

Interesting Times

3rd Edition (draft)

JOHN M REYNOLDS

INTERESTING TIMES

*Being a Role Playing Game of cinematic
martial-arts, magic and intrigue
through history.*

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<http://zandev.org/interestingtimes>

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Introduction

Interesting Times is an RPG game system and background about an order of monks known as the Guardians of Fate in a remote part of China. This covers the actions of the Guardians in different time periods. In particular, the settings of medieval China and modern day are explored.

The system is based on a deck of cards reflecting the philosophical beliefs of the Guardians.

Though it can be played in different ways, the default style of the game is cinematic action.

The Guardians of Fate

The Guardians of Fate are a small religious order inhabiting a mountaintop monastery far from populous regions.

The true origins of the Guardians of Fate are shrouded in mystery. To most who deal with them, they are simply a small monastic order. Observers with a keener eye will note a slightly unusual ethnic mix; many members show features not common in the locale, and a few even show signs of origin outside of China.

Known to few but full members, the Guardians in close to their current form

were created when European mages from the Order of Hermes fleeing a war in the 14th century took sanctuary in China with a group of ascetic monks.

Combining their understanding of the World, they formed new philosophical, magical and physical disciplines.

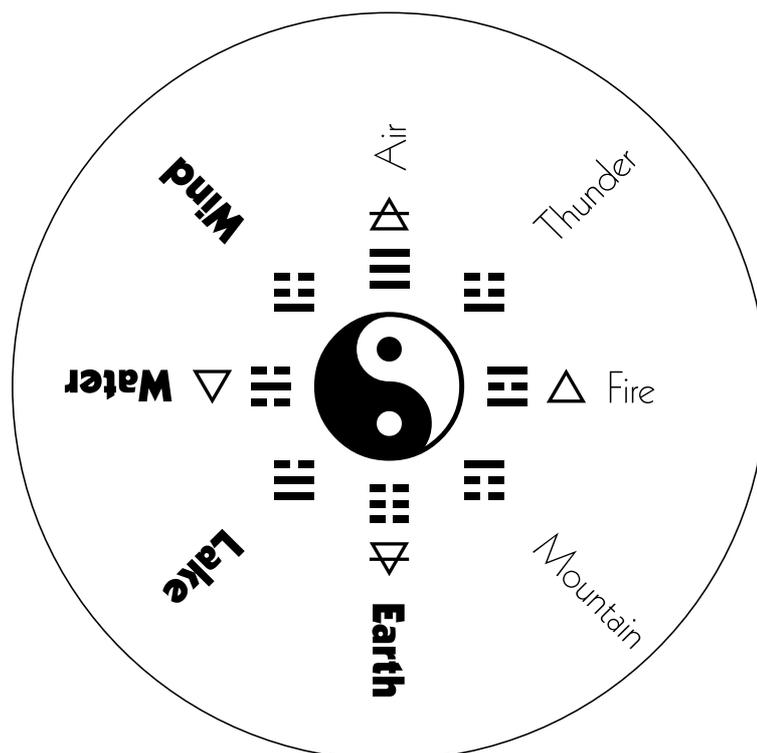
Members of the Guardians are drawn both from children of existing members or staff, or from the outside world. Some children are from humble backgrounds, sent to the order for a chance of a better life. Others are from knowledgeable noble families, sent for an education and to gain power and influence.

Wheel of Elements

The Wheel of Elements underpins the belief and abilities of the guardians. It is based on a fusion of the traditional Chinese I Ching and Hellenic physics model followed by the Hermetic Order.

The Elements

The elements follow the teachings of the Hermetic Order. As well as their elemental properties, they have different spheres of influence:



- **Earth** ☷ is associated with the material world.
- **Air** ☴ is associated with the spiritual world.
- **Fire** ☲ is associated with physical action.
- **Water** ☵ is associated with mental thought.

Yin, Yang and Chi

Following the ancient Chinese philosophy, the abilities of the Guardians of Fate are powered by **chi**, the life force of living things.

Also critical to their disciplines are **yin** and **yang**, ☯, the complimentary opposing forces in all things. **Chi** itself can also be aspected to **yin** ☷ or **yang** ☰.

Yin ☷ and **yang** ☰ cover many characteristics of things.

Amongst other things, **yin** is associated with water, earth, the moon, femininity, night, darkness and thought. Conversely **yang** is associated with fire, air, the sun, masculinity, day, light and physical action.

Amongst other characteristics, **yin** is associated with cold, wet, passivity, softness and stillness. Conversely, **yang** is associated with heat, dry, aggression, hardness and speed.

The I Ching

The I Ching is based on eight trigrams, which the Guardians have combined with the elemental model of the Hermetic order.

The Guardians consider these to be arranged around a wheel, the Wheel of Fate:

Deck of Fate

Following the Western tradition, the Wheel of Elements is embodied in a tarot deck known as the Deck of Fate.

The cards

The cards come in one of six suits:

- **Earth** ☷, **Water** ☵, **Fire** ☲, **Air** ☴: these represent the four elements, and each card has an additional association with the element of its suit.
- **Primal**: the primal suit ☰ represents the essence of each trigram.
- **Arcana**: the arcana suit ☱ illustrates each trigram with a symbolic figure or object. There are also two special cards: **yin** ☷ and **yang** ☰.

Card values

Each card has an associated **trigram**, which also represents a number from 1 to 8 (☰ ☱ ☲ ☳ ☴ ☵ ☶ ☷). Each trigram appears once in each suit.

Card attributes

Each card has **elemental** associations. These are based on the *trigram* and the *suit*. These are represented by the elemental symbols on the cards (☷ ☵ ☲ ☴ ☱).

Each card is also associated with **yin** ☷ or **yang** ☰ based on the trigram.

Trigram	Name	Meaning	Value	Chi	Elements
☷ Earth	乾 Qián	<i>the creative</i>	1	☷ yin	☷ Earth
☶ Mountain	艮 Gèn	<i>keeping still</i>	2	☰ yang	☷ Earth ☲ Fire
☵ Water	坎 Kǎn	<i>the abysmal</i>	3	☷ yin	☵ Water
☴ Wind	巽 Xùn	<i>the gentle</i>	4	☷ yin	☴ Air ☵ Water
☳ Thunder	震 Zhèn	<i>the arousing</i>	5	☰ yang	☲ Fire ☴ Air
☲ Fire	離 Lí	<i>the clinging</i>	6	☰ yang	☲ Fire
☱ Lake	兌 Duì	<i>the joyous</i>	7	☷ yin	☵ Water ☷ Earth
☰ Air	坤 Kūn	<i>the creative</i>	8	☰ yang	☴ Air

The major arcana

The major arcana are drawn from the traditional tarot, but also have an associated trigram:

- ≡ Earth - *The World*
- ≡ Mountain - *The Emperor*
- ≡ Water - *The Moon*
- ≡ Wind - *The High Priestess*
- ≡ Thunder - *The Hierophant*
- ≡ Fire - *The Sun*
- ≡ Lake - *The Empress*
- ≡ Air - *The Star*

The monastery

The mountaintop monastery of the Guardians of Fate is loosely divided into four schools. These deal with both the teaching of students and the activities of the Guardians.

The Temple

The Temple nominally provides the leadership of the order. Associated with the element air, the members of the temple study the spiritual world.

The Temple also makes a study of the arts.

From the Temple come the most visionary seers, able to predict the future and provide guidance.

The School of Order

The School of Order is associated with the element earth, and concerns itself with secular matters. The school performs most of the day-to-day administration and organisation of the monastery.

It is also concerned with practical matters of life, and employs the craftsmen of the order.

From the School of Order come the most capable geomancers, capable of ensuring things go smoothly in the material world.

The School of Magic

The School of Magic is highly influenced by the teachings of the Hermetic Order. The school is associated with the element water.

As well as magical studies, the school concerns itself with academic studies of all kinds.

Unsurprisingly, the School of Magic produces the most powerful magicians, capable of bending reality to their will.

