ Science (Electrical Engineering) ●●●○○

□ ○○○○○

□ ○○○○○

□ Stealth ●●○○○

□ Survival ○○○○○

□ Thrown ○○○○○

BIRTHRIGHTS

Guide (ancestral ghost) 3, Relic (Notebook
Computer - Magic, Moon, Mystery, Psychopomp) 4,
Relic (Court Robe) 1

WEAPONS

Glock: Acc 8, Dmg 3L-P, Rng 20, Clip 15,
Speed 4

KNACKS

Damage Conversion, Know-It-All,
Math Genius, Trick Shooter

WILLPOWER

●●●●●●○○○○○
□□□□□□□□□□

VIRTUES

Duty ●●○○○

Harmony ●●○○○

Intellect ●●○○○

Valor ●○○○○

SOAK

A 1 L 4 B 5

ARMOR

Bulletproof Vest

A _____ L 2 B 2

HEALTH

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LEGEND

● ● ● ○ ○ ○
○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Legend Points 9

EXPERIENCE

BOONS

Five-Cycle Augmentation, Magic 1,
Mystery 1, Where Are You?,
Yin-Yang Destruction
Spells: The Unlidded Eye

TOMMY LI

SCION OF SUN WUKONG

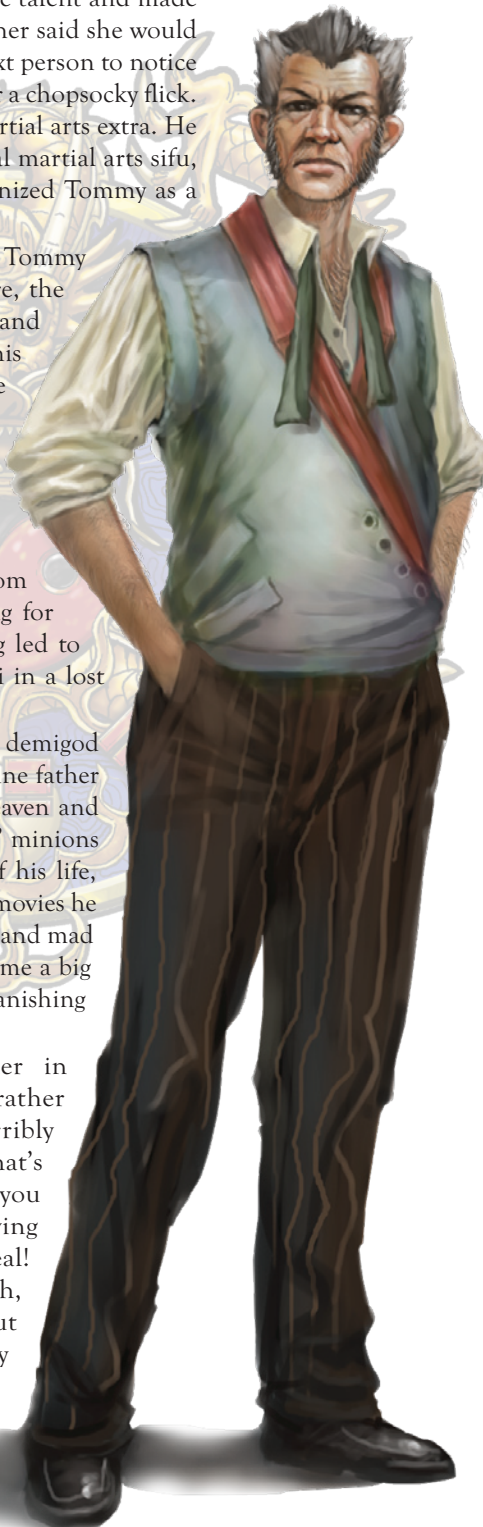
Description: Tommy Li got in trouble a lot on the streets of Hong Kong. His parents were very poor, and his father drank. Tommy became adept at grabbing fruit, fish and other groceries from market stalls and running and climbing away. First one of the Triads noticed his athletic talent and made a lucrative offer; Tommy was sorely tempted but his mother said she would die of shame if he became a gangster. Fortunately, the next person to notice Tommy's skill was a casting director who needed extras for a chopsoy flick. Tommy found he was very good at pretending to be a martial arts extra. He was so good that the fighting coach took him to see a real martial arts sifu, who took Tommy to his sifu, who was a xian and recognized Tommy as a Scion of great potential power.

Once word passed up the bureaucratic ladder, Tommy learned that "his Qi was strong" because 20 years before, the Handsome Monkey King took a fancy to his mother and posed as a handsome young actor to enjoy her. Once this came out, Sun Wukong had little choice but to say he meant to father a Scion, Visit his son and tell him to go out, fight the Titans, be a hero, yadda yadda yadda.

Tommy was less than thrilled to learn he was the bastard son of a monkey, even if the monkey happened to be one of the most famous heroes in Chinese mythology. Still, his new abilities catapulted him from bit player to minor star; and while he didn't go looking for trouble, it seemed to come looking for him. One thing led to another, and before Tommy knew it he was battling oni in a lost temple to save a fairy princess, and rather enjoying it.

Tommy thinks he has it pretty good. He's become a demigod and more powerful than he could have imagined. His divine father turned out to be a fun guy, and Tommy would move Heaven and Earth to help him. Some of the battles against the Titans' minions were pretty dire but, well, he lived. The greatest crisis of his life, really, was accepting that if he wanted to go further in the movies he needed to learn to act instead of relying on natural charm and mad kung fu talent. His agent tells Tommy that he could become a big star now if only he were more reliable and didn't keep vanishing for weeks at a time.

Roleplaying Hints: You take after your father in leaping before you look and seeking forgiveness rather than permission. The Celestial Bureaucracy seems terribly stuffy to you, but the Titans threaten the World and that's where your family and friends live. You also find that you enjoy standing up to bad guys, rescuing people and saving the day. It's like the heroes you play on screen, only real! As much as you want to defeat titanspawn, though, you also enjoy show biz. It shouldn't be a conflict, but doesn't entertaining people and making them happy matter too?



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Birthrights: Sun Wukong first gave his son a piece of his own size-changing staff, the Ru Yi Jin Gu Bang, which became a complete staff in turn. Not only does Tommy's staff function as an indestructible bo staff, it also allows him to channel Sky and War Boons and can grow and shrink up to 100% per dot of its wielder's Legend (so Tommy can make it six times longer and/or thicker, or one-sixth its normal size).

On a cord around his neck, Tommy wears a shard of the stone egg from which the Handsome Monkey King hatched; this enables him to channel Chaos Boons. To celebrate his son becoming a demigod, Sun Wukong scrounged around the back of his closet and found three more minor Relics to add to the necklace: A pit from one of the Peaches of Immortality (for Health); a Reginnaglar, or sacred nail from a Norse temple (Guardian; it came from a temple of Thor); and a little Egyptian cameo of a baboon (originally a Relic of Thoth, for the Animal Purview). The latter two items are (of course) stolen; members of the Aesir and Pesedjet might not like their repurposing to the Celestial Bureaucracy. Tommy doesn't have any Boons for these Purviews but what the heck, he might want to learn them someday.

Sun Wukong also gave his son a Qilin (the same Creature that the Amatsukami mispronounce as Kirin; see **Scion: Hero**, p. 326). Tommy has endless trouble moving this mythical beast about the World without people realizing that it shouldn't exist. He gets no help whatsoever from his agent Denning Quan, whom he hasn't told about the whole Scion thing; but Tommy's developed a small Internet fan club that's willing to try answering whatever strange question he puts to them, and thus functions as a one-dot Guide.





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COSMOLOGY

The Celestial Bureaucracy possesses enormous swaths of otherworldly real estate. Not only does it rule sprawling and complex realms in the Overworld and Underworld, it took over mystic locations associated with China's lesser ethnic groups. Gods, their Scions and other creatures of Legend also created their own locations in various Worlds.

The cosmology of Chinese myth changed repeatedly over the millennia, as the pantheon itself changed, mortals adopted new ideas and celestial commissions evaluated those doctrines for their utility. Daoism, Confucianism and Buddhism all left their imprint on the otherworlds of the Celestial Bureaucracy. Until the escape of the Titans, the Gods believed they would never again make major changes. Oh, they might update their supernaturally-simulated technology so the offices communicated by telephone, fax or email instead of courier-spirits, but the procedures and traditions were set.

Then the Titans escaped and smashed the sprawling Chinese Underworld into separate realms. One realm, at least, needs significant repair. The Jade Emperor speaks of a thorough review of procedures, the better to deal with the current crisis. Guan Yu always refers back to classical precedents when he wants to do something new, but still.... Some Gods uneasily wonder how far any reform might go, once ancient traditions – and comfortable bureaucratic sinecures – come under scrutiny.

Describing all the sub-realms, terra incognita and strange locations would fill an entire book. In fact, it does: The *Shanhaijing*, or *Classic of Mountains and Seas*, briefly mentions many of the legendary places in and beyond ancient China. The *Shanhaijing* is millennia out of date, though. The Celestial Bureaucracy commissions a new edition every few centuries, but keeps it from mortals.

PLACES OF LEGEND

STRANGE LOCATION: THE QINSHIHUANG NECROPOLIS

In 1974, peasants digging a well near the ancient Chinese capital of Xi'an dug into long-forgotten pits holding thousands of pottery figures of soldiers and horses. They discovered the tomb complex of Qinshihuang, the first historical emperor of China. Many despots ruled wider empires and some had bloodier reigns, but no tyrant ever shaped a culture so completely as did Qinshihuang. The Chinese people do not love their First Emperor, but they know he matters in a way that very few people have mattered more than 2,000 years after their death.

