

ancient secrets for



HEXAGRAMS

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Ah so, noble guest. You do my shop great honor with your august presence. What's that you say, *gweilo*? You don't want any of my fine herbs and powders? Then why are you here? Hexagrams? What you say, hexagrams? Ancient Chinese secrets? I know nothing of such things! Hmmm, that is a very large bag of money, honored guest. Perhaps I do know something of what you seek...

ancient chinese secrets

We Chinese have always known about magic. For many thousands of years, we have practiced arcane arts such as reading the *I Ching*, or *Book of Changes*, to tell fortunes; arranging the *feng shui* of a building to bring luck and prosperity to those who live there; and *ming sun*, the art of reading the future in the stars. Chinese wizards – *fang-shih*, in our tongue – were using potent magic when your honored ancestors were wearing furs and living in caves.

But our magic, like Western magic, was a chancy thing. Sometimes it worked perfectly, but more often, it did not; until 1863. In that year, sorcerers all over China began to notice that their powers worked correctly, most of the time.

The first to take advantage of this were the wizards aiding the **Taiping Rebellion**, in which my countrymen were attempting to cast off the yoke of the cursed Qing Dynasty and restore the true Chinese emperor to the throne. The Rebellion had nearly been crushed by the Qing army when the newly-awakened powers of the *fang-shih* breathed new life into the struggle. But the *fang-shih* of the Qing (*may dogs sleep on their graves!*) learned quickly. By 1868 they had ended the Rebellion once and for all. Many of us who fought in the rebellion fled here, to the great Mountain of Gold, in search of fortune and refuge.

All *fang-shih* gained much knowledge from the battles of the Taiping. We learned how to throw the *I Ching* to do more than just tell fortunes. In truth, our honored ancestors were wiser than we knew, for within the *Book of Changes* and other ancient texts were instructions for casting many powerful spells. Slowly, surely, we have learned much of their wisdom, but undoubtedly more remains. We call our powers

“hexagrams,” after the hexagrams of the *I Ching*.

Teach them to you? I cannot just snap my fingers and poof! you are *fang-shih*! It takes years of learning – and more enlightenment about the ways of the world than a Westerner such as you will ever possess.

Oh, all right, if you insist...

learnin' hexagrams

In order to learn hexagrams, a *Deadlands* character must take the following steps.

- First, he's got to find a teacher. Most *fang-shih* will only teach other Chinese, so if you're a round-eyes, good luck. Contrariwise, *fang-shih* need special teachers (and arcane background: huckster) to learn ordinary hexes, if they ever deign to use them at all.

- Second, the character must take the Edge, *arcane background*: *fang-shih*, and the Aptitude, *academia*: *Chinese occult lore*. Without this Edge and Aptitude, he can't learn the deep mysteries of Chinese sorcery.

- Third, the character must take the Edge, *enlightened*, which is described on page 9 of the Field Report #325 booklet in the *The Great Maze* boxed set. Under the rules there, only a character with martial arts training can buy that Edge, but characters with *arcane background*: *fang-shih* should also be allowed to buy it.

- Fourth, the character must buy the Ch'i Aptitude (FR325, page 15). *fang-shih* characters use all rules from FR325 to determine how many Ch'i Points they have and how they are regained.

The cost for **hexagrams** is the same as that for hexes – one point per level of skill, just like Aptitudes (though of course they cost more when bought with Bounty Points).

Got all that? Then you're set!

castin' hexagrams

Hexagrams aren't cast with playing cards like ordinary hexes are. That wouldn't be very Chinese, now would it? Instead they're more like Ch'i powers from *The Great Maze*. A *fang-shih* draws the power he needs to cast his spells directly

from the **Hunting Grounds** by means of intense physical and mental discipline. His powers are more akin to those of a martial artist or blessed than a huckster or black magician – in fact, *fang-shih* are often considered to be “holy men” and may be devoutly religious.

