

# SCROLL OF FALLEN RACES™



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THE MOUNTAIN FOLK

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## THE MOUNTAIN FOLK

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER ONE: THE MOUNTAIN FOLK	7
CHAPTER TWO: CHARACTER CREATION AND TRAITS	28
CHAPTER THREE: PATTERNS	46
CHAPTER FOUR: STORYTELLING	73



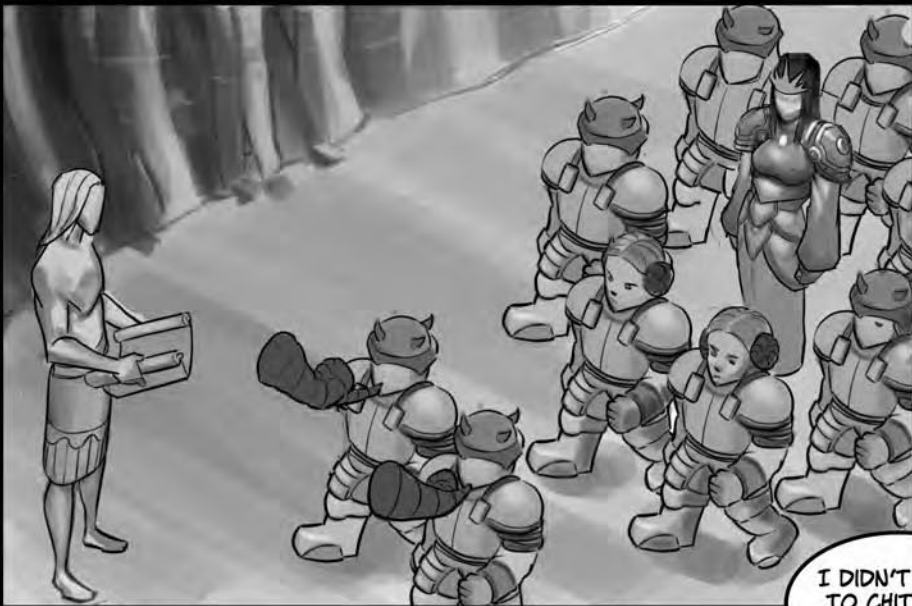
YESSIR.

They're coming.  
Back to work,  
back to work.



Welcome, Your  
Exalted Highness.  
Your visit honors us.  
My name is...

I DON'T  
CARE.



I DIDN'T COME  
TO CHITCHAT.  
WHERE IS IT?



Just beyond  
that archway,  
Madam.



We expect the full  
excavation to take  
several more months.

INCREDIBLE...



# INTRODUCTION

*We want... to plunge into the depths of the abyss,  
Hell or Heaven, what does it matter? into the depths  
of the Unknown to find something new!*  
—Charles Baudelaire, “The Voyage”

Banished to the depths by the machinations of the Solar Deliberative, the Mountain Folk have still managed to carve an empire more advanced than any on the face of Creation into the lightless caverns beneath the world. With the return of the Lawgivers and the growing number of Enlightened Jadeborn, is the Great Geas perhaps soon to be released, allowing the Exalted and the Mountain Folk to regain the brotherhood they once shared during the Primordial War? Or will old prejudices and mistrust further weaken, or finally undo, this proud people?

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**Scroll of Fallen Races—The Mountain Folk** provides the rules and background to run a game that focuses upon Jadeborn characters or to design such characters as allies or antagonists for other **Exalted** games. The book’s contents are as follows:

### Chapter One: The Mountain Folk

This chapter details the history and the society of the Mountain Folk, as well as providing an overview of important city-states and examples of advanced Jadeborn magitechnology.

### Chapter Two: Character Creation and Traits

This chapter supplies the rules you need to create a Mountain Folk character. Also in this chapter, you can find traits unique to Jadeborn characters, as well as information on how to adjust existing traits for the Mountain Folk.

### Chapter Three: Patterns

This chapter focuses on the Charms of the Mountain Folk, organized in Patterns by caste and Enlightenment.

### Chapter Four: Storytelling

The book’s final chapter describes the special factors one must consider when storytelling a game about the Mountain Folk.



## LEXICON

The majority of terms used in the core **Exalted** core book also apply to the Mountain Folk. The following terms, however, refer particularly to Jadeborn characters and their subterranean milieu.

**Artisan:** Those *Jadeborn* who still resemble the *Mountain Folk* from prior to the imposition of the *Great Geas* by *Autochthon*. This *Enlightened* caste rules the whole of their society.

**Autochthon:** The powerful Primordial who shaped the *Mountain Folk*, earning him the title *the Great Maker*.

**Conclave:** A council of *Artisans* who govern each *Mountain Folk* city-state. The Great Conclave, in the capital city of Urvar, directs the *Jadeborn* empire as a whole.

**Darkbrood:** Any race engineered by the Primordials that was either rejected and driven underground by its creators or was forced to retreat there after the Exalted victory in the Primordial War.

**Endless War, the:** A war fought since the High First Age between the *Mountain Folk* and the *Nameless Hordes* of twisted creatures that share their underground world.

**Enlightened:** *Mountain Folk* touched by the genius and inspiration of *the Great Maker*. Historically only *Artisans* composed this group, but the number of *Enlightened undercastes* is on the rise, threatening to upset *Jadeborn* society.

**First, the:** The original *Jadeborn* birthed by *Autochthon* who was the first ruler of his people. After having sought out the *Great Maker* to give his people a purpose, he was caught

and vivisected by the other Primordials, who modeled a new race—humanity—from his form. Seemingly immortal, he survived this treatment to become the twisted creature now known as the Clay Man and never returned to his people.

**Great Geas, the:** A magical compulsion placed on the *Mountain Folk* by *Autochthon* at the behest of the Unconquered Sun so the *Jadeborn* could never threaten the Mandate of Heaven.

**Great Maker, the:** A title the *Mountain Folk* use to describe *Autochthon*, as both the creator of the *Jadeborn* and the greatest crafter among the Primordials.

**Jadeborn:** A term used to refer to the *Mountain Folk* given that they are literally freed from nodules of jade upon their birth.

**Mountain Folk:** A race of beings shaped by the Primordial *Autochthon* from the Essences of Fair Folk trapped in the very substance of Creation upon its formation.

**Nameless Hordes, the:** Any of the violent subterranean creatures that live underground and make war on the *Mountain Folk*.

**undercaste:** Either the *Warrior* or *Worker* caste of the *Mountain Folk* or a member of either caste.

**Unenlightened:** *Mountain Folk* rendered compliant and less intelligent by the *Great Geas*.

**Warrior:** *Undercaste Jadeborn* born to fight in the *Endless War* to defend *Mountain Folk* civilization.

**Worker:** *Undercaste Jadeborn* born to toil in all aspects of *Jadeborn* industry to provide for *Mountain Folk* civilization.



I FEEL THE GREAT MAKER'S TOUCH HERE.



AFTER SO LONG, HAVE I FOUND THAT WHICH I SEEK?



THESE WONDERS... FEW REMAIN WHO ARE CAPABLE OF SUCH CRAFT.



☞ ☞ ☞ ☞







# CHAPTER ONE

# THE MOUNTAIN FOLK

Beneath the Imperial Mountain and deep below half a dozen sites in the Threshold, the mysterious and powerful Mountain Folk live and labor in their subterranean city-states. They also engage in both endless warfare and political machinations against the monstrous creatures that share their underground world. The numbers and activities of the Mountain Folk are largely unknown to the residents of the surface world. They regularly trade some of their advanced goods to surface dwellers across Creation, and Mountain Folk mercenaries companies are occasionally employed in the Threshold by Dragon-Blooded generals. In the Realm, the Mountain Folk construct manses, oversee magitech workshops and serve in the Imperial Army. Yet even the Dynasts know little of their ways or the subterranean realms in which they dwell. Their origins are even more mysterious, with many scholars believing them to be some enduring crossbreed between mortals and earth elementals. A few First Age treatises hint at the truth about these exotic beings, but few today believe these ancient works.

## HISTORY

In the timeless era before the Primordials first built Creation, imposing both fixed substance and linear time, the only intelligences in the primal chaos of existence were the formless Fair Folk. Eventually, something different and unimaginably powerful rose among these beings—complex composite entities known as the Primordials—though their origins are shrouded in mystery. Two of these mighty entities forever changed the nature of existence and inadvertently birthed the Mountain Folk.

These Primordials, Gaia and Cytherea, focused their unimaginable wills to forge chaos into order and almost instantly manifested the entirety of Creation. This order and stability was completely antithetical to the nature of the Fair Folk, who fled from it in terror in the brief moments during which Creation grew from a single mote of Essence to a vast region of enduring stability. Some of these Fair Folk were too close to the center of Creation to escape,

however, and became entombed in its fabric in pockets of solid jade, much like a grain of sand within an oyster forms the heart of a pearl.

## AUTOCHTHON, THE GREAT MAKER

Although he did not help forge Creation, the Primordial Autochthon was fascinated by the newly formed stability and undertook the task of sculpting the land and sea and creating much of the life that lived on and under its surface. The Great Maker also made the first gods, creating them as servants so he and his fellows could while away the time playing the Games of Divinity in the Celestial City of Yu-Shan. Increasingly fascinated with the process of creation, he also crafted all manner of enchantments and wonders made from jade, moonsilver, orichalcum, starmetal, soulsteel, adamant and magical materials that no longer exist.


In the course of his search for new and unique materials, he uncovered deposits of jade different from any other. These buried nodules contained the Fair Folk encysted centuries before. Finding that the sentience within such nodules of jade resisted his attempts to transform them into useful items, Autochthon studied them and, after one failed experiment, learned to work with rather than against this nascent sentience. From one nodule, he shaped a rough-hewn humanoid figure that lived and breathed and remembered nothing of the time before it was given life by Autochthon. Having created it, Autochthon moved on to other projects, thinking little of his strange creation.

Lacking purpose, this first creature languished alone, foraging for its survival, until Autochthon chanced upon it again centuries later and became interested in its potential. He instilled in this Jadeborn creature a need to create and imbued it with a fraction of his own talent. He then ordered it to free the others of its kind and to go forth and create. Afterward, the Great Maker again turned to other projects, while the original Jadeborn began freeing its fellows from stone and building the beginnings of a civilization.

Over the next few centuries, the Jadeborn Mountain Folk freed all of their number from the rock. In the course of doing so, they also built several great city-states, with the largest lying directly underneath Mount Meru, the heart of the Blessed Isle. They then looked for another purpose for their lives. Most prayed to Autochthon for guidance but never received an answer. Others worked to uncover the other buried and hidden denizens of their subterranean world. Entombed in rock, they found behemoths as old as or older than themselves. They also discovered the early creations of the Primordials, abandoned shortly after the formation of Creation, as well as once-natural beings who had been twisted by exposure to untamed founts of buried Essence.

The First, as the Jadeborn that Autochthon had created was known, was also the greatest of his kind. He was immortal and possessed more of the divine spark that Autochthon had used to give him life. He had ruled the Jadeborn for centuries as their undying emperor, but seeing his people in distress and praying for answers that never came, he stepped down.





He chose a Conclave of the wisest Mountain Folk to rule in his stead and worked out rules for universal elections to replace their number. Then the First went in pursuit of Autochthon. He searched both the depths beneath Creation and the surface for more than a century before finding the reclusive Great Maker. All of the Jadeborn's stories report that the two of them talked, but there is no record of what they said to one another. Afterward, the First never returned to his people, and his ultimate fate is unknown. What is known is that he set off to wander Creation and that other Primordials found and vivisected him in order to understand Autochthon's creation. They used this knowledge to create humanity, while the First, being truly immortal, gradually reassembled himself and wandered off, wiser and more bitter.

What is known is that Autochthon spoke to the souls of the Jadeborn. In so doing, he inscribing new purpose upon them. They would now mirror the Great Maker and find fulfillment in creation as he did. The Jadeborn rejoiced and began forging and sculpting great wonders. Their creativity and industry were as prayers to Autochthon, who returned to his own work. From that day forward, the Mountain Folk considered themselves to be the children of the Great Maker.

## THE PRIMORDIAL WAR AND THE GREAT GEAS

As the Games of Divinity enthralled the Primordials, they ceded increasing amounts of power to the gods. For their part, the gods tired of servitude and coveted both Yu-Shan and the Games of Divinity. When the gods began plotting rebellion, they were joined by two Primordials, Gaia and Autochthon. The former was persuaded by her new lover Luna, the latter because the other Primordials used him as a servant, mocked his infirmity and causally destroyed his creations.

While the rest of the conspirators plotted and schemed in vain, Autochthon devised a plan to use nascent humanity as their greatest weapon. He designed a means of imbuing mortals with divine power and gave this secret to the gods so they could make an army of champions. While the gods created the Exalted, Autochthon called upon the Jadeborn to supply them with weapons and armor. Thanks to the combined might of their innate strength and the power of their wondrous panoplies, the Exalted triumphed over the Primordials, and the results of this war transformed Creation. By the end of this war, most other Primordial races lay in ruin. The Dragon Kings were greatly reduced in number and no longer dominated the surface, the Lintha were broken and on the run, and the alaun and many others were rendered extinct. Yet the Mountain Folk continued to rule their subterranean empire.

Unfortunately, the Solar Exalted feared the might of the Jadeborn, feared having the same weapons they supplied the Chosen turned against them, and they prayed to their Celestial patron to protect them. In response, the Unconquered Sun ordered Autochthon to magically bind the creatures he considered to be his children into their underground realm, warning the Great Maker that the gods and the Exalted would destroy the Mountain Folk if he did

not. Autochthon reluctantly complied and laid the Great Geas on his people. Soon after, fearing that the Exalted would turn against him, Autochthon gathered his human followers within his vast form and departed from Creation into the deepest folds of Elsewhere.

## THE FIRST AGE

While humanity and its Exalted rulers flourished during the First Age, the first few centuries of this wondrous era marked the most desperate and terrible era in the Jadeborn's long history. At first, the Great Geas seemed to be of little consequence, as the Jadeborn had always preferred their underground cities to living under the open sky. Because few of the Exalted wished to dwell underground, they left the Mountain Folk strictly along, in return for a yearly tribute of magical materials and artifacts.

The true impact of the Great Geas became apparent only after the Mountain Folk began to die of old age. Although they lived for many centuries, their long lives eventually ended and their spirits re-entered nearby nodules of jade, waiting to be cut free and re-awakened by their living brethren. Unfortunately, the Great Geas splintered the souls of the Jadeborn. Instead of re-entering the jade as they always had, their souls split into five lesser pieces. Although each could be cut free and awakened as before, these partial Jadeborn were dull beings, lacking the genius and the vast physical prowess of their ancestors. Instead of a race of two million brilliant and powerful geniuses, they became a race of 10 million lesser beings, each of which was only slightly more capable than an enlightened mortal. There was a brief panic on the surface as some of the Exalted worried at the greatly increased numbers of the Mountain Folk, but their fears were soon allayed as they realized that these beings were incapable of operating much of their people's advanced machinery. Many on the surface predicted that the Jadeborn would soon become extinct.

## THE BIRTH OF THE THREE CASTES

While many of the Mountain Folk were too dull to care about their greatly reduced state, a handful dreamed of the lost glories of their past. The greatest of these heroes and dreamers was named White Shale. She vowed to search all of the subterranean lands of Creation to find a way to restore her people. She exploring a multitude of caverns so remote that none of her people had ever seen them and, in so doing, also saw legions of forgotten monsters massing beneath the earth. After years of traveling, White Shale found a crystal cave strewn with tools. It was deeper under the earth than her people had ever explored before. Out of a pit of white clay in the center of this cavern, a clay figure arose, proclaiming itself an avatar of Autochthon. This creature then struck White Shale. The hammer blow knocked her unconscious, but it also sculpted her soul.

When she woke up, she understood the message she had been given and returned to her people. Because of the lassitude that had overcome her people, most of their newly expanded numbers remained entombed in rock. She found



the first of these nodules, and with a few quick blows, cut loose a rough-hewn figure much like the very first of her people. This newly formed Jadeborn looked on her with trust and reverence, and she named him Uklem, which meant Bearer of Burdens. Then, she found another jade nodule and hacked forth a jagged and gnarled creature she named Naxok, Hammer of Sorrow. Finally, she found a third nodule she knew to be rarer and more precious than the others, because it contained within it one of the rare unfractured Jadeborn souls, which her people had lost the art of freeing from the stone. She carefully freed this figure, who rose up and stared at her with a gaze that reflected both brilliance and passion. White Shale named this being Eryan, Daughter of Hope.

This was the beginning of the modern form of the Jadeborn. Uklem and those like him became the Worker Caste. Although limited in mind and body compared to their ancestors, they were tireless and dutiful laborers who worked in the farms, mines and manufactories. Naxok was the first of the Warrior Caste, who trained and prepared to face the vast hordes of monsters White Shale had seen in her travels. Eryan was the first of the Artisan Caste as well as the last and tiny remnant of the old race of the original Enlightened Mountain Folk. Although only one in 1,000 of the Jadeborn were members of the Artisan Caste, each of these amazing beings was sufficiently powerful that he could successfully direct the remainder of his kind to allow their civilization to thrive and grow.

## THE HIERARCHY OF KINGDOMS

For the first millennia of the First Age, the Mountain Folk gradually rebuilt their civilization. This rigid division into castes replaced their previously egalitarian empire. The tiny aristocracy of Enlightened Artisans ruled the masses of Unenlightened Workers and Warriors. The only oddity in this rigid hierarchy was the fact that a few thousand of the Workers and Warriors were also found to be Enlightened. During the First Age, their fate was especially difficult. The roughly hewn forms of their bodies were at odds with their vast mental and physical prowess. The Artisans regarded these beings with a mixture of pity and discomfort. They were clearly far more than their Unenlightened fellows, but (at least in the minds of the Artisans) they were also clearly inferior to beings who still possessed the sacred form of their ancestors.

The Enlightened undercastes were put in positions of intermediate power, where they served to direct and control the members of their castes, according to the orders of the Artisans, but the Artisans regarded them with a mixture of distaste and condescension. Meanwhile, life among the Artisans was a heady mixture of power, responsibility and intricate politics. Numbering only 10,000, these kings and queens of the caverns constituted a tiny elite who reaped the full benefits of the labors of the undercastes. As happens often with mortals and the Exalted, however, their power drove the need to obtain even more, and so many became ruthless in their centuries-long battles of power, favor and prestige.

Although theoretically a group of equals who maintained the last traces of their previously universally egalitarian state, many Artisans spent decades gaining small advantages over their fellows. In practice, a few hundred of the most powerful and influential Artisans were effectively in charge of the entire Jadeborn nation.

Over time, the greatly expanded numbers of the Jadeborn spread out from the handful of cities they had previously inhabited. Using the vast tunnel car network they created millennia before, they settled networks of both natural and artificial caverns and tunnels all across Creation. From the ice mountains of the Far North to the volcanoes in the depths of the South, the Jadeborn built a series of powerful subterranean city-states across Creation, linked by a network of buried Essence-powered trains. Although many of their city-states traded with the peoples of the surface, others remained hidden in the depths, and the full extent and power of the Jadeborn was largely unknown to even the most powerful of the Celestial Exalted.



As the First Age continued, the Jadeborn's newly made hierarchy solidified and was further reinforced by a continuous threat to their entire nation, the massed forces of the Darkbrood. The so-called Endless War between Darkbrood and Jadeborn helped ensure the stability of Mountain Folk civilization and also mitigated some of the most destructive power politics because it forced competing Artisans to set aside their feuds and unite against their common foes. The many Jadeborn city-states assembled into a hierarchical confederation, with power shifting constantly among various factions according to perceptions of talent and accomplishment.

During the First Age, the Artisans formed themselves into a democratic Conclave. This body dictated policies throughout the Jadeborn hierarchy, although individual city-states retained considerable autonomy within the terms of the alliance. Near the edges of the Mountain Folk lands, the frontlines of the Endless War created a buffer wasteland of fortresses and garrisons almost solely populated by Warriors. Workers and Artisans lived in the stable regions within this perimeter, laboring to support the war effort and pay the tribute demanded by the Exalted. This way of life continued for most of the First Age.

## THE ENDLESS WAR

The Mountain Folk were not the sole inhabitants of the many caverns and tunnels underneath Creation. When the Primordials ruled the surface, the Jadeborn shared their labyrinthine network of caverns and tunnels with a variety of spirits and elementals and a few stranger creatures. The Mountain Folk traded with some and made war on others, but they remained the strongest, most technologically advanced and best organized of the subterranean civilizations. When the gods and Exalted overthrew the Primordials, many of these chthonian beings attempted to defend them. Some did this out of loyalty, others because, like the Lintha on the surface, they were descendents of the Primordials. Many were killed,





and some breeds of these so-called Darkbrood were utterly exterminated, but a few retreated back into the depths to hide from the terrible wrath of the Exalted.

The depths of Creation were also inhabited by horrific creations that cared for nothing and no one except their own kind. Some were failed experiments of the Primordials, deemed unsatisfactory and banished deep underground. Others were the descendents of natural creatures twisted by the radiation from especially deep and powerful demesnes. These beings were the strangest and most twisted of the Darkbrood, and when the Primordials ruled, their allies and children living underground kept the twisted beings in check.

During the first centuries of the Solar Deliberative, the surviving creatures still loyal to the Primordials gradually recouped their losses, while the hideous unaligned beings expanded their territories and their numbers now that there were few other creatures able to hold them back. Within two centuries of the division of the Jadeborn into castes, their expanding city-states met the first armies of the Darkbrood. Some remained loyal to the Primordials and hated the Jadeborn for fighting on the other side. Others simply saw the Jadeborn as prey or competition. Occasionally, some of these groups of disparate and unnatural creatures banded together, united by their hatred for the Mountain Folk and their desire to feast on the richness of their prosperous and expanding civilization.

The Mountain Folk were ready for this war. In previous wars, the Jadeborn had been an army of supernally skilled individuals wielding wildly diverse weapons and using a multitude of fighting styles. After White Shale's quest, their soldiers were stony-faced Warriors who fought with common purpose and tactics, using an ever-expanding arsenal of mass-produced weapons and armor. Led by Enlightened Warriors, who were commanded by brilliant Artisan generals, these Mountain Folk could readily beat back all attackers. Unfortunately, for every attacker that fell, half a dozen came to take its place.

Some of the Darkbrood armies inflicted terrible losses on the Jadeborn, pitting behemoths and equally huge and terrible monsters against the massed forces of the Mountain Folk. The Exalted learned of these battles, and a few congratulated the Jadeborn on their victories and promised aid, but this aid never came. All such promises were lies. Some Exalts hoped the Darkbrood and the Jadeborn would exterminate one another, others had no interest in using their own resources as long as the Jadeborn seemed to be winning, and many simply did not care one way or another. During the First Age, the borders of Mountain Folk domains often varied wildly as new settlements replaced those razed by the endless hordes of attackers.

## THE END OF THE FIRST AGE AND THE CONTAGION

The Usurpation had little impact on the Mountain Folk. They took no part in the battles on the surface. When a handful of Solar Exalts fled into their caverns, the Jadeborn did not object, nor did they do anything to hinder the Sidereal

assassins who followed them. The only change caused by the Usurpation was that several Mountain Folk city-states under both the North and the South hid among them the people of the earth who fled the massacres of the various altered breeds of humanity that took place aboveground. Although few Jadeborn cared anything about the politics of the Exalted, some of the Mountain Folk felt sympathy with a created people who were now hated and distrusted by the Exalted. Throughout the centuries of the Shogunate, the Mountain Folk fought their wars with the Darkbrood and paid their tribute to the Exalted, and their lives continued much as they had before.

The Great Contagion, however, was at least as devastating below ground as above. The first and by far the hardest hit were the hordes of Darkbrood, who died in even greater numbers than the mortals on the surface. Some of the city-states of the Jadeborn were equally hard hit, but heroic Mountain Folk in a few managed to warn the rest of their people through their echo jewel (see p. 25) communications network. The Conclave acted swiftly and unanimously. All of the city-states not yet affected by the Great Contagion, including the capital city of Urvar, sealed and warded all entrances and exits with huge slabs of enchanted jade. The Mountain Folk trapped outside begged and pleaded for entry, but the barriers remained in place. Most city-states were equipped with supplies for at least a decade, and Urvar vowed to remain sealed for the next quarter century. The surviving city-states kept in contact with Urvar and each other and prepared to wait out the years of isolation.

Then, the Balorian Crusade nearly destroyed Creation. Several outlying Jadeborn city-states vanished entirely as the Wyld consumed them, while at the same time, the echo jewels failed because the Fair Folk attack temporarily disrupted subterranean Essence flows and telluric currents. Cut off from both the outside and each other, the various city-states prayed to vanished Autochthon and waited for the end. When the young Dragon-Blooded officer who became the Scarlet Empress activated the Sword of Creation and turned back the Fair Folk invasion, the vast power unleashed produced earthquakes throughout Creation, breaking many of the jade seals around the city-states. The effects were worst in great Urvar, where almost half the city collapsed under massive rock falls. The Mountain Folk assumed they would soon be destroyed. Then, the earth settled and the Essence flows and telluric currents stabilized. The Jadeborn soon found that all of their city-states that had survived both the Contagion and the Fair Folk invasion still stood. Their numbers were greatly reduced, however, with only one in 100 of the Jadeborn having survived plague, Fair Folk attack and massive rock falls.

## THE AGE OF SORROWS

Across Creation, the Jadeborn began rebuilding and repopulating. After several years, they sent scouts to the surface. The scouts from Urvar found the Scarlet Empress in the first days of her reign. They returned to Urvar, gathered up what would become a yearly tribute of jade and paid

homage to her, then they returned below to help with the century-long rebuilding project.

Although vast number of their kind died, far more of the Darkbrood perished, which left the Jadeborn time to rebuild and regroup, free from the threats posed by these beings. For the first century and a half after the Great Contagion, the Jadeborn were able to rebuild and expand largely unmolested by the endless hordes. Half a millennium after the Great Contagion, the Mountain Folk had rebuilt their empire, controlling an area somewhat larger that they held in the First Age.

### WAR AND PEACE BENEATH CREATION



Around Urvar and beneath the entire Blessed Isle, the Endless War rages much as it did during the First Age. Beneath portions of the Threshold, however, the situation has changed. Under most of the Threshold, the numbers and proportion of Darkbrood who died from the Great Contagion was considerably higher than near Urvar. Also, between the attacks of the Fair Folk and the expansion of the boundaries of the Wyld, a number of types of Darkbrood were either completely destroyed or caught in the expanding Wyld and sufficiently twisted that they could no longer survive outside it. As a result, the number and types of Darkbrood under much of the Threshold was quite different than in the First Age. In many of these regions, the previous loose alliance between different sorts of Darkbrood crumbled, replaced by an ever-shifting network of deals and betrayals.

Weary of the Endless War, some Jadeborn city-states in the more remote portions of the North and the South watched the various types of Darkbrood grow in numbers as they themselves rebuilt, but the Mountain Folk refrained from attacking the Darkbrood. Surprisingly, the Darkbrood did the same. With the elimination of several of the more common types of Darkbrood, the politics of the more intelligent of these creatures changed. Instead of a single Endless War, where most Darkbrood united to fight the Mountain Folk, the situation has become far more complex. Several of the more intelligent breeds of Darkbrood became bitter rivals for resources they both require. Meanwhile, the residents of a few Jadeborn settlements have made tentative treaties with some of the less hostile breeds of Darkbrood. Today, there is even a small amount of trade between these Darkbrood and the Jadeborn.

War has not been replaced with peace and harmony, however. Different groups of Darkbrood now battle one another, just as some of them regularly raid or attack the Jadeborn. In portions of the Threshold, secretive raids, shifting alliances and complicated politics have replaced the continuous warfare that still occurs beneath the Blessed Isle. Especially in and around the city-states of Teffa and Shining Kren (see pp. 14 and 14-15), various subterranean species, including the Jadeborn, spy on one another and engage in all manner of covert deals, as well as raids and assassinations. The rulers of these various beings do their



Darkbrood



best to either deny all knowledge of such actions or blame them on other species.

## THE JADEBORN CITY-STATES

Ancient Urvar, beneath the Imperial Mountain, remains the capital of the Jadeborn empire, as well as its largest city-state. It holds two and a half million Jadeborn within its mighty walls, a quarter of all of the Mountain Folk. Although each city-state is largely independent, all are bound by a pact of mutual aid and alliance, and most obey requests and directives issued by Urvar's Conclave. Urvar, however, is only the largest of the Jadeborn city-states. There are six other large city-states beneath the Threshold, as well as almost a dozen or so smaller outposts and colonies of these city-states.

### TEFFA

Northernmost of the Jadeborn city-states, Teffa is located 50 miles south of Diamond Hearth. The Mountain Folk in this city-state have recently begun limited trade with merchants from that Haslanti city. In addition to exchanging diamonds and other materials mined from the depths for ivory and other surface goods, the Jadeborn are also willing to repair artifacts mined from the buried First Age city of Tzatli. For now, only a few Haslanti traders deal with the Jadeborn, and they keep this enterprise a secret to avoid competition.

Teffa is also one of the Jadeborn city-states where the inhabitants have made a limited and fragile peace with some of the surrounding Darkbrood. Their conflicts with these creatures consist of equal parts political machinations and covert wars. The Jadeborn of Teffa even engage in limited and cautious trade with some Darkbrood, primarily with the glowing-eyed underpeople found both north and south of Gethamane. Teffa also gains additional moneys from sending small companies of expensive mercenaries to the Haslanti League, who employ a few Dragon-Blooded generals specifically for the purpose of leading these small but deadly companies.

### RURK

Located between Whitewall and Falla, Rurk is the smallest of the major Mountain Folk city-states, with a population of approximately half a million. It serves as a political buffer between Teffa and Urvar. Because of their proximity to Gethamane, the residents of Rurk are also in charge of checking on the wards restraining the huge and monstrous buried hekatonkhire known to the Mountain Folk as Vodak. While the inhabitants of Rurk have no formal treaties with the Darkbrood, several of the more intelligent local species, as well as the underpeople in the caverns around Gethamane, give them safe passage. (None but the most mindless and hate-filled Darkbrood wish to see Vodak unleashed into their buried world.) Rurk is largely at peace with its neighbors, but this peace is especially fragile and often interrupted by small-scale battles.

### LUTAR

A city-state of one million inhabitants located halfway between Great Forks and Mount Metagalapa, Lutar is a staunch ally of Urvar and fights against both the local

Darkbrood and the fearsome undead that occasionally creep forth from beneath Sijan and Thorns. The inhabitants of Lutar occasionally trade with representatives of Great Forks' divine rulers but have no dealings with the local mortals. The Mountain Folk have recently begun limited trade with Halta, however, as well as sending a shard of Jadeborn mercenaries off to help the Haltans fight the Linowan. Lutar has begun to grow wealthy as the premier center for alchemical research into the properties of and possible extracts from the various Far Eastern plants that Haltan traders exchange for stocks of jewels, metal and jade.

### DIJAK

Built beneath the volcanic mountains southeast of the Varang city of Kirighast, Dijak is second only to Urvar in size, with a population of almost two million Jadeborn. It also boasts a large number of the surviving people of the earth among its inhabitants. In addition to their central city-state, these Jadeborn and their subterranean mortal allies control tunnels and caverns that stretch beneath the entire mountain range. Dijak is located only 30 miles from Mount Eledath, and since the Dragon Kings there have regained their sentience and memories, the Jadeborn have begun limited trade with them. They respect the Dragon Kings and find their crystal and vegetative technologies both fascinating and exceptionally useful.

Because of this recent trade, and because of its easy access to the mineral wealth of the South, Dijak is also the richest of the Jadeborn city-states. Its mines are extensive and stretch deep into the South, into searing tunnels where only Jadeborn protected by special heatproof armor can venture. Here, brave and daring miners can acquire all manner of unique wonders, including glowing stones known as furnace gems that perpetually remain as hot as molten iron.

### SHINING KREN

Located just south of Firepeak, beneath the Southwestern mountains between the City of the Steel Lotus and the Lap, Shining Kren gained its name due to the large number of glowing yellow crystals embedded in the walls of its caverns. These crystals are also abundant on the surface of various nearby mountain peaks. Their warm amber glow is visible for many miles on the surface at night. Shining Kren is Teffa's closest ally, since it too has made tentative peace treaties with several breeds of local Darkbrood, as well as the green-eyed Southern underpeople. The Artisans of Shining Kren also have loose ties to the Lunar Exalt who controls the surface of these mountains. These Jadeborn distrust the Exalt as much as the rest of their kind but have found the Lunar a useful, if not particularly close or trusted, ally.

Shining Kren also has an equally loose alliance with the Dragon-Blooded administrators of An-Teng, who regularly hire shards of Jadeborn mercenaries. Sometimes, they are hired to help eradicate mountain barbarians and bandit gangs, but most often, they are employed as marines in An-Teng's constant battle against the dreaded Lintha pirates. Since the



Mountain Folk regard the debased Lintha as foul mockeries of their noble heritage, Jadeborn Warriors are always eager to hunt down and destroy these cannibalistic fiends.

### PLESS

The most remote of the Jadeborn city-states lies in the West, beneath the volcanic island of Kerkeis, centrally located in the archipelago known as the Neck. Kerkeis is a sparsely populated island most notable for containing one of the gateways to Yu-Shan (Gate 40, see **The Compass of Celestial Directions, Vol. III—Yu-Shan**, p. 111). Small but regular numbers of both gods and Jadeborn travel through this gateway to engage in the limited amount of trade and diplomacy that occurs between the Celestial City and the Mountain Folk. Pless is also where the handful of Jadeborn emissaries to Yu-Shan train for these duties.

Because Yu-Shan is outside Creation, the Great Geas does not punish Mountain Folk who dwell there. Yet there is sufficiently little affection between the Celestial gods and the Jadeborn that only a handful of Jadeborn are willing to reside there, and none live there for more than a decade or two. On rare occasions, Celestial gods hire small companies of Jadeborn Workers to help with especially impressive construction projects in Yu-Shan or employ Warriors as ceremonial guards for festivals that can last as long as a season. Although many Mountain Folk resent this service, the gods pay exceptionally well, so the inhabitants of Pless swallow their pride and enlarge their coffers.

The Jadeborn in Pless have little to do with the surface world, but a decade ago, they turned back a large Lintha attack using a barrage of deadly Essence-powered weapons. The Jadeborn feared that the Lintha might either interfere with their use of the Yu-Shan gateway or make an alliance with some of the Darkbrood whom the local Mountain Folk battle.

A few of the mortal residents of Kerkeis saw the Mountain Folk destroy the Lintha and assumed they were earth elementals. The mortals of Jellico's Rest began worshipping the Jadeborn until the Jadeborn sent an emissary in exotic armor to ask them to stop. Still assuming they are earth elementals, the local populace honored the Mountain Folk's request and now worship Autochthon, assuming he is the ruler of the local elemental court.

### URBAN GEOGRAPHY

Urvar and the other Jadeborn city-states are all built along a similar plan. They consist of a multitude of cavern cities linked by a three-dimensional web of tunnels. Farming plantations surround these cities, with loam-packed caves producing crops of mushrooms and bizarre plants cultivated to thrive on Essence, geothermal heat or the light of glowing crystals. The major city-states also sit atop large quarries, all of which pale before the nearly bottomless jade mines beneath Urvar.

A buffer zone of largely uninhabited caverns and tunnels surrounds each city-state. This region is crisscrossed with specially bored tunnels to allow rapid troop deployment.

In Urvar, Dijak and the other war-torn city-states, Warrior outposts and fortresses surround this empty buffer zone. Here, the Warriors guard their borders against all enemies beyond, and at the edges, the Endless War rages in skirmishes and massacres. When the Mountain Folk win, they buy themselves a reprieve to prepare for the next wave. When they lose, reserves or nearby garrisons must cut through the defensive zone to intercept the endless hordes.

In Teffa, Shining Kren and (to a lesser extent) Rurk, a smaller but well-equipped defense force protects the city-states from both raiders and infiltrators. Because fewer of these city-states' resources are needed to supply their warriors, these city-states have surrounded themselves with large mobile weapon emplacements to further increase the strength of their defenses. Meanwhile, scouts, spies, merchants and diplomats all travel beyond these borders of these city-states to deal with the potentially treacherous Darkbrood.

### THE TUNNEL CAR NETWORK

A few centuries before the Primordial War, the Jadeborn used massive Essence drills to bore a network of precisely milled tunnels deep beneath the surface. Stretching the length and breadth of Creation, these tunnels were all identical, perfectly circular passageways four yards in diameter with mirror-smooth walls. The Mountain Folk built special cars of steel, adamant and jade to traverse these tunnels. Moving at speeds of 300 miles per hour, they are among the fastest methods of travel in Creation. At the height of the First Age, the tunnel car network connected the dozen major Jadeborn settlements in a vast network of tubes. Today, many of these tunnels have been destroyed, and others simply end without a destination, because the metropoli to which they used to travel were devoured by the Wyld during the Fair Folk invasion that heralded the end of the First Age.

The cars themselves are marvels of First Age manufacture, but using old plans, the Jadeborn can manufacture more as needed. Three yards in diameter and 10 yards long, these cars contain comfortable accommodations for up to 10 of the Jadeborn (or any other human-sized passengers). The seats are exceptionally comfortable and automatically recline themselves to act as beds for especially long journeys. A small Essence engine recycles food and drink for the passengers, allowing them to arrive at their destination comfortable and refreshed. The Jadeborn even solved the problem of minor obstacles in the tunnels and of having cars going both ways in the same tunnel. They crafted cars that could dematerialize themselves and all their contents for almost a second at a time, allowing them to pass through an oncoming car or a boulder, person or similar minor obstacle in one of the tunnels.

The Jadeborn also forged eternal pacts with minor earth elementals associated with these tunnels so that the elementals perpetually keep the tunnels in good repair. These elementals cannot repair the wholesale destruction of a tunnel and require a day or two to repair all but the most minor damage, but they





keep the surviving tunnels smooth and intact. As a result, there is regular traffic between almost all of the surviving Jadeborn cities. These journeys are not without risks, however. While the cars can briefly become immaterial to pass through minor obstacles, large rock falls remain impassible until the elementals can repair them. Darkbrood or various mindless subterranean creatures occasionally breach the walls and enter the tunnels as well. While the cars can simply pass through a single creature, several creatures or a single sufficiently large creature can block the tunnel beyond the ability of the car to pass through it.

When a tunnel car cannot pass through an obstacle, it instantly stops. Thanks to the car's inertial Essence dampers, this stop does little more than mildly jostle the passengers. If they wish to proceed forward, though, they must exit the car and confront whatever obstacle is in front of them. Even if the passengers would prefer to simply go back the way they came, the intruders into the tunnel might attack the car—as a safety measure, tunnel cars cannot move as long as something is attached to the outside.

Currently, there are eight functional car tunnels, and journeys between any two adjacent city-states always takes less than a day, unless the journey is interrupted for some reason. Five functioning tunnels radiate out from Urvar, one going north to Rurk and ending at Teffa, one going East to Lutar, another heading Southeast to Dijak, a fourth going Southwest to Shining Kren, and the last deep beneath the seabed, heading West to Pless. There is also a tunnel that connects Teffa and

Lutar and another that connects Lutar to Dijak, as well as a tunnel that connects Shining Kren to Pless. The tunnel that once ran between Dijak and Shining Kren has partially collapsed, cutting off access to an abandoned First Age city-state located 300 miles Southeast of the Lap. The tunnel between Teffa and Pless has also collapsed. It is now filled with water and inhabited by horrific aquatic Darkbrood.

## AN UNDERGROUND CIVILIZATION

The Jadeborn are the most advanced civilization in Creation, but these advances are not spread equally among their populace. The egalitarianism of the days before the Great Geas has been replaced by a rigid hierarchy of Artisans, assisted by the Enlightened Workers and Warriors, ruling the masses of Unenlightened Mountain Folk. Many Artisans regard the Unenlightened Jadeborn as little more than living machines, and few Artisans feel anything other than a distant sense of noblesse oblige for them. The Artisans enjoy riches and access to artifacts and Essence technologies that would be the envy of the wealthiest Dynasts, and the Enlightened Undercastes live with wealth and wonders similar to that enjoyed by many Dragon-Blooded in the Threshold. The Unenlightened masses dwell in comfortable but uniform dormitories, having access to only those wonders necessary for their health and livelihood.



## A LIFE UNDERGROUND

All Mountain Folk begin their lives as patterns of Essence entombed in nodules of jade. The souls of Mountain Folk almost always return to jade located within a few miles of where they died. A few incarnate in more distant locales, however, and the Conclave makes certain each and every one of these lost souls is tracked down. Once found, Workers free the jade nodule from the surrounding rock and bring it back to the nearest large city-state. Here, one of the Artisans frees the individual from its stony womb and shapes it into its caste. Each soul can be sculpted into only a single caste. Jadeborn come from the rock fully grown, if usually somewhat thin and devoid of all knowledge and wisdom. Within an hour or so of being born, the new Mountain Folk is escorted to the nursery appropriate for its caste. From here, the individual's life is largely set, with the only possible difference being if a Worker or Warrior turns out to be Enlightened, a fact that is always apparent within the first year. Regardless of their caste or enlightenment, all Jadeborn learn very rapidly and require only a year of basic training, followed by three more years of formal education, before they are considered to be fully adult citizens. What happens during this training and education varies greatly from one caste to the next.

**Workers:** During the first year of their life, members of this caste grow up in large communes, playing with mock-ups of assorted tools. Daily lessons allow the young to learn by mimicking the movements of their teacher-caretakers. Their instructors study their charges and split them into practice work details as they begin showing aptitudes to particular specialties. Enlightened Workers are also identified and given large amounts of individual training and attention.

Formal education largely consists of Unenlightened Workers being trained in the particular specialty in which they excel, as well as some degree of cross training in related specialties. Most Workers are trained as either farmers or miners, and Workers in these schools learn all aspects of farming or mining but concentrate on the specialty in which they are particularly skilled and drawn interested. Other Workers are trained in less common fields such as architecture, magitech assembly or working as laboratory assistants to the Artisans. Students train and live together in classes of between a dozen and a hundred and are taught by older Workers using specially designed teaching materials developed by the Conclave.

Enlightened Workers are singled out for special educational opportunities. Some become magitech researchers, urban planners or similar professionals who mix practical and theoretical perspectives. Others train as managers who coordinate projects and act as intermediaries between the Artisans and the mass of Workers. A few go into narrow and difficult specialties such as building advanced technologies, designing and overseeing the construction of powerful manses and similar demanding professions.

**Warriors:** Unlike the Workers, young Warriors are encouraged to compete against one another in various physical


activities, some of which amount to little more than battles with fists and padded weapons. Enlightened Warriors almost always become leaders of the various informal teams that compete against one another. Once the young Warriors have mastered these basic skills, their formal education begins. Their first lesson is in rigorous military discipline. They learn to restrain their natural aggression and, above all, to obey orders. The Artisans of the Conclave have devised special training procedures backed by tests using Essence- and emotion-sensitive instruments to make certain that each and every young Warrior becomes a well-disciplined and obedient addition to the Jadeborn fighting force.

After this basic training, Warriors learn the craft of war, from small-unit tactics to a wide variety of combat techniques. As with young Workers, young Warriors specialize, some becoming infantry, others train as commandos, scouts, war machine pilots and operators, military engineers, combat medics and similar duties. While the natural aptitudes of the Warrior are important, so are the needs of the particular city-state. In Urvar and Dijak, more than seven out of every 10 Warriors join the infantry so they can help fight the hordes of attacking Darkbrood. In vivid contrast, in Teffa, Rurk and Shining Kren, only four in 10 Warriors become infantry. The rest become scouts, disaster relief personnel, saboteurs and, in many cases, specially trained mercenaries that the Jadeborn hire out to any Dynasts or other wealthy and powerful Dragon-Blooded in either the Realm or the Threshold who can afford their services.

Meanwhile, Enlightened Warriors are given individualized instruction in command, strategy and various forms of elite special-forces training, depending upon their particular interests and capabilities. Some become commandos equipped with four- or five-dot Essence-powered armor and other equally potent weapons. Others become junior officers with the possibility of eventually becoming range lords in command of entire armies.

**Artisans:** Artisans always receive individual attention and private tutoring. While Enlightened members of the two undercastes gain large amounts of individual instruction from both Enlightened members of their caste and Artisans familiar with their desired specialty, each Artisan is given an experienced Artisan who is at least a century old as a mentor and a teacher. Every year, prominent Artisans compete and bid for the right to become mentors for the few new Artisans born that year. Each mentor raises her young Artisan for a year, after which time the young Jadeborn must attend the local College of Divine Enlightenment for the next three years.

Although even the smaller client states of the seven major Jadeborn city-states have facilities for training ordinary Workers and Warriors, all Artisans must by law be trained in one of the seven major Jadeborn city-states. Because of their rarity and their vast potential, a young Artisan's education is at once both gentler and more rigorous than that of a Worker or a Warrior. Young Artisans study a multitude of disciplines, including history, geography, thaumaturgy,



theology, politics, mathematics, sculpting, Essence theory, spirit lore and Charm use. Students live alone in private dormitories, but they usually study together in small working groups, which often become the basis for lifelong alliances or enduring rivalries.

## DAILY LIFE

The Unenlightened masses of Workers and Warriors have 10 hours out of every day to recuperate before their next duty shift. Even without Charms, Jadeborn need only six hours of sleep in order to work at sustained peak efficiency. Since idleness is discouraged, most use the remaining time for hobbies, socializing or in various games. Workers mostly prefer games involving manual dexterity and cleverness, while Warriors usually engage in various competitive team sports. All of the Unenlightened undercastes are exceptionally social beings, and solitary pursuits are rare and viewed as eccentric... and potentially suspicious.

The lives of Enlightened members of the undercastes, and especially the lives of the Artisans, are considerably more solitary. Most Enlightened members of the undercastes have positions of sufficient power and responsibility that they can effectively set their own hours, as long as all of their work is completed on time. Although some spend their leisure time among the Unenlightened members of their caste, most find the differences too great and either socialize with their own kind or spend much time in solitary pursuits. Enlightened undercastes are relatively wealthy and live in comfortable private dwellings similar to those of relatively wealthy human merchants and minor officials. Often, between two and five Enlightened members of a single caste live together. Such arrangements offset the isolation caused by the fact that only one in 1,000 members of their caste are similarly Enlightened.

Artisans have even more freedom and usually also possess an abundance of wealth. Most dwell in lavish and palatial estates. A significant proportion lives alone, content to allow studies and private interests to occupy their time when they are not working with other Artisans. Others live in informal families of between three and five members who either share the same interests or have interests that interrelate in some useful fashion.

## FRATERNIZATION BETWEEN CASTES

Off-duty interactions between Unenlightened Workers and Warriors are discouraged; the members of each caste are expected to largely fraternize with their own kind. The expectations for Enlightened Mountain Folk are somewhat different, however. A substantial minority of Artisans either avoids all members of the undercastes or interacts with non-Artisans only professionally and then only to give them orders or receive their reports. That said, many Artisans work alongside Enlightened and Unenlightened Workers or Warriors every day.

Fraternization between Artisans and Unenlightened members of the undercastes is rare, but it does occur, although Artisans who spend too much time interacting with the Un-

enlightened are often considered to be somewhat boorish and dull by their peers. In contrast, informal interactions between Enlightened members of different castes are not uncommon. Most Artisans socialize only with members of their own caste, but Artisans who work alongside Enlightened Workers in the same research facility or who have Enlightened Warriors as their military aids and junior officers often become close friends with these beings.

Because these friendships often result in increased efficiency when working together and sometimes produce unexpected cross-disciplinary discoveries, such interactions are neither forbidden nor discouraged. Even in informal situations, however, members of other castes are expected to act with deference toward Artisans. Enlightened Workers and Warriors are also free to socialize, and such fraternization is especially common between civil and military engineers and between technicians who design and service advanced weapons and the soldiers who use and evaluate them.

## SEX AND GENDER

While they possess distinct genders and functional sex organs like mortals, Mountain Folk cannot produce offspring with one another, and the sexes do not differ significantly in either physical or mental ability. As a result, gender plays absolutely no role in career choices or success, and both sexes may be found performing every imaginable task. Just as importantly, the inability to procreate means that sex is a purely recreational act and there is no social or legal difference between heterosexual and homosexual relationships. The entire concept of marriage is also foreign to Mountain Folk culture.

The one exception to the effective androgyny of the Jadeborn is that they can father and bear children with mortals, gods and the Exalted. All such offspring are some variety of God-Blood and few find a place in Mountain Folk culture. Although a few Artisans find they enjoy being fathers or mothers and become so repeatedly, their fellows regard them as extreme eccentrics and some consider them to be perverse and mentally unbalanced. Similar behavior by members of the other two castes is strongly discouraged for the Enlightened members, and forbidden to the Unenlightened.

## GOVERNMENT AND LAW

The simplest statement about Jadeborn government is that Artisans rule and all others serve. All adult Artisans belong to the Conclave, a democratic body that governs the Mountain Folk. Each city-state has its own independent Conclave, but all Artisans take part in decisions that affect the whole of the Jadeborn. Before the Great Geas and the breaking into castes, all Jadeborn had a vote in their destiny. Now this is true only of the Artisan Caste.

Each Artisan technically has a single vote, and all Artisans are theoretically equal. To prevent deadlock and endless debates, however, they organize themselves into factions led by charismatic and experienced leaders. Membership in these factions is purely voluntary, and members may leave



at any time, but long-term loyalty to a single faction is the norm and is usually rewarded by giving long-time members a greater role in determining faction policy.

The edicts of the Conclave are inviolable and unquestionable by Enlightened and Unenlightened alike. The fluid nature of faction-based control, however, means that reversals and amendments to prior laws are commonplace. Because such reversals are possible and because all Artisans recognize how physically and magically powerful they all are, actual violence is quite rare. Yet, “Diplomacy is a half-drawn blade,” has been the unofficial motto of the Conclave since before humans walked upon Creation.

### THE STATUS OF ENLIGHTENED UNDERCASTES

The power of the Artisans has been an issue with some Enlightened Workers and Warriors since shortly after these beings began appearing during the First Age. Enlightened members of the undercastes can attain positions of significant responsibility, power and wealth, but they can never vote to help decide their destinies and are always in an inferior position to even the youngest and most inexperienced Artisan.

Officially, the Conclave regards Enlightened Workers and Warriors as tragic mistakes who would have been Artisans, except for some flaw in either their jade nodule or the skill of the Artisan who freed them from the stone. Because of their alleged physical and spiritual deficiencies, the official dogma is that these beings cannot hope to attain their full potential. In recognition of their special but unfortunate status, however, they are permitted greater freedoms than their fellow caste members in light of their impressive capabilities.

In actuality, Enlightened undercastes are not failed Artisans. They have been gradually growing in numbers since the end of the First Age, and now, the total number of Enlightened undercastes is equal to the number of Artisans. Some believe they represent the beginning of a new era of universal enlightenment for their kind. The rigorous census records maintained by the Conclave records the gradual increase in the number of Enlightened undercastes and the equally slow decline in the number of Unenlightened Workers and Warriors, as an increasing number of undercaste souls rejoin, but these records are available to only a few Artisans. As the numbers of Enlightened Workers and Warriors have grown, some of these beings, along with a handful of Artisans, have begun to suggest including some portion, if not all, of the Enlightened undercastes within the Conclave. Most Artisans dismiss this idea as foolishness bordering on heresy, but the debates persist.

### CRIME AND PUNISHMENT

While the politics of the Conclave are fluid and complex, the underlying basis of Jadeborn law is far more solid and stable. White Shale herself wrote *The Codex of Primal Order*, which still serves as the basis of all Mountain Folk law. Equal parts sociological treatise and theological rumination, the *Codex* outlines all the responsibilities and functions of each caste. Its preeminent proviso stipulates that none of

the Jadeborn may kill anyone Enlightened by Autochthon. Violation of this edict mandates the death penalty for one of the Unenlightened and the steepest demotion for an Enlightened Jadeborn. Even accidental slayings can result in these severe consequences if culpability or negligence is indicated. The Enlightened are too few and too important to lose to petty political squabbles. As a consequence, Artisans are largely immune to blood feuds or assassination. Conclave members compete through proxies and words. On rare occasions, they even fight epic duels. But even the bitterest rivals hold their blades before committing the ultimate and unthinkable crime. Enlightened undercastes enjoy similar protections, but the penalties for an Artisan slaying an Enlightened Worker or Warrior are substantially less than for slaying another Artisan.

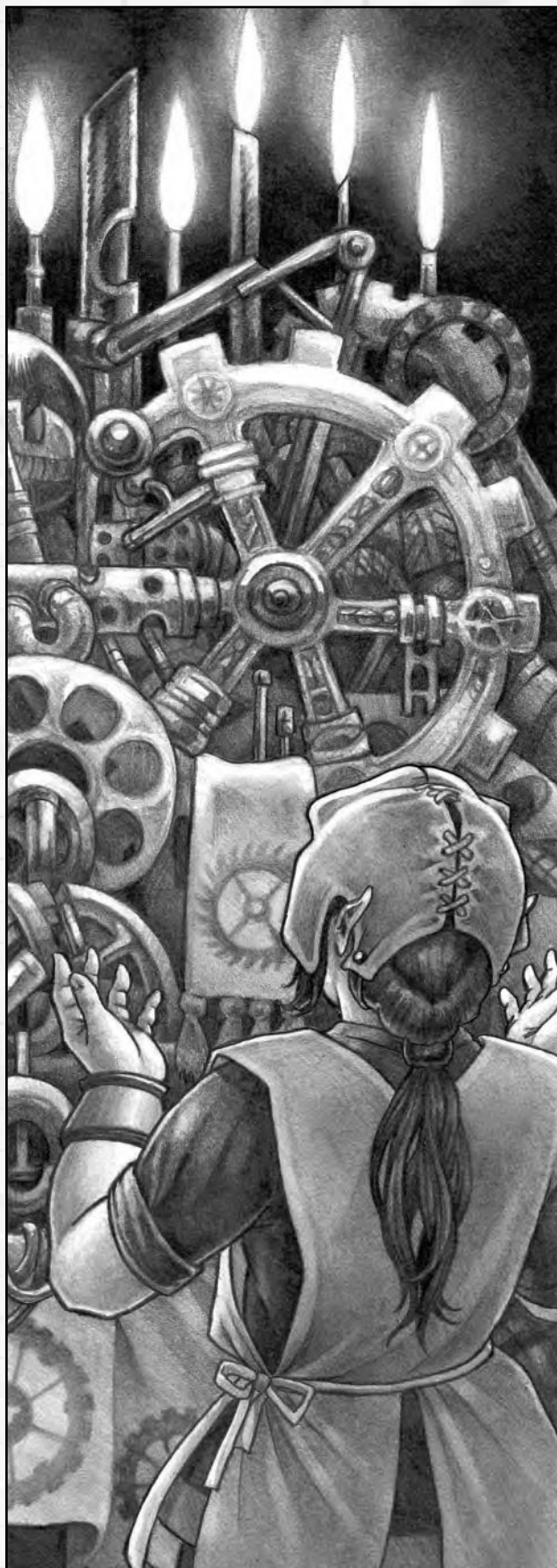
These protections do not extend to the Unenlightened. Artisans consider the teeming masses completely replaceable and have found that rehabilitating a criminal usually requires greater effort than training his replacement. The Conclave, therefore, imposes the death penalty on most Unenlightened criminals, providing a strong deterrent for improper behavior. Capital offenses include murder, sabotage, treason, inciting a riot, gross incompetence or negligence and dereliction of duty. Executions for the latter are always administered both publicly and painfully as an object lesson to others. Unenlightened found guilty of lesser offences such as theft, brawling or poor performance are typically punished through some combination of unpleasant or hazardous duties and fines.

### RELIGION

All Jadeborn worship Autochthon. This is regarded as a social duty more than any form of passionate personal devotion. Their prayers honor Autochthon and pray for his swift return. Most Mountain Folk, however, understand that Autochthon vanished into the depths of Elsewhere millennia ago, so they cannot count on that return. They must rely on themselves instead. The Jadeborn venerate Autochthon as dutiful adults honor their parents, not as supplicants before their god.

In spite of this widespread pragmatism and the cynicism of their peers, some Mountain Folk still zealously worship Autochthon, fervently hoping that he will return when his children prove they are worthy. They believe that the Great Maker will lift the Great Geas upon his return and usher in a new golden age of their people. The Conclave accepts this Cult of the Great Maker but urges its members not to allow it to distract them from their duties. Even a few Artisans follow this cult, but they have less faith that Autochthon will return on his own. Instead, they attempt to devise potent magics to reach out and contact him.

In addition to venerating Autochthon, Mountain Folk also pray to various allied gods of their subterranean realm as well as maintaining larger temples dedicated to Gaia and the various rulers of the local elemental courts. The Jadeborn regard this worship as a purely pragmatic task rather than with any sort of reverence.



## JADEBORN HERESIES

A few Jadeborn worship the Unconquered Sun in a desperate attempt to convince him to reverse the Great Geas and restore their people to their former glory. This worship has gone on since the First Age and is tolerated in large part because the Unconquered Sun has shown no sign of ever responding to such prayers. Anyone known to practice this heresy is considered weak and is often mocked by his fellows.

Not unexpectedly, ancestor cults and other cults associated with the dead are unknown to the Jadeborn, since they have no connection to the Underworld. A few widely scattered Yozi cults do exist among the Mountain Folk, however. Most such cultists are thaumaturges who summon demons and worship the Yozi in an effort to increase their personal power. This sort of worship is strictly forbidden. Unenlightened Jadeborn found to be worshiping the Yozi are slain, while Enlightened Yozi cultists must pay high fines and swear potent oaths (carefully monitored by devices that determine their sincerity) to never indulge in this foul practice again. Those who refuse or who are insincere in their oaths are exiled or imprisoned until they recant.

The strangest of Jadeborn heresies is the Cult of the Restored Primordials. Adherents seek to restore the Primordials to their previous glory and their rule of Creation. Unlike Yozi cultists, Primordial cultists fully understand that the Yozi are debased and foul beings who would only attempt to transform Creation into a horrific extension of Malfeas. Instead, these Jadeborn hope to find some way to restore the Primordials to the glorious state in which they existed before their defeat by the gods. Currently, this cult is far more of a theoretical discussion group practiced by Artisans and a few Enlightened Workers than anything resembling a religion. Most cultists believe that they would require some transcendent artifact such as the legendary Eye of Autochthon to accomplish their goal. Although officially regarded as a heresy, this cult is largely ignored. If any of the adherents discover some method by which they might be able to succeed in their prodigious task, however, others in the Conclave might be willing to consider it.

## THE MILITARY

Almost 40 percent of all Mountain Folk are Warriors. Yet, since some city-states face large-scale, continuous, open warfare with the Darkbrood and others do not, the military needs of the various metropoli are radically different. As a result, the city-states of Teffa, Rurk and Shining Kren send at least one in 10 of their young Unenlightened Warriors to Urvar and Dijak. In return, these city-states ship them an equal number of young Unenlightened Workers. In the more peaceful city-states, Warriors are put to uses other than fighting the Endless War. Some become scouts and emergency-relief personnel, ready to deal with mining accidents and similar problems. Others are trained as mercenaries.

In the Mountain Folk city-states embroiled in the Endless War, a large proportion of their resources go toward equip-

ping, training and replacing the casualties of the Warrior Caste. Artisan tacticians appointed by the local Conclave are in charge of all military operations, but field-level management falls to lower-status Artisan and Enlightened Warrior officers. Unlike the armies of the surface, the armies of the Jadeborn are arranged by factors of 10. Each city-state has one or more mountains of 100,000 soldiers. All mountains are composed of 10 hills, each with 10,000 soldiers, which in turn have 10 stones of 1,000 each. Finally, every stone has 10 shards of 100 soldiers. The full complement of any city-state's armed forces is referred to as a range and may contain five or more mountains (Urvar's range, the largest, contains 800,000 soldiers). Warriors typically serve four years on the frontlines, with a fifth spent recuperating in the reserves.

### JADEBORN MERCENARIES

The Mountain Folk's treaty with the Scarlet Empress commands them to supply one stone of mercenaries to serve the Realm. Known as the Scarlet Stone, this is the Jadeborn's largest regular mercenary force. Warriors assigned to the Scarlet Stone are generally accomplished veterans with somewhere between 50 years and a century of experience fighting in the Endless War. The Conclave does not send Warriors of lesser experience for fear they might project weakness, but also does not send more experienced veterans for fear they will alert the Dynasts to the Mountain Folk's true power. Every year at Calibration, the Conclave recalls and replaces one shard of Scarlet Stone soldiers. These Warriors' duties are largely ceremonial. Their marching in large parades signals both the power of the Scarlet Empress and the Realm's dominion over the Jadeborn. The Scarlet Stone is occasionally called on to defeat peasant uprisings, however, where its soldiers' ruthless efficiency and inhuman nature strike fear in their opponents.

The Conclave's treaty with the Realm also requires that they not fight against the Scarlet Empress or her forces. This treaty has been called into doubt in the time since she vanished. Also, it does not forbid Mountain Folk mercenaries from being employed by the enemies of the Realm, as long as the Jadeborn Warriors do not fight the forces of the Realm. As a result, a number of Threshold nations that are wealthy enough to hire Jadeborn mercenary units regularly do so. Because of the high cost involved, most employ only a few shards at a time and rarely employ them for more than a few seasons at a time. The Haslanti have used several shards to help hunt

down and destroy massed camps of Wyld barbarian raiders.