After decades of slow, careful excavation, Chinese archeologists found about 7,000 terracotta figures – each one apparently an individual portrait of a real soldier – plus complete metal chariots, intact weapons, tombs for the First Emperor's nobles and a complex of offices for the Emperor's bureaucrats in the afterlife. Legend says the emperor's own tomb, buried under a nearby hill, contains a relief map of China with rivers, lakes and seas of mercury, jewels set in the ceiling as a map of the stars, crossbow traps to kill grave robbers, and treasures to beggar the imagination. Archeologists have not yet dug into the tomb, but chemical analysis of the huge grave-mound's soil shows elevated levels of mercury.

The shen know that the souls of Qinshihuang's soldiers sleep in their clay effigies, ready to bring them to life at their Emperor's command. The Celestial Bureaucracy also used Death and Guardian Boons to place powerful wards around Qinshihuang's tomb, to make sure that day never comes. Qinshihuang reached too far, tried to become an immortal God, broke China to his will without regard for his own duty or cosmic harmony and burned every book he could find so the people would know nothing except what he told them. He now rules a private Underworld realm, a perfect copy of China where mercury rivers flow beneath unchanging stars. He is all alone, emperor of no one.

Nevertheless, Gods who visit the museum built around the Terracotta Army can imbibe the Legend that clings to the First Emperor's tomb. The Celestial Bureaucracy also collected 3,000 of the clay warriors before the archeologists found them, and awakened them to serve Heaven. See pp. 22-23 for a description of these skilled warrior colossi.

TERRA INCOGNITA: PENGLAI

Chinese legends mention three fabulous floating islands inhabited by millions of immortals. (Originally there were five islands, but two of them sank because of a Titan's wicked deeds.) Some legends placed the islands in a gigantic, otherworldly ocean to the east. Explorers and later scholars thought the three magic islands of Penglai, Fengzhang and Yingzhou were just fanciful versions of Japan or Taiwan.

In Penglai City, on the coast of Shandong province, people say their town is the source of the myth and even point to a scenic location in the city where the famous Eight Immortals landed. On some days, you can see the three islands out in the sea, though skeptics say they are mirages.



Almost needless to say, the skeptics are wrong and the fabled islands really exist among the other islands in the Straight of Bohai. They are too supernatural to exist in the World, but creatures of Legend can come and go. When they do, the islands become visible for a few minutes. Unwary mortals might pass to Penglai at that time. Their boat's disappearance from the ordinary World explains the legend that the islands are surrounded by "weak water" on which nothing will float.

The myths do exaggerate the size of the fabled islands: None of the mountainous islands are more than a few miles across. They are beautiful places, though, adorned with ever-blooming flowers and magical trees such as the Pearly-Garnet Tree, whose original stock came from Kunlun. All the animals on the islands are pure white. The fruit and seeds of the magical plants render the inhabitants immortal, or at least unaging. (Treat the Pearly-Garnet Tree fruit, for instance, as equal to the Golden Apples of Youth; see p. 111 of *Scion: Demigod*.) They are all sages or actual lesser immortals and live in pavilions of gold and jade. Gods of the Celestial Bureaucracy visit regularly, since the highest peak of the mountainous islands holds an axis mundi to the pantheon's Overworld realm. The inhabitants are a bit suspicious of visitors from the World, though, since the Amatsukami invaded and occupied the islands during World War Two.

TOUCHSTONE: THE GREATER WALL

Everyone knows about the Great Wall of China. You can't actually see it from the moon (it's far too narrow), but it is beyond a doubt the most immense feat of

construction in recorded history. Historians argue how well it succeeded at discouraging barbarian invasions, and some revisionists suggest the First Emperor built it from pure superstition, to block evil spiritual influences from the north. Later dynasties expanded and upgraded the wall, however, and posted soldiers — not what you'd expect for a work of magic and imperial folly.

Indeed, fortified cross-country walls have a long and successful history at keeping enemies out or disgruntled populations in. Hadrian's Wall kept the early Scots out of Roman Britain, while other Roman walls guarded other frontiers. More recently, the Berlin Wall kept East Germans from escaping. Botswana built a barbed-wire fence across its border to keep out hundreds of thousands of Zimbabweans fleeing their country's economic collapse.

All these walls and fences connect to the Greater Wall in the Overworld. The Wall is the archetypal barrier between civilization and barbarism (however its builders may define those concepts). Creatures of Legend merely need to touch one of the famous border-walls or fences in the World, past or present, and spend a point of Legend to reach the Greater Wall in the Overworld.

The Greater Wall looks like its oldest, largest and most famous analogue in the World, the Great Wall of China, though even more impressive: 30 feet high and 20 feet wide, all solid masonry, with 40-foot high square towers every five miles. The barbed wire along the parapet is a new touch. The local terrain resembles wherever the traveler came from; by walking along the Greater Wall for an hour and concentrating on a location in the World, a traveler can reach a section of

the Greater Wall that connects to another Touchstone. For instance, a Scion could start in the mountains of China, walk along the top of the Greater Wall until she reached desert, and return to the World at a section of Mexican border fence.

Alternatively, the visitor can concentrate on the other side of the Greater Wall and walk an hour to the primal outlands of ultimate barbarism: the Titan-realms. Terra, Muspelheim and most other Titan-realms can be reached using the Greater Wall, but the trip is one way. Once you jump off into the storms of Ehekatoayaatl or the sun-blasted wastes of Akhetaten, you can't return to the Greater Wall. Visitors cannot reach Hundun, though, for the Titan of Chaos has not physically impinged on any Godrealms: Some dangers just can't be walled away.

The Celestial Bureaucracy garrisoned the Greater Wall for centuries. Representatives of other pantheons who wanted to use the Greater Wall for rapid transit about the World had to pay a hefty fee for travel papers (or, more usually, bribe local guards for those permits). Since the escape of the Titans, security has tightened a great deal and the Bureaucracy no longer grants travel permits without a request signed by a pantheon's ruling God. Other pantheons are distinctly unhappy that the Bureaucracy has thousands of armed lesser immortals within an hour's walk of their turf in the World, but at present they can do nothing about it.

UNDERWORLD: DI YU

The oldest Chinese conception of the Underworld was of a dark, subterranean counterpart to the mortal World. As the Celestial Bureaucracy absorbed the pantheons of conquered cultures, it merged their ghost-countries into their own. Much later, Buddhism added notions of reward, punishment and reincarnation. The Celestial Bureaucracy gladly reorganized its Underworld to fit Buddhist notions. Not only did the Gods not want to risk losing souls to the imported faith, Legalist and more hard-core Confucian Gods liked the idea of thoroughly examining souls, recording their deeds in minute detail and assigning suitable rewards and punishments. The Underworld became even more bureaucratized than the pantheon's Godrealm.

Some Gods decried the newfangled practice of reincarnation: Ancestral souls should stay available for worship forever, because that was *tradition*. However, the Jade Emperor and his advisors pointed out that after some millennia their Underworld was full to bursting. Population forecasts suggested the Underworld would eventually gain ghosts faster than it could expand to hold them. Anyway, few spirits were remembered and revered more than a few centuries, so clearing them out would not deprive their descendants.

The Underworld was once called Huang Quan, or Yellow Springs – a name imitated by the Japanese Gods. After the reorganization, the Celestial Bureaucracy's Underworld became Di Yu, the Earth Prison. Spirits that still had descendants to offer reverence to them could stay in the old ghost-countries as long as they wanted, but others received a limit of three generations. After that (with a few special exceptions) they had to reincarnate. Before anything else, however, the dead would be judged – and punished, if their sins were sufficiently severe. No ghost would leave the Earth Prison until it paid in full for its misdeeds in life, and then it would receive a new existence based on those deeds.

The system of penance and reincarnation slowed the growth of the Underworld's population. At the last census, Di Yu held 9.2 billion ghosts. Over the millennia, there have been a lot of dead Chinese.

When the Titans escaped, Di Yu cracked along the sutures between the primeval ghost-countries. The First, Fourth and Fifth Courts float isolated in the dimensional chaos of the Underworld; the Second and Third, Sixth, Seventh and Eighth, and Ninth and Tenth Court drift as blocs that remain connected for now. At least a billion souls were lost outright to oblivion, and an unknown number escaped to haunt the mortal World as unauthorized ghosts. The Gods' servants work double shifts to recover them. Attacks from diverse Titans, however, leave the pantheon little time and resources to work on rebuilding Di Yu.

The shen are also uncomfortably aware that most of Di Yu's staff consists of demons. The Gods feel sure of the loyalty of the Oxheads and Horsefaces, but not the rest. On top of all their other problems, the Gods need to spy on their own minions.

THE TEN COURTS

Di Yu consists of 10 immense caverns, each one big enough to hold a good-sized country. Each cavern holds a complex of offices and prisons built on a design of concentric or variously-divided rectangles, just like a classical Chinese city in the mortal World. These are the Courts that examine the dead and administer their rewards or punishments. Despite the vast size of the caverns, the passages from one Court to another are short enough that a person could walk the entire series in a few hours, if she had the proper travel permits.

The First Court is Di Yu's reception area. Since it receives all the dead, it requires the largest offices. Indeed, its halls form an entire city devoted to judging the dead called Fengdu. Demons herd the dead into lines based on their status and occupation in life, and upper-class people naturally receive quicker service than common folk. Since "service" means assignment to torture, though, no one in the lower-class lines finds this too unfair. So far, the First Court's administration stubbornly refuses to update its categories, so demons wait at the doorways for noblemen and other classes now defunct in modern Taiwan, the People's Republic and the Chinese Diaspora, while clerks try to work out the proper categories for software engineers and other new occupations.