The School of War

The school of war organises the defence of the monastery, outside operations performed by the Guardians, and the training of members in the martial arts.

Associated with the element of fire, the School of War also undertakes academic studies of tactics and strategy.

The School of War produces the strongest warriors, capable of superhuman feats.

System

General terms

When introduced, new terms are presented in **bold**. When referred to for the first time in a section, significant terms may be presented in *italics*.

Characters are the characters in the game. The **players** are the players who control the **player characters**. The **games master** (abbreviated to **gm**) controls the other characters.

A **step** is an action taken by a player or gm according to these rules and cannot be interrupted by other actions. However, if an action consists of a number of steps, then other actions may occur between the steps.

Using cards

The card decks and drawing cards

Each character has a deck of cards representing the **Deck of Fate** as described in the previous section.

This contains 50 cards. 8 cards in each of the suits ♠ ♡ ♢ ♣ (32 total), 8 primal cards ☰, 8 arcana * and 2 special cards yin ☯ and yang ☲.

Each card has a value (1 to 8) and various attributes, such as elements ♠ ♡ ♢ ♣ or **yin** ☯ or **yang** ☲.

This is handled much like many card games: the **deck** is shuffled and placed face down (☐) in a stack. Each deck has an in play area. Cards placed face up (☉) in this area are considered to be **in play**. Each deck also has a **discard pile**, which is a face up (☉) stack of discarded cards from that deck.

When required to **draw** a card, take the top card of the stack and place it face up in the in play area. Once a card is no longer relevant, place it face up on the discard pile.

At any point, a *player* or the *gm* may look at any of their face up cards, whether they are in play, in the discard pile, or in the deck (some actions can turn deck cards face up), but they may not change the

order of the cards, or look at face down cards.

A player may also look at any card of another player as long as it is in play.

At any point, though often at points of pausing, for instance the end of a game day or the end of a session, the gm may indicate that the decks should again be shuffled.

Yin and Yang cards

The **yin** ☯ and **yang** ☲ cards have a special effect when drawn, and are not normally used for their values or attributes.

When one of these cards is drawn, do not put it into play and instead:

Step 1: shuffle the drawn card and the *discard pile* and the remaining *deck* to form a new face down deck.

Step 2: regain any amount of **yin** ☯ or **yang** ☲ matching the card (see the attributes section for **yin** and **yang**).

Step 3: draw a replacement card.

Note that as these are three separate steps, actions may be taken between them. For instance, actions which manipulate the deck may be performed after step 1, but before regaining yin or yang in step 2.

Actions

Actions are what the characters do. Actions are **declared** by players and then they are **resolved**. When an action is resolved, the gm decides on its effect.

Free Actions

A **free action** may be taken by any character at any time, except during a *step*. Resolve the action immediately when it is declared by a player (or gm).

Any number of free actions by any characters may be taken before and after steps.

Resolving actions

When an *action* is resolved, it may have an immediate effect, or may have a number of *steps*.

The gm decides the effect of any actions. Note that *free actions* may be taken before and after the resolution steps, and these actions are resolved immediately (before the resolution of the original action is complete). This is true even for other free actions, i.e. a free action with multiple steps may have other free actions taken between the steps.

Rounds

When the time taken for *actions* matters, for instance during a battle, time in the game is divided into **rounds** of a few seconds.

Fast actions

A **fast action** is an *action* that may be taken quickly. Each *round*, a character normally may take only one fast action. They may of course take any number of *free actions* as well. Some abilities may allow additional fast actions to be taken.

Declaring fast actions

Each *round*, as a *step*, each *player* declares the intended *fast action* for their character. Then the gm declares actions for other characters. Players may freely change their minds until the gm declares actions.

Depending on the situation or the style of play, the gm may allow discussion of the actions, or may hurry the players with their decisions.

Ordering of fast actions

After the declarations, if the order of *fast actions* is important, then each player may as a *step*, draw a card ⑤.

To this card add the character's *speed* (see later). This card is not modified by normal action bonuses, and is simply the card value added to speed.

Then, as a *step*, in order of this total (lowest to highest), players declare when they wish their action to occur, relative to those that have already declared. If there is a tie for value, the gm chooses first. If a player chooses not to draw a card, then the total is simply their speed.

Thus, characters with higher totals choose later, and can decide when to act based on what has come before.

Resolving fast actions

As individual *steps*, each *fast action* is then resolved in the order determined above, or otherwise in order determined by the gm.

Slow actions

A **slow action** is a longer *action* taken as part of the story. They are too slow to be used within a *round*.

At the gm's discretion, they may still be declared for a round, but will take more than one round to complete. A slow skill such as the Warrior's *feat* may typically take two rounds, but other skills such as meditation would take longer.

Such slow actions will normally resolve after fast actions in the second round.

A slow action split over multiple rounds may also be delayed if the character is interrupted.

Challenging actions

If the gm does not decide on an automatic outcome for the action, it may be a **challenging action**.

When the action is resolved, the following steps occur (note that as usual, free actions may be taken before and after each of these steps):

Step 1: The player draws a card.

Step 2: The gm declares a **difficulty** of the action.

Step 3: Determine the outcome.

To determine the outcome, compare the value of the card, plus any modifiers due to skills or circumstance to the *difficulty* of the action. If the value is equal to or greater than the *difficulty*, the action is a success.

For most actions, if the value is at least 4 greater than the difficulty, it indicates a particularly significant success, called a **critical success**. Each multiple of 4 adds another level of critical success, indicating an even greater level of success.

At the gm's discretion, the additional value needed for a critical success may be another number than 4, but 4 is the usual. One case where it does differ is for damage, described below.

Contested actions

A **contested action** is a variation of a *challenging action* which is opposed by another character. In this case as a step before determining the outcome of a challenging action, the player of the contesting character may also draw a card. The value of this card, plus any modifiers, adds to the *difficulty*.

Attacks

Most attacks with weapon, fist or magic are *fast actions* and are resolved like two challenging actions, the first to determine whether the attack hits, and the second to determine the damage caused.

The hit part is resolved as a challenging action with a bonus modifier of the character's *hit* (see below), and with a difficulty of the target's *evasion*. Other modifiers may apply at the gm's discretion, for instance penalties for range.

Relevant skills also add to the value depending on the attack. For instance, Martial Arts will add to fist attacks.

If the hit is successful, then a damage challenging action is resolved as described in the dealing damage section below.

If the attack is a critical success (that is at least 4 greater than the difficulty) then there may be additional effects at the gm's discretion. For a typical weapon this could be +2 damage per level of critical.

Defensive actions

Defensive actions are actions, for example dodging, parrying or blocking taken to counter an attack. The character must be aware of the attack and capable of acting. At the gm's discretion, taking a defensive action may give a penalty to non-combat actions taken in the same round.

Like *free actions*, a **defensive action** may be taken at any time, but is taken against a specific attack on the character. A character may take only one defensive action against a particular attack.

When a character takes a defensive action, the first part of the attack becomes a *contested action*, so the defender may draw a card to add to the difficulty.

Relevant skills also add to this value, depending on the type of defensive action taken.

A character may take defensive actions against additional attacks in the same *round*, but each action after the first is at a cumulative -3 penalty. Note that this can end up with the defence being worse than evasion alone (though this is unlikely for a skilled character).

The character may choose to take the penalty on early defensive actions in the round, to have a better chance on later actions. For instance, if after declarations, the player knows that their character will be the target of three attacks in a round, they could choose to take a defensive action at -3 to the first, -6 to the second and normal to the third.

A character may choose not to perform a fast action in a round, in which case they gain a +3 modifier to all defensive actions taken that round. For instance, if they take three defensive actions in a round, one would be at -3, one normal and one at +3.

Character attributes

Attributes may provide modifiers for actions. These are usually a direct bonus to the value of drawn cards.