The Haltans have employed a similar number of shards against the Linowan. The rulers of An-Teng regularly employ three shards of specially trained Jadeborn marines to help them fight back the advances of the Lintha pirates. Since Jadeborn on the surface risk the wrath of the Great Geas unless commanded by one of the Exalted, every nation who employs the Jadeborn must provide a Dragon-Blooded general to command them.



### JADEBORN MERCENARY SHARD

**Description:** This company represents the standard Jadeborn mercenary company of 99 Unenlightened Warriors, led by a single Enlightened Warrior. These mercenaries serve only Exalted commanders.

**Commanding Officer:** Varies

**Armor Color:** Varies

**Motto:** Varies

**General Makeup:** 100 Jadeborn Warriors outfitted with sparti armor, two-dot skirmish pikes and repeating assault crossbows.

**Overall Quality:** Excellent

**Magnitude:** 3

**Drill:** 4

**Close Combat Attack:** 3 **Close Combat Damage:** 3

**Ranged Attack:** 3 **Ranged Damage:** 3

**Endurance:** 8 **Might:** 4 **Armor:** 3 **Morale:** 4

**Formation:** Mountain Folk mercenary shards operate alone or as shock troops for mortal armies. On the surface of Creation, a Dragon-Blooded commander always leads them, with a single Enlightened Warrior acting as a sub-commander. They tend to be employed in close formation to maximize both their physical and their psychological impact on enemy troops.

### MOUNTAIN FOLK TECHNOLOGY

As beings created by Autochthon and given a portion of his inventive prowess, it's hardly surprising that the Mountain Folk are the most magitechnologically advanced civilization in Creation. During the First Age, their prowess was dwarfed by the mighty achievements of the Solar Exalted. Yet, while the humans and Dragon-Blooded of the Age of Sorrows live amidst the ruins of lost wonders,

## COMMON ARTIFACTS AND TECHNOLOGIES

The Mountain Folk are the most magitechologically advanced race in the Age of Sorrows. Various minor artifacts are more common in their subterranean cities than even in the Realm or Lookshy. The Enlightened Jadeborn have access to far more of these artifacts than the Unenlightened masses do, however. The average Jadeborn Warrior is equipped with a repeating mechanized crossbow (see p. 23) or flamethrower (see **Scroll of Kings**, p. 139, though the Jadeborn model requires only one soldier to operate it), as well as a one-dot skirmish pike (see pp. 25-26) and a one-dot jade breastplate. Elite but Unenlightened troops, including all mercenary units, wear sparti armor (as ashigaru skirmish armor—see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 79) and wield two-dot skirmish pikes, repeating assault crossbows (see p. 24) and plasma tongue repeaters or fuel bolt launchers (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 75). An Enlightened Jadeborn typically wears artifact armor worth three or occasionally four dots (often a myrmidon carapace—see p. 27) and wields a dragon sigh wand and either a three-dot skirmish pike or a power mace (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 78). Also, most Enlightened Jadeborn own a number of minor artifacts, including Essence-screying visors (see p. 25), echo jewels (see p. 25), resplendent personal assistants (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 58) and recorders of everlasting glories (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 61).

the Jadeborn retain their more modest but still impressive wonders. Today, many of the Realm's finest devices and wonders are either made by the Jadeborn or based on their designs. One of the hallmarks of Jadeborn magitechology is that many of their devices perform multiple functions or can be used in a variety of different ways. Instead of creating a daiklave that is merely a superlative blade, they create devices such as skirmish pikes (see pp. 25-26), which can be used to make lethal and nonlethal attacks, as well as both ranged and melee attacks.

## ALCHEMICAL GOODS

In their vast manufactories, powered by volcanic heat and the Essence flows of subterranean manses, the Jadeborn produce large quantities of various thaumaturgical materials. Some are unique creations, while others are manufactured versions of natural materials abundant on the surface world. These manufactories also produce all of the creations of mortal alchemists (see **Exalted**, p. 378, and **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 129-132, for examples), but in far larger quantities. Because of the size and the power of their manufactories, reduce the cost to create all alchemical creations by one dot. The following are only a small sample of the other products they create.

### GODSTRIKE OIL (RESOURCES ●●● TO ●●●●)

From a mixture of fungi spores, powdered stone, petroleum and the nectar of subterranean plants that grow in the presence of uncapped demesnes, the Jadeborn produce a sticky, sapphire-hued oil that glows if a dematerialized spirit approaches within 10 yards. Applying this oil to objects enables them to touch and affect immaterial creatures for one scene. One dose allows the character to anoint one two-handed melee weapon, two one-handed

melee or thrown weapons, 10 arrows or the character's hands and feet. A vial containing 10 doses costs Resources ●●● in the realms of the Jadeborn and Resources ●●●● elsewhere in Creation, if it can be found at all. Unless stored in diamond or adamant, the oil becomes useless after a year. A set of small diamond chimes with tiny sealed hollow spaces filled with this oil rings whenever an immaterial being comes within 10 yards. These chimes are found in many of the Jadeborn's important buildings and cost the same as a vial of this oil.

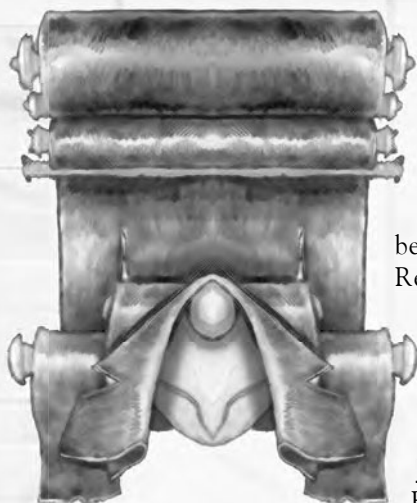
### PYROMANTIC GEL (RESOURCES ● TO ●●●)

Made from powdered red jade and various other materials also available underground, this gelatinous orange paste functions exactly like firedust, but can be manufactured in the Jadeborn's thaumaturgical factories. It costs Resources ● in the cities of the Jadeborn. Above ground, it's rarer and more difficult to manufacture and costs Resources ●●●. Pyromantic gel can also be used to fuel alchemical fire weapons (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age**, p. 75).

### SYNTHETIC LEATHER (RESOURCES ● TO ●●●● OR ARTIFACT ● OR ●●)

By mixing reagents and lichens with black oils that flow in deeply buried veins, the Mountain Folk manufacture a thick liquid that they transform into various sorts of sturdy synthetic leather. They can manufacture this glossy material in any color or pattern and can make it as soft and thin as doeskin or stiffer than the hardest shoe leather. All synthetic leather is slightly stronger than ordinary cloth, so even ordinary clothing made from it acts as low-grade armor. In addition, long synthetic leather coats act as improved versions of buff jackets.





The only limit on this material is that exposure to sunlight causes synthetic leather to grow brittle and gradually fall apart into useless shreds in a number of days equal to its Resources cost. Special treatments can prevent this, but this sun-resistant synthetic leather is slightly less durable and more costly. The Jadeborn also create an Essence-sensitive version

of synthetic leather impregnated with powdered jade that is considerably more durable if appropriately attuned. This material is automatically immune to the affects of sunlight. In addition to the items listed here, Mountain Folk also manufacture a synthetic and fully sun-proof version of silken armor (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, p. 159) identical to the version listed there. Wearing multiple layers of synthetic leather clothing is cumbersome and does not increase its protective value.

## ADVANCED DEVICES

Most Artisans devote their research and experimentation solely to magitechnological and/or thaumaturgical pursuits,

but some toy with mundane mechanical principles to produce highly advanced mundane technology. In addition to powering devices with Essence, the Jadeborn excel at crafting devices powered by steam or complex clockworks. They can also mass-produce mechanical devices that would require the finest mortal craftspeople weeks or months to make. Examples of such devices include the following.

### CROSSBOWS (RESOURCES ●●● OR ●●●●) AND (ARTIFACT ●● OR ●●●)

While rare among mortals, crossbows are the primary long-distance weapons of the Jadeborn. They are ideal weapons in the tunnels and caverns of their underground world. In addition to the basic crossbow (see **Exalted**, p. 372), the Mountain Folk also manufacture powerful mechanized crossbows that include complex mechanisms to amplify their power as well as small and discreet hand crossbows.

All crossbows can fire one of three types of ammunition. The most common are crystal-tipped, armor-piercing bolts identical in effect to target arrows (+0L damage, piercing damage). Blunt-headed bolts are identical in effect to



#### SYNTHETIC LEATHER ARMOR

Name	Soak	Mobility	Fatigue	Cost
Clothing	+2L/+2B	-0	0	•
Sun-Resistant Clothing	+1L/+1B	-0	0	••
Duster	+4L/+5B	-0	0	••
Sun-Resistant Duster	+4L/+5B	-0	1	•••
Great Coat	+6L/+9B	-0	1	•••
Sun-Resistant Great Coat	+5L/+8B	-0	1	••••

#### SYNTHETIC LEATHER ARTIFACT ARMOR

Name	Soak	Hardness	Mobility	Fatigue	Cost	Attune
Enhanced Buff Jacket	+5L/+6B	+2L/+2B	-0	0	•	2
Enhanced Reinforced Buff Jacket	+7L/+10B	+5L/+5B	-0	1	••	3

#### CROSSBOWS

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Cost	Tags
Hand Crossbow	5	+0	4L	1*	75	•••	B
Mechanized Crossbow	5	+1	7L	1*	200	•••	2, B

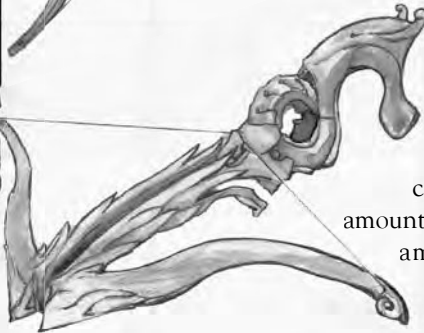
\* Crossbows normally all have a rate of 1, but the Jadeborn developed a special magazine that holds up to 10 bolts and that drops a new bolt into place immediately after the weapon is fired, giving the weapons a rate of 2 until this ammunition runs out. Refilling or replacing an empty magazine requires a miscellaneous Ready Weapon action (5 ticks, -1 DV).



fowling arrows (bashing damage, +2B) and flechette bolts with crystal shafts designed to splinter into a dozen jagged shards on impact are identical in effect to frog crotch arrows (+4L damage, double the lethal soak of the target's armor before applying this damage).



For elite troops and Artisans, the Jadeborn also create crossbows consisting of large amounts of jade and small amounts of several other magical materials. These devices require Essence to attune but gain no bonuses from the magical materials because they use mixtures of several.



Assault crossbows contain a socket for a single hearthstone. Onslaught crossbows have a hearthstone socket, which must be fitted with a level-2 stone or



better in order to function. (The hearthstone provides no other benefits while in use thus.) Powered in this way, onslaught crossbows create their own ammunition (of whatever of the three base types is desired) out of Essence, fire with greater force and even cock themselves after firing.

### FLAME WEAPONS

For short-distance weapons, Mountain Folk prefer flame weapons powered by pyromantic gel. Standard units of Jadeborn Warriors carry flamethrowers or flame pieces very similar to those of mortal manufacture (see *Scroll of Kings*, p.

139). The only difference is that the Jadeborn model requires only one Warrior to operate it. Elite troops carry either plasma tongue repeaters or fuel bolt launchers (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age*, p. 75).

Mountain Folk Warriors also use pyromantic grenades. These weapons are orange-sized spheres with clockwork timer mechanisms that activate when the user twists or slides a toggle switch. Once active, they tick audibly and detonate in a burst of white-hot fire at the predetermined time. The maximum time on the timer is one minute.



### ARTIFACTS

The Mountain Folk excel at using jade and other magical materials and create a vast array of Essence-based technologies. More than a dozen Enlightened Jadeborn Workers work as sub-directors in several of the Shogunate-style workshops the Realm maintains to manufacture artifacts and magitech. In addition to the artifacts listed hereafter and the few mentioned thus far, the Jadeborn can also create almost any of the artifacts published in any of the *Exalted* supplements, including both *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age* and *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex*. The Mountain Folk very rarely make level-5 artifacts and do not make many level-4 artifacts, thanks to the time and expense involved, but they are capable of making both. On average, the level of magitech used by the Mountain Folk is roughly on par with that produced during the Shogunate. As was true then, one- and two-dot artifacts are relatively common, while four- and five-dot artifacts are quite rare and are almost always used by Enlightened Jadeborn. Most Mountain Folk workshops count as Shogunate-era (flawless) workshops (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex*, pp. 28–29). Even the Mountain Folk cannot recreate First Age factory-cathedrals. They do, however, possess seven functioning factory-cathedrals that they use to the fullest capacity and that they keep in good repair. The existence of these factory-cathedrals is one of the Mountain Folk's most important and well-maintained secrets. The Artisans who rule the Conclave would rather risk the full wrath of the Great Geas than allow any of the Exalted to discover

#### ARTIFACT CROSSBOWS

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Attune	Cost	Tags
Assault Crossbow	5	+3	8L	1	250	5	••	2, B
Onslaught Crossbow	5	+3	12L	2	300	6•••	2, B	

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Cost
Pyromantic Grenade	6	+0	10L*	2	15	•••

\* This damage is reduced by one die for every full yard away the victim is from the blast. All flammable objects within five yards of the explosion immediately catch fire.

the existence of these awesome manufactories. Only Exalts who gain the full trust of the Jadeborn would ever be told of their existence.



### ECHO JEWELS (ARTIFACT • OR •••)

The most common of these items are crystal disks an inch in diameter. If a user attunes one by spending one mote of Essence, it adheres to the user's skin and instantly transmits anything the user says to all other linked echo jewels. As long as a character wears the echo jewel, she can automatically hear whatever is said into all other linked jewels. Characters may link one attuned echo jewel to another by touching the two together and spend-

ing a mote that is recovered normally. A single character can link her echo jewel to a number of other jewels equal to twice her permanent Essence. Characters may also sever all existing links by spending a mote. Underground, the telluric currents help transmit their broadcasts and echo jewels have a range of five miles. Above ground, they broadcast up to only 300 yards.

Artifact ••• echo jewels are large crystal disks a yard across and an inch thick. In their center, they contain a setting for a single hearthstone. If the disk is placed in a subterranean manse with an Earth aspect and a rating of ••• and an Earth-aspected hearthstone of a rating of at least ••• is placed in this socket, the disk activates. At this point, anyone touching the disk knows the approximate location of all other active Artifact ••• echo jewels located anywhere in Creation. Anyone touching the disk can then spend three motes to communicate with as many of these other active Artifact ••• echo jewels as he wishes for one full scene. Users can either send vocal messages or transmit a real-time, life-sized image of themselves and anything they are holding. These projections appear as slightly translucent images above the other disks. Other users can respond, but only one person can send to or from a given echo disk at a time. As a result, the users must take turns. In case of a dispute over who wishes to transmit message, the players of users of different disks must make a (Wits + Essence) roll. The character of the one who garners the most successes can transmit for a number of minutes equal to the number of successes by which he won. These echo jewels work only when activated in Earth manses that are at least 10 yards below the surface.

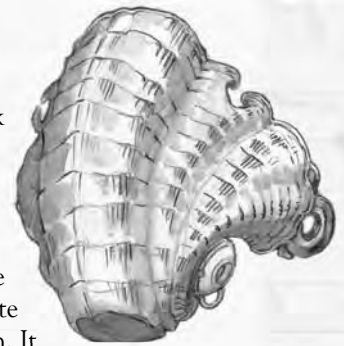
### ESSENCE-SCRYING VISOR (ARTIFACT •)

These common artifacts are arcs of translucent crystal that are worn like a pair of goggles. By spending three motes, the user can activate Essence sight for one scene. This ability to see patterns of Essence allows the wearer to pierce total darkness, fog, smoke, precipitation, thick underbrush and any other non-solid barriers to vision. The wearer can also see immaterial beings and instantly notices any Essence-powered objects as well as characters or objects under the influence of Charms. While active, this device also provides the wearer with a +2 bonus to all Awareness rolls. Another version of this device that also costs Artifact • requires the wearer to commit three motes of Essence to continuously power this device.



### MASK OF PURE BREATH (ARTIFACT •)

These flattened domes look like stylized seashells made from blue jade and other magical alloys. They fit snugly over the mouth and nose of a Mountain Folk or human. By spending one mote, the wearer causes the device to activate and automatically affix to her flesh. It then remains in place until the user either removes it or dies. These masks cleanse the air the wearer breathes, protecting her from all toxic gases, smoke inhalation and other airborne environmental hazards. In addition, in environments with little or no atmosphere, the wearer can spend two motes per hour to synthesize breathable air. Masks of pure breath also distort their wearer's voice, adding deeper and more menacing resonance. This distortion adds one die to any Presence-based intimidation attempt involving speech and adds two to the difficulty to identify the speaker if the listener has heard only her normal voice.



### SKIRMISH PIKES (ARTIFACT • TO •••)

The standard infantry weapon of the Jadeborn armies is a multipurpose device made of jade and adamant. In its basic form, it is a four-foot-long spear tipped with a 15-inch adamant spike. As a reflexive action, an attuned bearer can collapse a skirmish pike from its full length to a blunt, 18-inch baton or telescope it back to its former length. The diverse alloys used in the construction of these weapons prevents them from providing a magical material benefit, but it also allows any magical being to commit four motes of Essence to attune them. Skirmish pikes lack hearthstone settings.

Some skirmish pikes have additional built-in features, although Mountain Folk reserve these superior artifacts for elite troops, officers, the Enlightened or specific missions that call for their use. Adding one feature raises the artifact's

Exalts



rating to ••, while pikes with all three of these functions are rated at •••.

**Essence Battery:** The pike has a faintly glowing crystal set in its haft, which stores an additional 20 motes that may be used only to power other features of the weapon. The only way to recharge this crystal is for a being with an Essence pool to touch it and spend two motes per mote restored to its reservoir. Recharging the crystal requires a miscellaneous action (5 ticks, -1 DV). Mortals may attune to skirmish pikes equipped with this feature by committing two Willpower, but they have to depend on the motes in the crystal to power any features that cost Essence. Also, anyone carrying a pike with an Essence battery can expend one mote to make the crystal spike glow as brightly as a torch for a scene.

**Shock Pulse:** The bearer may fire a bolt of glowing Essence from the weapon's tip. The player rolls (Dexterity + Melee) to hit as normal.

**Stun Point:** The wielder can surround the pike's tip with a sheath of crackling Essence that spreads the impact of its blows over a large area. The weapon inflicts bashing damage, and anyone damaged by this attack is automatically stunned (see **Exalted**, p. 153) unless her player makes a successful (Stamina + Resistance) roll at difficulty 3.

## TRANSFORMATIVE CLOTHING AND ARMOR (ARTIFACT • TO ••)

Some of the more vain Artisans wished to make certain that they were always properly dressed for any occasion. To meet this need, skilled crafters wove the first suits of transformative clothing. This clothing is made from an Essence-sensitive fabric including threads of spun jade and moonsilver. In its basic form, it resembles a finely made tunic of synthetic silk. When the wearer spends one mote, however, she can cause the fabric to shape itself to her will, expanding and contracting the weave, altering its color, texture and shape to fit her precise specifications. It can become everything from a single glove or hat to an elaborate and multi-layered suit of elaborate courtly garb.

The wearer can also spend one mote to cause the garment to almost instantly clean itself and repair any damage.

This transformation is exceptionally rapid, requiring only a miscellaneous action (5, -1 DV). To either duplicate a garment she has seen before or design one of her own, the wearer must make a (Wits + Craft [Wood]) roll, with a failure indicating that the garment looks significantly different from the desired result. This artifact can duplicate any appearance it has ever held without requiring a roll, however. An ordinary suit of this clothing is a one-dot Artifact that can protect the wearer from heat and cold but has no value as armor.

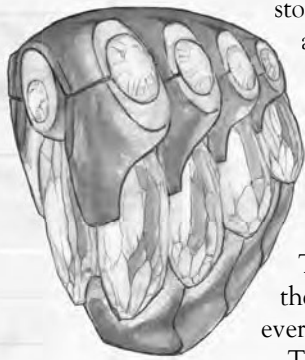


Artisans who wish to be able to protect themselves from attack even in situations where wearing armor is not appropriate (or who insist on looking stylish even on the field of battle) often wear a two-dot version of this artifact. Such armor always provides the listed bonus, regardless of its current form. Suits of transformative armor have all of the capabilities of a normal suit of transformative clothing. Because they are made from threads made from several magical materials, they gain no magical material bonuses.

## ESSENCE PULSE GRENADE (ARTIFACT ••)

Elite Jadeborn Warriors sometimes employ fist-sized reusable grenades constructed of jade and crystal. These spheres

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Defense	Rate	Mins	Attune*	Tags
Skirmish Pike	5	+2	+5L	+1	3	Str •	4	P
Stun Point	5	+2	+10B**	+1	3	Str •	4/1 mote per attack	P
* The cost listed before the slash is the attunement cost, the cost listed after the slash is the cost to fire the weapon.								
** The target is automatically stunned if his player fails a (Stamina + Resistance) roll, difficulty 3								
Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Attune*	Tags	
Shock Pulse	5	+2	8L	3	30	4/1 mote per attack	P	
* The cost listed before the slash is the attunement cost, the cost listed after the slash is the cost to fire the weapon.								
Name	Soak	Hardness	Mobility	Fatigue	Attune	Tags		
Transformative Armor	+6L/+4B	2L/2B	-0	0	4	-		



store a charge of concentrated Essence and release it explosively. The user pushes the correct combination of jeweled buttons to activate it and sets the timer for any time within the next hour. Then she throws or places the grenade where she wishes it to explode and waits. The explosion does not damage the grenade, but does great harm to everything nearby.

The exact nature and type of this blast depends upon the type of jade used in the grenade's construction. Red jade produces 12L of fire damage that ignites flammable objects. Blue jade produces a blast of electricity (20B, ignoring the soak of any non-magical metallic armor). White orbs emit concussive force (20B, all targets in blast range must resist knockdown at difficulty 3—see **Exalted**, p. 153, for details). Black jade inflicts cold damage (20B, and the intense cold temporarily reduces the Dexterity of all victims in range by two dots, unless their players succeed at a reflexive [Stamina + Resistance] roll, difficulty 3—victims reduced to zero Dexterity are frozen in place and cannot move; lost Dexterity returns at the rate of one dot per hour). Green jade grenades emit poison gas that inflicts no damage, but every living being in range must test for exposure to a toxin comparable to arrow frog venom (see **Exalted**, p. 131). Unlike the other grenades, this poison does not become weaker with distance from the grenade. Everyone within 10 yards is affected equally. The conjured fumes dissipate within six ticks. Recharging any grenade requires six motes, a miscellaneous action (5 ticks, -1 DV) and a specially made jade key.

**MYRMIDON CARAPACE (ARTIFACT ●●● OR ●●●●)**

**Repair:** 1

Elite Jadeborn soldiers wear distinctive suits of articulated jade and alloy armor that are efficient, multi-purpose and easy to mass-produce. Most of the armor consists of a network of interlocking hexagonal plates over a flexible and comfortable suit of synthetic silk. This armor also has a rigid breastplate, spaulders, greaves and bracers that resemble a

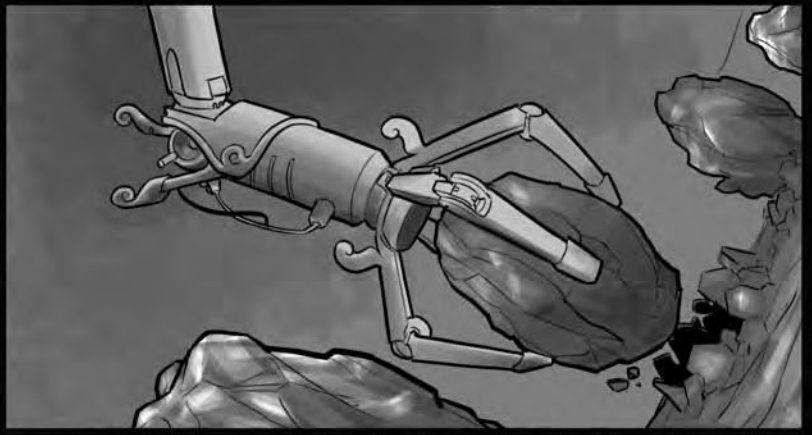
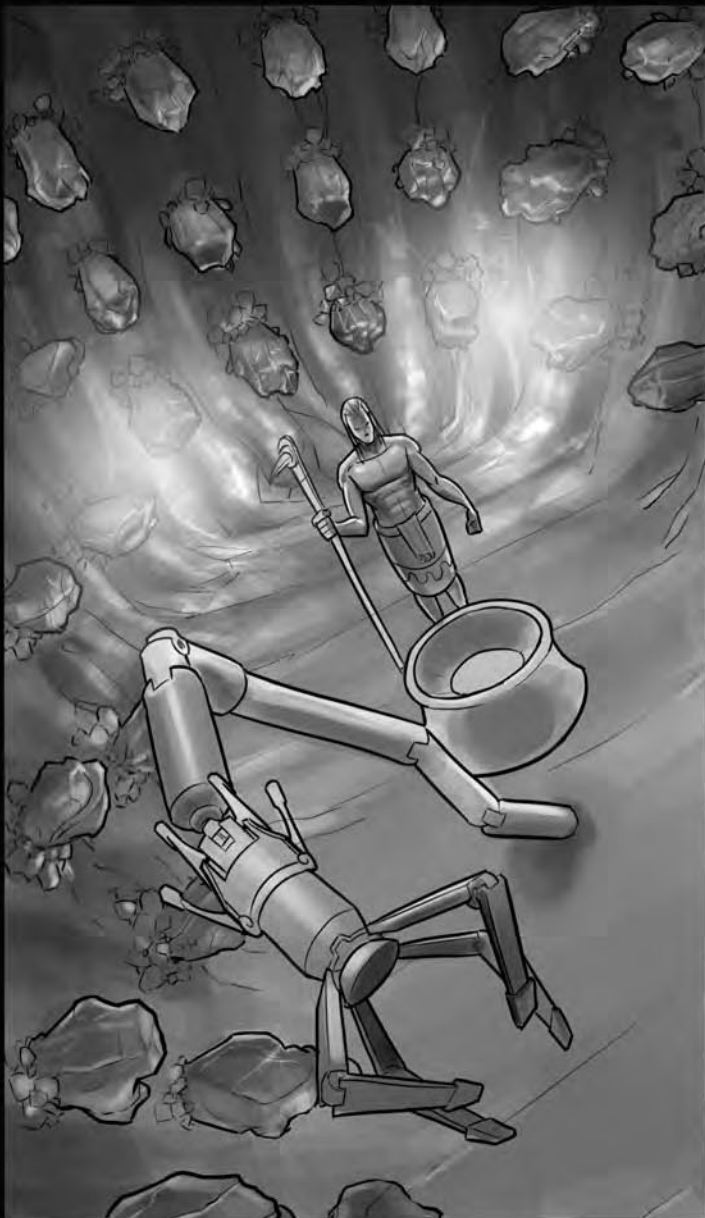
beetle's carapace, as well as a solid helmet with a muzzle-like mouth and almond-shaped transparent eyes. Activating this armor requires a commitment of six motes, which also causes the armor to size to fit the wearer.

The helmet contains a built-in echo jewel, Essence-scrying visor and mask of pure breath, which are all permanently activated as long as the armor is attuned. In addition, the armor contains Essence effectors that boost the wearer's Strength by one dot for all purposes. Similar effectors in the armor's greaves and boots enhance the wearer's walking and running speed. In combat, the wearer adds three yards per tick to move actions and six yards per tick to dash actions. When walking long distances, the wearer can march at a speed of 10 miles per hour, covering up to 100 miles in a day. Because of its alloyed components, this armor does not receive any magical material bonus.

Myrmidon carapaces require regular maintenance to function at peak efficiency. After every 150 hours of use, the suit needs two hours of overhaul and recalibration of its joints. For every 10 hours of missed maintenance, the armor randomly adds one to its mobility penalty or fatigue value (to a maximum rating of 3 in either) or loses one power (optical enhancement, filtration, communication or strength boost). After 80 missed hours, the suit's joints freeze completely and the armor becomes useless. Most members of the Warrior Caste know how to maintain their own armor and keep toolkits with components sufficient for two repairs strapped to their upper thighs. Enlightened Jadeborn often wear Artifact ●●●● versions of this armor which require no maintenance, have no mobility penalty and add two dots (instead of just one) to the wearer's Strength.



Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range	Tags
Essence Pulse Grenade	5	+0	special*	1	20	—
* The exact nature of the damage depends upon the type of jade used in the grenade. This damage is reduced by one die for every full yard away the victim is from the blast.						
Name	Soak	Hardness	Mobility	Fatigue	Attune	Tags
Myrmidon Carapace	+8L/8B	4L/4B	-1	0	6	—






# CHAPTER TWO CHARACTER CREATION AND TRAITS

Once a proud, prosperous people, the Mountain Folk have suffered both in spirit and in substance since the dawn of the First Age. While the humans and Exalted benefited from the fall of the Primordials, the Great Geas forced upon the Jadeborn by the Lawgivers' machinations had dimmed their souls and forever changed their race. Those of the generations born under the Great Geas were lesser beings than those born before Autochthon's binding; they lacked the spark of genius, or Enlightenment, that filled their older brethren, nor did they come forth as inspired or as strong of will.

The Great Maker had abandoned the Mountain Folk, and they were falling far and fast into ruins of mediocrity and dull mindedness. Someone needed to do something to prevent their deterioration into lesser beings. A great hero rose to the task: White Shale took it upon herself to travel the great caverns and warrens of the earth to find an answer to their problems. Her journeys eventually led her to the Great Maker's centuries-abandoned workshop. There she encountered the Clay Man, Autochthon's First, who proclaimed

himself an avatar of the Great Maker. The Clay Man, imbued by the Great Maker with abilities beyond the other Mountain Folk, struck her into unconsciousness and sent her back to her people with an answer to their problems.

White Shale awakened in the tunnels of the Mountain Folk and hurried off to the bowels of the earth, where stacks of jade waited to unveil the future Jadeborn. White Shale took one and carved out the short, powerful Uklem, Bearer of Burdens, who would become the prototype of the Worker Caste. Next, she carved out a creature similar in build to Uklem, but he was even stronger and small rocks pocked his flesh. She called him Naxok, the Hammer of Sorrow, and he became the first Warrior. He would lead the Mountain Folk like him against the Darkbrood creatures building up at their borders. White Shale then took up one last piece of jade and released a final figure: a tall, beautiful woman with the genius of her forebears. She called her Eryan, Daughter of Hope, and she was the template for the Artisan Caste.



White Shale knew the creatures she revealed would epitomize certain Virtues. Uklem and those born like him epitomized Temperance; Naxok and his Warriors epitomized Valor; and Eryan and her Artisans epitomized Conviction. Knowing this, she separated the new race into their current caste structure based on these inherent Virtues and abilities, thereby becoming a hero and mother of the new Jadeborn.

The caste system has endured since that day and has saved their dying race, but in the end, it has only temporarily slowed their demise. The Artisans have squandered their genius on scheming against one another, creating an atmosphere devoid of cooperation among their caste. Although they “lead” the Mountain Folk, they have done little more than sustain the society by birthing new Jadeborn and keeping the semblance of government in motion while they pursue personal interests and vie to increase their own power. This is not how the Clay Man envisioned the Jadeborn Artisans would behave when he gave White Shale the ability to create them. Instead of struggling with one another and playing petty power games, he wanted them to build a strong, sustaining future for the Mountain Folk. Now, they are trapped in their feudalism and internal squabbling, forcing each other to eternally play futile political games that do nothing to expand the horizon of the Mountain Folk.

The Mountain Folk need another hero, but their hierarchical structure with strict role limitations leaves

little room for such a strong personality to flourish. Their strict adherence to conformity usually snuffs the spark of leadership needed to raise the Jadeborn once again from their doldrums.

## CREATING A MOUNTAIN FOLK CHARACTER

This chapter provides all the rules you need to create Mountain Folk characters. The process is similar to that of creating a Solar character found in the core **Exalted** book, including the use of Charms.

### STEP ONE: CHARACTER CONCEPT

Character concept entails an overall picture of your character, who she is and what role she plays in her world. Before filling in a single dot on you're your character sheet, you need to be clear about the type of character you want to play. Keep in mind that the Mountain Folk, or Jadeborn, live in a very hierarchical society, with each caste performing certain duties for the good of the society's structure. In choosing to play a Jadeborn, you are already limiting the types of character concepts you may explore. You should still choose a character type you will enjoy playing on a continuing basis, however, and you should describe that concept in as few words as possible. For example, you might want to be a “formidable Warrior,” an “Enlightened craftsmen” or

### MOUNTAIN FOLK PHYSIOLOGY

As creations of the Autochthon, the Mountain Folk exhibit certain special physiological features. First, they are born of mixed fae and Primordial creator's Essence, and they begin life with a fully grown body, but they must undergo training to develop their intelligence. Their bodies do not age normally as other creatures' do. They do not begin to exhibit the wrinkling and weathering of flesh or slow movement inherent to the old until they reach a number of centuries in age equal to their permanent Essence. When they reach that age, their bodies begin withering and eroding, and they eventually die within 10 years of this stage. They can, however, prolong their lives considerably with the Eternal Jade Rejuvenation Charm (see p. 50).

Jadeborn spring to life from jade deposits fully grown, so they do not have parents. They have genders, but, despite the requisite anatomy, they cannot reproduce among themselves (though they do indulge in recreational intercourse). Oddly enough, they can reproduce sexually with human beings, creating Fae-Blooded offspring.

Another unusual physiological aspect of the Mountain Folk is that they do not truly die like other creatures (See “Innate Powers,” p. 39). Instead, when one's body fails her, her Essence vacates her body and begins a journey to find a jade deposit of sufficient size in which to hibernate until rebirth via the Jade's Egg Hatched Charm (see p. 68). Often, this Essence travels to the depths of the Imperial Mountain. The intangible traveling Essence moves invisibly throughout the Mountain Folk mines, undetectable by either magic or spirits.

After the Essence fully departs a Jadeborn's corpse the body immediately begins transforming, reverting to some form of earth dependent upon the dead Jadeborn's Essence. Bodies of Essence 1–2 transmute into soft clay. Essence 3–4 bodies marbleize, becoming crude statues of their former selves. Essence 5 bodies also become marble statues, but their features remain perfectly evident, as if marble merely coated their former shells. These perfect statues can be found throughout the homelands of the Mountain Folk, reminding them of their great heroes.

Because the transformation takes place so quickly, it is possible for weapons embedded in the dying Jadeborn's flesh to become trapped in the resulting statue if not removed quickly enough. Removing a trapped weapon is a feat of Strength requiring a (Strength +Athletics) total of 7 or more. Items carried by the Jadeborn do not transform with their bodies.



Exalted

a “conniving Artisan politician.” Whichever concept you choose, it will help you later build a history for your character, something that appeals to both you and the Storyteller and that will fit in with the group’s motivations.

### NAME

A Jadeborn’s caste affects his given name. If he is one of the Unenlightened masses, Warrior or Worker, his name is usually one or two syllables long, usually consisting of a hard consonant beginning and ending. Male name examples include: Naxok, Kurok, Grek and Daesod. A female’s name generally runs the same pattern but may sometimes end in a vowel or softer consonant. Female name examples include: Reyan, Siyas, Glori, Palas and Nory. The names of the Enlightened Artisans are usually descriptive names formed from noun pairs or an adjective and a noun. Examples include: White Shale, Jade Searcher, Song Weaver and Justice Keeper.

Although Storytellers will likely allow you to name your character, most Jadeborn receive names from the Conclave after several months of life. Although the names come from a pre-generated list in each birthing facility, the Conclave tries to match the name to the Jadeborn’s observed character or quality. Still, the name lists are finite and Jadeborn births numerous, so the lists recycle roughly every decade. Two Jadeborn with the same name use their settlement’s name as a surname if they encounter one another. If they happen to be from the same settlement, they then add their birth year to their name to clearly differentiate themselves.


### CASTE AND ENLIGHTENMENT

Unlike Exalted castes, Mountain Folk castes denote social standing within their societal structure, with the Warrior and Worker Castes serving as the plebian classes to the noble Artisans. The Artisans, the architects and scholars of Mountain Folk society, view the Warriors and Workers as replaceable, expendable parts in their society’s machinery. The undercastes are merely cogs of that great machinery, and nothing more. The Artisans direct these commoners in what to build and what to fight, and the Workers and Warriors comply, for that is the accepted role of the Unenlightened masses in the grand scheme of things. That is just the way of things in the Jadeborn society, are there are few, if any, exceptions. Even a brilliant Enlightened Worker or Warrior remains a second-class citizen by nature of his caste alone. As the structure currently stands, there is no way for an Enlightened Worker or Warrior to ever rise to anything more than a foreman or general within his caste. Sadly, great genius lies untapped in such individuals, but they fear that any attempts to buck the system would lead to their exile or death.

Another thing to note about the caste system is that it rarely allows variant caste members to intermingle, for each caste’s duties separate them from the other castes of Mountain Folk. This segregation of like-minded groups tends to limit the range of ideas and cements a consistent viewpoint among them. This is most true of the undercastes, who have limited access to books and knowledge or interaction with other peoples.







The limited interaction also affects game play. It is highly unlikely that a group of varying castes could come together to form a group. For this reason, a Jadeborn-based game should usually have all players exploring the same caste, allowing them to interact on a daily basis. Also, power differences exist between the Enlightened and Unenlightened, and having players of disparate power levels can upset the game's balance and make it less fun for the players with weaker characters. Playing an Unenlightened character in a game of Enlightened Mountain Folk would be about as much fun as playing a heroic mortal while everyone else in the group is Exalted and capable of performing tremendous feats of power. A mixed group of Artisans and Enlightened Warriors and/or Workers is the one exception to the general prohibition of mixed-caste games. There would need to be a well thought out reason for their association, but such a game doesn't suffer from a power gap and offers more variety of concept than other Mountain Folk games.

### MOTIVATION

Motivation establishes your character's goal throughout the unfolding story. Does your character desire to beat back the Darkbrood hordes, making the Conclave safe for the Mountain Folk? Does he desire to be more than his current caste will allow, possibly becoming the first Worker to become a leader in the Conclave? Or, perhaps, his desires are even more glorious: He seeks a way to remove the Great Geas from his people, allowing them to roam Creation and follow their gifts where they will?

Your character's Motivation will assist the Storyteller in creating stories of interest to you, and will help you get into the mindset of the character, so Motivation should not be chosen lightly.

When creating your character's Motivation, you might wish to consult pages 88 to 89 of **Exalted** for more information on choosing, playing or changing character Motivations.

### STEP TWO: ATTRIBUTES

Attributes reflect your character's natural capabilities and aptitudes. Keeping your character concept in mind, decide how you will distribute your dots among the Physical (Strength, Dexterity, Stamina), Social (Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance) and Mental (Perception, Intelligence, Wits) Attributes. Full definitions for these Attributes can be found in **Exalted**, pages 101 to 102.

As with Solar characters, you begin with one dot in each Attribute. Pick one Attribute category to be your character's primary, one to be her secondary and one to be her tertiary. Your chosen priorities determine how many dots you may spend in that Attribute category. Keep in mind that Worker and Warrior Caste characters generally have Physical Attributes as their primary, due to the nature of their work. Artisans would likely have Mental Attributes as their primary and Social as their secondary, or vice versa. They are extremely unlikely to have Physical Attributes as their primary category.

Additionally, your character's type, Enlightened or Unenlightened, determines the number of dots you initially gain for your primary, secondary and tertiary categories.

**Enlightened:** You receive 16 dots to spend in your character's primary category, 13 in your character's secondary category and 10 in your character's tertiary category. Your character may not exceed seven dots in any one Attribute without the expenditure of bonus points, and your character may not have any Attribute rated lower than three dots.

**Unenlightened:** You receive eight dots to spend in your character's primary category, four in your character's secondary and three in your character's tertiary. Your character cannot have an Intelligence rated above two dots or any other Attribute rated above five dots.

### STEP THREE: ABILITIES

Abilities specify things your character has learned or can do. All Abilities begin with a rating of zero. The Mountain Folk's type, Enlightened or Unenlightened, dictates how many dots he has to spend in Abilities. All Jadeborn possess six favored Abilities, Craft and five others chosen by the player. A character's caste does not affect his Abilities, except in the case of the Artisan, who has minimum Abilities requirements (see "Enlightened" below) that reflect his rigorous training at the College of Divine Enlightenment. Unenlightened characters tend to have few Abilities but at high ratings, reflecting their on-the-job training and specializations. They have little leisure time to broaden their studies to academic purviews or areas of personal curiosity, nor do they receive any formal training or education that does not directly involve their caste's role in Jadeborn society.

**Enlightened:** You receive 10 dots to spend on Favored Abilities and 25 dots to spend on any Abilities. At least one dot must be in each Favored Ability, and no Ability rating may be higher than three dots without spending bonus points, which can boost an Ability up to six dots but no higher.

Adult Artisans have the following minimum Abilities requirements: Awareness •, Bureaucracy ••, Linguistics •• (High Realm, Old Realm), Lore ••, Martial Arts or Melee •, Occult ••, Performance or Presence •, Socialize •• and •• in Craft Abilities.

**Unenlightened:** You receive 14 dots to spend on Favored Abilities and eight dots for any Abilities, including Favored. At least one dot must be in each Favored Ability. Favored Abilities may receive up to a rating of five dots, but may not exceed five dots, even with bonus points. Other Abilities require bonus points to exceed three dots and may not exceed five, even with bonus points.

### SPECIALTIES

A specialty is an area of focused expertise within one of your character's Abilities. Specialties may be purchased at character creation with bonus points and later via experience point expenditures. While purchasing specialties is not necessary, they do aid in further defining your character's

Abilities and may bring roleplaying depth to your character, as well.

For more on specialties, see **Exalted**, page 74.

## STEP FOUR: ADVANTAGES

Advantages detail the things a Mountain Folk character owns or can use, and they describe the character's magical abilities. Jadeborn, as creations of the Great Maker, also have certain innate powers Autochthon instilled in their forms. These are discussed here, but are detailed in the Traits section.

### BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds detail your character's "place" in the **Exalted** world. They indicate who your character knows, what she owns and what resources she can bring to bear.

**Enlightened:** Players of Artisans receive 13 dots to buy Backgrounds, while players of Enlightened members of the undercastes receive only 10 dots.

**Unenlightened:** Players of Unenlightened characters receive six dots to purchase Backgrounds.

### CHARMS

Like the Exalted, Mountain Folk have access to the Essence magic known as Charms. Jadeborn Charms are divided into six Patterns. Each caste has its own Pattern, and the Enlightened share a Pattern of their own. The fifth Pattern, known as the Foundation Pattern, amalgamates the miscellaneous powers all caste members share. Finally, there is a sixth forbidden pattern, the Chaos Pattern, whose Charms cannot be learned by starting characters. Enlightened members may select a limited number of Charms from castes outside their own. For more information on Mountain Folk Charms, see pages 47 through 72.

**Enlightened:** You receive six Charms, no more than three of which can come from the Pattern of another caste.

**Unenlightened:** You receive three Charms. All your Charms must come from your own caste Pattern or the Foundation Pattern.

## MOUNTAIN FOLK THAUMATURGY

Although the Jadeborn have great magics at their disposal in the form of the Pattern Charms, they sometimes delve in the more common magic of thaumaturgy. The Enlightened are more likely to practice it, but the Unenlightened may also learn its procedures and formulae. Some learn Thaumaturgy to gain an edge against their competitive peers, but others just study it out of general curiosity.

Mountain Folk must pay the same costs and perform the same training as any others who seek to master thaumaturgy (see **Exalted**, pp. 137–139 and **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 109–144).

### INNATE POWERS

Autochthon imbued his Jadeborn creations with several innate powers. These powers are detailed in the Traits section (see pp. 37–39). Players should make note of them on their character sheets.

### VIRTUES

Your character automatically begins with one dot in each of the four Virtues: Compassion, Conviction, Temperance and Valor. Depending on your caste, your character inherits a bonus Virtue dot in either Conviction, Temperance or Valor, the three Virtues the Clay Man imbued in the castes' forms when he had White Shale release the new creatures. You then receive five additional dots to distribute among the Virtue traits, as desired, but no Virtue may be raised above three dots without the expenditure of bonus points. You should choose your character's Virtues to reflect the character's concept and Motivation.

**Artisans:** As individuals who must impose their will upon others, Artisans weather the trials and tribulations of their leadership position within their society through supreme self-assurance. Artisans receive one bonus dot in Conviction.

**Warriors:** The formidable Warrior Caste prizes itself on displaying bravery in the face of its numerous enemies. Warriors receive an inherit bonus dot in Valor.

**Workers:** These individuals perform difficult, repetitious tasks on a daily basis, and they do so without becoming angered or annoyed. Seeing the value of their output in their community keeps them calm and controlled. Workers receive one bonus dot in Temperance.

## STEP FIVE: FINISHING TOUCHES

During this step, you round out your character with your final trait selections.

### WILLPOWER

Willpower describes your self-control and ability to overcome adversity. Your character's Willpower is the sum of her two highest Virtue ratings. You may not increase your Willpower higher than 8 with bonus points, and only characters with two Virtues at 4 or higher may begin the game with a Willpower of 8. Unenlightened characters' Willpower may never exceed 6. Willpower rules are detailed on page 115 of **Exalted**.

### ESSENCE

Essence measures your character's connection to the mystical energies prevalent in Creation. A Jadeborn Enlightened character's permanent Essence begins at 2, while an Unenlightened character's begins at 1. Unlike Exalted, the Jadeborn have a single Essence pool that does not display any form of anima banner. This pool's reserve motes equal (Essence x 10).

### HEALTH LEVELS

Health levels track your character's physical condition when taking damage. They impose penalties on your



character's dice pool for each injury level. Like mortals, Mountain Folk characters have seven health levels: one -0 health level, two -1 health levels, two -2 levels, one -4 health level and one Incapacitated. Charms may provide additional health levels.

### BONUS POINTS

Bonus points allow you to increase your character's traits, allowing you to fine-tune her to your character concept. Mountain Folk characters receive 15 bonus points to spend during any point of character creation.

### THE SPARK OF LIFE

After you have completed the game mechanic aspects of your character, you should create a physical description for her. Next, you need to bring her to life. To do so, you should give her a personality (including quirks), dreams, desires and home and familial connections to Creation. What does she care about? Who are her friends and family? What would she fight for or be willing to forfeit her life for?

An Unenlightened character of the undercastes might ask himself how he really feels about his lot in life. Is he content with being a cog or a disposable shield? Would he secretly like to make changes in the way Jadeborn society works? Does he think Autochthon would agree with how the Conclave currently operates? Additionally, he should fill in his personal history's details and decide how much he really knows about the Mountain Folk's history, as this understanding might affect some of his beliefs.

For an Enlightened character, she might ask herself how well she plays the unending political games in the Conclave. Which faction does she belong to and support? Whom does she trust? Has she proven her genius to the others in such a manner that it is unquestioned? What are her personal projects? What does she see in the Conclave's future? Can she foresee an end to the Endless War, and if so, will it require her cunning strategy or her ability to form alliances with others who can help?

A player has much to decide about his character, and he should think in terms of an epic future for his Jadeborn. Building great stories is what **Exalted** is all about, after all.

You can find more questions to help you round out your character in the **Exalted** core book, pages 77–79.

When creating your character, keep in mind that, even in a strict society of conformity like the Jadeborn's, each member has her own personality and motivation and maintains her individuality (even if she has to hide it from her fellow caste members). In addition, while a Jadeborn's caste largely determines her outward appearance (both the Warrior and Worker being short, blocky individuals and the Artisans being tall, beautiful and lithe), Jadeborn, especially Warriors, can gain have distinctive markings, like battle scars or a stone-embedded pattern that appears on their skin.

That being said, the Jadeborn society expects conformity, so it would not tolerate members who dress outside their issued uniform. They would also find Workers or Warriors with high or low Appearances different, and treat them so.



# CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

## • STEP ONE: CHARACTER CONCEPT

Choose concept, name, type (Enlightened or Unenlightened), caste and Motivation.

## • STEP TWO: ATTRIBUTES

Note that all Attributes start with one dot before you add any.

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental.

Worker and Warrior Caste characters usually have Physical Attributes as primary. Artisan characters likely have Mental or Social Attributes as primary.

Enlightened characters receive 16/13/10, while the Unenlightened receive 8/4/3.

Choose Physical Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina

Choose Social Attributes: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance

Choose Mental Attributes: Perception, Intelligence, Wits

Note: Enlightened characters cannot have Attribute ratings below 3 or above 7; Unenlightened characters cannot have Intelligence rated above 2 or other Attributes rated above 5.

## • STEP THREE: ABILITIES

Select Favored Abilities (Craft, plus 5 others).

Choose Abilities:

**Enlightened:** These characters receive 10 dots to spend on Favored Abilities and must place one dot in each. They also receive 25 dots to spend on any Abilities. The characters cannot use these dots to raise an Ability rating above 3, but they may spend bonus points to raise their Abilities as high as 6. Artisans have the following Ability requirements: Awareness •, Bureaucracy ••, Linguistics •• (High Realm, Old Realm), Lore ••, Martial Arts or Melee •, Occult ••, Performance or Presence •, Socialize •• and •• divided amongst Craft Abilities.

**Unenlightened:** These characters receive 14 dots for Favored Abilities and must place one dot in each. They receive 8 additional dots to spend on any Abilities as desired. They may only raise their Abilities to 3 with these dots, and may use bonus points to raise the ratings to 5 but no higher.

## • STEP FOUR: ADVANTAGES

Choose Backgrounds and Charms:

**Artisans:** receive 13 dots for Backgrounds and 6 Charms. May only take up to 3 Charms from the Pattern of another caste.

**Enlightened Undercastes (Workers/Warriors):** receive 10 dots for Backgrounds and 6 Charms. May only take up to 3 Charms from the Pattern of another caste.

**Unenlightened:** receive 6 dots for Backgrounds and 3 Charms. May only take Charms from their own Caste Pattern or the Foundation Pattern.

Choose Virtues: All Virtues begin with one dot in each, and each caste receives one bonus dot in its inherent Virtue. You then receive 5 dots to spend in Virtues. Virtue ratings may not exceed 3 without spending bonus points.

**Artisan:** One bonus dot in Conviction.

**Worker:** One bonus dot in Temperance.

**Warrior:** One bonus dot in Valor.

## • STEP FIVE: FINISHING TOUCHES

Record Essence (2 for the Enlightened, 1 for the Unenlightened), Willpower (the sum of the two highest Virtues—may not start above 8 unless two Virtues are rated at 4 or higher and may never exceed 6 for the Unenlightened), Essence pool (Essence x 10) and health levels (7, plus any gained from Charms).

## • BONUS POINTS

Bonus points (15) may be spent at any time during character creation.

## CASTES

• **Artisan:** Also called Jadeweavers, these are the Jadeborn savants and aristocrats. The Artisan Caste spends its time mastering various arts, including politics. Artisans enjoy intrigue and hoard treasures and artifacts as a means to extend their self-interests.

• **Warrior:** These Jadeborn were created to defend the Conclave from the Darkbrood and other enemies. These disciplined soldiers sacrifice their lives for the greater good. The few Enlightened among them generally rise to leadership positions and often become great heroes among their kind.

• **Worker:** The largest of the Jadeborn populace, the Workers are the cogs that keep the Mountain Folk society moving. They build the things that must be built, and they provide the food that keeps their people satisfied and capable of performing their work. The few Enlightened among them serve as foremen and engineers.

## VIRTUES

- **Compassion**—Empathy and forgiveness.
- **Conviction**—Emotional endurance.
- **Temperance**—Self-control and clear-headedness.
- **Valor**—Courage and bravery.

# CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

## BACKGROUNDS

- **Allies**—Aides and friends who help in tasks.
- **Artifact**—Magical devices or talismans.
- **Backing**—Standing and rank in an organization of power and influence.
- **Contacts**—Information sources and associates in useful places.
- **Familiar**—An animal or elemental companion.
- **Followers**—Unenlightened subordinates.
- **Influence**—Your pull in the world around you.\*
- **Manse**—A place of power and Essence.
- **Mentor**—A patron and instructor.
- **Resources**—Material goods and money.

\* Only Enlightened Jadeborn may possess more than one dot in this Background.

## BONUS POINTS

Trait	Cost
Attribute	4
Ability	2 (1 if a Favored Ability)
Background	1 (2 if Background is being raised above 3)
Specialty	1 (2 per 1 if in a Favored Ability)
Virtue	3
Willpower	2
Essence	10
Charms	5 (7 if a Charm of another's Caste Pattern)

## TRAITS

The Jadeborn do not possess any new Backgrounds specific to their race. The existing Backgrounds to which they have access need to be adjusted for them, however, as they live mostly within their mountain homes due to the Great Geas of Autochthon. They do not have many opportunities for extended travel aboveground, except to trade, to cart their tribute to their Dragon-Blooded overlords or to serve in the Imperial Army. Additionally, Autochthon imbued the Jadeborn with several innate powers, and they are fully detailed in this section.

## ALTERED BACKGROUNDS

Many common Backgrounds work slightly differently for the Mountain Folk. The changes are detailed in each of the listed Backgrounds that follow.

### ALLIES

Due to the Great Geas, the Mountain Folk have limited contact with the outside world, so their allies are generally other members of Jadeborn society. Other possibilities include earth elementals or gods who dwell in their subterranean realm, or Dragon-Bloods who live in communities near the Imperial Mountain and sometimes interact with the Jadeborn.

### ARTIFACT

The Mountain Folk, like their maker, are natural craftsmen, hammering out artifacts on a daily basis. As a result, they have easier access to these items and receive three dots of artifacts for every dot purchased in this Background. Also, they spend only one Background or bonus point to purchase ratings in this Background, even for those dots above a three-dot rating.

Jadeborn-made artifacts are usually made of jade, orichalcum or moonsilver, though there is the occasional item created from discovered starmetal.

### BACKING

Backing indicates rank in an organization, and for the Jadeborn, the only organization open to them is the military. They just do not remain aboveground long enough to join any other organizations. Storytellers who allow Jadeborn characters from the 1,000 who serve in the Imperial Army may make an exception for those characters.

The higher the Backing rating, the higher the character's rank in the Mountain Folk's military. Only Enlightened individuals may achieve the ranks at three dots or higher, and the Storyteller should consider allowing ranks of four dots or more to be earned only through play, as these ranks represent centuries of experience.

The Jadeborn military ranks are as follows.

#### Trait Effects:

- You are a shard leader, a low-level officer.
- You are a stone leader, a mid-level officer.
- You are a hill commander, a moderately powerful officer with many subordinates.

•••• You are a mountain lord, an extremely powerful leader and near the top of the military infrastructure.

••••• You are a range lord, a military general.

## CONTACTS

A Jadeborn's contacts most likely come from within Jadeborn society, but may also include Exalts, subterranean spirits and gods, or mortals, depending on how close your character lives to the surface world.

## FAMILIAR

A Jadeborn character may establish a magical relationship with a creature from the Mountain folk's subterranean realm. In the case of the Enlightened, this creature can sometimes be a lesser elemental, like a mercury ant or jokun. An elemental with Essence 2 costs four dots, and Essence 3 familiars cost five dots. Elementals are more autonomous than mere animals, and they rarely share Essence from their own pool, but they may be willing to share their senses.

For the Unenlightened, who have precious little leisure time to forge bonds, their familiars are subterranean animals who can assist them with their everyday duties.

## FOLLOWERS

Only Enlightened characters may have followers. Enlightened Workers or Warriors will have followers who are Unenlightened subordinates of their own caste. Artisans may select followers of various castes, as they have more access to the other castes. They might pull Warriors to be bodyguards or use Workers as personal laborers.

## INFLUENCE

This Background usually pertains to influence within a Mountain Folk enclave. As Enlightened individuals are more likely to gain influence, only they may acquire numerous dots in this Background; Unenlightened characters are limited to one dot.

Should a Storyteller allow it, this Background could provide influence on the surface world, but any character possessing such influence is likely to walk a serious tight-rope in not triggering the Great Geas.

## MANSE

The Mountain Folk build their cities and warrens around a central manse, and these areas are generally on a powerful geomantic wellsprings, ones too deep for aboveground beings of Creation to tap. Most of their manses and demesnes have an Earth Aspect, but other elements are possible. Even so, the Jadeborn control few manses of Air, even fewer manses with a Celestial aspect, and they own none with Abyssal-tainted energies.

A Jadeborn with this Background receives two dots worth of manses or three dots of demesnes to which he is attuned for every one dot rating in this Background. He may arrange them as he desires.

Unenlightened characters may be attuned to manses, but they generally do not carry their hearthstones. A possible



exception would be if an undercaste character was performing a mission that required the hearthstone and so possessed it temporarily to ensure the completion of the important task. It is much more likely, however, that a task requiring a hearthstone would be bestowed upon an Enlightened character rather than an Unenlightened one. So, really, the opportunity to carry one is nigh impossible for the Unenlightened, but as always, the decision remains in the Storyteller's hands.

### MENTOR

On a rare occasion, Mountain Folk may have spirits or Exalts as mentors, but generally, mentors come from more influential and wise individuals of a character's own caste. Artisans can serve as mentors for the Enlightened undercaste characters, but the castes' limited interactions with one another makes gaining one difficult—unless the undercaste character just happens to work as an assistant for the Artisan. Even in that scenario, however, Artisans are very jealous and secretive people by nature. They do not easily trust others in general, let alone enough to share their knowledge and secrets with them, so such instances are likely rare. It would take a highly confident and secure Artisan to enter into such a relationship. He would likely gain the displeasure of the other Artisans if the nature of the relationship were discovered, for they, as a whole, do not think the undercastes should strive to be anything other than what they are.

Only the Enlightened may have four or more dots in this Background.

### RESOURCES

The Mountain Folk uncover rich resources, such as precious ores and gemstones, on a daily basis. For this reason, they have easy access to riches, and subsequently have a Resources Background equal to their invested dots plus two, but they may not have more than five total dots in this Background.

Characters without this Background still benefit from their community's wealth. Enlightened characters live comfortably with the equivalent of Resources ••, while the Unenlightened have an effective Resources •. This is true for all characters in good standing with their community. All individual Mountain Folk have some access to Resources, unless they have been exiled from their community for being criminals or lazy wretches unwilling to work to earn their keep.

Unenlightened rarely have actual dots in this Background, but it is possible, especially for members of the Warrior Caste. For instance, a Warrior may have a dot in this Background as a reward for an exceptionally heroic act. Enlightened characters, however, rarely have less than Resources •••••.

## THE GREAT GEAS

The Unconquered Sun forced Autochthon to impose the Great Geas on the Mountain Folk to prevent them from ever rising against the Exalted. The Great Geas requires the Jadeborn to perform certain duties when bidden, such as building manses or artifacts for the Exalted, and it prevents them from attacking the Exalted (with rare exception) or aiding

their enemies, among other deeds. Failure to conform to the Great Geas inflicts the offender with points of Divergence.

The Divergence trait functions just like the Limit of the Exalted's Great Curse, and the Storyteller ultimately decides what constitutes an offense. When a character's Divergence trait reaches 10, the character experiences a great misfortune at the most inopportune moment, as though he broke an oath sanctified by an Eclipse Caste Solar with a permanent Essence equal to his own Essence rating.

Since his children had done no harm to the Exalted but were unjustly being punished by the Unconquered Sun because the Lawgivers distrusted the Primordial and feared the power at the Jadeborn's command, Autochthon provided them with some leniency. For every month an offending Jadeborn remains in his underground realm and commits no further transgressions against the edicts of the Great Geas, he loses one point from his Divergence total. Additionally, should an individual with Divergence encounter the First (a.k.a. the Clay Man), his touch, along with an expenditure of Willpower on a one-to-one basis, can cleanse the Jadeborn character of all his Divergence points. Of course, he might have to accept a task from the Clay Man for doing so.

The following deeds are considered offenses against the Great Geas. The list is not exhaustive, so the Storyteller might have to decide if other character actions constitute an offense.

Offense	Divergence
Breaking a sworn oath	5
Committing an unwarranted attack against a Celestial Exalt*	5
Killing a Celestial Exalt	5
Killing a Terrestrial Exalt	3
Aiding enemies of Creation (Primordials, their servants, Wyld denizens or Darkbroods)	4 per act of assistance
Associating with enemies of Creation	2 per week
Accepting worship from mortals	3 per week
Subjecting mortals to Jadeborn authority	1 per week
Living or traveling aboveground for more than one month without being in service to an Exalt	1 per month
Refusing to build an artifact for a Celestial Exalt—assuming he is capable of its creation—when properly commanded to do so	1 per week of refusal**

\* Jadeborn may attack a Celestial Exalt only in self-defense or when bidden to do so by another Celestial Exalt.

\*\* No Jadeborn can be forced to create more than one artifact a year for the Exalted.



The Great Geas should be considered to always be in effect for the Jadeborn. Only an individual who knows an obscure language called Rocktongue may phrase an artifact request for a Jadeborn in such a way as to trigger it, however. Doing so requires a Lore (+ Savant Background, if applicable) rating of 5 or more and an (Intelligence + Lore) roll at difficulty 6. Nowadays, the eldest Sidereals of the Bronze Faction are the Exalts most likely to remember this tongue and its usage in regard to the Great Geas.

## INNATE POWERS

The Great Maker bestowed the Jadeborn with several innate powers.

