



IN CHINA, everyone knows their exact place in society, and is expected to display it by means of the clothes they wear and their manners towards others. At the highest level, close to the Imperial Person, entire offices are staffed with bureaucrats whose duty is to ensure precision in such matters as clothing and manners. Even outlaws, though, have an acute awareness of the importance of respect and manners.

China has a population of over 100 million, of whom around six million live in towns and cities. It is divided into distinct classes, with the *shi*, the officials, emphatically on top. In theory the farmers are next, followed by the craftsmen and merchants. At the bottom are slaves, barbarians, and other dregs. All of them are subjects of the Son of Heaven.

*Divine influences conspire to assist
an enlightened ruler*

THE EMPEROR

The absolute monarch of China, the Emperor rules over his subjects with a complex bureaucracy. His authority derives from the highest source: he is the Son of Heaven. Upon his death he will continue to be venerated as a divinity. He is considered to possess the Mandate of Heaven, signifying his divine authority over his subjects. However at various points in history the Mandate is withdrawn from an Emperor who fails to behave correctly.

The Emperor lives in his palace in the Eastern Capital, Bianliang. There he is attended by a large number of women (the current Emperor has 3,912), and a support organisation of eunuchs. He also has a Secret Police of 70 officers, each of whom has ten subordinates, each of whom is rumoured to have ten or so informants.

Although the Emperor usually remains secluded in the closely guarded depths of the Imperial Palace in the Eastern Capital, there are occasions when he may venture forth. The current Emperor, a notorious womaniser, pays occasional secret nocturnal visits to the house of the famous concubine Li Shishi. The only other occasions when someone other than a servant, a eunuch or a councillor is likely to have the chance to enter the Imperial Presence is if an audience is held for some reason. Such an audience is held on the occasion of the heroes of Liangshan Po receiving their Imperial Pardon.

THE IMPERIAL DUTIES

The Emperor's responsibilities are both administrative and ceremonial. As Son of Heaven, he blends the realms of the religious and the political. Thus most of his actions have a somewhat religious character. He must attend a variety of ceremonies, the most important of which are those which honour heaven, and his imperial ancestors.

The Emperor may declare a general or limited amnesty for criminals (though this may not relieve those guilty of capital crimes) and a remission of taxation. This often accompanies a change in the name of his reign period.

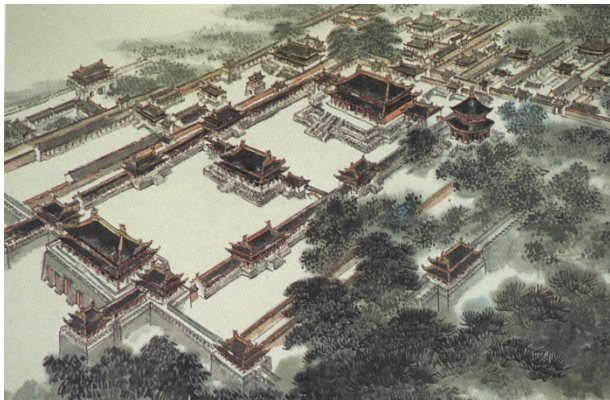
The Emperor conducts ceremonies to mark the ritual inauguration of the seasons, and the start of the new year. He must also make a variety of sacrifices. He may offer prayers for fine weather or for rain (according to the immediate needs of the farmers), for the end of a famine or pestilence. The order of importance of the various altars and temples of the Imperial Cult are as follows: first was the altar for sacrifices to Heaven, then the temple of the Imperial ancestors, the Imperial God of the Soil altar and the Prince Millet altar, and finally those altars dedicated to regional deities (including sacred mountains, seas and lakes), ancient sages and deified heroes.

The Emperor's will is enacted through edicts. The edicts, which are meticulously copied by a branch of the Palace devoted to this function, must be treated with the utmost reverence. At the start of the Water Margin Marshal Hong

Xin conveys an Imperial Edict to the Taoist Celestial Master on Dragon and Tiger mountain. It is treated with all the pomp and circumstance of a religious relic, which, in a sense, it is.

The current Emperor shows a particular interest in Taoism, so in addition to his position within the Confucian religion, he has also adopted the title Grand Master of the Esoteric Path, to show his importance within the Taoist religion. Unfortunately the current Emperor's other interests are art, calligraphy and gardens. He has little interest in administration, which allows the Prime Minister, Cai Jing, to hang on to power by persecuting political opponents, and cronies such as Gao Qiu to rise to high office. The Emperor's habit of requisitioning resources for the building of gardens does not endear him to some people, especially those who have their land appropriated, or who are sent to the end of the Empire to fetch a particularly attractive rock.

On the other hand, no one can deny that the Emperor is an excellent artist and calligrapher, and a generous patron of the arts.



The Imperial Palace

ARISTOCRATS

Those close to the Emperor have extremely favourable privileges, but since they live at the whim of the Son of Heaven they usually have to busy themselves intriguing in order to retain his favours. Aristocrats include people who have received honorary official titles as a result of imperial favour or exceptional merit, kinsmen of the Emperor, high-ranking concubines (and sometimes their families), and those few hereditary nobles who have retained their titles. Aristocrats may obtain any position up to +9 (+10 is reserved for the Emperor himself). This position reflects the reality of the situation, so an aristocrat's title may be anything or even nothing! It is possible, for example, for a prince to be an aristocrat of position 0.

One of the most important qualities for an aristocrat is to be rich. Without money, an aristocrat has little chance of influencing others, and therefore a high chance of being made somebody else's scapegoat. An aristocrat's wealth is most likely to be in the form of lands owned.

It is worth remembering that an aristocrat's political

power is entirely a matter of influence. Only those aristocrats who occupy a position in the bureaucracy have any formal political power, so others must simply make use of their proximity to the August Imperial Presence to get things done. Moreover members of the Imperial Family are forbidden to hold high office, and are actively discouraged from getting involved in Imperial politics. A salutary lesson may be learned from a certain Empress Dowager, who was pressured by a minister to renounce her involvement in politics. No sooner had she tentatively accepted the minister's proposal than he instructed an attendant to remove her screen, forcing her to terminate the audience abruptly and scurry back to the palace!

Aristocrats can hope to be given a position in the Imperial Bureaucracy if they demonstrate that they are 'sound'. A bureaucrat directly invested by the Emperor does not need to pass the civil service examinations. The positions of real power within the bureaucracy are held by examinees, however.

EUNUCHS

The Emperor is surrounded by a staff of Eunuchs, whose duties are to manage his immediate household.

Consequently eunuchs, though technically servants, can amass considerable power for themselves by virtue of their proximity to the Emperor. They have to be extremely crafty in order to get away with this. Past excesses of eunuchs, who brought about the fall of the Han and Tang dynasties, have led to a much tighter control of their activities.

In the standard games, the role of a eunuch is not really suitable for a player character (though one might make an excellent enemy). In a *Court* game set in the Imperial Court, however, a eunuch would be an interesting choice.

It is very common for people to refer to Eunuchs as 'manly men', as a sarcastic reference to their sacrifice, and because this is a pun on the word for Eunuch. Hearing this term will usually cause great offence to a Eunuch.

Eunuchs may occupy any position from 0 to +9. All have florid titles, though in truth the lower positions are mere servants. A eunuch has little hope of wielding any real power unless he manages to reach a position of +6 or greater.

Every official will be reborn

seven times a beggar

THE BUREAUCRACY

The Emperor is the supreme source of authority in the Empire, but he exercises it through his mandarins. His contact with them is primarily by means of his council of 3-5 ministers, which meets every day at dawn. This council has

a relative lack of protocol and is conducted behind closed doors. Despite the lack of protocol, the Song Emperors have reversed the laxity of their predecessors, by which Ministers were permitted to sit at council. Now they must stand at attention throughout.

Grand audiences, on the other hand, are attended by representatives from all the ministries. The chart of the Imperial Bureaucracy shows how the Emperor's power is disseminated through the various ministries.

The Imperial Bureaucracy (the central administration) numbers over a thousand, though there is also a supporting 'army' of clerks, runners and so on.

CENSORATE

The bureaucracy is controlled by the censors, whose responsibility is directly to the throne. The Grand Censor heads this department, and in some ways is the single most powerful man in the Empire apart from the Emperor. However, the Censorate has no influence on policy, and while they theoretically possess the authority to denounce and degrade any mandarin in the entire bureaucracy, this is mitigated in cases where someone has the ear of the Emperor. Thus in the reign of a less than prudent Emperor, a corrupt man may rise to a position where he is immune to the Censors in the absence of absolute, damning evidence. In this way Gao Qiu managed to reach high office.