- **Hit** is how accurate the character is with attacks, and adds to any card drawn to see if an attack hits. An untrained character without a weapon has a hit of zero.
- **Evasion** is how hard it is to hit a character. This is the difficulty of an action to hit the character. A normal character has an evasion of 4. Each level of Geomancer or Seer that the character has adds one to evasion.
- **Defence** is a bonus to defensive actions. Thus, it is like evasion, but only applies to actions taken to defend. An untrained character has a defence of zero.
- **Protection** is the value of armour worn or similar protection. This subtracts from any damage value suffered by the character. An unarmoured character has a protection of zero.
- **Resilience** is the toughness of the character, and reduces the injuries

caused by damage to the character. A normal character has a resilience of 4.

- **Speed** is how fast a character reacts. It gives a bonus to cards drawn to determine the order of actions. A normal character has a speed of zero. Each level of Warrior or Magician the character has adds one to speed.

Dealing damage

The outcome of dealing damage is resolved similarly to a *challenging action*. However, unlike most challenging actions, modifiers from *skills* and *disciplines* do not normally apply. Usually only modifiers from the weapon used are relevant (though some discipline abilities can give bonuses).

A card is drawn for the damage. The weapon used may add to this.

The *difficulty* is the sum of the *protection* and *resilience* of the target.

The *protection* of the target subtracts from the value. The *difficulty* is the *resilience* of the target.

Unlike most actions, the number required to get a *critical success* is not always 4, but instead is the target's *resilience*.

If the result is not a success, then no damage is inflicted. The level of success and critical success determines the damage:

- **Minor injury:** If the damage value is a success but not a critical success, the character suffers a minor injury. If a character has 3 or more minor injuries, and would take another minor injury, then they suffer a major injury instead. Characters suffer a -1 penalty modifier to all cards drawn for each minor injury they have.
- **Major injury:** If the damage value is a critical success then the character suffers a major injury instead of a minor injury. Characters suffer a -2 penalty modifier to all cards drawn for actions for each major injury they have. If a character has 3 or more major injuries, and would take another major injury,

then they suffer an incapacitating injury instead.

- **Incapacitating injury:** If the damage value is a double critical success (i.e. at least twice the resilience greater than the difficulty), the character suffers an incapacitating injury. The character may not take any significant actions. If a character has already suffered an incapacitating injury, and would take another incapacitating injury, then they suffer a fatal injury instead.
- **Fatal injury:** If the damage value is a triple critical success, the character has taken an injury which will be fatal without imminent treatment.

Chi

Yin and Yang

The life force **chi** ☯ powers many of the abilities of the Guardians. This life force

can be aspected to **yin** ☷ or **yang** ☰

☯. As a shorthand, **yin** and **yang** are used to refer to **chi** aspected to

one or the other.

Characters maintain an amount of **chi** which may be used for abilities.

Characters have the capability to store an amount of either kind of **chi**, and can also store some of one or the other.

A normal female character can store one unit of **yin** ☷, and one of either **chi** ☯. A normal male character can store one unit of **yang** ☰, and one of either **chi** ☯.

Cost of actions

Some actions have a cost of **yin** ☷, **yang** ☰ or **chi** ☯ (which means either a **yin** or **yang**). This is paid as an initial step when the action *resolves*. The character must pay this cost if they can. If they cannot, the action automatically fails.



Characters

This section describes how to create a character. Each player character is an agent of the Guardians of Fate.

In the historic setting, the characters are assumed to live in the monastery and dedicate their lives to the order.

In the modern day, improved transport and communication has made it feasible for some members of the order to live elsewhere and work for the order part time, being on call for crucial missions.

Creating the character

Various parts of the character background need to be decided:

- **Name:** Each character obviously needs a name, and possibly a nickname or call sign. Part time agents may (though not usually) have a cover identity.
- **Sex:** This has a very minor game effect in a bonus of **chi** that can be stored (females have one extra **yin** ☯ and males have one extra **yang** ☰).
- **Nationality:** The character can be of any nationality, though the European nationalities or Chinese are particularly common.
- **Disciplines, Skills and Perks:** see the following sections.
- **Occupation:** If the character is part time (modern day only), then their main occupation or lifestyle needs to be specified.
- **Background:** any other background or history of the character.



Example: Starting with the concept of a British full-time agent:

Name	<i>Jeremy Williams</i>
Alias	<i>Little Dragon</i>
Sex	Female ☯ <input type="checkbox"/> Male ☰ <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Age	<i>31</i>
Occupation	<i>Agent</i>
Nationality	<i>British</i>

Generation

The characteristics, skills and resources of a character are represented by Character Points (CP). The number of CP a character starts with is determined by the gm, depending on how the characters should start the game. The gm may also mandate a minimum number of CP to be spent on disciplines (see below), and a minimum level of each discipline.

The table gives examples for the number of CP and minimum levels for character types.

Any left over CP are not lost, and may be used to improve the character at a later point.

Character Type	Starting CP	Minimum Disciplines
Student	100	40 CP
Fledgling agent	160	90 CP, Initiate (1) in all
Fearsome agent	250	100 CP, Initiate (1) in all
Master of the order	450	150 CP, Novice (2) in all

Disciplines

Disciplines are the mystical skills taught by the Guardians of Fate described in the disciplines section.

As well as minimum levels, a gm may specify maximum levels of disciplines. For instance, a fearsome agent might only be able to have one discipline at journeyman (4) level, and none at the master level.

Each discipline costs per level 10 CP times the new level.

	Level	Cost	Total
Initiate	1	10	10
Novice	2	20	30
Adept	3	30	60
Journeyman	4	40	100
Master	5	50	150

Each level of a discipline also gives a bonus equal to its level to all traits and skills (see below) associated with that discipline.

Any skill (whether it is taught by the Guardians or not) will be associated with one of the disciplines.

Skills

Each school of the Guardians teaches three skills in a broad course of study. Each covers a wide variety of related things.

Each level of a skill gives a bonus equal to their level to any action involving an area they cover.

Skill costs

	Cost	Total
1	1 CP	1 CP
2 Amateur	2 CP	3 CP
3	3 CP	6 CP
4 Professional	4 CP	10 CP
5	5 CP	15 CP
6 Expert	6 CP	21 CP
7	7 CP	28 CP
8 Master	8 CP	36 CP
9	9 CP	45 CP
10	10 CP	55 CP

Historic

The Historic skills table below lists the skills and examples (not exhaustive) of the areas they cover.

Modern day

The Modern skills table below lists the skills for the modern day. The general areas are similar, but have developed based on increased scientific understanding.

Skill association

Each skill has an associated sign of the zodiac - Business (Capricorn), Physical Science (Taurus), Life science (Virgo), Ritual magic (Cancer), Reason (Scorpio), Thaumaturgy (Pisces), Battle (Leo), Martial arts (Aries), Stealth (Sagittarius), Spirituality (Gemini), Art (Aquarius) and Social science (Libra).

School	Discipline	Trait	Effect
Order ∇	Geomancer	Luck	Have good fortune
Magic ∇	Magician	Willpower	Resist mental influence
War △	Warrior	Fortitude	Resist physical effects
Temple △	Seer	Insight	Have inspiration

Modern skills

School	Skill	Covers
The School of Order (Earth ♁)	Life science	Medicine, biology, physiology, eastern healing, first aid, poisons.
	Physical science	Physics, chemistry, mathematics, technology, engineering, computing, civil engineering.
	Business	Business, management, logistics, finance, law, economics, trade.
The School of Magic (Water ♁)	Thaumaturgy	Magic theory, mystical creatures, magical analysis, magical engineering.
	Reason	Logic, puzzles, research, deduction, memory, general knowledge.
	Ritual magic	Slow magic actions including rituals, rune magic, alchemy, enchanting and all disciplines.
The School of War (Fire △)	Battle	Projectile weapons, strategy, tactics, vehicles.
	Martial arts	Melee, acrobatics, gymnastics, athletics, climbing, parkour.
	Stealth	Sneaking, sabotage, espionage, disguise, forgery, security.
The Temple (Air △)	Social science	Politics, sociology, manipulation, psychology, oration, leadership, history.
	Spirituality	Cosmology, mysticism, theology, legends, mystical history.
	Art	All arts, music, style, fashion, design.

