



BELIEFS

信心



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

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

*Every sect has its truth;
every truth has its sect*

RELIGION

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

The three main formal religions, Taoism, Buddhism and Confucianism, too, are not quite as separate as you

might expect. The scholar Li Shi-qian wrote: 'Buddhism is the sun, Taoism the moon, and Confucianism the five planets.' There is even a doctrine that the three are one religion with three aspects. Certainly, both Confucianism and Taoism revere Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi. Taoism and Buddhism too share many aspects. If there is any bad feeling, it is perhaps most evident between Confucians and Buddhists.

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

The gods are listed after the religions have been described.

COMMON RELIGION

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

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

Emperor himself.

Finally, it is essential to propitiate demons and restless ghosts. The difference between these and gods is by no means as clear-cut as you might think. All are dwellers in the Otherworld.

In all three cases, the method used is the same: offerings of incense and food. When worship or reverence is the aim, the offering is accompanied by kow-towing to show devotion. The precise nature of the offerings will differ, though, as gods are offered uncooked food, while ancestors and ghosts are offered cooked food. Ancestors are worshipped with an even number of incense sticks, while for gods and ghosts an odd number is appropriate.

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

IMPORTANT GODS

Listed in ascending size of area of responsibility. Some people disagree on the relative placing of the Buddhas and the Jade Emperor, not least the deities in question!

- The Hearth God
- The Local God
- The Town God
- Confucius, Laozi and other deified heroes and sages
- Celestial Buddhas and Boddhisattvas
- The Dragon Kings
- The Jade Emperor and his court

FAMILY WORSHIP

As mentioned earlier, families mainly concentrate on honouring their ancestors at the family altar. They may also make offerings to ghosts or demons, but these will always be made outside the house. The other religious rituals within the house are conducted towards the household's Hearth God. The most important of these are made prior to the 24th day of the 12 month, when the Hearth God goes up to Heaven to make his report to the Jade Emperor. Hearth Gods are probably the lowest rank in the Celestial Bureaucracy.

NEIGHBOURHOOD WORSHIP

Villages, and neighbourhoods within large towns, will have Local Gods to whom ordinary people may make offerings. Local Gods represent a particular area, and never overlap with other gods. Thus there will be only one temple to a particular local god.

Local Gods are recruited from those spirits who have

acquired enough merit to ascend to Heaven. They will very often be local people who have acquired some distinction. Each Local God will thus be a distinct personality, with its own festival day, and its own unique stories. He may, if successful, be promoted within the Celestial Bureaucracy, for example into a Town God.

Town Gods rank above the Local Gods, occupying a position analogous to the Magistrate. There will usually be one temple to a Town God in each district town or prefecture. One of the Magistrate's jobs is to conduct rituals at the Town God's temple on specified days. He must also conduct rituals at four open-air altars, which must be located within his administrative district. The four altars are to:

- ◇ Land and grain
- ◇ Wind, rain, thunder and clouds
- ◇ Mountains and rivers
- ◇ The unworshipped dead (hungry ghosts)

It is against the law for ordinary people to participate in these rituals. They must be conducted by the Magistrate or Prefect in person, with the assistance of junior members of the bureaucracy.

The Emperor himself, as already mentioned, make sacrifices directly to Heaven

BUDDHISM

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

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

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

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

The other main Buddhist teaching is that of the Pure Land. The founder of this school was Chinese, and he argued that while enlightenment through personal effort may have been possible in the past, in today's weakened moral climate the only way was through the intervention

of a Buddha. Pure Land worshippers venerate Emitufo, the ruler of the Pure Land, who helps those who invoke him. Worshippers' goal is to be reborn in the Pure Land, from which it is easier to attain Enlightenment.

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

PERFECT VIEW

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

PERFECT RESOLVE

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

PERFECT SPEECH

The Buddhist should avoid all lying, slander or gossip.

