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Welcome to the second supplement for *Legends Walk!*

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

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

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

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

*Tim Gray, January 2006*

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Thanks to Tim Partridge for comments.

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

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

## Creation

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

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

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

## The universe

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

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

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

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

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



# THE EIGHT IMMORTALS

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

They are counted as Heroes for character creation.

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

## Cao Guojiu

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

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

## Required Powers

*Tablet (take at least one)*

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

## Optional Powers

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

## Disadvantages

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

## Han Xiang

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

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



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

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

### Disadvantages

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

## Qilin

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

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

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



### Required Powers

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

### Optional Powers

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

### Disadvantages

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