Characters

Historic skills

School	Skill	Covers
The School of Order (Earth ♁)	Life	Medicine, eastern healing, first aid, poisons, herbs.
	Craft	Craftwork, devices, mathematics, construction.
	Bureaucracy	Organisation, law, trade, bureaucracy.
The School of Magic (Water ♁)	Thaumaturgy	Magic theory, mystical creatures, magical analysis, magical engineering.
	Reason	Logic, puzzles, research, deduction, memory, general knowledge.
	Ritual magic	Slow magic actions including rituals, rune magic, alchemy, enchanting and all disciplines.
The School of War (Fire △)	Battle	Projectile weapons, strategy, tactics, riding.
	Martial arts	Melee, acrobatics, gymnastics, athletics, climbing.
	Stealth	Sneaking, sabotage, espionage, disguise, forgery.
The Temple (Air △)	Nobility	Politics, manipulation, psychology, oration, leadership, history.
	Spirituality	Cosmology, mysticism, theology, legends, mystical history.
	Art	All arts, music, style, fashion.

Traits

Each discipline also has an associated **trait**.

Geomancers have an associated trait **luck**, magicians the trait **will**, warriors the trait **fortitude** and seers the trait **insight**.

These can be raised in the same way and for the same cost as skills. As with skills, the total bonus is given by the level of the trait plus the level of the associated discipline. The gm may require a draw with a trait as a bonus in certain circumstances:

- **Luck** may be used if the gm wishes to determine whether something has gone the character's way.
- **Will** may be used if the character wishes to resist mental influence, or distraction.
- **Fortitude** may be used if the character wishes to resist pain or hardship, or push to the limits of endurance.
- **Insight** may be used to give inspiration based on the character's knowledge and abilities that the player may not have realised.

Note that these have similarities to the discipline powers, which can be used in a similar way with automatic success (but at the cost of chi).

The traits may also be used when using some of the abilities of the disciplines. For instance will gives an attack bonus to magical attacks.

Also, if a the use of an ability is judged by the gm not to be an automatic success, then the trait may be used to determine the success.

Examples

Example: Chris wants to play a technology expert, based on a geomancer. He spends 60 CP to be an adept geomancer (level 3). This gives a 3 bonus to all earth 𐌚 skills. He spends 21 CP for level 6 in physical science. With the bonus from geomancer, he gains a total bonus of 9 to physical science actions. He spends 3 points on the trait Luck, to get level 2 (for a total of 5). He rounds out the earth skills with level 3 in business. Although he hasn't spent any

points on it, he still gets a total of 3 in life science from his skill in geomancer.

𐌚	Geomancer	CP	60	Level	3	
Luck	CP	3	Level	2	Total	5
Life Science	CP	0	Level	0	Total	3
Physical Science	CP	21	Level	6	Total	9
Business	CP	6	Level	3	Total	6

Skill specialisation

At the gm's discretion, a character may have additional aptitude in a narrow skill. This is particularly common for skills which are not taught by the schools, but are relevant to the character's outside profession.

In this case, the cost is half (rounded up) of what it would be for a school skill.

Note that skills will be associated with a discipline and will get a bonus equal to the discipline just like a normal skill.

Depending on the skill, the associated discipline may not be clear. In this case, decide on a discipline for that character.

Alternatively, a character may be particularly skilled in an area of a school skill. In this case, the cost is half (rounded up) of the difference between what the school skill at that level would cost, and the level the character actually has it at.

Example: a character wishes to have skill in archaeology, which is not taught directly by the guardians. Level 4 costs 5 CP (half of the normal 10). Depending on the type, archaeology could be associated with earth (physical archaeology), water (research) or air (historical societies).

The player decides the closest is water, and so if they had level 2 in magician, the total bonus for archaeology would be +6.

Example: a warrior character wishes to be particularly skilled in climbing. They have level 3 in the martial arts skill, which costs 6 CP. It would cost an additional 4 CP to raise martial arts to level 4, so having climbing at level 4 would cost 2 CP instead (half of the 4 CP). As with martial arts, the level of the warrior discipline adds to this bonus.

Languages

Historic characters automatically speak a Mandarin Chinese dialect common to the temple and Latin. Modern characters automatically speak Mandarin Chinese and English.

Each additional language costs 3 CP for proficiency.

Perks

CP may also be spent on additional advantages for the character. Many of them are available at different levels, costing a variable number of CP.

The costs listed are the total cost to get that level. For instance, most perks are 5 CP for level 1 and 10 CP for level 2. To start a character with level 2 costs 10 CP (not 15).

Resources and power

The guardians as a whole have extensive resources, contacts and influence, and will obviously provide suitable assistance when required.

These perks represent the personal resources of the character, which the character can call upon immediately without question.

Mundane resources (modern):

Level 1, 5 CP: The character is independently wealthy (millions of US dollars), and can acquire most normal items.

Level 2, 10 CP: The character is extremely rich (tens of millions of US dollars), and can buy substantial property without difficulty.

Level 3, 20 CP: The character is a member of the super-rich (at least hundreds of millions of US dollars), probably with control of a major corporation.

Mundane resources (historic)

Note that in historic times it will be unusual for characters to have significant outside interests.

Level 1, 5 CP: The character is independently wealthy (with significant property), and can acquire most normal items.

Level 2, 10 CP: The character is extremely rich and a minor lord, and can buy substantial property without difficulty.

Level 3, 20 CP: The character is a member of the nobility with extensive land holdings.

Fame (modern)

Level 1, 5 CP: The character is well known in a particular field of endeavour. People working in or following that field will likely know of the character.

Level 2, 10 CP: The character is known by the public as notable in a particular field.

Level 3, 20 CP: The character is an A-List celebrity and well known and often recognised amongst the general population. Note that this can be a disadvantage when trying to act without notice.

Influence (modern)

Level 1, 5 CP: The character has extensive contacts in one field (e.g. high technology companies), or in significant players in a region (e.g. Chinese politicians).

Level 2, 10 CP: The character has contacts with important people in multiple fields or regions.

Level 3, 20 CP: The character has extensive contacts and influence with many of the movers and shakers of the world. The character can arrange a meeting with most national leaders.

Mystical resources

Level 1, 5 CP: The character has significant personal stores of mystical items and equipment and can come by more if needed.

Level 2, 10 CP: The character has some personal major mystical artefacts, and can acquire such items easily.

Level 3, 20 CP: The character has extensive access to powerful mystical artefacts and magical research equipment.

Mystical influence

Level 1, 5 CP: The character has connections with particular mystical beings or factions.

Level 2, 10 CP: The character has wide contacts and influence through the mystical world.

Level 3, 20 CP: The character has extensive connections with many mystical beings and factions. They could probably get an audience with a Great Dragon on short notice.

Mind and spirit

Mystical link

Level 1, 5 CP: The character can store 1 more chi of either type (☯).

Level 2, 10 CP: The character can store 2 more chi of either type (☯☯) and also gains 1 more chi each time they meditate.

Level 3, 20 CP: The character can store 3 more chi (☯☯☯) and also gains 2 more chi each time they meditate.

Quick wits

Level 1, 5 CP: +2 speed. The character is quick to react.

Level 2, 10 CP: +4 speed. The player may be given extra time to think if the character is rushed.

Level 3, 20 CP: +6 speed. The character is almost supernaturally quick to react. The player may take time for a decision, even if the character must act immediately.

Physique

Attraction

Level 1, 5 CP: The character is impressively good looking and charismatic

Level 2, 10 CP: The character turns heads wherever they go and is naturally the centre of attention.

Level 3, 20 CP: The character could work as a supermodel (and possibly does if they have Fame), and can charm the most stubborn.