PERFECT CONDUCT

The Buddhist should follow the precepts:

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

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

PERFECT LIVELIHOOD

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

PERFECT EFFORT

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

PERFECT MINDFULNESS

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

PERFECT CONCENTRATION

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

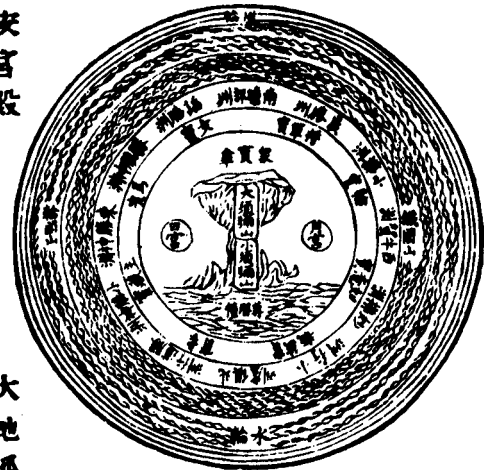
Buddhists believe the world is an illusion. Life is suffering. Only abstention from evil will allow a soul to be reborn in a higher form, eventually to attain enlightenment.

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

須彌頂上安宮殿

羅摩曼

南北東西四部洲



大地孤魂脫苦地

百千刹土亦能酬

Mandala of the Diamond World

CONFUCIANISM

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

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

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

If these relationships are all correctly observed, then society will be well ordered. Confucius also stressed the importance of Names. By this he meant that people should always conform strictly to their occupation and status. In other words, the ruler should behave like a ruler,

a father like a father, and a son like a son. Conformity is the essence of harmony. The model for this conformity is to be found in the conduct of the ancients, especially enlightened rulers such as King Wen.

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is perfectly possible to be an upright Confucian, and

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

TAOISM

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

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

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

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

TAOIST PRECEPTS

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

Many confuse Taoism with the religion of ordinary people. It's easy to do: most of the gods seem to be the same, and Taoist priests often perform rituals which benefit ordinary people. There is obviously not a hard-and-fast distinction between the two. In one fundamental area, however, there is a difference. Folk religion is about ancestors, ghosts and gods; primarily the former. Taoism has no interest in ancestors or kinship. Its rituals may be

of use to those who do care, but that's not what they are designed for.

RELIGIOUS & PHILOSOPHICAL TAOISM

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

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

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

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

Those who follow religious Taoism will attach considerable importance to the *Daocang*, the Taoist canon. This collection of writings not only codifies Taoist doctrine but contains copious notes on such varied subjects as medicine, botany and astronomy. Work began on compiling the *Daocang* in the Tang dynasty; between 1111 and 1118 it undergoes its final major revision. The work of Lao Zi and Zhuang Zi appears in the *Daocang* in a subordinate position.

TAOIST CEREMONIES

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

There is, however, an important distinction made in Taoist ceremonies, with which you should already be familiar from the section in Talismans in the *Magic* chapter. Some are based on worship or propitiation of the spirits, and in which the Taoist must assume an inferior role. Others are based on the power of the Taoist himself, and thus he will assume a superior role. This distinction between these two types of ceremony will be made clear by the Taoist's dress, behaviour and use of language.

OTHER SECTS

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

Here and there other ideas sprung up, often strange fusions of Chinese beliefs with western creeds, such as Christianity. There are also those within China and beyond its borders who follow Islam. Although the heyday of their traders is long gone, there are still a few remaining in certain southern ports. Recently arrived in Bianliang is a small community of Jews, trading in 'Western cloth', and looking like they are ready to settle in the city for some while.

Three feet above your head

the air is thick with spirits

THE GODS

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

Although the Jade Emperor, for example, is widely regarded as the most powerful god, there are clear limits on even his powers and knowledge. Moreover, Shijiamouni, who through his own enlightenment did succeed in transcending our form of existence, now exerts no influence on our universe.

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

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

What follows are descriptions of the more important gods. You should remember that there is a veritable multitude of gods out there.

THE JADE EMPEROR

The Human realm was fortunate to discover the Jade Emperor in the year 1005, when an Immortal appeared in a dream to Emperor Zhen Zong, handing him a letter from the Jade Emperor. Prior to this revelation there had been some ambiguity as to the identity of the Lord of Heaven. Some Taoists had argued that the Celestial

Primordial Worthy, the first of the Three Pure Ones of Taoism, was the ruler of Heaven. This proved to be partly true, in that it was discovered that the Celestial Primordial Worthy had resigned his throne in favour of his former assistant: the Jade Emperor.