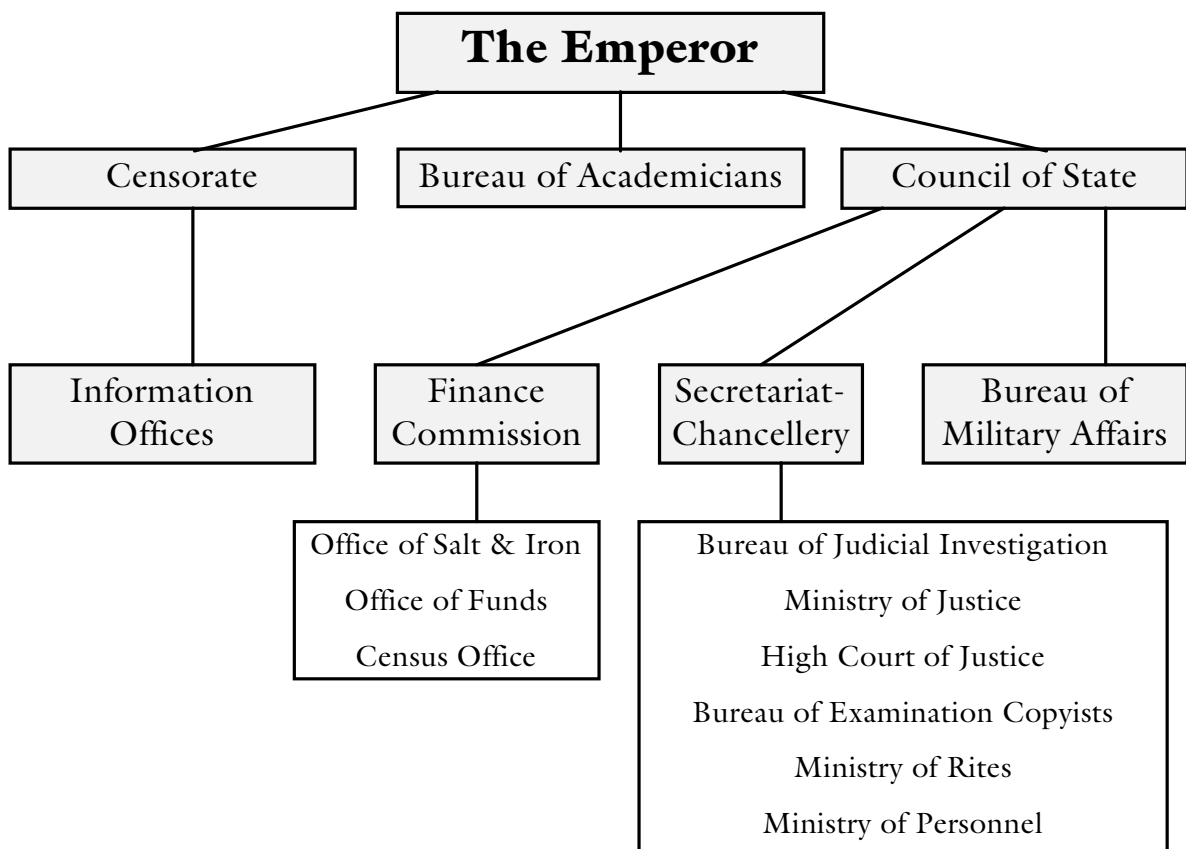
The Censorate's responsibilities extend all the way down the bureaucracy. In the provinces Commissioner-Generals represent the Censorate. They may travel incognito in order to confirm that prefects and magistrates are being scrupulous in their duty. They have the authority to relieve an erring mandarin of his office on the spot. Furthermore, any mandarin has the right (indeed, the duty), to denounce his superior to the Censorate. Any mandarin is held responsible for the actions of both his superiors and inferiors.

The Censorate also controls the Information Offices, which have two functions: one is to process memorials and petitions to the throne, and denunciations of superiors (any mandarin has the right and duty to denounce his superior to the censorate); the other is the transmission of government decrees to the provincial authorities.

BUREAU OF ACADEMICIANS

The Academicians draft imperial edicts and advised the Emperor on technical matters. The mandarins of the Academy are drawn from the finest scholars in the Empire. They are occasionally assigned to other branches of the bureaucracy in an advisory capacity.

THE IMPERIAL BUREAUCRACY



COUNCIL OF STATE

Two chief councillors, the Minister of the Left and Minister of the Right, head the Secretariat-Chancellery. They are the most influential members of the council. Two assisting civil councillors also represent the Secretariat-Chancellery. The council is completed by three Marshals representing the Bureau of Military Affairs. The Council of State exercises direct control on the three main administrative divisions of government:

THE FINANCE COMMISSION

Headed by a commissioner, the Finance Commission consists of agencies charged with finance, manufacturing, engineering, military supply and natural resources. It has three divisions: the Office of Salt & Iron, with responsibility for the exploitation of natural resources (especially the maintenance of the government monopolies), customs and excise, river communication and provision of resources to the military; The Office of Funds, which handles budgeting and financial planning; and the Census Office which deals with tax collection, certain construction projects and the census which is taken every three years.

The annual government budget is around 116,000,000 strings. From this, 480,000 strings go in the official salaries of the central administration, 1,200,000 strings supports the army, and the Emperor takes 840,000.

THE SECRETARIAT-CHANCELLERY

This branch has primary responsibility for general civil administration, the administration of the judicial system and personnel matters. The Bureau of Judicial Investigation, Ministry of Justice and High Court of Justice represent the top level of the system which extends down through society to the magistrates. No executions can be authorised without the approval of the High Court of Justice.

The Bureau of Examination Copyists control the marking procedure for the civil service examinations. As a measure against favouritism, all examination papers are copied, and marked anonymously.

The Ministry of Rites includes the examination bureau which (with assistance from the Bureau of Academicians) sets the various levels of the examinations, and co-ordinates the various levels and organisations involved. This ministry's primary responsibility, however, is the maintenance of the

Rule From Afar
One of the principles of the Chinese bureaucracy is that no mandarin may serve as magistrate in his home prefecture. This is so that he will be (at least in theory) immune to bias and prejudice arising from local interests.
One consequence of this principle is that Magistrates usually have a retinue of personal assistants whom they take from job to job. These assistants may be administrators, but they are more likely to have a military bent, and will be assigned to supervise the constables and conduct investigations.

rites and ceremonies considered essential to the continuance of the Emperor's enlightened rule. They determine the details of appropriate levels of formality in language, regalia or manner for a wide variety of situations, even including the day-to-day conduct of a magistrate.

The Ministry of Personnel handles appointments and promotions of mandarins. It is divided into offices according to the level of personnel dealt with: thus the Bureau of Executive Personnel deals with appointments to the executive level. The Bureau of Administrative Personnel appoints administrators within the central government. The Circuit Intendants Merit Bureau handles appointments and promotions in the provincial administration. It is subdivided according to level and function (fiscal or judicial).

BUREAU OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

The Imperial Army is split into three branches, each controlled by a Marshal. The marshals are assisted by six auxiliary academicians. The bureau's agencies control the execution of military planning, organisation, personnel and operations.

PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATION

The Empire is divided into 24 circuits. Each circuit has a small supervisory administration of about twenty mandarins covering financial, judicial, military and transportation responsibilities. However, their primary function is oversight rather than control. Only on those occasions when a single mandarin occupies multiple posts is it possible to identify a clear superior in the Circuit bureaucracy. Within each circuit are around ten prefectures, and these are the main governing bodies. The circuits and prefectures are listed in the chapter on China.

A prefecture is usually staffed by around six ranking mandarins: the Prefect and one or two assistants, a staff supervisor, a secretary and a prefectural judge. They control a staff of inspectors: Executive Inspector, Police Inspector, Judicial Inspector, Finance Inspector, Educational Inspector and Military Inspector. All of these are recognised as belonging to the official service: they must have passed the examinations to obtain their positions (or obtained influential patronage). Below them, however, is a staff of clerical and police functionaries, and service agents concerned with revenue matters, who are not ranking members of the bureaucracy.