### IMMORTAL ESSENCE

The Jadeborn do not truly die as most beings do. When a Jadeborn's body gives out, his Essence escapes his body and returns to a jade deposit within his underground home, likely one deep in the mines beneath the Imperial Mountain. Within the jade, the Essence slumbers until awakened to life by a Jadeborn Artisan with the Jade's Egg Hatched Charm (see p. 68). The awakening is a complete reincarnation, but the reborn Essence does carry trace memories of its former host to the new one. These memories are glimpses only. Unlike some of the Dragon Kings, the Jadeborn cannot access full details of their former lives.

### JADE SENSE

As beings born of jade, the Mountain Folk have an innate ability to sense deposits of that gemstone. For the reflexive cost of one mote, one can call upon this power, which allows her to sense the presence of jade within (her Essence x 5) yards. This is a vague sense only. It does not reveal direction or concentration. Once she has detected the jade, however, she may consciously expend another mote and an action concentrating to determine the exact direction of the deposit. For a third mote, she can determine the concentration of the jade and whether or not it contains the Essence of one of her people.

The jade sense power also provides the Jadeborn with an internal compass, as they can feel the pull of the Elemental Pole of Earth on their souls. This knowledge of their orienta-

tion in regard to the center of Creation remains active for the entirety of a scene.

### MAGICAL ATTUNEMENT

The Mountain Folk can attune themselves to jade-constructed magical items as if they were Terrestrial Exalts. In addition, they can fully attune to items of the other magical materials without need of rolling, but this ability costs twice the usual amount to do so. Jadeborn can also attune themselves to manses and demesnes.

### SUPERIOR CRAFTSMANSHIP

Autochthon implanted his children with the drive and the ability to create great works. As this purpose is innate to their souls, they may purchase or improve any Craft Abilities and specialties for half the normal experience cost and training time (rounded up). This cost benefit supersedes any provided by Favored Abilities.

Because of this innate power, the Jadeborn may also take up to five specialties per Craft Ability instead of the normal three. They may apply a maximum bonus of only +3 to any single roll, however, and they may not purchase the same specialty more than three times.

### WYLD RESISTANCE

Although the Mountain Folk were born of fae spirits trapped in jade, they do not possess the chaotic nature of their fae kin, nor are they drawn to such forces. Autochthon stamped their Essence with a protective pattern that defends the Jadeborn from the effects of the Wyld. This hardy resistance grants them five additional dice to apply to all rolls involving resisting the Wyld.

While in the chaotic lands of the Wyld, most Mountain Folk feel only an uneasy discomfort. They are not at risk of becoming addicted to it, and they can never experience a vision quest while there. If, for any reason, one should succumb to the effects of a physical transformation from exposure to the Wyld, the Mountain Folk instead suffer a level of unsoakable aggravated damage per mutation point he would have gained, but he remains otherwise unchanged.

Fair Folk cannot feed on the Mountain Folk. Such attempts automatically fail.



The most populous of the Mountain Folk, the hardy Worker Caste is the backbone of Jadeborn society's infrastructure. Workers keep the civilization going strong, doing whatever needs to be done, whether that means toiling deep within the mountains to unearth jade and other minerals or growing the food that keeps the masses fed and able to do their own work.

The focused, collective might of the Worker Caste can accomplish monumental tasks. For instance, they can create vast hoards of weapons with ease, and do so daily to keep the Warrior Caste armed and armored. Indeed, in the past, their labor brought forth the massive arsenal that allowed the Exalted to overtake the Primordials during the Primordial War. Likewise, their cooperative efforts brought forth the great city-state of Urvar and other cities such as Teffa and Rurk, and built the unfathomably vast network of tunnels that run underneath creation like the veins of the Great Maker.

Whatever their tasks and their individual traits, the Workers labor as one. Their drummers and foremen hammer out the beat that hums throughout the tunnels like a pumping heart, keeping them all attuned to the labor at hand. They are the epitome of duty, discipline and efficiency. Their power derives from their unity.

A Worker begins his life in a communal workshop, playing with tools and mimicking the movements of his teachers as they build small mock-ups of manses, weapons and mundane items. Other lessons involve mining, farming, building mundane structures and performing other day-to-day tasks necessary for the Jadeborn society's survival. Overall, his education in the trades is well rounded. Once a Worker displays an aptitude for a certain task, he is most likely assigned to perform that specific duty forever, excepting any emergency need for Workers to fill other important duties, whereupon he receives quick refresher training and is moved elsewhere.

A Worker's life is hard, no doubt, but he is innately built to withstand long hours of work and possesses a superior patience for the duties he performs. And no matter how tedious the tasks are that he performs, at least he has a longer life expectancy than his Warrior brethren.

Because the Artisans truly value the Worker Caste's skills and capabilities, they look out for the Workers, making certain that members of their own caste do not attempt to usurp the Workers' skills for their personal projects or set themselves up as petty dictators over them. Although every Artisan likely dreams of having that kind of control over an amazing group of laborers, they all know





that it is inefficient to squander this resource on anything but the society's greater good. When it comes to the Workers, inefficiency is a death toll for their society. Therefore, most Artisans see to it that the Workers receive fair treatment, two meals a day to keep them hardy, a good night's sleep to keep them productive and some leisure hours to keep them somewhat happy with their lot in life.

Most Workers are indeed content with their station, but there are a few thousand malcontents among the Workers. Considering that more than six and a half million Workers make up this caste, the malcontents are a small percentage of the whole. They are so small, in fact, that they know it is best they hold their tongues to avoid being exiled or even killed for their lack of obedience to the Conclave.

**Duties:** The Workers perform a variety of tasks that keep Jadeborn society functioning smoothly. Approximately two million of them serve in the bottomless mines underneath Urvar, extracting vast quantities of jade and other precious metals from their dig sites. A million Workers toil in manufacturing, producing great numbers of wonders with which to equip the Warrior Caste, to trade aboveground and to increase the wealth of the Conclave. Two million more earn their keep by laboring on the empire's farms and maintaining the immense mushroom plantations. Finally, the remaining million and a half Workers serve the Artisans as assistants or personal servants or carry supplies to the Warrior garrisons and soldiers at the various fronts. Some perform specialized jobs that keep them so secluded from their brethren that even other members of their caste aren't quiet sure what they really do.

**Appearance:** The Workers are the smallest of the Mountain Folk, standing between three and four feet tall. Their small forms are blocky but trim and are covered in corded muscle earned from their constant hard work. Within these compact

frames lies dense bone that supports the Workers for the tasks required of them. Worker skin is leathery from exposure to great heat, and their hands are greatly callused.

The Worker caste performs labor that leaves them covered in grime and dust, and they likely appear filth-covered when encountered. But, at the end of their shifts, the Workers value cleanliness just as the Artisan class, and they amass in the communal showers to scrub themselves clean.

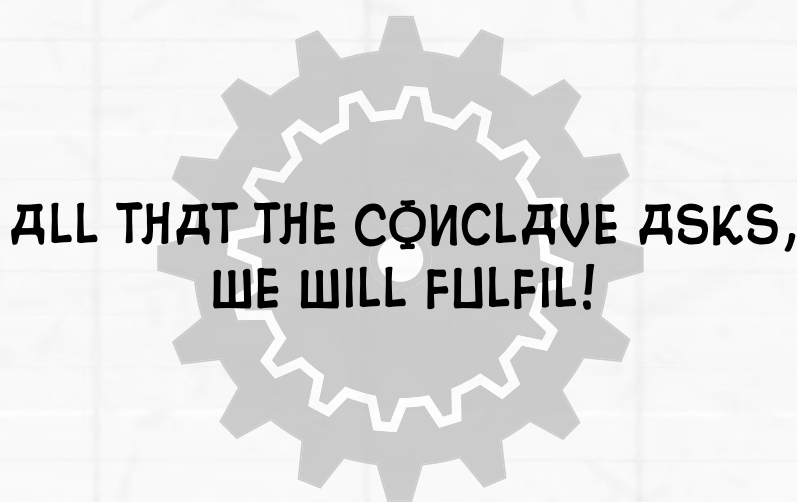
All the Workers wear durable clothing suitable to their labor. Most Workers wear belted tunics of drab earth tones. They wear boots of synthetic material that are color-coded to inform others of their specific duties. Miners wear black boots, farmers green and factory workers maroon. The maintenance Workers wear brown boots, the lab and research laborers wear gray and the Artisans' personal aides wear bright yellow boots. More recently, the Workers have added colored arm- or headbands to their attire. This helps others to identify their station with a quick glance, rather than having to lower their gazes to their feet to gain such information.

Finally, in addition to the boots and tunics, appropriate protective gear for those assigned jobs in hazardous areas completes their uniform. Such gear usually consists of helmets and thick, heat-resistant buff jackets.

**Associations:** A plain yellow gear (official symbol), diligence, dirt, dull colors, dust, farms, functional architecture, granite, hammers, iron, pickaxes, pillars, sickles, tools, Temperance

**Sobriquets:** Autochthon's Hammers, Children of Clay, Cogs of Creation, Gear Men, Ironsouls, Pillars of the Mountain

**Concepts:** Brave miner, disgruntled laborer, efficient foreman, improbable hero, inquisitive lab worker (Enlightened), simple farmer, unsung inventor (Enlightened)



The Warrior Caste fights the Endless War, a holdover from the First Age, keeping their Darkbrood enemies at bay. Thousands of Jadeborn Warriors die every day in these battles, but they continue to reincarnate like others of their kind. The Warrior Caste's life is a constant violent struggle, and one day looks much like the next, filled with death and blood. This is the only life the Warriors know, and this is truly the life most Warriors desire to live. They are the shields of their society, and they willingly give their lives to protect the Conclave.

The Jadeborn military is the epitome of discipline. The army fights with precision and fearlessness, and their own people refer to them as Engines of Victory. No soldier among them balks at their orders or tries to usurp power from their leaders. Warriors who would do so rarely live long enough to become trouble. Such aberrations are weeded out in youth and are exiled from the community, or outright killed, if they fail to obey and conform. There is no room for individuality among the Warrior ranks. Duty, battle and death are their mantras, and they give their all in that regard.

The Warriors are skilled at fighting in close quarters, their native terrain. Because their battlefields are winding tunnels spotted with the occasional cavern, normal aboveground tactical formations do not work for the Jadeborn. Their fighting style is a true product of their environment and has been molded accordingly. Most of their tactics could be said to be guerilla tactics. They set traps and finish off the surprised victims with hit-and-run attacks designed to kill quickly, and then retreat quickly into their tunnel networks, confusing any would-be pursuers. These tactics help them thin out their enemies' numbers, allowing them to make a concerted attack on a weakened force.

When they go toe-to-toe, Warriors rely on their pikemen to crouch and form lines near cave entrances, while other Warriors fill in behind them with flamecasters. After the flamecasters release their load, they too

# WARRIOR





crouch to reload, allowing those behind them armed with crossbows to finish off any enemies who survived the fiery assault. When the Jadeborn Warriors fall victim to ambushes, they form an outward-facing circle and fight to the death, taking as many of the enemy with them as possible. Only a few of the Darkbrood have been successful in catching the Warriors off guard this way, though, for the Jadeborn are a vigilant people and their Warriors more so. In the past, some Darkbrood succeeded in circumventing the Warriors to ambush unsuspecting Workers, causing great devastation. The Conclave often keeps a Warrior retinue with Workers who toil in dangerous parts of the mountain now for just this reason.

Mountain Folk of the Warrior Caste begin their lives in barracks-like housing. They train daily in the ways of combat and compete against one another in gladiatorial fights and in athletic games. The Warrior Caste's members are usually born with significant physical capabilities, but they are conditioned further to enhance both their strength and endurance. Like the Workers, each Warrior specializes in one particular type of combat duty, such as infantry, reconnaissance or war machine piloting, but they all receive well-rounded combat training. Once they achieve mastery of their weapons and combat tactics, young Warriors are shipped to garrisons, manses or to serve on the frontlines of any ongoing conflicts.

As likely evident from their dangerous lifestyles, Warriors rarely live more than a few decades. Those who survive for a century or more are considered the greatest of Jadeborn heroes. Their units believe them to be blessed with luck and therefore look upon them as talismans of good fortune.

While most would lament such short, battle-filled lives, Jadeborn Warriors face their fate with enthusiasm and pride. They were born to this task, and they do it to the best of their ability, knowing the fate of their own people lies in their hands.

**Duties:** The Warrior Caste's only duty is to defend the Conclave from all enemies, including the Nameless Hordes. To succeed at this task, the Warrior Caste receives aggressive combat training and conditioning to increase its members' strength and stamina. They perform their duty with focused zeal, knowing that they are the thin line that separates their race from extinction. The Enlightened among them rise quickly through the ranks to become unit leaders.

Most Warriors live in border forts at the periphery of Mountain Folk territory, and the rest reside in the empire's numerous garrisons. When these reserve units aren't being called up to replace fallen units on the frontlines, they serve as manse sentries, Artisan bodyguards or the local police force.

**Appearance:** Warriors can stand up to five feet tall. They are stout and powerfully built, and their skin texture often resembles stone. Some have small crystals or stones embedded in their skin like freckles or moles.

The Warrior Caste wears black, artificial-leather uniforms consisting of tunics, pants and high boots. Ever prepared for battle, however, Warriors wear their armor, heavy mail and helms, over their uniforms when on duty. Even off-duty Warriors armor themselves up, wearing breastplates or chain shirts over their black uniforms, and carrying sheathed swords and knives as weapons.

**Associations:** A crimson gear with spiked teeth (official symbol), arms and armor, basalt, bronze, endurance, fortresses, gates, garrisons, obsidian, steel, strength, Valor

**Sobriquets:** Autochthon's Blades, Children of Stone, Engines of Victory, Jade Shields, Steelhearts, Tunnel Terrors

**Concepts:** Charismatic commander (Enlightened), guerilla tactician, lucky veteran, war-machine pilot, zealous grunt

**BE ON GUARD AT ALL TIMES.  
THE ENEMY NEVER SLEEPS.**





# ARTISAN

The Artisan Caste contains roughly 10,000 of the brightest thinkers and strategists of the Mountain Folk. They, of all their people, retain much of the genius the Great Maker instilled in their race at the dawn of Creation. Even so, the Artisans, or Princes of Adamant, are but a mere shadow of Authochthon's First and the Jadeborn beings who followed him. Since their Creator abandoned them to their own devices, they know they can never truly reclaim the glory their kind once held, and this realization has caused some to grow caustic and bitter.

The sad truth for the Jadeborn, which the Artisans alone contemplate daily, is that the people who were once the hands of the Autochthon no longer hold his blessing. Neither he nor the First are ever likely to return to guide them out of the viperous environment of petty politics the Artisans have created for themselves and the life of endless toil and battle they have created for the undercastes. What bothers them most is that, even with their great genius, they cannot find a way to redeem their society and build bridges of cooperation among their caste members, whom they currently only compete with and scheme against. Without the skills and knowledge of such a think-tank to solve their societal issues, the Artisans are each and every one doomed to a dismal life of enlightened mediocrity and petty politics.

None of the Artisans are willing to work together to resolve anything, however, for they harbor only distrust for one another, believing each wants only to use the other for gain of some sort. Therefore, they are destined to live, work and plan alone—albeit in the best luxury Jadeborn society can offer them. Still, this life is lonely and difficult for them, for they really are a social people by nature, and they crave the companionship of others of their caste, if only to discuss the fascinating personal projects they pursue in their leisure time. But they cannot see a way beyond this lifestyle.



Distrust rules them now, and they have proven unable to let go of that paranoia long enough to willingly share ideas or information. They don't trust their secrets to their peers, for they know their enemies within would surely use them to gain the upper hand in their political games. Therefore, to fill the void of their weary, unfulfilling existences, they instead spend their days weaving plans to gain more personal power, while still serving half-heartedly in their roles as the Conclave's leaders.

So, while it is true that some rare few Artisans find contentment in this vicious, unforgiving atmosphere, most remain bitter at their own lot, even though it is the best among their kind. Some hate the gods for starting the Primordial War that ended in imprisoning them under the Great Geas. Many hate the Exalted for being the Chosen of the gods, for causing the Great Geas out of fear and jealousy and for requiring the Jadeborn to build great manses for them upon their whim. A few even hate Autochthon, their Great Maker, for caving in to the will of the Unconquered Sun and for entirely abandoning them. Finally, most blame themselves for not being able to rise above their petty infighting to improve their people's lot in life. For, surely, with their combined genius, they could find a way to circumvent the Great Geas and truly return the Mountain Folk to their former glory.

**Duties:** The Artisan Caste guides the Conclave and releases the newborn Mountain Folk from their jade to ensure the survival of their people. In addition to these duties, most Artisans just look after their own self-interests. A few enjoy the political games they play and the power they have, and some even like lording that power over the undercastes. But most Artisans dislike what they are and want nothing more than to escape the game and start working on something more fulfilling and more important in the great scheme of things. After all, they too have the urge to create, and that urge is greatly hindered by the societal structure within their own caste that they have brought forth.

Currently, the Jadeborn Artisans are nothing more than intelligent, frustrated artists forced to play politician against their own hearts' desires, while going through the motions of keeping their society in working order. They are bureaucrats without passion; leaders without the desire to lead.

**Appearance:** Artisans do not have the blocky appearance of their brethren, but are lithe and tall, with angular, elegant features. They are always striking to indescribably beautiful in form. A Firstborn's flawless skin is like polished marble, mixed with standard human hues, from mocha to ebony to a pale white. Their hair, which is usually worn long and tied back, varies the spectrum of human colors but also includes jeweled-colored highlights and even metallic strands. In short, the Firstborn appear so perfect in their grace and magnificence that they make mankind look like dreadful mockeries of Autochthon's greatest creation, while the opposite is true for their blocky, short, stone-like undercaste brethren.

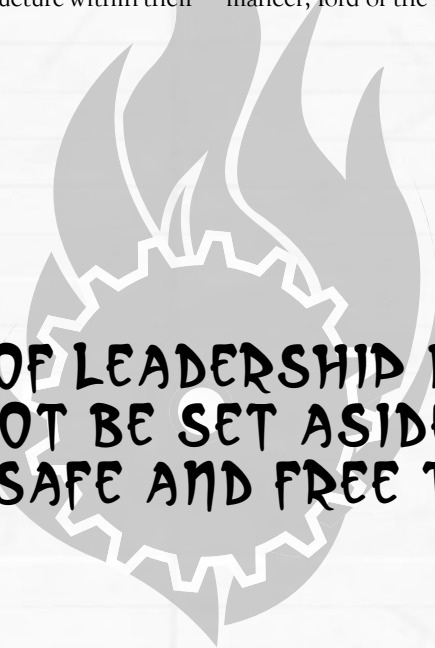
When Artisans work, they wear functional but comely clothing made from synthetic black silk worked with magic to self-mend and self-clean. Small jewels bedeck the dark clothing, mimicking the appearance of the night sky the Artisans have rarely if ever seen. When they relax or enjoy leisure activities, they favor flowing robes of spun diamonds and precious metals that glisten like gossamer. In battle, they wear awe-inspiring armor of jade and precious gems.

**Associations:** A blue gear wreathed in a stylized flame (official symbol), books, chisels, Conviction, great manses, intelligence, leadership, learning, palaces, precious gemstones, splayed hands

**Sobriquets:** Autochthon's Hands, Children of Crystal, Firstborn, Jadeweavers, Keepers of the Conclave, Princes of Adamant

**Concepts:** Conniving politician, genius strategist, geomancer, lord of the forge, Pattern Knight, selfish savant

**THE BURDEN OF LEADERSHIP IS CRUSHING,  
BUT IT CANNOT BE SET ASIDE UNTIL OUR  
PEOPLE ARE SAFE AND FREE TO PROSPER.**





THAT'S THAT, THEN. LET'S SEE HOW YOU LIKE...



...THIS.





# CHAPTER THREE PATTERNS

The Charms of the Mountain Folk are as regimented and structured as their social hierarchy, with few exceptions. The Charms are segmented into five primary Patterns—three that are caste specific (one for each caste), one general Pattern (the Foundation Pattern) which can be mastered by any Mountain Folk, and one that only the Enlightened can study or master (the Enlightened Pattern). A sixth Pattern (the Chaos Pattern) is recognized but not spoken of, and study of it is forbidden under Mountain Folk law. Unenlightened Mountain Folk can learn only the Charms that are in their caste-specific Pattern and those of the Foundation Pattern. The Enlightened can learn any Pattern, though study of the Chaos Pattern is legally forbidden.

## LEARNING NEW CHARMS

It takes a Jadeborn (minimum Essence x 3) days equal to master a new Charm, assuming the character has a Jadeborn tutor who already knows the Charm. Without a tutor, this time is doubled.

## CREATING NEW CHARMS

Only Jadeborn who have mastered a Pattern can create new Charms in that Pattern. Few ever reach such lofty heights of knowledge, and those who do are Enlightened at least—and usually Artisans—which creates problems in the dissemination of new Charms. It is a point of pride for an Artisan to create new Charms that could improve the performance of Workers and Warriors under their management; it would be embarrassing to allow those Charms to be discovered and stolen by other Artisans.

Many Artisans seek to hide their developments, often taking their new Charms to the grave rather than let rivals benefit from their studies. It is possible that certain Charms have been discovered, lost and rediscovered countless times before entering common usage. Some Artisans even go so far as to suppress the creations of Enlightened under their leadership. Enlightened Workers and Warriors are often less secretive about their discoveries, but they too get caught up



in the bitter competition between their Artisan leaders. As a result, the Patterns expand only slowly. Mountain Folk in a particular Artisan's entourage might have access to a number of additional Charms that have not yet entered the vernacular, though.

Creation of new Patterns is presumed to be beyond the scope of any Mountain Folk now living. Such a legendary feat has not been accomplished since the time of White Shale.

## THEMES

The Charms of the Jadeborn rarely improve their performance directly. Instead, they often grant abilities or powers that the Mountain Folk do not normally have, sometimes permanently. Many Mountain Folk Charms are permanent in nature, though some need to be taken multiple times in order for one to achieve the pinnacle of their power.

Another type of common Charm improves the Jadeborn based on the presence of their brethren, allowing them to draw strength from numbers.

Jadeborn Charms are typically tied to their Virtues, rather than Abilities.

## STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Unlike the Exalts and gods, the Jadeborn have no Excellencies and possess few other instant-duration Charms that improve dice pools, convert motes into automatic successes, grant automatic successes outright or allow rerolls. They also have no extra action Charms, although they do have some Charms that can have largely the same effect. Finally, the static nature of the Essence matrices that make up Jadeborn Charms makes linking them into Combos impossible.

Mountain Folk Charms are typically extremely efficient, rivaling even the Charms of the Terrestrials in their parsimonious use of Essence. Additionally, the Mountain Folk have access to a type of Charm not seen elsewhere in Creation, the enchantment, which blurs the line between Charm and spell.

Jadeborn cannot learn sorcery (though they have Charms that allow them to imitate the effects of some spells), nor can they learn any of the supernatural martial arts. At best, some Enlightened Warriors are able to mimic some martial arts techniques at a power level comparable to the less-powerful Celestial styles. All Jadeborn may study thaumaturgy without limit, although Arts that allow the summoning of or negotiating with threats to Creation are neither recorded nor studied—officially, at least.

## NEW KEYWORDS

*Creation-Bound*—Charms with this keyword are tied to the Essence patterns of Creation and have no function outside Creation—in the Underworld, Yu-Shan, Malfears, Elsewhere or the Wyld, they have no effect whatsoever.

*Gregarious*—Charms with the Gregarious keyword draw their strength from the number of Jadeborn surrounding the user. The more Jadeborn around, the more powerful the effect. In some ways, this effect is the mirror of the Dragon-Blooded

Cooperative keyword. Where the Dragon-Blooded grant their strength to others, the Jadeborn draw strength from other's presence. In some cases, this keyword is conditional. It might require that the other Jadeborn be using the same Charm, or it might be keyed to only a certain type of Jadeborn (only Workers, for example). There are no known examples of this type of Charm among the Artisans.

*Iterative*—Charms marked with the Iterative keyword are actually suites of Charms, tied together by a single common





## JADEBORN SORCERY, NECROMANCY AND THAUMATURGY

The Mountain Folk are largely incompatible with sorcery and necromancy of any sort. They cannot master sorcery, no matter how much they study it as an abstract art, and study of necromancy beyond the purely practical and basic study of effects and limitations drives even the most single-minded of Artisans to distraction and migraines.

Nonetheless, the Artisans have a number of Charms that, for all practical purposes, duplicate certain basic sorceries of the Sapphire and Emerald circles. They can summon spirits, dispel sorceries of the first two circles and the like. These Charms have their limitations (as must any custom Charms of similar power). Nearly all such Charms are concerned with summoning, warding or dispelling, or banishing spirits, elementals and the like. Mountain Folk cannot traffic with threats to Creation (demons, Fair Folk, the dead and the like), and possess no Charms that allow them to circumvent this restriction. (A Chaos Seer might use thaumaturgy to get around this limit to a lesser extent, though.)

Jadeborn study into thaumaturgy is widespread. Most Workers know at least small rituals to aid them in their daily tasks, while Artisans are often masters of entire branches of study, particularly Alchemy and Enchantment.

### Learning Jadeborn Charms

Eclipse and Moonshadow Caste Exalted have difficulty learning Mountain Folk Charms. Their dynamic Exalted Essence is only partially compatible with the rigid, crystalline channeling Patterns of the Jadeborn, which makes comprehending these Charms difficult (even if a Solar or Abyssal could find a Mountain Folk willing to teach them). For this reason, Exalted cannot learn Charms from the Artisan, Enlightened or Chaos Patterns, nor any Mountain Folk Charm with a Minimum Essence of 4 or higher.

Exalted who choose to use enchantment-type Charms treat them as simple Charms (with a Speed two ticks higher than it would be for a Jadeborn), and must spend and commit twice the listed Essence cost to sustain the effect (otherwise the Charm lasts only until their next action). Exalted are never treated as Jadeborn for the purpose of any Charm that has the Gregarious keyword.

theme or trait. Most commonly for Mountain Folk, this is either the five types of jade or the four Virtues that fuel so many of their Charms. If a character knows multiple versions of the Charm, he may invoke any or all of the versions he knows on the same tick as a single action, as if invoking a single Charm. If a character knows all versions of the Charm, there is frequently an additional benefit, usually a slight reduction in the cost of using the Charm. Such benefits are described in the text of each Charm.

*Leadership*—The Enlightened provide structure, leadership and guidance to their charges—and when necessary, augment them through the use of Charms. Charms with the Leadership keyword affect all Jadeborn of the appropriate type within a given range. Like the Gregarious keyword, this improvement is often conditional in nature. Most commonly, Charms with the Leadership keyword affect only a given caste of Mountain Folk or affect only the Unenlightened.

## THE FOUNDATION PATTERN

Properly speaking, this is not actually a Pattern, but rather a collection of largely unrelated Charms—castoffs and remnants of Patterns lost in the aftermath of the Great Geas. There is no overall theme or pinnacle to the Pattern, and there has been no deliberate improvement or expansion of this Pattern since its creation. That fact still amazes Jadeborn scholars, who marvel at how White Shale could have tied the Charms together and linked them to the Essence of each caste—a seemingly impossible task.

### CHARM TYPE: ENCHANTMENT

Enchantment-type Charms are largely the same as simple Charms. They have a Speed (measured in ticks, longticks, or—rarely—dramatic action), a DV penalty and are treated as an action (and like a simple Charm, the Jadeborn cannot take multiple actions when using an enchantment Charm). Unlike simple Charms, however, the Essence spent on enchantment Charms is **not** committed. The enchantment calcifies in the Jadeborn's Essence, lasting for the duration listed.

This does mean, however, that enchantment-type Charms cannot be extended without using the Charm again. (There are no enchantment Charms with a duration of “indefinite.”) Nor may they be canceled before their duration ends.

### OX-BODY TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Stackable

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Like the jade from which they come, the Mountain Folk are often hardier and more difficult to damage than their forms might suggest. Each time this Charm is taken, the Jadeborn adds one -1 and one -2 health level. Jadeborn may take Ox-Body Technique a number of times equal to their highest Virtue.

### ESSENCE SATIATION METHOD

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound, Stackable

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Mountain Folk can learn to quiet their hunger, satiating themselves and drawing sustenance from the Essence that permeates all of Creation. With the first purchase of this Charm, the Jadeborn cuts in half the amount of food and water he must ingest to survive—effectively doubling the amount of time he can work without food or water before suffering from starvation or dehydration (see **Exalted**, p. 129). A second purchase of this Charm cuts the amount he must consume in half again (to one-quarter of the original value), multiplying the time he can survive by four ( $[\text{Stamina} + \text{Resistance}] \times 4$ ). Only Mountain Folk with an Essence of three or higher can take this Charm a third time, which renders the Jadeborn immune to starvation and dehydration. They *can* eat or drink if they choose, but they no longer *need* to.

### STONE-STILL LUNGS

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound, Stackable

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Mastery of this Charm allows the Jadeborn to respire Essence in place of air. The first purchase extends the Mountain Folk's base period for holding her breath to (Stamina + Essence + highest Virtue) in minutes, and successes on a (Stamina + Resistance) roll are also measured in full minutes. Suffocation (or involuntarily breathing in tainted air) follows normally after this time. The second purchase of this Charm multiplies both the base period and the successes rolled by three. If this Charm is purchased a third time (which requires Essence 3), the Jadeborn no longer needs to breath at all, save to enable speech or other vocalizations.

### SLEEPLESS ROCK EMULATION

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound, Stackable

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

Stone never sleeps, and with the mastery of this Charm, neither do the Mountain Folk. Although they still need rest to recover Essence and Willpower, their physical need for sleep is removed. If a Jadeborn goes for more days without sleep than he has dots of Stamina, each subsequent day without sleep reduces the number of motes he receives from respiration each hour. After the first day, he gains only three motes for inactivity (and only seven from meditation), two (and six) on the second day beyond the limit, and so on. Sleeping for one full night resets this count back to zero, with the Jadeborn regaining his full respiration levels, and once again able to go up to (Stamina) days without sleep if he needs to. Jadeborn who do not sleep do not get to make a Conviction roll to regain Willpower.

### ETERNAL JADE REJUVENATION

**Cost:** 20m; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound, Obvious

**Duration:** Varies

**Prerequisite Charms:** Essence Satiation Method, Stone-Still Lungs, Sleepless Rock Emulation

By invoking this Charm, the Jadeborn suffuses his person and possessions with Essence, crystallizing into a statue of pure jade. He remains aware and conscious in this state, able to perceive what happens around him but is unable to respond until the Charm's duration expires or the Charm is ended prematurely. Upon activation, the player must specify the Charm's duration, in one-month increments. During this time, the Jadeborn cannot be roused by any normal means, nor can he voluntarily drop the Charm.

As a statue, the character is nearly invulnerable to harm. He has armor of 20L/30B, with a Hardness rating of 20L/20B, and he is treated as a First Age material for purposes of resisting Charms, spells or artifacts that inflict damage on objects. He heals damage at the rate of 2B or 1L per day, but remains a broken and lifeless jade statue if he suffers health levels sufficient to kill him normally. Hunger, thirst and suffocation do not affect a character under the auspices of this Charm, and his age is actually reduced by the number of months spent in this state.

When a character emerges from slumber, he is fully rested, healed and has access to full reserves of Willpower and Essence (minus any recent injuries suffered but not healed and the motes committed to the Charm's duration). All mundane toxins and diseases are purged by the Charm, but supernatural poisons and maladies remain as efficacious as they were at the time of transmutation.

Use of this Charm is not without risk. The total isolation inflicted by it can be maddening, even for the Enlightened. Roll the Jadeborn's Willpower, with a difficulty equal to the number of months spent crystallized. (This difficulty can be adjusted downward if others interact with the character—even if in a one-sided fashion). If the roll fails, the character gains an obsession that must be dealt with. The Storyteller chooses the obsession, which generally should not be complimentary to the character's current Motivation and Intimacies. On a botch, the character also loses a dot of permanent Willpower.

Time spent transformed can count as training time for Mental Attributes or Essence but cannot be used for raising any other traits that require training time. The only way to end Eternal Jade Rejuvenation prematurely is through Emerald (or greater) Countermagic or Obsidian Countermagic. These spells shatter the enchantment, leaving the Jadeborn injured and near death, having suffered enough levels of unsoakable aggravated damage to leave him with only two health levels remaining when he awakens (six ticks later).

### DARKNESS-PIERCING TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** (Essence + 1) hours

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

When used, the Mountain Folk's eyes change to glittering obsidian. While in this state, she can see in any visibility condition—up to complete darkness—without penalty, except those involving fog, ground cover or other visual obstructions, which affect her normally.

### SENSORY FOCUS DISCIPLINE

**Cost:** 3m/difficulty reduction; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One hour

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

With this Charm, a Jadeborn can suffuse his senses with Essence, sharpening them to supernatural levels of awareness. For every three motes spent on this Charm, his player subtracts one from the difficulty of any Awareness roll made for the next hour. This effect cannot reduce the difficulty of any Awareness roll below 1, however. Multiple activations of this Charm are cumulative for both duration and effect.

### PEBBLE AMONG BOULDERS STANCE

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One hour

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Jadeborn takes a rigid stance, becoming like a statue. Her possessions and appearance take on the image and touch of rock or earth, blending in with any stony or subterranean environment. As long as she remains motionless, her player adds the character's Temperance to all Stealth rolls. This camouflage falls away in a scattering of fine gray dust as soon as she moves, but returns (in one tick) the moment she becomes still again and continues to do so for the duration of the Charm.

## THE WORKER PATTERN

The Worker Pattern is the smallest of the three caste patterns, and the least dramatic. Its Charms are centered around the purpose of the caste and are mostly utilitarian and practical in nature, assisting in day-to-day tasks. It is a Pattern suited to servitors and craftsmen, although Enlightened masters of the Pattern move beyond simple labor, becoming efficient and steadfast supervisors and overseers.

### PILLAR OF (VIRTUE)

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Iterative

**Duration:** (Essence + 1) hours

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The stoic nature of the Worker Caste shines from within as they call upon the power of this Charm, taking on the heavy load and benefits of servitude. This is an Iterative Charm, based on the four Virtues. Jadeborn who master all four versions of this Charm reduce the activation cost to two motes per Charm. Characters can benefit from only one activation of each version at a time. Reactivating the Charm merely resets the duration.

**Compassion:** The Jadeborn becomes highly empathic, adding a bonus equal to half his Compassion (rounded up) to any dice pools that involve discerning the emotional state or well-being of others.

**Conviction:** The Worker's commitment to his superiors (or personal values, if Enlightened) becomes total and unwavering. The Jadeborn adds half his Conviction to his Dodge MDV and one-third of his Conviction to his Parry MDV (rounded up in each case) for the duration of the Charm. His MDV cannot drop below this base level plus one through any method. (A character with Conviction 5 could not have a Dodge MDV lower than 4 or a Parry MDV lower than 3.) This enhanced MDV is useful only against social attacks (natural or unnatural) that would lead to a betrayal of the character's true loyalties, which should be much more broadly interpreted for Enlightened characters. Against unnatural mental influences that bypass the normal social combat system, the Jadeborn's player receives a reflexive (Conviction + Essence) roll, against a difficulty equal to the opposing character's Essence, for the character to ignore the effect. Invoking this defense costs one Willpower if the opposing character's Essence is higher than that of the Jadeborn.

**Temperance:** The Jadeborn becomes an intuitive master of project management. He can determine nearly at a glance what tools will be required, how many hours of labor are needed, what obstructions are likely to impede progress, the complexity of the project and myriad other variables and problems that can affect a given task.

In game terms, the Worker's player knows the final difficulty of any roll, after all modifiers (and will know the value of any meaningful modifiers), as well as the granted information. His planning and insight also add bonus dice equal to his Temperance rating (rounded up) to all non-social actions that have a task duration of two actions or more, as long as he spends a full action considering the task in advance, as a simple action. This bonus does not stack with itself for longer planning efforts.

**Valor:** The Worker steels himself against privation, adding half his Valor rating to all Resistance-based dice pools to withstand fatigue or environmental conditions.

### HARVEST MULTIPLYING LABOR

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Until harvest or slaughter

**Prerequisite Charms:** Pillar of Compassion

Harvest Multiplying Labor is essential to maintaining the food supplies of the Mountain Folk. When invoked, the Charm accelerates the healthy growth of crops and livestock. Before this Charm can be invoked, the Jadeborn must spend a day inspecting and tending (feeding, watering, fertilizing, etc.) the agricultural products she intends to improve. The Charm must be invoked for either livestock or crops. A single use cannot affect both.



The maximum amount of livestock affected by a single use of this Charm is equal to (the Jadeborn's Essence x 10) health levels. These livestock must be non-sentient (Intelligence 1), non-magical and either domesticated or penned for the purposes of domestication. Livestock blessed by this Charm grow rapidly, bulking up to 25 percent larger than normal over the course of a month and are treated as having the Large pox (see **Exalted**, p. 288), and they are unusually fecund for their species. Also add one automatic success to all rolls for them to resist disease, toxin or injury. These benefits last for the rest of the animal's life, but unfortunately, the life span of livestock affected by this Charm is cut in half. Affected animals produce twice as much useful meat as normal when slaughtered, or produce twice as many eggs or milk as they normally would over the course of their lives.

The maximum area of crops a single invocation of this Charm can affect is one acre (plus one additional acre if the Jadeborn has a permanent Essence of 4 or higher). Crops affected by the Charm grow rapidly and with great vigor, pushing aside weeds and other parasites, and shrugging off most insects or other problems. They are immune to mundane blights and diseases but are affected normally by magical ailments. The harvest yield of fields affected by this Charm will normally be up to twice what they would normally be in bountiful years. Extended use of this Charm on the same fields, with no change in planting or process, will eventually drain fields of their vitality, however. The

Mountain Folk are careful to let fields lie fallow in between plantings of various crops to give their soil (and their spirits) time to recover.

Crops and animals can benefit from only a single application of this Charm and will ignore all subsequent activations. This Charm is not compatible with Earth Yields Abundance (or other Charms or effects that increase crop yield, fertility, etc.). Only the first Charm cast will have any effect on a given section of fields/animal.

### ESSENCE ALIGNING TREATMENT

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Touch

**Duration:** Until fully healed, or up to (Compassion) days

**Prerequisite Charms:** Pillar of Compassion

With the use of this Charm, the Worker harmonizes a body's internal Essence flows and rhythms, inducing a healing state that is extremely efficient and mildly euphoric. The Charm requires a minute or more (depending on the nature of the injuries or diseases suffered) of careful massaging and manipulation of the patient's pressure points and Essence centers. Once blessed with this Charm, a patient's normal healing rate is multiplied by the Jadeborn's Compassion rating, allowing her to recover from bashing and lethal damage at an accelerated rate. In addition, the patient's player adds dice equal to one third of the Jadeborn's Compassion (rounded up) to all rolls made for the patient to resist or throw off



disease (including infection). These benefits last until the patient is returned to full health, or a number of days equal to the Jadeborn's Compassion have passed. Mountain Folk can use this Charm upon themselves.

### EARTH YIELDS ABUNDANCE

**Cost:** 30m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Obvious, Touch

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Harvest Multiplying Labor, Essence Aligning Treatment

The Enlightened Worker places his hands in the dirt of a sown field or lays them upon an immature animal. Verdant green Essence flows from him into the soil or the creature, limning the limits of the croplands to be affected or suffusing the beast in an aura of power. Wherever the light touches, life springs forth.

Croplands burst forth with life as whatever crops desired erupt from the tilled soil, growing at a vastly accelerated rate, so that by the end of the day, where there stood only turned loam, bountiful fields of crops in the prime of their harvestable life stand instead. Such a rate of growth is neither natural nor sustainable, and these crops will last but a single week before they succumb to age and wither at a natural pace, but foods harvested during that time will be healthy and nourishing. The region affected by a single invocation of this Charm can be no more than (Compassion x 5) acres in size, but it may be any shape desired.

Animals touched by this Charm grow to full maturity in the span of a day, during which time they are wracked with pain and mostly helpless. The Charm's effects on the creature are identical to those of Harvest Multiplying Labor (including the halved life span). Only Jadeborn with an Essence of 5 can target sentient or magical animals with this Charm, and mortals (or other Jadeborn) cannot be targeted at all. Under all circumstances, the animal retains the mental faculties and abilities of its true age and will still require training as normal for a creature of its age.

### FAITHFUL SERVANT'S MIEN

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Servitude, Shaping

**Duration:** One day

**Prerequisite Charms:** Pillar of Conviction

The Jadeborn takes on the aspect of a humble servant, subsuming his own desires and wishes beneath the duties of servitude. Doing so allows him to oblige the requirements of his duties with maximum efficiency and removes any chance of pursuing his own goals during his off-duty hours.

For the duration of the Charm, the character gains the Motivation "Serve my Master/Liege/Employer well"—which replaces his original Motivation for the duration of the Charm. For the duration of the Charm, the character also gains an Intimacy toward the master to whom his Motivation pertains. Enlightened Mountain Folk who use this Charm become obedient to the idea of servitude to their

species and the greater good of the Mountain Folk or to the idea of social order and stability, if not the existing social hierarchy as it stands.

Any Willpower rewarded for taking actions that advances the character's Motivation while under the direct supervision of a recognized superior is doubled. The character must, however, spend a Willpower to take any action that is not in direct accord with his Motivation, other than basic life survival tasks (eating, resting, defending himself, etc.). This should be treated as a supernatural compulsion to obey the imposed Motivation.

As a final benefit, players of Jadeborn using this Charm gain a one-die bonus on all rolls made for the character to fulfill his duty or to defend a recognized superior. This die bonus does not apply to tasks the Mountain Folk has taken of his own accord, only those he has been ordered to take. Enlightened Mountain Folk gain this bonus die on tasks taken in advancement of the Jadeborn even over their own wishes or desires.

### EIDETIC RECOLLECTION DISCIPLINE

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Pillar of Conviction

Upon invoking this Charm, a Worker can flawlessly recollect any piece of information, event or sensation she has ever witnessed, read or experienced. With but a moment's concentration, she can replay the event as if reliving it or recite information without error. This mnemonic boost grants the character a single automatic success on any subsequent Ability roll that is partially or wholly based on memorization or recall (correctly formulating a thaumaturgical ward or precisely reciting a ritual greeting, for example).

Players whose characters have this Charm should take good notes or be willing to accept the (potentially) less-than-eidetic and occasionally flawed memories and notes of the Storyteller.

### OBEDIENCE INCULCATION METHOD

**Cost:** Varies; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Enchantment


**Keywords:** Obvious, Servitude, Shaping, Social, Touch

**Duration:** Varies

**Prerequisite Charms:** Faithful Servant's Mien, Eidetic Recollection Discipline

Where common Workers gather the rewards of dutiful submission, Enlightened Jadeborn can enforce obedience through the invocation of this Charm. The Mountain Folk lays one hand on each side of a sentient subject's head and stares into his eyes, spending ([subject's Willpower + Essence] x 2) motes and one Willpower. Essence arcs between the Jadeborn and the subject, spilling out through the eyes and mouth. The Jadeborn's player then rolls (Conviction + Essence) against the subject's Dodge MDV. If the Jadeborn is successful, the subject's Willpower rating drops by a number of dots equal to the Jadeborn's Conviction and he loses all Willpower in excess





of the new rating. This decrease cannot drop the subject's Willpower score below his permanent Essence.

If this sudden decrease results in a Willpower of 3 or less, the subject gains a new Motivation ("Faithfully and dutifully serve my master/liege/employer/superiors in all ways") and at least one new Intimacy ("Protect and serve my superiors"). The subject becomes servile and passive and will accept the Jadeborn—or anyone the user of the Charm designates—as his superior. If the subject's Willpower does not drop below 3, he retains free will, to the capacity of his diminished Willpower. If the Jadeborn desires, she may use this Charm again to ensure complicity.

The effects of this Charm are not permanent. For Mountain Folk, mortals, God-Bloods (of all sorts), Unenlightened Mountain Folk, Dragon Kings and other, similar species or types, dots of the subject's Willpower return at the rate of one dot per month. The subject regains his former Motivation, Intimacies, etc. once his Willpower rises to 4 or higher (or to his normal rating, whichever is higher). Exalts, Enlightened Mountain Folk, spirits and other beings of comparable magical prowess regain a dot of Willpower every week. Chaos Seers, curiously enough, regain a Willpower dot every day that they are under the influence of this Charm. Alternatively, Emerald Countermagic (or its equivalent) can break the compulsion immediately, returning all within the countermagic's radius of effect to their former selves. Sorcerers cannot free themselves in this fashion, however.

This Charm cannot affect beings with a higher Essence than that of the character using the Charm, and it cannot affect the Fair Folk, demons, ghosts or other beings from beyond Creation. Gods (of any sort) and elementals add one to their Essence to determine if they can be affected by this Charm. Using this Charm on any mortal, Exalt or god is an egregious violation of the Great Geas (see pp. 38-39).

This Charm is normally used as a combination of punishment and re-education, for those recalcitrant Workers or Warriors deemed salvageable by the Conclave. It is illegal to use this Charm on another Enlightened Jadeborn without the direct authorization of the Conclave, but it has certainly been known to happen, as the crime is considered quite a bit less serious than murder. Chaos Seers are always subjected to this Charm before being transported any significant distance, to help alleviate any chances of escape or disaster.

#### INCOMPARABLE EFFICIENCY TRANCE

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One task

**Prerequisite Charms:** Pillar of Temperance

The Worker concentrates his will upon a single physical task that will take more than one long tick to accomplish. For as long as he concentrates solely upon this task, he increases his pace by a factor equal to his Essence.

Mountain Folk invoking this Charm do not appear to move much faster than before. They simply work with

inhuman economy of motion and precision, with no wasted energy or time in their actions. If the Jadeborn takes any other action, takes a break or otherwise interrupts his efforts, the trance ends immediately.

#### HUNDRED TOOL TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Pillar of Temperance

With the application of this Charm, a Worker can replicate most common tools with his bare hands. The Charm does not actually change a Jadeborn's limbs in any way (except to inure them to pain and harden them as necessary), but it allows feats that seem impossible. The Jadeborn can turn screws with her fingernails, pound nails with her fist, saw boards with the edge of her hand, plane surfaces with her palm, et cetera.

The Charm is perfect in its emulation, and it adds one bonus die to any roll (usually, but not always, Craft) that could be aided through its use. Hundred Tool Technique cannot emulate weapons or make changes quickly enough to be used as one, but various implements (and their emulations) can be used to aid hostile interrogations, if the Jadeborn is so inclined.

#### TRANSCENDENT EFFICACY INSTRUCTION

**Cost:** 1m/subject, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4;

**Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One task

**Prerequisite Charms:** Incomparable Efficiency Trance, Hundred Tool Technique

The Enlightened Worker gathers a team, assigns its members roles and sets them to a task. He must spend one mote per member of the team, plus one Willpower, and no member of the team may have a permanent Essence higher than his own. As long as the group carries out its tasks as a collaborative effort, members multiply their rate of progress by the lowest permanent Essence of any member on the team (with a minimum rate of twice normal). This bonus is cumulative with Incomparable Efficiency Trance (so a x3 and x2 modifier becomes x5). Any member of the team who stops work for any reason loses the benefits of this Charm (as with Incomparable Efficiency Trance) and cannot be integrated back into the team, save by completely striking the team, re-organizing it and invoking the Charm again.

#### SYNERGY OF PURPOSE

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Gregarious

**Duration:** One task

**Prerequisite Charms:** Pillar of Valor

This Charm links groups of Workers into a collective hive-mind, allowing the group's synchronicity of purpose to enhance every effort toward a common goal. For every five



characters using this Charm within (Essence x 50) yards, each character gains a one-die bonus on all Ability die rolls, as long as each contributing character is working toward the same goal (if not on the precise same task). The total benefit granted by this Charm cannot exceed a character's Valor, but this limit is independently determined for each character. (If 25 are Jadeborn working on a task, and each invokes this Charm, the maximum possible bonus is five dice. A character with a Valor of 3 gains only three dice, however, while one with Valor 4 gets four.) Tasks that are extended rolls gain this dice bonus on every roll until the job is done. The dice pool granted is dynamic. If more laborers join in on the job and invoke this Charm, the dice bonus granted rises. Conversely, if Workers leave, the bonus dice pool gets smaller. If a Worker stops his own labors for any reason, the Charm immediately ends.

### INDUSTRY AND FORGE WISDOM

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Pillar of Valor

As creations of Autochthon, every Jadeborn carries in her soul an impression of the Great Maker, which she can call upon to aid her mastery of all things under his purview—all mechanical or magical devices. For most Jadeborn, this is the closest they ever come to understanding the majesty of Enlightenment, flawlessly and instinctively working the mechanisms and controls of even the most complex machines. The character using this Charm may substitute her Valor for an Ability rating in a single roll, as long as that roll concerns operating or understanding some mechanism or device—normally Craft or Lore, but occasionally Occult or some other Ability. It specifically does not allow the user to replace her combat Abilities with Valor. If a character's Ability already exceeds her Valor, instead add half her Valor rating (rounded up) as bonus dice to the task.

For the purposes of this Charm, nearly any device more complex than a hand drill—magical or strictly mundane in operation—counts as a mechanism for determining whether or not Industry and Forge Wisdom works with it.

### CRUCIBLE OF EARTHBLOOD

**Cost:** 30m, 3wp; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One Hour

**Prerequisite Charms:** Synergy of Purpose, Industry and Forge Wisdom

Their minds patterned in some small fashion after the design of the Great Maker's, the Enlightened Workers look past mechanism and design to the inner fire that lies at the heart of all industry. This Charm is part alchemy, part blacksmithing and part enchantment, allowing the Jadeborn to stoke a great forge fire or bonfire with Essence as part of a five-minute ritual until it becomes the primordial essence of Fire.

Fires enchanted by the Crucible of Earthblood burn with temperatures beyond comprehension, quickly reducing

to ash and slag any furnace or container not made of one of the magical materials. Those foolish enough to expose themselves to this obliterating white flame without suitable protection suffer 20A damage every five ticks.

Although fully capable of annihilating any industrial waste or other unwanted materials, the fires have potent constructive purposes. In the crucible, gold smelts and is purified into orichalcum, silver flows and becomes moonsilver, diamonds melt into pools of adamant, and mixed ores refine themselves into precious jade. Only soulsteel and starmetal are beyond the reach of the Jadeborn with the use of this Charm.

Only one tenth of the materials fed to the Crucible of Earthblood's flames remain as their purified form. Making 10 pounds of orichalcum requires 100 pounds of pure gold; the remainder is consumed in the process of forging. Only 10 pounds of material can be processed every five minutes (yielding one pound of magical materials). The Resources cost (in mundane gold, silver, etc.) to provide the raw materials needed for an artifact (discounting any special ingredients needed—see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex*, pp. 19–27) is equal to (Artifact rating + 2). As a result, all but lesser wonders are beyond the purview of most individuals to create on their own.

### EARTHEN INSIGHT METHOD

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Any Pillar of (Virtue) Charm

The Worker's thoughts reach out, casting forth for familiar patterns in the earth that surrounds him. He can use this Charm in one of two ways, either to seek out concentrations of specific minerals or to map the area surrounding him.

In the first function, the Worker can choose any specific earth-based material, mineral or geological structure he has ever touched or encountered (including specific ores or metals, different types of stone or geological formations, gemstones or nearly anything else of a specific earthen nature). If any form of that substance or formation exists within a radius equal to (Essence x 25) yards, he senses the direction and distance to—but not quality or quantity of—the largest concentration of it from his present position.

If used for mapping purposes, this Charm provides a snapshot image of the terrain within the same radius. The Jadeborn does not get a detailed map—only a three-dimensional mental representation of what areas are filled with earth, and which are clear. A given passage could still be flooded with water, stale or contaminated air or Darkbrood invaders. This Charm works only underground.

### STONE-BREAKING TOUCH


**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** One hour

**Prerequisite Charms:** Earthen Insight Method





As the Jadeborn invokes this Charm, Essence limns her body with a faint glow and hum, changing intensity and pitch as she moves. For the next hour, her unarmed attacks inflict lethal damage to any non-magical objects made of earth (stone, metal, dirt, ceramics, etc.), and she suffers no damage in making such attacks, regardless of the damage inflicted. Additionally, her blows score double damage against earthen objects, and gain the Overwhelming tag, with a rating equal to one third of her Essence (round up). With this Charm, even the mightiest of stoneworks and toughest of ore deposits eventually give way to the blows of the Mountain Folk.

### FLOWING ROCK STRIDE

**Cost:** 8m per hour; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** Varies

**Prerequisite Charms:** Stone-Breaking Touch

The Worker concentrates, closes his eyes and walks confidently into—and through—barriers of solid stone or other earthworks. As he strides, the earth gives way like water flowing around a swimmer, hardening back to its usual configuration and immobility in his wake. For the duration of the Charm, he can move through any earthen obstruction at his normal ground movement rate, half walking, half swimming, without needing to breathe. Movement is possible in any direction, and although his eyes must remain closed, he remains aware of his surroundings in a fashion identical

to the mapping function of Earthen Insight Method. The Jadeborn may continue to pay eight motes at the end of each hour to extend the duration of the Charm, but should he fail to do so—or should the duration otherwise come to an end—while he's still encased in earth, he is entombed in the rock. Without near-immediate outside help or access to some other magic, he will suffocate as normal.

A Jadeborn can use this ability to drop and secure objects safely in solid stone, but he cannot under any circumstance carry (or force) passengers into the earth with him, regardless of carrying capacity. The Charm is strictly singular, affecting only the invoker.

### PARTING STONE BLESSING

**Cost:** 1m per action; **Mins:** Essence 5;

**Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Touch

**Duration:** Varies

**Prerequisite Charms:** Flowing Rock Stride

By touching another being, the Jadeborn can confer the effects of Flowing Rock Stride upon him. The target need not be willing, and this Charm may be activated from within a clinch. Players of unwilling targets, however, may make a reflexive (Essence + Resistance) roll against a difficulty equal to the Mountain Folk's Essence. If they succeed, the Charm has no effect. Resistance Excellencies or other reflexive Charms may be invoked in conjunction with this roll and will have



their normal effect. Sadistic—or desperate—Mountain Folk have been known to force enchanted enemies into walls or floors, then simply wait for the Charm's duration to lapse.

### COMMAND THE EARTH

**Cost:** 1m per 3 yards, 2wp; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** All Pillar of (Virtue) Charms, Parting Stone Blessing

With imperious gestures and grandiose directions, the Jadeborn summons the very earth around him to life, commanding its form and structure through force of will and Essence.

This Charm can impose only very rough and crude changes upon the stone it works upon, without finesse or subtlety, but within this limitation, the Mountain Folk's control is near absolute. She can raise up supporting pillars, bring cavern roofs crashing down, open up passages or tunnels, or bridge or seal chasms. No natural stone wall can match her will. Fortifications crumble as if made of children's blocks or eggshells.

This Charm costs two Willpower, plus one mote for every three cubic yards of earth shifted or altered by the user. The effects of this Charm are inexorable, but slow. Only one cubic yard is shifted per tick, slow enough that agile (or even merely mobile) characters can usually get out of the way of the changing terrain in time. If for some reason a character is incapable of escaping, she will suffer 8L/2 overwhelming and piercing damage every three ticks that she remains in the chaotic, shifting area. Storytellers should keep in mind that this terrain movement is not at all sudden and give players ample time to relocate their characters out of the way or create some ingenious shelter.

Attempting to use this Charm to counteract the effects of other earth-moving effects such as the spell Raising the Earth's Bones (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. II—The White Treatise*, p. 56) or the Battlefield Engineering Protocols of the Earth Dragon armor (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age*, p. 86)—or vice versa—is treated as an example of Unstoppable Force, Immovable Object (see *Exalted*, p. 179) and calls for an opposed roll of (Essence + Craft [Earth]). In general, spells add one bonus die per circle (+1 for Emerald, +2 for Sapphire, +3 for Adamant), while artifacts add dice equal to (Artifact rating ÷ 3, rounded up).

### WORKER PATTERN MASTERY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Permanent

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Entire Worker Pattern

Those Enlightened Jadeborn who have accumulated mastery of the Worker Pattern are inherently attuned to its power and paths. This transcendent state reduces the cost of all Charms in this Pattern by up to three motes (to a minimum of one mote). This reduction does not apply to non-Essence costs or to Charms that are permanent in nature.

More importantly, mastery of the Worker Pattern allows an Enlightened Jadeborn to create new additions to the Pattern by creating custom Charms. Each Charm requires Storyteller approval and is generally subject to the following limitations:

- Must have at least one existing Worker Pattern Charm as a direct or ultimate prerequisite
- Should follow the themes of the Worker Pattern, particularly in regards to practicality (based on craftsmanship and servitude)
- Should interact with either the Virtues or the elements (particularly Earth or Fire)

Although additions to the Pattern can eventually filter down to the point where Unenlightened Mountain Folk can learn them, custom Charms created in play should generally be available to only other Enlightened Jadeborn who have also achieved Worker Pattern Mastery.

### THE WARRIOR PATTERN

For as long as they can remember, the Jadeborn have been at war. The annals of the Artisans record no time greater than a single generation that the Mountain Folk have not been at war—with the Darkbrood, as mercenaries, even to the beginning of their race, when they fought the ancestors of the Lintha and other species created by the Primordials for survival. This Pattern is the culmination of countless centuries of warfare, the crystallized essence of techniques and enchantments used by the mostly Unenlightened Warrior forces of the Jadeborn. In the hands of the Warriors, the Pattern serves well, bolstering them in both attack and defense. In the puissant hands of their Enlightened commanders and Artisan masters, it becomes an art of military leadership and strategy, enabling masterstrokes of maneuver and tactics worthy of the Exalted.

#### (VIRTUE)-BOLSTERING MEDITATION

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Gregarious (Valor), Iterative, War

**Duration:** (Essence + 1) hours


**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Warrior shatters internal distractions and doubt with a battle chant or war cry, hardening himself against suffering. This power actually represents four separate Iterative Charms, and knowing all four reduces the cost of each by one mote. Reactivating this Charm before the duration ends merely resets the duration.

**Compassion:** The character adds one bonus die to all actions intended to defend or rescue an ally from immediate physical danger. Once per 10 minutes (one long tick), the character may increase this bonus to his Compassion rating for a span of 10 ticks. (This period may encompass multiple actions, as long as they all involve defending or rescuing an ally.)

**Conviction:** The character inures himself to suffering, seeking the greater good despite his injuries. Subtract the character's Conviction from all wound penalties suffered





or miscellaneous external penalties imposed because of pain or suffering.

**Temperance:** The power of the Charm steels the character against the inclement environs in which he finds himself fighting. The cold does not bite him, nor the raging heat burn him. The character subtracts an amount equal to his Temperance rating from all environmental penalties and miscellaneous external penalties imposed because of extremes of climate or environment.

**Valor:** The character gains one dot of Valor, plus one additional dot for every five allies within line of sight who are also using the Valor iteration of this Charm. Characters with a Valor of 6+ are truly fearless, like automata. They are incapable of failing Valor rolls and are immune to all penalties and magics based upon fear.

Imposed penalties specifically include those brought about by the actions of Charms or spells that inhibit or hinder the character in some fashion that meets the general criteria of the Charm's effects. A character lashed with a Fire Aspect's fire bolts would still take damage (though he might not suffer wound penalties), but the incidental heat that a Child of Hesiesh's Charms might summon up would not hinder him.

This Charm has special effects when used in mass combat. If half or more members of a unit have access to one of the following aspects of this Charm, the unit gains the appropriate benefits:

**Compassion:** The unit adds one to its Might score as long as it is in a defensive formation (Storyteller's judgement), and can double this bonus to +2 Might once every 10 long ticks, for the space of one long tick.

**Conviction:** The unit is nigh unstoppable in battle. Add one to the unit's Magnitude for purposes of taking and inflicting damage, but for no other purposes.

**Temperance:** Harsh terrain and treacherous conditions make little difference to the Mountain Folk. Add two to the unit's Endurance, and halve penalties inflicted on the unit because of terrain, environmental factors and the like.

**Valor:** Add half the unit's unmodified Magnitude to its Morale. If this bonus raises the unit's Morale above 6, the unit is treated as having perfect Morale (and does not make any sort of Morale check). Casualties inflicted to the unit that decrease Magnitude reduce the Morale bonus accordingly. If a unit suffers enough casualties that its Morale drops below 6, it again suffers Morale effects normally, beginning on the next long tick.

### (COLOR) JADE TRANSFORMATION

**Cost:** 8m (special); **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Iterative, Obvious

**Duration:** (Essence + 1) hours

**Prerequisite Charms:** Specific (Virtue)-Bolstering Meditation(s)

Jadeborn is more than just an appellation; it is a description for the Mountain Folk. From jade they are born, and to jade they return. Warriors who master this Charm may

briefly call upon their birthright, transforming their bodies into moving statues of living jade. Five versions of this Charm exist, one for each natural type of jade. The cost to invoke this Charm is reduced by the number of different instances of the Charm the Warrior already has active. The first costs eight motes (8 - 0), the second costs seven motes (8 - 1), and so on until the last Charm costs only four motes (for a total to invoke all five of 30 motes). Multiple versions of this Charm can be stacked, but only one instance of each Charm can be active at a time. Reactivating a Charm before its effects run out merely resets the duration.

Each version of this Charm grants a unique power. Additionally, invoking any version grants the character a natural lethal soak and Hardness rating equal to her Stamina, and permits the character to parry lethal attacks unarmed without a stunt. (The lethal soak granted by this Charm does not stack upon itself with multiple invocations. Apply the soak bonus only once.)