The Jade Emperor rules the Celestial Bureaucracy from his throne, upon which he sits in the dragon-embroidered robes of an Emperor, his serious mien expressing calm and dignity.

In 1115, the current Emperor erects a temple to the Jade Emperor in Bianliang, and bestows upon him the title of *Shang Ti*: Most High.

QUEEN MOTHER OF THE WEST

YAN LUO, LORD OF HELL

THE THREE PURE ONES

DRAGON KINGS

CHANG E, THE MOON LADY

EMITUOFO

KUAN YIN, BODDHISATTVA

PU XIAN, BODDHISATTVA

DI CANG, BODDHISATTVA

WEN SHU, BODDHISATTVA

SHIJAMOUNI

MY LORD THUNDER

CAI SHEN, GOD OF WEALTH

DOOR GODS

SMELLING & PUFFING GENERALS

GODS OF PROFESSIONS

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

THE OTHERWORLD

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

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

One of the most important principles regarding the Otherworld is that the incorporeality of what we call 'spirits' is merely a product of their separation from our own world. If you are physically transported to the spirit world, you find that 'spirits' have an existence fully as corporeal as your own.

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

CONTACTING THE OTHERWORLD

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

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

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

DEATH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It is widely believed that *hun* spirits also wither away if the deceased's body is incomplete at the point of death. This is why the death penalties which involve mutilation, such as decapitation, are more serious than strangulation,

which keeps the body intact. It is also the reason why most Eunuchs 'buy back' their missing parts from the surgeon who performs the operation. When they die, they are sewn back on in the hope that the *hun* will not dissipate.



Some of the pleasures awaiting the sinful in Yan Luo's Underworld

BAD LOSS

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

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

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

In certain cases players must roll to suffer the effects of their bad joss. This has the effect of reducing the total

of bad joss, but it does mean the character suffers from misfortune.

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

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

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

FATE

The Black-haired Race are pragmatic when it comes to fate. If something is destined to befall you, then it will...probably. Fate can be predicted in advance, and with bribes to the right parties (functionaries in the Celestial Bureaucracy) can even be occasionally minimised, if not averted.

DIVINATION

There are many methods of divination, stretching back to the use of tortoise shells. The *Magic* chapter has already described how to use divination in the game. Thus presented below are common methods for divination on which you may draw to add atmosphere to the game.

THE BOOK OF CHANGES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Once you have drawn the hexagram, you can consult *Book of Changes* for a reading. You will soon notice that much of the skill of the *I Ching* lies in interpretation.

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

ZHUGE LIANG'S SPIRIT CALCULATION

OTHER ORACLES

ASTROLOGY

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

YEAR SIGN

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

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

Earthly Branch	Direction	Time	Animal
子	North	11pm-1am	Rat
丑	East	1am-3am	Ox

寅	North	3am-5am	Tiger
卯	East	5am-7am	Rabbit
辰	South	7am-9am	Dragon
巳	East	9am-11am	Snake
午	South	11am-1pm	Horse
未	South	1pm-3pm	Sheep
申	West	3pm-5pm	Monkey
酉	West	5pm-7pm	Rooster
戌	North	7pm-9pm	Dog
亥	West	9pm-11pm	Boar

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

ANIMAL SIGN

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

Earthly

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

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

CONSTELLATIONS

In the constellations we can find a correspondence with Elemental theory, and *Feng Shui*. The Lunar mansions are 28 constellations which lie along the celestial equator, and to which the astrologer looks for signs of what influences are acting upon the world.

The Lunar Mansions are divided into four groups, according to the Celestial Emblem in whose domain they lie. Each of the Lunar Mansions is occupied by the spirit of a great warrior from Shang times. There is also an attendant animal. In the list below, the Lunar Mansions are given, along with its lord and its attendant animal. Those marked with an asterisk are the Earthly Branches listed above.