The lowest level of the bureaucracy is the district. Each prefecture will control up to ten districts (there are 1500 in all in the Empire), though this number will vary depending on how heavily populated or remote the region is.

A district is ruled by a Magistrate, whose staff will depend on the size of the district under his control. Usually he will have an assistant magistrate, a registrar, a sheriff (though sometimes he has to perform these jobs himself) and a staff of between 100 and 150 clerks, jailers, constables, accountants, secretaries, runners and miscellaneous labourers. He will have between 10 and 100 constables available to him in addition to the local militia, and if the

need arises should also be able to call on the military assistance of any army units which are stationed in the district (on average, about 100 soldiers).

The Magistrate invariably rules his district from a town, within which his *yamen* is built. However his authority extends to the countryside surrounding the town. The area within his jurisdiction, both urban and rural, is divided into various administrative units. More details are given in the *Local Society* section, below.

All provincial appointments, from Governor down to assistant magistrate, have a minimum tenure of three years. Changing positions is frequent, especially for those of talent.

All in all, there are about 11,500 mandarins in the provincial administration, and about 6000 military officials.

EXAMINATIONS

The key to a successful appointment in the bureaucracy is the system of Imperial Civil Service Examinations. Scholars are permitted to take the examinations at any age from 15 up, and as many times as they like. There are three levels of examination: the local level, the metropolitan level and the palace level. A candidate may not sit for the metropolitan level unless he has first passed the local level. He may not sit for the palace level unless he has first passed the metropolitan level. The examinations are held every three years.

Examinations for the bureaucracy may be taken in: CEREMONY, CLASSICS, COMPOSITION, HISTORY, or LAW. The examination with the highest status is COMPOSITION. Examinations for the military bureaucracy may be taken in STRATEGY or a weapon skill. Examinations for the medical service are taken in MEDICINE.

According to the letter of the law, examinations may only be taken by members of the gentry. There are ways around this restriction, however, bribery being perhaps the most potent.

TAKING THE EXAMINATION

In order to take an examination, a candidate must travel to the examination site on the correct day. Local level examinations are usually held in the principal prefectures of circuits. Metropolitan and palace level examinations are held in the Eastern Capital. The examination lasts all day. The examination is conducted as a skill roll with an ease determined according to two criteria: the level of the examination, and the overall standard of that year's examinees. The ease according to the level of the examination is 6 at the prefectural, 4 at the metropolitan and 2 at the palace level.

The candidate should add any skill bonus in the examination subject, and (for written exams) should also add any bonuses for LITERACY and DILIGENCE. CALLIGRAPHY is not relevant as the examination papers are recopied as an anti-corruption measure.

A successful roll indicates a pass. A high degree of success (6 or more) indicates that the candidate's name

appears in the list of the top ten successful candidates. Such a result at the palace level, especially in the doctorate of composition, provides an almost certain guarantee of being appointed to an important official position.

SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATES

Passing the examinations confers several privileges:

- ◇ A pass at the prefectural level qualifies a student to enter for the metropolitan level of examinations. It also makes it highly likely that they will be accepted for the job of sheriff, registrar or assistant magistrate.
- ◇ A pass at the metropolitan level qualifies the scholar to obtain an official post as a magistrate, and to enter for the palace level. The character gains +1 respect (+2 if they were one of the top ten).
- ◇ An ordinary pass at the palace level qualifies the student to obtain an official post as a mandarin in any branch of the bureaucracy. The character gains +1 respect (+2 if they were one of the top ten).

A character who obtains a pass at the prefectural level who doesn't obtain a higher level degree must retake the prefectural level examination in order to retain the qualification. Higher level degrees, once obtained, are permanent.

Possession of a degree confers tax advantages, exemption from local service (see *Local Society*, below), and more favourable treatment under the law.

SCHOOLS

Prefectural and county schools have been established by the state. In addition the National University, the Military Academy, the Imperial Academy and the Imperial Medical College serve the advanced educational needs of the populace. Recruitment for these establishments is by competitive exams every three years. Students are expected to be disciplined, and have to wear uniform when they leave the campus.

Graduation from these institutions qualifies the student to take a position in the Imperial Bureaucracy. However, many graduates take the Imperial Examinations, because of the benefits it offers in terms of promotion and long term career prospects.

Many candidates, however, rely on local teachers, usually scholars who have passed the local level but who, for some reason or other, have not entered the bureaucracy.

PATRONAGE

There is an alternative route to an official career: appointment by patronage. This usually requires the use of influence (see the later section). An alternative is a sizeable number of mandarins who are directly appointed by the Emperor. This is in order to ensure that there was a body of 'right-thinking' officials upon whom the Emperor could

rely. The higher posts in the bureaucracy would nevertheless go to successful examination candidates.

Mandarins are theoretically forbidden to engage in commerce. Similarly, sons of merchants are theoretically forbidden to enter the civil service examinations. However, failed candidates from rich families are often set up in merchant-style businesses, and scions of merchant families may sometimes be ‘adopted’ by impoverished members of the gentry, and take the examinations based on such family positions.

MANDARIN POSITIONS

The most usual mandarin of position +1 is a district magistrate. From here, he can hope for promotion. Mandarins will usually hope to become a part of the central bureaucracy, though most spend their entire careers working in the provinces. Promotion is by no means guaranteed, either, so a large proportion of mandarins will never rise above position +1, particularly if they only passed the examinations at the metropolitan level, or entered the bureaucracy through patronage.

When a mandarin does get promoted, however, it may be to either the central or provincial bureaucracy. Appointments are decided by the Ministry of Personnel of the Secretariat-Chancellery, and it is common to switch between central and provincial many times in a career. The advantage of the central bureaucracy from a careerist point of view, however, is that you are more likely to come to the attention of some important official who may become a patron and assist your further rise through the hierarchy. Some job titles for mandarins according to their position are shown below (those marked with a (c) are part of the central bureaucracy):

Position 0:	Assistant Magistrate, Registrar, Sheriff, Clerk (c)
Position +1:	Magistrate, Executive Inspector, Police Inspector, Judicial Inspector, Finance Inspector, Educational Inspector, Military Inspector, Assistant Secretary (c).
Position +2:	Assistant Prefect, Prefectural Judge, Prefectural Secretary, Staff Supervisor
Position +3:	
Position +4:	Prefect
Position +5:	Commissioner-General
Position +6:	Governor
Position +7:	Academician (c)
Position +8:	Councillor (c)
Position +9:	Minister of the Left (c), Minister of the Right (c), Grand Censor (c)

There are nine grades of officials rated from 1 (the highest) to nine (the lowest). These correspond to the position scores, with +1 being position 9, +2 being position 8 and so on. Mandarins graded position 0 are considered to be ‘outside the stream’ of the official service. Although the vast

majority in the bureaucracy fit into this category, it is only those of higher position who can hope to wield any real influence.

If one family goes to law

ten will suffer

LAW AND ORDER

You can’t have outlaws without laws, and Song China has plenty of both. The most important idea to keep in mind about the law is the underlying principle of justice: peace must reign at all costs. From this pragmatic viewpoint emerges a strict and comprehensive legal code, which attaches no importance to ideas such as equality or innocence until proven guilty.

ADMINISTRATION

The law is the province of the magistrate, and is administered from his fortified citadel, the *yamen*. This, the central and most imposing feature of a town, houses the magistrate’s residence, administrative offices, accommodation for some of the constables and staff, and the prison. Its judicial heart is the audience hall. It is here that cases are heard, in three sessions a day: morning, noon and afternoon.

Everything about the judicial process is designed to discourage litigation, although initiating a case is straightforward. To bring a case to the attention of the magistrate you simply enter the yamen and bang the gong which hangs before the audience hall. The clerk who takes down the complaint will instruct the litigant at which session the complaint will be heard. The gong should also be struck in order to report natural disasters, attacks by bandits, or any other important matter, to the authorities.

A session of the court begins with the entrance of the magistrate. He seats himself in the armchair behind a desk, draped with red brocade. Scribes and clerks range themselves on each side of his desk, while the constables of the yamen are ranged in two rows, one along each side of the hall. The bamboo staves carried by the constables are far from ceremonial. On the magistrate’s desk lie writing brushes and ink (in various colours required for the writing of different sentences), and a box containing bamboo sticks. Casting these to the ground indicates the number of strokes to be delivered to the accused by the bamboo staves of the constables.

Litigants, when called, must kow-tow to the magistrate, and then remain kneeling throughout the case. They are permitted no representatives.