Toughness

Level 1, 5 CP: The character is significantly more resilient than most. This gives +1 resilience (i.e. a base resilience of 5 rather than 4).

Level 2, 10 CP: The character is significantly resistant to damage. This gives +2 resilience (i.e. a base resilience of 6 rather than 4).

Level 2, 20 CP: The character is impressively impervious to damage. This gives +3 resilience (i.e. a base resilience of 7 rather than 4).

Blood

Several members of the order are (distantly) descended from various supernatural creatures. This may have various unusual effects (not always positive), as well as the direct benefits listed below. For example, supernatural creatures may react differently to the character.

Dragon blood

Level 1, 10 CP: Includes level 1 of mystical link.

Level 2, 15 CP: Includes level 2 of mystical link. The character is not particularly bothered by extreme temperatures (though fire will still burn them).

Level 3, 25 CP: Includes level 3 of mystical link. The character gains +2 resilience against fire, heat or cold damage.

Fae blood

Level 1, 10 CP: Includes level 1 of attraction.

Level 2, 15 CP: Includes level 2 of attraction, though the look is somewhat unusual.

Level 3, 25 CP: Includes level 3 of attraction, and the character has a noticeably otherworldly look.

Demon blood

Level 1, 10 CP: Includes level 1 of toughness.

Level 2, 15 CP: Includes level 2 of toughness. The character is an intimidating presence.

Level 3, 25 CP: Includes level 3 of toughness. The character is an extremely intimidating presence and may feel uncomfortable in holy places.

Character improvement during the game

Characters can improve during the game by gaining CP which can be used similarly to during creation.

Disciplines

The schools of the Guardians of Fate teach four **disciplines**. These are the mystical abilities of the Guardians.

Each is associated with one of the schools, and thus also one of the elements.

The four disciplines are **magician** (▽ water), **warrior** (△ fire), **geomancer** (∇ earth) and **seer** (⊕ air).

Each level of training grants additional skills, and storage for **chi** (☯, ☯ or ☯).

The geomancer and magician gain primary chi bonuses of **yin** ☯ and the seer and warrior gain primary chi bonuses of **yang** ☯.

Each level of a discipline also gives a +1 bonus to all skills associated with that school.

Example: A technology expert has level 3 in geomancer, and level 6 in physical science. The character gains +9 on all draws for physical science skills.

This does not just apply to skills taught by the schools; normal actions are usually associated with one of the disciplines:

- **Geomancers** gain a bonus to all actions regarding understanding of the physical world, life, and organisation.
- **Magicians** gain a bonus to all actions regarding magic and pure thought.
- **Warriors** gain a bonus to all physical actions.
- **Seers** gain a bonus to all actions related to art, spirituality or inspiring people.

Ranking

- **Initiate:** The student has just begun the journey (level 1). An initiate gains 1 additional primary chi (☯ or ☯) and a 1 bonus to relevant actions.
- **Novice:** The novice has grasped the basics of the discipline (level 2). A novice gains 2 additional primary chi (☯ or ☯), 1 additional flexible chi (☯) and 2 bonus to relevant actions.
- **Adept:** The adept has begun to see the depths of the discipline (level 3). An adept gains 3 additional primary chi (☯

☯ or ☯☯), 2 additional flexible chi (☯☯) and 3 bonus to relevant actions.

- **Journeyman:** A journeyman is fully proficient in the discipline (level 4). A journeyman gains 4 additional primary chi (☯☯☯ or ☯☯☯), 3 additional flexible chi (☯☯☯) and 4 bonus to relevant actions.
- **Master:** A master is an expert in the discipline (level 5). A master gains 5 additional primary chi (☯☯☯☯ or ☯☯☯☯), 4 additional flexible chi (☯☯☯☯) and 5 bonus to relevant actions.
- **Grandmaster:** A grandmaster is a legendary master of the discipline (level 6).

Resolving discipline actions

Most actions using disciplines automatically succeed, though at the gm's discretion or where specified they may be *challenging actions*.

The bonus to such actions is given by the associated trait.

Most discipline actions have a **chi** (☯) cost. This is listed as **yin** ☯, **yang** ☯ or **chi** ☯ (which means either **yin** or **yang** may be used).

Some disciplines abilities have a cumulative cost. A cumulative cost increases each time it is used in a round.

Example: If an ability has a cumulative cost of 2 yang ☯☯, the first use in a round costs 2 yang ☯☯, the second 4 yang ☯☯☯☯ and the third 6 yang ☯☯☯☯☯☯ and so on.

Universal skills

These are basic skills taught to all Guardians, and are not associated with a particular discipline:

Meditation: Slow action, difficulty 4: Regain a **chi** ☯. Each level of critical success gains an additional **chi** ☯. This can be in any combination of **yin** ☯ or **yang** ☯. As a bonus, the character may use their highest *trait*.

Example: A character has level 3 magician and willpower level 3 for a total willpower

trait of +6, being their highest trait. They get a bonus of +6 to meditation draws, and no other traits apply.

Chi flow: Free action: rearrange or discard any **chi** (yin ☯ or a yang ☲). The rearrangement means that it does not matter whether **chi** is stored specifically in the **yin** or **yang** slots or an either **chi** slot.

Chi boost: Free action, 1 **chi** ☯ (i.e. spend either a **yin** ☯ or a **yang** ☲): Gain an immediate +1 bonus to an action or add +1 to the difficulty of a contested action against you.

For a particular action, *chi boost* may be used a maximum number of times equal to the total number of levels of disciplines the character has.

Note that in an attack, *chi boost* may be used separately on the hit and damage parts; each up to the normal maximum number of uses.



Geomancer

A **geomancer** ☷ is trained to master fate as it applies to the present time.

Geomancers are trained by the School of Order, and associated with Earth ☷.

Unless stated otherwise, all card affecting skills may only be used on your own cards.



Initiate (level 1)

Luck: Free action, 1 **yin** ☯: Discard a card. Draw a replacement if it was in play.

This may be any card you control that is in play or in the deck.

If you discard a **yin** ☯ or **yang** ☲ card from the deck, it has the same effect as if you drew it causing the deck to be reshuffled and the character gains **chi** (though do not do the final step of drawing a replacement card) and the card ends up shuffled in the deck rather than in the discard pile.



Novice (level 2)

Serendipity: Slow action, 1 **yin** ☯: Have a minor piece of personal luck.

Minor pieces of personal luck include (but are not limited to):

- **Chance:** win a game of chance with reasonable odds.
- **Insignificance:** people happen to be looking the other way as you sneak past.
- **Convenience:** A common object happens to be in a convenient place. For instance a ladder left by a wall you wish to climb.
- **Misfortune:** Cause a minor misfortune for a nearby opponent.

Second thoughts: Free action, 1 **yin** ☯: Abandon a previously declared action before its outcome is finally determined.

This may be at any point right up to determining outcome, or whether an attack hits, including after cards have been drawn. The action does not succeed, but you may not suffer penalties for failure. For instance, abandoning an attempt to climb a wall would mean you make no progress rather than falling. If you abandon the action before it is resolved, then you do not pay any associated costs (such as **yin** ☯ or **yang** ☲).



Adept (level 3)

Quick serendipity: Fast action, 1 **yin** ☯ and 1 **yang** ☲: Have a minor piece of personal luck.

This is the same as *serendipity*, but is a fast action.

Change of mind: Free action, 1 **yin** ☯ and 1 **yang** ☲: Before it is resolved, abandon an action and take another instead.

Unlike *second thoughts*, this must be before the action is resolved (and so before any cards are drawn, or costs paid). The action still occurs at the same point in time, it is just as if you had declared the different action instead of the original action.

Echoes of the past: Free action, 2 **yin** ☯☯: Swap a card with one from your discard pile.

The card swapped may be any card you control, in your deck or in play.

If you swap a **yin** ☯ or **yang** ☳ card from your deck, instead of swapping, it has the same effect as if you drew it (in the same way as **luck**), and so it does not end up in the discard pile.