Once a soul signs in and receives a case number, she goes to the Office of Past Lives to stand before the Mirror of Recollection. This huge enchanted mirror reflects the person's past, including previous incarnations, and reveals any meritorious deeds and unexpiated sins. Clerks record everything. Demon magistrates examine the record of sins and send the soul to the appropriate Court and prison, or hell, for punishment. Some hells punish very specific offenses; others punish general wickedness. If the person's merits exceed her faults, she can go to the Tenth Court for immediate reincarnation, or linger in the first cavern-realm as an ancestral spirit. The First Court keeps a file on every soul that passes through, going back at least 15 centuries, and by examining past lives it has spotty coverage back to the Zhou Dynasty.

Fengdu also contains one rather special hell of its own. This hell, called Bu Jing Suo, exists to punish priests, monks, nuns and other religious professionals who did not perform rituals for which they were paid, or who performed them in a careless fashion. Bu Jing Suo consists of an immense, cold, drafty and pitch-black hall where the sinners must copy the appropriate holy scriptures. Their only light comes from a tiny lamp whose wick is a single thread.

The Titans' escape broke the First Court's cavern from the rest. Since they cannot receive their proper punishment, the clerks try to find them lodgings with ghosts who dwell in the rest of the cavern. Ancestral spirits possess nothing except what their descendants send them as burnt offerings. The Celestial Bureaucracy wills it that burnt models of objects become the real items in Di Yu, so ghosts with reverent descendants can have nice homes, automobiles, wide-screen plasma TVs and other amenities. However, these items only exist in Di Yu, have no supernatural powers (aside from the fact that they exist and function) and disappear if mortals cease to revere the ghost.

The Second through Eighth Courts each hold a large central prison and 16 smaller prison-hells for specific offenses. Punishments typically involve various forms of wounding, up to sawing in half or complete dismemberment, though every conceivable means of causing pain is used somewhere in Di Yu. All the punishments in these Courts, however, are finite. A sentence may take centuries to complete, but it does end, and then the soul can move on to the Tenth Court – or could. The caverns of these Courts are inhabited by ghosts that completed their sentence but still have ancestors who honor them.

The Ninth Court is the most feared, for it alone was permanent – and unjust. Once it received the souls of suicides and people who died too soon, no matter what the cause. Most particularly, it received the souls of people who had no descendants to honor them with offerings, or who died in ways that prevented a proper funeral. These were the hungry ghosts, condemned more often than not for mere bad

luck. These unfortunate souls were simply sent out into the cavern's dreary expanse to... do nothing. However, the Court also includes hells for the sinners who committed the ultimate crime of serving the Titans: the spectres (**Scion: Hero**, pp. 292-293).

The Tenth Court holds the Office of Reincarnation. First, the demonic clerks and magistrates determine what new life a person should receive, based on her deeds in her previous lives. Virtuous people can be reborn into wealthy or otherwise privileged circumstances.

People who led mean-spirited, wicked lives are reborn in poor or otherwise unfortunate circumstances, as animals or even as demons to stay in Di Yu. They pass to the cottage of Granny Meng (she refuses to permit any updating of her facility) where this lesser God feeds them the Broth of Oblivion that wipes away memories of the previous life and existence in Di Yu. At last, the amnesiac soul marches into the vast, spinning Wheel of Reincarnation that whirls it back to the World and a new body.

The dismemberment of Di Yu interrupted the cycle of punishment and reincarnation. The only souls that could reach the Tenth Court weren't supposed to; the souls that should have entered the Wheel were stranded in other fragments of the Underworld. The war against the Titans seldom leaves time for psychopomp Gods to ferry convoys of souls from the other fragments to the Tenth Court.

What's worse, the cataclysmic escape of the Titans broke the lesser prisons of the spectres. Hordes of the damned now lay siege to the Tenth Court. If they can seize the Office of Reincarnation, they can be born into the World in whatever lives they want – from newly-born nemean beasts to the children of tycoons and government officials – with full knowledge of their past lives and their worshipful service to the Titans. The Celestial Bureaucracy believes this is the worst thing that could happen to the World, short of nuclear war or an assault on humanity by the Titans themselves. The Tenth Court is now one of the main battle-fronts in the war against the Titans. The shen send all the warriors they can spare; but the Titans send increasingly powerful minions of their own, as they become aware of the Tenth Court's strategic importance.

And what of the hungry ghosts in the Ninth Court? Yanluo would like to rescind their eternal sentence and send them through the Wheel. Never mind assigning special incarnations; let Fate itself choose new lives for them. The Jade Emperor, however, forbids this. Guan Yu judges that the risk is too great of spectres posing as hungry ghosts to infiltrate the Tenth Court. Yanluo counters that the spectres already recruit resentful hungry ghosts by promising them escape: If the Celestial Bureaucracy does not show them mercy, the hungry ghosts shall multiply the spectres' numbers a hundredfold.

SAMPLE HELLS

It has been truly said: The Chinese have a lot of hells. These are only a few examples.

Heart-Gouging Prison: People who were stubborn, jealous, bigoted, cruel, treacherous, lewd or otherwise had lawless hearts have their chest split open and heart removed.

Ordure Pool: Prostitutes, pimps, smugglers, swindlers, womanizers, gangsters and their bodyguards, defaulters and deliberate bankrupts, bribed officials and crooked building contractors all wallow neck-deep in pits of dung.

Prison of Boiling Water: Thieves and robbers have their hands nailed to wooden frames and splashed with boiling water. If they cry out, they are beaten with rattan canes.

Prison of Forced Drinking of Medicine: Medical quacks must drink pails of disgusting potions.

Prison of Red-Hot Bricks: A whole building made of red-hot brick, for glory-seekers, exploiters of others' misfortune and sycophants who worship the rich and despise the poor. The worse their sins, the hotter the bricks they must walk upon.

Prison of Scooped Eyes: Peeping Toms, readers of pornography, proud people who "looked down on" other folk, students who cheat by looking at others' examination papers and other sinners with "dirty eyes" are strapped to posts and have their eyes gouged out with iron forks and replaced three times daily.

Small Prison for Amputating Limbs: Reserved for robbers and killers.

Small Prison of Barbed Netting, Locusts and Leeches: Corrupt officials and extortionists crawl between two layers of barbed-wire netting while leeches and locusts feed on their blood and brains.

Small Prison for Reckless Drivers of Motor Vehicles: A new prison. People who kill others through reckless driving must pull cartloads of bricks, barefoot, over sharp stones.

A-Bi Diyu, the Hell of No Escape: The Ninth Court's prison for spectres, both those who served the Titans in life and those corrupted after death. They are cast into a pitch-black, labyrinthine cave full of sharp spikes and hot mud... or were, before the breakout.

THE YAMA KINGS

Yanluo has nine lesser death-Gods as assistants. Together they are called the 10 Yama Kings, the supreme tribunal of Di Yu. Each of them oversees one of the Courts. For a time, Yanluo was in eclipse and demoted to running the Fifth Court, but Guan Yu promoted him once more to the First Court and overall leadership of the Yama Kings.

Each of the Yama Kings looks much like Yanluo himself, a Chinese man with ebon skin, dressed in magnificent robes of pitch black or stark white, depending on the Yama King's mood. There's some turnover among Yama Kings, but the current roster consists of Chu Jiang, Song Di, Wu Guan, Qin Guang, Bian Cheng, Tai Shan and Ping Deng; they all bear the honorific "Wang" after their names. Du Shi Wang, king of the Ninth Court, was destroyed in the eruption of the spectres and has not yet been replaced. They are all Gods with Legends of 10 or 11; Yanluo adopts any Scions they sire.

PASSAGES

If they are not held for punishment, ghosts move easily and frequently between Di Yu and the mortal World. If fact, they are expected to visit their living descendants and reward their filial piety or punish any lack thereof. A grave can act as a passage for the ghost of the person buried there, and not for anyone else.

The living have greater difficulty passing between Worlds. A few graves — typically tombs of aristocrats or great generals — may become general passages, and Scions can use them if they have some way to physically enter the tomb. Such special graves can be located by searching for legends about masses of ghosts erupting from the tomb, perhaps to fight armies of other ghosts. Tales also describe voices being heard around such graves, and eerie glows resembling blue fire.

If necessary, a Scion of the Celestial Bureaucracy can make a passage by having herself confined and buried with full traditional rites. When a demon-bailiff from Di Yu comes to collect her soul, she must overpower it or bribe it to conduct her bodily into the Underworld, while spending a point of Legend to make this possible. Note, however, that this process does not enable the Scion to *return* at will: For that, she must find a pre-existing passage out. Failing that, if she can reach the Tenth Court she can grab the Wheel of Reincarnation and jump through it, to appear in a random location somewhere in the World, next to a just-born infant to whom she shall be forever Fatebound at a strength of at least 4.

Legend speaks of other permanent passages. Somewhere in Sichuan, for instance, is a well that leads directly to Di Yu. Local priests used to have the townsfolk throw large sums of paper money down the well, until a brave mandarin descended and learned from Guan Yu himself that this was not necessary.

The south of Kwangsi Province holds two passes through the mountains that were both once called Ghost Gate Pass. Later scholars said this was just superstitious confusion because the word “kuei” can mean either “ghost” or “cassia tree” and really, these were just the Cassia Gate Passes. The skeptical scholars were wrong, of course: They really are gates to the Underworld, available to anyone with Legend (though they only work at night). China holds several other uncanny locations that can lead to the Underworld as well.

