

TM
JADETECH
white jade

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A Reroll Productions Publication
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Jadotech: White Jade

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First published in 2015 by Reroll Productions.

6885 W. Lone Mountain Rd. #161, Las Vegas, NV 89108

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Flying Iron

The inside of Saint Ignatus Church was dim and cool, a contrast to the blazing mid-afternoon heat baking the rutted cobblestones outside. Shen tugged a heavy stone water basin in front of the immense double doors, ramming it under the candlestick that held them shut. Behind him, a black robed priest was protesting in eloquent Aerish as Alistair tore a strip of yellow silk from one of the wall hangings. The sailor slumped in the corner of a pew, pale and bleeding. He held a folded square of white jade-laced sailcloth under one arm.

Shen turned from the door and tucked his hands into the copious sleeves of his new robe. It was only new to him, but he liked it. It felt civilized. "Our apologies, father. I was given to understand that the Church of Ehal offered refuge and solace to those in need. As you can see, my friend has been shot and . . ."

"By the guard!" The priest wailed. "There is nothing in the sacred texts about harboring criminals!"

Alistair moved with quick fingers, twisting the expensive silk cloth around his friend's arm and then middle. "Because, the guard only ever chases criminals . . ."

How or why the Kausao city guard had been waiting for them when the three escapees had exited the Túyang Market District, Shen would never know. Cutting back and forth through the narrow alleys and side streets left very little time to recount who knew they were in the city and might have given them up to the authorities. The guards were smarter than he remembered—by the time the sailor had taken a bullet to the arm and another to the gut, Shen realized that they were being herded toward a specific location. With that in mind, Alistair suggested they break the pattern and get off the streets entirely. The tiny side door they ducked into was the back entrance of a church, and the only other exit was through the double doors opening onto the busy street outside. Now they were trapped with guardsmen at either door.

There was an explosive slam, and the candlestick between the great iron handles bent. Shen cleared his throat. "It appears they have brought up the ram."

The sailor stirred. There were dark rings beneath his eyes and he winced as he sat up. He pushed Alistair away. "Leave me, buddy. You done right by me this whole way back. Give me the guns and the knife and I'll hold them here."

Alistair shook his head. There were tears in the corners of his bright blue eyes. "Like hell."

The priest gave a remonstrative grimace, then caught Shen's eye and seemed to think better of it.

Shen paced past the door as the ram hammered home again. The candlestick bent further this time, with a ringing groan. One of the candles fell to the floor and rolled away under a pew. Shen smiled. "Do you have a bell, father?"

"Yes, we have three. White Jade and good iron. All the way from blessed burning hills of Aerum."

Shen nodded. With a jerk, he pulled the rest of the silk hanging Alistair had shredded from the wall. "Thank you, father. Great Ehal may have mercy on us yet, his servant notwithstanding."

Tucking a shoulder under each arm, they hauled the sailor through a narrow doorway and up the winding staircase of the belltower. Like most Ehalian churches, Saint Ignatus was two stories with a steep roof and a bell tower that rose another forty feet above it. On holy days, the bells could be heard almost anywhere in Kausao City.

Shen lowered the sailor against the short wall of the belfry and glanced into the street below. A squad of armored guardsmen were standing in a v-formation, swords drawn, preparing to rush the doors the moment the ram broke through. A swelling crowd of onlookers was blocking the street entirely. Beyond them, half a mile off, Kausao Bay gleamed in the bright sunshine.

Alistair looked grim. "You know someone with an airship, Shen? Someone you can signal?"

The dark eyed Túyangan shook his head and glanced overhead at the great iron bells. Just as the priest

had said, a lovely jade inlay of Ehalian symbols covered the outside of each bell. The white jade inlays made the bells lighter, allowing for more and larger bells to be hung in much smaller belfries. A clockwork system of windlasses and cranks rang the bells with ease. "Got your knife?"

Alistair nodded and pulled a curving Naramel blade from his belt. It had been one of the first things the boy had retrieved upon returning to the city. Shen pointed upward. "Cut me down the middle bell and save all the rope you can from the twist lines."