To cast a hexagram, the *fang-shih* rolls an Aptitude check using his level in that hexagram and the die type for the Trait the hexagram uses. If he gets at least one Onerous (7) success, the hexagram works as described (with possible additional effects if raises are rolled); otherwise it fails. If the *fang-shih* goes bust when rolling his hexagram, he suffers backlash because the energy of the Hunting Grounds disrupts his Ch'i (use the chart in *Hucksters & Hexes* to determine the effects, but substitute loss of Ch'i for any loss of Wind the *fang-shih* would suffer).

The special effects of the various hexagrams are described below. When hexagrams are cast, the *fang-shih's* hands may glow, or ghostly Oriental spirits may whirl around his body, or lightning may arc from his hands. The use of hexagrams is usually pretty obvious (even glaringly so) – *fang-shih* cannot hide their powers. Chinese people are far more accepting of magic than Westerners, so at least among their own people *fang-shih* have less need to hide. Outside of the Chinese camps and ghettos, a *fang-shih* would be well-advised to keep his marvelous powers to himself. Some folks in the Weird West are a bit spooked these days, and using hexagrams just might lead to a necktie party if the *fang-shih* is not careful.

the hexagrams

Here are the hexagrams themselves. The descriptions are the same as those in *Deadlands* and *Hucksters & Hexes*, except that “Hand” is replaced by “Cost,” meaning the basic cost in Ch'i to cast the hexagram (like the “Activation Cost” of Ch'i Powers). Additional Ch'i can sometimes be spent to increase the duration or effect of the hexagram (similar to the “Maintenance Cost” of Ch'i Powers).

beans into men

Trait: Knowledge

Cost: 6

Speed: 2

Duration: 1 round/hexagram level

Range: 10 yards/hexagram level

Tiny beans can overcome the strongest men.

If you don't feel like eatin' your dinner, maybe it can help you in a fight! This hexagram will turn one or more beans (any kind) into men who can fight for the *fang-shih*. The men are shambling mockeries of life, equivalent to the Walkin' Dead (*Deadlands*, page 200). If the hexagram succeeds, one bean-man is created. For each raise, an extra bean-man is created.

breath of cheng lun

Trait: Spirit

Cost: 3

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 20 yards/hexagram level

Cheng Lun's breath more powerful than breath of typhoon.

Folks are going to think you're a walking lantern when you

use this hexagram, but they're in for a little surprise, since you're more like a cannon! The *fang-shih* snorts, making a sound like a bell, and projects two deadly beams of light from his nostrils. (Sure, it looks disgusting, but it works.) The *fang-shih* must use his hexagram skill and Trait die type and roll to hit like a gunshot against a Fair (5) TN, with no range modifiers. The Breath does 1d6 damage, +1d6 damage for each raise.

breath of feng-lin

Trait: Knowledge

Cost: 3

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 round/hexagram level

Range: 20 yards/hexagram level

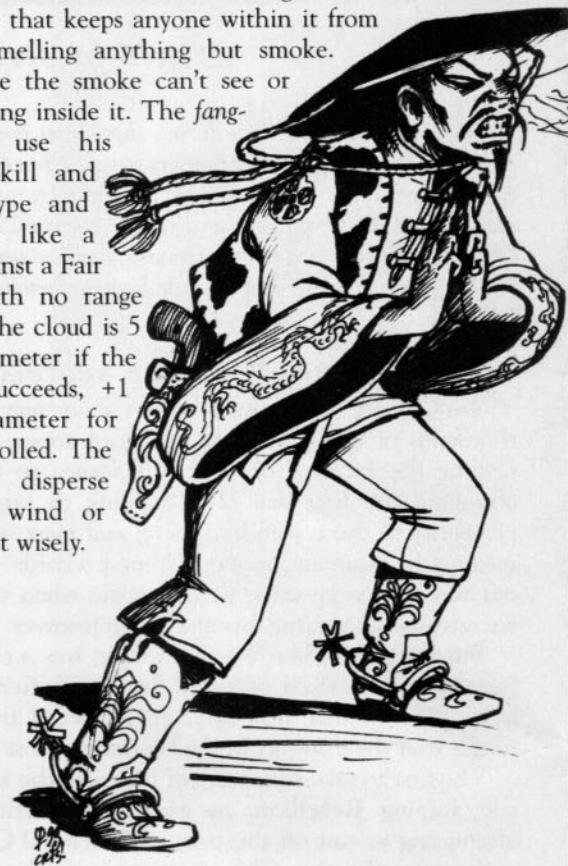
Feng-lin's Breath make fire seem puny.