**Black:** (*Prerequisite:* Temperance-Bolstering Meditation): The character gains flowing agility and freedom of movement thanks to her resonance with Water. She adds one to her Dexterity and subtracts an amount equal to her Temperance from her total mobility penalty.

**Blue:** (*Prerequisite:* Conviction-Bolstering Meditation): The character's resonance with Air renders her light and deft. She subtracts an amount equal to her Conviction from her total fatigue penalty (from armor or other encumbering possessions), doubles her usual leaping and jumping distances and halves the actual distance of any falls suffered for purposes of determining damage inflicted by impact.

**Green:** (*Prerequisite:* Compassion-Bolstering Meditation): The Warrior resonates with the healing vitality of Wood, regenerating one level of bashing damage every 10 ticks and one lethal level of damage every hour.

**Red:** (*Prerequisite:* Valor-Bolstering Meditation): The character resonates with the passion and fury of Fire, gaining total immunity to all natural sources of heat and flame. The character adds an amount equal to her Valor to her lethal soak against magical sources of flame. Additionally, the character gains some of the speed and grace of flame as well, adding bonus dice to her player's Join Battle roll equal to half her Valor (rounded up).

**White:** (*Prerequisite:* All four [Virtue]-Bolstering Meditations): Embodying the harmony and balance that is Earth, the character adds (highest Virtue + Essence) to her natural bashing and lethal soak values and gains a Hardness rating equal to one-half that amount (on top of that normally provided by this Charm). Additionally, her jade-like body becomes a natural weapon, causing lethal damage unless she chooses to pull her blows. Finally, she cannot be stunned, knocked down, tackled or thrown, nor does she suffer knock-back from any natural external source. This defense does not grant her the ability to withstand Charm-based effects that induce these conditions, nor does it inure her to the hazards of poorly executed maneuvers.

### FIVEFOLD EMBODIMENT OF (COLOR) JADE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Iterative, Obvious, Permanent

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** (Color) Jade Transformation

Lesser Warriors can briefly assume aspects of their heritage, but veterans wear their inheritance openly—permanently taking on the aspects of the jade from which they are all birthed. For each purchase of this Charm, the character permanently gains the effects of one of the (Color) Jade Transformation Charms that he has already mastered. The Dexterity bonus gained through Black Jade Transformation is considered part of his natural rating for all purposes, including raising the trait with experience. This modification may raise the Attribute above its normal limit.

The permanent modifications made by this Charm are not compatible with the temporary changes wrought by (Color) Jade Transformation. The character may not stack both Charms for the same color of jade, although different versions of the permanent and temporary Charms may be stacked together (though not their base soaks). A Jadeborn character may not learn this Charm more times than he has dots of Essence, and Exalts may not learn this Charm through any fashion.

### ARSENAL-ENHANCING TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Touch

**Duration:** One day

**Prerequisite Charms:** Compassion-Bolstering Meditation

The one surety about members of the Warrior Caste is that they know their weapons and armor. With the invocation of this Charm and a brief period of reverential care and maintenance, the Jadeborn can briefly stoke the least god that exists in his arms or armor to life, imploring it to enact efforts normally beyond conventional weapons.

The primary effect of this Charm is to temporarily transform mundane equipment into superior equipment (see **Exalted**, pp. 365–366). When invoked, the weapon or armor becomes equal to exceptional hardware, gaining bonus points that may be allocated as the Mountain Folk sees fit. If cast upon conventional clothing, that clothing becomes exceptional as well, hard-wearing and durable, and granting minor defensive benefits (+2L/1B soak), without mobility or fatigue penalties.

Normally, this Charm lasts for one day, but when invoked, the Jadeborn may choose to spend two experience points (if she has any available) to make the effect permanent. Already exceptional equipment becomes perfect when subjected to this Charm—and may be made permanently perfect through the expenditure of two experience points. (Perfect clothing is extremely durable and lightweight for its type, with +3L/2B soak, and no mobility penalty or fatigue value.) Only permanently exceptional (through craftsmanship or this Charm) equipment can be made permanently perfect.

This Charm can also be used to enchant magical weapons, granting them the same bonuses endowed upon mundane weapons, but the Charm cannot be stacked to make such a weapon “perfect,” nor may experience be spent to make the Charm’s effects permanent. This Charm has no effect on perfect equipment, except to shine and clean it and make its least god *truly* happy with the weapon or armor’s owner.

### BATTLE TRANCE FOCUS

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** (Essence + 1) hours

**Prerequisite Charms:** Conviction-Bolstering Meditation

The Warrior concentrates, focusing his mind and will upon the purposes of war and the science of violence. The Jadeborn’s heart and soul thus hardened against the perils of combat, his player adds the character’s Essence or half of his Conviction rating (rounded up), whichever is higher, to his attack dice pools, and half that value to the character’s DV.

While in this state, the character’s single-minded focus upon warcraft inflicts a penalty equal to his Conviction or his Essence (whichever is higher) to all dice rolls his player makes for him that are not combat related. Rolls that are indirectly combat related (Stealth, for example) are not enhanced or penalized. When there is any question as to whether a roll is combat related or not, the Storyteller makes the final decision, but she should allow players ample leeway in justifying how a roll might be combat related.

### PRECISION ONSLAUGHT METHOD

**Cost:** 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** (Essence + 1) hours

**Prerequisite Charms:** Temperance-Bolstering Meditation

Using this Charm, the Warrior adopts a dynamic fighting stance that allows her to strike with exacting aim and supernal economy of motion. Her blows seek out the chinks in armor and holes in defenses, subtracting her Temperance from the soak of anything attacked (down to a minimum of 0). Additionally, subtract one from the penalty of any called shots she makes (down to a minimum penalty of 1).

### CHARRING MAGMA BLADE

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** (Essence + 1) hours

**Prerequisite Charms:** Valor-Bolstering Meditation

The Jadeborn draws upon the furious power of the earth’s blood. With a touch of his blade to the stony earth, burning Essence erupts from the ground, enveloping the weapon in a coruscating halo of orange radiance. That halo quickly cools to a dim glow that is uncomfortably warm to those around the Warrior but does not set objects alight at a touch.

As long as the enchantment remains in effect, the blade’s repressed fury awakens whenever the Mountain Folk strikes a blow, adding his Valor to the weapon’s base damage and setting fire to anything flammable he strikes. While this



enchantment is in effect, the weapon cannot be used to inflict bashing damage.

Additionally, as long as the enchantment is active, the weapon inflicts lethal damage equal to the Jadeborn's Valor every tick to anyone else who tries to touch or wield it. The player of anyone who attempts to use the weapon other than the Jadeborn who enchanted it must successfully make a reflexive (Stamina + Resistance) roll, difficulty 4, for her character every action or she drops the weapon from the searing agony.

Normally, this enchantment can be used only with melee weapons. A character using a (Color) Jade Transformation Charm or Living Jewel Armor, however—or one who knows one or more of the Fivefold Embodiment of (Color) Jade Charms—may invoke this Charm and imbue his jade flesh or crystalline exoskeleton with the smoldering power of magma. All of the character's attacks become lethal (and cannot inflict bashing damage) and add the character's Valor as normal. If any of these transformational Charms should end before Charring Magma Blade's normal duration would, Charring Magma Blade ends immediately as well.

### LIVING JEWEL ARMOR

**Cost:** 7m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** (Essence) hours

**Prerequisite Charms:** White Jade Transformation

The character weaves a lattice of crystalline Essence around herself, transforming it into a glittering armored exoskeleton that subsumes into itself any protective garments the character is wearing. Living Jewel Armor confers lethal and bashing soak equal to its creator's Essence, plus the soak of any assimilated armor. The armor has a Hardness rating equal to the base Hardness of the user's armor, plus half her Essence (rounded up). The exoskeleton's mobility penalty and fatigue value are equal to half those of any armor the character had been wearing (if any).

Finally, the armor absorbs and deflects part of the damage of Essence-based attacks that do not have a physical component. (This includes Charms such as Phantom Arrow Technique and Spirit Weapons, and weapon attacks such as that of an Essence cannon or the ranged attack of a skirmish pike, but not Charms that have the Elemental keyword, for example.) Against such attacks, the exoskeleton's soak and hardness are doubled, and each point of soaked damage allows the Warrior's player to roll one die. For each success scored, the character regains one mote of Essence.

Offensively, the armor's various edges, spikes and blades make potent weapons, adding one to the Accuracy, 2L to the Damage and one to the Rate of any unarmed attacks made. Additionally, anyone who strikes the character with an unarmed attack suffers 5L damage from the various spikes and quills.



Lastly, the exoskeleton adds one to the character's Strength for the duration of the Charm. This bonus dot is considered part of the character's natural Strength rating.

### REFORGING TRAVAIL OF THE VETERAN

**Cost:** Special; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Touch, Training

**Duration:** One week

**Prerequisite Charms:** Arsenal-Enhancing Technique

Where lesser Warriors forge blades and armor, Enlightened generals forge minds and bodies. By applying judicious amounts of Essence, rigorous amounts of training—and no small amount of physical exertion on the part of her trainees—the Warrior improves the quality of her troops. To use this Charm, the Warrior first gathers a band of trainees, all of whom must have an Essence of 3 or less, and takes them to a remote or secluded area with room in which to conduct basic combat maneuvers. She must commit one mote for every dot of Essence they possess between them. (This amount is doubled for any non-Mountain Folk in her training group.)

The trainees conduct training sessions under the evoker's tutelage for at least 15 hours each day, learning the art and science of war. For every day of exercises, the trainees gain one “phantom” experience point. These points are banked separately from a character's normal pool of experience (if any). At the end of the week, the trainees spend the experience points they have gained without regard for training times. The instructor's player designates and prioritizes how these points must be spent. Valid choices for this pool of points include—Valor, Warrior Pattern Charms, Physical Attributes, Wits or any Ability figuratively marked “*This trait is important in combat.*” A Warrior cannot train any Ability, Attribute or Charm that she does not possess herself, and traits cannot be raised higher than the Warrior's own rating in them. Affected characters use their experience points to raise traits to the listed levels, spending phantom points first. Any phantom points left over after traits are raised are lost, unless the character begins a new session of training almost immediately (within two days). A character cannot undergo more than (his Willpower + Essence) sessions of training under this Charm in a single year. Phantom experience points are treated as experience point debt, and must be paid off as normal.

### GREAT MAKER'S CHAMPION

**Cost:** 20m, 2wp; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Obvious, War

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Battle Trance Focus

The Enlightened Warrior focuses his will and his genius upon his forces, granting them some measure of his skill in battle and integrating them into a fearless, supernaturally fearsome war machine. They advance, pitiless and inexorable, shattering with fear those they do not shatter with blades.

This Charm can be invoked only when using mass combat. While enchanted, any Mountain Folk combat units under the Warrior's unbroken chain of command (including

not just the unit he is personally commanding, but all units that have an unbroken chain of communication and command under him) within half a mile of the Jadeborn gain the following benefits:

- +1 Drill
- +1 to Close Combat Attack and Ranged Attack
- +1 Might
- One automatic success on all Morale checks

Units opposing the Jadeborn's forces suffer a corresponding penalty to these values. Additionally, if enemy forces seek to directly oppose the Jadeborn general (through the use of heroes, sorcerers, etc.), the penalty to their attacks increases to equal the Jadeborn's Valor.

Units may benefit from only one instance of this Charm at a time. As units enter or leave the radius of effect, they gain or lose benefits/penalties without hindrance (this can happen multiple times over the course of a battle). If the Warrior dies, the Charm ends instantly. This Charm's penalties have no effect on units that are not subject to morale effects (such as automatons, certain undead forces, those whose Valor has been raised to supernatural levels, etc.).

### DIAMOND-SHATTERING BLOW

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Precision Onslaught Method

With a single moment of precise clarity and absolute calm, the Jadeborn launches a single attack of preternatural force and accuracy. If she strikes an inanimate object, she adds (Temperance + Essence) to the base damage, and the attack ignores soak altogether. (Objects of First Age manufacture—vehicle hulls, certain pieces of construction, etc.—gain their full soak score, but the attack gains the Overwhelming tag with a value equal to the Mountain Folk's Temperance.) Against an animate target, the attack ignores and destroys any non-magical armor the target is wearing, but adds no additional damage to the strike.

A Warrior may also use this Charm to directly target an opponent's weapon. This is called shot with a difficulty of 3 that may be dodged normally. If parried, the attack automatically succeeds. Success destroys any non-magical weapon and sends any magical weapon flying from the wielder's hands as an automatic disarm attempt.

This Charm can normally be used only with weapons, however characters using a transformation Charm (such as Living Jewel Armor) may use this Charm with unarmed attacks. Using this Charm with a non-magical weapon against First Age materials or artifact weapons will shatter that weapon in the process of delivering the blow.

### INESCAPABLE VOLCANO STANCE


**Cost:** 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Charring Magma Blade





The Warrior holds motionless for a single tick, readying himself, then explodes in a blur of action. His blade seems to be everywhere at once, flicking out to engage opponents no matter their position. The Mountain Folk makes  $(\text{Essence} + \text{Valor}) \div 2 + 1$  total attacks. For the duration of the Charm, the Mountain Folk ignores rate and multiple action penalties, and suffers a DV penalty equal to only the highest penalty for any one attack. Once invoked, this Charm cannot be invoked again for  $(20 - [\text{Essence} + \text{Valor}])$  ticks, but the character may take other actions normally.

### WARRIOR PATTERN MASTERY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Permanent

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Entire Warrior Pattern

This Charm works in a manner identical to the Worker Pattern Mastery Charm (see p. 57), except that it applies to Warrior Pattern Charms.

### THE ARTISAN PATTERN

The Patterns of the Workers and Warriors are built with the understanding that most of their users are Unenlightened and thus incapable of comprehending the greater secrets of Charm usage. This is not the case with the Artisan pattern, which assumes most Artisans will quickly master the lesser aspects of Essence and move into the more esoteric realms of spiritual mastery.

### UNFOLDING PATTERN INTUITION

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** (Essence + 1) hours

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Artisan attunes herself to the patterns of Essence that surround her, attuning her senses to the flows and eddies of Creation. In this state, the Jadeborn perceives the supernatural more clearly than the natural, seeing all things not as objects or people, but as whorls and eddies and constructs of Essence.

While this enchantment is active, she can distinguish demesnes, manses and dragon lines, which glow in the color of their aspect. (Water Essence appears midnight blue, Air is sky blue, Fire is red, Wood is forest green, and Earth is chalk white. Lunar Essence gleams argent, Solar is golden, Sidereal produces a shifting chromatic pattern, and Abyssal Essence is pitch black.) Artifacts and Essence users (including the Exalted, the Mountain Folk, the Dragon Kings, mortal thaumaturges who have learned to unlock their Essence, etc.) appear to be limned by their dominant Essence. (Dragon Kings appear limned with a shifting red hue, while Jadeborn are typically Earth-aspected, and mortals have always-shifting patterns that favor the elemental hues.) Charms and spells appear as complex patterns of Essence, each unique. Animate creatures throw off a vague, indistinct aura of no discernible pattern or color, barely greater than Creation's background

aura. This is sufficient, however, to reduce vision penalties to that of murky vision in most cases.

The Artisan using this Charm sees immaterial beings and sanctum entrances clearly, and she might recognize the pattern of standing Essence constructs (whether permanent spells, constructed wards or the like) or Charms or spells as they are invoked, as long as she has encountered them before.

Lastly, the Jadeborn's player may add the character's Essence to any Awareness rolls made to counteract mundane Stealth attempts. This Charm specifically does not provide any bonus to counteract magical Stealth enhancements or to reveal any magically concealed effects or objects.

### INTERCONNECTION'S EYE

**Cost:** 1m per point of difficulty reduction; **Mins:** Essence 3;

**Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Unfolding Pattern Intuition

The Jadeborn naturally excel at seeing patterns in all things. This Charm enhances this natural talent to supernatural levels, allowing the Mountain Folk to see beyond apparent randomness to the underlying association and order. For every mote spent on this Charm, the difficulty of any roll to notice hidden patterns is reduced by one, to a maximum reduction of the character's lowest Virtue, though never below difficulty 1.

The purview of this Charm is broad and should be interpreted in similar fashion. In conjunction with Awareness, it can be used to detect hidden trigger plates in a pattern of floor tiles. Used with Linguistics, it can be used to see the pattern of a language's drift over the centuries—or to see (if not understand) hidden codes and phrases in a missive. Storytellers should adjudicate each use of this Charm on a case-by-case basis, but should generally give the benefit of the doubt in its use, particularly if the description of its use would qualify normally for a stunt bonus.

### SUPERNAL AWARENESS OF ALL

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Interconnection's Eye

The Jadeborn closes her eyes and clears her mind, opening her awareness to the ebb and flow of Creation's Essence. In response, her eyes transform into featureless spheres of white jade, granting no normal sight whatsoever. Instead, the character perceives in every direction, taking in her surroundings perfectly through Essence awareness alone. She cannot be surprised and gains the effects of Unfolding Pattern Intuition, but she still cannot pierce magical concealment or see in total darkness. Finally, her magical sight grants a preternatural awareness of any threat from any direction, perceived as a magical flash from the direction of any coming threat moments before it materializes. This flash normally gives the character a number of ticks worth

of notice equal to her Essence before any threat, but it does not provide any other information about the nature of the hazard, other than direction.

### REVELATORY SIGHT OF DESIGN

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Permanent

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Supernal Awareness of All

Upon learning this Charm, the character gains all of the benefits of Unfolding Pattern Intuition as a permanent expansion of his natural senses. Characters with Essence 5 instead gain the effects of Supernal Awareness of All. The character can switch between these augmented visions and his normal sight as a reflexive action.

### EARTH-SHAPING DISCIPLINE

**Cost:** 1m per cubic yard; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Touch

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Unfolding Pattern Intuition

This Charm begins a brief cascade known alternately as the Lower Earth Path or the Art of Shaping. The Artisan lays her hand upon any object of earth and infuses it with her Essence, sculpting it according to her will. The character may not expend more (Essence x 2) motes, but she may affect portions of a larger structure. As her Essence expands (at the rate of one cubic yard per tick), stone and soil liquefies and reshapes itself to reflect her wishes. Even if constructed using weak materials such as sand or dust, the final result has supernatural tensile strength, making impossible structures feasible with this Charm. Structures made from weak materials remain transient, however, lasting only one scene. Therefore, while a Jadeborn Artisan might create a chasm-spanning bridge out of shifting sand, it will last only a short while before it collapses.

This Charm requires more than simple will. A knowledge of stonework and sculpture is needed to get the most out of its power. When invoking this Charm, the Jadeborn's player rolls (Intelligence + Craft [Earth]). The base difficulty depends on the material—1 for sand, dirt or dust; 2 for hard-packed soil or clay; 3 for stone or metal; 4 for crystal. The difficulty rises by one for crude changes (breaking a hole in a wall, collapsing a ceiling), two for complex changes (raising stone bars to imprison someone) or three for extremely complex or artistic changes (re-creating complex clockworks or carving a beautiful sculpture from memory). This Charm cannot be used to affect magical materials, nor may it be used directly as an attack, although it can be used against ceilings, pillars or other structural details with possibly catastrophic results.

### SHAPING MIND CONCENTRATION

**Cost:** 1m per cubic yard; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Earth-Shaping Discipline

This Charm duplicates Earth-Shaping Discipline, save that it may be used at a range of (Willpower x 10) yards, morphing and molding stone through will alone. This Charm requires no gesture or incantation to invoke, although appropriate actions can qualify for stunt bonuses.

### INCOMPARABLE SCULPTOR'S TRANCE

**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Shaping Mind Concentration

After being invoked, this Charm allows the user to shape earth as if using Shaping Mind Concentration at will. This costs no motes, but is limited to (Essence ÷ 3) cubic yards every tick.

### LIVING EARTH MEDITATION

**Cost:** 10m/1m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound

**Duration:** Instant/one hour

**Prerequisite Charms:** Unfolding Pattern Intuition

This Charm begins the cascade known as the Higher Earth Path, or the Path of Geomancy. With this Charm, the Jadeborn learns to channel Essence more efficiently through auspicious meditative postures. These stances serve two purposes.

First, the Jadeborn can spend 10 motes to force instant attunement with a manse or demesne by standing within its boundaries and imposing her will upon it. If the place of power has no beings attuned to it, this process is automatic. Otherwise, the Jadeborn's player must roll (Intelligence + Lore) against a difficulty equal to the highest Essence of any being attuned to the place of power. On a botch, the harmonic feedback inflicts unsoakable lethal damage equal to the difference between the Jadeborn's Essence and the highest attuned Essence (minimum one level). On a failure, the character merely wastes Essence. Success leaves all previous attunements in place, with the Artisan joining the group. Regardless of success or failure, all beings attuned to the place know that another has attempted to claim it.

Second, this Charm speeds the rate of Essence recovery through meditation. For a cost of one mote, the character can spend an hour meditating in a rigorous series of postures. At the end of the hour, roll the character's Temperance. She regains eight motes of Essence, plus one for every success rolled.

### MANSE BODY TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound, Permanent, Stackable

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Living Earth Meditation

The Artisan re-forges and strengthens his bonds with the vast wellsprings of Essence that lie at the core of Creation. While underground, he regains a number of motes per hour equal to his Essence, regardless of his activity level. This added mote recovery is in addition to any motes regained





through normal respiration, hearthstones or the effects of other Charms, artifacts, et cetera.

Mountain Folk with an Essence of 4 or higher may purchase this Charm a second time, doubling the recovery rate granted. The Charm may not be purchased more than twice.

### ESSENCE-TRANSFER TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound, Touch

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Manse Body Technique

With a touch and concentration, an Artisan can donate or drain motes from a target. He cannot do so as part of a striking attack, but this Charm can be used in conjunction with a successful clinch. Each activation may transfer a number of motes up to the Essence of the target or the Jadeborn (whichever is lower). Jadeborn cannot use this Charm on beings that lack an Essence pool.

An alternative use of this Charm allows the Jadeborn to store motes of Essence in flawless crystals. At any one time, each crystal can store a number of motes equal to the crystal's Resources cost. It takes five motes to store a single mote in the crystal, but this Essence cost does not have to be paid all at once. After a number of minutes equal to the charge already gathered, however, any motes spent but not yet converted to a stored mote are lost. (For example, a stone with three motes stored and three motes

spent toward storing a fourth mote, will lose that fractional charge after three minutes.)

Motes are stored indefinitely unless the stone is brought to the surface and not kept in an Essence-rich environment (such as carried along a dragon line, or kept within the boundaries of a manse or demesne). Stones left unattended in the surface world lose one stored mote per week. Any being with an Essence pool can draw motes from a crystal, but a character may tap only one crystal within five ticks, and the user can draw only a number of motes equal to his Essence within that same time period.

### ESSENCE-FOCUSING CONCENTRATION

**Cost:** 1wp per dot; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Living Earth Meditation

The Artisan extends her will into the earth, channeling and absorbing its ambient Essence and focusing it into herself. For a brief moment, she manifests an anima banner, furious and blazing, as bright as that of an iconic Solar, but without any totemic expression of her true self.

If the Artisan is standing within a manse or demesne to which she is attuned (or holds the hearthstone of a manse to which she is attuned), she may drain as many dots as desired from that site's rating. Each drained dot costs one Willpower and restores 10 motes to her Essence pool, which





may temporarily raise her pool above her normal maximum. These excess motes drain from her pool at the rate of one mote per tick. Sites of power recover one drained dot of rating per day and provide Essence at this reduced rate, but any additional benefits (including hearthstone powers) do not recover until the full rating is restored. This Charm does not allow a Jadeborn to drain sites of power to which she is not already attuned. She must first connect to the site with Living Earth Mediation and force attunement.

Alternatively, the Artisan can drain Wyld places, drawing power from the chaotic Essence to be found there. A one-mile-radius region in the Bordermarches or Middlemarches is the equivalent of a level-1 demesne, while the Deep Wyld is level-2, and a zone of Pure Chaos would be equivalent to a level-3 demesne. Draining any Wyld region inflicts unsoakable levels of aggravated damage equal to the equivalent demesne's rating to the Artisan and sends discordant shock waves out a number of miles in every direction equal to (the equivalent demesne's rating x 5). Any raksha within that radius can sense the shock waves with a successful (Perception + Awareness) roll.

Finally, the Artisan can tap the ambient Essence of Creation. Doing so restores five motes to her pool but desiccates the normal geomantic activity within half a mile around her (a disruption that lasts for one day). Within this region, no being can regain Essence through respiration, though stunts, hearthstones and the like work normally. Immaterial spirits will feel extremely uncomfortable within the region and might even seek revenge upon the drainer. Even mortals and animals will be out of sorts and find the area unpleasant until normal geomantic activity returns.

### DRAGON-TANGLING WEB

**Cost:** 3+m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound, Obvious

**Duration:** Essence hours

**Prerequisite Charms:** Essence-Focusing Concentration

With a harsh clutch-and-release gesture, the Artisan summons a coruscating web of light that engulfs his hand, knotting itself into impossible geomantic patterns as it fades into the Essence of the Artisan's target. This Charm is highly versatile and much feared among those who know of its existence.

If invoked in its first aspect, a Jadeborn standing in a demesne or manse may attack it, as long as its rating does not exceed his Essence. The web this Charm produces inhibits and scatters the Essence flows of the site, reducing its power. The site temporarily loses one dot for every five motes of Essence the Jadeborn spends on this Charm (to a minimum of 0), until the Charm's duration ends. While reduced in this fashion, any hearthstones or other associated powers are also neutralized (even if the site is not reduced to a rating of 0).

In its second aspect, the Dragon-Tangling Web can be directed at any hearthstone the Mountain Folk successfully

touches with an unarmed attack (this is called strike, normally with a -2 external penalty). A successful attack, and the expenditure of (hearthstone rating x 3) motes, renders the hearthstone an inert and powerless rock until the Charm's duration ends.

A Jadeborn with Essence 5 may summon the Dragon-Tangling Web in its third aspect and direct it against an opponent for a cost in motes equal to (the victim's Essence + 10). The target must have an Essence pool and must have an Essence equal to or lower than that of the Artisan using the Charm. The Artisan must specify whether he is laying a stable or unstable web when attacking. A stable web, once laid, prevents the target from regaining motes through any process other than respiration (including recovery from stunts, hearthstones, drawing on stored power from Essence storage devices, enhancements or effects from Charms), but it lasts for only one scene. An unstable web snares and then immediately collapses, draining a number of motes from the victim equal to (its creator's Willpower + Essence).

The final aspect of the Dragon-Tangling Web, when invoked, spreads to encompass a ([creator's Willpower + Essence] x 10)-yard radius in every direction. Within this radius, all creatures regain Essence at half their normal rate, rounded down. More dangerously, all Essence expenditures increase by the Jadeborn's Essence in motes. (A Charm that normally costs four motes instead costs four plus the creator's Essence motes to invoke.) The creator is not immune to this effect, but anyone with a higher Essence is immune to both of these effects.

All aspects of the Dragon-Tangling Web can be parried or blocked only with a perfect defense, but the web can be torn asunder with Emerald Countermagic or its equivalent.

### SIGN OF WARDING

**Cost:** Varies; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound, Obvious

**Duration:** Until broken

**Prerequisite Charms:** Essence-Focusing Concentration

The Artisan uses a finger to trace a complex mandala, trailing a luminous pattern of Essence on a surface or in the very air. The sign flares with power when complete, spreading out to encompass the area the Artisan wishes to be warded. Afterward, the ward fades to invisibility (though beings capable of perceiving Essence may still see it), reappearing only when set off by intruders.

Wards created with this Charm are altogether superior to those created by the Art of Warding and Exorcism (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex**, pp. 141–144) but work similarly in many ways to those lesser barriers. They may be keyed to as varied or specific a type of interloper as desired, from all non-Jadeborn to the Dragon-Blood Cynis Denovah Avaku of Ways, and they are as effective against dematerialized beings as they are against material ones. When created, the Jadeborn invests a number of motes in the ward, dividing them between the following aspects:

- Soak 2L/2B per mote invested (1L/1B base)
- Hardness 1L/1B per mote invested (0L/0B base)
- Health Levels 4 per mote invested (4 health levels base)
- Regeneration one health level per five ticks per mote invested (one level per five ticks base)
- Keyed one mote (allows the Jadeborn to specify who can enter or leave a warded area)
- Damaging one mote (inflicts damage equal to half its lethal soak to any who enter the warded area—this damage is inflicted every five ticks and reduces the soak of the ward by 1L/1B every time it is delivered)

A ward that has suffered damage equal to or greater than the ward's health levels has a hole large enough for the attacker to pass through rent in it. Wards are destroyed utterly after they take four times this damage. Regeneration will restore a ward to its full defensive strength (minus any reductions for damage inflicted) in time. Re-application of this Charm can restore a ward to full strength, but it cannot increase its power. To do that, the ward must be broken and re-created.

Wards that protect an entire area have a maximum radius of (Willpower x 10) yards. Those that protect a specific two-dimensional space (acting as a gate or to shield a wall from attack by immaterial spirits, for example) can cover an area equal to (Willpower x 50) square yards.

Emerald Countermagic or its equivalent will utterly destroy a ward created with this Charm.

### ELEMENTAL INVOCATION RITE

**Cost:** 10+m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Varies

**Prerequisite Charms:** Essence-Transfer Technique, Dragon-Tangling Web

Like the Exalted, the Mountain Folk long ago learned the secrets to summon and bind elementals to their service. These arts are used sparingly—especially with elementals with higher Essence.

The ritual necessary to summon an elemental requires a number of hours equal to the targeted elemental's Essence, time spent drawing the complex geomantic designs necessary to beckon and constrain the elemental. In all other ways (other than as listed thus far), this Charm operates in the same fashion as the Terrestrial Circle spell Summon Elemental (see *Exalted*, p. 254).

As normal, higher Essence elementals may choose to send minions instead of attending to the Jadeborn themselves. (Fire and earth elementals are less likely to do so than air, water or wood ones, though.) Those who do show up expect to be treated with great respect and paid well with artifacts, prayers or other desired objects, lest they seek their vengeance upon the Artisan who summoned them when their terms of service are up.

### SPIRIT-CALCIFIFYING TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Elemental Invocation Rite

The Artisan hurls a pulse of incandescent light at an immaterial being in his line of sight. The energy spreads through the spirit's ephemeral body, weighing it with Essence and forcing it to manifest in Creation.

Roll the Jadeborn's (Willpower + Essence) against the target's (Willpower + Essence). If the target wins, the Charm simply drains motes from the spirit's Essence pool equal to the Jadeborn's (Willpower + Essence). If the Artisan wins, the spirit becomes solid and is stuck in this form for the remainder of the scene.

Dematerialized beings that have access to Charms that allow them to materialize must do so immediately (spending the appropriate costs to activate the Charm) and may not dematerialize for the duration of this Charm. Elementals that are materialized may not use Charms (or other effects) to dematerialize while under the Charm's effects. Those spirits that lack a method of materializing (or cannot currently pay the cost of materialization) lose all remaining motes of Essence, and then materialize anyway.

Spirit-Calcifying Technique cannot affect beings with a permanent Essence of 7 or higher. This Charm does not confer an ability to perceive immaterial beings.

### GOD-SUMMONING GLYPH

**Cost:** 30m, 3wp; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Varies

**Prerequisite Charms:** Elemental Invocation Rite

Mountain Folk may no more command the obeisance of gods than the Exalted can. The most knowledgeable of Artisans can, however, summon certain types of gods into their presence—to converse, to bargain, to threaten or for whatever other purpose. Gods of the earth, of the subterranean depths and those related to industry, alchemy or other purviews related to Autochthon are all gods who may be summoned by the Mountain Folk.

The geomantic patterns required to use this Charm are far more complex than those needed for elementals. Four hours of work constructing them per dot of Essence the god possesses is normal. Once summoned, the god appears before the Jadeborn, manifested (but not necessarily materialized), and from this point forward, the two may interact as they both choose. If the Jadeborn desires some service or boon, she must negotiate, cajole, threaten or entice the deity into acquiescing to her requests. Nothing inherent in the Charm prevents the god from attacking the Jadeborn or using Charms, though the Artisan may attempt to banish the spirit whence it came as a standard action, the player rolling (Willpower + Essence) against a difficulty equal to the god's Essence. Jadeborn who know the Sign of Warding may erect barriers

against potentially hostile deities, although this is rarely seen favorably by the gods. Most, in fact, see it as an insult.

### EMERALD UNWEAVING RUNE

**Cost:** 10 or 20m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Essence-Transfer Technique, Dragon-Tangling Web

Although the Mountain Folk's study of sorcery is theoretical in nature, it is not without benefits. Geomancers with sufficient understanding of Essence and the forms and patterns it takes are able to inscribe this rune, which may be used in two fashions.

If 10 motes are spent on the Charm, the geomancer secures his person against hostile magic, tracing a coiled symbol of emerald light in the air before him. Until the end of his next action, any spell of the Terrestrial Circle cast against him shatters against the bulwark of the rune's defenses. While the rune is active, any non-reflexive action the geomancer takes incurs a +1 difficulty.

If 20 motes are spent, the Jadeborn may hurl the sign against a Terrestrial Circle spell within (Essence x 20) yards. The symbol flies from the Jadeborn's hand to the spell's focal point and shatters in a violent flash, tearing the spell apart. The violence of this effect inflicts dice of bashing damage equal to half the shattered spell's Essence cost (rounded up) to everything within three yards of the explosion.

Emerald Unweaving Rune is analogous to Emerald Countermagic in all other respects, including its ability to disrupt certain Jadeborn Charms.

### SAPPHIRE UNWEAVING RUNE

**Cost:** 20m, 2wp; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Obvious

**Duration:** One hour

**Prerequisite Charms:** Emerald Unweaving Rune

Skilled Artisan geomancers can unmake Terrestrial Circle spells—or the enchantments of their fellow Artisans—with relative ease. Celestial or Shadowlands Circle spells can be destroyed only through the use of an hour-long ritual involving three Mountain Folk who all know this Charm and use it in concert.

As the ritual begins, the gathered Jadeborn stand together and raise their hands in unison. They sing or chant, each in a different, discordant pitch. As the melodious incantations flow from their lips, their hands trace intricate patterns of blue light around the participants. At the end of the hour-long ritual, the three adjust their pitch into a magnificent harmony, and the three designs merge into a single vast rune. The symbol hovers for a moment, then flies to the heart of the targeted spell, where it detonates with a thunderclap. The focal point of the spell cannot be further than (the lowest Essence of any participant x 20) yards away. As the spell shatters, its Essence explodes outward in a destructive wave, inflicting dice of lethal damage equal

to half the spell's Essence cost (rounded up) to everything within 10 yards of the blast.

Sapphire Unweaving Rune is analogous to Sapphire Countermagic in all respects except those previously listed.

### DEMESNE-BINDING RITUAL

**Cost:** 30m, 3wp; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Creation-Bound, Obvious

**Duration:** Until broken

**Prerequisite Charms:** Essence-Transfer Technique, Dragon-Tangling Web

Over the course of an hour, an Artisan sets up an array of flawless gemstones around the core of a demesne to which she is attuned. These gems can be of any type, as long as they are suitably large and well cut (Resources ●●● for a level-1 to level-3 demesne or Resources ●●●●● for a demesne of level-4 or level-5).

Once this complex array of crystals is in place, the Artisan stands at the center of the demesne (or as close as physically possible) and activates this Charm. Paths of Essence link the crystals in a complex geomantic pattern, setting them alight and causing them to ring in a pattern that moves swiftly from utter cacophony to perfect harmony. This pattern culminates in a brilliant flash of light and a sonorous pitch that fills the area within the demesne. As the display subsides, it leaves the gemstones charged with Essence and still glowing with their internal light.

As long as the crystals remain undisturbed, the demesne is considered capped by a manse of equal rating. Over the course of a week, this temporary manse produces a hearthstone somewhere toward the center of the pattern of crystals.

Those who desire may use the manse-creation process in *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. III—Oadenol's Codex* (pp. 63–79) to create the resultant manse. The manse must have Fragility ●● to reflect the ease of breaking the Charm, and many powers listed are incompatible with the basically non-material nature of the manse. Storyteller and player should work together to craft the resulting manse, keeping in mind its makeup. The manse is a thing of Essence and crystal, not fortifications and rooms.

Alternatively, this Charm can be used to enhance an existing manse, raising it up to match the demesne it caps (so a level-3 manse capping a level-5 demesne would be raised up to level-5). Doing so requires that the Jadeborn construct her web of crystals around the hearthstone chamber of the manse, and the Charm lasts only as long as that web is undisturbed. As long as the Charm is active, however, the demesne is considered completely capped, and powers such as Essence Vents are no longer needed.

This Charm lasts until the pattern of gemstones that makes it is disturbed (requiring a [Strength + Athletics] total of 10 or more), the invoker cancels it or Emerald Countermagic (or its equivalent) is used against it.





### RESPLENDENT DISPERSION TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 1–5m, 1 Divergence; **Mins:** Essence 5;

**Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Demesne-Binding Ritual

Using this Charm, an Artisan can banish an object Elsewhere, summoning it back to appear within his sight or to his hand at any time as a diceless reflexive action. This Charm is limited to objects of the Jadeborn's size or smaller, and it cannot target objects that currently belong to someone else. Activation for this Charm is normally one mote, but increases to one mote per dot of Artifact rating for any magical device. Only artifacts attuned to the Artisan may be banished to Elsewhere, but they maintain their attunement status indefinitely while banished.

### ARTIFICER'S INSIGHT

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Unfolding Pattern Intuition

This Charm marks the beginning of the cascade known as the Fire Path or the Art of the Forge. The Artisan stares at a crafted object, spends a mote of Essence and instantly knows if the object has any magical power. If the object is magical, roll (Perception + Occult) at a difficulty equal to the artifact's rating (6 for N/A-rated artifacts). The number of successes determines the information obtained, with each succeeding level incorporating the information gleaned at lower levels.

**One success:** The character establishes whether the artifact is functional, damaged or otherwise inoperative.

**Two successes:** The Artisan understands the overall category of purpose into which the item's magic falls (offensive, defensive, utilitarian, etc.).

**Three successes:** The character gleans the device's specific purpose but not the details of its powers (narrative details only, without any explanation of rules or traits).

**Four or more successes:** The Artisan discerns the specific details and operation of all the artifact's powers and understands perfectly how to operate it.

### INCOMPARABLE FORGE DOMINION

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Permanent, Stackable

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Artificer's Insight

The Jadeborn resonates with the Primordial Essence of Autochthon, accelerating the speed with which she can create or repair mundane objects and artifacts to half the time required. A Jadeborn with Essence 4 can purchase Incomparable Forge Dominion a second time, reducing the time to a third of usual. A Jadeborn with Essence 5 may purchase this Charm a third and final time, cutting the time required to one quarter the original duration.

### GREAT MAKER'S GRASP

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Touch

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Artificer's Insight

With a touch, the Artisan may instantly force full attunement with a device, reducing the normal commitment cost by an amount equal to her Essence (to a minimum of half normal attunement). For artifacts made of magical materials other than jade, the attunement cost is still doubled before applying the reduction granted by this Charm. The Artisan may not force attunement of an artifact to which another is already attuned. The first attunement must be broken in some fashion first.

### JADE'S EGG HATCHED

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Shaping

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Great Maker's Grasp

Carefully disseminated to every Artisan capable of learning it, this Charm is considered the single most important piece of magical lore known to the Mountain Folk. The Jadeborn race would quickly dwindle into extinction without it. Jade's Egg Hatched allows an Artisan to shape those jade nodules that contain Mountain Folk souls, transforming rigid stone into living flesh as he frees the Jadeborn within.

The birthing ritual takes (8 – the Artisan's Essence) minutes. Roll the Artisan's (Intelligence + Craft [Earth]) at a variable difficulty based on the caste being shaped: difficulty 1 to produce a Worker, difficulty 2 for a Warrior and difficulty 6 for an Artisan. Failing the roll produces a Worker, while a botch results in stillbirth and forces the soul to flee to a new nodule of jade. Rolling eight successes or more in an attempt to shape a Warrior or Worker can make the undercaste one of the Enlightened, at Storyteller discretion.

These numbers are not reflective of normal birthing percentages. Typically only one in 1,000 or so Mountain Folk is Enlightened (either as an Artisan or as one of the "lower" castes). For a more "realistic" percentage, roll four dice. If three successes are rolled, the child can be an Artisan. With four successes, she can be an Enlightened member of an undercaste. Roll the sculpting attempt normally, allowing creation of an Enlightened Jadeborn only if the probability check permits.

### BODY SHAPING MEDITATION

**Cost:** 10m; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Obvious, Shaping

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Jade's Egg Hatched

The Artisan concentrates, willing the threads of his Essence to reweave themselves. His form undulates and flows like soft clay in response, remolding itself to his specifications. Once this Charm is invoked, the Artisan's player may reallocate a number of dots of his Physical Attributes up to his Essence. This effect cannot raise any Attribute above seven

dots or reduce any Attribute below three dots, nor can it alter any Attribute by more than three dots from its true rating.

The character may drop the Charm at any time, returning to his normal traits. A character's body can accept only one application of this Charm at a time. If he wishes to change the allocation, he must first drop back to his normal configuration by ending the Charm.

### ARTISAN PATTERN MASTERY

**Cost:** —; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Permanent, Shaping

**Duration:** Permanent

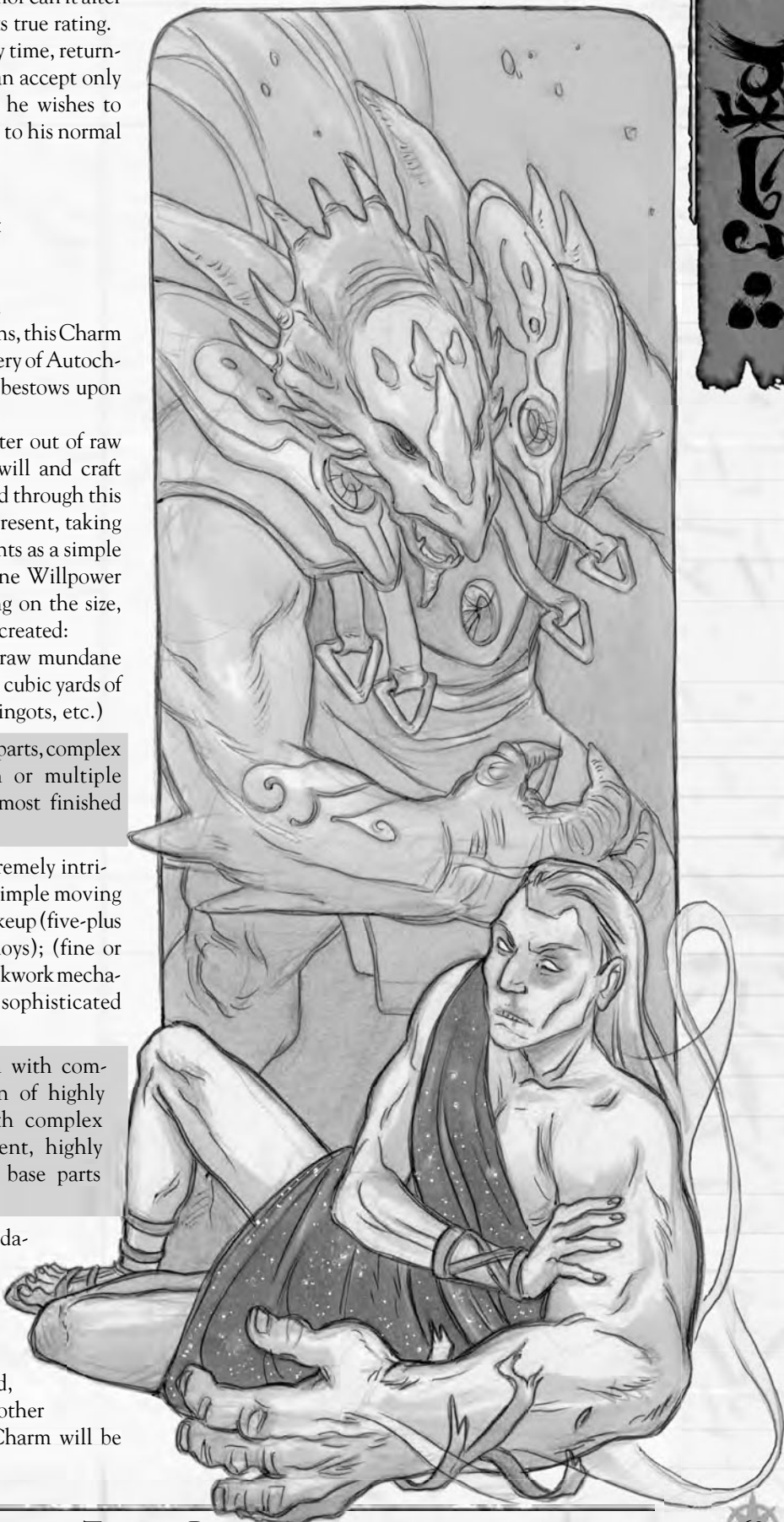
**Prerequisite Charms:** Entire Artisan Pattern


The pinnacle of Enlightenment for Artisans, this Charm endows the greatest Jadeborn some small mastery of Autochthon's Primordial Essence. This endowment bestows upon them several benefits.

First, the master Artisan can create matter out of raw Essence, shaping it with a combination of will and craft into any form she can imagine. Objects created through this Charm coalesce out of the ambient Essence present, taking form near the Artisan. Using this Charm counts as a simple Charm use (Speed 8). The Artisan spends one Willpower and a number of motes of Essence, depending on the size, complexity and makeup of the artifact being created:

- 2 motes one cubic yard of a single raw mundane material (limit is Essence in cubic yards of material); (steel bars, gold ingots, etc.)
- 2 motes objects with simple moving parts, complex (but non-moving) design or multiple (two to four) materials; (most finished objects)
- 3 motes complex moving parts, extremely intricate design (but with only simple moving parts) or highly complex makeup (five-plus materials, sophisticated alloys); (fine or exceptional equipment, clockwork mechanisms, intricate jewelry, sophisticated manufactured goods, etc.)
- 4 motes extremely intricate design with complex parts or combination of highly complex mechanisms with complex makeup; (perfect equipment, highly sophisticated clockworks, base parts for magitech devices)
- 5 motes raw magical materials; (adamant, jade, orichalcum, moonsilver only—cannot create starmetal or soulsteel by this process)

Only nonliving matter can be created, regardless of Essence spent. Automaton or other self-motivated machines created with this Charm will be





lifeless, still requiring the complex enchantments and patterning needed to give them “life.” A character who lacks sufficient motes to fuel the Charm may prepare ahead of time with Essence-Focusing Concentration.

In addition to conferring the ability to create objects, Artisan Pattern Mastery allows Artisans to create new Charms. This procedure follows the guidelines and restrictions for other Pattern Mastery Charms (see p. 57). Finally, Artisan masters subtract two motes from the Essence cost to activate any Artisan Pattern Charm (except the creation ability associated with mastery itself), to a minimum cost of one mote.

## THE ENLIGHTENED PATTERN

This Pattern covers the social and mental superiority that defines Jadeborn Enlightenment. Although these Charms are primarily restricted to Artisans and their intricate politics, Enlightened undercaste Mountain Folk also study them for the advantage they provide against the prejudiced dominion of the Conclave.

### GLORIOUS PRODIGY LESSON

**Cost:** 15m, 6xp; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** None

The Jadeborn engages in a course of isolated contemplation, surrounding himself with the trappings and teachings of a skill or knowledge he has previously studied. At the end of a day and a night of study, he emerges, newly focused on his new field of mastery.

The player selects an Ability in which the character already has at least one dot. After invoking this Charm, that Ability becomes a Favored Ability (if it's not one already), and the character gains one dot in it. Additionally, the character's maximum potential rating in that trait increases by one. This Charm cannot be used to improve the same Ability more than once, excepting only those Abilities (Craft, for example) that can be developed in multiple different fields of study.

### UPON STRANDS LIGHTLY

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** (Essence + 1) hours

**Prerequisite Charms:** Glorious Prodigy Lesson

This Charm marks the beginning of the cascade known as the Art of Civilization. By attuning herself to the web of interactions and social ties around her, the Jadeborn empathically weaves herself into the tapestry of society, becoming an intrinsic part of it. She intuitively understands the rituals of courtesy and gesture that lubricate the wheels of interaction in the society she finds herself a part of and executes these mannerisms with flawless—if automatic and mindless—precision. She might not understand exactly why she must, for example, screw blue mud into the place where her navel should be, only that it is the key to harmonious interaction with her surroundings.

This hyperawareness of social cues and interactions brings with it a sensitivity to social and physical dangers. She subconsciously knows when those around her intend her immediate harm—physical or otherwise. Sensing this danger is automatic (unless the intent is masked by Charms invoked by a being with a higher Essence than her own), but the Jadeborn may perceive the source of the danger only with a successful reflexive (Perception + Compassion) roll made by her player. The difficulty of that roll is equal to the attacker's permanent Essence. The warning provided by this Charm comes at least one full action before any impending attack, ruining any chance of ambush or surprise.

### MIEN OF (VIRTUE)

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Enchantment

**Keywords:** Iterative

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Upon Strands Lightly

The Conclave that rules the Mountain Folk is a whirling chaos of shifting alliances and subtle treacheries, held together only by crystalline dictates of law, custom and protocol. Artisans plot and dispute for reasons of faction, personal distaste, social standing, resource access or simply for sport. They accept certain rules to their labyrinthine social warfare, however, if only to preserve the battleground they wish to control, and to give their competition some sense of fair play and challenge.

The Mien of (Virtue) Charm is one of the most potent and ubiquitous weapons in the arena of Mountain Folk politics, encompassing the four essential Charms that define acceptable social interaction. While under a mien's effects, a Jadeborn projects a specific emotional archetype that helps him act the part of his assumed role. Such a character may assume multiple miens in sequence, but he benefits from only one mien at a time, and there is no benefit to mastering all of them other than the ability to fluidly switch from one to another without limit. Although these are enchantment Charms, timing restrictions are assumed to matter only when used in combat.

Besides its basic power, each Charm includes a greater effect for extreme circumstances and emergencies. Essence 3+ characters who are projecting a mien can reflexively access this greater effect for a cost of either 10 motes or a channel of the proper Virtue. The greater effect lasts until it's voluntarily relinquished or the Charm ends.

**Compassion:** The Jadeborn takes on an inquiring or friendly stance, projecting an appropriate amount of conviviality and inquisitiveness. This mode is used infrequently, and predominantly in private. In public, it lacks the defensive and offensive benefits found in the other miens. While this mien is in effect, add the character's Compassion rating to all social rolls based on the Jadeborn's amiability and allure, as well as to all Investigation rolls made for him to politely attempt to garner information from someone else.

This mien's greater effect makes the character irresistibly charismatic and handsome. Convert the standard mien dice bonus into automatic successes for all seduction attempts.



**Conviction:** The Jadeborn takes on a taciturn and defensive stance, surrounding herself with an aura of resolute calm. Her social presence is neither obscured nor enhanced, but her emotions and motives are concealed by her intense serenity. This mien is considered a default by many, particularly in unfamiliar company, and is used in most social encounters. While projecting this mien, the character gains a static bonus to her Mental Defense Values equal to her Conviction. This effect does not actually raise her MDV scores for purposes of determining actions, only for purposes of resisting social attacks.

The mien's greater effect additionally grants total immunity to sources of unnatural mental influence, provided that the aggressor employing the magic has a lower permanent Essence. The character still enjoys the aforementioned defenses while the greater effect is in place, granting the Jadeborn supernal defenses against influence of all sorts. This effect specifically does *not* defend against the lesser effects of any Mien of (Virtue) Charm.

**Temperance:** The Mountain Folk becomes passive and withdrawn, disengaging behind a cloak of aloof indifference. This mien is typically used by those who wish only to observe or witness discussion or hostilities rather than take part in them.

Any roll made to passively notice the character in a crowd or urban environment has its difficulty raised by an amount equal to half his Temperance, and his player gains a bonus to all Stealth rolls equal to the character's Temperance in such environs. Most sentients will ignore the Jadeborn outright. These benefits apply only while the character does nothing to draw attention to himself. He is not invisible, only highly unnoticeable. Additionally, the mien adds the Jadeborn's Temperance rating as a static bonus to his Mental Defense Values, in the same fashion as the Mien of Conviction.

Regrettably, this mien obscures the character even when he wants to be noticed, inflicting his Temperance as an internal penalty to all of his player's social rolls that reflect any sort of interaction with others. It does not, however, interfere with attempts to understand a social situation or to discern the feelings of a target.

Switching from either the Compassion or Valor mien to Temperance creates a jarring emotional disconnect that helps terminate or suspend discussion. Anyone interacting with the Jadeborn ceases to do so unless her player succeeds at a reflexive Willpower roll with a difficulty equal to the Jadeborn's Temperance. If the roll fails, the conversation is (somewhat awkwardly) interrupted, and the Mountain Folk can gracefully retreat from the situation.

This mien's greater effect allows the Jadeborn invoking it to retreat even further from social interaction. The player of any character seeking to interact with him (after first succeeding to notice him to begin with) must succeed at a reflexive Willpower roll with a difficulty equal to the Jadeborn's Temperance at the start of each action. Failure renders the attempt useless, and the character must re-notice

the Jadeborn character as he effortlessly slips back into the anonymity of the crowd before any other attempt at interaction can be made.

**Valor:** The Jadeborn adopts an aggressive stance, projecting dignified pride and furious anger. While she might outwardly retain the superficial signs of courtesy, her whispers carry the force of shouted epithets, and her every word is a manifestation of glorious tyranny. While highly advantageous in social combat, this mien is seen as a weapon of last resort, and normally used sparingly. Those who rely on its power are often seen as crass or even barbaric.

This mien attracts immediate attention from all those around the Jadeborn, and it aids in argumentation and social attacks, adding the character's Valor to her player's social rolls made to represent raw force of personality, intimidation or attacks of personality and rage. The mien also adds a bonus equal to half the character's Valor (rounded up) to her MDV scores, as with other miens, as her anger and forceful personality bull through lesser social attacks.

Unfortunately, this mien automatically voids all Stealth attempts that are not Charm-enhanced, making the character preternaturally conspicuous. The character cannot hope to blend into a crowd. The players of all observers receive a reflexive (Perception + Awareness) check at standard difficulty to locate the character. Also, her aggressive demeanor makes the character unlikable, making any social interaction where the Jadeborn can't succeed through domination and intimidation far more difficult. The Mountain Folk using this mien suffers an internal penalty equal to her Valor to all social rolls that are not based on domination, intimidation or argumentative force.

This mien's greater effect converts the standard dice bonus into automatic successes for intimidation attempts only. In addition, the character's voice carries clearly over any ambient noise. Everyone in her line of sight can hear the Jadeborn as clearly as if she stood directly before them.

### STUDIOUS ERUDITION TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** Varies; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Until learned

**Prerequisite Charms:** Glorious Prodigy Lesson

This Charm marks the beginning of the cascade known as the Art of Thought. The Jadeborn focuses his Essence, increasing his mental sharpness and cognition in order to rapidly improve an existing trait or learn a new one. He divides the training time required to purchase or improve a Mental Attribute, Ability, specialty or Charm by a factor equal to one third of the motes committed to this Charm. As a result, it costs six motes to halve training time, nine to cut it to a third of normal, 12 for a quarter, et cetera. The Essence remains committed until the character purchases or advances the trait. The Charm cannot be voluntarily relinquished before that time, and it provides no break or discount to the actual cost of acquiring the trait.





## LANGUAGE AND MEANING DISCERNMENT

**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Indefinite

**Prerequisite Charms:** Studious Erudition Technique

While invoking this Charm, the character learns foreign tongues in much the same way people learn new words in familiar languages. By listening to an unfamiliar language spoken for an hour (of reasonably continuous conversation—overly taciturn samples may require as much as three hours time), a Jadeborn using this Charm may attune her mind to its syntactical structure, allowing her to understand and speak it like a native. This Charm's effects (and knowledge of any languages temporarily learned) end when the character ceases to commit Essence to it. The player may, however, spend experience points equal to half the number of languages she currently speaks to have the character permanently and completely learn the language in question. (Doing so can send the character into experience point debt.) This Charm does *not* actually raise the character's Linguistics rating, only grants the character access to this language or family.

## THOUGHT SPEECH ORATION

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Touch (for attunement only)

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Language and Meaning Discernment

With a moment of concentration, the Jadeborn structures his thoughts into an abstract construct of Essence. He can then hurl that construct with a glance into the mind of any sentient being he can observe clearly. If the target attempts to resist the sudden intrusion of foreign thoughts, the Jadeborn's player must succeed at a reflexive Willpower roll with a difficulty equal to the target's highest Virtue to force his thoughts through her resolve. If the target receives the message, she hears it in the Jadeborn's own words, as if he were standing next to her and speaking clearly. The message can have any length, but once sent, the Jadeborn must invoke this Charm again to send a new message.

For the cost of one experience point, the Jadeborn can attune himself to another sentient being by using this Charm while maintaining physical contact. This attunement reduces the cost of this Charm to one mote, and the target may thereafter be out of visual range, up to (Essence) miles away, and still receive the Jadeborn's thought constructs.

## CONFERENCE OF THE MIND

**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Instant

**Prerequisite Charms:** Thought Speech Oration

By touching or making eye contact with another sentient being and invoking this Charm, the Jadeborn may transport their minds into a shared dreamscape that exists outside time and space.

This virtual space has whatever features and terrain the Jadeborn wishes, and he can dictate how events play out, regardless of the laws of reality. He cannot affect the thought-body of his target, however, nor may either participant come to any real harm in this mindscape. If the target knows this Charm as well, she can invoke it to give herself some measure of control over their shared reality, but at all times, the original invoker of the Charm is the primary guiding mind behind this virtual reality.

Though the Jadeborn may end it at will, the Charm's effects may be maintained for a period of time equal to the initiator's permanent Willpower in perceived hours, but once the Charm ends, no actual time will have elapsed. Although predominantly used to facilitate private communication, this Charm also sees use as a training tool, allowing for hours of training to pass in the blink of an eye.

## INCOMPARABLE TUTORING METHOD

**Cost:** 20m, 1wp, 1+xp; **Mins:** Essence 4; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Training, Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

**Prerequisite Charms:** Conference of the Mind

As the Jadeborn lays his hands against a sentient being's forehead and invokes this Charm, a white light flashes between them, imprinting on the target whatever information the character wishes to share. He can transmit memories, expand cognition and intellectual sharpness (raising Mental Attributes), impart or improve Abilities and specialties or instruct Jadeborn in new Charms. In the case of any actual trait increases, the target must still spend the appropriate number of experience points to gain the benefits—the Charm's primary effect in this case is forgoing the need to expend training time. This effect can send the recipient into experience point debt. The Jadeborn may even donate experience points beyond the one required to activate the Charm. These points must be spent immediately or earmarked toward the purchase of a trait granted by this Charm if the target does not have enough experience points to buy the trait outright.

## ENLIGHTENED PATTERN MASTERY

**Cost:** None; **Mins:** Essence 5; **Type:** Special

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

**Prerequisite Charms:** Entire Enlightened Pattern

A heightened understanding of Enlightenment itself comes with mastery of the Enlightened Pattern. With such wisdom, a Jadeborn may produce custom Charms to augment this Pattern. This process follows the guidelines and restrictions for other Pattern Mastery Charms (see p. 57). Additionally, the character reduces the Essence cost to activate any Enlightened Pattern Charms by one mote, to a minimum of one mote.



HEIGH-HO, FRIENDS.



THANK YOU FOR COMING, DESPITE THE SHORT NOTICE.

I TRUST YOU WEREN'T FOLLOWED.



NO, WE'RE ALONE HERE TOGETHER. ARE YOU DAMAGED?

ONLY A LITTLE. NOTHING TO WORRY ABOUT.

SO, THEN, HAVE YOU MADE UP YOUR MINDS REGARDING WHAT WE SPOKE ABOUT?



WE HAVE, HONORED ONE. THE TUNNEL YOU ASKED FOR IS ALMOST COMPLETE.



BUT... I DIDN'T EVEN KNOW YOU'D AGREED TO TAKE ON THE TASK.



WAS THERE EVER ANY DOUBT? THE GREAT MAKER'S WISH IS OUR DELIGHT.



# CHAPTER FOUR

# STORYTELLING

This chapter offers some guidance on sharing stories in the roots of the earth about the Jadeborn and their Endless War against the creatures in darkness. You should already be familiar with some of the practicalities of running **Exalted**, but this advice is geared specifically to playing the Mountain Folk, who are more than mortal but less than true Exalts.

## GETTING STARTED

Part of your job as Storyteller is focusing the options for the game. You need to create some boundaries for your series—not so tight that your players are railroaded, but not so loose that you have one player with a character suitable for a sitcom and another suited for high tragedy. You also need to set some limits on questions of time and space: whether your series is a multi-generational saga spanning the whole underground empire or a slice of daily life in a particular barracks on the frontier.

## INITIAL QUESTIONS

Before you begin a game focused on the Jadeborn or allow your players to include Jadeborn characters in your

regular **Exalted** game, answer some questions about the rules and the setting:

- Who is going to play the Jadeborn, and what caste? When can everyone meet? How often? Should the game run a set number of sessions?
- What elements of the setting do you wish to avoid? What rules will you adapt or de-emphasize?
- Who are the antagonists, rivals and recurring characters your players' characters will encounter? Who are your characters' regular allies, and what resources will they have initially?
- Where are the characters from, and where are they based? How did they meet each other, and what is their purpose?
- What character hooks should everyone have, or should everyone avoid? What Abilities and knowledge must be assumed for this group to be effective? Is Ability overlap acceptable, or should everyone be different?
- Should the characters all come from different castes or the same caste? Do they have a mentor in common? Do they share similar goals and purpose?