While the boy scrambled up the wall and onto the beam overhead, Shen stripped off his robe. He sat against the wall next to the now glassy-eyed sailor. "Remember when you taught me how to make a rope?"

The sailor gave him a wan smile. "You were terrible at it."

A few moments later, the robe and what was left of the yellow silk hanging had been transformed into a pair of thin but sturdy ropes, and the great bell was laying on its side on the belfry floor. Four short lengths of hemp rope, worn smooth, lay next to it. Looping the rope Shen had made around the bell, he knotted it tight. Unfolding the sailor's sail cloth, he found the four corners and threaded the twist lines through the metal grommets he found. These he tied to the loop of robe around the bell. With the last of his homemade rope, he tied the bell clapper to the crank on the opposite side of the room.

Together the two able-bodied fugitives pushed the bell to the edge of the tower until the narrow end jutted out of the belfry, over the roof. Alistair looked at Shen. "You're not making a weapon, are you?"

Shen smiled. "Not this time."

Together they helped the sailor into the bell and Alistair followed. Across the room, the crank groaned as the bell overbalanced and the line went tight. Shen smiled and tucked himself in after Alistair. "Shoot that crank for me, will you Alistair? I believe I can fly"

The boy nodded. "I . . . I think I believe you."

There was a deafening shot, a snap, and the bell dropped into thin air, falling away from the tower. Shen counted to three and flung out his arms, releasing the bundled sail cloth. There was a jolt. Shen held his breath as the cloth billowed, catching more wind than was naturally possible, and the lines at each corner went tight. There was a moment of weightlessness, and then silence.

Shen peaked over the side of the bell. The rooftops of Kausao City were rushing past below them in a blur. Here and there a squad of guardsmen looked up in shock. Shen laughed and sat back. There was no steering a flying bell, but there was little catching it either. Here below the airship's safest altitude, they could float for hours unmolested if they so desired.

Alistair shook his head. "They always did say white jade was Ehal's gift to man."

Shen tapped his own temple with a finger. "Among other things."



Welcome to the Jadetech Series

Jadetech defines the world of *Jadepunk*. It shapes everyday life and allows for a level of technology and understanding far beyond what would otherwise be possible. At its core, jade defies the laws that are considered the normal laws of nature. Any attempt to codify these exceptions to the natural order in any but the loosest of ways has failed. Many philosophers hold that jade—and by extension, Jadetech—is proof that the universe is unknowable in any way beyond the superficial. Others maintain the hope that some underlying principle or series of principles will emerge and explain the jade phenomena with some sort of grand, unified law.

What is White Jade?

White jade is second only to black jade in rarity. Found on mountain tops and windswept plains, it is associated with air, breath, reason, and freedom. It allows for the control of gravity and, to a lesser extent, mass. Without it, the Four Great Nations would only be three—it is critical for the survival of the Aerum Empire. Airships, floating cities, and all manner of wonders are made manifest through the use of white jade. In its natural form it is either found in massive veins high in the mountains, or in particulates carried by the winds. In the northern plains of Aerum, great wind traps have been built to collect this white jade dust for refinement. In the mountains, mines thread through the native lands of the Aerish. The mountains of Aerum are the largest source of white jade in the world, though the Xibu Bati range near Kausao City is a close second. Elsewhere miners are lucky to pull more than a few grams of the precious mineral out of the veins per day. White jade is easily worked and easily refined; the only difficulties lie in finding enough of it to use. While it is not as malleable as blue jade, that small bit of rigidity actually makes it a favorite of engineers and alchemists. It holds its shape and abilities once set while also being easily remolded when it is brought back to the proper form. White jade is both constrained and free, both chaotic and ordered. It exists as a contradiction and through its use white jade has opened up whole new areas of technology and research.

History of White Jade

Even after the discovery of red jade led to the search for other forms of jade, white jade remained hidden in the lands of the Aerish people. In those days, Aerum was a small and weak nation hidden high up in the mountains, a primitive and backward people surrounded by powerful enemies. As the news of jade began to move throughout Aerum, brought by Naramel missionaries, the ancient Aerish began to recall the stories of their ancestors. It was said that they were descendants of the great birds and first dwelt upon a great jade island in the sky before being cast down to earth for stealing the secrets of the gods. While some doubted that the great jade island existed, they began searching the mountains for jade. In the Yuraq valley of Comn, where the first man was said to have fallen from the sky, the Aerish discovered a large vein of white jade.