Mortals – even Scions – are not supposed to visit the Underworld, though. Visitors may be detained indefinitely, judged and punished by the Courts unless they can present authorization papers from a Celestial office, or come up with a damn good bluff or bribe. Imperial censors and other high officials of the mortal Chinese Empire also had the right to visit the Underworld on inspection tours and similar business. The governments of both the People’s Republic and Taiwan both inherited this privilege, but do not know of it (yet).

GODREALM: TIAN

The Celestial Bureaucracy occupies an expansive and intricate realm in the Overworld, with many divisions and subrealms. Overall, its name is simply Tian, “Heaven,” the realm of the sky and celestial bodies. Some division of Tian are so large and important, however, that mortals often imagine them as completely separate or alternative Godrealms.

At first glance, Tian itself looks like an idealized version of China. Rivers flow through fertile fields and between forested hills and mountains. All manner of birds and beasts live in Tian as well as the Gods and lesser immortals themselves.

A closer look, however, reveals the Godrealm’s celestial character. Jewels form the gravel in the riverbeds. The largest river flows with stars instead of water; mortals know it as the Milky Way. The birds sing in harmony with orchestral precision. Delicate perfume scents the air. The flowers, grass and trees are made of ivory, gold, lapis lazuli or other precious substances. Phoenixes, unicorns and other mythic creatures roam freely, while dragons sport in the rivers and among the clouds. Many creatures have human faces or other strange fusions of different human and animal features.

The cities of Tian correspond with the stars in the Big and Little Dippers. Heaven’s capital corresponds to the Pole Star. These cities consist entirely of palace-temples built of cinnamon and sandalwood, precious metals and gems. Here dwell the Gods and the spirits who assist them in the Celestial Bureaucracy. Like the Forbidden City of Beijing or earlier imperial compounds, each city of Heaven is built on a plan of concentric rectangles. The Jade Emperor’s palace, called the Purple Forbidden Enclosure of Heaven, occupies the center of the pole-star capital, the city of Tian Shu, or Celestial Pivot.

KUNLUN MOUNTAIN

All this celestial magnificence occupies the top of a mountain called Kunlun. To reach Tian from elsewhere in the Overworld, one must pass a mountain range of fire, then

a black river that circles Kunlun’s base. This river Ruoshui, the Weak Water, lacks buoyancy: It will not float so much as a feather, so anyone who tries to swim across will drown. The base of Kunlun is 800 li (248 miles) square, and the mountain rises higher than non-divine eyes could see.

Kunlun rises in three tiers, each with wonders of its own. The lowest tier, Liangfeng Shan (Cool Wind Mountain) is quite wild, rugged and forested. The Cinnabar River flows through the crags and caverns of this level; its water staves off death, no matter how sick or gravely injured the imbiber may be. Pincao Grass makes those who eat it happy and forgetful of their troubles. Anyone who eats the wood of the waterproof Shatang Tree will never sink in water. Magical white cranes guard a special grass that can restore life to the dead, if brewed into a tea and fed to the corpse within an hour after death. Each face of Liangfeng Shan, in turn, is its own subrealm, with its own axis mundi to the mortal World.

Various half-divine creatures live on this tier. These include the beast Tulou, who looks like a sheep with four horns and eats human beings; Qinyuan, a bee the size of a mandarin duck, with a deadly sting; six-headed birds; and mundane-seeming snakes and panthers. Many sages rendered immortal by the Gods live on Liangfeng, too, dwelling in alabaster caves or graceful pavilions of jade while they perfect their understanding of the Dao. The God called Immortal Grandfather of the South Pole oversees this level of Kunlun.

The second tier, Xuanpu (Suspended Garden) holds even greater wonders. Here grow trees of jade and pearl, and Xiwangmu’s peach trees of immortality; the God herself acts as this tier’s chatelaine. A magical grain called Muhe (Tree Grain) also grows here, on stalks 40 feet tall and five handspans wide. For meat, the lesser immortals who live on Xuanpu have Shirou (Seeing Flesh), a substance shaped like a cow’s liver with two eyes. No matter how much Shirou is eaten, it grows back instantly. Despite Shirou’s somewhat disturbing appearance, it is the finest of meats. Many terraces and gazebos overlook the mountain slopes, each one offering a view more beautiful and magnificent than the last.

At Kunlun’s summit is a wall of jade, with nine wells and nine gates, all guarded simultaneously by the God-beast Kaiming (Enlightenment), who resembles an immense tiger with nine tails and nine heads with human faces. Beyond the gates lies the third tier: the expanses of Heaven, as wide as the World itself.

SUBREALMS

Tian experiences seasons and weather just like those in the mortal World. It also has its own sun and moon. These, however, are at once subrealms and living creatures. During the night, the sun of Tian turns into a three-legged crow that perches on the branch of a giant cinnamon tree at the eastern limit of Heaven. To reach the sun-realm, however, one must fly up into the sky of Tian and ask the luminous crow for permission to enter.

The sun-realm is an ever-luminous world of gold, fire and shining jewels. Here trees of burning gold grow beside

lakes of ruby, diamond and topaz, or rivers of liquid fire. The God Houyi rules this subrealm from a magnificent golden palace he designed and built himself.

The moon-realm is a world of shadows, ice and silver, with forests of cinnamon trees and pools of liquid crystal and pearl. The God Chang'e, wife of Houyi, rules this subrealm. Her chief companion is a rabbit who prepares the Elixir of Immortality.

AXES MUNDI

The axis mundi of Tian is the Purple Forbidden Enclosure of Heaven itself. Occupying the center of Tian, in the topmost level of Kunlun, it is by definition the highest point imaginable. The Purple Forbidden Enclosure connects to the World at the Forbidden City in Beijing and analogous structures (or their ruins) in previous imperial capitals such as Xi'an and Kaifeng. The Mandate of Heaven demands a link between the Emperor of Heaven and his mortal counterpart. The Purple Forbidden Enclosure also connects to the First Court of the Yama Kings, in the Underworld.

Finally, a God with Wind's Grace (or otherwise able to fly) can reach the Purple Forbidden Enclosure by flying at top speed toward the star Polaris. After an hour of flight, the God reaches the final access point to Heaven. The Jade Emperor can break the connections between the Purple Forbidden Enclosure and the mortal capitals, but not the connection to the Pole Star.

Mount Kunlun has its own axes mundi. Chinese tradition speaks of five sacred mountains within China itself and four sacred mountains "beyond the seas" (meaning beyond the mortal World), one each to the north, south, east and west. These, however, are all simply the four faces of Kunlun. These four faces each connect to a sacred mountain on Earth, just one at a time, temporarily turning the peaks into lesser axes mundi. The western face

of Kunlun now connects permanently to the highest peak of the Kunlun range in central Asia — trapped by the Fateful link of the shared name. The eastern face permanently connects to the highest peak of Penglai. The other two faces' connections are still mobile, their terminals in the World set by the Immortal Grandfather of the South Pole.

To qualify as a "sacred mountain," a peak must carry a temple to the Celestial Bureaucracy. Usually, the Immortal Grandfather connects Kunlun to Mao Shan, Tai Shan, Wu-Tang Shan or other traditional sacred peaks in China. As the Chinese Diaspora spreads and grows, however, the shen work to build temples on sacred mountains around the World (no matter who they were sacred to before). Some shen grumble that they'd rather have axes mundi to *cities* around the World, but the pantheon could not change the laws that govern Kunlun's axes mundi without razing their entire Godrealm and rebuilding it from scratch.

As Gods create subrealms within Tian, however, they also forge whatever axes mundi they please. Chang'e, for instance, defines her lunar realm's axis mundi as an event rather than a place: Anywhere that people celebrate her holy day, the full moon of the eighth lunar month, Gods can pass between her subrealm's largest cassia tree and any of the open-air altars raised in her honor. Since Tian includes many more subrealms than can be described here, shen have many options for travel between the World and Overworld, though they probably need another deity's permission.

The shen also face one additional restriction unknown to other pantheons: paperwork. Leaving Heaven by axis mundi without the proper authorization from the Office of Celestial Travel in Tian Shu is a mild offense, punishable by fines of 10 points of Legend. Gods who enter Tian by any of its axis mundi must also report promptly to the same office, or face similar punishment. This is, after all, the Celestial Bureaucracy....

SINCE THE SIEGE — NIBBLED TO DEATH BY DUCKS

Hundun, the Titan who long has been the Celestial Bureaucracy's special foe, does not manifest physically in Tian. Other Titans claimed beachheads, however, and the shen know they received help from Hundun's old front-man Chiyu (see pp. 44-45). A horde of Soku-no-Kumi's creatures erupted from the dark place in the star-river that corresponds to the Coal Sack, and was beaten back with some difficulty. A cave in Kunlun became Crom Cruach's chalk and disgorged a swarm of nemean vermin. Akhetaten's seraphim tried to capture the three-legged sun-crow and kidnap that entire subrealm. Two sacred mountain terra incognitae have been destroyed outright. No single attack has posed a major threat to the Celestial Bureaucracy, but the war-Gods recognize them as mere probes designed to test the pantheon's defenses.

Greater danger may come from the pantheon's own attempts to stay on a war footing. Guan Yu declared a state of emergency when the Titans escaped, but as years pass with no major attack, Gods grumble and return to their normal projects and ways of doing things. Other Gods want to take the offensive and attack the Titans themselves. Some Gods want to gather allies among other pantheons; others remain isolationist. Guan Yu does his best to keep the pantheon united, but he knows that divine factions now organize their own war plans — and those plans must eventually collide. When that happens, Hundun has its opening to throw the pantheon into chaos. Already, overstressed shen accuse each other of being pawns of Hundun, adding to the tension. Guan Yu needs some clear mission for the shen to rally around, so the pantheon can exploit its huge numbers and organizational talents — and the Titans won't give him one.