As the Storyteller, you are most responsible for rivals, villains and the world around your players' characters. The more you do to front-load this material at the beginning of the game, the less retconning and revision you will have to do later.

## ALTERING RULES

Exalted is not chess, with fixed rules and traditions that have held since before people started keeping track. You are free to make your game as rules-light or as rules-intensive as you wish. Do be aware that altering rules can sometimes have surprising consequences, however, causing one character to be stronger or weaker than another. Make a point of recording rules changes in a place where all the players have access to them, so that no player benefits unduly. It is a good idea to inform your players ahead of time, as well, so that there are no ill feelings or confusion about how a given rule works.

One possible use of the Jadeborn is as an interlude to a regular Exalted game. If one session with your regular Exalts ends on a cliffhanger, you could then play three sessions with the Jadeborn, while waiting for the "regular season" to begin again.

## CHARACTERS AND CONFLICT

Because the Mountain Folk come from only three castes and not five or more, there is more likelihood of overlap, where two players' characters come from the same caste. In addition, you could choose a style of play in which all the players' characters come from the same caste. Be sure to urge your players to consult with one another, so that not every Warrior is a

hard-bitten, fierce veteran with a taste for fungal cigars and dark beer, and not every Artisan is an ethereal beauty whose love of working in gold hides a secret desire for revenge.

Classical stories often derive their structure from clashes of motivations. These motivations are often defined according to four different categories:

- Mortal vs. Self
- Mortal vs. Monster
- Mortal vs. Mortal
- Mortal vs. Nature

You as the Storyteller are responsible for generating two and a half of these conflicts in your own story: you act as the natural world, as most of the monsters and as at least some of the other sentient beings in the world. The players are responsible for generating stories between and among their characters and creating memorable tensions between differing aspects of their personalities. Try to make sure that you are not responsible for generating *all* the conflict and drama within your game. Encourage your players to shoulder some of that burden as well.

## GAME STYLES

The best way to play Exalted is the way that you and your group want to play. Chances are, if your players are familiar with the core rules, they will be bringing a certain set of expectations to the table about what kind of game they are going to be playing. These kernels from the main game, re-imagined for the Jadeborn, may help get you started.





## VANILLA EXALTED

The lands of the Jadeborn beneath the Earth are only one-tenth as large as Creation above it, because of all that solid rock. Even so, this means there is an area at least as large as North America to explore and control. In a Jadeborn game, the players' characters may be responsible for taking back an ancient stronghold of their people and holding it against all the Nameless Hordes in the darkness. It could involve fighting, politicking and persuading the Exalts of the surface world to intervene.

## A LAND ONCE DIVIDED MUST UNITE

The structure of this sort of game is slightly altered by the reality of the Jadeborn empire as an already-united land hemmed in by horrific enemies. Despite endless Darkbroods waiting to invade and destroy the homeland of the Mountain Folk, the Conclave is fractious and fickle. In this sort of game, players might start out as Artisan-princes on the fringes of the Empire who slowly become aware of how rotten the Conclave is and begin searching for ways to change it. By proving themselves capable of military heroism and wondrous art, such a troupe could work its way closer to the centers of power, and higher in the order of things, until it might be able to change Mountain Folk life as thoroughly as the First or White Shale did. The Age of Sorrows is a time of new heroes after all.

At the same time, you as the Storyteller should be aware that the Mountain Folk are not Exalts. They are more powerful than the average human mortal, but they are still not as strong as the Chosen of the Sun, the Servants of the Maidens or even the Dragon-Blooded. It is difficult to alter the trajectory of the Jadeborn without changing the whole people, and only you can decide if your players and their characters are up to the challenge.

## AND I'LL FORM THE HEAD!

**Exalted** is almost always over-the-top, but this option for your game cranks the dial to 11—maybe 12. A fair amount of the First Age production facilities of the Jadeborn survived the Contagion and the Usurpation intact. The underground empire of the Mountain Folk could easily have color-coded suits of battle armor that meld into a super-warstrider or earthsubs with gigantic drill bits that tunnel new routes for the tunnel car system that joins the various redoubts and strongholds of the empire.

One option here is that there are special rituals that allow individual unenlightened Jadeborn to merge themselves in groups of three into Enlightened Jadeborn for short periods of time. This should be very costly to do and dangerous, but it can change the nature of the ordinary Jadeborn in your game.

## OUTLANDER

Perhaps the underground empire bores you, but you find the Jadeborn themselves intriguing. Perhaps sorcery or specific rituals allow the Mountain Folk to walk under

sunlight in violation of the Great Geas. This option should be limited to one or two players at most, but they could be artifact designers and builders, manse architects or tactical advisors. In nearly all the ways that matter, the Jadeborn are superior craftsmen to ordinary humans, and they use their gifts in the sunlit realms solely in exchange for payment. How do you pay a being who has everything he needs? With knowledge and experience, presumably—knowledge of how things were done in times past, and experience at re-creating that knowledge in modern ways.

## LIFE UNDERGROUND

Phosphorescent fungi and lichen lights the world of the Jadeborn, not sun- or moonlight. Twisting caverns, formed by water or magma or the whims of the gods or Primordials, are the only routes available for travel. There are no short cuts through solid rock. As Storyteller, your job is to make this world come alive and to help your players see the crystallized minerals in the rock faces, the bands of fossils and metal ores, and the hard realities of life underground. In this section, we look at some of the tools that you have for doing this.

## CAVES AND CAVERNS

The Primordials built Creation, and among the things that they added to their design plans was an elaborate series of caves, caverns and chambers beneath the world. Some were storerooms, while others served as boudoirs and apartments. Some were laboratories, some were tombs, and some were prisons. They range in size from alcoves only a few yards across to vast, echoing halls of stone, hundreds of yards wide. Some are joined to the surface world through tunnels and sinkholes, while others exist as pockets or voids in the depths of the earth, unconnected to anything else.

Caves and caverns are both natural, unshaped by miner's pick and spade or sorcerous intervention alike. The Jadeborn use the word *cave* to refer to any chamber smaller than 100 feet in diameter, while *cavern* usually refers to spaces of greater size and majesty. The Mountain Folk revere these spaces. When found near to their cities and towns, they use them initially for meditation and solitude. After a period of time, which may range from a month to a season, the Jadeborn give them over to the Worker Caste, who transform them into gardens and farms, or workshops.

When first opened to the wider network of Jadeborn living spaces, caves and caverns pose huge potential risks. A cave may be filled with toxic gas or with explosive vapors, which a candle or a lantern or a weapon discharge could ignite. Since caves also served as prisons for the gods and behemoths before them, even a long-sealed cavern might hold a monster of horrific destructiveness. Some caves contain hallucinogenic fumes or liquids, which can leave a Jadeborn colony delirious and open to attack for hours or days.

As Storyteller, you may ask your players to make a (Perception + Craft [Earth]) roll in order for their characters to determine if a newly dug tunnel is about to intersect with a



new cave or cavern. A (Perception + Medicine) roll can be used to determine if there are significant risks of toxic fumes present in the cave, while a (Wits + Survival) roll can be used to deal with the sudden change in atmosphere in the event that a cave is breached accidentally and a toxic event occurs.

## GEODES

Though rarely more than a few yards in diameter, the open pockets of geodes are priceless treasures to the Jadeborn. These tiny chambers hold within a blanket of rock a precious cargo of crystals and liquid. Geode liquid, when specially processed and refined using secret processes, serves as an important lubricant for artifact machines and as conduits for Essence in the construction of Water-aspect manses. The crystals themselves are usually large and of high quality. A geode's discovery triggers two reactions: a public celebration among the unenlightened Workers, and a fierce competition among the Artisans for possession of this rarity.

More common but less valuable are vugs, which are partially formed geodes, in which a tiny hollow has formed, but in which crystals have yet to begin growing. The Jadeborn have a number of artifact machines into which excavated vugs can be placed, and the right types of crystals artificially grown. These crystals are usually less pure and high-quality than the naturally grown ones, but the work of the Mountain Folk continues whether the right materials are immediately at hand or not.

A large collection of geodes or vugs in a given location can also be a useful indicator of the presence of the right types of stones to shape into new Jadeborn. Because achievement bonuses usually accrue to Worker teams who find caches of geodes, vugs and Jadeborn stones, there are high levels of competition to find such objects.

A successful (Wits + Craft [Earth]) roll can alert a miner to the presence of a geode while digging. The player of an Artisan who wishes his character to use a vug to grow crystals for experiments or construction may make an (Intelligence + Craft [Earth]) roll for the Jadeborn to seed the proto-geode.

## HALLS AND CHAMBERS

The vast majority of the Jadeborn's living and working spaces are not natural caves (at least, not anymore). The very irregularities of natural caves and caverns—uneven floors, the presence of stalagmites and stalactites, the endless dripping of water and the occasional earth-belch of toxic fumes—make them unsuitable as living quarters. Instead, the Mountain Folk excavate chambers of the correct size and shape for their intended uses, which are then sealed against dangerous influences.

Therefore, they build barracks halls long and wide, with plenty of entrances and exits and strong outer defenses. Travel corridors have numerous checkpoints and hidden ambuscades, to protect against attacks from the Nameless Hordes. Laboratories and manufactories have polished walls and rough floors, in order to maximize light and reduce the

chance of slipping. All such spaces are carved with markers indicating direction—a stylized flame by corridors pointing south, a spiral-filled cloud for passages pointing north, a tree shape for tunnels pointing east and a wave for tunnels tending west. Additional marks, such as the sun and moon for up and a rock shape for down, help guide the Mountain Folk in unfamiliar places. In areas frequently overrun by enemies from the Nameless Hordes, graven symbols are replaced with less obvious cues—a regular drip of water, a sound of wind over a cleft in the rock, the roaring of lava far below or a patch of phosphorescent fungus. Additional codes point the way to Jadeborn fortresses and towns, but always discreetly. Few want the Hordes knowing just where to go.

As Storyteller, you may require players to make a (Perception + Lore) roll in order for their characters to identify correct directions in a poorly marked and unfamiliar area.

## ROCK FORMATIONS

The rock beneath the Blessed Isle, and indeed all Creation, is formed of three basic types: igneous rock, which the Mountain Folk recognize as having been shaped by fire; sedimentary rock, which has distinct and observable layers within it, as a result of having been laid down in successive layers then subjected to pressure; and metamorphic rock, which is igneous or sedimentary rock that has gone through further transformation from heat and pressure.

Jadeborn Workers know that certain kinds of rock provide certain kinds of resources for their construction projects and for construction of their wondrous devices. For example, marble deposits are typically found in metamorphic rock, usually not far from places where there are already deposits of limestone, a sedimentary rock. When searching for iron ore, the Jadeborn seek out igneous rocks, knowing that it is easier to find magnetite and hematite in fire-changed rock than in sediments, though they do occur there on occasion.

The Warriors also know that their enemies are more likely to appear in certain regions. Cephalids, for instance, tend to haunt sedimentary rock formations. The Mountain Folk theorize that the cephalids have an easier time transmitting their thoughts through this sort of rock than through the denser metamorphic and igneous formations. Each of the races of the Endless Hordes has its place in the rocks, and the Warriors can often guess who is about to attack them just by studying the nearby rock walls.

The Artisans are aware of these things, of course, but they are aware of a third meaning to be found in the rocks around them. Certain kinds of stone give off an energy that is neither Essence nor Wyld, but something far different—an energy contained in these objects as a result of the mechanics of Creation. This radiation, as they have learned through diverse experiments, actually dates to the formation of Creation itself. Some Artisans seek to harness this radiant energy and turn it to new purposes. A cautious few, however, worry the energy exists as a result of something else being trapped as the Primordials willed their great mechanism into



being, just as their own Fair Folk progenitors were, and such experimentation with it might prove dangerous.

As Storyteller, you may require players to make (Wits + Investigation) rolls for their characters to identify the layers of information available to them simply by understanding the local geology.

### CAVE-INS AND SINKHOLES

When the roof of a cave or hall collapses due to loss of support, the result is a cave-in. Cave-ins can occur in any type of rock at the moment when the weight overmasters its foundation. In commonly used areas, Worker parties perform regular inspections to make sure that collapses do not occur. In particularly old and heavily used areas, scaffolding and braces support roofs and columns weakened by time. In other areas, the Warriors deliberately use cave-ins to close off corridors and reduce the risk of attack, though these cave-ins sometimes spiral out of control and destroy towns. Some Artisans have used cave-ins as particularly egregious forms of intimidation against their rivals, and at least one Artisan has been convicted of murder for engineering such a catastrophe.

The other side of a cave-in is a sinkhole, when the floor of a cave or hall collapses due to a withdrawal of support from underneath. This occurs when mines beneath the chamber are dug too rapidly or when an earthquake shifts the ground. A rapid withdrawal of water from beneath floor level can destabilize rock as well. Finally, the more intelligent of the Nameless Hordes have been known to undermine Mountain Folk settlements in order to destroy them or, in a more limited manner, to provide egress for an invasion.

Leaping to safety during a sinkhole event or a cave-in can be exhilarating and deeply frightening. As Storyteller, you may require a player to make a successful (Dexterity + Athletics) roll for her character to escape from under falling rock, while a successful (Wits + Survival) roll will allow a character to take shelter in an air pocket during a cave-in. As a sinkhole forms, a successful (Wits + Awareness) roll allows a character to shout a warning to others in the group, while a successful (Dexterity + Survival) roll will give a character a chance to leap up through several layers of collapsing earth to steady ground.

### FAULTS, FISSURES AND EARTHQUAKES

The land beneath Creation is cut and carved into huge, irregular blocks of rock that not even the Unconquered Sun could move. Between them lie faults (which lie parallel to the surface world) and fissures (which stand upright, perpendicular to the surface world). Some of these faults and fissures are wide or high enough for an army to travel within, while others are little more than crawlspaces in the bowels of the world. Many of the Mountain Folk's principal lands exist in the first and second faults below Creation's surface, but battle groups have delved as far down as the fifth fault in places and returned to tell the tale. Explorers have gone as deep as the ninth, but the tales they tell of their journeys are often too lurid to be believed.

Earthquakes and ordinary shifts of rock sometimes open new faults and fissures or close old ones. Mapping these changes is an important part of the labors of the Workers and the Warriors, for they sometimes open in the middle of the empire or divide the Jadeborn empire in pieces. The Conclave tries to plan for these events by acknowledging no territorial jurisdictions that cross a fissure or a fault, since they serve as natural barriers to political power.

A successful (Perception + Lore) roll may allow an Artisan to determine where and when a fault or fissure is due to close, with additional successes narrowing the window of time in which such an event might occur.

### WEST AND WATER

The Jadeborn Empire is a land continually shaped by water. Everywhere the drip-drip-drip of water off rock speaks to the gradual reshaping of the Mountain Folk's domain with the slow inexorable logic of erosion and accretion.

Water is as precious a resource to the Jadeborn of Aucththon as it is to surface-dwelling mortals, so they gather it by means of basins, catchments and pools. They use it to raise blind fish and to grow rice under phosphorescent fungi. In some places, the Jadeborn have built canals for transporting goods and people over long distances. In the western part of their empire, the Jadeborn have even constructed an artificial sea with islands for defense and refuge from the Endless War. Alas, the Nameless Hordes have followed them even here, and strange beasts lurk in the dark, salty water.

The Jadeborn build canalboats, barges and even rowing vessels for traveling upon these bodies of water, but they have no sailing ships. Instead, mechanical devices or Essence engines help power the boats. Operating these machines requires a successful (Wits + Sail) roll.

### SOUTH AND FIRE

Through long and expensive experience, the Mountain Folk know that open flame in their world is not a good idea. A fire can use all the breathable air in a cave if left burning long enough, and some rocks burn or melt at high temperatures, which weakens the roofs or the supports of chambers above. Jadeborn chefs use heated plates rather than open fires to cook, but even this precaution is sometimes not enough.

Another danger posed by fire involves the gases that can build up in enclosed pockets or rarely traveled passages. These flammable gases ignite in the presence of the smallest spark, and their explosive power empties hallways of air and often triggers cave-ins on those levels above the explosion. Depending on the volume of gas involved and how narrow the space in which it is contained, damage from such explosions can range from 5L to 20L, soaked normally. Roll (Perception + Survival) to notice such a pocket, and (Dexterity + Dodge) to find a sheltered spot during an explosion. Once a cave's air has detonated, most players will then have to roll (Wits + Survival) in order to avoid breathing the residue of the explosion, which is often lethal in itself.



## NORTH AND AIR

Noxious and explosive gases can build up in caverns and untraveled corridors if given the chance. The Jadeborn build vents, windcatchers and air ducts in areas where they live and work to prevent these pockets from forming, but they are common even in rural areas of their empire. The Jadeborn acknowledge three basic types of gas pocket: the silent air, which is odorless and kills those who stay in it too long; the stinking air, which smells as poisonous as it is; and the sweet air, which smells delicious and causes the Mountain Folk to grow giddy and hallucinate before they die. Both silent air and stinking air are highly flammable, while sweet air is not.

Silent air is the most dangerous. It can kill those breathing it in under 10 minutes. It builds up in low spots at different levels and lacks the power to give life in each breath. Even the Jadeborn rarely notice that they have walked into silent air until it is too late. One must make a successful (Wits

+ Survival) roll, difficulty 4, for one's character to notice silent air.

Stinking air is the second most dangerous of the three airs. It kills after only an hour of breathing it. Fortunately, it is more obvious than silent air. Only one success is needed on a (Wits + Survival) roll to become aware of its presence.

Sweet air is the least dangerous of the three. It takes the longest to kill those who breathe it. Victims begin to exhibit giddiness and exhilaration after a half-hour of constantly breathing it, and they remain in that state for a quite some time before succumbing to unconsciousness and eventual death.

## EAST AND WOOD

Even in the depths of Creation, the power of the Elemental Pole of Wood penetrates. Yet, without the Unconquered Sun, the principle of life and growth expresses itself in fungi. Huge capped mushrooms, blue lichen powered by radioactivity, and tumor-like saprophytes extend along many disused hallways and caves of the underground empire.

Name	Damage	Toxicity	Tolerance	Penalty
Silent Air	1L/minute	3L	—/—	-0
Stinking Air	1L/10 minutes	3	—/—	-1
Sweet Air	4B/half hour	3M	(Stamina)/hour	-4



The fungi of the Jadeborn's territory are relatively benign, and in fact, the Mountain Folk cultivate numerous varieties. There are some that decay limestone and certain minerals into an overly thick whiskey-like substance, toxic to humans but deliciously intoxicating to the Mountain Folk. Other types serve in place of bread and vegetables for the Jadeborn. Still other forms are rigid enough to use in place of wood or bamboo, for paneling or scaffolding.

Beyond the Jadeborn caverns, wild mushrooms are common and range from mildly toxic to inventively lethal. As a general rule, mushrooms are divided into three categories: mycorrhizoids, which are usually beneficial to the Jadeborn, either as food or medicines; saprophytes, which break down the dead—both the Nameless Hordes and the Mountain Folk alike; and parasites, which attach themselves to living beings and slowly digest them.

The breaththeft mushroom is an example of a parasitic mushroom. When stepped on or brushed against, it releases a spore cloud. When breathed in, the mushroom settles in

the lungs and propagates at a rapid rate. The Storyteller should roll (Stamina + Resistance) for the character. A simple failure results in the establishment of a colony in the character's lungs. For every month that it remains there, roll again. On a failure or a botch, reduce the character's Stamina by one dot. Once the character's Stamina reaches zero dots, the character collapses as the fruiting body of the mushroom pushes out of the mouth and nostrils. Players of other characters may roll (Wits + Medicine) for their characters to attempt to clear the mushroom from the victim's bronchial tract, lest he suffocate.

A mycorrhizoid fungus, the *izaur*, can be deliberately planted in wounds caused by befouled *hruugga* weapons. Once it spawns, the fungus draws nutrients from its host at a cost of one dot of Stamina for a week. During this time, however, the *izaur* pumps antitoxins and antibiotics into the host's body, which causes wounds to heal without risk of infection. Wounds caused by other types of Darkbrood are unaffected by the *izaur* mushroom.

#### EXPERIENCE COSTS

Trait Increase	Cost	Training Times
Craft Ability	current rating	(current rating x 3) days
Craft Specialty	2	two weeks
Essence	rating x 10	(rating x 3) months
New Path	7	(Min. Ability + Min. Essence) days
New Favored or Breed Path	6	(Min. Ability) days

**Note:** Except for those traits listed above, Mountain Folk characters increase traits at the same cost and training time as Solar Exalted do (see Exalted, p. 274, for details).

# SCROLL OF FALLEN RACES



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# SCROLL OF FALLEN RACES™

## THE DRAGON KINGS

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CHRISTINA STILES, SCOTT TAYLOR AND ANDREW WATT

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# SCROLL OF FALLEN RACES™

## THE DRAGON KINGS

### TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	4
CHAPTER ONE: THE DRAGON KINGS	7
CHAPTER TWO: CHARACTER CREATION AND TRAITS	27
CHAPTER THREE: PATHS OF DRACONIC ENLIGHTENMENT	44
CHAPTER FOUR: STORYTELLING	73



NOW WHERE ARE WE?

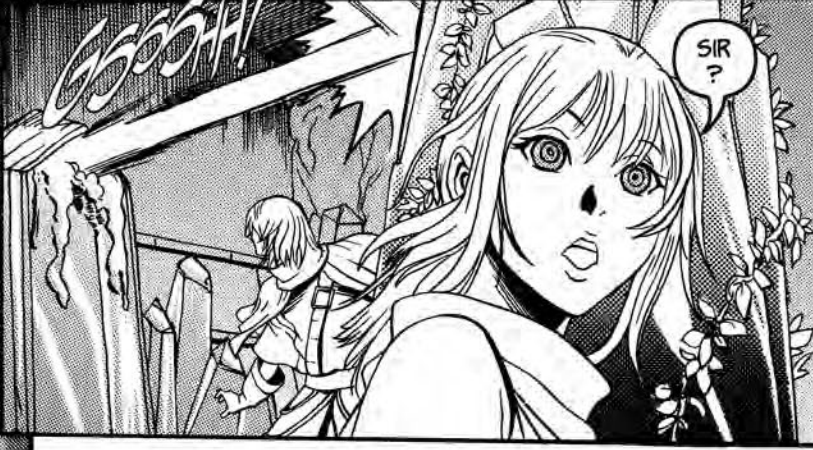
THIS CHAMBER ISN'T EVEN ON THE MAP.



INTERESTING ...



HEY, THIS IS ALL CRYSTAL UNDER HERE. HELP ME CLEAR THESE.



SIR?



WHAT... WHAT IS IT?



KERACK!



# INTRODUCTION

*The Sleestak are not my ancestors. They are the barbaric descendents of a people who could no longer keep their anger in check and eventually destroyed my time. This is not the past. This is my future.*  
—Enik, *Land of the Lost* “The Stranger”

Decimated by the events of the Primordial War, the Dragon Kings, former masters of Creation, lived on in faded glory until the dark days of the Contagion and the Fair Folk invasion that followed. Then, without their Solars patrons to save them, the race fell into bestial savagery. Perhaps the Lawgivers’ return means the salvation of this once proud people? Or maybe the Time of Tumult the return heralds signals only their death knell?

## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

**Scroll of Fallen Races—The Dragon Kings** provides the rules and background to run a game that focuses upon Dragon King characters or to design such characters as allies or antagonists for other **Exalted** games. The book’s contents are as follows:

### Chapter One: The Dragon Kings



This chapter details the history and savage society of the Dragon Kings, as well as providing an overview of its few remaining settlements and examples of the Dragon Kings’ vegetative and crystalline technologies.

### Chapter Two: Character Creation and Traits

This chapter supplies the rules you need to create a Dragon King character. Also in this chapter, you can find traits unique to Dragon King characters, as well as information on how to adjust existing traits for the Dragon Kings.

### Chapter Three: The Paths of Draconic Enlightenment

This section focuses on the mystical Paths of the Dragon Kings, which provide them with both enlightenment and power. It also reveals for the first time the Dark Paths that helped to hasten the proud race’s downfall.



## Chapter Four: Storytelling

The book's final chapter describes the special factors one must consider when Storytelling a game about the Dragon Kings.

## LEXICON

The majority of terms used in the core **Exalted** core book also apply to the Dragon Kings. The following terms, however, refer particularly to Dragon King characters and their savage milieu.

**Anklok:** A rugged, desert-dwelling breed of *Dragon King* native to Creation's South.

**crystal technology:** A peculiar form of magitechnology developed by the *Dragon Kings* centering around the growth of Essence-reactive crystals keyed to perform specific tasks.

**Dragon King:** A member of an ancient race of enlightened reptiles who ruled Creation and humankind before the advent of the Primordial War.

**Mosok:** An aquatic breed of *Dragon King* native to Creation's West.

**Path:** One of the Paths of Draconic Enlightenment that reflect a *Dragon King's* intellectual and spiritual growth as well as her degree of supernatural power. These Paths are divided into the Ten Paths of Prehuman Mastery and the five Dark Paths.

**Pterok:** A winged flying breed of *Dragon King* native to Creation's North.

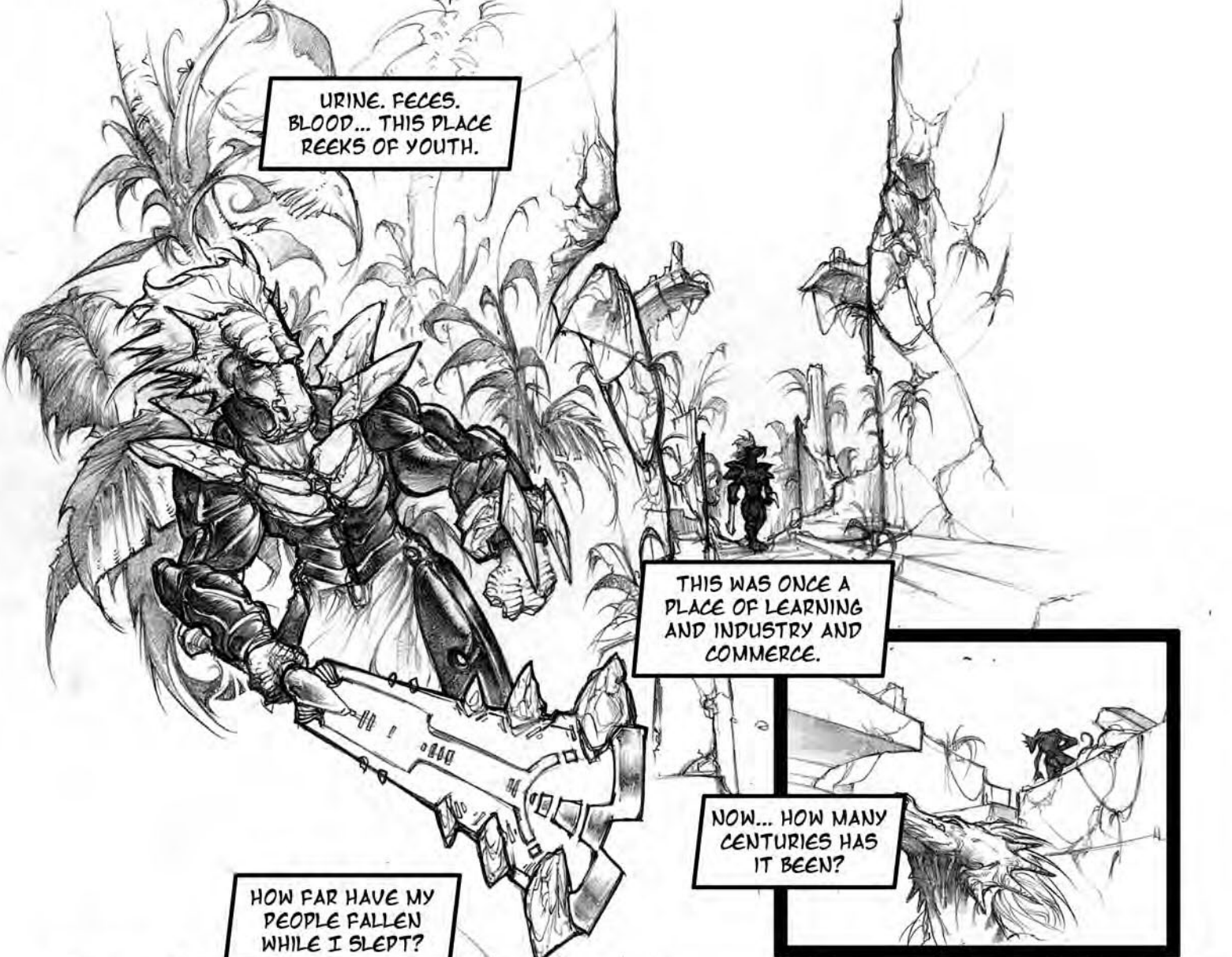
**Raptok:** A swift, lithe breed of *Dragon King* native to Creation's East.

**stalker:** A term used to describe the bestial *Raptok* who inhabit the lost city of Rathess and its environs. Likely considered derogatory by any *Raptok* with the intellect to consider such things.

**Step:** Any distinct power available to a *Dragon King* on a *Path*.

**vegetative technology:** A unique form of magitechnology developed by the *Dragon Kings* centering around the growth of Essence-reactive plants keyed to perform specific tasks.





URINE. FEACES.  
BLOOD... THIS PLACE  
REEKS OF YOUTH.

THIS WAS ONCE A  
PLACE OF LEARNING  
AND INDUSTRY AND  
COMMERCE.

NOW... HOW MANY  
CENTURIES HAS  
IT BEEN?

HOW FAR HAVE MY  
PEOPLE FALLEN  
WHILE I SLEPT?

THERE YOU ARE.

STILL AN  
ADOLESCENT.  
GOOD.

STILL YOUNG ENOUGH TO LEARN.



# CHAPTER ONE

# THE DRAGON KINGS

In the distant past, during the almost endless parade of years before the gods overthrew the Primordials, the ferocious and proud Dragon Kings were the masters of Creation. The gods created the Dragon Kings to serve and worship them, just as the Primordials created the gods as their personal servitors. The Dragon Kings were made to be especially tough and durable because Creation was newly formed and sufficiently unstable that earthquakes, volcanoes and hurricanes were all regular occurrences, and huge, deadly predators roamed the land and swam in the seas.

At the dawn of this ancient aeon, the gods inhabited the Blessed Isle, and the Primordials ruled the Celestial City of Yu-Shan. However, the rest of Creation was largely barren of intelligent life. To obtain servants and worshipers, the gods created four breeds of Dragon Kings, one to live in each of the four directions of the Threshold. The devious marine Mosok held sway over the islands and oceans of the West, the brilliant-winged Pterok controlled the icy

North, the lithe and eloquent Raptok populated the forests and jungles of the East, while the fierce and sturdy Anklok ruled the fiery South.

As one of the first experiments at creating thinking beings with purely physical bodies, the Dragon Kings were spiritually halfway between gods and mortals. Although their souls were immortal and retained within them some memories of their past lives, their bodies were mortal flesh that typically lived between 300 and 350 years. When a Dragon King died, his spirit was reborn within the egg of another of his kind. The Dragon King's personality remained intact. However, the process of rejoining a physical body stripped away most of the memories and power from this spirit. As a result, Dragon Kings were reborn as savage beasts who required special training to regain their reason and their memories. Also, even when they had regained both, they were left with only fragmentary memories from their previous lives.



## HISTORY

The Dragon Kings were the sole intelligent inhabitants of the Threshold during the savage early days of Creation. However, in time, the world became less violent and deadly, and the Primordials created humanity, both as their own experiment in crafting intelligent life and because the Dragon King population was fixed at approximately 150 million and could never exceed the total number of Dragon King spirits. The Primordials desired greater numbers of servants to do their bidding. Based on their brutal examination of the first member of the Mountain Folk, the Primordials created humanity as a species that could potentially spread across the face of Creation. Because mortals were both weaker and more numerous than the Dragon Kings, the Primordials made the Dragon Kings their overlords. In this era, the hierarchy of Creation was perfect and unchallenged. Human served Dragon King, Dragon King served god, and god served Primordial.

In the Southern deserts and savannas, the massive and dangerous Anklok stalked big game and produced mysterious stone sculptures and rock paintings at which people still marvel. Of all their kind, these Dragon Kings had the least contact with their human subjects, only rarely coming into the coastal human cities to order their subjects to raise temples or hold festivals to honor the gods. In the West, the aquatic Mosok ruled the archipelagos and the waters around them. They hunted sea dragons and other dangerous

beasts of the Western Ocean, coming ashore to command the human islanders to construct cities and erect temples. The winged Pterok were masters of the air and the North's the icy wastes. The Pterok ruled that direction from their magnificent mountain strongholds and used their human subjects as pawns in intricate games of status. It was the dense forests and jungles of the East, however, that were the heart of Dragon King civilization. Here, the tall and graceful Raptok built great cities, shaped potent magics and crafted wonders to rival the glories of Yu-Shan. The Raptok had the most contact with the humans they ruled, being the only Dragon Kings to live in the same cities as the humans. The greatest of these cities was the jungle metropolis of Rathess—capital of the Creation-spanning society of the Dragon Kings.

Humanity remained in its subordinate role for millennia, living and working in the cities of the Dragon Kings and in its own cities, which were ruled by distant Dragon Kings. Because there were more than twenty human beings for every Dragon King, the reptiles were unable to keep close track of all of their charges. Many humans fled to Creation's edges to live free but brutally savage lives. Escapees who were caught—in fact, all who offended either the laws of the gods or their reptilian masters—were sacrificed on top of the Dragon Kings' great solar pyramids. The ancient reptiles offered up the hearts of the offenders to the Unconquered Sun then devoured their bodies.



## THE WAR AGAINST THE PRIMORDIALS

Worshippers of the Unconquered Sun, the Dragon Kings were fiercely loyal to their lord. Thus, when the gods created the Exalted and warred against the Primordials, the Dragon Kings fought alongside them and helped to slay the Primordials and their allies. However, while the Primordials greatly underestimated the power of the great mass of humanity and of the newly created Exalts, they understood the danger posed by the Dragon Kings. As a result, the Primordials slaughtered the rebellious Dragon Kings by the tens of millions, using weapons that utterly destroyed both their spirits and their bodies, thus preventing their rebirth. In the course of these battles, the reptiles' numbers were reduced from more than 150 million to slightly less than 30 million.

Also, while the Dragon Kings were not particularly brutal or horrible overlords, many humans resented their rule. As a condition of their aiding the gods, humanity's leaders demanded that mortals be freed of the Dragon Kings' rule if the rebellion succeeded. However, the gods still remembered the Dragon Kings were their loyal creations and brokered powerful treaties between the Exalts and the Dragon Kings, binding each group to peace and alliance. These treaties, combined with the ferocity the Dragon Kings showed in fighting the Primordials and the sad fact that most of their number had been utterly destroyed, led previous animosity to fade, especially since both mortals and Exalts knew the greatly reduced numbers of the Dragon Kings would never again rule Creation.

After the war, the gods gave the Exalted dominion over Creation, ending the rule of the Dragon Kings forever. However, the reptiles' power was already broken. They remained valuable allies of the Solar Deliberative during the High First Age but became an increasingly isolated people who turned inward and focused on their own concerns. Because almost half of the Dragon Kings who survived the Primordial War were Raptok, Rathess became even more the center of Dragon King civilization than it had before. And for a brief time, it was also the center of human civilization, as the capital of Queen Merela's Ochre Fountain. Rathess was also home to the oldest temple to the Unconquered Sun in all Creation, the great Pyramid of the Sun. Both the city's history and its grandeur caused Rathess to remain one of the wonders of the First Age. Among the Dragon Kings, its only rival was the city of Shakanzer, located in the mountains of the South.

The Exalted regularly visited Rathess, and many became friends with Dragon Kings. Also, while most of the increasingly reclusive Dragon Kings never ventured beyond the boundaries of their own lands, in every generation perhaps one in 500 looked beyond their increasingly insular civilization. Some moved to live in mortal cities, while others became friends or allies with Exalts, elementals, god children of all sorts and even some mortals. Their unshakable ties to the Unconquered Sun caused the Dragon Kings to regard the Solar Exalted as their closest allies, and both mortal and

Dragon King storytellers told many tales about these epic friendships. Such friendships typically endured from one Dragon King lifetime to the next, and a few Solars found that their closest and most enduring friendships were with Dragon Kings.

## THE END OF THE FIRST AGE AND THE FALL OF THE DRAGON KINGS

Eventually, a combination of hubris and the Great Curse drove the Solar Exalted to terrible excesses of power and transformed many into mad and terrible warlords. The Sidereal and Terrestrial Exalted plotted against the mad Lawgivers. However, while the excesses perpetrated by their closest allies horrified the Dragon Kings, they could not bear to betray them. Their priests prayed to the Unconquered Sun for years, sacrificing themselves and many others in an effort to obtain aid or even guidance, but no answer came. When the Sidereals and their Dragon-Blooded allies acted, the Dragon Kings isolated themselves in their cities, expelling most mortals and Exalts, and attempted to ignore the horrors around them. During the Shogunate, the Dragon-Blooded and the Dragon Kings both agreed to avoid one another; thus, the Dragon Kings became almost completely isolated, withdrawing from the rest of Creation into their secluded cities and domains.

In the early days of the Contagion, a great many Dragon Kings came to blame the Dragon-Bloods' treacherous murder of the Lawgivers for the pandemic's ravages. Mobs of Dragon Kings left their cities to hunt down Terrestrial Exalts to sacrifice upon their altars in hopes of regaining the Unconquered Sun's favor and ending the dread disease. Though almost 100 Dragon-Bloods had their still-beating hearts torn from their chests in a great orgy of bloodshed, not even these offerings satisfied the Unconquered Sun, so the terrible outbreak raged on.

Eventually, the rampant Contagion, assaults by the raksha and the terror and brutality that followed in those events' wake wiped out almost the entirety of the cultured Dragon Kings. In addition, the encroaching Wyld destroyed many of their cities and shredded the souls of most of their number, reducing their maximum population to slightly less than four million Creation-wide.

The few surviving young Dragon Kings fled into the wilderness. They were left with no elders to teach them the lessons they required to regain their intellect and personalities. Instead, these so-called stalkers remained semi-sapient savages who led brief and violent lives, almost always dying before they had the chance to complete the exceedingly slow and unreliable process of regaining their intelligence without special training. A small number of Dragon Kings regained their intellects spontaneously, but the majority were slaughtered by the barbaric stalkers, and the rest were incapable of doing more than training a few of the savage stalkers and forming fleeting communities of incompletely enlightened Dragon Kings. At present, most of the extant



Dragon Kings of each breed are mindless predators. A small number of civilized Dragon King settlements exist, but either they survive only briefly or are located in distant and exceedingly remote areas of the world.

## DRAGON KINGS IN THE AGE OF SORROWS

In the present, even the savage and mindless Dragon Kings are relatively rare, with less than four million extant across Creation. Almost half are the graceful and deadly Raptok stalkers, with the remaining Dragon Kings divided between the other three breeds. Dragon Kings who live long enough to extricate themselves from the brutality of their early years are even rarer. There are fewer than 100 intelligent Raptok in the ruins of Rathess, which is home to the largest concentration of Dragon Kings in Creation. Still, intelligent Dragon Kings may also be discovered dwelling elsewhere in Creation and even in the Celestial City of Yu-Shan. However, less than one in 300 of these creatures have regained their minds, and most of these live in Yu-Shan.

Other than the Celestial gods and the subterranean Mountain Folk, both of whom retain many records of the First Age, no one except a few savants, the most educated Dynasts and Celestial Exalts who possess fragmentary memories of the First Age have any idea what the savage reptiles occasionally found in wild places actually are. In the centuries since the end of the First Age, most of the legends of the Dragon Kings have been lost. They were insular enough before the First Age ended that few ancient chronicles talked extensively of them. More importantly, the fact that they were devout worshipers of the Unconquered Sun caused the Immaculate Order to suppress all knowledge of their existence from anyone other than the Dynasts. Also, most of the exploits of the Dragon Kings who traveled beyond their lands were recorded in the writings and thought records of the Solar Exalted, most of which were destroyed in the first few decades after the Usurpation.

## PHYSIOLOGY AND LIFE CYCLE

All four breeds of the Dragon Kings are relative similar. They are all warm-blooded, egg-laying, humanoid reptiles covered with brightly colored scales and decorative feathers. They are also all ferocious and voracious predators. Raptok can eat and even enjoy plants, but even they are almost exclusively carnivorous. The members of the other breeds eat only meat.

Dragon Kings are born as savage beasts, ruled solely by the instincts of their reptilian bodies. They mature physically in only five or six years, becoming cunning and deadly predators. However, regaining even the first traces of reason requires years of special training. The Dragon Kings raised their young in spacious, well-built enclosures and walled game preserves during the First Age, where they were slowly educated through various hunting games but were not permitted to roam free because of the danger they posed to civilized beings. Following nearly a decade of special instruction by

## THE ORIGIN OF THE SLEEPERS


With both the Contagion slaying mortals, Exalts and Dragon Kings alike and the armies of the Fair Folk advancing upon Creation, some of the wisest Dragon Kings sought to preserve and rebuild their ancient civilization sometime in the future. Several hundred mature Dragon Kings retreated into specially enchanted chambers, where they lay in magical stasis. Most went to sleep in Dragon King cities, but some took themselves and their stasis chambers into various mortal cities across Creation to insure that at least some of their kind survived. Inside these chambers, the Dragon Kings didn't age, but disruptions in Essence that followed the magical catastrophes at the turning of the Age prevented most of these sleepers from waking on their own.

Some have awakened at various points since, but many chambers were looted and their occupants killed. Today, less than 200 sleepers survive. Eight lie waiting in Rathess, and similar numbers exist in First Age ruins at various points across Creation. Seven are in the heart of the most ruined portions of Chiaroscuro, and others are in a hidden vault under Nexus, a chamber in the underways of Gethamane and inside a well-fortified room in the buried First Age city of Tzatli.

The Dragon King sleepers initially intended to stay in stasis for 100 to 200 years and then to emerge to aid their kind in the rebuilding effort following the twin disasters of the Great Contagion and the Fair Folk invasion. Instead, the Dragon Kings have remained in suspended animation for many more centuries while Creation has for the most part forgotten their race as anything more than the stuff of ancient legend or as savage stalkers. While sleepers are typically outfitted with both hearthstones from carefully concealed manses and powerful artifacts, those Dragon Kings who wake in the Time of Tumult have no knowledge of the current Age and find themselves in a world that holds no place for their people.

their Dragon King elders, the adolescents' spirits reawakened, with the light of reason returning to their eyes. Much of the instruction they received involved spiritual devotions dedicated to the Unconquered Sun. Even today, the Dragon Kings believe, perhaps truthfully, that the ultimate source of their reason is the Incarna's light. At this point in their education, young Dragon Kings were moved from enclosures or game preserves into actual dwellings. Here, they were trained in the arts of civilization. One of the most serious weaknesses the Dragon Kings possess is the fact that without such training, their reason and intelligence can easily take more than two decades to reemerge.





A few years after a Dragon King regained both his reason and the power of speech, his past memories reemerged, and he took his full place in society. The totality of these memories was always fairly fragmentary—little better than those of the Celestial Exalted. Dragon Kings retained their basic personalities from one life to the next, and Dragon King society was set up to help reintegrate a new Dragon King into his old life. To the Dragon Kings, inheritance was always based on spiritual continuity and not biological parentage. The identity of who fertilized or laid a particular egg was considered of little consequence. Fortunately, identity was relatively easy to determine, since Dragon Kings always remembered their names and possessed at least vague memories of their friends, allies, rivals and enemies. In addition, an individual's likes and dislikes remained from one life to the next. The Dragon Kings felt that this constituted spiritual immortality and, therefore, felt little fear of death. Once their training was completed, Dragon Kings were generally expected to pick up their lives where they'd left off.

## DRAGON KING CIVILIZATION

Dragon Kings viewed the first few decades of their new lives as a period for growth, reflection and, most importantly, relearning both cultured wisdom and their rules of honor. The Dragon Kings believed that spending ten or more years as mindless predators helped to reacquaint them to their physical bodies and wild origins, while relearning wisdom and enlightenment gave them a new opportunity to recognize how to lead valiant and admirable lives. Reasoning that anyone who committed serious crimes had forgotten or never properly learned these necessary lessons, the Dragon Kings sacrificed their criminals to the Unconquered Sun. To the Dragon Kings, hastening a criminal's demise and reincarnation forced her to relearn these lessons and gave her a chance to rise above her previous incarnation's misdeeds. Though the Dragon Kings believed these offerings inferior to the fervent sacrifices of weary or elderly Dragon Kings, the Unconquered Sun accepted all the hearts sacrificed to him.

While the Dragon Kings ruled humankind, they also sacrificed human lawbreakers to the Unconquered Sun. During the time of the Solar Deliberative, this practice ceased. On rare occasions, however, the Chosen of the Sun agreed that humans who committed egregious crimes against the Dragon Kings should be put to death in this manner to atone for their crimes. However, the Lawgivers only permitted the worst human offenders to be sacrificed by the Dragon Kings in this manner.

However, criminals were not their only, or even their preferred, sacrifices. The carnivorous Dragon Kings offered the hearts of living animals to the Unconquered Sun and, not infrequently, their own hearts as well. Death was never something simply accepted by the Dragon Kings. They viewed it as a denouement to the chapters of their immortal existences and preferred to meet it on their own terms. Though some arranged to meet their end hunting dangerous beasts

or carrying out some feat of derring-do, many Dragon Kings nearing the end of their lives offered up their own hearts to the Unconquered Sun, asking the priests to make their deaths holy offerings to their god.

The Dragon Kings met other forms of death equally freely. Dueling was an accepted method of arbitrating disputes, and while most ended at first blood, duels to the death were not uncommon. However, the Dragon Kings considered the death of one of the combatants a minor misfortune at most because any Dragon King who died thus would soon be reborn. As a result, some Dragon Kings fought duels over even minor slights. In addition to being naturally more aggressive than human beings, Dragon Kings were often more worried about their honor than their own survival. Being creatures of abiding passion, Dragon Kings' love, and their hate, often endured from one incarnation to the next, even if the basis for those emotions no longer existed. To prevent feuds between rivals from becoming literally endless, the reptiles developed an elaborate code of honor and dueling, as well as complex religious codes, to govern their behavior.

## RELIGION

First and foremost, the Dragon Kings worshiped the Unconquered Sun. While they also honored a host of other, lesser gods, the Sun was the center of their world and the heart of their faith. Every dawn, there were worship services atop the Pyramid of the Rising Sun in their capital city of Rathess and at similar temples in all of their other cities and settlements.

However, while the Dragon Kings worshiped the Unconquered Sun as their patron and protector, they also regularly dealt with a host of lesser spirits. In addition to summoning elementals, they also regarded spirit possession as a perfectly natural and, in fact, heroic practice. Beings chosen as a vessel by a god, especially if the spirit was one the Dragon King had a natural affinity with, was a great honor that few Dragon Kings refused and many actively sought. There were hundreds of Dragon King sagas and praise-songs about the heroic deeds performed by Dragon Kings seeking to attract the notice of a powerful god and persuade it to possess them.

Dragon Kings looked upon those possessed by the gods with wonder and admiration, referring to them by several names, the most common of which was *olchilik*, or "the Chosen," an expression used later by men to describe the Exalted. Dragon Kings viewed the *olchiliké* in much the same way humans viewed the Exalted. However, the Dragon Kings did not see either the *olchiliké* (or even the Exalted) as intrinsically superior to other beings. Though they often enjoyed great privileges, those possessed were not considered to be of some higher caste, and they did not regard themselves as grander beings. Since a spirit could—and often did—withdraw its power from its host, few looked upon the Chosen as godlike or even semi-divine, despite their great powers. The Dragon Kings understood the gods could ride anyone, and becoming an *olchilik* was sometimes based on a god's self-interest rather than the fitness of its host.

However, the *olchiliké* did command the Dragon Kings, much as the Exalts did their people elsewhere in Creation. The *olchiliké* were the reptiles' warlords, savants, sorcerers and high priests. The Chosen were slightly rarer among the Dragon Kings than the Dragon-Blooded were among the humans, and *olchiliké* were often somewhat removed from daily life because of their close connection to the lives and concerns of the gods. The greatest of the possessed wielded powers equal to or, on rare occasions, superior to the weakest Celestial Exalted, and fear of the numerous Chosen was one of the reasons the Primordials attacked the Dragon Kings so viciously during the Primordial War. However, even the mightiest of the Chosen could never match the power of a mature Celestial Exalt, and during the time of the Solar Deliberative, the prowess of the *olchiliké* was eclipsed by the vast power of Creation's new sovereigns.

## THE CITIES AND SETTLEMENTS OF THE DRAGON KINGS


Most Dragon King settlements were either overrun by the Wyld at the end of the First Age or abandoned and destroyed over the centuries since. Most now exist only as scattered bits of rubble of use to no one but the most dedicated and detail-oriented savants. However, a few of the Dragon Kings' greatest metropolises still exist. Almost all are at least partially in ruins, but in some, the Dragon Kings' durable buildings still stand, and the Essence technologies that once powered them still function. The most famous of these ancient settlements is the glorious city of Rathess. However, a handful of other cities also survive, both inside Creation and beyond its boundaries.

### RATHESS

During the First Age, Rathess was home to more than five million Dragon Kings and was the center of their civilization. At this time, this glorious metropolis was built in the form of a perfect circle surrounded by acres of elaborately manicured jungle gardens. Today, this city has literally become part of the jungle. The outermost buildings are now completely overgrown, and lianas and low jungle foliage have spread throughout the city. However, even the verdant Southeastern jungle cannot obscure the grandeur of the city's most impressive and famous street, the Way of the Pyramids. This vast boulevard is 30 yards wide and made of black stone veined with shining gold. It runs through the city's center, stretching from the Pyramid of the Dawn in the eastern edge of the city to the Pyramid of Sunset at the city's western border. Although each of these magnificent structures stands 500 yards tall, both are dwarfed by the enormous Pyramid of the Sun that stands in the center of this city. This edifice is the highest point in the city, with a peak 700 yards high. The Way of the Pyramids divides and encircles the Pyramid of the Sun with a circular road 20 yards wide that joins back with the straight road on the other side.



Exalts



The entire way shines in the sun during the day, and the road's golden veins blaze dimly at night, providing more light than the full moon does to anyone on or close to this magnificent thoroughfare. The Way of the Pyramids is the only external portion of the city where the old enchantments still guard the paving stones from erosion and overgrowth. Not even moss grows between the enormous four-sided stones, and they all shine as brilliantly as when they were first set.

Radiating outward from the Pyramid of the Sun, which sits in the exact center of this circular metropolis, are six other roads, each 15 yards wide. Three lie on either side of the Way of Pyramids. Each is constructed from a different color of granite or basalt, and all are in excellent shape, though obviously worn and weathered. Between these roads and the Way of Pyramids, Rathess is divided into eight sections of equal size. Six of these were for the use of the terrestrial Dragon Kings, a seventh has canals that connect to nearby Lake Therak instead of streets and was built for the aquatic Mosok, while the eighth, located just to the south of the western portion of the Way of Pyramids, was designed specifically for the use of mortals and Exalts.

## SHAKANZER

During the First Age, the second great Dragon King metropolis was Shakanzer, located in the mountains separating the East from the South, 1,500 miles south-southeast of the Varangian city of Kirighast. Here, more than four million Dragon Kings of all breeds once lived amidst architecture that appeared more rough-hewn than the smoothly polished beauty of Rathess but was equally huge and impressive. Today, Shakanzer is known only to a handful of explorers who have dared the peaks of Far Southern mountains, and even these daring souls regard it as an unattainable mystery.

During the Balorian Crusade that ended the First Age, waves of the Wyld reached forth to cover much of the outer portions of Creation. Most of the southern half of Shakanzer and its inhabitants were instantly dissolved into Wyld-torn chaos. Then, one of the surviving Dragon King technicians managed to connect the city's weatherproof Essence dome to a small reality engine and channel most of the power of the city's central manse into this jury-rigged device. The result created a permanent dome of solid Essence over the entire city-- including the area transformed by the Wyld-- protecting the still-solid portions of the city from the Wyld's ravages.

When the Scarlet Empress used the Realm Defense Grid to force back the Wyld, this Essence dome also protected the Wyld zone covering the southern half of the city from being forcibly stabilized. The energies of the Essence dome have very gradually stabilized the Wyld zone, but even today, almost 10 square miles of the southernmost portion of Shakanzer remain an area of the Middlemarches.

As the edges of this Wyld zone have gradually retreated, it has left behind a tainted region consisting of a swirl of half-melted city made from colored glass, living plants and other less durable materials. Most of these remains have de-

cayed into oddly colored rubble, but some remnants survive, including the forms of Dragon Kings suddenly transformed into multicolored glass. This area also contains a few dwelling towers transformed into solid glass blocks that all appear half-melted. In addition, some Dragon King buildings once made of stone now exist as constructs of living, but utterly alien and often carnivorous, vegetation that takes the rough form of those buildings.

The northern half of the city was spared from the corruption of the Wyld, but the Essence dome proved impossible to turn off and creatures spawned by the Wyld zone soon killed off the few surviving civilized Dragon Kings. Today, the entire city sits under a dome of solid Essence eleven miles in diameter. Creatures spawned from the Wyld zone roam the city, as do the savage descendents of the Anklok, Pterok and Raptok who still survive within the dome. None of the Dragon Kings that now inhabit Shakanzer are anything more than savage beasts living amidst the ruins of their ancestors' glory. The savage Dragon Kings strictly avoid the Wyld zone and kill any of their number afflicted by Wyld mutations. These exceptionally cunning hunters also regularly battle the monsters that venture forth from the city's Wyld zone. Over the centuries, the Wyld-born creatures have come close to wiping out the Dragon Kings, and occasionally, the Dragon Kings have killed off all mutants and Wyld-spawn existing outside the Wyld zone, but the battles still continue.

The Essence dome surrounding the city has protected it from the ravages of age and the elements. A third of the underways and dwelling towers in Shakanzer are sealed and intact and have not been used since the First Age. Anyone who made their way into these structures would find them fully functional and, in many cases, stocked with a wealth of minor artifacts. In addition, 46 ancient Dragon Kings (including Anklok, Pterok and Raptok) sleep in stasis chambers in one room of the sealed portion of this city's underways, waiting for some disturbance or visitor to revive them.

Unfortunately for an outsider, gaining access to the city is nearly impossible. The only way to dispel the protective Essence dome is either to use some vastly powerful Essence weapon, which might well destroy the structures and beings within, or to use powerful sorcery. Celestial Circle Countermagic directed at the Essence dome would open a hole that is as many yards across as the sorcerer's permanent Essence. This hole remains for one scene, after which it closes, leaving the dome as solid as before. Actually removing the Essence dome requires Solar Circle Countermagic, which would instantly and harmlessly dispel the entire dome. However, only the recently returned Lawgivers, who have not yet discovered Shakanzer, can use such magic. The few Sidereals and Lunars who know about Shakanzer have not yet had any reason to breach the dome, so the city has remained sealed and filled with both treasures and deadly dangers. Anyone venturing inside must face savage Dragon Kings as well as a host of deadly Wyld mutants and strange composite beasts spawned in the Wyld.



## SSAANETH

In the depths of the Southwestern jungles, south of An-Teng, lies a relatively large, partially ruined Dragon King city. During the First Age, the Dragon Kings of Ssaaneth had little contact with the Solar Deliberative, so by the late Shogunate, its existence was lost to the outside world. The only references to it can be found in Rathess or in a few ancient texts and thought records that survive in various libraries and First Age ruins. However, most of this city still looks much as it did during the First Age.

Two hundred miles north of Ssaaneth lies the Domain of the Serpents Who Walk as Men, where a breed of serpent beastmen have interbred with the local mortals sufficiently to appear as mortals with the eyes of serpents as well as scales along their cheeks, the backs of their arms and the sides of their legs. Ssaaneth itself is home to the purebred serpent beastmen (see **The Book of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. III—The East**, pp. 152-153) relatives of the half-breeds of the nearby domain. Although the Lunar who created these beastmen apparently died during the fall of the First Age, a few of her serpent beastmen survived and have since thrived.

The purebred serpent beastmen living in Ssaaneth believe it to have been built and inhabited by their ancestors. More than one in 10 of these beastmen have enlightened Essence and have learned to tend and use the Dragon Kings' various crystal and vegetative technologies. The beastmen live in this city worshiping both Luna and the Unconquered Sun and have no idea that this city was once home to an entirely unrelated breed of intelligent reptile.

Today, these beastmen speak and read High Holy Speech, wield swordsticks and throwing blades and use many other of the simpler Dragon King wonders. They assume the reason they look different from the statues and carvings of the Dragon Kings is that they suffered some degeneration during the close of the First Age, which is also why the swimming and flying breeds of their kind have vanished. Meanwhile, the bestial descendents of the actual Dragon Kings dwell in the nearby wilderness. Mosok inhabit the river that runs past Ssaaneth, Raptok roam the surrounding jungles, and small bands of both Anklok and Pterok live in the nearby mountains located to the east of this city. Almost two-thirds of Ssaaneth lies in ruins, but the rubble has been diligently cleaned, and the remaining third is home to almost 4,000 beastmen. The rulers of the Domain of the Serpents Who Walk as Men know about Ssaaneth, and a few discreet traders from this land regularly do business with the beastmen living there. However, the rulers of the Domain keep the existence and location of this city a secret to everyone they do not trust.

## LOST KHRYAL

Only a few hundred miles from Rathess, deep in the Middlemarches of the Southeastern Wyld, lies the ancient Dragon King citadel of Khryal. Although the surrounding regions were devoured by the Wyld centuries ago, this city

contains functional reality engines that keep the Wyld at bay, and the city looking much as it did during the First Age. However, the last true Dragon King living there died a few years after the end of the Balorian Crusade.

Today, Khryal appears to be a thriving community of more than 400 Dragon Kings living and working as they did in the days of the First Age. The crystal lights and water vines work perfectly, the streets are bustling with Dragon Kings dressing in all manner of exotic finery, and all of the buildings and their fittings are in immaculate condition. In reality, however, this city has been invaded by shapechanging members of the Fair Folk, who must ape the Dragon Kings forms and lives in order to usurp its powers.

Before the arrival of the Fair Folk, the city's reality engines caused the surrounding portions of the Wyld to shift randomly and swiftly between Creation and Pure Chaos, producing large-scale Wyld storms that endangered the local Fair Folk. These Fair Folk eventually organized an expedition into the heart of this deadly Wyld storm and discovered Khryal and its reality engines. After lengthy exploration, they discovered that they could gain limited control of these reality engines by transforming themselves into duplicates of the Dragon Kings. For the last 200 years, these Fair Folk have lived in Khryal, keeping the reality engines under control. They find the radiations produced by these devices intoxicating and also hope to understand them and build similar devices that can infect portions of Creation with the Wyld's chaotic energies.


These Fair Folk are not used to visitors from Creation and are none too happy to see anyone traveling to this city. However, many of these Fair Folk are exceedingly caught up in their roles as ancient and powerful Dragon Kings and are reluctant to break character even if there is no reason not to. Also, having them revealed as what they are inside the city limits causes all of the wonders of the city to go dormant for at least a month and could very easily result in the city's Essence-powered defenses being turned against them.

Because of the unique nature of the city and its reality engines, the illusions disguising the Fair Folk are considerably more durable and convincing than ordinary Fair Folk glamour and, within Khryal, these illusions are immune to the touch of cold iron. The Fair Folk inhabiting Khryal will attempt either to encourage any visitors from Creation to leave as rapidly as possible or to capture and devour them.

## CHARACTERISTICS OF DRAGON KING CITIES

While Rathess was always the greatest of the Dragon Kings' metropolises, all of their cities share many features in common, and the following descriptions apply both to Rathess and all other ruined Dragon King cities. The most obvious difference between Dragon King and mortal cities is a disturbing lack of right angles. Rather, gentle curvatures and 60- or 120-degree angles predominate. In addition, most structures possess unremarkable floors and ceilings, but their walls are invariably decorated with either striking mosaics





or ornate reliefs. In or near homes or places of business, these works of art typically comprise intricate circular or hexagonal spirals or other similar patterns. In public areas, however, especially in close proximity to a city's temples, the artwork portrays scenes from Dragon King history. Such scenes feature wild and dangerous hunts, epic conflicts and sacred rites, including the offering of still-beating hearts to the Unconquered Sun.

However, there are other more subtle and pervasive differences that cause every Dragon King settlement to feel indefinably alien to all human visitors. Stairs are spaced too far for comfort, and ramps are used instead in many places. Doors and ceilings are higher than normal, and furnishings have odd grooves designed to accommodate Dragon King tails. In addition, the glow crystals that light the darker portions of Dragon King cities are all somewhat redder than is comfortable to human sensibilities.

### THE DWELLING TOWERS

In addition to the pyramid temples, the above-ground sections of all Dragon King cities always contain a large number of dwelling towers. During the First Age, these structures contained the apartments and villas of the Dragon Kings. These impressive edifices all possess large windows of shining quartz, and most are straight-sided and triangular or hexagonal in cross-section. The majority are between 25 and 40 yards across at their base and between 100 and 300

yards tall. Their walls are made of brightly colored stone, and the structure of all Dragon King towers is reinforced with potent enchantments. Lacking powerful artifacts or equally impressive Charms or sorcery, the only way into a sealed tower is to find the entrances located in the lower levels of that city's underways.