Within fifty years the Aerish would use the white jade to conquer nearly all of the surrounding nations—only a few would hold out for any length of time. As white jade was easy to work with and they held the only supply, the Aerish rapidly became a major power in the mountain nations of the content that would soon bear their name. It would take the invention of the airship to force the world to recognize their power, though. What started as a mere curiosity has rapidly become the driving force behind trade the world over. While others have constructed airships since their invention, Aerum still has the largest fleet and, they claim, the finest ships in the sky.

Airship Designs

Airships are still based around the designs of the Aerish ships. They tend to be brightly painted with heavily artistic designs. The ships of Aerum are all designed to look somewhat like the mythic birds of their stories and legends. The current royal family has claimed sole right to use the image the great sunbird Re Pitca, mythical father of man. The Túyang and Narmel airships also tend toward designs based around mythical creatures, with dragons, fish, demons, and angels being rather prevalent. The Kaiyumi tend toward very functional designs that look very much like their ocean-going vessels, and they do not view the skyships as central to life as they do sea going vessels. They tend toward utilitarian and drab designs compared to the other great nations, lacking in the traditional family carvings and paintings of their Sea Ships.

Due to the discovery of white jade veins in the Xibu Bati mountain range, there has been an upswing in airship manufacturing by companies outside of the Four Winds Trading Company. This has led to quite a bit of tension between white jade mine owners. Those who had gotten used to having a monopoly on the precious jade are trying to push others from pursuing it. To further complicate things, other nations and corporations are seeking to capitalize on this perceived weakness in Aerish interests.

Refinement

White jade is some of the most difficult jade to gather in any meaningful amount. Miners must ascend to great heights, where the air is thin and the gravity increases, to tap into the veins. On the windswept plains, complicated and dangerous wind-catchers must be deployed to pull in the small amounts of jade dust. Were it not for the extreme value of white jade this type of mining wouldn't be worth the trouble. As it stand, however, miners pull in just enough to make a minor profit. Recently, a few people have begun an attempt to domesticate white jade infused moss as a means of pulling white jade from the air and soil. Initial crops look promising, as the moss seems to purify the jade as it pulls it from the soil. Only time will tell if this method will become economically viable.

The refinement process is pretty simple; white jade is the most forgiving of the jades when it comes to heating and cooling. It must be heated to any temperature above 800 degrees fahrenheit (427 °C) and any temperature below 1200 degrees fahrenheit (649 °C). It must then be cooled back to room temperature. There is a great debate among those who refine raw white jade as to whether slowly or swiftly cooling the jade makes for the best final product. Currently there seems to be no significant difference in the outcome of either method. When white jade has been slowly cooled and has fully crystallized after refinement, it loses its milky opalescence and becomes almost perfectly clear, whereas quickly cooling it causes small crystals to form, and the jade shimmers like a white jewel.

Quality of life uses

White jade is both useful and rare. While it does not have the omnipresence that some of the other jades do, it has several powerful and obvious effects on the world as a whole. Airships opened the world up in ways that were impossible before, allowing for travel across the vast mountain ranges and oceans that separate the great nations. In Kausao City the jade rail is a vast network of white jade rail lines, a monument to graft, mismanagement, and poor planning. The railway's cars can take passengers in large numbers nearly anywhere in the city at high velocity, carried along by the white jade's ability to manipulate gravity. However, the network is not all connected and it is run by the corrupt Bureau of Internal Transportation. The train cars are never on time, and they rarely go where one wants to go. Knowledge of the jade rail schedule is treated very much like predictions for the weather.

Resurrectionists: Those who seek out the bodies of folk who made heavy use of jade to harvest the jade from their corpses. A hideous practice, it is looked down on by society at large. On occasion they will be hired to steal bodies for doctors practicing the illegal act of autopsy. Should they be caught, the punishment can vary depending on who catches the resurrectionist. In the Kaiyumi controlled lands a resurrectionist faces summary execution, whereas the crime is nearly nonexistent in Aerum as the standard practice of cremation means their are few corpse to loot.