Beatings are common. As well as being the punishment for many minor offences, they may be used to discipline

impolite litigants, or to persuade them to testify more appropriately.

PROSECUTION

Anyone accused of a crime is arrested and thrown into jail. There they will not be fed, but depend either on their family to bring them meals, or on their money to send out for something. Money comes in useful in other ways. There are prison guards to be persuaded to give good treatment, and clerks to be induced. Although litigants may not have direct legal representation during the case, they can seek advice from clerks of the court, and even pay them to draw up written petitions. Some clerks even act as intermediaries with the magistrate, arranging 'out-of-court' settlements. One such clerk was called Song Jiang. You'll learn more about him in the *Extras* chapter (or in one of the *Water Margin* books).

Even a wrongfully accused person is guilty of a breach of the peace. Accusers, too, are treated with suspicion and accorded scarcely more comfort during a trial than the accused.

If a suspected criminal can't be accused, then those responsible for them are taken in instead. This means, in the first instance, the person's family. If they have no family, or have been formally disowned (this must have been registered in advance at the yamen), then the suspect's neighbours are taken into custody instead. In general, if the suspect evades capture, those taken in instead will be beaten for 'assisting the suspect's escape'. Similarly, constables and sheriffs are often set a time limit for the capture of criminals: failure to meet it will result in a beating. In extreme cases, an even sterner penalty may be exacted.

LAWS

The Legal Code handed down from ancient times is quite comprehensive. There is some leeway allowed for the magistrate to use his discretion. Each crime has a particular punishment laid down for it, but there are certain mitigating circumstances which affect the severity of the punishment, and of course the magistrate determines exactly what crime was committed.

The most notable mitigating circumstance is that of a convicted criminal who is an only child with a parent to support. This may result, for example, in a murderer having a custodial sentence commuted to a fine, or a death by decapitation reduced to death by strangulation. A high position in society (especially possessing an academic degree: having passed the bureaucratic examinations) also carries privileges which may reduce the severity of sentences, with the exception of those imposed for corruption..

The full law code is enormous, so the referee will just have to fill in the details as appropriately and authoritatively as possible. Bear in mind that it is designed to maintain peace, and also to cement the importance of the family.

PRINCIPLES OF JUDGEMENT

The Legal Code is extremely pragmatic. Objective evidence is absolutely essential, as is a confession. The former means that without a corpse showing evidence of murder there is no murder case, and without stolen goods you can't prove a case of burglary (in some cases, thorough magistrates do often manage to find other charges for the suspect to answer to).

The necessity for a confession is balanced by the common use of torture to extract one. While it is technically illegal to torture a person, certain practices are deemed acceptable, if used with discretion. Magistrates are subject to careful supervision and review. Misuse of torture may have serious consequences. In the worst case, if an accused dies under torture and is subsequently shown to have been innocent, the magistrate (and the constable who performed the torture) will be guilty of murder, tried, and executed accordingly.

In very serious cases, a magistrate may refer a case to a superior court: that of the Prefect. It is also possible for people to appeal to higher courts, though as with all litigation, it is not a pleasant undertaking.

PUNISHMENTS

All crimes involve corporal punishment to some extent. Imprisonment is relatively rare, as it is costly for the authorities. Prisoners will have to do some useful work, and will be held in the jail of a yamen, or a military camp. As with those imprisoned awaiting trial, they are not provided with food. For this reason, exile is a more serious punishment than local imprisonment.

Exiled criminals are branded on their face with their place of exile: This is referred to as 'fixing golden seals'. They will also have a cangue fitted about their neck: the weight of this is decided by the sentencing magistrate. Although cangues still permit the criminal to use their hands, they are a considerable burden, and will certainly count as a serious encumbrance in combat. Exiles will be escorted by constables to their place of exile. Such constables are entitled to stay at inns on the road free of charge.

Magistrates may apply all punishments on their own authority, with the exception of the death penalty, which must be approved by the High Court of Justice in Bianliang, Kaifeng prefecture. The criminal will be held in prison until the authorisation comes through.

Death penalties range in severity from the mildest (strangulation, which allows the body to remain in one piece) through standard having the head chopped off, to the worst (the death of a thousand cuts, or being torn apart by horses). Penalties which do not preserve the integrity of the body are the most serious, as these may destroy the *hun* spirits.

POLICE RANKS

The overwhelming majority of characters following the occupation of Constable have a **position** of 0, and work as ordinary Constables at a district yamen. There is some room for advancement, as the following table shows, but to progress higher than a police functionary, a character will have to take the examinations, and become a Mandarin. Indeed, most police functionaries at the Sheriff level and higher are already centrally appointed officials.

Position 0:	Constable, Jailer
Position +1:	Constable of a Prefecture
Position +2:	Executioner, Chief Torturer
Position +3:	Sergeant
Position +4:	Prefectural Police Functionary
Position +5:	Metropolitan Police Inspector

Fraud in the manufacture of goods is punished by sixty strokes of the rod.

The code also emphasises the importance of the family. Raising a hand against parents or grandparents carries the penalty of death by beheading. Striking an older brother or sister brings two and half years of forced labour. Striking an older cousin deserves only 100 strokes of the rod.

A master who beats his servant to death suffers a year of forced labour. A servant who kills his master is killed (if it was an accident, he suffers the lightest penalty—strangulation).

The carrying of weapons is restricted by law. Even possessing a weapon in one's house in the capital is illegal if the owner is not entitled to it. Entitlement extends to members of officialdom (though they rarely take advantage of it), officers of the army, soldiers while on duty, and persons bearing authorisation from the local magistrate.

Gambling is also theoretically restricted, but actually rife. The most popular game is called 'double-six', using 24 pieces, similar to backgammon.

If a felon can't be arrested, then his family is arrested. If they can't be arrested, his neighbours may be taken in.

*If you spy your neighbour in your orchard
it is polite to look the other way*

LOCAL SOCIETY

Below the official bureaucratic level of the district, the population is further subdivided into counties and wards. Wards are administrative units of the local militia system, and so their size is usually determined by number of households rather than geographical areas. Thus a district

town may be divided into wards, while out in the country a ward may be an aggregation of several villages.

The administration of counties and wards is conducted by local people. These local administrators are not part of the bureaucracy, rather they are ordinary local people who are required by law to devote their services for a fixed period. In some cases, County Officers and Ward Chiefs may hold a position almost indefinitely, but usually the remuneration is so slight, and the responsibility so onerous that the positions are rotated among leading households.

COUNTIES

The number of counties in each district varies between two and ten, but will usually be around three. Similarly, the number of wards in each county varies between two and ten, but is usually two or three. Since a ward consists of 100-300 households, you'll see that a county may contain 200 to 3000 households.

County Officers follow the occupation of clerk during tenure of their office. Although they gain a position bonus of +3, it should be noted that they are often at a disadvantage when faced with the professional clerks employed in the magistrate's yamen.

WARDS

As mentioned above, a ward is composed of between 100 to 300 households. It is administered by a Ward Chief. Ward Chiefs may follow the occupations of soldier or clerk, depending on the particular emphasis they follow in their duties. This ambiguity arises because of their dual responsibilities: they are simultaneously responsible for overseeing such mundane affairs as local taxation, transmission of documents, local law and order, as well as being the officers in charge of the local militia. By virtue of his office, a Ward Chief has a bonus of +2.

The remaining local administrators, including a small proportion of the clerks, runners, jailers, secretaries and labourers serving in the local *yamen*, are also conscripted from the local populace, receiving no pay for their troubles. The precise number and description varies from place to place—in some counties there may be no Assistant Ward Chief, for example, because the magistrate's clerks have been bribed not to draft anyone. None of these conscripted employees receive a position bonus.

THE MILITIA

A group of ten households form a *small guard*. Each of the households with two or more adult male members must donate one of them to serve in the militia. One, from a well-to-do household, is the Small Guard Chief.

Five small guards form a *large guard*, commanded by a Large Guard Chief. Between two and six large guards form a Ward, and the Ward Chief (usually with an Assistant) commands the militia thus formed.

Militiamen are not paid. However, they do have the

right to bear arms while on duty. They will also receive rudimentary weapons training, mainly archery, from their Ward Chief (who in turn will be trained by a regular Army Officer).