On the inside, all of these towers are very similar. Each level is three yards tall. On most levels, spacious apartments line the exterior, while the tower's center is a large open plaza filled with various furnishings to make it a comfortable gathering place. In one corner of the central area is a space containing three to five lift tubes (see p. 22) and a spiral ramp for those who would rather walk up or down the height of their dwelling tower than take a tube. On some levels, rather than a central meeting area, there is a two-yard-wide semicircular hallway in from the lift tubes. The remainder of the level is filled with one to three large apartment villas for the Dragon King elite. Levels consisting of a few large apartment villas are frequently found near the apex of dwelling towers.

### THE UNDERWAYS

Many of the most important and vital portions of Rathess and the other Dragon King cities were located underground. Although the reptiles favored living under the light of the sun, the Dragon Kings considered trade, industry and the majority of secular activities too profane to conduct in the light of the Unconquered Sun. Thus, the Dragon Kings





placed those portions of their cities devoted to such activities beneath the temples, arenas and dwelling towers that compose the surface of the cities. Also, Dragon Kings were most active in the morning and at twilight, as they found the sunlight of the day's height overly relaxing. To them, the dimmer light of the underways was far more conducive to the practical activities of daily life.

The underways of the Dragon King cities once housed all of the businesses, bistros, bureaucratic offices, surgeons, schools and manufactories that kept these cities running. Portions of the underways were also inhabited by those Dragon Kings who were so devoted to their work that they avoided the drowsy sunlight except to attend religious festivals. The reptiles' savage young were often kept in secure enclosures in the underways until they were considered civilized enough to roam freely through the cities.

Most cities contained underways composed of at least half a dozen levels and sometimes twice that many. The higher levels were mainly devoted to businesses and similar public areas, while more vital and secretive activities took place far underground. As various explorers have noted, the arsenals, thaumaturgical workshops and similar locales of great significance and worth in Dragon King cities are usually found in the underways' lowest levels.

Regardless of the level, the underways are all fundamentally alike. They mostly consist of corridors that are three yards tall and between six and 15 yards wide, with entryways and large recesses set on either side. Unlike those of human construction, these corridors wind sinuously through the earth in a series of gentle S-curves. As a result, even in places where the ancient glow crystals still function, it is not possible to see more than 30 yards down any corridor. The curves block out longer lines of sight. Such corridors never branch nor divide, but they often lie parallel to one another, and occasionally there are semicircular side corridors, between four and six yards wide, that connect the various main corridors. In places, the parallel corridors emerge into enormous underground rooms, which can be up to 1,000 yards wide. These rooms served multiple purposes. Some were huge libraries, others were educational facilities, courts or vast public mud baths that, in the more functional cities, are often still filled with hundreds of steaming mud pools. However, many of these areas were used for reptilian activities beyond the comprehension of human beings.

The strangest of the various underways chambers are large open spaces known to savant and scavenger lord alike as maze plazas. These underground structures are typically hexagonal in shape, stretching 900 yards across with ceilings 20 yards high. Inside these spaces are a series of roofless interconnected rooms. Each room in a maze plaza is also hexagonal and between 15 and 40 yards across. These rooms are joined together without corridors or passageways. In portions of a plaza, the paths through these rooms are complex and maze-like. In other sections, it is a simple matter to walk from one side of the plaza to the other. In all portions of the

### THE TUBE CAR TRANSPORT SYSTEM

In all large Dragon King cities, the underways also included a public transport system. Paralleling all of the major corridors were tubes four yards in diameter with passages that connected them to the main corridor every quarter mile. The cars that travel through these tubes are simpler variants of the globes of transport (see p. 26). When someone approaches the entrance to a tube, an orange-sized green crystal drops down from a concealed storage space and forms a bubble of solid Essence with an opening in the side. The basic cars are spherical and can hold up to three Dragon Kings or four mortals. Each car is designed to be operated by a single occupant, who must touch the green crystal floating in the center of the car and name her destination in High Holy Speech. The operator can also open and close the tube car's door and, if she expends a mote of Essence, cause the car to expand into a round-ended cylinder that can hold up to 10 Dragon Kings or 14 mortals. These tube cars are powered by the transport system and do not require the operator to expend any Essence.


maze plaza, the walls themselves are always of black basalt two yards thick, 10 yards high and flat on top.

These maze plazas were originally fashioned to hold various forms of entertainment. Some rooms once contained crystalline mechanisms that could produce temporary constructs of solid Essence that Dragon Kings could test their strength and skill against. Others were gardens for meditation or locations for observing or even confronting deadly wildlife. Even today, in the intact maze plazas of Rathess, a fourth of the larger rooms contain gardens filled with exotic plants and animals. Some are from distant lands, while others are from no place now known. Few of these animals willingly leave their enclosures, though they may be carried out by outsiders. All are nourished by some unknown means, but most of the carnivores are more than willing to attempt to sample fresh meat if it is available to them.

### FEATURES FOR DIFFERENT BREEDS OF DRAGON KINGS

Most surviving Dragon King cities were designed primarily for the most human-like of the Dragon Kings, the lithe Raptok. However, portions of all ancient Dragon King cities were specifically designed for the other breeds of Dragon Kings, and some cities were primarily designed for other breeds. The following are some of the differences found in settlements or portions of settlements specifically designed for these creatures.

**Anklok:** Regions designed for the hulking Anklok are relatively similar to those for the Raptok. The primary differences is that doors are wider, indoor temperatures are



both somewhat higher and less carefully regulated, and less effort is made to smooth off the rough edges or surfaces of walls or utilitarian objects. The Anklok are heavily armored creatures who find the scrape of rough stone on their armored hides pleasant. Also, in warm and dry climates, Anklok dwellings are often built so that they are perpetually open to the elements. They frequently contain large unglazed windows. These structures also contain fewer stairs and ramps and more Essence powered lifts, since the Anklok do not enjoy climbing. Also, while the doors of almost all Dragon King settlements are made large enough to accommodate their large bodies, in cities or neighborhoods specifically designed for the Anklok, doors and corridors are wider still, giving these creatures sufficient room to feel comfortable. Objects and furnishing made for Anklok also tend to be large, blocky and somewhat crude in appearance, and the breed generally prefers to use crystal technology rather than vegetative technology.

**Mosok:** Portions of a city designed for the Mosok are the most obvious. Mosok neighborhoods always adjoin some sort of water source and have canals and waterways instead of roads. The apartments in Mosok dwelling towers always contain large pools as well as the ordinary furnishings found in Raptok dwellings. Underways in areas designed for the Mosok are especially challenging to explore because much of them consist of passages between 10 and 20 yards in diameter that are usually filled to within two or three yards of the top with water. Dragon King Essence technologies keep this water as fresh and pure as the water found in most swiftly flowing rivers. Portions of Mosok underways are completely above water, especially most workshops and similar locations that needed to remain dry. However, if there is no reason to do otherwise, most areas designed for the Mosok allow for them to swim or lounge in the water.

**Pterok:** The Pterok greatly prefer flying to walking, and structures designed for their use were built accordingly. Every floor, and often every apartment in a Pterok dwelling tower has a large balcony suitable for landing on. The roofs of all buildings designed for the Pterok are flat and are also designed for landing upon. There is rarely more than a single lift tube in any Pterok dwelling tower, existing only for visitors and the elderly or infirm. Similarly, all corridors are relatively short, and even in the underways, there are large open spaces suitable for flying or at least gliding. Also, in areas inhabited by the Pterok, all furnishing and utilitarian objects have exceptionally clean and elegant lines, rooms are especially large, and large windows are very common, since Pterok do not enjoy feeling confined.

## THE HUMAN NEIGHBORHOODS

One-eighth of Rathess and similar portions of several other Dragon King cities were specifically designed for human habitation. Like the rest of these cities, these neighborhoods contain a forest of tall towers, but these towers are almost always square, rectangular or, on rare occasions, circular in cross section and set on a grid plan of right-angled streets. In

form, almost all of these areas resemble somewhat less ornate versions of the glass towers found in the cities of Chiaroscuro or Tzatli. While most contain some crystal and vegetative technologies, they have usually been somewhat hidden, and human-designed Essence technologies are also used.

## DRAGON KING SETTLEMENTS IN THE AGE OF SORROWS

The vast majority of the almost four million Dragon Kings now living in Creation are members of packs of feral and mindless young Dragon Kings that live as savage beasts who die before they manage to regain their sentience. Hunting packs containing up to several dozen Dragon Kings can be found swimming the Southwestern seas, running across the Southeastern savannas or through the Eastern jungles, or flying the skies of the North. Mortals and Dragon-Bloods regard these creatures as nothing more than slightly more cunning relatives of the claw strider or the river dragon, and no one but a few savants has any idea that these beasts are the descendents of the legendary Dragon Kings.

Small pockets of civilized Dragon Kings remain in various isolated locations, but in the Age of Sorrows, less than one in 300 Dragon Kings has regained its mind, and many of those now live in Yu-Shan. These civilized communities are more isolated and far rarer than the bands of feral Dragon Kings. The following examples are not the only such communities, but they are among the largest and most enduring. Although no one knows this yet, Dragon Kings have recently been spontaneously regaining their intelligence more easily, a fact that is likely related to the recent return of the Solar Exalted.

**The Tribe of the Eastern Tower:** Living in and around one of Rathess's intact dwelling towers, there is a single enclave of slightly more than 100 Dragon Kings that have slowly and painfully regained their minds. These semi-savage Dragon Kings command an unusual amount of power because they have also made deals with several of the powerful gods that still inhabit Rathess.

These Dragon Kings are not inherently hostile to humans like their more savage stalker kin. The wisest and most powerful possess memories of the First Age and remember working side-by-side with both mortals and Exalts. However, these reptiles have learned a hard lesson about the Age of Sorrows—the old ways cannot be trusted and neither can mortals or Exalts. Eager human hunters and Dragon-Blooded explorers alike have killed several members of this tribe. As no outsider realizes that any of the remaining Dragon Kings are anything other than dangerous beasts, anyone encountering this tribe will have no reason to suspect that they haven't simply run across another group of cannibalistic reptilian savages.

These Dragon Kings are working hard to regain their lost knowledge and have already learned to cultivate and use some of the vegetative technology that still grows wild in and around Rathess. However, their numbers are few, and

they face great obstacles. Members of this tribe are killed or injured on a regular basis, and it takes years to forcibly train one of the savage stalkers so that it begins to regain a portion of its lost intellect and memories.

### EASTERN TOWER WAR BAND

**Description:** A band of intelligent Raptok warriors who search Rathess for useful artifacts and defend their territory from savage members of their kind as well as hobgoblins and other foes.

**Commanding Officer:** Mirror Snake

**Armor Color:** Green scales and golden green armor

**Motto:** "For Rathess!"

**General Makeup:** 30 Raptok warriors with leaf armor, swordsticks and throwing blades.

**Overall Quality:** Good

**Magnitude:** 2

**Drill:** 1

**Close Combat Attack:** 4

**Close Combat Damage:** 4

**Ranged Attack:** 4      **Ranged Damage:** 3

**Endurance:** 6    **Might:** 3    **Armor:** 3    **Morale:** 3

**Formation:** The members of this war band are fierce and powerful but not particularly disciplined. They fight as a deadly but unordered mob who defend one another but use no sophisticated tactics.

**The Black Crag Mountains:** The ledges and small caves found on the frigid peaks of these mountains west of Gethamane are home to a tribe of 150 or more savage Pterok. Though they prey primarily on wandering herds of reindeer, elk and mammoth, these Dragon Kings also occasionally attack small groups of human travelers. Sometimes, during particularly lean years, several dozen Pterok swoop down upon a Guild caravan or a migrating tribe of icewalkers. Others go after Haslanti air boats passing through the area. The danger these Pterok pose requires that air boats traveling to Gethamane be equipped with siege crossbows or heavy ballistae so that they might defend themselves against these aerial menaces. A small number of these Pterok have regained their intellects and now rule this tribe. They have little interest in helping the others regain their minds, however. These enlightened Pterok rule their savage brethren and regard other intelligent Pterok as possible threats. However, a pair of Pterok from this aerie have recently decided to leave the harsh and savage life of the Black Crag Mountains far behind and seek their fortunes elsewhere.

**Vesathar Valley:** One of the largest and most successful of the surviving Dragon King settlements is in the

Far Northeast, 2,700 miles northwest of the Haltan city of Chanta and 250 miles north of the Haslanti city of Crystal, in a remote mountain valley located high in a small but steep mountain range. Roughly 600 enlightened Pterok and 400 enlightened Raptok live and work there alongside more than 5,000 humans. While those who dwell there retain no more



than legends about the First Age, the Dragon Kings have maintained some remnants of the old Dragon King civilization. They produce some of the more mundane forms of vegetative technology in crystalline hothouses, and they excel at crystal technology production. The Vesathar Valley's human inhabitants allow themselves to be ruled by these Dragon Kings, whom they worship as benevolent demigods specially blessed by the Unconquered Sun.

By First Age standards, the valley is poor and backward. However, life there is relatively peaceful, and the magics of the Dragon Kings allow the people to prosper there despite the harsh environment. The valley is bounded by high mountains, and adventurers exploring the world outside Vesathar Valley either never come back or return with tales of savage barbarians twisted by the Wyld and hostile tribes of icewalkers. However, an expedition recently spotted a Haslanti air boat, which was exploring the lands east of Crystal. As some of the valley's Dragon Kings possess fleeting recollections of the First Age's great skyships, they are now equipping a small team of Raptok and Pterok to journey southwest in order to see if they can discover the source of this craft.

**Mount Eledath:** This great conical mountain located halfway between Rathess and the Varang city of Kirighast is an extinct volcano rising almost four miles above the surrounding jungle and possessing a caldera more than two miles across. This caldera is home to a wide variety of exotic plants and animals, including examples of First Age flora and fauna now extinct in the rest of Creation. Savage tribes of Anklok and Raptok have inhabited this caldera for hundreds of years. They lived as animals, knowing neither reason nor their people's storied history. The two tribes, each one consisting of a few hundred Dragon Kings, fought a seemingly endless series of deadly battles against each other. The Raptok dwelled in the dense jungle at the caldera's bottom, and the Anklok dwelled in the rocky terrain near the caldera's walls. This all changed a few years back, however, when more than a dozen Dragon Kings within both tribes unexpectedly regained their intellects.



Now, a few dozen Dragon Kings of both breeds have regained their intelligence and fragmentary memories, and they are educating others. The enlightened Dragon Kings have enforced a fragile peace on their brutish brethren. They still fight but in a more restricted manner. Duels have replaced open warfare, although many of these duels still end in death. As the leaders recollect additional fragments of their former lives, they become increasingly ambitious, and if they can successfully aid more Dragon Kings to regain their minds, they will begin to explore and spread out beyond their isolated home.

Their efforts have recently been aided by the fact that Mountain Folk from the subterranean Jadeborn city of Dihak have contacted these intelligent Dragon Kings and begun to trade with them. Because the Mountain Folk were especially interested in their vegetative technology, the Dragon Kings of Eledath have begun cultivating and learning to use the various altered plants that had been growing wild around them for centuries. In return for goods made from these plants, the Dragon Kings gain weapons and other wonders from the Jadeborn.

**The Glitter-Flame Desert:** A large rocky desert containing several dozen small oases lies 700 miles south of Chiaroscuro. Bounded to the north by low, rocky hills and to the west by endless lines of sand dunes, the Glitter-Flame Desert is home to more than 200 savage and mindless Anklok. These bestial reptiles mostly subsist upon the rugged wild goats

with which they share this harsh landscape, but they supplement their diet by preying on the barbaric Dune People who dwell under the nearby sand dunes. Wise travelers know to steer clear of this area, for fear of both the Dune People and the Anklok, as either are happy to consume those who wander into their territory. Only a handful of the armored reptiles have regained their intellect, and these lord over their savage brethren. An Anklok who regains his mind must normally either defeat one of his rulers in single combat or die trying. However, a few manage to conceal their intelligence and flee this bleak and brutal place to seek other, less savage lands. Since the numbers of these Anklok who regain their minds has increased slightly, some of these creatures will likely soon wander into Chiaroscuro or some other nearby city.

**Scale Crest Island:** In the oceans of the Southwest, 1,100 miles south of the Wavecrest Archipelago, sits an isolated jungle island covering 160 square miles. The coastal regions of the island are controlled by a tribe of almost 300 intelligent Mosok, who rule more than 2,000 human savages who fish the seas and gather food from the coastal forests. The island's interior is separated from the coast by a series of low but jagged cliffs. The vast jungle of the interior is controlled by 150 or so intelligent and civilized Anklok, who rule almost 5,000 especially fearsome mortal barbarians. These two peoples largely avoid one another, but there are occasional raids as well as limited and highly ritualized trade.



The center of this island is a shallow and long-dormant volcanic crater five miles across. This valley is inhabited by tyrant lizards, river dragons and other giant reptiles, as well as a 30-foot-tall First Age automaton resembling an enormous warstrider. The Dragon Kings and their human subjects wisely avoid this valley. To defend their human subjects and themselves from these creatures, the Anklok constructed huge palisades of living trees with animate gates to stop any of the monstrous animals from leaving their volcanic valley. Both the coastal and interior barbarians who inhabit Scale Crest Island worship their Dragon Kings as gods, and the Dragon Kings themselves regularly sacrifice criminals and prisoners of war by tearing out their still-beating hearts and offering them up to the Unconquered Sun.

**Scag:** Almost 2,000 miles due west of Azure lies the barren isle of Scag. This island is located so far in the West that both soil and vegetation are rare. As a result, only pirates or Wyld barbarians who can breathe underwater visit this desolate island and its neighbors. Regardless, Scag is now one of the greatest assets of a band of Coral pirates. Scouts from a small-time pirate fleet known as the Azure Hook found this island was the breeding ground and part-time home of a rough tribe of nearly 400 savage and mindless Mosok. A decade ago, these pirates figured out how to capture and train these beasts, and the Azure Hook has since attempted to emulate the Lintha pirates' success. These Coral pirates now use the feral creatures to aid in attacking ships and raiding coastal villages, sending the Mosok in first to terrify their targets and slay the more dangerous defenders.

Based as it is in the Coral Archipelago, the Azure Hook has for the past few years taken the opportunity to make additional money renting out some of these Mosok to other Coral pirates. The Azure Hook possesses nearly 100 well trained but still savage Dragon Kings it controls through threats and powerful drugs. However, the pirates' training has begun to stimulate the minds of a few of these bestial Mosok. A numbers of the pirate trainers noticed these changes and are now instructing a few of the semi-savage Mosok in more elaborate tasks. Still, many trainers wish for nothing more than dim and compliant beasts and severely punish any indication of greater understanding. The brightest of these captive Mosok have learned to hide their budding awareness and now bide their time until they have a chance to slaughter the pirates holding them prisoner.

### DRAGON KINGS IN YU-SHAN

During the First Age, Dragon Kings visited Yu-Shan regularly, and many lived and worked there. Some Celestial gods considered Dragon Kings to be the finest gardeners or arborists, while others simply enjoyed the company of these proud and civilized reptiles. When the Dragon-Blooded slew the Solar Exalted in the Usurpation, some Dragon Kings who already had close ties with the gods fled the growing

chaos in Creation and moved to Yu-Shan to join the ones already living there. And civilized Dragon Kings dwell in Yu-Shan still. Although only a few thousand Dragon Kings live amidst the teeming millions of gods who inhabit Yu-Shan, their kind is well known. Most gods now treat the Dragon Kings with the mixture of pity and mild deference reserved for once important individuals who have fallen on desperately hard times.

Most Dragon Kings living in the Celestial City have jobs, just like the gods of Yu-Shan. Some are employed as servants to powerful gods, while most work in the Celestial Bureaucracy, usually in the Bureau of Heaven or the Bureau of the Seasons. The vast majority work as clerks or couriers or serve in sinecure positions that grant little more than a minimal salary and a chance to rightfully live in Yu-Shan. Most Dragon Kings have little direct supervision, and so long as they make occasional appearances and don't violate any of Heaven's laws, they are largely left to their own devices. Other less fortunate Dragon Kings dwell in one of the mostly abandoned portions of the Celestial City, living the same sorts of marginal lives as the unemployed spirits who also live there.

Members of all four breeds of Dragon King live in Yu-Shan, and all but the youngest of them are fully intelligent. Either older Dragon Kings or various divine tutors make sure that all Dragon Kings in Yu-Shan regain their minds and memories, since no one wishes to have savage beasts wandering Yu-Shan's streets.

Some Dragon Kings born in Creation who manage to regain some of their memories seek to travel to Yu-Shan in order to find allies and companions. The luckiest among them find work as servants or successfully petition for employment in the Celestial Bureaucracy. Those Dragon Kings who work in Yu-Shan usually do their best to gain the approval for all such petitions but have little power to enforce their wishes.

Ghataru, the head of the Bureau of Seasons, feels honor bound to aid Dragon Kings in Yu-Shan because a Dragon King saved his life during the fall of the First Age. The Shogun-Regent has lobbied to allow Dragon Kings to retain a portion of their traditional rights in Yu-Shan and finds many who come to the Celestial City make-work postings in his Bureau or with his allies in the Bureau of Heaven. Some of these Dragon Kings have sufficiently impressed their immediate superiors with their ambition and ability and have been promoted and given meaningful positions in one of these Bureaus.

## ARTIFACTS OF THE DRAGON KINGS

Like their Steps, Dragon King technology is completely different from that used by humans or Exalts. The reptiles custom breed exotic plants and create Essence-sensitive crystals with their innate magics. And while doing so, Dragon

Kings seldom employ anything resembling tools. Most Dragon King artifacts appear more like trinkets, ornaments or living works of art than functional items. The only exceptions are their arms and armor, and even some of these wonders are completely unlike those forged by human or Exalt hands. Dragon King wonders rarely have moving parts, and only the simplest such artifacts appear to have any relation to their genuine function.

### COMMON VEGETATIVE ITEMS

Commonly seen examples of Dragon King vegetative technology include:

**Alchemical Shrubs:** These plants produce sap or fruit that duplicate various alchemical creations, including medicines, poisons and more exotic concoctions.

**Carpet Grass:** This delicate-looking turquoise grass is exceptionally tough but extremely soft to lay and walk upon, and it absorbs and digests dirt and spills. This grass coats the floors of many Dragon King structures and keeps them clean and fragrant.

**Industrial Lianas:** These six-inch- to foot-thick living vines transport either fresh or waste water. Most grow down into or away from carved stone basins. The Dragon Kings provided these wonders to some Exalt-built First Age cities in the East, and these vines still thrive in both the Haltan forest and the jungles around Rathess.

**Living Furniture:** These are items of mutable living furnishings that duplicate all the functions of a thousand comforts lounge (see *The Books of Sorcery, Vol. I—Wonders of the Lost Age*, p. 58).

### COMMON CRYSTAL ITEMS

Commonly seen examples of Dragon King crystalline technology include:

**Automatic Doors:** These doors open or close when specific gestures are made.

**Crystal Lights and Heaters:** Crystal panels provide light, comfortable levels of heat or sometimes both. They are set into walls or ceilings and may be controlled by touching a small gemstone set in or near them.

**Crystalline Books:** A book's text appears on the surface of the crystal, and a reader can scroll down through the work by running a finger along the book's edge.

**Essence Locks:** These locks can be locked or unlocked by means of small keys that appear to be brightly colored rings of crystal. Each such lock can only be unlocked by a key specifically linked to it by touching that key to a quartz panel nearby. (A character suffers a +3 external penalty to pick an Essence lock unless she uses one of the octagonal crystal lock picks once utilized by Dragon King criminals. Using this item, these crystal locks can be picked as easily as any other.)

**Essence Shelters:** These torso-sized, transparent, faceted pillars were mounted on the flat roofs of many Dragon King buildings and in the centers of many of their plazas. Activated by touching an inset gemstone, the pillar creates a dome of semi-solid

Essence over the roof that keeps off wind and rain and at night provides light equivalent to sunset. These domes keep out all forms of inclement weather but provide no protection against deliberate attacks not based solely on wind. Many Dragon King cities also had larger domes that could protect the entire city from storms or similar forms of extreme weather.

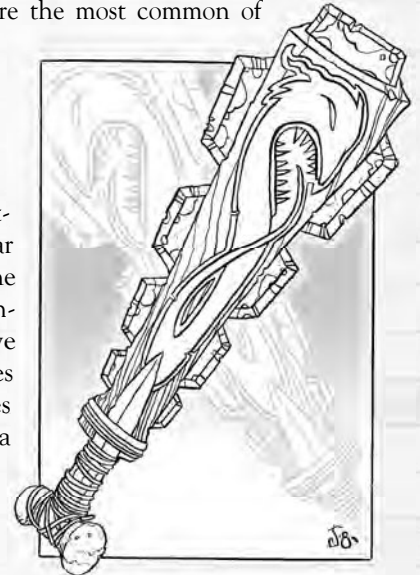
**Lift Tubes:** These Essence-powered elevators consist of disks of solid Essence floating inside a vertical crystal tube three yards across. Dragon Kings controlled these disks by tapping out codes on the slightly raised central portion of this disk with their dexterous toe claws. Humans and Exalts must normally bend over and tap out these codes with their hands. Users who don't understand the Dragon King script arrive at a random floor.

### MUNDANE WEAPONS OF THE DRAGON KINGS

While some Dragon Kings used spears, javelins, spear throwers, boomerangs, clubs, slings, throwing clubs and throwing knives, most fought and hunted with more exotic weapons that their kind first created long ago. Sword-clubs and throwing blades are the most common of these weapons.

#### SWORD-CLUB

Lacking the aptitude for metalwork possessed by humanity, the Dragon Kings created weapons quite similar to chopping swords. The best are made from ironwood that either have chipped obsidian blades slotted into their sides or are carved so that a row of jutting razor-sharp triangular blades project from each side of the weapon. The weapon looks much like the tooth-filled jaws of a sawfish.



#### THROWING BLADE

Throwing blades look much like curving triangular shuriken the size of a large man's hand. While some are made from ironwood, the best throwing blades are all carved from razor-sharp crystal. The Dragon Kings make an artifact version of this weapon that has the same cost and statistics as the sky-cutter (see *Exalted*, p. 388).





<b>Name</b>	<b>Speed</b>	<b>Acc</b>	<b>Damage</b>	<b>Defense</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Minimums</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Tags</b>
Sword-Club	4	+2	+4L	+1	2	Str ●●	●●	-
<b>Name</b>	<b>Speed</b>	<b>Acc</b>	<b>Damage</b>	<b>Rate</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Minimums</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Tags</b>
Throwing Blade	5	+1	+3L	2	30	Str ●●	●●	-
<b>Name</b>	<b>Soak</b>	<b>Hardness</b>	<b>Mobility</b>	<b>Fatigue</b>	<b>Attune</b>	<b>Tags</b>		
Leaf Armor	5L/5B	2L/2B	-0	0	2	-		

## DRAGON KING ARTIFACTS

In the time prior to the rise of man, the Dragon Kings possessed an advanced technomagical society. Although it never reached the astonishing pinnacle of technomagic attained by the Solar Exalted during the High First Age, the reptiles' reign produced artifacts aplenty. Even following the Primordial War, the Dragon Kings retained their sophisticated crystalline and vegetative technology, and their nature was such that many examples survive even today.

The wonders listed below are a selection of the most common devices that survived into the Second Age. Also, while the Dragon Kings rarely worked orichalcum, their connection to the Unconquered Sun allows the Dragon Kings to attune to artifacts made from that magical material as easily and cheaply as the Solar Exalted. However, unless specifically mentioned in the description, Dragon King artifacts do not gain any magical materials bonuses, since most are made largely or exclusively of living plants or special crystals.



### BREATHER PLANT (ARTIFACT ●)

This small, exceedingly leafy vine is usually found rooted in a pot designed for easy transport. Anyone may uproot the vine and wind it around the neck of a living being no larger than a warhorse. There, this plant extrudes tendrils into the wearer's throat. The plant filters out impurities in the air, allowing the wearer to safely breathe smoke and other

gaseous toxins. In addition, it allows him to breathe water.

Breather vines are rather fragile and must be periodically replanted to remain intact. After approximately six hours of use, a breather vine begins to lose its vibrant green color and turn yellow. When it turns fully yellow, it withdraws its tendrils from the wearer's neck and goes dormant. It must then be returned to its pot for at least 12 hours before it can be reused. Alternately, the wearer can commit two motes of Essence to the plant, at which point it can be worn indefinitely,

taking nourishment from this Essence.

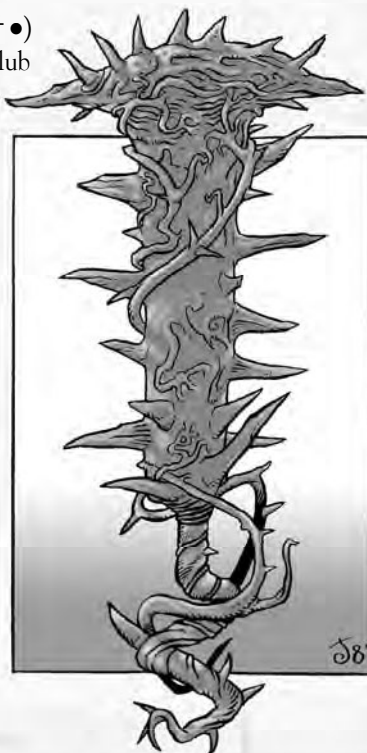
### LEAF ARMOR (ARTIFACT ●)

This suit of armor consists of interlocking and overlapping living leaves the size of a human palm that appear ribbed with gold. When not attuned, this hauberk appears to be made from unusually resilient autumn leaves. However, if the wearer commits two motes of Essence, the armor appears to be an exquisitely made garment of green, living leaves that fits the wearer exceptionally well. The leaves are imbued with traces of orichalcum, so this armor provides the appropriate armor bonuses for orichalcum.



### SWORDSTICK (ARTIFACT ●)

This living sword-club can be plucked from one of the sword bushes the Dragon Kings created to allow them to literally grow weapons. Each sword bush produces a cluster of three or four mature swordsticks every two years. This weapon functions as a normal ironwood sword-club, unless the owner commits three motes of Essence. At this point, it returns to life, gaining a brighter and more vibrant color. It also bends itself to the user's will, aiding him in his attacks.



Name	Speed	Acc	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Tags
Swordstick	4	+2	+5L	+1	3	Str ●●●	3	–
Name	Speed	Acc	Damage	Rate	Range	Attune	Tags	
Bracer of Crystal Bolts	4	+2	8L	2	150	3	P	
Name	Speed	Acc	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Tags
Fire Claw	5	+2	+7L	+2	3	Dex ●●●	5	–

#### BRACER OF CRYSTAL BOLTS (ARTIFACT ●●)

This bulky bracer is composed of a single piece of clear rock crystal. The artifact holds two bolts also composed of enchanted rock crystal. With but a thought, the wearer can fire these crystalline bolts, and by spending a mote of Essence, the character can draw the bolts back to the artifact. (They actually hurtle back to the bracer.)

If either bolt is damaged or broken, it automatically repairs itself within an hour's time, less for minor damage. Committing three motes of Essence to it activates the bracer and causes it to resize itself to fit the wearer. It can then only be removed by the wearer or upon his death. The bracer of crystal bolts uses the Thrown Ability to attack, and Thrown Charms may be applied to attacks with it. The bracer has a setting for a single hearthstone.

#### FIRE CLAW (ARTIFACT ●●)

This flamboyant and lethal weapon is made in the form of a intricate orichalcum bracelet set with a large piece of red

crystal. When a wearer (whether Dragon King or not) commits five motes of Essence, its filigree design contracts to fit her wrist. By expending two motes of Essence, the wearer may cause a curving blade of golden sunfire to spring forth from the bracelet and arc in front of the wearer's hand (activating this weapon is a reflexive action). This huge burning claw endures for one full scene, but so long as the wearer expends two motes every scene, it can be made to exist indefinitely. The artifact is built so that it isn't possible for the wearer's hand to be injured by the flaming claw curving above it. The fire claw is typically used with the Melee Ability, but it can also be used as a claw-type weapon for the purposes of Tiger or Lunar Hero Style. Unlike most Dragon King weapons, this item gains the normal benefits for being made from orichalcum. This weapon also contains a setting for a single hearthstone on the underside.

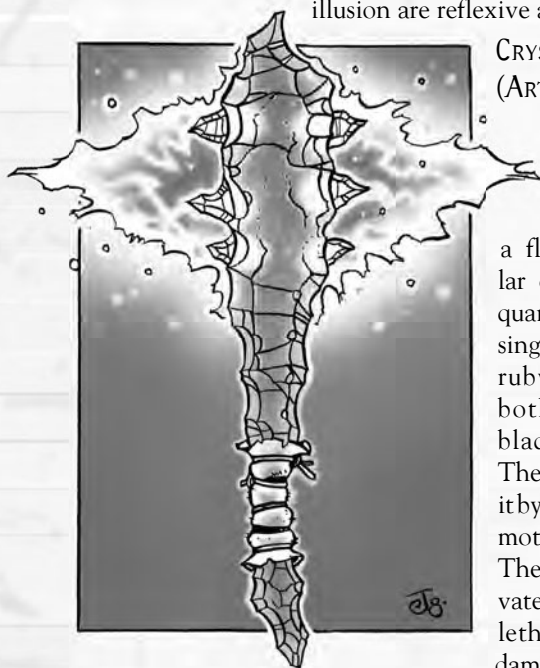
#### RING OF IMAGES (ARTIFACT ●●)

This blue jade ring is set with a tiny amber-colored crystal. It allows the wearer to project small illusions of





anything she can imagine up to (permanent Essence x 2) yards away. Such illusions can be no larger than a large house cat, and are solely visible and auditory—they have no smell and are completely intangible. The user can only create a single illusion at a time, and it costs one mote every scene to sustain such an illusion. Creating an illusion requires a miscellaneous action (5 ticks, -1 DV), while moving and directing the illusion are reflexive actions.



**CRYSTAL WARCLUB**  
(ARTIFACT ●●●)

When not in use, this weapon looks like a flattened angular club of smoky quartz, set with a single row of bright ruby crystals on both of its two blade-like edges. The user activates it by spending three motes of Essence. The user may activate it to do either lethal or bashing damage. When ac-

tivated to do lethal damage, a triangular blade of glowing energy issues from each of the red crystals. When activated to do bashing damage, a sheath of glowing crimson energy surrounds the club. In either case, the club remains activated for the next full scene. Anyone who wields this club must also commit five motes of Essence to it.

**NECKLACE OF SOLAR CHARISMA** (ARTIFACT ●●●)

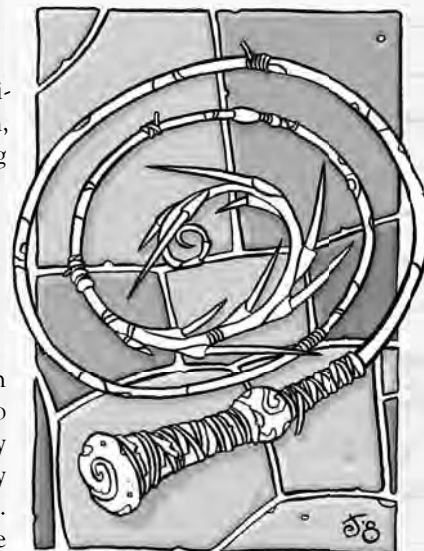
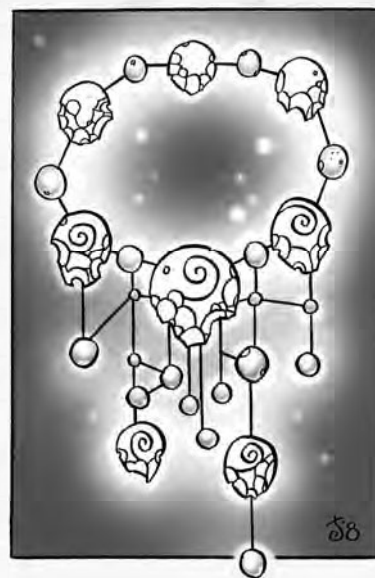
This necklace consists of a series of golden circular crystals inscribed with images of the Unconquered Sun

connected by slender orichalcum chains. When the wearer dons and attunes it by committing three motes, she is infused with a tiny portion of the Unconquered Sun's splendor. She becomes supernaturally attractive and charismatic as a result, adding three bonus dice to all Charisma and Appearance pools. In addition, anyone with a permanent Essence less than the wearer's regards her as attractive and does not find her appearance in any way peculiar or unsettling, no matter how she actually appears.

No one affected by the artifact will ever attack the wearer simply for looking monstrous or deadly. However, someone may still attack the wearer out of greed, anger or any other reason that does not involve her appearance. Beings with an Essence equal to or greater than the wearer see her normally, but she still gains the Appearance and Charisma bonuses for rolls directed at them. This necklace has a setting for a single hearthstone.

**THORN THROWER**  
(ARTIFACT ●●●)

This curious artifact consists of a thin, flexible, four-foot-long branch that holds many large thorns near one end. Its user must commit six motes of Essence to wield the weapon. The user can then cause it to curl up into a six-inch coil that may be easily and safely carried on one's belt. The weapon may be



Name	Speed	Acc	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Tags
Crystal warclub (lethal)	5	+3	+12L/3	+0	2	Str ●●●, Dex ●●●	5	O
(bashing)	5	+3	+18B/3	+0	2	Str ●●●, Dex ●●●	5	O, P

\* The piercing tag only applies when the club deals bashing damage.

Name	Speed	Acc	Damage	Rate	Range	Minimums	Attune	Tags
Thorn Thrower	5	+3	8L*	3	20	Dex ●●●	6	P
Name	Speed	Acc	Damage	Defense	Rate	Minimums	Attune	Tags
Thorn Whip	5	+3	+6L*	+3	3	Dex ●●●	6	D, R
* Anyone wounded by this weapon loses one level of unsoakable lethal damage every 10 ticks due to bleeding, and all attempts to stop this bleeding suffer a +1 external penalty.								
Name	Soak	Hardness	Mobility	Fatigue	Attune	Tags		
Obsidian Sheath	10L/10B	5L/5B	-0	0	7	-		

used in two ways. The wielder may crack it like a whip at a target and spend one mote, at which point a large and deadly thorn flies off the end of the artifact to strike the target. Each thorn is coated with an azure sap that promotes blood loss. In addition to throwing thorns, the user can use this weapon as a whip to strike nearby opponents. Using it in this way requires no additional Essence expenditure.



#### GLOBE OF TRANSPORT (ARTIFACT ●●●●)

In order to travel swiftly across their world, the Dragon Kings enchanted special crystals to serve as vehicles. The smallest and most common was the globe of transport. When not in use, this artifact is a solid sphere of violet crystal the size of an orange with a setting for a single hearthstone. If the user places a hearthstone of at least level 2 in the setting

and spends 10 motes of Essence, the sphere transforms itself into a wondrous vehicle. It expands into a thin-walled hollow globe of Essence and crystal three yards in diameter. This globe expands around the individual supplying the Essence. Once it has fully expanded, the globe can carry a maximum of 1,500 pounds of cargo or up to four humans or Dragon Kings. However, it is not large enough to transport larger creatures, such as horses.

The individual who supplied the transport globe with Essence also controls it. He can direct the globe to go to any place he has visited before of whose location he is aware, or he can tell the globe to travel in a particular direction. The Essence supplied to the globe powers it for one journey, regardless of length. This vehicle travels at up to 150 miles per hour, and the character controlling it can cause it to land at any time. This vehicle surrounds its occupants with a shell of transparent, faintly glowing Essence that protects them against the wind and serves as 90% cover by deflecting attacks (adding +2 DV against hand-to-hand attacks and +4 DV against ranged attacks). However, this vehicle was not

designed for combat, so this penalty is also applied to attacks made against characters outside the craft by the occupants. The instant the globe lands, it deactivates and transforms itself back into a small violet ball. When the globe of transport deactivates, everyone and everything inside of it is deposited outside of it, completely unharmed. While the globe is in use, the hearthstone in its setting provides no other benefit to its owner.

#### OBSIDIAN SHEATH (ARTIFACT ●●●●)

This unusual armor looks like a suit of articulated plate carved from shining black stone trimmed in orichalcum, and it provides the magical material bonuses for orichalcum armor when properly attuned. While based primarily on Dragon King crystal technology, it was originally developed with the aid of the Jadeborn Mountain Folk. It was only worn by the elite troops of the Dragon Kings, and all suits are marked with an orichalcum sunburst in the middle of the breastplate, symbolizing the wearer's devotion to the Unconquered Sun.



When attuned, the armor not only acts like a second skin, it also boosts the wearer's Strength and mobility. The armor automatically increases the wearer's Strength by 3. In addition, in combat, the wearer adds four yards per tick to move actions and eight yards per tick to dash actions. When walking long distances, the wearer can march at a speed of 15 miles per hour, covering up to 210 miles in a day. If the Dragon King can fly, he gains adds four yards per tick to move actions and eight yards per tick to dash actions while flying and can fly at speeds of up to 100 miles per hour.

WHY THEY NO CAN  
SEE-WHAT-WAS?

THEY SEE MAMMOTH.  
THEY SEE SKY. THEY  
ONLY SEE-WHAT-IS.

I SEE-WHAT-IS AND  
SEE-WHAT-WAS.

I SEE-WHAT-WAS  
A SUN-QUEEN. I  
FLEW BESIDE HER.

I SEE-WHAT-WAS A HUMAN  
PLACE IN THE SKY, LONG  
BEFORE I HATCHED.

MAYBE SOMEWHERE  
ARE OTHERS WHO CAN  
SEE-WHAT-WAS.



# CHAPTER TWO CHARACTER CREATION AND TRAITS

The gods created four breeds of Dragon Kings to rule over Creation, sending one breed to each of the four corners of Threshold. The aggressive, hulking Anklok, the gods sent to the brutal, barren South. The aquatic Mosok, they sent into the great ocean in the West. They gave the winged Pterok control of the North, which they ruled from their mountaintop homes. And, finally, the gods sent the Raptok to the East, where they built the great city of Rathess and practiced their crystal and vegetative technology.

When the Dragon Kings rose up with the gods against their Primordial masters, millions of the reptiles died. The Primordial War not only decimated their numbers, however, it ended the Dragon Kings' greatness. Afterward, only pockets of their civilizations survived in remote areas of Creation, such as deep jungles and desert wastelands. The survivors bred, but their offspring soon forgot their kind once ruled as overlords over all Creation. Instead, they lost themselves to the savagery that all Dragon Kings were born to but were once taught to overcome by their elders.

Without such elders to train them, tribes of "stalkers" and barbarians resulted, and these are the Dragon Kings most encountered in present-day Creation.

Currently, handfuls of these savages are starting to awaken to the true understanding of their capabilities. With the aid of the ancient Dragon Kings or the returned Lawgivers, they may even be able to increase their Essence and truly start remembering their past lives and honored heritage. Doing so may allow them a chance at rebuilding their once great society. It will be a slow process, however, for they must capture and train one savage Dragon King at a time to increase their enlightened numbers. This is no easy task, especially when their own savage kind seeks to kill them because of their differences.

## PLAYING THE DRAGON KINGS

Savage Dragon Kings, though the most common of their kind, are not character material by any means. Therefore, players should choose a more suitable Dragon King type: one



of the awakened modern Dragon Kings or one of the ancient sleepers. Each type has its own rules (see below). Additionally, it is possible for a modern or ancient Dragon King to become an *olchilik*, one of the Chosen. While that option is outlined below, players cannot begin play as one of the Chosen. Rather this option should be earned through roleplay.

## MODERN DRAGON KINGS

Modern Dragon Kings started life as just another one of the millions of Dragon King savages, but they either spontaneously awakened to their intelligence and Essence, or they learned to tap into their heritage under the tutelage of another fully sentient Dragon King.

Once awakened, these Dragon Kings tend to separate themselves from the others for fear of being slain because of their difference. Some modern Dragon Kings do attempt to train others, but converting the sheer number of mindless beasts is a daunting task, not something easily accomplished alone. Therefore, it is much easier to seek out others who have already awakened and form self-sustaining communities with them, but such communities rarely grow beyond a few dozen members. And, of those, the members rarely survive for more than one or two centuries of their normal 350-year life spans.

Modern Dragon Kings cannot regain their highest levels of Essence (Essence 4+) or learn the highest levels of the Paths without the aid or assistance from one of the

following: ancient texts, an ancient Dragon King or a god knowledgeable about the Dragon Kings.


## ANCIENT "SLEEPER" DRAGON KINGS

During the time of the Great Contagion and the subsequent Fair Folk invasion, which both greatly thinned the reptiles' population, several hundred Dragon Kings hid themselves away in enchanted stasis chambers in an attempt to preserve their civilization into a future century. The magical nature of the chambers kept them alive and ageless, but the Essence disruptions that took place in the world around them during their slumber kept them from awakening from the magical slumber on their own, though a few have been awakened over the centuries since the First Age. Worse still, looters sometimes killed the ancient reptiles while they slept, fearful of what might happen should they awaken the great beasts.

Today, fewer than 100 ancient Dragon Kings survive. Some still slumber in the ageless sleep in Creation's ruins. Scholars believe eight ancient beasts still rest in the ruins of the Dragon King city of Rathess and likely in other First Age cities as well.

Opening an ancient sleeper's chamber more often than not awakens him. Recently, the Solar Exalted, who explore old ruins in hopes of reclaiming their past glory, are the ones to open the enchanted chambers and awaken their old allies. Additionally, if a Solar Exalt uses her Charms or actually





Exalts near a sleeper's chamber, the Essence fluctuation can awaken the sleeper.

Being creatures from the First Age, the Dragon Kings possess knowledge and secrets currently only known by the gods and the Chosen of the Maidens. Many can operate and repair First Age artifacts, and some even know the locations of legendary cities and lost manses.

## THE CHOSEN

In times past, many Dragon Kings submitted themselves to being the living vessels of the gods, while some even actively sought possession, doing great deeds or performing rituals to attract the attention of a god seeking a mortal host. Dragon Kings possessed by such spirits were called "the Chosen," or *olchiliké*, and they were considered lucky and envied. While they remained the same breed and were considered equals among their kind, they often garnered great privileges from their people, though none deigned to view them as divine themselves, despite their considerable powers. The Dragon Kings knew how fickle the gods were, and a chosen vessel might quickly be abandoned for another on a whim. Thus, the vessel itself held only a passing specialness while inhabited.

Today, being Chosen is quite rare. Few Dragon Kings even recall the necessary rituals to garner the attention of the gods to indicate their desire to serve. Additionally, the gods who formerly joined with the Dragon Kings in the past no longer interact with the Dragon Kings and have moved on to other duties. And willing and able spirits have a hard time locating candidates to accept their will.

Often, the types of spirits the Dragon Kings find willing to join with them are small, self-centered gods, who only desire to use the Dragon Kings for their own specific goals. These gods do not treat the joined relationship with the respect of times past. Instead, they see the great reptiles as chattel meant to serve them, and they see nothing wrong with expending one or more to meet their goals. These spirits tend to bond with low-Essence Dragon Kings, ones they can easily subvert to their will. A rare few gods actually do seek to form long-term, symbiotic relationships, however, and these seek out strong, like-minded candidates with similar objectives.

## POSSESSING DRAGON KINGS

Spirits require the Ride Charm (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I**, pp. 161-162, for details of that spirit Charm) to merge with Dragon King characters to create *olchiliké*. This is an ancient Charm created by the gods to use on the Dragon Kings, who have willingly prostrated themselves as vessels to them over the Ages. Also, note that other Charms, such as the Possession Charm (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I**, p. 161), only allow possession of the Dragon King for the duration of a scene. To create a true, long-lasting union between god and Dragon King, the Ride Charm is necessary. However, this Charm is extremely

rare, and most gods who know it avoid using it, for fear of alerting and offending the Immaculates, who consider this Charm blasphemous. The Immaculate Order will aggressively attempt to end its continued use.

## CREATING A DRAGON KING CHARACTER

This chapter provides all the rules one needs to create Dragon King characters, both new (modern) Dragon Kings and the ancient sleepers. The process is similar to that of creating a Solar character found in the core **Exalted** book. However, the Dragon Kings do not possess Charms. They have their own form of magic, instead, called Paths.

The following steps walk you through the rules and help you to create a compelling Dragon King character.

### STEP ONE: CHARACTER CONCEPT

Character concept entails an overall picture of who your character is; an archetype, if you will. Before filling in a single dot on your character sheet, you need to be clear about the type of character you want to play. While you initially won't know every detail—that will come with play—you should at least start with a general feel for who she is and what she wants in the world. Choose something you will enjoy playing on a continuing basis, and describe the concept in a few words. For example, you might want to be a "zealous priest" or "bloodthirsty bandit." The concept will help you later build a backstory for your character, something appealing to both you and the Storyteller, and one that will mesh with the clutch's motivations.

### BREED

The Dragon King character's selected breed affects her physiology, determining in what environment she is most comfortable. Most importantly, breed affects the character's traits, modifying certain Attributes to reflect her physical prowess, agile movement or even deftness of mind. And finally, breed determines what Abilities she has an affinity for and what Paths she is attuned to.

### MOTIVATION

Motivation establishes your character's goal throughout the unfolding series. Does your character desire to unite the disparate savage Dragon King breeds, one by one, with the goal of unlocking the latent intelligence residing in each, allowing the Dragon Kings to once again vie to be the Unconquered Sun's chosen? Or do you want to return Rathess, the First Age city of wonders, to its glory? Or perhaps use the once-great city as a seat of power in your attempts to return the Solar Deliberative to its rightful rulership of Creation? When creating your Motivation, you may wish to consult page 88 of **Exalted** for more information on choosing, playing or changing character Motivations.

### STEP TWO: ATTRIBUTES

Attributes reflect your character's natural capabilities and aptitudes. Keeping your character concept in mind,





decide how you will distribute your dots among the Physical (Strength, Dexterity, Stamina), Social (Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance) and Mental (Perception, Intelligence, Wits) Attributes. Full definitions for these Attributes can be found in **Exalted**, pages 101-102.

As with all characters, you begin with one dot in each Attribute. Pick one Attribute group to be your primary, one to be secondary and one to be tertiary. Your chosen priorities determine how many dots you may spend in an Attribute category. The type of Dragon King you choose to play, modern or ancient, determines the number of dots you initially gain for your primary, secondary and tertiary categories, and your character's Breed indicates any bonus modifiers you should apply to particular Attributes (see below).

You are not limited in the number of dots you choose to spend in one Attribute, but you may not exceed five dots in any one Attribute without spending bonus points.

Modern Dragon Kings receive seven dots to spend in their primary category, five in their secondary and four in their tertiary. Ancient Dragon Kings receive eight dots to spend in their primary category, six in their secondary and five in their tertiary.

In addition, these Attributes are modified by breed. Anklok and Mosok characters receive a two-dot bonus to Strength and a two-dot bonus to Stamina. Pterok receive a two-dot bonus to Dexterity and a two-dot bonus to Perception. Finally, Raptok receive a one-dot bonus to Strength, Dexterity, Stamina and Perception. A Dragon King still may not exceed five dots in any one Attribute without spending bonus points.

### STEP THREE: ABILITIES

Abilities are learned expertise your character has gained in certain skills. A Dragon King's breed indicates special affinities he has for certain Abilities, and his type dictates how many dots he has to spend in Abilities. As is normal, characters begin with zero dots in Abilities.

The Dragon Kings' Breed Abilities are as follows:

- **Anklok Abilities:** Anklok have a natural affinity with Resistance, Survival and War.
- **Mosok Abilities:** Mosok have a natural affinity with Larceny, Martial Arts and Survival.
- **Pterok Abilities:** Pterok have a natural affinity with Athletics, Lore and Occult.
- **Raptok Abilities:** Raptok have a natural affinity with Craft, Linguistics and Socialize.

Modern Dragon Kings receive 25 dots to spend on Abilities and may select three Favored Abilities, which may not be the same as the Breed Abilities. At least 10 of these 25 dots must be spent on Breed or Favored Abilities. At least one must be in each Favored Ability, and no Ability may be rated higher than three dots without spending bonus points.

Ancient Dragon Kings receive 35 dots to spend on Abilities and may select three Favored Abilities, which may not be the same as the Breed Abilities. At least 10 of these 35 dots must be spent on Breed or Favored Abilities. At least one must be in each Favored Ability, and no Ability may be rated higher than three dots without spending bonus points.

### SPECIALTIES

A specialty is an area of focused expertise within one of your Abilities. Specialties may be purchased at character creation with bonus points and later via experience point expenditures. While purchasing specialties is not necessary, they do aid in further defining your character's Abilities and may bring roleplaying depth to your character, as well.

For more on specialties, see **Exalted**, page 74.

### STEP FOUR: ADVANTAGES

Advantages outline the magic talents of a Dragon King character, called Paths, as well as that character's social connections, wealth and panoply.

### BACKGROUNDS

Backgrounds detail your character's "place" in the **Exalted** world. They indicate what your character knows, who he knows, and what resources he can utilize.

Modern Dragon Kings receive seven dots to assign to the available Backgrounds, and ancient "sleeper" Dragon Kings receive 12 dots and have access to a few more Backgrounds (see "Character Creation Summary," p. 34).

### PATHS

The Dragon Kings practice elemental Essence-shaping techniques called the Ten Paths of Prehuman Mastery. These Paths lead them to orderly wisdom and power and include two Paths based on each of the five elements: air, earth, fire, water and wood. Within each Path, the Dragon Kings learn the powers within a fixed order, much like with Abilities, meaning they have to learn the first one-dot power before learning the two-dot power of that Path. Of their Path powers, the Dragon Kings are most renowned for the powers that allow them to create their unusual and highly useful crystal and vegetative technologies.

Modern Dragon Kings receive six dots in the Paths. Ancient Dragon Kings receive 10 dots in the Paths. A unique feature of the Paths is that the Dragon King Breeds themselves are biologically attuned to two Paths, which are usually the two Paths of a certain element. These two innate Paths are called Breed Paths. For instance, the fire-loving Anklok are attuned to the fire-based Paths: The Path of Blazing Fire and The Path of Flickering Fire. All members of that Breed, therefore, must have at least one dot in their Breed Paths.

A Dragon King's Essence limits the number of dots he may acquire in any given Path. If his Essence is 1, the standard Essence for one of the near-mindless stalker Dragon Kings, he may only learn up to one dot in any Path.

With Essence 2, he may develop up to three dots in a Path. Essences of 3 or higher allow him to develop up to five dots in a Path. Only a Dragon King 100 years old or more may advance his Path as high as six dots.

### VIRTUES

Your character automatically begins with one dot in each of the four Virtues: Compassion, Conviction, Temperance and Valor. Both modern and ancient Dragon Kings receive five additional dots to distribute among the Virtue traits, and at least one of those additional dots must be placed into Valor. No Virtue may exceed three without spending bonus points.

### STEP FIVE: FINISHING TOUCHES

During this step, you round out your character with your final trait selections.

### WILLPOWER

Willpower describes your character's self-control and ability to overcome adversity. A character's Willpower is the sum of her two highest Virtue ratings. You may not increase your character's Willpower higher than 8 with bonus points, and only characters with two Virtues at 4 or higher may begin the game with a Willpower of 8. Willpower rules are detailed on page 115 in **Exalted**.

### ESSENCE

Essence measures your character's connection to the mystical energies prevalent in Creation. A Dragon King's type indicates how much Essence he begins play with (see below). As with spirits, Dragon Kings are fully harmonized to their entire Essence pool, and Essence expenditures do not cause them to display anima banners. A Dragon King's Essence pool is equal to the following: (Essence x 4) + (Willpower x 2) + Conviction + Valor.

Modern Dragon Kings begins with an Essence rating of 2. Ancient Dragon Kings begin with an Essence rating of 3. A Dragon King's permanent Essence determines how much he can remember of his past lives. It also determines

the maximum dots allowed in his magical Paths and Intelligence ratings.

### HEALTH LEVELS

Health levels track your character's physical condition when taking damage. They impose penalties on your character's dice pool for each injury level. Like mortals, a Dragon King has seven health levels. She has one -0 health level, two -1 health levels, two -2 health levels, one -4 health level and one Incapacitated health level. Anklok and Mosok receive one extra +0 health level. Dragon Kings heal at the rate of common mortals. And while their tough hides allow them to resist the affects of bleeding, poison and harsh environments, they do not protect them from disease or infection. Dragon Kings use the mortal rules for disease and infection (see **Exalted**, p. 129). Their tough hides give them innate armor, but their Stamina does not assist them in soaking lethal damage like an Exalt's does. When not wearing additional armor, one's bashing soak equals (Stamina + innate armor). One's lethal soak equals only her innate armor. See page 33 for each breed's innate armor.

### BONUS POINTS

Bonus points allow you to increase your character's traits, allowing you to fine-tune him to your character concept. Your Dragon King type affects the number of bonus points you receive. Modern Dragon Kings have 15 bonus points. Ancient Dragon Kings have 25 bonus points.

### THE SPARK OF LIFE

After you have completed the game mechanical aspects of your character, you should create a physical description for her. Next, you need to bring her to life. To do so, you should give her a personality (including quirks), dreams, desires and home and familial connections to Creation. What does she care about? Who are her friends and family? What would she fight for or be willing to forfeit her life for? You can find more questions to help you round out your character in the **Exalted** core book, pages 77-79.

Essence	Personality and Memories	Maximum Intelligence
1	Bestial, with no memories, but keen sense	1
2	Fully civilized, but no memories	3
3-5	Has past life memories, like the Celestial Exalted	5
6	Possesses inhuman Intelligence, clear memories, and can increase Abilities and Virtues up to 6	6

# CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

## • STEP ONE: CHARACTER CONCEPT

Choose concept, Breed and Motivation.

Choose to create a modern or an ancient Dragon King.

## • STEP TWO: ATTRIBUTES

Note that all Attributes start with one dot before you add any.

Prioritize the three categories: Physical, Social, Mental (7/5/4 for a modern Dragon King or 8/6/5 for an ancient Dragon King).

Choose Physical Attributes: Strength, Dexterity, Stamina.

Choose Social Attributes: Charisma, Manipulation, Appearance.

Choose Mental Attributes: Perception, Intelligence, Wits.

Apply Breed Attribute modifiers.

Note: Even after these modifiers are applied, Dragon Kings cannot have any Attributes higher than 5 without spending bonus points.

## • STEP THREE: ABILITIES

Note Breed Abilities.

Select Favored Abilities (5; may not be the same as Breed Abilities).

Choose Abilities (25 for a modern Dragon King or 35 for an ancient Dragon King—at least 10 must be from Breed or Favored Abilities; at least one must be in each Favored Ability; none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points).

## • STEP FOUR: ADVANTAGES

Choose Backgrounds (7 for a modern Dragon King or 12 for an ancient Dragon King—none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points), Paths (select one favored Path, in addition to the two Breed Paths), Path powers (6 for a modern Dragon King—at least 3 must be from Favored or Breed Paths; none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points; or 10 for an ancient Dragon King—at least 5 must be from Favored or Breed Paths; none may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points) and Virtues (5, at least 1 of which must be put into Valor—no Virtue may be higher than 3 without spending bonus points).

## • STEP FIVE: FINISHING TOUCHES

Record Essence (2 for a modern Dragon King or 3 for an ancient Dragon King), Willpower (add the total of the two highest Virtues—may not start at higher than 8 unless at least two Virtues are 4 or higher), Essence pool ([Essence x 4] + [Willpower x 2] + Conviction + Valor) and health levels (7, plus any gained from Path powers).

## • BONUS POINTS

Bonus points (15 for modern Dragon Kings or 25 for ancient Dragon Kings) may be spent at any time during character creation.

## BREEDS

- **Anklok (Southern):** Zealot priests and barbaric warriors who deal with fire.

**Breed Trait Modifiers:** +2 to Strength and Stamina, an additional +0 health level and +6L/+6B soak.

**Breed Abilities:** Resistance, Survival and War

**Breed Paths:** The Blazing Fire Path, The Flickering Fire Path

- **Mosok (Western):** Amphibious creatures who excel in deception.

**Breed Trait Modifiers:** +2 to Strength and Stamina, an extra +0 health level and +4L/+4B to their soak.

**Breed Abilities:** Brawl, Larceny, Survival

**Breed Paths:** The Flowing Water Path, The Shimmering Water Path

- **Pterok (Northern):**

**Breed Trait Modifiers:** +2 to Dexterity and Perception and +1L/+1B soak.

**Breed Abilities:** Athletics, Lore, Occult

**Breed Paths:** The Celestial Air Path, The Clear Air Path

- **Raptok (Eastern):**

**Breed Trait Modifiers:** +1 to Strength, Dexterity, Stamina and Perception and +3L/+3B to soak.

**Breed Abilities:** Craft, Socialize, Linguistics

**Breed Paths:** The Yielding Earth Path, The Growing Wood Path

## MOTIVATION

Choose a driving and epic goal for your character.

# CHARACTER CREATION SUMMARY

## VIRTUES

- **Compassion**—Empathy and forgiveness.
- **Conviction**—Emotional endurance.
- **Temperance**—Self-control and clear-headedness.
- **Valor**—Courage and bravery.