Feng-lin's Breath creates a billowing cloud of thick black smoke that keeps anyone within it from seeing or smelling anything but smoke.

Folks outside the smoke can't see or smell anything inside it. The *fang-shih* must use his

hexagram skill and Trait die type and roll to hit like a gunshot against a Fair

(5) TN, with no range modifiers. The cloud is 5 yards in diameter if the hexagram succeeds, +1 yard in diameter for every raise rolled. The smoke will disperse quickly in wind or rain, so use it wisely.



i ching

Marshals may wish to ask players to buy a 64-tile set of the *I Ching* and role play the process of deciphering its revelations, with a lengthy sub-plot of enigma hunting and whimsical interactions. For a cheaper alternative, players might just bring some fortune cookies to the game, and break one open every time they need some wisdom.

Marshals should also be aware that by adding Chinese mysticism to their *Deadlands* campaigns, that they are mixing the metaphysics of Eastern philosophies into a world burgeoning to the gills with incongruent magicks. How will the manitou of your world react when summoned by cards, tattoos, holy symbols, and now a *fang-shih's* *I-Ching*?

celestial lotus of invulnerability

Trait: Spirit

Cost: 5

Speed: 1

Duration: Can last 1 round for +2 Ch'i

Range: Self

The tranquility of the lotus surpasses all earthly easements.

Wouldn't think a flower could stop bullets, would you? Well, this one can. To use it, the *fang-shih* must have a card up his sleeve so he can interrupt another character's action. He waits until someone tries to attack him. Then he "interrupts" and uses the hexagram to cause a magical lotus flower to grow from his mouth and block the attack! The lotus provides 1 point of Armor against all attacks, +1 point of Armor for each raise

rolled. The lotus fades away instantly unless two more points of Ch'i are spent to keep it alive for the rest of the round (in which case it

blocks all attacks made against the *fang-shih* that round, then fades away).

the ears of chang tao-ling

Trait: Cognition

Cost: 1

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration

Range: 20 yards/hexagram level

A wise man does not always speak what he hears.

This Hexagram is identical to earshot (*Deadlands*, page 129).

ghost arrow

Trait: Spirit

Cost: 8

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 50 yards/hexagram level

May the spirits of your enemy's ancestors pursue you.

According to Chinese legend, arrows fired by angry ghosts will pierce armor and break the target's back! *fang-shih* can recreate this attack with the ghost arrow Hexagram. The ghost arrow does 2d10 damage, plus another 1d10 for every raise rolled.

hua ren's mantle of fire

Trait: Spirit

Cost: 3

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 round/Ch'i

Range: Self

Tigers and dragons walk through fire unharmed.

The Weird West's a mighty flammable place – dry and filled with tinder. This hexagram helps a *fang-shih* who needs

to protect himself from the flames. It provides Armor against fire damage – minimum success provides 2 points of Armor (reducing most fire damage to d8 instead of d12). Every additional Ch'i spent beyond the base cost provides another point of Armor and extends the duration for another round. The caster must roll the raises for this.

hills to plains

Trait: Knowledge

Cost: 6 + (1/additional hour of effect)

Speed: 1

Duration: 1 hour + 1 hour/raise

Range: See below

Mountain falls before water.

China isn't an easy place to travel in, so an old *fang-shih* put this hexagram in the I Ching to make trips go a little more smoothly. *fang-shih* in the Weird West have found it to be of great use in their new homeland, which isn't any easier to travel in. Hills to plains "evens out" the land in front of the caster's current location for 1 hours' worth of travel, with an additional hour for every raise rolled. (The hexagram doesn't actually change the lay of the land at all, just makes it much easier for the *fang-shih* to travel.) During this time any method of travel the *fang-shih* uses, from his own feet to a stagecoach (but not a train) can move at double its usual rate because the going is so easy. If others are riding in the same conveyance as the *fang-shih*, they get the benefit of the hexagram as well, but anyone else travelling the same route by any other means will not. Nor can anyone other than the *fang-shih* see that the land has been changed in any way (though a huckster using hex sense will be able to tell that magic is being used somehow). However, a huckster using home ground in the affected area can not only tell that magic is being used, but knows the nature of that magic and can take advantage of it (the *fang-shih* will know that he is doing so).