Members of the militia will usually combine their duties with normal everyday work. They may be called upon to attack bandits or defend against barbarians, but their usual duties are more mundane, connected with law enforcement and tax collecting. They are often used to perform mundane police work, to leave the serious job of apprehending criminals to the better-trained Constables. Thus many districts will have night watch patrols composed of militiamen, and militiamen will often be employed to beat the drums which announce the hours in a town or large village. Militiamen who do manage to apprehend criminals can expect to receive a reward.

Small and Large Guard Chiefs may choose to follow the occupation of soldier, but regular militiamen may not.

Members of the militia gain no position bonus, or other special benefit for being drafted, apart from the right to bear arms while on duty, and a limited amount of training. Militiamen are usually equipped with staves (it is the responsibility of the Ward Chief to see to the arming of the militia) and are rarely armoured. The right to bear arms varies from place to place. In general, the further South, the less likely the militia are to be allowed to carry arms. In the extreme South the local people are trusted so little that it is common practice to issue weapons only as and when they are required, and not to permit the carrying of swords or spears.

FEUDING

One of the problems with the militia, and the reason it is often viewed with suspicion by officials, is that it places a body of armed men at the disposal of locally powerful families. Since the commanders of the militia are drawn from the higher grade households of an area, if a close eye is not kept on them they may view the militia as their own private army.

In many districts this problem has reached its logical extreme, and Guard Chiefs use their commands in order to carry out bloody vendettas, sometimes against rival militia commanders. Of course, any casualties of these disputes are reported to the authorities as bandits killed in the course of being arrested. Because both sides are breaking the law, they are rarely inclined to report such infractions to the authority.

HOUSEHOLDS

Rural households are officially categorised and registered for tax paying purposes. They are divided into 5 grades according to their wealth. The lowest category (grade 5) corresponds to a **wealth** bonus of 0 or lower. Above this, however, the grades are relative to the overall affluence of the region. In the majority of regions a grade 4 household has a **wealth** bonus of +1, and so on up to a grade 1 household, which will have a bonus of +4 or more.

In poor areas, a household with a +2 bonus may find

itself categorised as a grade 1 household. Conversely in a very wealthy region higher **wealth** bonuses may be needed to qualify for grade 1 status.

Household grade, along with social class, are noted in registers kept in the local yamen. It is used in determining eligibility for local service, as well as for tax purposes. Grade 5 households have a minimal liability for conscripted local service. Wherever possible, higher positions such as County Officers and Ward Chiefs are drafted from grade 1 households.

To make nails don't waste good iron;

to make soldiers don't waste good men

THE MILITARY

In the Song Dynasty, the military has fallen to a nadir in terms of its position in society. More than ever before, the military authorities are kept subservient to civilian administrators. The soldier occupies an unenviable position in society: considered by many to be a mere parasite upon the hard working members of society, he has to risk his life against bandits and barbarians, and even perform the duties of urban night-watchman and city fire-fighter!

The reputation of ordinary soldiers is by no means improved by the relatively large number who are sentenced criminals.

Since the reforms of Wang Anshi half a century ago, the army has been slimmed down from a strength of well over a million to less than 500,000. The excess fighting strength is supposed to be made up by the local militia.

There are four main branches to the army: the Imperial Guard, a professional army based in the capital, but stationed all over the Empire, the Provincial Army, which is primarily a labour organisation (and into which convicts are inducted), the Foreign Auxiliaries, and finally the Militia.

ORGANISATION

Squads of 5 men, the lowest unit (sergeant). 50 men in a platoon (lieutenant) and two platoons form a company (captain). Five companies make up a battalion (major). Two battalions are a regiment (colonel) and four regiments an army (general).

MILITARY RANKS

The following are the main available military ranks, according to position. Obviously there are specialised positions, especially at the mid to upper levels.

Position 0: Ordinary soldier

- Position +1: Sergeant, Imperial Guard
- Position +2: Lieutenant, Imperial Guard Sergeant
- Position +3: Captain, Imperial Guard Lieutenant
- Position +4: Major, Imperial Guard Captain
- Position +5: Colonel, Imperial Guard Major
- Position +6: Staff Officer, Imperial Guard Colonel
- Position +7: General, Garrison Commander
- Position +8: Military Official
- Position +9: Marshal

While most members of the Military follow the occupation of soldier, there are, of course, others. There are Military Instructors, whose duty it is to maintain the fighting ability of the army. Lower ranking instructors will be sent out to train the Ward Chiefs and Guard Chiefs of the local bureaucracy. Higher ranking Instructors may aim for a position in the Mighty Imperial Guards, the Emperor's personal troops. Such a position carries with it a position of +6, the equivalent of a Staff Officer.

THE IMPERIAL GUARD

Compared with other soldiers, much more likely to be good at unarmed combat.

PROVINCIAL ARMY

The regular army is an extremely variable organisation. Since soldiering is not a highly regarded profession, the regular army has to acquire its recruits the best way it can. A large proportion of them are actually criminals who have been sentenced to penal servitude. Many of the rest are former criminals who stayed with the army after their period of penal servitude was up.

*A monastery is no place
to borrow a comb*

THE PRIESTHOODS

Joining a formal priesthood is excluding oneself from society. A priest is usually cut off from his family to a certain extent, and this is symbolised by taking a new name.

TEMPLE RANKS

Both Buddhist and Taoist monasteries are organised along more or less the same lines. The following positions are used for characters who belong to a monastery or temple. Most will be following the occupation of priest, but in the Shaolin monastery of the Buddhists, most of the ordinary monks are

pugilists, and the higher ranking monks are either pugilists still, or have been for much of their lives.

- Position 0: Ordinary monk
- Position +1: Chief of the Lavatories, Chief of the vegetable garden, Gate Supervisor
- Position +2: Chief Tea Maker, Pagoda Keeper
- Position +3: Bathhouse Keeper, Subscriptions Collector
- Position +4: Chamberlain, Hallkeeper, Storekeeper
- Position +5: Recorder, Guest's Host, Superintendent's Assistant
- Position +6: Superintendent, Abbot's Assistant, Head of Discipline
- Position +7: Abbot
- Position +8: Superior Abbot
- Position +9: Sect Leader

Note that lay priests, wandering monks, geomancers and the like do not possess a position bonus. If they are attached to a temple or monastery they will ordinarily live outside. Certainly in Buddhist monasteries, no women, or men who have not been ordained as monks, are permitted to stay within its walls.

Buddhist monks require a certificate of ordination. Anyone caught posing as a monk who is not in possession of such a certificate will certainly be flogged, and will probably be remanded in custody while the official checks them against any outstanding crimes (this may take a long time, depending on how widely the mandarin casts his net). If the supposed monk is not implicated in any crime, he will probably be flogged again for good measure, and then escorted back to his home district.

Because posing as (or really becoming) a monk is a relatively common criminal trick, officials are rarely very sympathetic towards such men. On the other hand, for



Buddhist Nun

political reasons they often have to show at least some deference towards high ranking clergymen.

Taoists, too, ordinarily require documentation: a license from the Celestial Master, granted after proof of knowledge of the doctrines. The authorities do not usually enforce requirements for documentation quite so strictly on Taoists as they do on Buddhists.

It should be stressed that in practical terms Abbots are the true holders of power. There may be holy leaders, recognised as the head of a sect, but their authority is based on respect rather than power. The same is also true of Taoism's Celestial Master. He has no formal authority to order any Taoist.

*One cannot build a great house
with one pole*

ORGANISATIONS

The key to Chinese society is to understand its organisations. The most important organisation is the family, and for many people it is the only organisation they need, and belong to all their life. For others, though, the protection and security of the family are not sufficient. We have already looked at the bureaucracy, the military and the priesthood, but there are other organisations.

Most of these organisations demonstrate the importance of the family by consciously aping the way it works. Members will look on other members as (and sometimes even call them) 'brothers' and 'sisters'.

GUILDS

Both merchants and artisans commonly establish organisations for mutual benefit. The most powerful and influential are those connected with the national monopolies. The rice merchants guild, for example, is a semi-official body charged with the efficient transportation, distribution and sale of rice. However just about any profession will have a guild, and its representatives will, along with local gentry, constitute the notables of a district.

The power of guilds is not appreciated by the authorities, and as a result these organisations have to tread carefully, and assist the government as much as possible.

Nevertheless, simply by virtue of their position at the top of a hierarchy, Guild Masters in a locality will gain a **respect** bonus. Thus a member of an occupation which has a guild will often find that the Guild Master is the person to turn to if they need to exert influence. They will have to influence the Guild Master to act on their behalf, of course, but most Guild Masters will be happy to do so, as it provides them with favours which they can make use of.