Celestial Emblem: The Blue Dragon

1. The Dragon's Horn	Deng Yu	Scaly Dragon*
2. The Dragon's Neck	Wu Han	Smooth Dragon
3. The Base of the House	Jia Fu	Badger
4. The Room	Geng Yan	Rabbit*
5. The Dragon's Heart	Kou Xin	Fox
6. The Dragon's Tail	Cen Peng	Tiger*
7. The Basket	Feng Yi	Leopard

Celestial Emblem: The Black Tortoise

8. The Ladle	Zhu Yu	Qilin
9. The Ox	Ji Zun	Ox*
10. The Maiden	Jing Dan	Bat
11. Void	Gai Yan	Rat*
12. The Rooftop	Jian Dan	Swallow
13. The House	Geng Shun	Boar*
14. The Wall	Zang Guan	Porcupine

Celestial Emblem: The White Tiger

15. The Slipper	Ma Wu	Wolf
16. the Mound	Liu Long	Dog*
17. The Stomach	Wu Cheng	Pheasant
18. Pleiades	Wang Liang	Rooster*
19. The Net	Chen Jun	Crow
20. The Beak	Fu Jun	Monkey*
21. Orion	Du Mao	Ape

Celestial Emblem: The Red Bird

22. The Well	Yao Qi	Wild Dog
23. The Ghost	Wang Ba	Sheep*
24. The Willow	Ren Guang	Buck
25. The Bird Star	Li Zhong	Horse*
26. The Bow	Wan Xiu	Deer
27. The Wing	Pei Tong	Snake*
28. The Carriage	Liu Zhi	Worm

GEOMANCY

By far the most common use for the ELEMENTALISM skills of a geomancer is in the siting of graves. This is because the entire family lineage is interconnected. If a parent or grandparent is buried in a site which is well orientated towards the Dragon Veins, then some of that favourable

flow of Cosmic Breath will find its way through the family connection to the children. Conversely, a poorly sited grave may lead to bad joss.

This effect depends on familial proximity. Thus the grave of my parent has more effect on my life than the grave of my grandparent, and it's fair to say I'm pretty well immune to effects arising from the siting of my distant ancestors' graves.

When siting graves, it is important to get it right first time, of course, because exhuming a body, even for reburial, is a capital offence. The same rules, however, may be used in siting dwellings, as the flow of the Dragon Veins may exert a direct influence on the living.

GEOMANTIC SITING

Geomancy is a complex business, tied up with the theories of the five elements, so a simple explanation will have to suffice.

A potential site is analysed in terms of four 'animals' which describe its features. These are the Celestial Emblems already described: the Blue Dragon, Red Bird, White Tiger and Black Tortoise. These connect the site to the stars. Furthermore, the elemental affinities of these descriptions can easily be found in the table in the *Magic* chapter. Although each is associated with a direction, these are ideals, indicating a potentially good site. The actual animal terms refer to siting: the Black Tortoise is the back, Red Bird the front, the Blue Dragon lies to the left, the White Tiger to the right. An ideal site has its back to the north, gaining the protection of a mountain. On the (ascendant, *yang*) left, the Blue Dragon is an embracing arm of hills, which should be slightly larger than those on the *yin* right side of the White Tiger. The front of the site, the Red Bird, should have a clearing in which to site the grave or dwelling. It should also have gently flowing water, and be blocked by another hill in the distance.

The following figure represents a mountain chain, and potentially good sites are marked on it with circles.



Mountain chain with good sites marked

CULTURE

For a thousand or more years, China has been the most civilised nation on earth. Its science, administration and customs mark it out as a highly sophisticated culture in a world of barbarism. At the same time, it has developed a rich heritage of folklore, and a carefully maintained history which stretches back into the furthest reaches of the past. Awareness of this heritage, and observance of the various usages and customs appropriate to one's station are essential to smooth relations with one's neighbours.