ANTAGONISTS

The Celestial Bureaucracy encounters many strange creatures of Legend. Some of them work for the Gods themselves. Others serve the Titans. Both sorts are potentially dangerous to unwary Scions.

CHIMERA, QIONGQI (CREATURE)

This creature's name means "thoroughly odd," and it deserves the epithet. This bizarre spawn of Terra has an eagle's wings and a tiger's body, but covered with quills like a hedgehog with a mane of longer quills running down its neck. It is thoroughly malevolent: the qiongqi prefers to kill the virtuous, but it may present slain animals as gifts to wicked and disruptive people. It also hunts people who have long hair (though it readily kills anyone or anything weaker than itself, if it gets the chance). No one knows why it starts at the nose when it eats its victims.

Not only is the qiongqi as strong and lethal a hunter as a tiger, it can fly and stoop like an eagle. Anyone who attacks it by hand gets pierced by its coating of quills. Like a tiger, it has a loud and intimidating roar. It cannot speak, but has greater intelligence than any mere beast. Strangest of all, the qiongqi can sense who is in the right of a dispute, or at least who is telling the truth, as a way to pick whom it attacks first. As part of this power, it can detect fellow servants of the Titans. The qiongqi does what it can to help them and to harm the decent folk of mortal society.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 3, Stamina 6; Charisma 2, Manipulation 4, Appearance 1; Perception 4, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Virtues: Ambition 1, Malice 3, Rapacity 3, Zealotry 2

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 4, Brawl 3 (Swoop to Attack +3), Fortitude 4, Integrity 3, Investigation 3, Presence 3, Stealth 4, Survival 3

Supernatural Powers:

Flight: A qiongqi can fly at three times its normal movement rate in combat, or up to 50 miles per hour out of combat.

Quills: Anyone who succeeds at an unarmed attack against the qiongqi suffers one die of Piercing lethal damage from the creature's quills, unless the character has at least 2L soak from armor, or 4L intrinsic soak. (The quills are supernaturally sharp, it's part of the creature's legendary nature.) Also, anyone whom the qiongqi grapples suffers this damage with each of the creature's actions, unless the character has the requisite defense.

Tiger's Roar: The first time a qiongqi roars, people who can hear it may hesitate from fear and animals run away. Each character's next action is delayed by one tick due to this hesitation unless her player succeeds at a (Wits

+ Integrity) roll. If a character has Courage or Valor, add the higher Virtue rating to the dice pool, without need to channel Willpower through the Virtue.

Virtue Sense: With a successful roll of (Perception + Investigation), a qiongqi can tell if a person believes she tells truth or lies, or if a person or creature has at least one dot in a Dark Virtue.

Join Battle: 9

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 6, Damage 6B, Parry DV —, Speed 6, Piercing

Bite: Accuracy 6, Damage 7L, Parry DV —, Speed 6

Claw: Accuracy 7, Damage 6L, Parry DV 3, Speed 4

Soak: 0A/3L/6B

Health Levels: -0/-1/-1/-2/-2/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 4 **Willpower:** 6

Legend: 2 **Legend Points:** 4

Trophy: A qiongqi's quills are its trophy. When slain, the qiongqi quickly disappears from its sheer improbability, but leaves behind a number of steel-hard quills equal to its remaining Willpower points. By inserting one of these quills at a special acupuncture point, one can render a person incapable of lying or, using a different point, incapable of telling the truth. This effect lasts for one minute, after which the quill evaporates. While some knowledgeable shen already know the special acupuncture points, a character can deduce them through a roll of (Intelligence + lowest of Medicine or Occult). Mortals cannot resist the qiongqi's quill. Scions and other people of Legend can resist the quill's power by spending one point each of Willpower and Legend.

Other Notes: Servants of the Titans might receive a qiongqi as an ally. As a Birthright, it functions as four-dot Creature.

LESSER IMMORTAL: CHINESE DRAGONS (GUIDE OR)

In addition to Gods, Scions, ghosts and lesser immortals, the Celestial Bureaucracy includes a great many dragons, whom they call Lóng. Unlike the vicious, fire-breathing dragons in the myths of Western barbarians, the Chinese know dragons as intelligent and cultured creatures, though they are sometimes careless or with violent tempers. Chinese dragons also dwell in water, whether rivers, lakes, under the sea or high in the clouds. The greatest dragons are so powerful they are Gods in their own right. Even the least powerful dragon, however, can equal the might of a demigod.

The Chinese describe their dragons by the Nine Resemblances: horns like a stag's, head like a camel's, eyes like a demon's (or a rabbit's), ears like a cow's, neck like a snake's, belly like a clam's, scales like a carp's, the soles of its feet like those of a tiger and claws like an eagle's. They are colored black, blue, green, red or yellow. A dragon has from three to five claws on its feet, representing their age, power and rank in the Celestial Bureaucracy. A dragon's voice has the ringing tones of a gong.

The tatsu found on pp. 234-235 of *Scion: Demigod* can adequately represent a *lóng* who could become a four-dot Guide. Instead of acid breath, however, the *lóng* has all the Sky and Water Boons from one to five dots. Some dragons can also take human form.

ADDITIONAL DRAGONS

The *lóng* themselves exist in many variant breeds and forms. Notable examples include:

Dragon Horse: Fuxi found the eight trigrams of the I Ching on the back of a creature resembling a horse's body with a dragon's head and scales.

Dragon Kings: Ao Chin, Ao Jun, Ao Kuang and Ao Shun live in palace of crystal and pearl at the bottom of the sea. They regulate the oceans, and the shen count them as Gods. The four Dragon Kings feel considerable rivalry with Ryujin, the Amatsukami's dragon king.

Fu-Tsiang-Lung: A dragon who guards precious metal ores and treasures.

P'an Lung: An earth-dragon, unable to fly.

Shien Lung: The imperial dragon, bearing scales of all five colors and five claws on its feet. It directs wind and rain and protects imperial dynasties. Only the Son of Heaven and members of his court can wear the image of the imperial dragon.

Tian Lóng: The celestial dragon that supports the palaces of the gods, when this becomes necessary.

Ti Lung: A celestial water dragon that lives in the clouds during springtime and under the sea in autumn. It guards rivers and streams.

Ying Lóng: The only dragon with wings is millennia old and controlled the weather for Huang Di during his battle with Chiyou.

Yu Lóng: The carp dragon, which has the head and fins of a fish.

LESSER IMMORTAL: THE WHITE SNAKE

The White Snake is one of China's best-known legends. The opera about her has been performed around the world. The legend tells how a white serpent (already a supernatural creature, as shown by its color) practiced austerities to gain further magical powers, including the power to take the form of a beautiful woman. As Madame White, she married a young scholar... and the versions of the story diverge. They range from a version in which she takes her true form and kills him, to the opera in which she is a loyal wife but her husband freaks out when he learns the truth; a Buddhist abbot forestalls any attempt at reconciliation by imprisoning her for centuries beneath an enchanted pagoda.

The White Snake *tried* to be good. This lesser immortal wanted to earn a place in the Celestial Bureaucracy by showing she could be a person, not a supernatural predator. She even invaded Mount Kunlun for a magic herb to save her husband's life. It was all for nothing. She's now free again, however, and mad as hell. The White Snake does not serve the Titans, but she's willing to work with their servitors for the sake of revenge on the Celestial Bureaucracy. It is not *completely* inconceivable that a Scion could ease her anger at the pantheon, but it would be incredibly difficult. In the White Snake's case, Loyalty acts in a manner quite distinct from Duty: She can go to amazing lengths for the sake of friends and lovers, but cares little for social obligations. Her campaign against the Celestial Bureaucracy, indeed, is driven by her high Loyalty.

This lesser immortal possesses formidable powers. She has great proficiency at Taiyi, magic and the Illusion Purview. As a divine spirit untainted by mortality, the White Snake can use axes mundi to enter the Overworld. She is a mastermind rather than a front-line combatant, though. She takes false identities to spy on the pantheon, sabotage their efforts or arrange the deaths of Scions or lesser immortals. In human form, the White Snake appears as a beautiful young Chinese woman dressed in the height of fashion. Drinking wine mixed with realgar, however, sickens her and forces her to resume her true form as a python-sized snake with pure white scales.

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 7, Stamina 6; Charisma 6, Manipulation 7, Appearance 5; Perception 6, Intelligence 5, Wits 6

Virtues: Duty 1, Harmony 2, Intellect 4, Loyalty 4

Abilities: Academics 4, Animal Ken 2, Art (Couture and Personal Grooming) 4, Athletics 3, Awareness 5, Brawl 3, Command 3, Empathy 3, Fortitude 4, Integrity 5, Investigation 4, Larceny 3, Marksmanship 2, Medicine 5,

Melee 2, Occult 5, Politics 2, Presence 4, Stealth 3, Survival 1

Birthrights: Follower 5 (Greenie), Relic 2 (Sage's Brush – Illusion, Magic), Relic 2 (Sacred Yarrow Stalks – Mystery, Prophecy)

Supernatural Powers:

Boons: Magic 7, Five-Cycle Augmentation, Yin-Yang Destruction, Five-Cycle Conjunction, Eight Trigram Transformation, Living Hexagram Metamorphosis, Resurrection Anchor, Prophecy 4, Mystery 4, Subtle Knife, Stolen Face, Fool's Gold, Dreamcraft, Fantastic Vistas, Hidden name, Loaned Identity, Animal Communication (Snake), Animal Command (Snake).