OUTLAW BANDS

SECRET SOCIETIES

*Excessive politeness is a sure sign
of excessive egotism*

SOCIAL RELATIONS

The glue that holds society together consists of the relationships between people. In Song China, those relationships are almost all vertical—in other words when you deal with others you will be dealing with superiors and inferiors, but only rarely equals. This takes a little getting used to.

In such a society, favour and influence is exceptionally important. Characters can achieve their ends by persuading others to assist them. Such assistance leads to a favour being owed.

Favours can be viewed as a form of social currency. In order to use favours effectively, characters need to protect their reputations jealously, guarding their *face*.

FAVOURS

Obligation is a powerful force in society. Honouring debts is an effective way of maintaining **respect**, which in turn helps you obtain what you want. This is handled through *favours*. Characters will owe favours to people who assist them. They may also be owed favours by others, through offering assistance or presents.

In general, each time a character is helped by another in any significant way, they will owe a favour to that character. This applies especially in the case of occasions where attempts to influence other people are successful (see below). It is possible to owe multiple favours to the same person. These may simply be expressed as ‘2 favours’, ‘3 favours...’ and so on.

Favours may be discharged by repaying the debt in some way. However, unsolicited repayments of favours do not automatically discharge obligation unless the favour is acknowledged. It can be difficult to force someone to discharge a favour: you have to put them in a position where they will lose *face* unless they acknowledge the repayment.

Characters also owe their parents 3 favours and each patron *at least* 1 favour. The favours owed to a character’s parents may never be completely repaid (although it is possible to repay two of them).

Owing favours has two main effects: one on influence attempts and the other on *face*. These are explained below.

RESPECT

Respect represents a quality which has accrued to a character’s name through his deeds and behaviour. It includes prestige and reputation, and can be simply described as the weight your name carries with others.

A character with a negative **respect** bonus is despised or derided by people. Positive **respect** bonuses represent increasing levels of success and fame. Simply by virtue of his position, the Emperor has +10 **respect**. Extremely famous officials, heroes or other luminaries may hope for a **respect** bonus of +8 or 9, while the average local magistrate will have at least +2. Even a **respect** bonus of +1, however, indicates that a character is something more than a ‘common person’.

Respect is used in personal interactions. It is especially common in the use of influence, but at the discretion of the referee it may be added to characters’ chances of successfully intimidating, giving orders, obtaining good seats in restaurants and so on.

Note that **respect** says little about morality! It is possible for a ruthless man such as Gao Qiu, Minister of War, to have a high **respect** score by being cruel, and also by borrowing from the Emperor.

Changes to a character’s **respect** bonus are handled through the use of points of *face*. These points of *face* are of no use in their own right, except as a measure of fluctuations in a character’s reputation which may have an effect on **respect**.

BASIC RESPECT

As explained in the *Characters* chapter, because of the vertical nature of Song society, characters may gain **respect** bonuses simply by being a part of a hierarchy.

+1 respect

is gained by characters with a simple position in a hierarchy: that of a person who has been placed in charge of a small number of subordinates. For example: the manager of a thriving business, a sergeant in a magistrate’s yamen or a military unit, a master craftsman or a small-scale bandit chief.

+2 respect

is gained by being part of a more complicated hierarchy, and having at least two tiers of subordinates. This applies to ‘mid-level’ people, for example, officers in the army, ward chiefs of villages, magistrates, magnates or Abbots of temples.

+3 respect

is gained by those at the top of a substantial hierarchy. This applies to ministers, generals, bandit kings and the Taoist Celestial Master.

INCREASING RESPECT

Respect may be increased by progressing up a hierarchy. If a character who formerly had no subordinates acquires a position of some kind, they will gain the point of **respect** referred to in the previous section. Similarly with the other statuses referred to.

Other changes in **respect** are handled using points of *face*. Various kinds of behaviour may enable a character to acquire points of *face*. These may then be spent to increase

the character’s **respect** score. The cost of an increase in **respect** score is the new bonus times 5. So a +1 **respect** bonus costs 5 *face*, while going from +4 to +5 requires 25 points of *face*.

Once *face* points are spent to acquire the new bonus they are lost. Thus it is usually better not to buy the bonus as soon as you get the necessary *face*—if you subsequently lose even a little *face* you’ll lose your hard-earned **respect**.

LOSING RESPECT

As suggested above, **respect** may be lost through losing *face*. When a character loses *face* for some reason, he must spend the appropriate number of *face* points. If he doesn’t have enough to pay the penalty, he loses all his *face* as well as one point of his **respect** bonus.

You can see from this why people are so careful to ensure that they do not lose *face*, and why this is increasingly the case as you rise through society—those in higher positions have more to lose.

You will also lose **respect** if there is a change in your status (in the terms explained in the *Basic Respect* section, above).

GAINING AND LOSING FACE

Face can be expected to change quite often. If possible you should keep track of it openly, amending characters’ scores

during a game session on a single piece of paper. This is because *face* is public property, known by anyone.

Whenever a character’s *face* score changes, the referee should announce the fact, and amend the score on the paper. It is also a good idea to warn a player when her character proposes to do something which will cause him to lose *face*.

Face may be awarded for any of the cases listed in the table below. In many cases the referee will have to interpret how serious the particular circumstances are, but the ideal is that players can agree on the amount of *face* at issue themselves. One way of doing this is for players to state the amount of *face* they are prepared to stake on a particular action or outcome, being guided by the table below. This is the amount they will gain if successful, or lose if unsuccessful. You should also bear in mind that the higher one goes in society, the more vulnerable one is. A poor farmer is unlikely to lose any *face* if the magistrate orders constables to push his cart off the road. If the same fate befalls the palanquin of a local guild master, it will be a serious matter.

Matters of honour involving social disputes between two parties will also have an impact on *face*. These are explained below.

MATTERS OF HONOUR

There are times when characters have a disagreement which

Action	Face	Action	Face
Filial devotion: supporting parents at considerable personal inconvenience	+1 to +5	Filial disrespect: failure to obey, honour or support parents	-3 to -10
Generosity: lavishing gifts and favours widely	+1 to +5 for each favour provided, or +1 per penalty of -2 to wealth rolls for a month.	Stinginess: refusing to repay a favour owed	-5 per favour owed to the person
Honoured: being shown respect by a person of high status	+ difference between your position and/or respect and the other’s	Snubbed: being treated dismissively by a person of high status (eg having a gift refused), or being insulted	Minus your respect bonus
Loyalty: suffering personal injury or loss in order to support another	+1 to +10 depending on the extent of the loss	Treachery: betraying family or comrades for personal gain	-1 to -10 depending on how monstrous
Resoluteness: demonstrating that one is not to be trifled with	+1 to +5 depending on the level of fortitude	Indecision: being seen to be weak and irresolute	-0 to -5 depending on the amount of dithering
Success: achieving a goal by demonstrating great personal ability.	+1 to +5	Failure: demonstrable incompetence	-1 to -5
Victory: vanquishing a mighty foe in single combat	+the opponent’s respect bonus	Defeat: being overcome by an inferior foe	Minus your respect bonus
Victory: commanding a victorious army in a mass battle	+0 to +10 depending on the odds	Defeat: losing a mass battle to a smaller enemy	-0 to -5

becomes socially important. In such cases, one or other of the aggrieved parties may stake his reputation on the matter. He does so by specifying a number of points of *face* which he considers at issue. The disagreement then becomes a matter of honour. When a character does so, the other party may immediately respond by conceding the issue, for a loss of half the number of points specified by the other. If he doesn't, however, or if he responds by stating an increased level of *face*, then this will be the number of points which will be lost by the final loser of the confrontation. The winner may gain *face* of up to half the number staked, at the discretion of the referee.

The nature of the confrontation, and the manner in which it is finally resolved, are entirely a matter for the players and referee to decide. An example might be where an individual's word is questioned. A reputation for honesty can be very important, especially to a merchant, and this can become a matter of honour. A merchant who is called a liar will suffer a loss of *face* from the insult, and can attempt to recover it by making it a matter of honour. The difficulty lies

in obtaining a ruling that will be generally accepted. Usually the decision of a person of high status who is accepted by both parties (bearing in mind that refusing to accept an eligible person may be construed as an insult, which in turn may become a further matter of honour) can be accepted as final.