Other important uses are in the realms of metalwork and communication. The Air Hammer is a way of manipulating metals without dealing with heat treating. It has allowed for some metals to be shaped without losing their strength or flexibility. Many smiths are quite excited about this new development as it allows for whole new schools of thought for materials innovation. Of more immediate interest to most is the advent of the wind caller. While it is derivative of the water caller, developed in Kaiyu, it is league beyond that technology in applicability. It allows for long distance communication between two device in real time. Currently the technology is heavily restricted for government use, though many companies have hidden wind callers to remain ahead of the competition.

Natural Jade infusions

White Moss is imbued with white jade and is neutrally buoyant in the air, and causes anything it covers to become neutrally buoyant as well. Generally it is found in the high mountain valleys, little green balls of moss floating in the air, holding up small rocks with its strange power.

Aerish royal mountain parrots, white jade infused parrots with high intelligence (for birds), are used by the noble houses of Aerum as message carriers. They take very well to training and have the uncanny ability to mimic sounds. Those raised by the Aerish nobles have been trained to recognize faces and carry small verbal messages or notes from one noble to another.

Wind caller

A recent Kaiyumi invention that allows transmission of messages across distances by way of the wind. These devices are incredibly expensive and highly controlled—the governments and large corporations are the primary users of this device. Other's might have one or two (criminal cartels and super rich individuals), but this device is still quite rare.

Royal Mountain Parrots

Portrayal: White Jade Infused Parrot

Need: An Ordered World

Instinct: Obey the Master

The Jade Siren is a small shrub that releases a white jade-laced toxin into the air around it. Any animals that breathe in the toxin become lethargic and contemplative. The victims of the plant's toxin will sit next to the shrub until they die. The plant's root system then absorbs the decomposing matter of the victim. Know the Jade Siren by the yellow and red spotted blooms growing into and out of skeletons spaced in a rough circle around the core plant. It tends to grow in large clusters of the plants, spreading slowly outward.

Escape the Siren's Clutches

Most people are too large to be very affected by the Siren plant, but the plant can cause many complications in a hero's day. When a character approaches a Siren plant they must make a Scholar roll (+2 difficulty) to detect the skeletons and dead creatures surrounding the plant. Should they get close enough then they must make a Scholar (+5) or Explorer (+3) roll to resist a minor consequence (related to lethargy or a desire to stay near the plant). If you are attempting to create an antidote to the toxin, or to somehow create a stronger toxin, you would use an Engineer ability and follow the standard rules for asset creation (page fifty-six of *Jadepunk: Tales from Kausao City*). If you are in the middle of a conflict or contest within the range of the plant, the difficulty for the rolls to notice and resist it should increase by between 1 and 3, depending. Each roll is only rolled once per character in the area, so all it can do is make a current issue worse.

Complications

If white jade is improperly refined it can become far more dense than it should be, or it can become intensely fragile. A few artists have begun working with white jade specifically to construct delicate pieces, seeing it as a challenge. Overdosing on white jade concoctions has been known to cause many problems, both physical and mental. It can cause the user to become too focused, causing obsessions within the user, usually related to the task at hand. Also, it has been known to cause overconfidence or an overestimation of one's own strength and understanding. This belief stems from the increased reason and logical understanding of the world around the user. In addition to that, white jade can shut down emotional recognition and decision making. While users are not quite stripped of will, those who overindulge in white jade can become unable to create a hierarchy of needs or desires. They will see all wants as being equally valid. Abusers can also become physically weaker, losing muscle and bone density. This is due to their body losing weight, but not mass. The longer they indulge in jade abuse, the lighter they become and the less their body needs to work to keep functioning. In the later stages, white jade users will need the jade in order keep their lungs pumping and their heart beating. Should they ever stop, their whole system will shut down.