Hills to plains automatically lasts for one hour when it is successfully cast and the Ch'i cost is paid. When the *fang-shih* casts it so well that it lasts for longer than one hour, they must spend an additional point of Ch'i for every extra hour he chooses to maintain the power. This hexagram only works in unsettled wilderness areas; it has no effect in cities or towns.

invocation of the ancestors

Trait: Spirit

Cost: 3

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 20 yards/hexagram level

Do not shame your ancestors, for they have long memories.

In China, one's behavior can cause one's ancestors shame in the afterlife. A good Chinese tries to avoid this – but he doesn't always succeed. Most Westerners don't even know they're supposed to pay attention to what their dead grandpappies think about 'em.

This hexagram summons the spirits of the target's ancestors, who will berate him for his failings, improper conduct, and failure to worship them properly. Only the affected character and the *fang-shih* can see these spirits; to others, the victim will seem to be staring into thin air (and

maybe talking to it or gesturing at it as well, depending on how he reacts.) Unless the character has led a good and blameless life (not likely in *Deadlands*, but possible; Marshal's discretion), he must make an Onerous (7) Guts check (there is a -1 to the roll for every raise the *fang-shih* rolled). Failure indicates that the character will run away screaming, or break down and bawl like a baby. Blessed with the Protection Miracle may use it to defend against Invocation of the Ancestors.

peach blossom star

Trait: Smarts

Cost: 3

Speed: 1

Duration: Concentration

Range: 5 yards/hexagram level

Madness blossoms with the Peach Blossom Star.

This hexagram is identical to mind twist (*Deadlands*, page 130), except that the effect is to lower mental Traits by one die type for a success, plus an additional die type for every raise the *fang-shih* rolls, to a maximum of three die types.

reach of chang tao-ling

Trait: Smarts

Cost: 2

Speed: 2

Duration: 1 round/hexagram level

Range: Self

Great men have long arms.

This hexagram makes the *fang-shih's* arms stretch out. He can grab things which are far away from him, and has +2 to all climbin' rolls made while this hexagram is in use. The caster's arms stretch 1 yard if the hexagram succeeds, +1 yard for each raise rolled.

separating the soul

Trait: Spirit

Cost: 10

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 10 yards/hexagram level

When the soul is divided, the body cannot survive.

This hexagram causes the the target's hun and p'o (superior and inferior souls) to separate, killing him instantly. Of course, this will not work on targets that do not have both hun and p'o, or whose souls are already separated; this would include most undead creatures and certain hell-spawned horrors like Los Diablos. If the *fang-shih* goes bust when he rolls his hexagram check, he will suffer the fate he means to inflict upon his enemy. Ouch.

Using this hexagram isn't exactly good for the *fang-shih's* soul, either – messing around with peoples' souls isn't really



the province of mortals, if you get my drift. Whenever the *fang-shih* uses it, he must perform rituals of atonement within 24 hours, or risk the wrath of the gods. He also risks that wrath if he uses separating the soul too often (Marshal's discretion as to what amounts to "too often," but more than once a week is definitely pushing it). If the gods decide to punish the *fang-shih*, he will suffer bad luck (including -1 on all rolls) until they feel he has atoned properly.

spirit of chang tao-ling

Trait: Spirit

Cost: 4

Speed: 2

Duration: 1 round/hexagram level + 1 round/additional

Ch'i spent

Range: Self

Duality is the nature of all things.