BORROWED FACE

Characters may gain or lose *face* according to changes in **respect** of those with whom they have a relationship. The relationships that might lead to this are as follows:

Family:	
Father	3
Other family member	1
Patron	
Active	2
Inactive	1
Dependent	3
Blood brother	5

The number listed next to the relationship above is the 'closeness' of the relationship. It is the number of *face* points gained or lost when the person specified gains or loses a point of **respect**.

For example, your father is publicly humiliated when the magistrate fails to turn to a formal banquet which he has agreed to attend. Your father suffers the loss of 7 points of *face* and this results in his **respect** bonus going down by one. As soon as this becomes known to those around you, you will suffer a loss of 3 points of *face* yourself.

It is possible to formally sever one of the above relationships, in order to prevent the effect of borrowed face. However, in the case of the relationship with a father, doing this merely changes the 'closeness' of the relationship to 2. Even a disowned child is still a child.

RESPECT ABROAD

Since **respect** reflects a relationship with a community, a problem arises when a character travels. How much **respect** can they use in practice?

The first point to note is that **respect** deriving from position in a hierarchy can be used anywhere, so long as the character demonstrably holds the position in question. The problem arises mainly with **respect** deriving from a character's actions and specific relationships.

In the latter case the more **respect** a character has, the more widely that **respect** can be used. A character with a +1 or +2 bonus will be well known in a local district, but probably not outside it, and therefore that bonus will not be available to them if they travel. A character with +3 or +4 will be known within the area of a prefecture. They may be able to use part of their bonuses in neighbouring prefectures, but will lose the whole bonus if they travel further afield. +5 or +6 means that a character is known within a circuit, and may even have some influence in neighbouring circuits. +7 or more represents the sort of respect and presence that can be used pretty much anywhere.

Example: Dealing With Loss of Face

Deng Che and Lei Ying steal Prefect Yan's seal of office in a plan to advance the cause of their master, the Xiangyang Prince. Lei Ying is sent to drop the seal into the icy depths of Turbulent Spring, which he does.

Unknown to the rebels, the seal is retrieved by the hero Jiang Ping, and Prefect Yan then sends an official document to the Xiangyang Prince. Understandably, he is angry, and both Deng Che and Lei Ying stand to lose face, from failure and possibly treachery.

Deng Che is first to be interrogated, and he confirms that he stole the seal, and entrusted it to Lei Ying to dispose of. It looks like Lei Ying will be the one losing face. Lei Ying, however, was captured during the theft, and made the discovery that Deng Che had unbeknown to him slipped the seal out of its case and abandoned him to his pursuers. He therefore hates Deng Che and doesn't feel any compunction about shifting the blame on to Deng Che. He cunningly adapts Deng's ruse to his own purposes, telling the Prince that he was already harbouring suspicions about Deng Che, and that Prefect Yan must have hidden the real seal and reproduced a false one, which Deng Che then stole.

It is now Deng Che who stands to lose face for his incompetence. Lei Ying rubs it in by calmly suggesting that everyone must sit down and discuss matters. But Deng knows that if he to regain face, extreme measures are required: he must vent his anger by going and killing the prefect! At the same time, he knows that this is a difficult task, so he issues a challenge; anyone who has courage may come with him. This serves two purposes: it states clearly that he is taking courageous action to make up for his blunder, and it also (if he's lucky) gets him an ally in his mission.

Face, on the other hand, is purely local. *Face* gained in a community outside the area in which the character can use their **respect** does not count towards increasing **respect** in the character's home district. *Face* points may be lost outside a home area, and this may lead to a loss of **respect** in that area, but unless details are somehow passed on to the character's home area, they will not lose *face* at home.



INFLUENCE

In the course of social relations, it often happens that a person needs to obtain a favour from another person. If the two people involved are player characters, then the players may decide what happens by role-playing. If one of the people is controlled by the referee, however, it is useful to have some rules to decide on the outcome of the influence attempt.

If the character being influenced owes the influencing character a favour, then refusing to provide the favour asked for will cause them to lose 5 points of *face*, if the fact becomes known. This applies to player characters as much as referee characters.

Influence may be applied in several ways. The first choice is whether the influence attempt is done through direct or indirect means. A direct attempt means that the character approaches the person he wishes to influence, and speaks to them. Skills appropriate to this type of influence attempt include RHETORIC (for persuading mandarins), COMMERCE (for persuading merchants), MANNERS, DECEPTION, INTIMIDATION, WIT or PRESENCE.

An indirect attempt means that the influence attempt is done in writing. In such a case, appropriate skills would be LITERACY, LETTERS and CALLIGRAPHY.

The next thing to determine is the scope of the influence attempt: is it: within the character's occupation, across occupations but within the character's social class, or across occupation and social class?

Then consult the following table to see which

characteristics are relevant to the influence attempt.

Scope	Ease	Notes
Within occupation	6	+ position and respect - target's position -1 if target higher social class
Across occupation	5	+ respect ± relative occupational status
Across social class	4	+ respect ± relative occupational status ± relative social status

RELATIVE OCCUPATIONAL STATUS

Each occupation is rated with a basic status from 0 to +5. Subtract the occupational status of the person to be influenced from that of the person trying to influence. If the difference between the two is 2 or more, the result is applied as a bonus (positive or negative) to the influence attempt.

If the net difference between the two is 1 or 0, apply this bonus to the influence attempt, then continue as follows. Divide the characters' position scores by two (rounding halves up, as usual). Then subtract the value for the person to be influenced from that of the person being influenced. Apply the result as a bonus (positive or negative) to the influence attempt.

RELATIVE SOCIAL CLASS

Consult the following table to find the bonus to an influence attempt from differences in social status. Do not use this where characters are following the same occupation.

Find the social class of the person making the influence attempt down the left, then look along the top to the initial letter of the social class of the person being influenced. The number given is the bonus to the chance of making an influence attempt. Note that the amount by which it is easier to influence someone lower in status is generally lower than the difficulty the low status person faces in attempting to influence someone of high rank.

	I	O	F	A	M	L
Imperial Family	0	+1	+2	+2	+3	+4
Official	-1	0	0	+1	+2	+3
Farmer	-2	-1	0	+1	+2	+3
Artisan	-3	-2	-1	0	0	+1
Merchant	-5	-3	-2	-1	0	0
Lower class	-6	-5	-4	-2	-1	0

SITUATIONAL MODIFIERS

There are a large number of subtleties involved in the use of influence, and the referee will have to use plenty of imagination and insight in order to apply situational modifiers. Here are a few examples:

Very difficult request -1 to -3

If the favour required isn't very easy for the person to provide, then a penalty should be applied.

Mutual benefit +1 to +3

If the favour benefits the person being influenced as well as the person influencing them, a bonus should be applied to the chance of success.

Ungrateful -1

Trying to influence someone to whom you already owe one or more favours leads to a modifier of -1.

Relationship +1 to +3

If the person being influenced has a relationship of some kind with the character attempting to influence them, this will increase the chance of influence. The strongest relationship is that of family (simply sharing the same family name counts for +1), but other relationships may include friendship and exchange of gifts.

Inducements +half *wealth bonus*

Money and gifts may also be used to increase chances of success. A character with a bonus in TASTE that exceeds their **wealth** bonus may add an additional +1 to their chance, by selecting particularly appropriate gifts. If used against an official, however, a failure at the influence attempt may be followed by arrest for corruption.

SUCCESS

Failure in the influence attempt means that the favour has been refused. Success means that the favour will be granted, but the degree of success indicates the enthusiasm with which the favour will be carried through. A result of snake-eyes might suggest that although the favour is granted, it is done so in such a way as to inconvenience the character who requested it. In any case, if a favour is granted, the recipient acquires a debt of obligation to the person who granted it.

PLAYER CHARACTERS

When player characters are on the receiving end of influence attempts (whether from other player characters, or referee characters) there is no need to use this system. The player may simply decide for themselves whether they wish to grant the favour or not. If they do, they will be owed a favour by the person they grant the favour to.

PATRONS

Usually characters will have to employ influence in order to acquire patrons. This is especially true in the case of teachers, who normally have to be persuaded to take on a new student. In such cases, there may well be additional situational modifiers based on the proclivities of the teacher in question. Further, an aspiring character may be expected to prove their dedication. This may entail the performance of a task, or the patron may automatically refuse the first two

influence attempts to see whether the potential student is persistent enough.