Epic Attributes: Epic Dexterity 5 (all Knacks in **Hero**, Divine Balance, Escape Artist), Epic Stamina 4 (Holy Fortitude, Regeneration, Self-Healing, Skin-Shedding), Epic Charisma 5 (all Knacks in **Hero**, Boys Will Be Boys, Crowd Control, Unimpeachable Reference), Epic Manipulation 7 (all Knacks in **Hero** and **Demigod**), Epic Appearance 5 (all Knacks in **Hero** and **Demigod**, A Visage Great and Terrible), Epic Perception 5 (all Knacks in **Hero**, Environmental Awareness, Subliminal Warning), Epic Intelligence 3 (Know-It-All, Language Mastery, Perfect Memory), Epic Wits 6 (all Knacks from **Hero**, Instant Assessment, Monkey in the Middle).

Shapeshifting: At will, the White Snake can resume her animal form. In this form, she retains all her Attributes and Epic Attributes, but the only Boons she can use are her intrinsic Animal Boons. On the other hand, her bite is venomous (use Titanspawn Venom; **Scion:** **Hero**, p. 182).

Spells: All spells from **Hero** and **Demigod**, Bound Spirit, Legendary Surge, Measured Foe, Meddlesome Fates, Transient Visitation, Tugging Heartstrings (see "The Manifestations of Ichor," p. 38).

Join Battle: 11

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 10, Damage 4B, Parry DV –, Speed 6, Piercing

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 9, Damage 7B, Parry DV 15, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 11, Damage 4B, Parry DV 17, Speed 4

Bite: Accuracy 11, Damage 6L, Parry DV –, Speed 5

Soak: 4A/11L/14B

Health Levels: -0 x 13/Incap

Dodge DV: 20 **Willpower:** 8

Legend: 8 **Legend Points:** 64

Other Notes: The White Snake's two Relics are a calligraphy brush once used by the legendary Taoist master Chang Dao-Ling and a box of yarrow stalks for casting the I Ching divination in its most traditional form. She does not need a Birthright to use her two Animal Boons, as they are implicit in her being a snake-spirit.

The White Snake's Follower is her maidservant Greenie, another supernatural snake that can take the form of a beautiful Chinese woman. Greenie has a Legend of 6 and all the White Snake's Epic Physical Attributes and Epic Wits, with full Knacks, but has no Boons except for Animal Communication and Animal Command. Her base Attributes are all one less than the White Snake's. Greenie also lacks the White Snake's intellectual Abilities, but has Brawl and Melee 4 – she's a superb martial artist and fencer.

MINION: DEMONS

Enormous numbers of demons inhabit the realms of Chinese mythology. Most of them have only descriptive titles, such as Jade Zither Demon or Nine-Headed Pheasant Demon. Most demons look humanoid, albeit possibly with unusual numbers of arms or heads. However, they have brightly hued skin, prominent fangs, claws and possibly horns, bone spurs or tails. Their powers are too diverse to list.

Origins of demons are similarly diverse. Many demons started as titanspawn, and quite a few of them serve the Titans still. Others began as gods or lesser immortals of China's ethnic minorities, either forced into the Celestial Bureaucracy's service or still fighting against it. (Most of these turned to the Titans long ago.) Finally, persistent sinners whom all the tortures of Di Yu cannot reform may be transformed into demons so that at least their incorrigibly violent impulses find a proper outlet in the service of Heaven.

The basic, low-power demonic minion has a Legend of 3. To write one up, start with the Experienced Soldier (**Scion:** **Hero**, p. 283). Add four dots of Epic Physical Attributes (with Knacks) and the one- and two-dot Boons from an All-Purpose Purview. Specialist demons may have a higher Legend or other powers; for instance, a Superior Clerk Demon from Di Yu might have two dots of Epic Intelligence with Knacks such as Perfect Memory and Language Mastery. Demons of greater power can have higher Legend and additional Epic Attributes, Knacks and Boons.

Demons that serve the Titans follow Dark Virtues. Demons that serve the Celestial Bureaucracy have mixed Virtues: typically, Rapacity and Malice combined with Order and Courage. They lack the finer moral sensibilities for Duty and Valor, and so are restricted to mere obedience and battle-fury – and their grosser, brutal appetites frequently overwhelm them if they lack firm oversight by the shen.

UNDEAD: QING-SHI

The "corpse-spectre" (also called ch'ing-shih, kianghshi, etc.) is the Chinese vampire. These undead can look human; some may wear ornate robes or simple funeral shrouds. This is merely a disguise,

though. When a qing-shi uses its Titan-derived powers, it becomes a green-skinned, faintly luminous, corpse-horror with a mouthful of fangs and long white hairs on its body. Qing-shi range from nearly mindless killers who never think to look human to subtle and sophisticated predators who move easily through the most refined mortal society.

To the basic undead template described on p. 257 of **Scion: Demigod**, the qing-shi adds a deadly, freezing breath. This has the same lethal effect as the touch of the yuki-onna (**Scion: Demigod**, pp. 289-290), but acts at a two-yard range. To strike a target with its breath,

the qing-shi's player must succeed with a (Dexterity + Marksmanship) attack roll. Individual qing-shi may develop additional powers, such as flight or turning into a wolf or a ball of glowing vapor. Qing-shi often tear victims limb from limb and gorge on the blood and flesh; many corpse-spectres also feel a mad lust and rape before they kill.

Qing-shi cannot cross running water or a line of iron filings, red peas or rice. Salt dissolves a qing-shi's flesh, to the point that a handful of salt thrown on a qing-shi inflicts a level of aggravated damage.

TITAN: HUNDUN - CHAOS

AKA: Adharma, the Elder Chaos, the Void Heart of Infinity

Over the millennia, the Celestial Bureaucracy has faced and fought many Titans. Their greatest battle came when Gonggong broke the sky: The Gods fought the Black Dragon of Soku-no-Kumi, the floods of the Drowned Road, the monstrous beasts of Terra and the fires of Muspelheim all at once — and won. The Chinese Gods do not fear these Titans. But who gave Gonggong, formerly a minor God, the power to rend Pangu's handiwork and open the way to these Titans' forces? Only Hundun, whom the shen call the first Titan, the blind lord of the chaos from whence all things came, and who seeks to draw all things back into its formless abyss.

The Gods themselves can explain Hundun only through metaphor. Some Gods describe Hundun as a faceless giant, blind, deaf and mute, fumbling at the walls of reality in search of a crack with which to tear them apart. Others call Hundun a black, storm-tossed ocean without a shore. Such poetic fancies fail to capture the truth of Hundun, whose defining feature is its lack of defining features. There is one way to see Hundun directly, though: Ask a God of Chaos to become The Void. That mind-shattering view into everything and nothing is a window on Hundun.

To the extent that Hundun wants anything, it wants to unmake Pangu's creation. The sages of Heaven believe Hundun even wants to unmake the other Titans, though it may help them enter the shaped Worlds as a way to weaken the Gods. After all, most Titans define themselves quite narrowly: Akhetaten is Light, Ehekatoyaatl is Air and so on, with minimal admixture of other elements and principles. Hundun is all of these,

and none. The only powers that seem beyond the reach of Hundun and its servants are Prophecy for asserting an inevitable progression of time and causality; Justice for asserting a moral and social order; and Guardian for asserting a trustworthy connection between oneself and other creatures.

Other pantheons find Titans physically encroaching on their Godrealms, absorbing their substance while giants and monsters emerge from the Titan's body to attack them. The Celestial Bureaucracy face only minor threats of this sort. It doesn't matter. Hundun doesn't operate that way. The Elder Chaos gibbers in the Gods' dreams and whispers in their hearts when they argue. Hundun is the mad impulse, the word you wish you hadn't said, the desire you barely dare to acknowledge. Without words, the Titan speaks to the angry, the obsessive and everyone who hates the World for being itself instead of an extension of their will. Hundun promises Gods and Scions that they can make the World a mirror that reflects only themselves.

That's a big temptation for a God. Wielding such power, it can be hard to accept that you still need to get along with other Gods. But... what if you had truly *ultimate* power? No more rules to follow, no more fear of consequences, no more crap from other Gods. Just submit to Hundun, become its vessel and break the World.

Favored Purviews: Chaos, Darkness, Illusion, Psychopomp, Water. Note that the Illusion Purview appears in **Scion: Ragnarök**. If you do not have that book, ignore this Purview. Also, while Hundun's proxies must favor at least one of these Purviews, they can favor other Purviews as well.

Banned Purviews: Guardian, Justice, Prophecy

THE CHAOTIC TEMPLATE

The titanspawn created by Hundun itself usually manifest surrounded by clouds, rains of blood, sand or other substances, or swarms of insects. This cloud has a radius in yards equal to the creature's Legend. Any solid-seeming core is merely a denser clot of this substance; only the creature's eyes are truly solid. As such, Hundun's creatures can be difficult to damage. No attack on the creature's body, however powerful, can deal more than a single level of damage after soak. If the creature normally would have taken enough damage to kill it outright, it instead dissolves into the surrounding cloud, to coalesce again (down one level of damage) five ticks later.

Attacks on the creature's eyes deal full damage. The eyes, however, possess a higher DV than the creature itself: Do not halve the (Dexterity + Athletics + Legend) total used to calculate Dodge DV before adding any bonus from Epic Dexterity. Chaotic creatures have no Parry DV because they are not solid enough to deflect an attack.