Journeyman (level 4)

Fortune: Slow action, 2 **yin** ☯☯: Have a major piece of personal luck.

Major pieces of personal luck include (but are not limited to):

- **Unlikely chance:** win a game of chance with the odds stacked against you.
- **Unlikely convenience:** an unusual item happens to have been left conveniently for you.
- **Woeful misfortune:** Create a significant misfortune for a nearby opponent.

Strength of stone: Free action, 1 **yin** ☯ and 1 **yang** ☳: Draw a card. Add its value to another card, and combine their elements.



Master (level 5)

Flash serendipity: Free action, cumulative 2 **yin** ☯☯ and 1 **yang** ☳: Have a minor piece of personal luck.

This is the same as *serendipity*, but is a free action.

Quick fortune: Fast action, 2 **yin** ☯☯ and 1 **yang** ☳: Have a major piece of personal luck.

This is the same as *fortune* but is a fast action.



Magician

A **magician** ▽ is trained to use focussed **chi** to bend reality to their will.

Magicians are trained by the School of Magic, and associated with Water ▽.



Initiate (level 1)

Chi projection: Ranged attack, 1 **yin** ☯; or fast action, 1 **yin** ☯: Transfer a number of **chi** (☯ or ☳) up to your magician level to another character.

Focus your **chi** on another character or object. This can be used as a ranged magical attack, or to transfer **chi** at range.

The ranged magical attack uses *will* as the bonus to the attack.

Transferred **chi** may be any combination of **yin** ☯ and **yang** ☳ as long as the total number does not exceed your magician level. You do not need to decide the amount until this action is resolved.



Novice (level 2)

Force of will: Slow action, 1 **yin** ☯: Produce a minor magical effect.

Minor magical effects include (but are not limited to):

- **Telekinesis:** move an object without touching it.
- **Healing:** Cure a minor injury, or reduce a major injury to a minor injury in you or another.
- **Illusion:** Create a temporary illusion.
- **Flame:** Conjure a flame.
- **Enhancement:** Give a character a bonus for a short period (a few minutes or a battle). For instance, +1 resilience, +1 damage, +2 protection, +2 hit, +2 evasion or +2 speed. Only the largest such bonus to an attribute counts.

Elemental charge: Free Action: 1 **yang** ☳: Before drawing cards, add an elemental charge to an attack. Effects depend on the element.

An attack may only have one element charge. If used on an attack that already has an element, this replaces it.

The attack does not have to be magical: elemental charge can be used on any attacks by the character for example normal projectile weapons.

The elemental charge effects are:

- **Earth:** If the damage card is earth aspected ☱: add 4 to the *damage*.
- **Air:** If the attack card is air aspected ☴: add 4 to the *hit*.
- **Fire:** If the damage card is fire aspected ☲: add 5 to the *damage*, but only if damage would be dealt (after reduction for *protection*, and overcoming *resilience*) without this bonus.
- **Water:** If the attack card is water aspected ☵: add 6 to the *hit*, but this bonus is removed if the target takes a defensive action against this attack.



Adept (level 3)

Quick force of will: Fast action, 1 **yin ☷** and 1 **yang ☰**: Perform a minor magical effect.

This is the same as *force of will* but is a fast action.

Elemental attack: Fast action, 1 **yin ☷** and 1 **yang ☰**: Make a mental, ranged elemental attack. Effects depend on the element.

An elemental charge may be added, and does not have to be the same element.

As with *chi projection*, *will* adds to the attack.

- **Earth:** Tremor: Shake the ground beneath the target's feet. +4 *hit*, +2 *damage*.
- **Air:** Storm: Catch your target in the blast of air. +4 *hit*. The target suffers -3 to missile attacks for the remainder of this round, and the next round.
- **Fire:** Fireball: Conjure a ball of flame to hurl at your enemy. +4 *damage*.
- **Water:** Deluge: Strike the target with a wall of water. +2 *damage*. If hit, the target is at -2 to all physical actions for the remainder of this round, and the next round.

Dispel: Free action, 1 **yin ☷**: Your opponent must pay again the **chi** cost of a contested action for each element that matches on the cards.

This may only be used once per contested action, and only if you are opposing the action.

Your opponent may pay the normal **chi** cost of the action again for each element that the opposing cards drawn have in common. This is the base cost of the action, and does not include additional **chi** spent for instance on *chi boost*.

If they cannot or choose not to pay, then the action automatically fails.



Journeyman (level 4)

Iron will: Slow action, 2 **yin ☷**: Produce a major magical effect.

Major magical effects include (but are not limited to):

- **Healing:** Cure a major injury, or reduce an incapacitating injury to a major injury.
- **Shift:** Transport yourself a short distance to a location you can see, without crossing the intermediate space.
- **Enchantment:** Imbue an item with a spirit so that it becomes a magical item.
- **Enhancement:** Give a character a bonus for a short period (a few minutes or a battle). For instance, +2 *resilience*, +2 *damage*, +4 *protection*, +4 *hit*, +4 *evasion* or +4 *speed*. Alternatively give half the bonus to multiple nearby characters. Only the largest such bonus to an attribute counts.

Channel: Fast action, 1 **yin ☷**: difficulty 4: reduce **chi** cost of a subsequent action by one. Each level of critical success also reduces the cost by one.

The action must be soon after, such as the next slow action, or the next fast action. You may take multiple actions such as focus or more channel actions first. The action does not have to be a magician action.



Master (level 5)

Flash force of will: Free action, cumulative 2 **yin** ☯☯ and 1 **yang** ☰: Perform a minor magical effect.

This is the same as *force of will* but is a free action.

Quick iron will: Fast action, *mental*, 2 **yin** ☯☯ and 1 **yang** ☰: Perform a major magical effect.

This is the same as *iron will* but is a fast action.



Warrior

A **warrior** △ is trained to control the flow of **chi** through their body, enabling great physical feats, and also improve their own use of **chi**.

Warriors are trained by the School of War, and associated with Fire △.



Initiate (level 1)

Focus: Fast action, 1 **yang** ☰: Gain +2 to a subsequent action. Use up to your warrior level times on an action.

The action must be soon after, such as the next slow action, or the next fast action. You may take multiple actions such as *channel* or more *focus* actions first. The action may be any action, not just a warrior skill. The bonus may only be applied to a single card. For example it can be used on the *hit* part of an attack, or the *damage*, but not both.



Novice (level 2)

Feat: Slow action, 1 **yang** ☰: Perform a minor physical feat.

Minor physical feats include (but are not limited to):

- **Leap:** jump across a large gap, or jump from a building without injury.

- **Light walk:** walk across soft ground without a trace.
- **Iron punch:** punch through a wooden door.
- **Wall running:** run straight up a wall.
- **Immovable:** resist normal attacks which would move you.
- **Enhancement:** Gain a bonus for a short period (a few minutes or a battle). For instance, +2 resilience, +2 damage, +3 protection, +3 hit, +3 evasion or +3 speed. Only the largest such bonus to an attribute counts.

The slow part of the action is building concentration; the action itself may be very quick.

Fury: Free action, 1 **yang** ☰: +2 damage to an attack. If it injures the enemy, the enemy suffers -3 to actions next round not against you. This may only be used once on an attack.



Adept (level 3)

Quick feat: Fast action, 1 **yin** ☯ and 1 **yang** ☰: Perform a minor physical feat.

This is the same as *feat* but is a fast action.

Second wind: Free action, 1 **yin** ☯ and 1 **yang** ☰: Recover from a minor injury, or reduce a major injury to a minor injury.

Signature move: Fast or defensive action, 2 **yang** ☰☰: Perform a signature move, gaining +8 split between the cards.

For an attack, the attributes are *hit* and *damage*. For a defensive action, the attributes are *evasion* and *protection*.

A character may have as many signature moves as levels of warrior. Each signature move has a fixed division of the bonuses.