In addition to teaching himself how to hear through another's ears, the great *fang-shih* Chang Tao-ling also learned how to "leave his body behind" and send his spirit forth to spy on his enemies. This hexagram duplicates the Harrowed ability soul flight (*Book O' The Dead*, page 52). The *fang-shih* may extend the hexagram's duration by spending additional Ch'i. If the *fang-shih* botches his hexagram roll, he has hurt himself by improperly separating his body and spirit; the backlash must be a type that causes physical damage. The Marshal should select an appropriate backlash rather than rolling randomly.

thousand-weapons cloud

Trait: Knowledge

Cost: 4

Speed: 1

Duration: Instant

Range: 50 yards/hexagram level

Man with a thousand weapons can defeat army of a thousand men.

This deadly hexagram evokes a dark stormcloud that rains weapons instead of water! Swords, knives, spears, axes, and other weapons come raining down over an area equal to 3 yards' diameter per level of the hexagram. Anyone within that area takes 3d6 damage. For every raise rolled, the damage's Coordination may be increased by one die, or the area affected can be expanded by 3 yards' diameter (player's choice). The weapons created by this hexagram fade out of existence in the round after they fall.

makin' fang-shih

Here are some new Aptitudes for *fang-shih* characters.

chinese divination (i ching, ming sun)

(spirit)

Chinese wizards are well-versed in the art of predicting the course of future events. This Aptitude is how they do it. There are no hard and fast rules for foreseeing the future; the Marshal has to figure out what happens based on the roll. Generally, the more successes and raises the character gets, the further he should be able to see into the future, and the more accurate his perception should be.

There are two Concentrations for this Aptitude. The first is I Ching, which involves interpreting the trigrams and hexagrams in the Book of Changes to predict the future. The *fang-shih* uses marked coins or stalks of the yarrow plant to determine what trigrams and hexagrams will govern the question he seeks to have answered or future he wishes to foresee. The other is ming sun, or Chinese astrology.

Predicting the future – sounds pretty powerful, doesn't it? Well, it's not all it's cracked up to be, pardner. There are a couple of reasons for this. First, it takes a long time to get an

answer – a minimum of one hour for the *fang-shih* to prepare his hexagrams or charts, consult the proper reference works, and determine the outcome and what it means – and the further he wants to see into the future, or the more important the undertaking he's inquiring about, the longer it takes. During this time he needs to concentrate in an undisturbed place, which isn't always so easy to find in the Weird West. Second, Chinese Divination does not provide exact answers to questions. Instead, it is more likely to indicate whether a particular activity is propitious, or if good luck will follow, or when's the best time to start doing something. If a *fang-shih* were to ask, "Can I use my I Ching to determine if there's anything behind that door?" the answer would be, "No." Chinese Divination just ain't that precise. The best he could do would be to find out whether it would be lucky or unlucky to open the door, and that can mean a whole lot of things. Third, remember – the future is not immutable; all is change. The character's actions, or those of his friends, can easily change the future he has seen.

feng shui (cognition)

Feng shui is the Chinese art of arrangement and placement of buildings and houses. A *fang-shih* reads the feng shui (also sometimes known as "dragon lines") to determine the best place to build a house or locate a grave, then counsels the owners on how to build and arrange their house to best channel luck and prosperity towards them, and keep evil spirits at bay.

As with Chinese Divination, the effect of having good feng shui are left up to the Marshal to determine. On extremely good rolls, anyone in the house or building might have luck o' the irish while they're inside, or any evil spirits who enter the building might suffer penalties to any action they take.

With regard to *fang-shih* hexagrams, proper use of feng shui may make them easier or harder to cast. In areas where the feng shui is helpful to the sorcerer, the Chi cost of the hexagram may be reduced by 1 or more. If the feng shui is against him, it may be increased by 1 or more.

for further reading

Readers interested in finding out more about Chinese magic, its "special effects," and the lore behind it, can consult these books.

Chinese Myths and Fantasies, Cyril Birch

A Dictionary of Chinese Symbols, Wolfram Eberhard

Dragons and Dynasties, Yuan Ke

Myths of China and Japan, Donald Mackenzie

An Encyclopedia Of Myth And Legend: Chinese Mythology, Derek Walters

Myths And Legends Of China, E. T. C. Werner