## BACKGROUNDS

- **Allies**—Aides and friends who help in tasks.
- **Artifact**—Wondrous devices from the First Age or vegetative, crystal or orichalcum weapons and tools of Dragon King manufacture.
- **Backing**—Standing and rank in an organization of power and influence.
- **Celestial Manse**—A dwelling in the Celestial City.\*
- **Contacts**—Information sources and people in useful places.
- **Cult**—Mortals who worship you.
- **Familiar**—An animal companion.
- **Followers**—Mortals who look to you for leadership.
- **Influence**—Your pull in the world around you.
- **Manse**—A place of power and Essence.
- **Mentor**—A teacher and instructor.
- **Resources**—Material goods and money.
- **Salary**—The size of your celestial packet.\*
- **Savant**—Memories of the First Age and its lost secrets.\*\*

\* Only characters living or working in Yu-Shan may take this Background. Characters may not exceed two dots in this Background, even if using bonus points.

\*\* Only ancient Dragon Kings may choose this Background at character creation.

## BONUS POINTS

Trait	Cost
Attribute	4
Ability	2 (1 if a Favored or Breed Ability)
Background	1 (2 if Background is being raised above 3)
Specialty	1 (2 per 1 if in a Favored or Breed Ability)
Virtue	3
Willpower	2
Essence	8
Path	5 (10 if the Path is being raised above 3)
Breed Path	4 (8 if the Path is being raised above 3)
Terrestrial Circle Sorcery	7 (See p. 47)
Terrestrial Circle Spell	7

## TRAITS

Most of the Dragon Kings' traits remain identical to those found in **Exalted**. Virtues, Abilities, Attributes, Willpower and Essence work the same or nearly so. For more information on these Traits, see **Exalted**, pages 88 to 115.

## ALTERED BACKGROUNDS

Unless mentioned below, existing Backgrounds work as described in the **Exalted** core book.

### ARTIFACT

Minor Dragon King artifacts are fairly common, so this Background provides the Dragon King with twice as many dots worth of artifacts as is normal for Solars. Dragon Kings gain one artifact worth the number of Artifact Background dots and two or more artifacts whose sum of dots add up to the Background's rating total. These artifacts are so prevalent in the ruins of Rathess and other Dragon King settlements of old that even modern Dragon Kings with no rating in this Background will have a single one-dot artifact of the Storyteller's choice.

## NEW BACKGROUNDS

The following new Backgrounds are available to Dragon Kings.

### CELESTIAL MANSE

Within Yu-Shan, gold and silver spires climb toward the city's sky dome, sprouting like beautiful but massive horns from mansions that would span several blocks in a mortal city. Even its slums would send mortals, merchant and peasant alike, into a scavenging frenzy that would assure their prosperity for life in the mortal realm.

Within this heavenly domain, you own a sanctuary that is primarily immune to sabotage from others. Owning this property confers power upon you and shelters you from the pressures of working for the Celestial Bureaucracy. Celestial manses produce hearthstones like other manses, but these are generally Lunar, Sidereal or Solar in nature.

A Dragon King who lives or works in Yu-Shan may possess this Background. Storytellers may require characters possessing this Background to have at least one dot in Salary, as well. It is impossible for a Dragon King to raise this Background above two dots.

x None. You have no power in Heaven and are not worthy of a Celestial manse.

- A modest townhouse that produces a level-one hearthstone.
- An elegant, expansive townhouse that produces a level-two hearthstone.

### SALARY

In Heaven, riches constitute Quintessence and Ambrosia, not the jade coveted by mortals. The Celestial Bureaucracy issues stipends to those on its payroll. The recipients may spend it on whatever they wish, but only within Yu-Shan.

While Essence channelers can transform Quintessence into jewels or wine and Ambrosia into jade through mere touch and imagination (combined with the appropriate Craft skills), laws forbid salaried recipients from using the converted wealth to great extent in Creation.

Salary in Yu-Shan cannot buy a hearthstone-producing manse. To own a Celestial manse at the beginning of play, your Dragon King character must take the Celestial Manse Background. High Salary in Yu-Shan can only, at most, provide palaces that, while fantastic by earthly standards, do not produce hearthstones.

Only Dragon King characters working or living in Yu-Shan may possess this Background. It is impossible for a Dragon King to raise this Background above two dots.

x None. You live a lowly life within Yu-Shan, having possibly angered the God of Dispensation or having violated Celestial law.

- This is the starting salary for most gods. This salary provides a small apartment (a rental with five rooms and facilities), one feast per day and two servants. You earn no Ambrosia, but you have the equivalent of Resources ••• in Creation and Resources •• in Heaven.

- You can afford a large apartment or small townhouse in an unfashionable neighborhood. You can afford feasts to your content. You earn more Quintessence than Ambrosia, but you still possess the equivalent of Resources •••• in Creation and Resources ••• in Heaven.

### SAVANT

Dragon King characters with this Background know the greatest secrets and training arts of the First Age. Such characters add their Savant rating in dice to Lore checks involving history, science or magic of the First Age. This same number is also added to Lore, Occult and Craft Abilities to meet the minimum Ability requirements to operate and maintain First Age artifacts.

Only ancient Dragon Kings may possess this Background.

x None. You either failed to take the special training of your peers, or you just didn't grasp and retain it.

- You possess some knowledge of the glorious First Age.
- You have a good general knowledge of First Age lore and secrets.
- You received extensive training during the First Age, and you easily recall that knowledge.
- You know how to work most First Age artifacts and recall much of the time before the Usurpation.
- You were an exceptional student during the First Age, and your Dragon King elders graced you with rare secrets. You are a scholar among scholars when it comes to the First Age.



# ANKLOK

The most aggressive of the Dragon Kings, the Anklok, or Southern Dragon Kings, dwell in deserts and arid, rocky plains. These slow, hulking creatures prefer a life of seclusion but occasionally join with others of their breed to praise the Unconquered Sun with vast, intricate rock carvings and masterful fire rituals. The Anklok believe their fire mastery and connection to the heated lands of the South brings them closer to the Unconquered Sun's true nature than the other Dragon Kings, these connections thereby making them the god's foremost priests. Others, including other Dragon King breeds, gladly concede them this point, for they fear the overly aggressive and volatile nature of the Anklok, who have been known to attack those who disagree with them—though always outright and never with guile, for they are an honorable breed. (The more civilized of their kind tend to offer to duel disagreeable individuals instead of mauling them in the streets, but truly civilized Anklok are rare.)

The Southern Dragon Kings' passion for their religion is boundless, and most individuals who have encountered them consider them zealots. One might think this zeal would lead to the creation of elaborate temples to appease their god and bring in converts, but such is not the case. The Anklok do not erect massive or ornate temples to the Unconquered Sun at all. As they believe they share a strong connection to their god on an individual basis, they have no need of such edifices. Instead, the Anklok prove their devotion to him through skillful hunting and sacrifice. Anklok seek out formidable prey to vanquish his name, enduring great hardships and showing unwavering persistence and patience to prove they are the mightiest of Creation's hunters. And, when one successfully vanquishes his chosen foe, he offers up the prey's heart at the site of the kill, ripping it from its body and burning it to cinders with magical fire, all while shouting out prayers to the Unconquered Sun.

Most Anklok care little about the state of politics or whether the people around them are living a good life or being oppressed. They value only their religion and a few individuals lucky enough to be considered part of their clutch. If, however, a Southern Dragon King decides to take notice of anything outside of his normal concerns, he does so in a manner that is just as serious and zealous as his other interests. The Anklok are fiery natured creatures in this regard, either burning brightly with conviction or offering not even a spark of interest whatsoever.

Anklok are excellent hunters and fearless warriors, and they enjoy both activities on a level that can be only be termed sacred, for like hunting, they see battle as a way of proving their worthiness and devotion to the Unconquered Sun.





**Appearance:** The largest and most physically imposing of the Dragon Kings, Anklok stand over seven feet tall and are massively built. Their heads display several short horns and fierce eyes filled with bloodlust. Their muzzles are blunt and brim with sharp teeth. Their bodies end in thick, broad, three-foot-long tails tipped with a club-like extension they wield as a weapon. They have crude hands and carry weapons specifically made for them.

They also possess heavy, crocodile-like ridged plates to protect their bodies in battle.

**Breed Traits:** Anklok characters receive +2 to Strength, +2 to Stamina and an additional +0 health level. The Southern Dragon Kings also possess +6L/+6B to soak due to their tough hides. Thanks to their massive paws and stubby clawed fingers, Anklok may only use Dragon King tools and weapons, and they suffer a -1 internal penalty to all Dexterity rolls made for the reptiles to use even those, as well as in any situation where fine manipulation is needed. (Note, members of other races who attempt to use Dragon

King tools likewise suffer a -1 internal penalty to all required rolls to use them.)

**Breed Abilities:** Anklok excel at overcoming adversity. They have a natural affinity for Resistance, Survival and War.

**Breed Paths:** The Blazing Fire Path, The Flickering Fire Path

**Innate Weapons:** Anklok can attack with their sharp teeth, their claws and their heavy, club-like tail.

Weapon	Speed	Acc	Damage	Defense	Rate
Bite	5	+0	+3L	-	2
Claw	5	+1	+3L	+0	3
Tail	6	-1	+4L	-2	1

**Sobriquets:** Children of the Desert, Desert Dragons, Sand Hunters, Unconquered Zealots

**Concepts:** Honorable warrior, master hunter, zealous priest, aggressive brute

**THE EYE OF THE UNCONQUERED SUN IS UPON US.  
SHOW HIM OUR COURAGE. FIGHT. WIN.**

Also called the Western Dragon Kings, the Mosok are amphibious creatures who live mostly in the Western Ocean but who thrive equally in fresh water, occasionally making their homes in the rivers and lakes of the Threshold. Though they prefer to remain in their watery homes, Mosok may remain on land indefinitely, but extended periods away from their favored environment affects their mood, which can be termed mercurial at best to begin with.

Because they spend the majority of their lives beneath the water, Mosok do not normally socialize with humans. However, that is less true of those Mosok who make their homes in rivers and lakes, areas more likely to be situated near human communities or along their trade routes. Among their own people, however, the Mosok are very sociable creatures, preferring to live in tribes numbering several hundred to a few thousand. They raise their children as a society. Additionally, they enjoy gathering in celebration, holding numerous festivals throughout the year, and they revel in their worship of the Unconquered Sun.

A Mosok's temperament flows like water from one moment to the next, making the Western Dragon Kings' overall disposition indeterminable to those who encounter them. A tale exists of a human community who discovered the Mosok along a

# MOSOK







riverbank. The creatures initially rejoiced in learning of the presence of their neighbors, invited them to partake of their food and festivities, and then, deep into the celebration, their hosts turned on them and killed them all, except for a lone survivor who lived to spread the tale.

Mosok are also self-serving and their kind's kings of deception. While they rarely betray their closest kin and allies, to whom they remain loyal to the death, the Western Dragon Kings have been known to betray casual comrades for gain and to sacrifice individuals they deemed as liabilities to their goals. They expertly pursue blackmail and thievery, and despite their bulk and slow movement on land, they excel in assassination. Their chosen Paths support these activities, making them premier thieves and backstabbers.

What Mosok Dragon Kings do not excel at is technology, and living in the ocean as they do, their environment and natural enemies have not driven them to excel in its mastery. The apex of their technology lies in their home building. They craft their partially submerged villages and towns of shells, mud, coral and other nearby materials on coral atolls and small islands. The mishmash of building materials blend to create oddly beautiful structures that have proven quite structurally sound. Mosok occasionally craft plants and crystals, however, to create tools, weapons and other useful items for daily life.

**Appearance:** The stout, bipedal Mosok have elongated heads with a short snout. Their mouths brim with conical, sharp teeth ideal for ripping apart prey. Their thick hides resemble those of crocodiles, and they have blocky, clawed hands with webbed fingers. Their feet are webbed as well. Their bodies end in flattened crocodile-like tails, which allow them to propel themselves through the water at great speed.

**Breed Attributes:** Mosok characters receive +2 to Strength, +2 to Stamina and an additional +0 health level.

The Western Dragon Kings also possess +4L/+4B to their soak thanks to their tough hides. A Mosok's clawed and webbed hands do not lend well to holding human-sized tools or weapons, and for this reason, they can only use tools and weapons specifically made for Dragon Kings. Even with these items, they suffer a -1 internal penalty to all Dexterity rolls made for actions requiring fine manipulation, such as picking a lock or crafting an item. (Note, members of other races who attempt to use Dragon King tools likewise suffer a -1 internal penalty to all required rolls to use them.)

As amphibious creatures, Mosok are completely at home in the water and are adept swimmers. Mosok may swim as a move action, and they may swim at their dash speed as a dash action. They can also hold their breath for (Stamina x 10) minutes, plus 10 additional minutes for every success on a reflexive (Stamina + Resistance) roll. On land, however, Mosok are clumsy. They cannot dash, and their jumping distance is halved.

**Breed Abilities:** Mosok excel at hunting, deceit and life in an aquatic environment. They have a natural affinity with Larceny, Martial Arts and Survival.

**Breed Paths:** The Path of Flowing Water, The Path of Shimmering Water.

**Innate Weapons:** Mosok possess claws, sharp teeth and a flat, heavy tail.

Weapon	Speed	Acc	Damage	Defense	Rate
Bite	5	+0	+4L	-	1
Claw	5	+1	+2L	+0	3
Tail	5	-1	+5B	-2	2

**Sobriquets:** Children of the Sea, Croc Men, Deep Delvers, Sea Hunters

**Concepts:** Deadly assassin, cunning thief, clever seaman

**YOU WON'T BELIEVE WHAT I HAVE TO SHOW YOU, CAPTAIN.**

# PTEROK



In the time before the Primordial War, the Northern Dragon Kings, winged reptiles called the Pterok, ruled the skies unequivocally. They built their homes atop great mountain peaks and flew down to the human villages below to govern the subjects the gods set them over. When the gods warred against the Primordials, their servants decimated the Pterok. The few who survived had to share the skies with sorcery-created flying creatures, Exalted skyships and aerial chariots forever after.

The Pterok are decent craftsmen, and they have a deep and abiding love of beautiful things. They take great care and pride in crafting their mountain homes and their artifacts, ensuring that both exhibit the exceptionally clean, elegant lines that have come to be associated with Pterok work. And though they admire beauty, they do not indulge in ornamentation of any kind in their homes, so their dwellings' interiors are what humans would consider spartan. In fact, some humans have been known to mistake Pterok homes for well-preserved ruins, devoid of decoration or earthly treasures as they are.

In fact, the only treasures Pterok find of interest are items of the First Age and books of all kinds. Many Northern Dragon Kings devote their lives to studying the artifacts and relics of the past. They eagerly join expeditions to lost cities and painstakingly study and preserve the items they recover from such sites. They often use their crystalline technology to make found books imperishable. (Older tomes created by the ancient Pterok are already preserved in enchanted crystal plates, as their scholars knew they wanted their treasured knowledge to withstand the test of time).

One hundred or more of the most talented Pterok scholars reside in the Celestial City of Yu-Shan. These serve as scribes and personal historians to the gods. The gods often praise their work for its meticulousness and its ornate calligraphy. Few calligraphers in Creation can rival the work of skilled Pterok.

In addition to studying the past, the Pterok are noted occultists and magicians as well. They often spend their time seeking out spirits with which to converse, gaining secrets of the past.

All these scholarly pursuits might lead one to believe the Pterok are docile creatures only interested in pursuing research, but that is far from the truth. Pterok can be just as deadly as the other Dragon King breeds. They are still predators, preferring to track their prey from above, using their acute vision to spot helpless quarry, then dive upon them swiftly, using their strong, razor-sharp teeth to rend their victims to shreds. The dives themselves are works of art, and Pterok gain status for the beauty and effectiveness of them.

**Appearance:** The Northern Dragon Kings appear as large winged reptiles. When standing, Pterok reach heights of four and a half to five and a half feet, and they lean slightly forward on bent legs. Their leathery wings span between 16 and 20 feet, though ancient Pteroks can have wingspans up



to 25 feet or more, making them fearsome sights to behold. Long-fingered, dexterous hands extend from their short arms, which only reach the center of their wings. They can fold their wings back to allow them to carry objects, to fight with weapons or to manipulate tools. The top of a Pterok's head ends in a pointy crest, which it uses for steering in flight, and a Pterok's muzzle is long and beak-like, brimming with razor-sharp teeth. Short, brightly colored feathers cover the reptiles' neck and lower body but do not cover their wings. A long, thin tail ending in a rudder-like flap completes their body.

**Breed Attributes:** The Pterok receive +2 to Dexterity and +2 to Perception.

When flying, the Pterok can ascend at a rate of (Dexterity + 4) yards a tick, and they can descend at speeds up to 10 times their ascending speed and may fly level at four times the ascending rate—typically reaching speeds between 40 and 55 miles per hour over long distances.

On land, Pterok are not as swift. They move as normal, but their dash speed is only (Dexterity + 3 - current wound penalties - armor mobility penalty) yards a tick.

A Pterok's hard, leathery hide grants them an extra +1L/1B of soak. Because of their unusual form, these Dragon Kings may not use generic weapons and armor. Instead, these must be specifically designed for them. Additionally, their

wing-attached arms make it difficult to use tools, lock picks, musical instruments or small implements not specifically made for them. When the Pterok do not use such items, they suffer a -1 internal penalty to all required rolls. With their own tools, however, Pterok can be master craftsmen, and few can rival their skill with a calligrapher's brush. (Note, members of other races who attempt to use Dragon King tools likewise suffer a -1 internal penalty to all required rolls to use them.)

**Breed Abilities:** Pterok excel in athletics and scholarship, and they are quite adept at dealing with spirits. They have a natural affinity with Athletics, Lore and Occult.

**Breed Paths:** The Celestial Air Path, The Clear Air Path

**Innate Weapons:** Pterok cannot attack with their claws or tail. They can attack with their sharp teeth and make buffet attacks with their wings, however.

Weapon	Speed	Acc	Damage	Defense	Rate
Bite	5	+0	+3L	-	3
Wing Buffet	5	+1	+4B	+0	1

**Sobriquets:** Aerial Demons, Children of the Wind, Keepers of the Past, Sky Lords

**Concepts:** Celestial bureaucrat, heavenly scribe, scavenger lord, spirit talker

**FROM UP HERE, THE PROBLEMS FACING THE WORLD DON'T SEEM SO DAUNTING.**

Once the rulers of the wondrous jungle city of Rathess, one of the greatest cities of the First Age, the Raptok were the epitome of civilized Dragon Kings. Said to be the most human-like of all the Dragon Kings, they enjoyed music, literature, art, fine food (being omnivores) and stimulating conversation. The Raptok reveled in all the pleasures Creation had to offer, and they enjoyed living in a populous city, where socializing was commonplace. They also developed close ties and friendships with both mortals and the Exalted, whom they often accompanied into battle. During the First Age, some adventurous Raptok even abandoned their homes in Rathess to live among the other races, finding life more interesting beyond their jungle realm.

The Raptok were also widely hailed throughout Creation for their craftsmanship, especially in regard to their renowned vegetative and crystal technologies. The Exalts treasured these items, finding them both beautiful and useful. The Raptok used their mastery of these technologies to create one of the most advanced cities of their Age, and aspiring engineers still explore the ruins of Rathess in hopes of understanding and utilizing the Dragon Kings' advanced magitech to improve the lot of life in their own cities. However, without the knowledge of the Paths, they have little hope of being able to replicate these wonders.

The Raptok's social and inquisitive natures made them exceptional diplomats in their day, but like the other Dragon Kings, they were savage predators at heart so also enjoyed combat and ritualized dueling. The Raptok were ruthless, fierce warriors in battle who took pleasure in annihilating their enemies. And after a hard day's work on the battlefield, they might well wipe away the blood, drink some fine wine and discuss the great literary works of the time, all while polishing and adorning their enemies' skulls with elaborate crystal to display in their battle shrines.

After the Solar Deliberative relocated to Meru and no longer utilized the Dragon Kings as they had in the past, the Raptok of Rathess, over time, grew complacent in their studies and became more quarrelsome toward their own kind. Idleness for them led to internal conflicts and violent bloodbaths.

The peace of the First Age, which allowed them to pursue their creative arts and technologies and to experience Creation's great pleasures, ultimately failed to appease the predators' unquenchable spirit for battle. The great warriors

# RAPTOK





who had helped topple the Primordials had nothing to fight against. So they turned on each other. Bloody battles occurred in the streets of Rathess over religion, public policy and even personal disagreements. Meanwhile, time marched on around them, and after the fall of the Solars, the Dragon-Blooded abandoned the Raptok altogether as a result of the Dragon Kings' long history of alliance with the Anathema—which only heightened the problems in Rathess. The Dragon Kings had a need to be needed. Without purpose, their glory had slowly faded in the face of the power of the Exalts. Eventually, with the advent of the Great Contagion and the Fair Folk crusade that followed, the Raptok of Rathess devolved completely into the savage “stalkers,” who still lurk amid Rathess' ruined underways and collapsed towers. A rare few realize these same creatures are the once glorious Dragon Kings who built Rathess (a character must possess four or more dots in Lore to grasp this fact).

**Appearance:** The graceful, slender Raptok stand between five and six feet tall. Small scales cover their bodies, and a striking, colorful crest of feathers runs down their backs to the tip of their sinuous tails, which can extend to lengths of up to three feet. Their heads are bird-like, ending in a beak full of sharp teeth, and their foot-long necks are quite flexible. Unlike the other Dragon Kings, the Raptok's clawed hands are small and nimble, almost human-like, and allow them to use average-sized tools.

**Breed Attributes:** Raptok characters receive +1 to Strength, Dexterity, Stamina and Perception. In addition, the Raptok's tough scales add +3L/+3B to their soak.

Raptok have deft, human-like hands that end in claws. These hands are small and nimble enough to use common mortal tools and weapons, and they can manipulate small objects with ease. For this reason, this breed does not require specialized tools and weapons like the others, nor does it suffer any internal penalty when using human tools and weapons.

**Breed Abilities:** The social and nimble Raptok excel at Abilities requiring socialization and manual dexterity. They have a natural affinity with Craft, Socialize and Linguistics.

**Breed Paths:** The Growing Wood Path, The Solid Earth Path

**Innate Weapons:** Raptok can attack with their sharp teeth and claws but cannot use their tails to attack.

Weapon	Speed	Acc	Damage	Defense	Rate
Bite	5	+0	+3L	–	2
Claw	5	+1	+2L	+0	3

**Sobriquets:** Stalkers, The Walkers Among Men, The Lords of the Green

**Concepts:** Healer, magical artificer, skilled diplomat

**IF YOUR DEFTNESS OF MIND MATCHES YOUR SKILL  
IN BATTLE, WE MAY YET BE FRIENDS.**



SIR? SIR! SAY SOMETHING!

YOUR CAPTAIN CAN SAY NOTHING.



YOUR SHIP IS MINE. HAVE YOU ANYTHING TO SAY?



# CHAPTER THREE PATHS OF DRACONIC ENLIGHTENMENT

The supernatural powers, or Steps, of the Dragon Kings are different from Exalted Charms in several key ways. First, they are never stand-alone. Dragon King Steps are each part of a Path of Draconic Enlightenment. Every Path consists of six Steps of increasing power. When a character starts down one of these Paths, she learns the first Step on the Path. Once she has mastered the first, she may learn the second. The second leads to the third, and so on. The number of Steps on a particular Path that a Dragon King has mastered is known as her Path rating.

Dragon King Steps do not have Ability requirements. The first Step on a Path requires Essence 1. The second and third Steps require Essence 2. The fourth and fifth Steps require Essence 3. The final Step at the apex of each Path requires Essence 6.

While most Exalted Charms are unique techniques or powers gained through training, they do not necessarily imply any mental or philosophical qualities other than knowledge of how to use them. The Paths of the Dragon Kings, on the

other hand, represent not training, but philosophical experience and enlightenment. Dragon Kings begin their lives as predatory animals. They use their experience, natural predisposition, wisdom and learning to come to grasp the Paths and gain their powers. Each Path, in turn, has a unique message that helps a Dragon King to become wiser, more refined and more powerful. The Paths of Draconic Enlightenment are just as their name suggests. High Essence Dragon Kings with no Path mastery simply do not exist (though such a thing is not mechanically forbidden).

Excluding exceptions such as supernatural martial arts, Dragon Kings may not invent their own Steps. Every Step that they can normally master is part of one of the 15 Paths spelled out in this chapter.

Dragon Kings do not have Excellencies. Many Dragon King Steps do add dice to rolls involving certain actions, but **Path Steps do not have a universal system governing how many motes must be spent or the maximum number of dice that can be gained.** Most Dragon King Steps that add

dice have a maximum addition equal to the Dragon King's Path rating for the Path in question. Certain combinations, however, can end up granting a Dragon King quite a few bonus dice. Such synergies are easy for the Dragon Kings because **Path Charms never need to be made into Combos.**

Dragon Kings are not nearly as powerful or flexible when it comes to bonuses from the Charms of others. **If a Dragon King receives bonus dice or successes from non-Path Charms, her maximum total die bonus equals the Ability governing the roll,** even if she uses Path Steps to augment the roll as well. She may only add half as many successes, because each success added to a roll is the equivalent of two dice. Furthermore, **non-Path Charms such as supernatural martial arts must be Comboed normally,** but Path Steps can still be used freely during a Combo of which they are not a part.

Dragon King Steps have different mechanical and descriptive themes from Solar Charms. Their Paths focus on harnessing relatively narrow philosophical or religious powers and using primal elements to achieve highly physical, raw magical effects. They don't excel at leadership as the Lawgivers do, nor scholarship, nor mass warfare. Also, while Solar Charms commonly appear easy or incidental to onlookers, Dragon King Steps usually don't. Most of their Steps carry the *Simple* type, and a great many also carry the *Obvious* keyword. They do not look easy. Dragon King Steps

are usually meditative efforts, often involving mantras in High Holy Speech or complicated mudras and postures.

## THE FIRST STEP

**Obtaining the first Step of a non-favored Path always requires instruction of some kind.** Only someone who has mastered at least the first five Steps of a given Path may provide such assistance. However, those with the proper wisdom to impart may train multiple students simultaneously, and even the tantras and sutras of such (possibly long dead) individuals are sufficient to allow initiation into a Path. Written lessons simply don't count as tutored training when determining training times.

## PATHS OF VIRTUE AND LEAPING AHEAD

Once a Dragon King has taken her first Step down a Path, it's a slow and difficult road fraught with perils to hinder her progress. Along the way, trials and tribulations give way to positive experiences that serve to strengthen Virtues. Each Path has a particular Virtue that most fully characterizes its lessons. Dragon Kings walking Paths often find these Virtues increasing over time as they become more important in their training.

Occasionally, people in **Exalted** exceed normal limitations to achieve momentary brilliance through their Virtues. The Dragon Kings can even potentially activate Steps they have not yet mastered. Only Steps coming next along







Paths that a Dragon King is currently walking are eligible. The Dragon King attempts to use the power as though she could use it normally, then her player spends a Willpower point to activate the Virtue associated with the Path of the Step. Instead of adding dice, the Virtue activation allows the Dragon King to attempt the feat of enlightenment. The Dragon King's player rolls the Virtue in question, and on a success, the Step activates. If the roll fails, then the character must still take any action the Step requires.

*For Example: Rek is an Anglok with only the first Step of the Flickering Fire Path. His player wishes Rek to use the second Step along the Path, Fiery Prowess, to strike his enemy. Fiery Prowess is a Supplemental Charm that can enhance an attack, so Rek makes his attack, and his player spends a point of Willpower to activate Valor (the Virtue associated with the Flickering Fire Path). He rolls Rek's Valor (four dice, but scores no successes. The Dragon King's attack still concludes normally, but the Step does not enhance it. The player marks off one of Rek's Valor channels. Unfortunately, since the attempt counts as activating a Virtue, he can't spend any more Willpower to enhance the attack.*

*Rek also possesses the first two Steps of the Blazing Fire Path, but they are no help to him. After his first attack fails, he decides to try for the next Step along the Path, Bolt of Fire. Its type is Simple. Since the Blazing Fire Path is also associated with Valor, Rek's player spends another Willpower and another Valor channel. He rolls Rek's Valor (four dice), but though odds favor success, he fails again. The Simple action still happens, so Rek's DV decreases by one for the next six ticks, but all his chanting and centering rituals have no effect.*

Path rating does not go up (even momentarily) when a Dragon King activates a Virtue to Leap Ahead. Calculations based on Path rating use the character's normal value.

## MARTIAL ARTS, SORCERY AND NECROMANCY

Dragon Kings may learn Terrestrial Martial Arts styles. Several methods exist to enlighten them to perceive and utilize the Essence of the Bulb of the Perfected Lotus and to use martial arts Charms of the Celestial level. However, such enlightenment always comes from an outside source because no Paths assist such a feat.

Dragon Kings may also learn Terrestrial Circle Sorcery. Mastering the art is usually as difficult as it is for a Dragon-Blood, typically requiring years of schooling.

The only known way for a Dragon King to learn necromancy is through advancement along the Tormented Bodhisattva Path (see pp. 71-72).

## THE TEN PATHS OF PREHUMAN MASTERY

These Ten Paths were created along with the Dragon Kings themselves. They represent the ten ways of elemental enlightenment that progress the Dragon Kings toward the ultimate glory of the Unconquered Sun and the one truth of the celestial order.

They are now known as the Ten Paths of Prehuman Mastery to differentiate them from the Dark Paths, which were introduced to the Dragon Kings through the emergence of the unholy elements of the Underworld. Thus, the Dark Paths are a consequence of the Primordial War—a devastating massacre for the Dragon Kings, fought primarily by and for Exalts, who are human.

Today, the Unconquered Sun is silent. Without the religious infrastructure of the First Age, few Dragon Kings are able to proceed beyond the basic principles of one or two Paths. Those who do are usually individually tutored by an enlightened teacher.

## THE CELESTIAL AIR PATH

**Favored Breed:** Pterok

**Associated Virtue:** Temperance

The way of celestial air is the way of the spirit chakra. Its teachings reveal truths of breath and Essence beyond the normal range of existence. By opening herself to the wisdom of spirit, the Dragon King becomes attuned to the elemental will of Gaia and the celestial order of the Unconquered Sun.

The Steps of this Path help the Dragon King to be like and deal with spirits. She learns first to perceive spirits, then to interact with them physically. Further teachings allow the adept to open spiritual doorways. She may eventually learn to draw on her Gaian nature to summon elementals. The master gains the ability to dematerialize herself and others. The Transcendent Dragon of Celestial Air controls the chasm of the material, giving her incredible power over what can be seen and felt and what cannot.

During the First Age, walkers of this Path were the greatest shaman of the Dragon Kings and the ones most often chosen to be vessels of powerful spirits. Today, the Celestial Air Path is common only amongst the Dragon Kings of Yu-Shan, though a few nomadic Northern tribes of Pterok have shown an affinity for it.

### • PIERCING THE CELESTIAL VEIL

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** One scene

Opening her Essence to the spiritual plane, the Dragon King using this Step perceives immaterial beings as though they were material. They register to every sense except touch. If the Dragon King's Path rating is greater than an immaterial creature's Essence, it also identifies them as immaterial.

If an immaterial being with an Essence score greater than the Dragon King's Path rating inhabits a material host, the Dragon King perceives only the spiritual form. For example, if a demonic leech possesses a mortal, then the Dragon King perceives the leech, and not the host, though the two probably communicate as one. The only exception comes through the use of the spirit Charm Ride. If a spirit and a host have formed a complete union with that Charm, then the entity perceived by this power appears to be a graceful amalgam of the two.

## •• TOUCH THE CELESTIAL FORM

**Cost:** 3m or 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2;  
**Type:** Reflexive or Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK or Combo-Basic  
**Duration:** Instant or One Scene

By flooding her chakras with celestial breath, the Dragon King may physically interact with immaterial beings. For three motes, this Step is Reflexive and lasts only for an instant—long enough for a single attack, or to receive a touch-based Charm.

By activating this Step as a Simple Step and spending an additional Willpower, the Dragon King may interact with immaterial beings for an entire scene. In this case, she may reflexively spend three motes to cancel this Step's effects for a single instant without ending it permanently. She may do so (Path rating) times, and they don't count as Step uses.

## ••• OPEN THE CELESTIAL DOORWAY

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Obvious  
**Duration:** Instant

Surrounding herself with the ringing peals of spiritual bells, the Dragon King may enter a sanctum through its spirit door. She may bring with her a number of individuals no greater than her Path rating, so long as they all stand at the door when she uses the Step. The Dragon King and/or her associates may remain inside the sanctum indefinitely.

Any spirit with an Essence score equal to or greater than the Dragon King's may attempt to block use of this Step on its sanctum. To attempt to overcome this resistance, the Dragon King reflexively spends a Willpower, and her player rolls a number of dice equal to the character's Path rating. If (her Essence + roll successes) exceeds the spirit's Essence, then the Dragon King and her associates are free to enter.

## •••• SUMMON THE CELESTIAL SERVANT

**Cost:** 10+m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3;  
**Type:** Simple (Dramatic Action)  
**Keywords:** Obvious  
**Duration:** Special (see below)

This Step is mechanically identical to the Terrestrial Circle spell *Summon Elemental* (see **Exalted**, p. 254), except that it does not require a sorcerous ritual to perform. The action to summon the elemental requires one hour of meditation and prayer for each dot of Essence the desired elemental possesses. All of the non-sorcerous dangers (such as retaliation) and limitations (such as time limits) of *Summon Elemental* apply to the use of this Step.

Dragon Kings who summon elementals associated with their species's natural elemental affinity may summon an elemental with an Essence score lower than her (Path rating - 1) in mere seconds. In that case, instead of (elemental's Essence) hours, the summoning requires only (elemental's Essence) miscellaneous actions. Dragon Kings who have activated the Step Lithic Understanding (see pp. 50-51) can likewise summon weaker earth elementals at the enhanced rate.

## ••••• WALK THE CELESTIAL ROAD

**Cost:** Varies; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Obvious  
**Duration:** Indefinite

By filling herself with radiant celestial light and serenity, the Dragon King may spend (Essence x 5) motes to dematerialize indefinitely. The Dragon King may also dematerialize up to (Essence) willing characters within three yards. Every companion dematerialized with this Charm adds (his Essence) to the mote cost of the Charm. All companions dematerialized with this Charm must remain within three yards of the Dragon King or else they rematerialize. Also, all such companions rematerialize when the Dragon King does but may also rematerialize at will. This Step dematerializes characters once. Its effects end for a character if he or she rematerializes. The Dragon King must be material to dematerialize others. Those under the effect of this Step do not need to eat, drink or breathe while dematerialized.

## ••••• BAR THE DOORWAY OF THE GODS

**Cost:** 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Obvious  
**Duration:** One scene or indefinite

Taking the chasm of the material into the domain of her celestial chorus, the Dragon King controls what may or may not materialize and dematerialize. She may reflexively deny materialization and/or dematerialization to any objects, structures and creatures within a horizontal radius equal to her (Path rating x 10) yards, stretching vertically into infinity. She may also seal off sanctum doors to those she chooses, from either side. Creatures with Essence scores greater than the Dragon King's Path rating may spend one Willpower to defy this Step for a single action. The Dragon King may make broad, sweeping statements about who is affected in what ways, using triggers or passwords of any kind, so long as they are objective. However, she does not automatically detect specific presences. The Step's area of affect moves with the Dragon King.

Furthermore, spirits who are killed within the area of effect of this Step are treated as though the Dragon King was a god who had slain them (see **The Books of Sorcery, Vol. IV—The Roll of Glorious Divinity I**, p. 19). She can bind or slay them permanently.

If this Step is used to affect a manse or demesne to which the Dragon King is attuned, it affects any areas of the Dragon King's choosing within the manse's range or the demesne's area of influence.

If this Charm is activated at the culmination of a 10-minute meditation ritual, the Dragon King creates five immaterial crystals that fly outward on beams of light, forming a pentagonal boundary of immaterial light. These stones hover level to the Dragon King and spin silently, fueling the Step's power. They have no soak and require only a single health level to destroy, but while all five last, so does the Step. This region has 10 times the Charm's normal radius, but it does not move with the Dragon King.

## THE CLEAR AIR PATH

**Favored Breed:** Pterok

**Associated Virtue:** Compassion

The way of clear air is the way of the third eye. Its teachings reveal the power of stillness and caring. By opening herself to the bittersweet beauty of her own predatory place in nature, the Dragon King sees through the world and reads sutras written in Essence, finding joy and wisdom in the coolness of a snake's scales and the rhythm of the falling rain.

The Steps of this Path help the Dragon King to perceive through the lens of the hunter. She learns first to heighten her senses, then to open her senses to Essence. Further teachings allow the adept to link her perceptions to her predatory instincts. She may eventually learn to find the essential hearts of all things, where weakness waits. The master gains the ability to find answers in the softest currents of secret Essence. The Transcendent Dragon of Clear Air cuts through all deceptions and sees all hidden things.

During the First Age, walkers of this Path were the greatest hunters of their kind, providing food for their people, defending settlements from their enemies and tracking down criminals. Today, the basic principles of this Path are practiced by most migratory Pteroks, who would never imagine the depths of its noble wisdom.

### • CLARITY OF (SENSE)

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One scene

Smiling wryly at the unnoticed messages of the world around her, the Dragon King heightens her awareness. When this Charm is purchased, the Dragon King's player chooses sight, hearing and touch, or smell and taste to be heightened. This Step functions as the Solar Charm Keen (Sense) Technique (see *Exalted*, pp. 225-226) for the sense(s) in question. While the Step is active, she may reflexively pay one mote to change the chosen sense(s) this Step covers.

### •• SEE THE WINDS OF ESSENCE

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One scene

Awakening her to the Essence flows around her, this Step bestows all of the effects of the Solar Charm All-Encompassing Sorcerer's Sight (see *Exalted*, p. 222).

### ••• VISIONS OF ATTACK AND DEFENSE

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** (Path rating) actions

As the Dragon King's instincts guide her senses, which guide her mind, add (her Path rating ÷ 2) to the character's Dodge DV. Furthermore, the character is considered to have aimed any ranged weapon that she attacks with, to the maximum extent of her ability. This usually means a +3 internal bonus to attack rolls for ranged attacks, as though the character had taken three Aim actions.

### •••• PERCEPTION OF SUBTLE FLAWS

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

Focusing her predatory instincts, the Dragon King adds her Path rating to the damage of a single attack, and the attack ignores half the soak value of the target's armor. In addition, every subsequent attack supplemented by this Step during the scene benefits from a cumulative +1 bonus to damage. If the total damage bonus from this Step exceeds the target's (Stamina + Essence), then the Dragon King may spend a point of Willpower to make the attack's damage aggravated.

Furthermore, if the target is an object or structure, double the Dragon King's damage against it.

### ••••• ANCIENT UNDERSTANDING

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Stackable, Touch

**Duration:** Instant

Guided by the light of her third eye, The Dragon King reads the sympathetic connections between things. To use this Step, the Dragon King's player chooses a question related to a person, place or thing. The Dragon King then calmly and lightly touches the target (which may require an attack roll if the target does not wish to be touched). The Dragon King then spends the required cost, and his player rolls (Path rating + Lore). This roll suffers an external penalty as severe as -5 if the question is poorly related to the target, or if the target is badly damaged. Living characters should (at minimum) apply their wound penalty as an external penalty. If the roll is successful, then the Dragon King learns the answer to a relatively simple or harmless question, such as "What is your name?" or "How long ago were you made?" More difficult, complicated, obscure or generally powerful questions require that the Step immediately be successfully reused one to five more times, as determined by the Storyteller. For instance, the Storyteller may decide that psychically probing a deathknight's daiklaive to locate the hidden stronghold of the Deathlord that forged it requires four consecutive uses. Each time the Charm is used increases the depth of the character's knowledge, until she finally realizes the specific details of what she seeks. Most secrets should require no more than four uses. Six uses uncover any secret that has not been quarantined by the Division of Secrets.

After the first use, the Storyteller tells the player of the Dragon King how many more times she'll have to use this Step, so that the player isn't stuck wasting all of her motes and Willpower on a question that she can't possibly answer. Each consecutive use of this Charm to probe deeper into a target's secrets increases the difficulty by 1, so only strong-willed and wise Dragon Kings possess the ability to discover the most powerful answers to the most difficult questions. Storytellers are urged to take care with this Step and to disallow or penalize frivolous uses on unimportant targets. The power of this Step's revelations can quickly bring an end to a series focused on investigation or secrets.





### ••••• INHUMAN CLARITY OF PERCEPTION TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** One scene

Except as noted below, this Step functions identically to the Solar Charm Eye of the Unconquered Sun (see **Exalted**, p. 226). The primary exceptions involve the Step's cost, type and keywords. Additionally, the Dragon King using it does not have an anima when this Charm is active, and she does not add her Essence in automatic successes to rolls to determine the primacy of this Step's effects.

### THE SOLID EARTH PATH

**Favored Breed:** None

**Associated Virtue:** Temperance

The way of solid earth is the way of sacred geometry. Its teachings reveal truths of inevitable progress, stoic strength and endurance. By opening himself to the lessons of timeless Ages, the Dragon King becomes as rock, shaping and redefining all stable things.

The Steps of this Path help the Dragon King to shape and affect rock and stone by becoming one with it. He learns first to commune with and easily work stone, even without tools. He then learns to quickly shape rock as though it were clay. Further teachings allow the adept to produce crystalline artifacts and manses. He may eventually learn to become rock himself. The master gains the ability to control and shape large amounts of earth by touch alone. The Transcendent Dragon of the Solid Earth moves effortlessly through earth and shaped stone, fully one with the element.

During the First Age, walkers of this Path were the builders of all Dragon King cities. They formed a worldwide guild responsible for the crystal technology and great pyramids that the Dragon Kings are still famous for in the current Age. Today, the secrets of this Path are remembered only by a handful of the Dragon Kings of Yu-Shan, where crystal is out of fashion and such powers are less important. However, many reading crystals can still be found that retain the secret teachings of the Solid Earth Path.

#### • LITHIC UNDERSTANDING

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One scene

Meditating on the Kata of Lines, the Dragon King achieves communion with the simple properties of earth. She may add her Path rating to all rolls made to understand or work with sand, rock, crystal or other raw mineral substances. This includes stone bricks and worked jewels but not refined metals or the magical materials. This Step also cancels the penalty to Craft rolls suffered by Dragon Kings who lack manual dexterity as long as they are working the pertinent substances. Furthermore, this Step allows characters to work even the hardest stone without any sort of tools,

suffering no penalties while doing so. Finally, Dragon Kings with this power active may attune to crystalline artifacts instantly and reflexively, though they must still pay the normal costs to do so.

### •• SHAPE THE EARTH

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** One scene

Enacting the Kata of Fluid Angles, the Dragon King shapes solid earth like wet clay. When using her claws, she ignores the soak of stone for the Charm's duration and may accomplish in a single scene what would take a craftsman without this Charm a full day. With a miscellaneous action, the Dragon King may alter existing earth to create bridges, handholds or other simple stone shapes. She may also repair (Path rating) health levels to damaged stone objects or structures. Assuming the raw materials are available, she may even create stone wall fortifications (see **Exalted**, p. 154) at a rate of (Path rating) square yards of fortification per action spent building them, or the equivalent of a martello fortress per scene so spent.

While using this Charm, an unarmed character may block stone or crystalline weapons without a stunt and receives (Path rating) automatic successes to avoid being disarmed of such weapons.

### ••• EMPOWER CRYSTAL

**Cost:** 10m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

Utilizing the Complementary Lattice Completion Method, the Dragon King aids her occult craftsmanship with personal Essence crystal. As long as the Dragon King's Essence remains committed to the task of crystal artifact or manse design or repair, treat the artifact or manse in question as one level lower with regard to the character's efforts. For instance, crystal artifacts require fewer exotic components and are generally easier to make or repair. Manses become significantly cheaper to construct, and the whole process is greatly sped up. All Ability score requirements remain unchanged. The Dragon King committing the Essence to the project must also be the primary builder and remain on hand during the entire process. Releasing the motes powering this Charm ruins the effort.

Level-one crystalline manses can be raised by the character alone in a single year. He counts as 100 mortal builders for determining construction time and requires no outside resources. One-dot crystalline artifacts have their creation roll intervals reduced to a day. The creation roll is at difficulty 5. No exotic materials are needed. Combined with the earlier Step Shape the Earth, the Dragon King using this Step can potentially build a simple crystal artifact in one scene or raise a small manse in a week.

This Step does not assist in the construction of artifacts that require magical materials other than orichalcum or white jade. It can only help produce Earth- and Solar-aspected manses.

### •••• BECOME STONE

**Cost:** 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Obvious

**Duration:** One day

While applying the torturous Anglizing Transmutation Principle to himself, the Dragon King's body becomes stone while still yielding to his will. The character gains (Path rating x 2) lethal soak and (Path rating x 4) bashing soak. He also gains Hardness equal to these soak bonuses. The character's unarmed and melee attacks deal additional damage equal to one half the Dragon King's Path rating. He can block lethal damage while unarmed. He also becomes immune to fatigue and exhaustion, need not sleep and can work unceasingly. Until this Charm ends, the Dragon King weighs approximately 100 pounds more (which may cause problems) and can no longer swim, fly or dash.

### ••••• COMMAND THE EARTH

**Cost:** 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Touch

**Duration:** One scene

As a recognized master of the 5,000 Possibilities of Unchanging Things, the Dragon King forces the earth to move with a touch alone. While in contact with the ground, he may reflexively create earth tremors radiating (Path rating x 20) yards, generating an external penalty of -3 to all actions and making dash actions impossible without a stunt or the use of a Charm. Structures in the radius suffer one health level of damage per tick, to a maximum of (Path rating x 20) health levels in one scene. These quakes are not completely under the character's control, and he is not automatically immune to their effects.

The Dragon King may also command earth and stone to move, repairing structures or creating entirely new ones. He may repair and create structures as though he were using Shape the Earth (see above) and need only touch any part of the structure or the nearby earth. While touching an earth-based structure, the Dragon King may deal to it (Path rating x 4) health levels of damage with a single miscellaneous action if she does nothing else.

This Step is too slow to be used for attacks, but it can cause massive changes to the area. Over the course of a scene, the Dragon King can wall off an army, build a small castle, dig a new route for a river or just raise a giant obelisk. Though with just a scene this Step can reproduce the work that it would take a team of 100 mortals to accomplish in a day, it cannot create detail or work with extreme precision. Walls are rough and cannot be made with intricate crenellations or arrow slits. Dwellings are structurally functional, but that's all. For these reasons, this Step can't help speed manse construction.


### ••••• UNITY WITH EARTH AND STONE

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One scene





Having walking to the summit of this Path, stone becomes the Dragon King's plaything. He becomes completely immune to all stone- or earth-based attacks, damage and penalties. He has nothing to fear from stone weapons, cave-ins or sandstorms. He may pass through the earth as though it were air or water; he could easily walk into a stone wall and swim through it, moving or even sprinting in any direction. This can even allow him to leap out of the ground, launch an attack and duck back into it.

One clever use of this Step involves launching hand-to-hand attacks from within walls, reaching out to strike nearby opponents. In such a case, the Dragon King is only physically vulnerable if his enemies can break through the wall to hit him. Objects separated from the character while he is deep in the earth become encased until he grabs them again.

The perfect unity of this Step even allows the character to see through (Path rating) yards of earth and stone.

## THE YIELDING EARTH PATH

**Favored Breed:** None

**Associated Virtue:** Compassion

The way of yielding earth is the way of abstracted methodologies. Its teachings reveal the power of remembrance, love and gratitude. By opening himself to the desire to help and make things whole, the Dragon King finds fulfillment in the working of miracles and the glory of answered prayers.

The Steps of this Path help the Dragon King to repair things and restore the injured to health. He learns first to protect people from disease, then to mend broken objects. Further teachings allow the adept to speed natural healing. He may eventually learn to turn back the damaging effects of time. The master gains the ability to heal almost any disease, condition or damage suffered by himself or others. The Transcendent Dragon of Yielding Earth can fix and completely renew absolutely anything, if he is willing to pay the price.

During the First Age, walkers of this Path were public servants—often members of powerful theocracies but occasionally free agents plying their skills where they felt the most needed. Today, the Yielding Earth Path has been all but wiped out by the Division of Endings, who deemed that its most powerful techniques were dangerous to the established order. Those few Dragon Kings vowing to retain its secrets have fled to hidden places and use their powers with extreme caution.

### • BALM OF HEALTH

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Touch

**Duration:** Instant

Using ancient methods, the Dragon King empowers himself or another with supernatural fortification against disease and infection. If the target's player must roll for the target to resist disease or infection during the next day, this Charm will aid him. If the target is mortal, her player may roll to shrug off disease or infection as if the target was an Exalt. If the target is Exalted, or otherwise possesses Exalt-like resistance to disease, then this Charm adds (Path rating) dice to the (Stamina +

Resistance) roll to resist infection. This Step affects only the next roll made for the target to resist infection.

### •• REPAIR

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Touch

**Duration:** Instant

Using his highly honed instincts to guide him, the Dragon King's normal repair action restores all an item's health levels. The Dragon King must possess a Path rating equal to the object's Resource value, and his player must succeed on a (Intelligence + Craft) roll at the difficulty normally necessary to craft the object. If he lacks the Path rating or fails, then the item still *looks* like it will function, though it will break the first time it is dramatically appropriate. This Step does not repair damage from normal wear or time. It will not heal damage caused by missed maintenance. It cannot replace parts that are missing. This Charm cannot repair objects made or enhanced by Essence, artifacts or objects made of the magical materials.

### ••• SPEED HEALING

**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Obvious, Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

The Dragon King's soft assurances and firm touch speeds the target's natural healing. While this Step's Essence is committed, the target heals bashing and lethal damage at (Path rating) times his normal speed.

### •••• RESTORE

**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Obvious, Touch

**Duration:** Instant or one day

By asking the spirit of an object about its history and delving into its creation, the Dragon King is able to turn back the clock while making repairs. The supplemented repair action automatically repairs all damage and returns any mundane object to its prime, even if pieces of the object are missing. If repairs would not normally require significant Resources to perform, then the duration is instant. Otherwise, the duration is one day, and the Step ends if the Dragon King ventures more than 100 yards from the object. He may only restore mundane objects with this Step, not artifacts.

### ••••• EMPOWER HEALING

**Cost:** 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Touch

**Duration:** One week

By supplementing a healing action with a course of treatment involving leaps of logic and unfathomable methodologies, the Dragon King may heal nearly any infirmity or injury and reinforce the target against further harm. Whenever the target suffers damage or experiences a Crippling, Poison or Sickness effect (including those already present), the Dragon King's player rolls a number of dice equal to his character's (Intelligence + Medicine), at a difficulty determined by the potency of the effect. Crippling, Poison and Sickness effects



range from difficulty 1 to difficulty 5 (or occasionally higher). A Poison's difficulty is equal to its Toxicity. A Sickness's difficulty is equal to its Untreated Morbidity if it is untreated, or Treated Morbidity if it is successfully treated. A Crippling effect's difficulty is determined by its severity, as determined by the Storyteller, but generally ranging from 1 to 5. Only very powerful supernatural Crippling effects should exceed difficulty 5. Healing these effects requires a number of days equal to their difficulty, during which time the character's condition does not worsen. If the roll is instead successfully made to heal wounds, then the target heals from them extremely quickly. Bashing damage is difficulty 1, and all a character's bashing health levels can be completely healed in one tick. Lethal damage is difficulty 2, and it heals at one health level per action. Aggravated damage is difficulty 5, and it heals at one health level per scene.

The character cannot heal conditions or damage with a difficulty greater than her Path rating. If the Dragon King's player botches one of this Step's Medicine rolls, if its duration ends or if she withdraws her Essence, all healing ends, and negative conditions resume their normal course. Any effects that remain when the Step's effect ends cannot be healed by the same Dragon King with this Step until her Medicine score or Path rating increases.

••••• **REGAIN THE GLORY OF THE PAST**

**Cost:** 25m, 2wp; **Mins:** Essence 6;

**Type:** Simple (Dramatic Action)

**Keywords:** Obvious, Shaping, Touch

**Duration:** One scene or indefinite

Using the ideal of an object as his template, the character may repair almost anything, restoring it to the beautiful way that it once was. The Dragon King must possess at least a tiny part of something that has been in better shape. It must be a basically physical, single thing, that is not made up of multiple sophisticated things, but anything is possible within those limitations.

The repair requires a full scene of dedicated concentration while nobody else observes or interferes. At the end of the scene, the target is repaired, despite all logic. All parts that the Dragon King did not possess to incorporate into the repairs vanish (or become henceforth unrelated to the target). All that remains is to explain to the pattern spiders exactly *how* it was done.

If regular old repairs could've done the job, then the explanation is simple enough. Reality waves its hand. If the target requires prerequisites to repair or rebuild that the Dragon King could not possibly possess, or if time itself was rewound, then reality calls for an explanation.

In that case, the Dragon King must continue to commit the Essence powering the Step while embarking on a spiritual quest determined by the Storyteller. The quest should overlap with the current story to avoid removing the character from the series. If the character maintains her commitment and completes the quest, then all is well. Otherwise, the target is

once again broken, and he may not attempt another repair unless his Essence (somehow) increases.

**THE BLAZING FIRE PATH**

**Favored Breed:** Anklok

**Associated Virtue:** Valor

The way of blazing fire is the way of trial by fire. Its teachings reveal the glory of idealistic devotion and unmitigated passion. By opening and devoting herself to the arduous road of righteousness and purity, the Dragon King burns away weakness and doubt as she burns away her enemies.

The Steps of this Path allow the Dragon King to create and control fire. She first learns to generate light, then Essence-fueled fire. Further teachings allow the adept to project bolts of fire. She may eventually learn to command even large fires with her will alone. The master gains the ability to project enormous Essence-fueled bonfires that can quickly ignite her enemies. The Transcendent Dragon of Blazing Fire can instantly start great mystical fires anywhere that she can touch.

During the First Age, walkers of this Path were warriors and priests. Every fire was an observance of their valiant sacrifices. Today, the Blazing Fire Path in Yu-Shan has been reduced to a set of esoteric devotions. In Creation, it has become nothing more than strange lights occasionally emitted by angry Anklok.

• **FIRST LIGHT**

**Cost:** 1m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Touch

**Duration:** One scene

The Dragon King lights the way. She causes any part of herself or a touched object to glow, brightly illuminating the area around for 10 yards. In very brightly lit areas, a character carrying the target around unconcealed suffers a -2 external penalty to Stealth rolls to hide. In dark areas, such an unconcealed object makes normal stealth impossible.

•• **LESSER CONJURATION OF FLAME**

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Touch

**Duration:** One scene

The Dragon King's fury boils up through her flesh and covers a part of herself or a touched target in a medium-sized heart's flame (see "Playing with Fire," p. 55). If the Dragon King ignites her natural weapons, the damage from the flames is not applied separately but added directly to her normal damage. In that case, it also is considered a part of her and cannot be controlled by any outside force.

••• **BOLT OF FIRE**

**Cost:** 1m per 2L; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

The Dragon King passionately discharges her rage and casts it off as a spear of golden flame. Use her (Dexterity + Thrown) to target the bolt, which has an accuracy bonus equal to her Path rating. The bolt has a maximum range equal



to (Path rating x 20) yards and suffers no accuracy penalties out to that range. Damage from the attack equals 2L per mote spent creating the flame, plus attack successes. No more than (Path rating) motes may be spent in this way.

By spending an additional three motes when using this Step, the attack creates a medium-sized heart's flame (see "Playing with Fire," opposite) where it strikes, which burns for (Path rating) actions unless extinguished.

#### ●●●● COMMAND FIRE

**Cost:** 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One scene

The Dragon King's burning heart communes with the fire, allowing her to direct and control it. The character chooses a source of fire no larger than a bonfire or a section of a larger fire of equivalent size within (Path rating x 20) yards. She becomes immune to harm from that fire and may use one miscellaneous action during each of her actions to direct the flame in one of the following ways:

- She may cause the flame to change size by one category or extinguish a small fire.
- She may direct the flame not to harm anything that it otherwise would. It will obey her until she directs otherwise.
- She may cause the flame to move as far as (Path rating x 2) yards per tick. Characters in the path of this flame may attempt to dodge out of its way if there is room to do so. This requires a reflexive (Dexterity + Dodge) roll at a difficulty 1 for a small flame,

difficulty 2 for a medium flame or difficulty 3 for a large flame. Characters who fail this roll suffer damage from the fire.

- She may direct the fire to attack a single target near or within the fire. The range of this attack is one yard for a small flame, three yards for a medium flame or 10 yards for a large flame. The character uses (Wits + Path rating) to target the attack, which is subject to multiple action penalties. Medium fires have an accuracy bonus of +1. Large fires have an accuracy bonus of +3. If the target of the attack is already being burned by the fire, then the attack cannot be dodged or blocked. Successes from the attack add to this damage, but armor applies to it as well.

Command Fire can be used to control heart's flame (see "Playing with Fire," opposite), which acts like a normal fire while controlled. If the fire is extinguished, then this Step ends. The character may control as many as (Path rating) fires at once through repeated use of this Step and may use a miscellaneous action on each when she acts. Only one commanded fire may actually occupy the space of a particular target at once, but all fires within range can issue attacks.

#### ●●●● IMMOLATION

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

Releasing the purest fire within, the Dragon King projects an orb of golden devotion, which explodes into a large heart's flame (see "Playing with Fire," opposite) upon impact



## PLAYING WITH FIRE

For the purposes of this Path, fire comes in three sizes: small, medium and large. Small fires are smaller than a torch's flame. Medium fires are around the size of a campfire and can burn large portions of a person. Large fires are around the size of a bonfire and can completely contain a single person. Anyone wishing to touch someone within a bonfire or attack them with a non-reach melee weapon must enter its area of affect. Anyone emerging from a bonfire is burning. The amount of fire still on them constitutes a medium fire in itself.

Small fires deal one die of damage to creatures that they touch. Medium fires deal two dice of damage. Large fires deal four dice of damage. This damage is lethal. Objects or creatures being burned by these fires suffer damage from an environmental hazard, as indicated below.

Type	Damage	Trauma
Small Fire	1L/action	1
Medium Fire	2L/action	2
Large Fire	4L/action	3

Small fires burn away only very combustible materials. Medium fires will burn away wooden objects but usually require at least a scene to do so. Large fires will quickly consume most light wooden objects within one minute, dealing one health level of damage every five ticks. This damage can destroy most wooden structures in a single scene.

Putting out a small or medium fire usually requires a miscellaneous action. For a small flame, no roll is necessary. Putting out a medium fire with water is automatic, but stamping it out, rolling around or using clothing to smother it requires a miscellaneous action and a successful (Wits + Athletics or Resistance) roll. Stronger measures must be taken to affect large fires. A great deal of water is usually necessary for the attempt, and a miscellaneous action using a (Wits + Athletics or Resistance) roll at difficulty 3 (or higher for even larger fires) is needed just to stop a fire from advancing in a particular direction. Keep in mind that fire goes where the wind blows.

Some fire created by this Path is a magical type known as heart's flame. It differs from normal fire in that its size and heat are not determined by the amount or type of fuel that it consumes. As a matter of fact, it does not *need* to burn anything at all. Heart's flame may continue to burn away even on unburnable substances, such as metal. However, heart's flame can still be put out by most normal methods. It needs air to burn. Water will douse it. Rolling on the ground will still extinguish the flame on oneself. Its burning is simply unaffected by what it is or is not burning. It also needs to be based on a solid or liquid, like most normal fire does. In short, it is a magical fire that appears to act in all ways like normal fire, except that it can be found or created on unusual substances. Heart's flame does not harm the Dragon King who created it. Heart's flame does spread; however, any fire started by it is just normal fire. When the Step used to create heart's flame ends, it becomes normal fire. With nothing to burn, it goes out.

that burns for (Path rating x 3) actions. The attack uses the same system as Bolt of Fire above, except that it cannot be parried and can only be dodged by targets that have the space to escape the area of effect.

### ●●●●● TOUCH OF BLAZING FIRE

**Cost:** 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Obvious, Touch

**Duration:** One scene

One with the single-minded purity of flame, the Dragon King becomes immune to fire's effects (even those of magical fires) and can reflexively set ablaze anything she touches. A fire thus created is heart's flame (see "Playing with Fire," above). It can be small, medium or large. Regardless of its size, it can be made to burn with heat as soft as a candle's touch or as destructive as a bonfire's wrath.

Furthermore, while this Step is in effect, any heart's flame created by the Dragon King is invested with her righteousness. It will not burn anyone who shares with her an Intimacy based on pure love (for a common other, not for each other). Nor will it burn things that were deliberately

built to be used in service of such an Intimacy. It deals aggravated damage to anyone toward whom the Dragon King possesses an Intimacy based on hatred or anger, as well as creatures of darkness. Philosophical or religious Intimacies overrule mundane ones when there is a conflict. Motivations are treated like Intimacies and overrule them as well.


Finally, by spending a point of Willpower when creating a heart's flame, the character may cause it to remain as such forever. Only after its target has burned away will the fire die out naturally. Such fires may exist for centuries or longer on stone floors, providing free light and heat, or perpetually powering machines. These fires carry the righteousness of ancient priests and are used for ritual tests of purity by some peoples.

## THE FLICKERING FIRE PATH

**Favored Breed:** Anklok

**Associated Virtue:** Valor

The way of flickering fire is the way of pilgrimage. Its teachings reveal the power of courage and action. By opening herself to change and subduing her fear, the Dragon King takes control of her own destiny and becomes a true hero.