Journeyman (level 4)

Heroic feat: Slow action, 2 **yang** ☰☰: Perform a major physical feat.

Major physical feats include (but are not limited to):

- **Feather walk:** walk across snow without a trace.

- **Steel punch:** punch through a stone wall.
- **Stone hands:** lift and carry a boiling cauldron with bare hands without injury.
- **Giant leap:** leap across a chasm, or jump off a cliff without injury.
- **Immovable:** resist huge force which would move you.
- **Enhancement:** Gain a bonus for a short period (a few minutes or a battle). For instance, +3 *resilience*, +3 *damage*, +5 *protection*, +5 *hit*, +5 *evasion* or +5 *speed*. Only the largest such bonus to an attribute counts.

Flurry: Free action, cumulative 2 yang ☰☰: After resolving a fast action, take another fast action.

Either action may be any fast action, not just a warrior skill.



Master (level 5)

Flash feat: Free action, *physical*, cumulative 2 yang ☰☰ and 1 yin ☷: Perform a minor physical feat.

This is the same as *feat* but is a free action.

Quick heroic feat: Fast action, 2 yang ☰☰ and 1 yin ☷: Perform a major physical feat.

This is the same as *heroic feat* but is a fast action.



Seer

A **seer** ☰ is trained to master fate as it applies to the future.

Seers are trained by the Temple, and associated with Air ☰.

Unless stated otherwise, all card affecting skills may only be used on your own cards.



Initiate (level 1)

Premonition: Free action, 1 yang ☰: Turn the top three face down cards of your deck face up.

Do not change their order. They remain part of the deck, and so the top one remains the card that will be drawn next.

As they are now face up, the player may look at them at any time even though they are still in the deck.



Novice (level 2)

Sight: Slow action, 1 yang ☰: Have a minor vision of the future.

Minor visions include (but are not limited to):

- **Fate:** determine what is likely to happen to a character in the near future.
- **Consequence:** see what the immediate consequences of an action could be.
- **Actions:** see what a character may do.
- **Danger sense:** get a feeling for your personal risk.
- **Hunch:** pick an auspicious option when you have a choice. For instance picking a suitable direction to travel when lost.

Anticipation: Free action: 1 yang ☰: Use once before either draws in a contested action to gain +3.



Adept (level 3)

Quick sight: Fast action: 1 yin ☷ and 1 yang ☰: Have a minor vision of the future.

This is the same as *sight* but is a fast action.

Precognition: Free action: 1 yin ☷ and 1 yang ☰: Use once before either draws in a contested action to gain +6.

This may be combined with *anticipation*.

Deja Vu: Free action, 2 yang ☰☰: Instead of discarding a card, set it aside. Use this once instead of drawing a card.

This card is not considered to be in play or in the discard pile. Thus, it is not normally shuffled back into the deck with the discard pile, unless specified by the gm (for instance at the end of a session).



Journeyman (level 4)

Prophecy: Slow action: 2 yang ☰☰: Have a major vision of the future.

Major visions include (but are not limited to):

- **Fate:** determine what is likely to happen to a character in the distant future.
- **Locate:** see where an item or person is likely to be in the near future.
- **Conceal:** make your future actions harder to predict.
- **Warning:** get a continuing feeling for your personal risk over a period.

Flawless: Free action: 1 yin ☷ and 1 yang ☰☰: Use before drawing a card. Instead draw 4 cards and choose 1. Discard the others.



Master (level 5)

Flash sight: Free action: 2 yang ☰☰ and 1 yin ☷: Have a minor vision of the future.

This is the same as *sight* but is a free action.

Quick prophecy: Fast action: 2 yang ☰☰ and 1 yin ☷: Have a major vision of the future.

This is the same as *sight* but is a fast action.

The World

Throughout history there have been people with the ability to bend reality to their will. However, these people are rare: those with power but no training typically make little progress, go mad or kill themselves. Thus most magically active people form groups for mutual protection and advancement.

One prominent group is the Guardians of Fate. This was formed many centuries ago when mages from the Order of Hermes in Europe fled magical war to China and joined forces with an ancient order of monks.

Since then, the Guardians have been dedicated to protecting the populace from mystical threats.

Mystical creatures form one such threat. Though some are friendly, many have long preyed upon the fringes of society. Fortunately, they too are rare. They generally shun humans, as despite their power, they have learnt that a mob is dangerous and the world is often inhospitable.

Magic

Each of the different groups has its own view of how magic works and what it can do. However, there are a number of common beliefs:

Blatantly affecting reality is hard. Bending reality is easier than breaking it. This is one reason that mystical creatures often inhabit other realms which are more malleable.

Directly affecting other people is really hard. A sorcerer could conjure a ball of flame and throw it at another, setting fire to them, but not be able to cause them to burn directly.

Affecting yourself is much easier. Some magicians do little else.

The Guardians of Fate

Historic

The Monastery

Location

Structure

The School of War

The School of Magic

The School of Order

The Temple

Members of the Order

Relations with the world

Modern Day

The Monastery

Members of the Order

Global operations

Other Factions

Historic

Modern day

The following are a sample of significant factions in the mystical world. There are many other factions, at the lower end.

The Guardians of Fate

The Guardians of Fate are headquartered in their ancient home of a monastery in a remote mountainous region of China.

They have an uneasy alliance with the government of China, but members of the Guardians are now drawn from many nationalities, and they have operations around the world.

In modern times they have become fashionable as a religion with celebrity following, which provides a convenient cover for their operations.

Order of Hermes

The Order of Hermes remains an independent force in Europe, made up of many powerful sorcerers.

They are on good terms with the Guardians but usually more concerned with their own power.

Allied Operations Executive

NATO organisation for the investigation of supernatural happenings. Though they have very few magically capable individuals themselves, they have significant resources and information.

AOE is made up of many separate national divisions.

They are on generally good terms with the Guardians and the Order of Hermes, though would like to know more about them.

C-15

Supposedly part of the US government (though not listed on any public records), C-15 have a reputation for extreme ruthlessness and willingness to use power.

Though nominally supposed to be helping the Allied Operations Executive,

they are known to be extremely secretive and reluctant to share information.

They have worked with the Guardians in the past (or at least individuals probably working for C-15 have) and generally don't directly clash, but their methods and motives are unclear.

Fel Brotherhood

The Fel Brotherhood are a faction clearly at odds with humanity.

Well known for consorting with demons, they seem to aim to acquire power at any cost. Not a great deal else is known about them, except that they have a number of powerful sorcerers and frequently cause trouble.

Some speculate that they are a breakaway group from the Order of Hermes, though this is strongly denied by the Order.

The Eighth Department

Part of the PLA of China. They would love to get hold of the power of the Guardians but for now largely let them be.

Organised crime

Various organised crime factions have a few individuals with mystical powers.

Section 27

A part of the FBI, tasked with investigating unusual happenings. They have very little power themselves, but are extremely diligent and turn up surprisingly often. Most other factions try to avoid them before they ask awkward questions.

Mystical creatures

Dragons

Rarely seen, the dragons are creatures of immense power. They have many forms, and most can mystically alter their shape, so will often appear as human.

Generally solitary creatures, they tend to live in remote areas or in their own realms.

The Guardians have benefitted greatly from alliances with various dragons.

Fae

The Fae are not a single faction, but seem to take delight in ridiculously complicated internal conflicts. While generally divided between grouping of seelie and unseelie, this is more of a guideline.

The Fae come in many different forms mostly humanoid, and generally reside in alternate realms, rarely interacting with humans.

Spirits

Spirits are fairly common but rarely interact with people. In the rare cases they are even visible, they may appear as ghostly apparitions.

Demons

Demons have great power, but are rarely seen operating in the world, unless summoned for such purpose.

Demons usually look much like humans, though often with scaly skin.

The Oni

Possibly a form of demon, the Oni are giant humanoids with great strength.