THE CALENDAR

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

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

THE FARMER'S CALENDAR

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

1. Beginning of Spring	15 days
Rain Water	15 days
2. Waking of Insects	15 days
Spring Equinox	15 days
3. Pure Brightness	15 days
Grain Rain	15 days
4. Beginning of Summer	16 days
Forming of Grain	15 days
5. Grain in Ear	16 days
Summer Solstice	16 days
6. Slight Heat	15 days
Great Heat	16 days
7. Beginning of Autumn	16 days
End of Heat	15 days
8. White Dew	16 days
Autumn Equinox	16 days
9. Cold Dew	15 days
Frost's Descent	15 days
10. Beginning of Winter	15 days
Slight Snow	14 days
11. Great Snow	15 days
Winter Solstice	15 days
12. Slight Cold	15 days
Great Cold	14 days

THE OFFICIAL CALENDAR

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

FESTIVALS

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

MONTH 1

1 New Year

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

5 Cai Shen (God of Wealth) Festival (minor)

7 *Birthday*

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

9 Jade Emperor's birthday (minor)

10 Local God Festival (minor)

15 *Lantern Festival*

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

MONTH 2

1 Festival of the Sun. It's traditional to give presents of little green bags full of grains, melon seeds and the like to wish many descendants (minor)

15 Lao Zi's birthday. Entry into nirvana of Shijiamouni, the Buddha (minor)

MONTH 3

1 *Pure Brightness*

Heralds the change in weather. It is a Festival of the Dead, when families restore the graves of their ancestors and make offerings. It's also the day of coming of age: twenty-year-old boys are ceremonially capped; fifteen-year-old girls have hairpins placed in their hair.

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

MONTH 4

8 Buddha's birthday (minor)

15 Buddhist monks return to their monasteries and remain confined there for the summer months (minor)

MONTH 5

5 *Duanwu*

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

MONTH 6

24 Day of worship for the Thunder God (minor)

MONTH 7

7 *Weaver-girl Festival*

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

15 *Hungry Ghosts Festival*

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

MONTH 8

3 Day of worship for the Hearth God (minor)

15 *Moon Festival*

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

MONTH 9

9 *Double Yang Festival*

Another occasion to visit the graves of ancestors. Picnics often held on hills or mountains.

MONTH 11

11 *Winter Festival*

A family occasion, primarily celebrated with a feast.

MONTH 12

24 Hearth God's Report To Heaven. Offerings are made to improve the report. (minor)

25 Zhong Kui talismans and peachwood amulets are hung up (minor)

RITUALS

BIRTH

CAPPING

WEDDINGS

Betrothal is arranged by families, sometimes with the assistance of professional matchmakers, and sometimes with the assistance of amateur matchmakers (the distinction may be blurred at times!). Betrothals can be made at any time—in extreme cases even prior to the birth of the child in question!

With well-off families, there will be a formalised set of exchanges of gifts prior to the wedding, which serve to express the relationship between the two families in terms of influence.

It is improper for a bridegroom and bride to meet before their wedding day, although in exceptional circumstances, and properly chaperoned, it may happen.

On the day of the wedding the bride undergoes a ritual of purification, along with the dowry, and is then carried in a palanquin to the home of her bridegroom. There she is ritually purified again. To signify that she has become part of her husband's family, she worships at his family altar.

Different parts of the country have different additional rituals, but feasting is common, both at the bridegroom's and, less often, at the bride's. Such feasts are often the occasion for prestige battles, as the formal seating arrangement and treatment of guests expresses influence relationships.

Even though they become a part of their husband's family, brides retain their original family name.

FUNERALS

YEAR NAMES

This table shows the Emperors of the Song Dynasty and the titles for their reign periods. The name for any given year is the number of the reign name. For example 1095 is God's Welcome 2. Note that the name given for each Emperor is that used *after* death. While alive, the Emperor is simply 'The Emperor'.