In some cases, however, characters will have no say in the patrons they acquire. Servants rarely choose their masters, and soldiers never choose their officers!

JIMING HIGH

It may seem impossible for a low status character to obtain anything from anyone important. However, there are ways and means other than robbing an Imperial Mint and using the proceeds to smooth the way. The best way to reach high without bankrupting yourself is to use intermediaries. Aim for someone of higher status than yourself, who is nevertheless within your reach in influence. The favour you ask of them is to petition someone on your behalf. If successful, you will owe a favour to the important person who helps you. You will also owe *two* favours to the intermediary (one for acting on your behalf, and another to compensate for the fact that *they* now owe a favour to the important person). In theory, it is possible to use more than one intermediary, though as you can see, this will result in you owing a lot of people a lot of favour.

With money, a dragon;

without money, a worm

MONEY

It is not actually necessary to note down exactly how many coins and other forms of money your character happens to possess. What matters is whether he can afford to buy something or not. For that, the wealth bonus is used, in combination with any appropriate skills your character may be able to use to get a better price.

Money is an important part of society, though, so details are provided of the various types of currency in use.

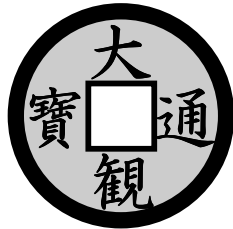
BUYING THINGS

Rather than worrying about the precise amount of money possessed by a character, this game abstracts matters by focusing on whether they have enough ready cash available to buy whatever it is they want, and whether the item is available. This can be handled as a standard skill check.

Assuming a particular item is available, a character can afford to buy anything which has a price of less than or equal to their **wealth** bonus. There is no need to make a roll, so long as the character is buying an item for personal use, as against doing business for profit.

If the price of an item equals or exceeds the character's **wealth** bonus, a roll must be made. The ease of buying an item is 7, less the item's price. To this you can add your

wealth bonus, your skill in COMMERCE, and any other skill that the referee allows. Remember to subtract 2 if you don't have a positive wealth bonus. Success at the roll means that you have enough money to buy the item. However, if the degree of success of the roll is less than the price of the item, you will suffer a penalty of the difference to rolls to purchase anything else for a month.



Copper cash of the Great Prospect period of the reign of Hui Zong

CURRENCY

The standard coinage of China is the cash, a small copper coin with a hole through the middle. A string is a number of cash threaded on to a knotted rope. The common people's string is referred to as a 'hundred', as it has 100 cash threaded on it. An official string, however, as recognised by the administration, is 1000 coins. An official string is worth about the same as an ounce of silver (called a tael) which, though not an official form of currency, is widely accepted, and considered a more prestigious form of money. Gold, of course, is even more prestigious, and extremely rare.

In addition, promissory notes (effectively paper money) are issued by prestigious merchants or merchants' guilds, and the government. The merchant notes are rarely acceptable as currency except to affiliated merchants or organisations. The government notes, on the other hand, are widely acceptable, but valid only within the circuit in which they are issued. They are also guaranteed not against gold or silver, but against salt. Finally, certificates for the ordination of monks, because of their usefulness, are widely accepted as a form of paper money, though the nominal value of 220 strings might be negotiable (on the black market it might sink as low as 20 strings).

ECONOMIC REGIONS

The cost of living in the Capital is rather different to that in the country. For this reason, earnings bonuses are relative to the economic region the character is living in. Characters who move will find that their earnings bonuses are affected. The three economic regions, in order of affluence, are:

- Court
- Town
- Country

The difference between these zones is 1. This means that a character from the country, with an **wealth** bonus of +1, who moves to the town, will find that his **wealth** bonus has

disappeared. If the same character then attempts to penetrate the rarefied atmosphere of the Court, he will suffer from a -1 **wealth** bonus.

Conversely, someone from the Court without a **wealth** bonus who leaves to live in the town (perhaps a retired Minister?), will gain a +1 on his **wealth** bonus. If he prefers a more pastoral environment, and moves to the country, his bonus will become +2.

Note, however, that these differences are based on the character pursuing a more or less similar type of life. In practice, the Minister who retires will sacrifice some of his position, and this may lead to a loss of income, counteracting the benefit due from moving to the country.

EARNINGS

Your character's **wealth** bonus represents the overall affluence of the character's family. It therefore includes property and possessions. It reflects the character's ability to spend money on items which are surplus to the necessities of life: food and clothing appropriate to their social station. Players need not worry about such things except in special circumstances (such as on a journey), or if their earnings bonus is negative, in which case obtaining enough food becomes a matter of utmost priority.

The scale for **wealth** bonuses is not linear: each successive point of bonus represents a vastly greater level of wealth.

CHANGING WEALTH BONUS

The most obvious way in which a **wealth** bonus can change is through a change of job. Earnings bonuses may increase as characters obtain higher positions within their occupations.

Characters may lose **wealth** through imprudent purchases, or the effects of bad joss.

Characters who acquire treasure through unusual circumstances may find that they have enough to increase their overall **wealth** bonus. That merchant you attacked on the road may have been carrying a fortune in gold. How do you rate such a haul? The easiest way to do so is to rate any fortune in *taels*. *Taels* are like *face* points which can only be spent on **wealth** bonuses. Thus a character with a +2 **wealth** bonus who benefits from the above-mentioned merchant's fortune (let's say, 16 *taels*) would go up to +3 and still have a *tael* left over.

Characters who wish to be extremely generous can use the above idea to convert their **wealth** bonus into *taels*. For example, if a wealthy merchant (+4 **wealth**) decides to renounce the world and become a monk, he might convert his bonus into *taels* (20+15+10+5=50) and distribute that among the poor of the area.

THE MARKET

Although the outlaws of China obtain most of their equipment by theft, the rest of the country must make do by paying for things with money. Although there is a certain

amount of barter, the economy is quite sophisticated and the use of money is the norm in the cities at least.

One problem that characters may face, however, is in the availability of goods. There are restrictions on who may own weapons in a town, and while it is possible to bypass these, a reputable armorer is unlikely to risk his livelihood by selling to someone who isn't entitled to carry arms. Similarly, the supply of exotic items in a country market is likely to be patchy, to say the least.

The lists provided here are not so much to encourage players to go to town buying and selling, but to give you some idea of what sorts of things are available.

WEAPONRY

Prices of weapons depend primarily on their quality. They will also vary dramatically according to the circumstances of sale. Since owning military weapons is technically forbidden to those who are not either licensed or employed by the government (soldiers, constables and so on), it may be difficult to obtain weapons at the 'official' prices listed.

In these tables, weapons subject to military restrictions are given in italics.

	<i>Poor</i>	<i>Average</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Fine</i>
Axe	1	3	4	-
<i>Battle-axe</i>	1	3	5	-
<i>Chain</i>	1	3	5	-
Club	1	-	-	-
Dagger	-	2	4	6
Flail	1	2	4	-
<i>Halberd</i>	1	3	5	7
<i>Hammer</i>	1	3	4	-
<i>Hook</i>	1	3	5	-
Knife	1	-	-	-
<i>Lance</i>	1	3	5	-
<i>Mace</i>	-	2	4	-
<i>Sabre</i>	1	3	5	7
<i>Shield</i>	1	3	5	-
<i>Spear</i>	1	3	4	-
Staff	1	2	4	-
<i>Sword</i>	3	3	5	7

Missile weapons are not rated according to quality in the same way. All of the weapons listed below, with the exception of a light bow, are considered military weapons. A light bow is acceptable for hunting purposes, but carrying it on the streets of a town would probably attract the unwelcome attention of the local constables.

Bows with increased or decreased pull can be made by increasing the price by one point.

	<i>Price</i>
<i>Composite bow</i>	3
<i>Heavy crossbow</i>	5
<i>Javelin</i>	2
Light bow	2
<i>Light crossbow</i>	4

ARMOUR

Availability of armour is pretty much restricted to members of the military, officers of the militia or, exceptionally, constables. An ordinary person ordering a suit of armour from an armorer is likely to be reported to the local magistrate unless they ensure that the armorer has good reason not to do so. Of course, it is possible to obtain armour in other ways (most notably theft).

Metal and full armour must be fitted to the character. If not, it will count as an encumbrance of -1 in combat.

	<i>Price</i>
<i>Light armour</i>	3
<i>Medium armour</i>	4
<i>Metal armour</i>	5
<i>Full armour</i>	6