White Jadetech Assets

Opal Steel:

Using methods similar to Demalian Steel, Opal Steel is a steel alloyed to white jade that makes it interact with physics in interesting ways. When used in construction it acts as a beautiful and super light material without losing any strength. However, when used in any tool with moving parts, it allows for an ease of movement and an increase in momentum. By manipulating the mass of the item in mid motion it can create clocks that stay wound for months, swords that swing far harder than they should, and carts that become easier to move the longer they are pushed or pulled.

Heaven's Hammer

Designed specifically to take into account the special effects of Opal Steel, this hammer is constructed entirely out of it. It is double headed, with a pick one one side and a bludgeon on the other. Masters of this weapon have been known to shatter steel, pierce the strongest armor, and even crack refined green jade.

Function Aspect: White Jade Hammer.

Features: Harmful 4

Flaws: Troubling (Uncontrollable Power)

Cost: 2

Variable Mass Whip

A whip designed so that the tip weighs almost nothing during the swing, but upon impact with a solid object its mass becomes nearly infinite. It is immensely dangerous, even for the wielder. Only a master of the various whip or chain-based martial arts should attempt to use this device. The weapon is not a subtle one; it creates a tremendous whip crack that can be heard at a great distance.

Function Aspect: White Jade Gravity Whip

Features: Flexible (you may use Explorer in place of Fighter for attacks), Harmful 2

Flaws: Situational (can only be used when you have moved during this round), Troubling (Thunderous Whip Crack)

Costs: 1

Mark 5 Accelerator Gun

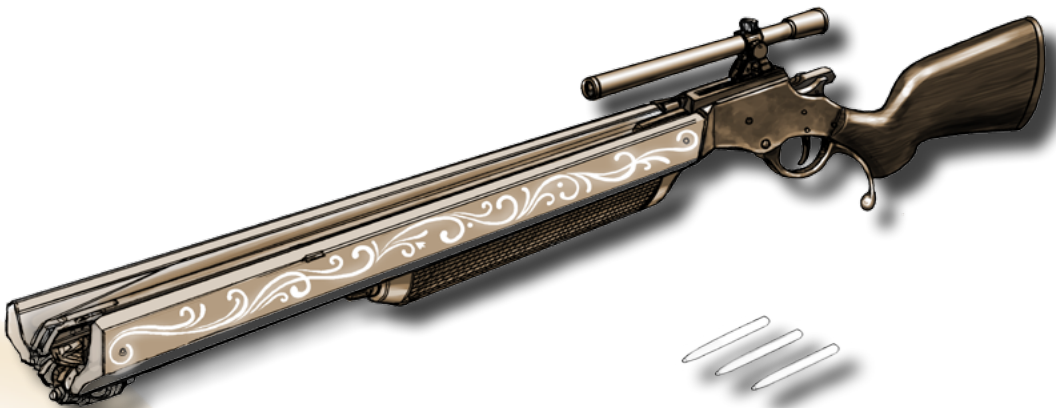
Most armament companies utilize red jade to construct ranged weapons. Red jade casings are reusable and relatively cheap. There has been little impetus to develop alternative methods of dealing death at a distance. However, Wessen-Krupp is a small firearms company in Aerum that is now working on creating an alternative. The genius weapon designer Alfred Krupp discovered that he could use white jade to accelerate a projectile to far greater speeds than red jade casings. After many designs he finalized the Mark 5. Using white jade along the barrel allows for projectiles to be fired at nearly five times the speed of sound. Currently Wessen-Krupp has released a small run to test the weapon's popularity and saleability.

Function Aspect: White Jade Railgun

Features: Harmful 2, Extraordinary (target cannot use stress boxes to negate hits)

Flaws: Demanding 2 (take on action and roll versus +2 Engineer to reload after each shot),

Cost: 2



Empty Sky Boots

Designed by a jade engineer who wished to fix an airship while it was in flight, these boots allow one to achieve subjective gravity. It allows one to alter the plane of gravity in relation to the user of the boots. With these boots the user can walk on walls, ceilings, or whatever surface upon which they would like to walk.