Year	Emperor	Reign Name
960	Tai Zu	Building Prosperity
963		Celestial Virtue
968		Unfolding Treasure
976	Tai Zong	Great Peace, Flourishing Nation
984		Hatching Joy
988		Borders Enfolded
990		Pure Transformation
998	Zhen Zong	Universal Peace
1004		Perceived Virtue
1008		China's Auspicious Charm
1017		Heavenly Rites
1022		Celestial Affluence
1023	Ren Zong	Heavenly Sage
1032		Bright Way
1034		Perceived Succor
1038		Treasure's Origin
1040		Health Established
1041		Jubilant Epoch
1049		Imperial Succor
1054		Achieving Peace
1056		Auspicious Succor
1064	Ying Zong	Governed Calm
1068	Shen Zong	Bright Peace
1078		Original Plenty
1086	Zhe Zong	Original Boon
1094		God's Welcome
1098		Original Symbol
1101	Hui Zong	Strong Centre Pacifying the Nation
1106		Reverent Peace
1107		Great View

1111	Political Harmony
1119	Proclaimed Harmony
1126 Qin Zong	Pacified Security
1127	<i>Northern Song overrun by Qidan from Liao</i>

OTHER SOCIAL EVENTS

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

HISTORY

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

THE LEGENDARY MONARCHS

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

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

ANCIENT TIMES

Huang Di
Yao the Flood
Shun
Yu conquered the Flood
Xia dynasty
2100-1600 BC
17 kings, 14 generations.
Shang dynasty
1600-1027BC
Zhou dynasty
1027-221BC
Han dynasty
206BC-220CE
Three Kingdoms
221-265
Six dynasties
265-580
Sui
581-618
Tang

618-906
Five dynasties
907-960
Northern Song
960-1127
Recent history:
Wang Anshi's reforms: the struggle between Conservatives and reformers until the start of the 12th C (argument spread into academic arena: conservatives into fate, reformers into action; also poetry: reformers favour shi, conservatives ci).
During the Water Margin: 1120, Fang La's uprising in Qingxi, Liangzhe. Fang La a Manichaeon. Quashed in 1121.

TIME LINE

The Water Margin opens with the release of the spirits of the 108 heroes by the Imperial Envoy (described in *The Story Begins...*). The adventures of the heroes mostly take place between the years 1108 and 1121. The main events are listed below.

CORRECT THESE DATES: GAO QIU INSTALLED IN 1101!

1101

Gao Qiu installed as commander of the Imperial Guards. Wang Jin forced to flee.

1104

Month 8. Shi Jin implicated with outlaws of Shaohua mountain, forced to burn down his estate and flee.

1105

Shi Jin meets Lu Da in Weizhou. Lu helps Old Jin and his daughter, kills Butcher Zheng and is forced to flee. Ends up as a monk at Wutaishan monastery

1106

Month 2. Lu causes trouble at the monastery and is sent to Great Xiangguo temple in Bianliang. On the way has several fights and meets Shi Jin again. Shi Jin returns to Shaohua to join the bandits there.

Lu meets Lin Chong; they become blood brothers. Young Gao chases Lin Chong's wife. Lin Chong framed, betrayed by Lu Qian. Exiled to Cangzhou. On the way, Lu prevents his murder by escort. Lin meets Chai Jin. Lin arrives in Cangzhou. Lu Qian tries to murder him, but is killed by Lin. Lin flees to Liangshan Po.

1107

Yang Shi, forced to sell his sword, commits murder and is exiled to the Northern Capital, Daming. Governor Liang takes a liking to him.

1108

Month 5. Yang Shi sets out with the Birthday Gifts (a bribe from Governor Liang to Premier Cai Jing).

Month 6. Chao Gai and friends steal Birthday Gifts. Yang Zhi flees to Two-Dragon Mountain and becomes a bandit leader there with Lu Da.

Squire Chao Gai and his friends flee to Liangshan Po. Lin Chong kills Wang Lun and installs Chao Gai as leader.

1109

Lin Chong learns of his wife's death.

Song Jiang marries Yan Poxi, then accidentally kills her after she learns of his connection with Chao Gai. He flees and is given refuge by Chai Jin.

1110

Wu Song, returning home, kills a tiger and becomes a constable. While Wu is off on a trip to Bianliang, his brother is murdered by his wife and her lover. On returning, Wu kills them all and is exiled to Mengzhou.

Month 8. Wu works for General Zhang, but is framed.

Month 10. Wu massacres the entire Zhang household and flees.

Song Jiang goes to visit his old friend Hua Rong, military commander of Fort Clear Winds.