Their less-than-solid nature enables chaotic creatures to pass through tiny openings, such as under a door or through a screen or air vent: A barrier must be air-tight to keep out a chaotic creature. These creatures are immune to any Chaos Boon wielded by any creature whose Legend does not exceed its own.

On the other hand, a chaotic creature's Legend is considered two less than its true value against Guardian or Justice Boons. What's more, such Boons briefly force a chaotic creature into solidity. When a chaotic creature becomes the target of a Guardian or Justice Boon, the creature's player resists the dice roll associated with that Boon using a (Willpower + Integrity + Legend) roll for the creature (and remember the reduction in effective Legend). If the attacker's player wins the contest, the chaotic creature becomes solid for five ticks per net success of the attacker. The creature can no longer pass through small openings, and any attack upon it inflicts the normal quantity of damage.

Finally, the actions of chaotic creatures are immune to Prophecy unless the creature becomes Fatebound in some way. No one can foretell the actions of Hundun's emanations or predict when the Titan may empower a God as its avatar by proxy.

PROMINENT FEATURES

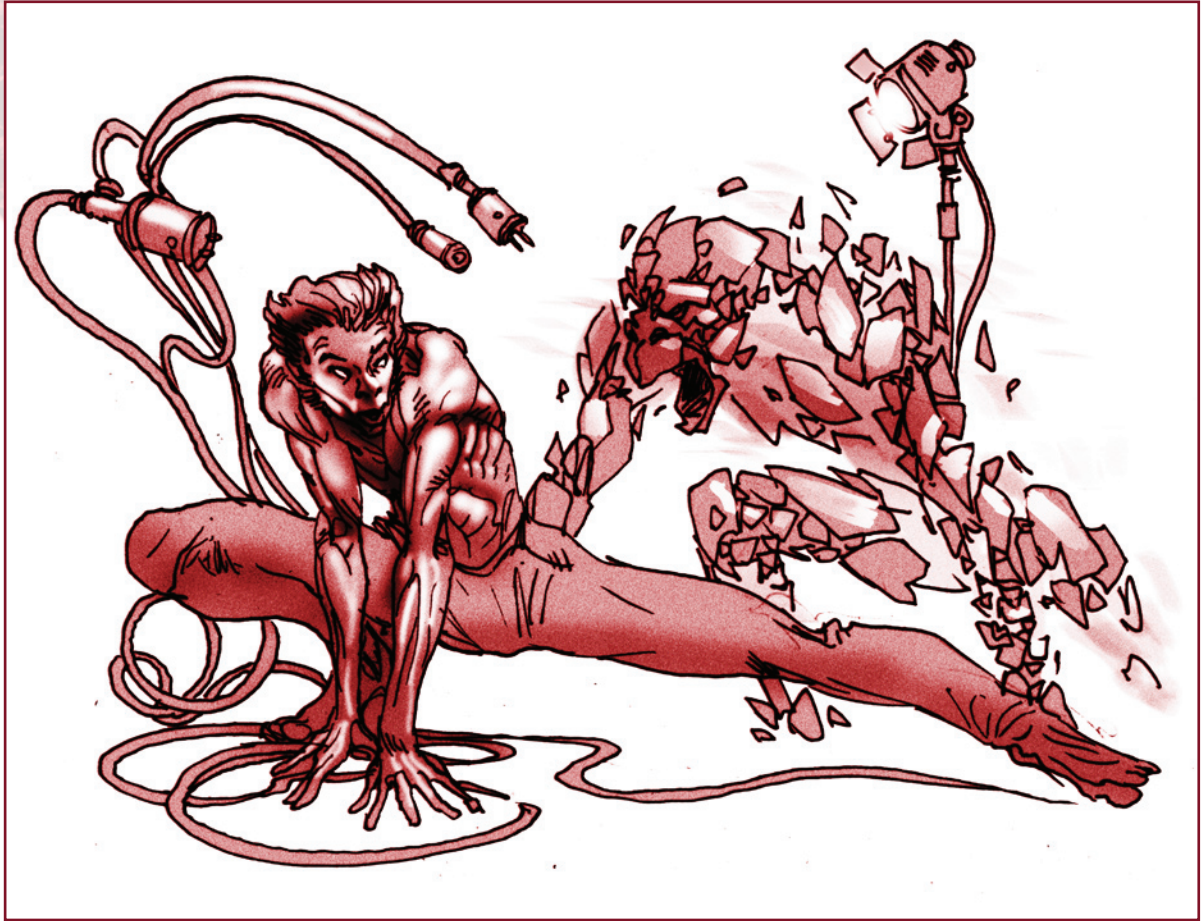
Strictly speaking, Hundun has no features. It has no size, no shape, no distinction between "here" and "there." It is light *and* dark, wet *and* dry, roused to furious motion *and* utterly static and unchanging.

Perceiving such a paradox of Being and Nothingness crushes mortal minds in an instant. Gods find it difficult to comprehend as well. If any creature finds itself within Hundun, it becomes subject to the madness of chaos: The creature's player rolls (Willpower + Integrity + Legend) for every scene. The player needs successes equal to a randomly chosen Virtue, or the character suffers the Virtue Extremity condition of that Virtue and loses two Willpower points. When the character loses all his Willpower points, he loses his sense of self and dissolves into the Void Heart of Infinity, gone forever (though Hundun may send out a black calamity or other chaotic creature in his outward form).

Visitors to Hundun tend to project their own thoughts onto the Elder Chaos, though. Hundun mirrors their thoughts, building fantasy-realms based on the visitor's desires, fears and obsessions — including a Scion's Virtues. These imaginary

worlds make no more sense than dreams usually do, and act to prod a Scion's Virtues. For instance, Tommy Li might find himself on a mad movie set with a film crew of monkeys made of broken glass, being attacked by mortal friends and relatives armed with fish, who insist that he sing show tunes — but he doesn't have a mouth. A player needs at least 8 successes on the (Willpower + Integrity + Legend) roll to resist creating such a dreamworld... not that this makes any difference whether or not a Scion suffers a Virtue Extremity.

Escaping from Hundun involves forcing stable form and definition on its chaotic non-substance. This means deliberately shaping a dream world and holding it stable. Doing this calls for the same roll as resisting Virtue Extremity or absorption in a dream world shaped by Hundun, again at difficulty 8. By sheer strength of will, the character imagines a portal or passage to someplace else and forces Hundun to accept this reality. Then the character spends a point of Legend to traverse this passage — but he should expect the Elder Chaos to send a celestial dog or at least a few black calamities along with him, just for the chance to project a bit of its reality-deranging power into the shaped Worlds.



PASSAGES

To find Hundun, journey into the furthest reaches of Mythspace until you are completely lost and no forms remain to guide your travel. Or, have a God become The Void and jump through him into the Elder Chaos.

Of the other Titans, Ehekatoyaatl, Soku-no-Kumi and the Drowned Road have the most affinity for Hundun. When the whispers and dreams of the Drowned Road become meaningless babble, where the storms of Ehekatoyaatl knot in such tight confusion that there's no telling lightning from hail, when you travel so long in the utter darkness of Soku-no-Kumi that you can no longer tell if you are awake or sleepwalking – then, you are near Hundun. Any Titan-realm, however, might develop a passage to Hundun in a place that the Greater Titan itself has forgotten about. For instance, the Titan avatar Aten never thinks about the darkness beneath his palace of mirrors, the one place in Akhetaten where his boundless radiance does not penetrate.

CHIYOU

Hundun never emanates a true avatar: The Titan of Chaos does not create defined, unique individuals. Instead, Hundun infuses its power

into willing Gods. Such proxies wield the power of avatars, but they lack an intimate, Fateful connection to Hundun. Killing one of these proxies does not alter the nature of Hundun itself, or the World. A captured proxy cannot be used to bind Hundun by magic. Indeed, the Celestial Bureaucracy believes that Hundun cannot be bound: To bind something, you must define it. By definition, the Elder Chaos cannot be defined.

Of the various Gods to whom Hundun gave power, Gonggong caused the most damage but the arch-rebel Chiyou became the most persistent. The war between Chiyou and Huang Di raged across China and involved numerous Gods on both sides. In the end, the Yellow Emperor executed Chiyou. The arch-rebel came back, though, and caused trouble on several occasions.

Long ago, Chiyou introduced metal weapons and armor to China. At first, the shen thought these were a useful gift for humanity, since they helped civilized folk to defeat wild beasts and barbarians. In his pride, however, Chiyou sought to conquer both Heaven and Earth. His weapons made him mighty; he sought to become Almighty, and rule by force instead of by right conduct and right understanding.

The arch-rebel still tries to make himself supreme by destroying the harmony of Worlds, Gods and mortals. Chiyou leads uprisings of damned souls in Di Yu, and barbarian invasions in the mortal World. He causes natural disasters and civil wars. Though a mighty warrior, his power to rouse the rabble may be just as dangerous, and he is cunning enough to hide his power in mortal or immortal guises, much like the Gods themselves. Worst of all, Chiyou readily works with avatars, spawn and minions of other Titans. If anyone can persuade two Titans to coordinate assaults on the Celestial Bureaucracy, it's Chiyou. The shen fear this possibility almost as much as Hundun inspiring another civil war between the Gods themselves.

In his traditional form (it is arguable whether such a disciple of the Elder Chaos still has a *true* form), Chiyou appears as a tall, powerfully-built man with the hooves and head of an ox, four eyes and six arms. He wears bronze armor and a fearsome helmet adorned with an aureole of blades. He may take any other form he pleases, but reverts to this ox-headed form when he decides the time is right to declare his power and terrify the Gods.