Function Aspect: White Jade Gravity boots

Features: Focus (+2 Explorer), Exceptional (you can walk on walls and ceilings)

Flaws: Situational (only when moving through difficult environments where there is a possible path over physical obstacles), Limited (can be used once per scene)

Cost: 2

Kinetic Enhancers

These elbow-length gloves and knee-high boots designed for the dilettante son of a member of the council of nine allow for the user to climb and jump as if you weighed no more than a couple of pounds. While they were meant to be a unique status symbol for a wealthy son of privilege, the plans went missing shortly after the device was finished. Should a member of the Jianghu find these plans it would be a great tool for hindering the machinery of oppression.

Function Aspect: White Jade Gloves and Boots

Features: Focus 2 (+2 Explorer), Exceptional (gain a +3 when invoking aspects related to movement or terrain)

Flaws: Troubling (Difficult to Judge Momentum), Situational (gain bonus only when moving at full speed)

Cost: 2

Perception Potion

Often abused by freelance detectives to keep an edge during investigations and people who wish to understand the world around them to a greater degree. Know those who abuse it by their milky white eyes.

Function Aspect: White Jade Potion of Perception
Features: Focus 2 (+2 Scholar)
Flaws: (based off of the results of a creation roll)

Infusion of Alacrity

A jade infusion that increases the speed and agility of the user by reducing weight and increasing momentum. Many of the youth gangs in Kausao City seek out these infusions as they can more easily travel over the rooftops and through the narrow alleyways of Kausao.

Function Aspect: White Jade Infusion of Movement
Features: Focus 2 (+2 to Explorer)
Flaws: (based off of the results of a creation roll)

Death Mask

This face mask was designed to allow folks to operate in the deep tunnels and hazardous areas where the air is filled with toxins. The breath mask quickly caught on with the grave diggers and plague doctors, and now the common folk have begun to associate this mask with death and disease. This has led to the folk to name this device a "death mask."

Function Aspect: White Jade Breath Mask
Features: Flexible (use Scholar in place of Explorer), Focus 2 (Scholar +2)
Flaws: Situational (only gain bonus for defense and overcome vs airborne poisons and diseases), Troubling (People Fear The Mask)
Cost: 1

Aether Goggles

These goggles allow for enhanced vision and situational awareness. They were designed for a Naramel noble whose eyesight had begun to fail in his later years. The jadetech engineer who built them realized that if they would grant a nearly blind man sight, they could be used to enhance healthy eyes beyond their normal capacity. The goggles are crafted by mixing a small amount of white jade powder into the glass while it is still molten. Due to the small amounts of jade required, these are fairly common among investigators and explorers.

Function Aspect: White Jade Goggles

Features: Focus 2 (+2 Scholar)

Flaws: Situational (only when dealing with sight-based obstacles within the normal range of vision)

Cost: 1



Skycraft “Fufu”

A sky yacht, repurposed by its current owner as an exploration craft. The owner is Zeng He, a reporter for the Túyang newspaper *Whan Go Gon Bao* (the Ten Thousand Nations People’s Newspaper). He uses it to travel the world and writes a serialized diary of his explorations and adventures. Newspapers are quite popular, even among the illiterate. Many pubs, taverns, and tea houses will have someone read the paper out loud every evening as a method of drawing in customers.

Function Aspect: *White Jade Pleasure Yacht*

Features: Exceptional (instantly leave or appear in a scene, so long as there is a way in or out)

Flaws: Demanding (requires a +2 Explorer roll to take off), Troubling (*Light and fragile craft*)

Cost: 1

HMS “Indefatigable”

During the many small wars that crop up along the borders and colonies of the Aerish Empire, one airship has been at the forefront for the last fifty years. The Indefatigable was the first of the Unstoppable class of airship. It has served with distinction for its entire service, and been the linchpin in a great many battles. Now it is on its last mission before it is to be decommissioned. Captain Smythe is an old and honorable captain who believes he and his ship still have many battles left to fight.

Function Aspect: *Massive White Jade Warship*

Features: Aspect (*Deadliest Warship of the Line*), Exceptional (instantly leave or appear in a scene, so long as there is a way in or out), Protective 2, Sturdy 2, Focus 1 (+1 Engineer)

Flaws: Demanding (requires a +2 Explorer roll to take off), Situational (only when fully manned by a crew of 40)

Cost: 6

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December 2015