1111

Month 1. Hua Rong and Song Jiang arrested by the civil commander of Fort Clear Winds. Rescued by local bandits Yan Shun, Wang Ying and Chen Da and their band. In the battle, Qin Ming is recruited. All concerned end up fleeing to Liangshan Po.

The Emperor names his heir (later to be Qin Zong). A general amnesty is declared.

Song Jiang submits to arrest then is exiled to Jiangzhou. Meets Dai Zong, Li Kui and Zhang Shun. Writes a seditious poem and is arrested by Huang Wenbing along with Dai Zong.

Month 7. Heroes from Liangshan Po rescue Song and Dai in a tough battle. Huang Wenbing is cut apart by Li Kui. 29 reborn heroes meet in the White Dragon Temple.

Song Jiang returns to see his father, and meets the Mystic Queen of the West in a dream. Returns to Liangshan Po with his father and brother.

Li Kui and Gongsun Sheng return to their families. Li Kui's mother killed by a tiger: Li kills family of tigers. Yang Xiong's wife Clever Cloud dallies with the monk Pei Ruhai. With Shi Xiu's help he kills them and they flee to Liangshan Po.

Month 11. Heroes captured by Zhu Family Village. Liangshan Po assaults them. After a tough battle, Zhu is destroyed. Hu Sanniang, Li Ying and others recruited.

1112

Month 8. Chai Jin captured in Gaotang. Liangshan Po send 5000 men to release him. Prefect Gao Lian uses magic during battle. Dai Zong and Gongsun Sheng sent to find Gongsun Sheng. Master Luo teaches Gongsun the Five Heavenly Thunderbolts. Gongsun uses it to defeat Gao.

1113

Gao Qiu meets the Emperor and urges an assault on Liangshan Po. Huyan Zhao sent with army including chain-linked cavalry and Ling Zhen's cannon. Liangshan Po capture Ling Zhen and recruit Xu Ning so that his barbed lance can be used to defeat the chain-linked cavalry.

Huyan Zhao, having failed to defeat Liangshan Po, has a go at Peach Blossom Mountain's bandits. Yang Zhi and Lu Da's bandit group on Two-Dragon Mountain come to their aid. Assistance requested from Liangshan Po. Huyan is captured and recruited, and the bandit groups are amalgamated.

1114

Shi Jin captured in Huazhou while visiting a girlfriend. Lu Da also captured. Liangshan Po mobilises against Huazhou. By hijacking Marshal Su's incense burning mission, Huazhou is captured and Prefect Ho killed. Fan Rui's bandit group on Mount Mandang assaulted and recruited by Liangshan Po.

1115

Liangshan Po marches against Zengtou village. Chao Gai killed by Shi Wengong. Song Jiang resists other leaders' requests that he become supreme leader. Lu Junyi the Magnate of Daming entertained by Liangshan Po. On returning home is captured by Governor Liang. Liangshan Po sends an army to Daming to rescue him. Xuan Zan leads an imperial army to assault Liangshan Po. Liangshan Po pulls back from Daming and fights. Xuan Zan is recruited along with Guan Sheng.

Chao Gai's ghost appears to Song Jiang.

1116

Month 1. During the Lantern Festival Liangshan Po launches a sneak attack on Daming. Lu Junyi rescued. Imperial Councillor Zhao Ding suggests an amnesty and is stripped of his rank. Instead another army is sent to assault Liangshan Po. It is defeated.

Zengtou village assaulted and finally defeated. Shi Wengong's heart is cut out.

Lu Junyi and Song Jiang compete to see who will become leader. Song captures Dongping before Lu can capture Dongchang, so Song Jiang becomes leader.

Month 4. The Heavenly Tablet is uncovered, on which is written the names of the 108 heroes.

The heroes subsequently obtain an amnesty (despite Gao Qiu's best efforts), but owing to continuing Court machinations, they are not allowed to rest on their laurels. They are sent on a series of missions to quell religious uprisings and recapture land from the Qidan. One by one they succumb to fate. By the time the Jin invade in 1127, less than a quarter of the 108 remain alive. There are also vague legends that continue the story (one, for example, in which Li Jun becomes King of Thailand!).