Chiyou has a base dice pool of 22 for all actions. He favors Physical Attributes.

Virtues: Ambition 4, Malice 3, Rapacity 3, Zealotry 4

Supernatural Powers:

Avatars: The General, The Void

Boons: Every one- to eight-dot Boon from every Purview except Guardian, Justice and Prophecy, which are forbidden to Chiyou. The arch-rebel also has all Boons from the Chaos, War and Taiyi Purviews.

Epic Attributes: Epic Physical Attributes at the 10-dot level (with all appropriate Knacks). All other Epic Attributes at the eight-dot level (with all appropriate Knacks).

Forge Birthright: Chiyou crafts powerful Birthright weapons and armor in mere hours, though he needs at least a small quantity of legendary raw materials such as demon blood, a dragon pearl or lunar cassia-bark. For a single point of Legend, he can craft a Relic rated up to four dots. With a few days, 10 points of Legend and extraordinary legendary material (such as the body of a lesser God or one of the peaches of immortality), Chiyou can forge five-dot Relics. Chiyou gives out such Relics as bribes, but they also carry curses that cause murder, chaos, madness and (one way or another) harm to Gods or the World.

Resurrection: As a Titan avatar, Chiyou does not actually have Ultimate Stamina. Since he has complete mastery of Taiyi, however, he achieves much the same effect.

Shapeshifting: Chiyou can take any more-or-less humanoid form, including forms with different numbers of arms or heads, at no Legend cost. He can

also manifest with a reduced Legend as if he had three dots in the Avatar Birthright, though this reduces his base dice pool (it stays at twice his Legend), while his Epic Physical Attributes cannot exceed his (Legend -1) and his Epic Mental and Social Attributes cannot exceed his (Legend -2).

Join Battle: 22

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 22, Damage 12L, Parry DV -, Speed 6

Unarmed, heavy: Accuracy 21, Damage 15L, Parry DV 56, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 23, Damage 12L, Parry DV 58, Speed 4

Sword of Murder: Accuracy 26, Damage 18L, Parry DV 58, Speed 4

Soak: 10A/52L/57B

Health Levels: -0 x 52/Incap

Dodge DV: 57 **Willpower:** 9

Legend: 11 **Legend Points:** 121

Other Notes: Though of classical Chinese styling, Chiyou's sword is identical to Tyrning (**Scion:** **Hero**, pp. 167-168), including the curse that once drawn, it must be used to kill. Anyone who draws the sword (except Chiyou himself) temporarily has three dots of Malice that drive him to kill someone before he sheaths the blade again. It's a good example of the sort of Relic Chiyou would give away. Chiyou does not bother wearing real armor: The armor he seems to wear is actually formed of ichor, just like his body.

REVISIONIST HISTORY

The official story of Chiyou's rebellion might not be completely truthful. The San Miao people of southern China claim Chiyou as their divine ancestor and patron. Quite possibly, Chiyou was never a member of the Celestial Bureaucracy at all, but a God of a rival pantheon, making the war between Huang Di and Chiyou an imperial conquest that paralleled the conquest of the San Miao by the Han ethnic group that now dominates China. The Celestial Bureaucracy does not like to admit that China's other ethnic groups ever had Gods of their own; and the shen accept that every administration, mortal or divine, tweaks its official histories to justify its rule.

No matter how the war began, though, Chiyou sought help from the Elder Chaos and became the Titan's proxy. Whatever motives once drove this God, he now seeks to cast all Worlds and realms into chaos and destruction.

BLACK CALAMITY

The black calamity, or hoh sheng, is one of Hundun's lesser emissaries into shaped reality. Chinese tradition holds that the hoh sheng appears when the Emperor is unrighteous. To prevent further manifestation, the Emperor must confess his faults in the Temple of Heaven, reduce taxes and order a purge of corrupt officials. Actually, the black calamity doesn't specifically need a bad Emperor to enter the World: Any misrule, in which leaders neglect their Duty with a resulting collapse of social Harmony can open the way for a hoh sheng.

A hoh sheng manifests in a rain of black peas or sand, and leaves surfaces spattered with rotted blood. The core of the creature looks like a human or comparably sized dog, cat or other animal, though legend speaks of black calamities appearing in the form of snakes that rolled about like hoops. Whatever its form, the creature is flat black except for its golden eyes. A black calamity inflicts wounds with a mere touch; these wounds are painless, but slow to heal (aggravated damage). A black calamity prefers to enter homes at night to kill one or two sleepers while leaving other people unharmed. They seem to have some sense of which victim's death can most disrupt the family, preferring beloved children and respected elders.

Fortunately for humanity, the black calamity suffers a terrible weakness to salt. A single handful of salt cast at the creature inflicts lethal, Piercing damage equal to a Light Unarmed attack. A quart or more acts as a Heavy Unarmed attack that deals Piercing lethal damage, and such attacks bypass the black calamity's chaotic template. A slain black calamity vanishes with a crack like a gunshot, leaving only smears of stale blood and a single golden eye.

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 4, Stamina 4; Charisma 4, Manipulation 1, Appearance 3; Perception 2, Intelligence 2, Wits 4

Virtues: Ambition 1, Malice 4, Rapacity 2, Zealotry 2

Abilities: Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 4, Empathy 2, Fortitude 4, Integrity 1, Investigation 1, Larceny 3, Presence 3, Stealth 4

Supernatural Powers:

Boons: Horner's Nest, Sky's Grace

Chaotic Nature: Black calamities possess the chaotic template (see "The Chaotic Template" sidebar, p. 43).

Epic Attributes: Epic Dexterity 1 (Lightning Sprinter), Epic Stamina 2 (Self-Healing, Solipsistic Well-Being), Epic Appearance 1 (Lasting Impression; negative)

Join Battle: 7

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 8, Damage 2A, Parry DV -, Speed 6

Unarmed, Heavy: Accuracy 7, Damage 5A, Parry DV -, Speed 5

Unarmed, Light: Accuracy 9, Damage 2A, Parry DV -, Speed 4

Soak: 2A/4/6B

Health Levels: -0/-0/-0/-0/-0/-4/Incap

Dodge DV: 7 (eyes 12) **Willpower:** 6

Legend: 3 **Legend Points:** 9

Trophy: A black calamity's trophy is its eye. The eye protects its bearer from Chaos Boons wielded by any creature whose Legend does not exceed the bearer's own. The eye grants this protection three times (once for every dot of Legend the black calamity possessed), then dissolves into putrid blood and black sand.

CELESTIAL DOG

This mighty spawn of Hundun manifests as a lean and menacing, vaguely canine but ox-sized shape of dense yellowish vapor with pitch-black eyes. A thin cloud of faint, yellow-green radiance surrounds it for a 45-yard radius, and at night the celestial dog is visible for miles. The cloud around the titanspawn smells faintly of rot, while the creature itself reeks of decay. Just coming near a celestial dog exposes mortals and Gods alike to sickness of both mind and body. Celestial dogs exist to spread madness and destruction; they learn from their surroundings how and where they can cause the most damage.

Attributes: Strength 6, Dexterity 8, Stamina 8; Charisma 6, Manipulation 1, Appearance 6; Perception 5, Intelligence 2, Wits 5

Virtues: Ambition 2, Malice 4, Rapacity 4, Zealotry 4

Abilities: Athletics 4, Awareness 5, Brawl 4, Craft 5, Integrity 3, Investigation 4, Occult 5, Presence 3, Science 5, Survival 2

Supernatural Powers:

Boons: All Chaos Boons from one to seven dots; all negative Health Boons from one to seven dots. These are innate powers for the celestial dog.

Chaotic Nature: Celestial dogs carry the chaotic template (see the sidebar on p. 43).

Dissolving Touch: A celestial dog's attacks deal aggravated damage.

Entropic Aura: A celestial dog's mere presence dissolves matter, mind and soul. When a character enters the celestial dog's radiant aura, her player rolls (lowest Virtue + Integrity) at difficulty 3. Failure means the character loses half her Stamina and Epic Stamina (with appropriate alteration to health levels), half her Willpower points and half her Legend points. A character who exhausts her Willpower points in the aura goes mad as if affected by Crawling Chaos (Chaos •••••).

Epic Attributes: Epic Dexterity 3 (Cat's Grace, Lightning Sprinter, Monkey Climber), Epic Stamina 5 (Damage

Conversion, Divine Damage Conversion, Regeneration, Self-Healing, Solipsistic Well-Being), Epic Charisma 1 (Pied Piper), Epic Appearance 3 (Center of Attention, Inescapable Vision, Lasting Impression), Epic Perception 4 (Predatory Focus, Spatial Attunement, Supernal Hunter, Telescopic Senses), Epic Intelligence 1 (Telepathy)

Join Battle: 10

Attacks:

Clinch: Accuracy 12, Damage 6A, Parry DV -, Speed 6

Bite: Accuracy 11, Damage 9A, Parry DV -, Speed 5

Paw: Accuracy 13, Damage 6A, Parry DV 11, Speed 4

Soak: 5A/15L/19B

Health Levels: -0 x 17/Incap

Dodge DV: 14 (eyes 24) **Willpower:** 8

Legend: 8 **Legend Points:** 64

Trophy: A celestial dog's trophy is the howl it emits when it dies. That howl lodges in the mind of one of its killers (whoever has the fewest Willpower points at the time, or randomly in case of a tie). Its presence strips the character of another Willpower point that she cannot regain until she uses the howl. Any time thereafter, the character can release the howl from her own throat, with the same effect as Instant Riot (Chaos ••••• ••). The howl then vanishes from her mind.