The Host

Extremely rarely seen (and many believe actually legendary), the Host appear as humans with powerful abilities. Some have speculated that they are also a form of demon, but others consider them to be Angels, and rumours of acting to protect humanity in desperate situations seem to support this.

Items

Items are one of a number of types:

- **Outfits:** These are the clothes or armour of the character. A character may wear only one outfit at a time.
- **Accessories:** these are additional items that may be worn. A character may wear a reasonable number of accessories based on their type. For instance a character may not normally wear two hats.
- **Held items:** these are weapons or other usable items. Characters must be holding them to use them.
- **Carried items:** these are items that may be carried, but do not need to be worn or held.

A character may carry a reasonable number of items of any type in packs and pouches.

An item may be **single use**, in which case it is destroyed, consumed or otherwise useless once used.

Magical items may also have **charges**. Each time it is used, a *charge* is marked off.

A magical item with *charges* may also be **rechargeable**. A character may use the **chi projection** magician skill to restore one *charge* for each **chi** (of either type) transferred.

The following sections give some example items.

Historic items

Outfits

Monk's robe: +1 protection, +1 speed

Leather armour: +2 protection, +1 resilience

Chain armour: +5 protection, +1 resilience

Accessories

Amulet of magic: +1 to magician skills.

Amulet of shielding: +1 resilience.

Held items

If a held item is listed as a weapon, then it may be used to make attacks. Any

bonuses listed to *hit* or *damage* only apply to attacks made with this weapon.

A held item may be 1h (1 handed) means it needs one hand to use (so two 1h items may be ready for use at once), or 2h (2 handed) which means it needs both hands to use.

Magician's staff: 4 *charges*, *rechargeable*, 2h weapon. +3 *hit*, +3 *damage*, +3 *defence*. Free action, 1 *charge*: Gain 1 **yin** for a magician skill.

Wizard's wand: 6 *charges*, *rechargeable*, 1h. Free action, 1 *charge*: gain 1 **yin** or 1 **yang** for a magician's offensive skill or elemental charge.

Magician's orb: 4 *charges*, *rechargeable*, 1h. Free action, 1 *charge*: gain 1 **yin** or 1 **yang**.

Steel sword: 1h weapon. +2 *hit*, +4 *damage*, +2 *defence*.

Enchanted sword: 4 *charges*, *rechargeable*, 1h weapon. +3 *hit*, +5 *damage*, +2 *defence*. Free action, 1 *charge*: gain 1 **yang** for warrior skills.

Iron shield: 1 hand. +1 *evasion*, +3 to *defence*.

Rogue's dagger: 1h weapon. +1 *hit*, +2 *damage*, +1 *defence*, +2 *speed*.

Divining rod: 1h. +1 to Geomancer or Seer actions.

Shortbow: 2h weapon, ranged. +2 *hit*, +2 *damage*.

Carried items

Calligraphy set: write notes on parchment.

Tool kit: necessary for repairs of machinery.

Medical supplies: +3 to healing actions.

Looking glass: view long distances.

Climbing gear: +3 to climbing and mountaineering actions.

I Ching set: +1 to Seer slow actions.

Minor yin tablet: Fast action, single use: gain 1 **yin**.

Minor yang tablet: Fast action, single use:
gain 1 **yang**.

Major yin tablet: Fast action, single use:
gain 3 **yin**.

Major yang tablet: Fast action, single use:
gain 3 **yang**.

Healing salve: 3 charges. Slow action, 1
charge: heal 1 minor or major injury.

Healing draught: Fast action, single use:
heal 1 minor injury.

Focus crystal: 5 charges. Fast action, 1
charge: gain 1 **yin** or 1 **yang**.

Scrolls

These are carried items which are single
use.

Inscribed on parchment are runes which
allow the reader to duplicate a particular
effect, usually of a magician skill. The
scroll fades after use.

Modern day items

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Name	
Alias	
Sex	Female  <input type="checkbox"/> Male  <input type="checkbox"/>
Age	
Occupation	
Nationality	

Background	

Languages	CP

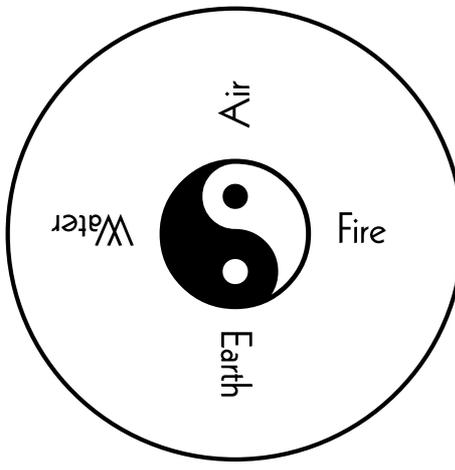
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Evasion		△+▽
Resilience		Base 4
Protection		Base 0

	Seer	CP	Level	
Insight	CP	Level	Total	
Nobility	CP	Level	Total	
Spirituality	CP	Level	Total	
Art	CP	Level	Total	

Minor Injuries (-1 to actions)
  

Major Injuries (-2 to actions)
  

	Magician	CP	Level	
Willpower	CP	Level	Total	
Thaumaturgy	CP	Level	Total	
Reason	CP	Level	Total	
Ritual Magic	CP	Level	Total	



	Warrior	CP	Level	
Fortitude	CP	Level	Total	
Battle	CP	Level	Total	
Martial Arts	CP	Level	Total	
Stealth	CP	Level	Total	

Perk	CP	Level

	Geomancer	CP	Level	
Luck	CP	Level	Total	
Life	CP	Level	Total	
Craft	CP	Level	Total	
Bureaucracy	CP	Level	Total	

Chi
 Yin <input type="checkbox"/>
 Either <input type="checkbox"/>
 Yang <input type="checkbox"/>

Armour	Prot.	Res.

Weapons	Hit	Damage

Items

Name	
Alias	
Sex	Female ♀ <input type="checkbox"/> Male ♂ <input type="checkbox"/>
Age	
Occupation	
Nationality	

Background

Languages	CP

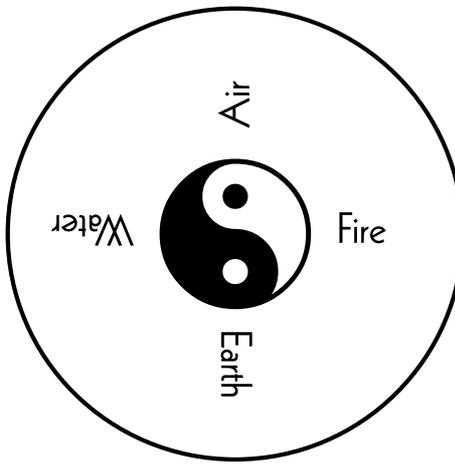
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Evasion		△+▽
Resilience		Base 4
Protection		Base 0

Seer	CP	Level	Total
Insight	CP	Level	Total
Social Science	CP	Level	Total
Spirituality	CP	Level	Total
Art	CP	Level	Total

Minor Injuries (-1 to actions)
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Major Injuries (-2 to actions)
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Magician	CP	Level	Total
Willpower	CP	Level	Total
Thaumaturgy	CP	Level	Total
Reason	CP	Level	Total
Ritual Magic	CP	Level	Total



Warrior	CP	Level	Total
Fortitude	CP	Level	Total
Battle	CP	Level	Total
Martial Arts	CP	Level	Total
Stealth	CP	Level	Total

Perk	CP	Level

Geomancer	CP	Level	Total
Luck	CP	Level	Total
Life Science	CP	Level	Total
Physical Science	CP	Level	Total
Business	CP	Level	Total

Chi						
<table border="0"> <tr><td>☯ Yin</td><td>☯ Either</td><td>☯ Yang</td></tr> <tr><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td><td><input type="checkbox"/></td></tr> </table>	☯ Yin	☯ Either	☯ Yang	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
☯ Yin	☯ Either	☯ Yang				
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Armour	Prot.	Res.

Weapons	Hit	Damage

Items