The Steps of this Path help the Dragon King to control her movements. She first learns to react quickly and athletically, then to perform brilliant maneuvers of true dexterity. Further teachings allow the adept to perform simultaneous actions without dividing her concentration. She may eventually learn to perform impossible feats of acrobatics with the speed of a flashing fire. The master gains the ability to save up her kinetic powers for just the right moment in order to unleash furious techniques from the middle of a whirlwind of motion. The Transcendent Dragon of Flickering Fire can move with total confidence, dodging all attacks and evading all obstacles.

During the First Age, knowledge of this Path was quite common. Because the Path's tenets were so useful and comforting to developing Dragon Kings, Anklok missionaries carried its lessons to all corners of Creation. However, incidents of recklessness blamed on the Path and a growing loathing for reckless heroism eventually led to a drastic decline in the Flickering Flame Path in non-Anklok territories. It was seen as self-aggrandizing and hubristic and became the domain of criminals and duelists. Today, many developing Dragon Kings seek out the wisdom of this Path for self-defense but come to find that it leads them into danger.

#### • FLASHING AGILITY

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** One scene

The Dragon King trades standing for reacting, her player adding the character's Path rating to all Athletics and Join Battle rolls.

#### •• FIERY PROWESS

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

The Dragon King trades failure for boldness, her player adding the Dragon King's Path rating to a single Dexterity roll. A static value derived from the character's Dexterity may be increased by (Path rating ÷ 2) instead.

#### ••• ONE FIRE, MANY FLAMES

**Cost:** 3m per additional action; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Extra Action

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant

Trading a thoughtful second for a flashing moment, the Dragon King may construct a magical flurry involving up to (Path rating - 1) physical actions.

#### •••• SPEED OF FLAME

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

Trading what's behind for what's ahead, the Dragon King travels with the blessings of movement's potential. She adds (Path rating x 2) to her Strength and Dexterity

with regard to her jumping distances and movement speeds. Furthermore, the character may navigate obstacles or cross difficult terrain, water, airspace, etc. at full speed. Also, the character is so nimble and light that water and similarly fluid liquids are no impediment and can even be useful surfaces. She may run across a still lake, soar through a rainstorm (with wings) or swim up a waterfall. Finally, whenever the Dragon King successfully dodges a melee attack that is part of a flurry, her movements can nullify any remaining attacks against her. If her Path rating is greater than the attacker's Dexterity, such attacks are lost. Reach weapons (or similarly long range melee attacks) are immune to this effect.

#### ••••• TWICE-FLICKERING FLAME

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** One scene

Trading anticipation for effectiveness, the final physical action of any natural or magical flurry the Dragon King performs does not count toward his DV penalty or multiple action penalties. The action itself suffers no multiple action penalties.

*For example: A Dragon King using this Step decides to launch a flurry involving three attacks. The first attack suffers a -2 penalty, and the second suffers a -3 penalty, as though the character were only making two attacks. Finally, her third attack uses her full dice pool. She suffers a -2 penalty to her DV, as though she had launched two attacks. Without this Charm, the Dragon King would have suffered -3, -4 and -5 to her attacks. She would then have to deal with a -3 DV penalty.*

The "free action" from this Step can be added, without Essence cost, to the end of any magical flurry, as long as the "free action" would have been a valid action in the flurry. It can even lengthen a magical flurry that already contains the maximum number of actions.

#### ••••• PERFECTION OF MOVEMENT

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

Fully trading possibility for movement, the Dragon King suffers no penalties to her DVs from the actions that she performs, from onslaught or from coordinated attacks. She also suffers no penalties at all resulting from positioning, such as penalties from lack of leverage or cover. She suffers no penalties related to balance and need take no actions nor concern herself at all with unstable footing. She may swim and climb at her full dash speed and may take any movement-based action reflexively. So long as the character can fit her head through a space, she can maneuver at full speed through it without suffering the slightest penalty while doing so. The character cannot be grappled or bound. Though she must still use normal movement methods to get around (no flying without wings, etc), she can move at full speed through any opening large enough to accommodate her head. Basically, only walls stop her or even slow her down.

## THE FLOWING WATER PATH

**Favored Breed:** Mosok

**Associated Virtue:** Conviction

The way of flowing water is the way of mathematical numerology. Its teachings reveal the power of detached contemplation and creative analysis. By opening herself to the true facts of Creation on a grand scale, the Dragon King learns to bypass the most daunting “limitations.”

The Steps of this Path help the Dragon King to manipulate her location. She first learns to hold onto wherever she is, then to move in impossible directions. Further teachings allow the adept to reach through solid barriers. She may eventually learn to step completely through such barriers. The master gains the ability to actually teleport, even to places that she cannot see. The Transcendent Dragon of Flowing Water can open portals connecting distant places that others may travel through.

During the First Age, walkers of this Path were merchants, criminals and politicians. Many of the most prominent and wealthy Dragon Kings throughout the Age were advocates of the Path of Flowing Water. Today, even the initial lessons of this Path are lost on most Dragon Kings. A few animalistic Mosok have picked up the basic lessons, but only ambition triggers the true power of this Path.

### • CLINGING PUDDLE STYLE

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** One scene

It's easy for the Dragon King to remain where she is. The Dragon King can walk across solid surfaces regardless of angle, so long as a surface can support her weight, and her player adds (Path rating) successes to rolls for the character to resist knockdown and knockback. The wall-walking effect is temporarily disabled if the Dragon King attempts a dash action, which requires more speed than the Step allows.

### •• AIR WALKING STYLE

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** Until next action

After thinking about it for a while, the Dragon King can walk on substances too weak to support her weight, such as paper, water, smoke, clouds or even air. Her move action can take her up, down, diagonally or in any other unoccupied direction. The character may reorient herself sideways in relation to the ground, upside down or any other way she chooses. She can turn air corners and generally do in three dimensions anything that she could with a move action on land. As the character's DV refreshes, she must reactivate the Step to stay afloat. Without it, the character descends, ignoring the first 10 yards of space when determining falling damage.

### ••• VAULT-BREACHING METHOD

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Touch

**Duration:** One scene

As the world bends before her piercing logic, the Dragon King may penetrate any barrier not made of the magical materials. She can't go all of the way through, but she can push any extremity through, so long as at least half of her body remains on the original side. The character's body doesn't magically lengthen or half-teleport, so she can only reach through to the other side of a barrier if it's thin enough. This Step lasts until the end of the scene or until the Dragon King completely returns to the original side.

This Step does not help the Dragon King to see through opaque solids, but she can simply push her head through a wall to see to the other side. Easily carried objects that the character possesses travel with her as she passes through, so she could grab into a locked chest to steal its contents. This property can be manipulated to allow the character to deposit small possessions within solid objects. The Dragon King may even launch attacks on the other side of a barrier from 75% cover (or 100% if she doesn't need to see), but she suffers a -1 external penalty to combat rolls from awkward positioning and cannot use her Dodge DV unless she returns to the other side of the wall (and thus ends the Step).

### •••• BARRIER BREACHING METHOD

**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Touch

**Duration:** Instant

As reality finally succumbs to her mystical reasoning, the Dragon King may move completely through any barrier not constructed of the magical materials. She simply pushes against the barrier and walks through. However, the character may not move further through solid material than she could travel with a Move action in a single tick, nor may she pass through more than (her Path rating) yards of solid material. This Step can be used while Vault-Bypassing Method is in effect, so the character may look before she leaps.

### ••••• DISTANCE IGNORING TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple


**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** Instant

Through proven division by zero, the Dragon King fades from existence and ripples into being at a destination up to (Path rating x 30) yards away. If she can clearly see where she is going, the effect works automatically. If she can't, she'll still go somewhere but not exactly where she wants. The Dragon King's player rolls (Intelligence + Path rating), difficulty 1. This roll suffers cumulative -1 external penalties if the target is extremely small, busy, cramped, unfamiliar, unlike she expects, a misestimated distance away or in a misestimated direction. The Dragon King may bring along up to (Essence x 50) pounds of material along for the ride.

On a successful roll, the character appears where she wants to be. On a failure, the character ends up somewhere nearby and cannot use this Step again until she can figure out where she is in relation to her origin or her destination. On a botch, the character finds herself in a bad spot,





teleporting high into the sky, in front of an oncoming danger or even into a solid object. The exact results are up to the Storyteller, but being shunted from a solid object causes at least 10 dice of aggravated damage, which bypasses armor. No matter what, a character who botches cannot use this Step again for the remainder of the scene.

To use this Step, the character must know where she is and must know the location of where she is going fairly well. She cannot find places if she has no idea where they are, though she can get to places even if she's a little off target.

#### ●●●●● CREATE GATEWAY

**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** (Path rating) actions

Exploiting an array of Creation's inconsistencies that are nevertheless true, the Dragon King creates a semi-permanent gateway between two distant points in space. The gateway appears as a shimmering oval disk of solid light between one and six yards in diameter. Anyone (not anything) from either side who touches the portal, willingly or not, is instantly transported to the other side. The portal lasts for (Path rating) actions or until she wills the portal to close.

One end of the gateway appears before the Dragon King. Targeting the other end uses exactly the same system as Distance Ignoring Technique above, with necessary rolls being made in secret. As a result, an overzealous Dragon King can very possibly send six of his good friends to their

doom. Successful gateways cannot connect different realms of existence, such as Creation and Yu-Shan, but botched rolls can create gateways to very bad places. Sometimes, the very bad things that live in those places can come through. Caution is advised.

If the Dragon King uses this step to or from a manse or demesne to which she is attuned, or if she activates the Charm at the culmination of a 10-minute preparatory ritual, then the maximum range of the gateway is extended to (Path rating) miles.

## THE SHIMMERING WATER PATH

**Favored Breed:** Mosok

**Associated Virtue:** Conviction

The way of Shimmering Water is the way of riddles and hallucination. Its teachings reveal the power of assumptions and perspective. By opening himself to the lessons of belief and denial, the Dragon King learns to forge a new reality of misdirected perceptions.

The Steps of this Path help the Dragon King to disguise and obscure. He first learns to go unnoticed, then to become something other than what he is. Further teachings allow the adept to drastically alter his appearance. He may eventually learn to turn completely invisible. The master gains the ability to precisely and radically disguise almost anyone or anything. The Transcendent Dragon of Shimmering Water can precisely and powerfully influence the perceptions of everyone nearby in almost any way.





During the First Age, this Path was feared and shunned. Teaching it was usually forbidden, and private tutelage was generally done in secret. However, the Path's usefulness was undeniable. Criminals, guilds and governments alike made secret use of specially trained shimmering water operatives. Today, the Shimmering Water Path is invaluable to Dragon Kings who wish to travel through human areas without drawing attention. Some Mosok in the West have opened themselves to its secrets, and a few enlightened ones can be found (with difficulty) traveling in less organized cities there.

• **AVERTING THE EYES**

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-Basic  
**Duration:** One scene

Cloaking herself in fabricated normalcy, the Dragon King achieves an effect identical to the Solar Charm Easily Overlooked Presence Method (see *Exalted*, p. 230).

•• **VISAGE OF THE NEW FACE**

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Obvious  
**Duration:** One day

Lacing her Essence with wild stereotypes and subtle fears, the Dragon King assumes the guise of any reptilian creature with two arms and two legs that is no more than 50% larger or smaller than herself. She appears as a non-specific member of the species, but she may also attempt her own disguise to impersonate specific members of her new apparent species. This guise is not an illusion, but it does not provide any of the powers or mechanical benefits of the new form. It works as an instant disguise that automatically scores a threshold equal to the character's (Path rating + 5).

••• **GUISE OF THE NEW FORM**

**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Obvious  
**Duration:** One day

With a cunning application of insanity, the Dragon King affects a guise in a manner much like with Visage of the New Face, except that she may become any humanoid creature no more than 50% larger or smaller than herself.

•••• **UNSEEN FORM TECHNIQUE**

**Cost:** 4m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Obvious  
**Duration:** One scene

Artfully distracting the Essence of observation, the Dragon King becomes invisible. The results of his actions (opening doors, tracks, etc) are still visible, but he is not. Anyone attempting to notice or target the character suffers an external penalty of -2. If the Dragon King stands still, the external penalty to find him worsens to -4. Unless the Dragon King deliberately makes his location known, it always requires a roll to find him. This roll usually benefits from a bonus of +1 to +3 if onlookers know that he couldn't have gotten far since they last noticed him.

••••• **VEIL OF DECEPTION**

**Cost:** 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Illusion, Touch  
**Duration:** One scene

With impossibility in hand and insanity on her tongue, the Dragon King may instantly disguise any person or object as virtually any other person or object no smaller than a cat nor larger than a moose. This Charm does not disguise the nature of the target's actions and does not actually change her size or shape. It is an illusion. Observers whose MDV is greater than the Dragon King's Path rating may spend four Willpower to see the target for what she truly is. This is reduced to one Willpower if the target acts out of character. If the Dragon King attempts to create an exact appearance by memory, then he must make a disguise roll, but the final difficulty is always 1. The Dragon King may use this Step on himself.

•••••• **PERFECTION OF ILLUSION**

**Cost:** 7m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Illusion  
**Duration:** (Path rating) actions

By stunning reality and taking over where it left off, the Dragon King manipulates what everyone perceives about the area around her for 100 yards. Everyone perceiving into that radius from outside it is subject to her uniform, though potentially dramatic description of it but is otherwise safe. Anyone within whose MDV is lower than the Dragon King's Path rating can be made to truly experience the full magnitude of her whims. She can determine who perceives what, and to what extent. She can make them see/feel/etc just about anything. At the extreme, this can make virtually any actions impossible and can easily cause severe long-term mental damage or addiction. To those whose MDV is not lower than the Dragon King's Path rating, the scene cannot be made so dramatically different as to cause more of an internal penalty than the Dragon King's Path rating and an external penalty of half that. Four Willpower can be spent to pierce the illusions. If the illusions are pointed out as such or seem impossible, or if a successful roll of (Perception + Awareness) is made at a difficulty equal to the Dragon King's Path rating, then the cost to pierce the illusions drops to one Willpower.


**THE GROWING WOOD PATH**

**Favored Breed:** Raptok

**Associated Virtue:** Compassion

The way of growing wood is the way of living auras and vibrations. Its teachings reveal the simple beauty of life. By opening himself to the joy of living, growing and loving Creation, the Dragon King finds bliss and brilliance in the beauty of a single leaf.

The Steps of this Path help the Dragon King to control and empower plants and communicate with their spirits. He first learns to understand and precisely cultivate plants, then to strengthen and protect them. Further teachings allow the



adept to cultivate magical plants and even Wood-aspected menses. He may eventually learn to rapidly use plants to his advantage in a variety of ways. The master gains the ability to drastically alter plants in very powerful ways and to empower their spirits to animate them. The Transcendent Master of Growing Wood can become one with plants in body and spirit, moving through them and replenishing himself with their vitality.

During the First Age, walkers of this Path were artists and scientists. Though they were occasionally skilled craftsmen, practitioners of the Shaping Earth Path and their constructions were more reliable. This Path was usually no more than a liberal road to self-fulfillment, but some advanced and unappreciated Dragon Kings saw in it vast scientific potential. Today, Raptok who manage to make decent existences for themselves occasionally awaken to the Path's basic lessons, and more advanced Dragon Kings in Rathess utilize it toward destructive ends. The Growing Wood Path has always been rare outside of the East.

#### • VERDANT UNDERSTANDING

**Cost:** 2m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One scene

Opening his heart to the whispered green pulse of life, the Dragon King feels plants in powerful ways. This Step is identical to the Charm Lithic Understanding (see pp. 50-51), except that it helps with plant-based materials and artifacts, not earth.

#### •• EMPOWER CULTIVATION

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Touch

**Duration:** Instant

Saturating a plant with an adoring stream of Essence, the Dragon King causes it to successfully grow despite extremely poor conditions. The plant requires much less sunlight, water and other nutrients and can grow in cramped places and awkward positions. With this Step, pine trees can be grown in the desert, and small trees will flourish in the darkest jungle. Plants that would normally require the Wyld to survive can also be reinforced with this Step to grow in Creation.

#### ••• EMPOWER PLANTS

**Cost:** 10m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Reflexive

**Keywords:** Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

Sharing a heartfelt conversation with their least gods, the Dragon King encourages the growth of occult plant life. This Step functions identically to Empower Crystal (see p. 51), except that it benefits working with Wood-aspected menses of a rating no higher than one half the character's Path Rating and plant-based artifacts that require none of the magical materials besides green jade.

#### •••• SHAPE PLANTS

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basis, Obvious, Touch

**Duration:** One scene

Singing idly, mixing the songs of the red with those of the green, the Dragon King may cause any plants that he is touching to reshape themselves. Trees bend, grasses tie knots, and vines can snake up free from support. This Step instinctively helps the character to move rapidly through wooded areas and to cover his tracks. In appropriate situations, it automatically grants a one-die bonus to rolls that can be assisted by mobile plants. In areas of dense plant life, this bonus increases to the character's Path rating for physical rolls.

By focusing his song, the Dragon King can speed mundane construction that requires only plant-based parts. With a single miscellaneous action, he can permanently create excellent mundane small wooden objects, so long as his Craft (Wood) score would be sufficient to do so normally. On larger or more complex projects, he can accomplish in a scene what would otherwise require a day. These constructs can be made as living parts of the plant, or new living plants themselves. This Step does not shape dead plant material, but objects can be grown to be easy to break free of the original plant. Plants with sentience or an Essence score are immune to this Charm's effects.

#### ••••• ALTER PLANTS

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Touch

**Duration:** One scene

As he embraces the teachings of Primordial Gaia, the character empowers all plants he touches with his living Essence. The Dragon King may instantly and perfectly communicate with the spirits of all plants he touches and may even read their minds and memories, so long as their Essence does not equal or exceed his own. The Dragon King may reflexively induce rapid growth or healing in all non-magical plants, causing approximately a year's worth of growth over a single scene and healing one health level per tick. By focusing, the character may use a full scene of contact to alter the biological properties of any plant, making it as poisonous, resilient, fast-growing, etc as any plant with which he is familiar, or more so. These new plants are designed as artifacts and require all of the Abilities that designing artifacts requires, but no resources or exotic components are needed. All work is done in one scene, within the plant. A single (Intelligence + Craft [Wood]) roll is made, with a difficulty equal to double the artifact plant's rating. Failure kills the plant. A botch creates a flawed plant and affects the plant's spirit in unpredictable ways. Artifact plants still require the things that plants require and usually need more maintenance and are much more susceptible to damage than metal or stone artifacts. Also, they will eventually die.



The character may also spend three motes and a miscellaneous action to empower the governing spirit of a touched plant with an Inhabiting Charm that allows it to physically control and move the plant. Optionally, this effect can force the spirit to do so and to obey the character's verbal commands (and mental commands for as long as he touches the plant). The plant's Physical Attributes are equal to one half the character's Path rating. The plant's Abilities are limited to the spirit's Abilities, which are usually 0 in the case of least gods. Major trees may have much more powerful spirits. All plants suffer bonuses and/or internal penalties ranging from -5 to +5 to rolls that are appropriate to the type and size of the plant involved. Vines make good clinchers, for instance, but small shrubberies don't. Normal plants typically have object soak values ranging from 0 to 6 and health levels determined by size. A huge redwood could have hundreds and hundreds of health levels. A blade of grass would have only one. A young tree might have five to ten. Plants typically do bashing damage, but large trees can do lethal damage. Plant animation ceases when this Step ends. Plants with an artifact value greater than one half the character's Path rating are likely to be too powerful for their spirits to animate, though some powerful spirits could potentially manage it.

No plant may benefit from this Step more than once in a month. Any attempt to use this Step again within that time kills the plant. Plants with an Essence score are unaffected by this Step.

#### ●●●●● PLANT WALK

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** One scene

Synchronizing himself fully with the songs of the green, the Dragon King walks in the auras of the wood. This Step is identical to the Charm Unity with Earth and Stone (see pp. 51-52), except that it allows freedom within living and dead plant material. In addition, while the Step is active, the character may (and must) interact physically with all plant spirits and wood elementals. Also, as long as the character is within living plant life, he regains one mote of Essence each tick. If the character uses this Step in conjunction with the animating force of Alter Plants above, then he may substitute his own Ability scores for those of the animating spirit for the purposes of controlling a plant that he is contained within.

### THE SHAPING WOOD PATH

**Favored Breed:** Raptok

**Associated Virtue:** Temperance

The way of shaping wood is the way of ritual markings and names. Its teachings reveal the power of understanding, appreciating and controlling oneself. By opening himself to the legends deep in his soul, the Dragon King realizes who he has been, who he is now and what he can become.

The Steps of this Path help the Dragon King to change shape into a deadlier or more useful creature. He first learns to refine and accentuate his bestial qualities, then to grow more physically versatile and powerful. Further teachings allow the adept to greatly enhance his resilience. He may even learn to temporarily become another breed of Dragon King. The master gains the ability to assume a legendary battle form. The Transcendent Dragon of Shaping Wood can become almost any creature of Creation.

During the First Age, walkers of this Path were often professional hunters or warriors. Those who advanced along it were staunch allies, dedicated to themselves and their ideals. It was often considered good practice for successful Dragon Kings to study this Path before accepting positions of power and responsibility. Today, it is common among bestial Raptok in and around Rathess. As a result of its utility, a surprising number of older Dragon Kings have also studied the Path, and most sleepers have as well.

#### ● SHAPING THE BARK

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** Indefinite

Drawing on the primal wisdom of her ancestors, the character toughens and sharpens her physical form at the expense of grace. When this Step is activated, the Dragon King decides at what level she wishes to activate it. The maximum level she can attain is equal to the character's Path rating. Benefits of escalating levels are cumulative.

Activating this Step or increasing the Step's level requires but a moment, but deactivating the Step or reducing its level requires one scene for each level that the Step's effect is taken down. Health levels gained by this Charm are not automatically healed if the Step is deactivated.

Level	Effect
1	+1B/+1L soak, -1 Appearance (min 0)
2	+1 damage with natural weapons, -1 external penalty to Dexterity
3	+1B/+1L soak, +1 damage with natural weapons, -1 Appearance (min 0)
4	+1B/+1L soak, +1 damage with natural weapons, no armor or weapons
5	+1 Stamina, +1 (-2) health level, -1 Charisma (min 0)
6	+1 Strength, +1 (-1) health level, no speech

#### ●● ALTER THE TRUNK

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2;

**Type:** Simple (Speed 8, -2 DV)

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

Assuming the undername of the Legendary Champion, the character enhances her size and flexibility. She gains 50%

additional height and reach but may squeeze through cracks no less than four inches wide. Furthermore, this adjustment adds one to Strength and Dexterity. **Common Undernames:** Atlaaki, Caltia, Octavian

••• ADAPTATION

**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-Basic  
**Duration:** One day

Assuming the scars and intername of the Unalterable Guardian, the Dragon King adds one half her Path rating to her Stamina. Also, her player adds the character's Path rating as successes to all rolls to resist environmental hazards. **Common Internames:** Leviathan, Mostath, Cecelyne

•••• FORM OF ANOTHER BREED

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-Basic  
**Duration:** One scene

Assuming the surname of a Dragon King breed, the character becomes a member of that breed. For instance, a Pterok could use this Step to become a Mosok, losing the ability to fly, Dexterity and Perception, but gaining Strength, Stamina and excellent swimming ability. Natural attacks change as well. The appearance of the character shifts enough to make her one of the new breed, but her identity is not disguised.

••••• FORM OF THE TERRIBLE ANCESTORS

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-Basic  
**Duration:** One scene

Assuming the overttitle of the Dragon Emperor, the Dragon King grows into an enormous reptilian killing machine. Her Strength and Stamina scores both increase by an amount equal to her Path rating, and she gains one -1 health level and two -2 health levels. She also adds half of her Path rating to her bashing and lethal soaks. The character's natural weapons experience similarly deadly alterations, shown below. In this state, the character cannot speak, use weapons or wear armor. All clothing and attuned artifacts transform with the character, with armor losing its armor properties and weapons losing their weapon properties. The character may automatically succeed on any Valor rolls and gains a dot of Valor for the duration. **Common Overttitle:** Arilak, Leyata, Mokrelus

	Speed	Acc	Damage	Defense	Rate
<i>Anklok</i>					
Bite	+0	+1	+7L	+2	+0
Claw	+0	+2	+5L	+0	+0
Tail	+0	+2	+4L	+0	+0
<i>Mosok</i>					
Bite	+0	+3	+6L	+2	+0
Claw	+0	+1	+4L	+1	+0
Tail	-1	+3	+6B	+2	+1





<i>Pterok</i>					
Bite	+0	+2	+6L	+0	+0
Wing	+0	+3	+5B	+2	+0
<i>Raptok</i>					
Bite	-1	+2	+5L	+0	+0
Claw	+0	+1	+5L	+0	+0

### ••••• TRANSFORMATION OF THE NEW FORM

**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** Instant or indefinite

Assuming the surname of a species, the Dragon King becomes a generic member of them. He keeps his regular traits and Steps but has the physical shape and qualities of his new species. He may also use the species's Physical Attributes and natural powers that do not rely on outside forces, though he may not understand exactly how to control all of his new capabilities (at Storyteller's discretion). The character is physically indistinguishable from and possesses all of the mannerisms and instincts of his new species, though is still in full control himself.

The Dragon King possesses the Ability to assume a number of different species (of the character's choice) equal to his Path rating. They may be any species that he has ever encountered, as long as they have Essence 2 or worse, can survive outside of the Wyld and are between the size of a tyrant lizard and a large cat. He may spend one experience point to swap out one species for another. Unique creatures cannot be copied.

This Step's duration may be instant or indefinite, at the character's option. If she uses it to change to her original species, then she returns to her original form, the effects of age notwithstanding.

## THE DARK PATHS

Like the Ten Paths of Prehuman Mastery, the five philosophies known as the Dark Paths are based on lessons of elemental enlightenment. Unlike their noble counterparts however, these Paths came into the world with the creation of the Underworld and call upon the wisdom of its elements: ash, blood, bone, pyre flame and void.

The Dark Paths do not lead to the worship of the Celestial Order, Gaia or the Unconquered Sun. If anything, they can lead to the veneration of powers from outside Creation. Dragon Kings who study the Dark Paths become unpredictable and deadly. But the Dark Paths are shortcuts to power, and they come with a price. **A Dragon King with at least as many dots in a Dark Path as she possesses in any other Path is a creature of darkness** (see *Exalted*, p. 192). Furthermore, Dark Paths come with significant drawbacks that counterbalance their deadliness.

Dragon Kings seek enlightenment on Dark Paths with increasing frequency. The Unconquered Sun is not answering the Dragon Kings' prayers, and unsavory individuals such as the forbidden god Han-Tha of Rathess (see *The Compass of Terrestrial Directions, Vol. III—The East*, pp. 121 and 136-138) can exploit his absence with the Dark Paths.

These are not Paths of virtue. Those following Dark Paths find their Virtues less useful and often decide that they are more trouble than they are worth. Each Dark Path has an Anathema Virtue. **In order to Leap Ahead to use more advanced Charms of the Dark Paths, the character must fail a Virtue roll, not succeed on it.** This is a special type of Virtue activation that still requires a Willpower point but does not count as one of the times that the character may activate her Virtue each story. Botching this roll can cause the character to permanently lose a dot of the Virtue in question.

Finally, because the elements of the Underworld are so innately tied to the deceased of humanity and the Exalted destruction of the Neverborn during the Primordial War, **humans (mortal, God-Blooded and Exalted) may learn the first Step of each Dark Path.** This does not make them creatures of darkness.

## THE GLORIOUS CONSUMPTION PATH

**Favored Breed:** None

**Anathema Virtue:** Valor

The way of glorious consumption is the way of eating ash. Its teachings reveal the latent power of the dead and the glory of hunger and greed. By opening herself to the dark ascension of spiritual consumption, the adherent grows more powerful as she defiles what has already been destroyed.

The Steps of this Path allow the adherent to feast on the dead and gain their power and knowledge for herself. She first learns to heal from the latent energies of dead flesh, then to steal memories. Further teachings allow the adept to acquire the physical properties of specific dead individuals. She may eventually learn to consume a person in a single bite. The master gains the ability to consume the Essence and powers of the dead. The Transcendent Dragon of Glorious Consumption can even evade death.


During the First Age, walkers of this Path contributed to the downfall of Rathess, where the Path of Glorious Consumption is still practiced today by the followers of the Ghoul King. These cultists ritually sacrifice and consume unwanted guests, animals and basically anything else they can get their teeth around. Fortunately, devotees of Han-Tha tend to be greedy and cowardly. They are thus difficult to motivate.

## DRAWBACKS

Walking this Path involves eating corpses. The deceased must have been sentient, and almost all organs and limbs must be present. Eating a corpse is usually done over several days or weeks, but a dozen sick, hungry individuals could do it in a single meal. Sharing is permissible. This Path does not guard against disease.

Worst of all, parts of powerful people upset their devourer's anatomy in several disgusting ways. Fueling a Step of this Path with the corpse of someone with an Essence score equal to or higher than the character's own causes an internal penalty to all rolls equal to the dot rating of the Step involved. Multiple instances are cumulative. These penalties can be offset for a single scene by spending one Willpower,





but doing so inflicts one unsoakable level of aggravated damage for every -5 of the total penalty.

• **LIFE THROUGH DEATH**

**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** Essence 1;  
**Type:** Simple (Dramatic Action)  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK  
**Duration:** Instant

As the Dragon King consumes the corpse of a sentient creature who has died within the last scene, she heals. At the conclusion of her meal, she recovers a number of health levels of lethal or bashing damage equal to her Path rating. The character may spend one Willpower during the meal to trade five levels of lethal or bashing healing to heal a single level of aggravated damage.

•• **CONSUME THE MIND**

**Cost:** 10m; **Mins:** Essence 2;  
**Type:** Simple (Dramatic Action)  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK  
**Duration:** (Path rating) days

As the Dragon King consumes the brain of a sentient creature who has died within the last scene, she gains its memories. If the target had an Essence score higher than the Dragon King's Path rating, then the Step fails. If the target was a mortal, the Dragon King may pay one Willpower when activating it to retain the memories indefinitely, without committed Essence. She can only hold the memories of one individual at a time.

••• **CONSUME THE BODY**

**Cost:** 3m per dot; **Mins:** Essence 2;  
**Type:** Simple (Dramatic Action)  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK  
**Duration:** (Path rating) days

As the Dragon King consumes the corpse of a sentient creature that has died within the last scene, she gains its body's strength and speed. She may increase her own Physical Attributes (prior to augmentations from breed or Charms) to those of the target, at a cost of three motes per dot. She may also consume and acquire any physical qualities (except Appearance) that the target possessed, such as claws or natural armor. These qualities are rated as though they were Wyld mutations (see *Exalted*, pp. 288-290). Qualities as potent as a pox can be acquired automatically. Qualities as potent as afflictions cost three motes. Blights would cost six motes. Abominations cost nine motes. More potent physical qualities are either out of reach or subject to being reduced to the potency of an Abomination. Anything that requires motes of Essence to fuel cannot be acquired by this Step, nor can any qualities that rely on the target's Charms or Essence to function.

•••• **JAWS OF THE ASH DRAGON**

**Cost:** 8m; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Supplemental  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK  
**Duration:** Instant

This Step supplements a bite attack, causing it to ignore the target's armor soak. If the attack kills the target outright,

or if the target is already dead, then this Step allows her to swallow all of the natural organic parts of the corpse, leaving behind only its equipment. In that case, the Dragon King may choose to reflexively activate any one other of this Path's Steps that require the consumption of a corpse. The reflexive power does not count as a Charm use but still carries the normal mote cost.

••••• **CONSUME ESSENCE**

**Cost:** 1m or 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3;  
**Type:** Simple (Dramatic Action)  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK  
**Duration:** One scene

As the Dragon King consumes the corpse of a sentient creature who has died within the last scene, she gains its powers. The Dragon King regains a number of motes of Essence equal to 10 times the Essence score of the target. She also fully understands all of the target's Charms, to the extent that he understood them himself. The Dragon King may then spend an additional nine motes and one Willpower to choose one Charm or Step the target possessed, which she can then use as if she had mastered it herself. She must meet all the Charm's or Step's prerequisites and must pay the Charm's or Step's costs herself.

••••• **CONSUME SELF**

**Cost:** -; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent  
**Keywords:** None  
**Duration:** Permanent

As the character lies dying, she invests her grave hunger into the fabric of the surrounding Essence. When her life ends, her body immediately consumes itself. Six ticks later, the Dragon King erupts from the reasonably intact corpse of any sentient being within one mile, consuming it in the process. The Dragon King's player may choose the most advantageous corpse, if multiple are available. The character returns with the Essence and Willpower that she had when she died and recovers enough damage to return her to her lowest -4 health level. As she rises, she may use her resurrection's host to fuel one of the other Charms on this Path (assuming that she may pay the other costs), potentially restoring additional damage or gaining a host's Charm.

This Charm is ineffective if a suitable corpse does not exist within range, or if the Dragon King is killed by something so deadly that it completely bypasses her Dying health levels.

## THE COAGULATED EUCHARIST PATH

**Favored Breed:** None

**Anathema Virtue:** Temperance

The way of the Coagulated Eucharist is the way of drinking blood. Its teachings reveal the power of invasive intimacy through fear and lust. By opening herself to the blissful freedom of shameless addiction, the adherent learns to control and be controlled and to find communion in the gory will of darkness.



The Steps of this Path allow the adherent to manipulate emotionally and to be manipulated. She first learns to take pleasure and Essence from blood, then to taste the shame contained within. Further teachings allow the adept to create a deadly tentacle of blood and darkness. She may eventually learn to use the tentacle to solidly chain the hearts of others. The master gains the ability to make her blood into a parasite that can help her manipulate from a distance. The Transcendent Dragon of the Coagulated Eucharist can raise her Essence score higher than normal as she absorbs the alien will of darkness.

During the First Age, walkers of this Path were leaders of dark cults in the far corners of Creation. Today, cults of this Path emerge suddenly and unpredictably, and it seems that some Dragon Kings inherit its teachings from the Underworld. Most of these cults lose themselves to disease or the Underworld, but some manage to evolve into deadly armies of blood-crazed zealots.

## DRAWBACKS

Though the Sharing of Blood makes drinking blood pleasurable and easy, vital fluids still carry disease. To those under the effects of this Path, they also carry darkness and inebriation. Drinking blood causes a cumulative -1 penalty to Temperance and Valor (minimum 0), unless an adherent's player succeeds on a Willpower roll at a difficulty equal to the blood donor's Essence. Drinking more total times than her Path rating within a scene causes this roll to fail automatically. Lost Virtue points return at a rate of one each per scene.

Also, using any Step of this Path on anyone with a Compassion score less than the character's own counts as a scene building an Intimacy for the target based on lust or fear.

### • THE SHARING OF BLOOD

**Cost:** -; **Mins:** Essence 1; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

By spending a miscellaneous action drinking the blood of a living creature as though it were wine, the Dragon King regains Essence. The amount gained is based on the creature providing blood. Animals grant one mote. Mortals provide two motes. Creatures with Essence 2 or higher provide three motes. Essence can be gained from a particular creature (Path rating) times during a scene. Each mote gained equates to a lethal health level lost by the target. Blood drained must be drunk within one scene to remain effective.

### •• THE PALATE FOR SHAME

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** One scene

By slipping into the nightmares buried within any blood that she has tasted during the past scene, the Dragon King learns a desire or fear represented through one of the target's Intimacies. The character rolls (Intelligence + Socialize),

adding (Path rating) successes and an external penalty equal to the target's Dodge MDV. Failure renders the target immune for the remainder of the scene. This Step always reveals lusts or fears of which the target is least proud first.

The Dragon King's player adds dice equal to the roll's successes to all Presence, Performance, Investigation and Socialize rolls against the target that utilize revealed information. If the character knows with what information she wants to commune, she can seek it out deliberately. This Step does not automatically reveal who the target is.

Using this Step counts as drinking the target's blood for the purposes of intoxication.

### ••• THE FINGER OF NIGHTMARES

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp, 1hl; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion, Obvious (unless using immaterial tendrils)

**Duration:** (Stamina) actions

To use this Step, the character must have at least one open, bleeding wound resulting from an attack that caused at least one lethal health level of damage. The Dragon King focuses on either fear or lust and extends from her wound a tentacle of inky blood, which she may use as a whip. It possesses all of the statistics of a normal whip, except that it is a natural part of the character, it does lethal damage, and it has a total damage bonus equal to the character's (Path rating + lethal health levels of damage currently suffered).

During every action in which a target of the tentacle is "clinched," he must resist the fear or lust it exudes. If his MDV is less than the Dragon King's (Path rating x 2), then he must spend one Willpower to avoid immediately acting on the emotion. This is an unnatural mental influence.

The tentacle dissolves after a number of actions equal to the character's Stamina. However, while the Step persists, she may reflexively spend another lethal health level to refill it with blood and vigor for (Stamina) additional actions. The whip is hungry, and any successful attack with it counts as the character drinking the target's blood.

Dragon Kings with Path rating 4 or higher may create an immaterial tentacle, which may still influence material creatures' minds but cannot hold or damage them and does not drink their blood. It's also invisible to those who can't perceive the immaterial.

### •••• THE BLESSED TIE THAT BINDS

**Cost:** 12m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Servitude, Social

**Duration:** One scene

Except for its duration, and the minor effects below, this Step is mechanically identical to the Solar Charm Worshipful Lackey Acquisition (see *Exalted*, p. 205). However, it can only be enacted while the target is under the influence of the Finger of Nightmares and is only visible to those who can view the immaterial. Such onlookers perceive a small red tendril growing from the target's body and stretching in the Dragon King's direction. It cannot be physically removed.

Finally, targets of this Step suffer a -1 internal penalty to Temperance and Valor rolls while it persists.

••••• **THE ONENESS OF THE BLOOD**

**Cost:** 4m; **Mins:** Essence 3;

**Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Indefinite

This Step is activated while someone in the character's presence knowingly consumes her blood in its pure form. The target (the drinker of the blood) gains the rapid and complete healing, resistance to disease and enhanced natural soak of the Exalted. Unfortunately, the Dragon King may at any time spend one mote and use a miscellaneous action to cause the blood to reject him, dealing one unsoakable level of lethal damage.

Additionally, the target's dreams are extremely pleasant and satisfying, adding one die to his Conviction roll to regain Willpower upon awakening. Unfortunately, the Dragon King may also subtly influence the target with strange nightmares. Once each day, she may reflexively spend one mote and use a miscellaneous action to cause the next period of the target's sleep to count as a scene spent building an Intimacy toward any of the Dragon King's own Intimacies or her Motivation. At his option, the dreams may be intense enough to eliminate any Conviction roll to regain Willpower upon awakening altogether. Otherwise, the target must succeed on a (Wits + Integrity) roll just to notice the shift in Intimacies.





Finally, the Dragon King may reflexively spend one mote and a miscellaneous action to intoxicate the target as though she were an adherent of this Path who had just partaken of her blood.

Mortals remain affected by this Charm even after the Essence powering it is uncommitted. Beings with Essence 2 or higher remain affected only until the commitment is broken. Any target may attempt to reject the blood within them. Doing so costs one Willpower and deals one level of aggravated damage. The victim's player rolls (Stamina + Resistance) and adds her character's Essence as automatic successes. An external penalty applies equal to the Dragon King's (Path rating + Essence). On a success, the target vomits up a coagulated mass of writhing, tentacled blood that splashes to the ground with an unholy whine, ending the Step's effects.

The Dragon King may use this Step on herself to receive its benefits. However, another Dragon King with a higher Essence score who has also used this Step on himself may then control the blood of the lesser. If two Dragon Kings who have used this Step on themselves have the same Essence score, then neither can affect the other in that way.

••••• **THE MULTITUDE OF ONENESSES**

**Cost:** –; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** Stackable

**Duration:** Permanent

The Dragon King adds darkness to herself, in the form of an additional Motivation. He uses it in all ways like a normal Motivation. The Storyteller creates a Motivation concerning an extremely long-term goal involving fear and/or lust and incorporating the control of multiple people. It is unrelated to the character's original Motivation, seeming foreign or alien. The character's original Motivation has primacy when there is a conflict.

Purchasing this Step also allows the character to raise her Essence score one higher than before, and to purchase this Step again, to a maximum of three times.

Unfortunately, these enhanced statistics come from the power of the Underworld. The Dragon King must venture to the Underworld for 24 hours each month per purchase of this Step. The first purchase requires a shadowland. The second requires the Underworld proper. The third requires the Labyrinth itself. Deprived of access to the Underworld, the character loses any traits she should not possess until she returns.

**THE TECHNOMORPHIC  
TRANSCENDENCE PATH**

**Favored Breed:** None

**Anathema Virtue:** Compassion

The way of technomorphic transcendence is the way of cracking bones. Its teachings reveal the power of rationality and technological progress. By opening himself to the will to power through scientific augmentation and cold logic,

the adherent learns to become the ultimate blend of Dragon King and machine.

The Steps of this Path help the adherent to enhance himself through the use of artifacts and to become more like them. He first learns to power artifacts using cold focus in place of Essence, then to build and repair artifacts as a part of himself. Further teachings allow the adept to fuse artifacts to himself, making them a part of him. He may eventually learn to hide his artifacts within himself. The master gains the ability to instantly attune to artifacts, even if they are attuned to others. The Transcendent Dragon of Technomorphic Transcendence can become completely mechanical, rapidly regaining Willpower and becoming immune to mental influence.

During the First Age, walkers of this Path were hermits whose study of mechanical remorselessness eventually led them to attempt wild schemes intended to further psychopathic agendas. Today, there are no known adherents to this Path, but it is said that true automata can occasionally enlighten Dragon Kings into its lessons, and cleverly disguised sutras explaining its techniques are currently being deciphered by both Lookshy and the Realm.

**DRAWBACKS**

Using surgery to implant biomagic artifacts typically requires a sophisticated laboratory (Resources 4), as well as an extended action requiring multiple (Intelligence + [Lower of Lore, Medicine or Occult]) rolls. See the descriptions of specific artifacts for details.

The scientific detachment of this style does not react well to feelings and does not play well with others. A penalty to Compassion and social rolls is applied to any character using a Step of this Path. The penalty is equal to the highest Path rating of the Technomorphic Transcendence Path Steps currently active.

• **MECHANICALLY INTEGRATED**

**ATTUNEMENT MEDITATION**

**Cost:** 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 1;


**Type:** Simple (Dramatic Action)

**Keywords:** Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

The Dragon King takes normal actions designed to attune to an artifact. Instead of investing Essence into the connection however, he forces onto himself internal changes designed to form a less mystical link.

So long as the artifact has a rating no higher than his Essence, he may attune to it for free. However, he must dedicate a number of Willpower points equal to one third the artifact's commitment cost, rounded up (minimum one Willpower). If his temporary Willpower pool falls below that number, the attunement instantly breaks. The attunement will also break if the Dragon King leaves physical contact with the artifact for a full scene. The Dragon King cannot force complete harmonization to receive the magical material bonus from artifacts that are made of an unsuitable magical material.



The Dragon King may use this Step to maintain a number of attunements equal to his Path rating. The amount of Willpower needed to maintain multiple attunements does not automatically increase with each new artifact. The same Willpower points can be used to power multiple artifacts.

Artifacts attuned through the use of this Step that require Essence expenditures to use can and must be powered by Willpower also. The Dragon King substitutes one Willpower for up to three motes of Essence.

This Step also allows mortals to attune to and activate artifacts using their Willpower. This Step does not allow anyone to attune to an artifact using both Essence and Willpower. It's either one or the other.

#### •• SEMI-ORGANIC ASSEMBLAGE PROGRAM

**Cost:** 5m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** One scene

Using his bones and nerves as tools, the character constructs, repairs and maintains artifacts that are surgically integrated into him with astounding speed and skill. Applicable artifacts must be a part of the character—non-functional without him and unusable by others without some surgical effort. With regard to the difficulty of his work, this Step temporarily reduces the artifact's effective rating by one, and its repair rating by two. An artifact's effective rating cannot be reduced below one by this, but its effective repair rating can be reduced to 0, in which case repair and maintenance conducts itself reflexively and automatically over the course of the scene. Finally, the character is in no danger at all from medical complications arising from integrated artifacts or surgery intended to implant them.

#### ••• SKELETAL FUSION TECHNIQUE

**Cost:** 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

As Essence welds metal to bone, (Path rating) of the Dragon King's attuned artifacts become part of his body. He cannot be disarmed of such artifacts, and they cannot be removed from his body against his will. Artifacts that are deliberately separated from the character (by throwing them, giving them away, etc), or become unattuned to him, are no longer a part of this Step's effects. This Step has no effect on artifacts with a rating higher than the character's Essence, but applicable artifacts can be transferred right off of an enemy's body or out of his hand.

Weapons grafted by this Charm can be wielded with Martial Arts and count as natural attacks. Grafted armor's soak simultaneously counts as both armor soak and natural soak, whichever is more beneficial.

#### •••• MAGITECHNOLOGICAL TRANSFORMATION KATA

**Cost:** 6m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious, Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

The Dragon King's body transforms to hide attuned artifacts he possesses. While so hidden, the artifacts cannot be used, but they also cannot be detected by normal senses. Charms designed to analyze Essence patterns can potentially recognize the presence of concentrated Essence but cannot gather the number or details of artifacts. The character may reflexively produce or re-hide his hidden artifacts. If all of the Dragon King's artifacts are hidden, then the social penalty inflicted by this Path is halved and rounded down.

#### ••••• NEURO-SKELETAL ATTUNEMENT INTERFACE

**Cost:** 6m, 2wp (see text); **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Touch

**Duration:** Indefinite

Using his nerves and bones as an interface, the Dragon King instantly attunes to any artifacts that he is touching and cannot be forcibly detuned from them by any power. If he attempts to force full harmonization with such artifacts, his player gains a number of bonus dice equal to the Dragon King's Path rating. Furthermore, if the character's Path rating equals or exceeds an affected artifact's rating, he becomes aware of all of an artifact's potential functions and how to activate them. Artifacts beyond five dots are counted as six dots (or potentially higher). Even if an affected artifact is too powerful to fully access, he gains a number of dice equal to his Path rating to Lore rolls designed to figure it out.

If a touched artifact is attuned to another character when this Step is activated, then it can be forcefully detuned from her, so long as the Dragon King's Path rating exceeds the target's Essence. If an affected artifact is physically separated from the character, then the effects of the Step end with regard to the item.

#### ••••• TOTAL SYSTEMIC MECHANIZATION

**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** Indefinite

While the Step is active, the character becomes fully emotionally detached and mechanical. She never makes Compassion rolls nor fails other Virtue rolls.

The Dragon King cannot spend Willpower on effects that are not related to Steps, such as activating Virtues. However, the character regains one Willpower each tick.

The Dragon King also becomes immune to mental influence of all kinds.

## THE ECSTATIC ARMAGEDDON PATH

**Favored Breed:** None

**Anathema Virtue:** Temperance

The way of the ecstatic Armageddon is the way of breathing pyre flame. Its teachings reveal the power and glory of destruction for hate's sake. By opening herself to the glory of bloodlust and rage, the adherent learns to consume her enemies in a fire that never dies.

The Steps of this Path help the adherent to kill and destroy on a devastating scale. She first learns to harness the



rage of herself and others for combat, then to destroy a single enemy using aggravated damage. Further teachings allow the adept to burn indiscriminately and to lash out when struck. She may eventually learn to breathe a deadly stream of flame. The master gains the ability to stir up violence in every aspect of the surrounding area. The Transcendent Dragon of Ecstatic Armageddon can instantly summon up a horde of minions and spreads pyre flame everywhere she goes.

Today, the Ecstatic Armageddon Path springs up where hate calls its unholy name loud enough to rattle the bones of the Neverborn. Fortunately, it usually consumes those who wish to learn it before they can get very far.

## DRAWBACKS

Wherever any of the Steps of this Path are active, there are flames. Any dry combustibles touching the character catch fire, and things within 10 yards may also. It's impossible to predict what will catch fire, but things that are most likely to burn quickly and spread the flame tend to be the first to go.

### • SMOLDERING HATRED

**Cost:** 3m; **Mins:** Essence 1;  
**Type:** Simple or Supplemental  
**Keywords:** Emotion, Social  
**Duration:** One scene

Amplifying anger until it boils over, this Step supplements a social attack designed to create an Intimacy based on anger or hatred or to erode a positive Intimacy in a person or group with Magnitude no greater than the Dragon King's Path rating. If the attack is successful, a target gains a bonus die to all attack and damage rolls for the remainder of the scene. Also, he must fight in some fashion or must spend two Willpower to remain peaceful. This is an unnatural mental influence.

The character may target herself with this Step as a simple action (Speed 6, DV -1), even in combat.

### •• BLISTERING EXECRATION

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Supplemental  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Obvious  
**Duration:** Instant

Glowing with hatred, the Dragon King's hand-to-hand attacks against a particular target deal aggravated damage. When this Step is first purchased, the Dragon King's player chooses the target. It must be a sentient creature to whom she possesses an Intimacy involving anger or hatred. The target can later be changed to a different qualifying creature for one experience point. If the Dragon King destroys her target, then switching to a new one is free. If at any point the Character does not possess a correct Intimacy toward her target, then this Step won't work.

### ••• FIRES OF RETRIBUTION

**Cost:** 3m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Elemental, Obvious  
**Duration:** One scene

The Dragon King's vengeance becomes flame that lashes out to deal (Path rating) dice of lethal damage to any character that successfully attacks her in hand-to-hand combat. This damage cannot be parried or dodged but can be soaked normally. As an added bonus, the character becomes immune to non-magical fire while the Step is active.

### •••• BREATH OF DAMNATION

**Cost:** 1m per two dice; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Elemental, Obvious  
**Duration:** Instant

The Dragon King exhales a wicked gout of flame that deals a base two dice of lethal damage for every mote spent. The attack is aimed using (Dexterity + Athletics or Thrown), fires out to a maximum range equal to (Path rating) yards and has an accuracy bonus equal to the character's Path Rating. Extra successes add to damage normally. The character may make a sweeping attack, targeting multiple characters within range, which causes multiple-action penalties as appropriate. The base damage is then divided by the total number of targets. Any attempt to parry the attack using a weapon not built of the magical materials does not work and destroys the weapon. The Dragon King may spend a maximum of (Path rating) motes powering this Step.

### ••••• SERMON OF ELEMENTAL RUINATION

**Cost:** 10m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Simple  
**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion, Obvious, Social  
**Duration:** One scene

The Dragon King calls for the destruction of everything nearby with a social attack using Performance that targets a group with a Magnitude no greater than the Dragon King's Path rating and within a surrounding area of (Path rating x 20) yards. Everyone and everything who fails to defend against the attack is consumed by the lust for destruction. All nearby spirits, including little gods, bend an ear to the sermon, and the area becomes dark and cursed. All fires within range become pyre flame. All still water within range becomes diseased. The wind turns cold and turbulent, and smoldering ash fills the air. The earth shakes. Cliff sides break apart, and deadly fissures rip themselves open. Animals turn violent and attack their masters. Plants wilt and begin to lose their leaves, quickly dying. The area itself becomes an environmental hazard equivalent to a severe sandstorm (see *Exalted*, p. 131).

All nearby characters who fail to defend suffer an unnatural mental influence that induces them to destroy everything nearby. Affected characters do not ignore each other in their rage, but they tend to save each other for last. Things or people for whom there can be found preexisting hatred or aggression will be the first to be destroyed. Spending two Willpower will calm the mad rage to a manageable level. The Dragon King gains five motes of Essence whenever something significant to which he has an Intimacy of hate or rage is destroyed.

By spending an additional point of Willpower when enacting this Step, the Dragon King may permanently convert a successfully affected fire elemental with an Essence score lower than her Path Rating into the equivalent of a pyre flame elemental. Altering an elemental in this way has severe effects on the being's Motivation. They usually come to hate all things, especially fire. The change often quickly adjusts his Virtues to favor Conviction and Valor over Compassion and Temperance. These "elementals" cannot understand what has happened to them unless it is thoroughly explained and are often confused and pliable, finding aesthetic joy and fulfillment in the wondrous Steps of this Path. Multiple Willpower points can be spent to fuel the change of multiple fire elementals.

●●●●● PYRIC MANTLE OF DESTRUCTION

**Cost:** 15m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic, Obvious

**Duration:** One scene

The Dragon King becomes an avatar of obliteration. She is engulfed in a bonfire of pyre flame that moves with her and clings to all things that touch it or pass through it. Those things which only skirt the edge of the pyre flame are affected by a two-die amount (see the "Pyre Flame" sidebar). Those attacking it with a melee weapon are affected by a four-die amount. Those attempting to attack the character with natural weapons are affected by a six-die amount, which is the maximum from this effect. The pyre-flame bonfire regenerates itself, so the Dragon King need never worry about running out. The character herself is immune to mundane fire and pyre flame while the Step is active, and she may grasp a two-die amount of pyre flame and hurl it, using (Dexterity + Thrown) and the attack statistics below. Furthermore, all of the character's hand-to-hand attacks deliver a two-die amount of pyre flame, and all of the normal flame attacks of this Path's earlier Steps can become pyre flame attacks at her option. Instead of doing their normal damage, she may choose to have them inflict pyre flame upon their target, covering him in an amount that deals damage equal to the normal damage of the attack.

What's more, from the green flame emerges a unit of creatures made up of tiny forbidden gods, spontaneous faux "elementals" based on the Dark Paths' elements and strange things that dwell in shadows, all twisted by hate and fueled by the vitriolic Essence of the pyre. They have a Magnitude of (Path rating - 2) and possess stats equivalent to those of green soldiers (see **Exalted**, p. 279). They have the following mass combat stats: Drill 0, Endurance 2, Might 0, Close Combat Rating 2, Close Combat Damage 2, Morale (Path rating -3). They come with no special characters and cannot act independently of a mass combat setting. They are,

PYRE FLAME

The green-hued pyre flame of the Underworld combines aspects of liquid fire and burning acid. It's rare enough that it's not a constant danger, but it's common enough that only the newest ghosts do not know its properties.

Pyre flame burns through anything except for earth, stone, jade and soulsteel. Other magical materials are not proof against the flame, but they are resistant enough that they can serve as short-term protection. It burns as hot as normal flame but tenaciously clings like pitch to anything it touches. The green flame neither spreads nor permanently goes out. It burns brightly until it has consumed all of its available fuel, at which point it dims into embers and lies quiescent until fed more substances it can consume. Most Underworld inhabitants quell pyre flame by throwing dirt over the embers, which works well enough until one of them unwittingly shovels it up.

Contact with pyre flame inflicts the following environmental effect: Damage 2L/action, Trauma 4. The damage can be greater, depending on the volume of pyre flame—the listed value is for a hand-sized patch. Greater quantities inflict greater damage. Inanimate objects do not have (Stamina + Resistance) pools, so they suffer automatic levels of damage and are quickly consumed. Magical materials other than jade and soulsteel reduce the Damage to 2L/minute, increasing the time they take to burn away. Pyre flame will also consume armor and weapons if it gets on them. The sticky substance can be removed with a miscellaneous action and an appropriate tool, though it consumes whatever tool is used for the purpose. Quantities of pyre flame that inflict greater damage require more effort to remove. For each additional die of pyre flame damage, scraping off the substance requires one additional miscellaneous action.

Sunlight evaporates pyre flame in minutes, leaving an acrid green haze and stain. Still, there is no true sun in the Underworld, and some of the Underworld's springs or geysers produce the stuff in seemingly unlimited quantity, so there is no danger of running out.

however, immune to the Dragon King's pyre flame. Attacking the Dragon King's unit does not require entering into the radius of her pyre flame, but targeting her specifically would, at least with a hand-to-hand attack. If this army is destroyed, the character cannot summon up a new one until she travels at least one mile distant or one full day passes.

Name	Speed	Accuracy	Damage	Rate	Range
Small Glob of Pyre Flame	5	+0	special	3	10





Path of the Dragon King

## THE TORMENTED BODHISATTVA PATH

**Favored Breed:** None

**Anathema Virtue:** Conviction

The way of the tormented bodhisattva is the way of the Void mandala. Its teachings reveal the power of religious devotion and sacrifice for its own sake. By opening himself to the terrible, terrifying, inevitable end, the adherent conquers death even as he becomes its terrified thrall.

The Steps of this Path help the adherent to internalize and manipulate death and destructive religious devotion. He first learns to sacrifice his life force to succeed, then to sense the slow decay within the life force of others. Further teachings allow the adept to leave his physical body as a ghost. He may eventually learn to enflame the power of devotion and sacrifice within others for his own power. The master gains the ability to use Iron Circle Necromancy. The Transcendent Dragon of the Tormented Bodhisattva becomes a walking avatar of death, waiting, terrified, for the perfect moment to sacrifice himself forever to bring the Void to his enemies.

During the First Age, a handful of Raptok were born with a strange affinity for this Path. They grew in power and, eventually, several became sleepers. Today, a few enlightened Dragon Kings have begun stirring up religious fervor and inciting wars. It seems likely that at least one of the sleepers has awoken and is spreading his twisted faith.

## DRAWBACKS

This Path revolves around devotion and martyrdom. As one progresses along the Path, it becomes harder to resist the urge to sacrifice oneself to the cause. Given an opportunity to give his life in service to the Tormented Bodhisattva Path, an adherent's player must fail a Conviction check in order for his character to avoid playing martyr so long as doing so will also bring death to the Path's enemies.

- **RAGE IN THE ROPES OF DUKKHA**

**Cost:** 3m, 1ahl per success; **Mins:** Essence 1;

**Type:** Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** Instant


For every three motes and one aggravated health level sacrificed, the Dragon King gains a success on the roll for any action. The character cannot channel through a Virtue to enhance an action that benefits from this Step. Characters with sufficient Essence can use this Charm to do as much damage to themselves as they want, but they cannot benefit from more successes than their Path rating.

- **PIERCE THE BLACK VEIL OF ANICCA**

**Cost:** 6m; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-OK

**Duration:** One scene



The character perceives the pale fire of the Void burning within the hearts of all sentient creatures. He can discern whether anyone that he perceives has an Intimacy involving faith or devotion to a religion or philosophy and whether their Motivation involves devotion to a religion or philosophy. The fire also identifies Essence scores, discerns Exalts from non-Exalts, detects whether someone is unaging and points out whether those viewed consist of or spend death Essence.

••• CLING TO THE LOVING EMBRACE OF ATMAN

**Cost:** 8m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 2; **Type:** Simple

**Keywords:** Combo-Basic

**Duration:** (Stamina) days

The Dragon King becomes a ghost. He loses access to all powers not normally available to ghosts, except for those of this Path. He retains all of his other statistics and may even learn ghost Arcanoi Charms as though he were a normal one of them. He retains the Ability to use such Arcanoi whenever he enters ghost form or if he dies and becomes one once and for all.

The character must be incapacitated with lethal or aggravated damage to use the Step. His body can't be healed while the Step is active. If the body is damaged, it begins dying. If it dies, the character will remain a ghost forever.

Upon becoming a ghost, the Dragon King heals a number of health levels equal to his Path rating, which becomes his maximum possible level of health. While his body survives, he cannot be healed further than that by any means. Upon returning to his body, he is once again incapacitated. If the character's ghostly self is destroyed while this Step persists, then he returns to his body but loses all of his remaining Willpower points and suffers one level of lethal damage, which causes him to begin dying. The same fate awaits him if, for any reason, this Step is prematurely ended while he is not in physical contact with his body.

The Dragon King's body will die after (Stamina) days without its soul.

••• BE STICKS IN THE SACRED FIRE OF NIRVANA

**Cost:** 5m, 1wp; **Mins:** Essence 3;

**Type:** Reflexive or Supplemental

**Keywords:** Combo-OK, Emotion, Social

**Duration:** One scene

This Step supplements a social attack designed to instill or promote an Intimacy of devotion toward a religion or philosophical ideal. The attack's effects become an unnatural mental influence. A target that possesses or gains the Intimacy recovers a point of Willpower and gains a temporary dot of Valor. A target whose Motivation corresponds with the attack is granted a temporary Valor score of 6. She also gains points of temporary Willpower and suffers levels of aggravated damage equal to the (Threshold of the attack roll + 1). These Willpower points can exceed the normal maximum, but excess Willpower fades at the end of the scene.

Anyone who is successfully targeted by this Step may choose to sacrifice her life for the Dragon King. The target's life force becomes a shower of cold, blue flames, which flood

into the character's heart and dance around his body. Targets whose Motivation involves religious devotion provide (Essence •) flames. Others provide one flame per dot of Essence. These flames last until the end of the scene. Anyone who is outright killed by the damage of this Step is considered to have sacrificed her life in this way.

The Dragon King may spend the flames as though they were motes of Essence. Furthermore, if the character uses the flames to fuel the first Step of this Path, then he does not have to sacrifice any health levels to use it.

The character may potentially target a social unit with a Magnitude no greater than his (Path rating - 3), and every member of the unit may potentially sacrifice themselves to provide him with soul flames. The unit (minus any special or heroic characters) acts as its leader does.

The Dragon King may reflexively use this Step on himself. Should he martr himself while using it, he gains double the normal number of flames and may complete any (non-dramatic) actions that he is taking before perishing.

••••• LAMENT THE 5,000 POISON

BHUMI OF THE BODHISATTVA

**Cost:** -; **Mins:** Essence 3; **Type:** Permanent

**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

This Step allows the character to take Shadowlands Circle Necromancy actions, even if he happens to be a ghost as a result of Cling to the Loving Embrace of Atman.

••••• MURDER SAMSARA &

WEAR HER SAD ROBES

**Cost:** -; **Mins:** Essence 6; **Type:** Permanent

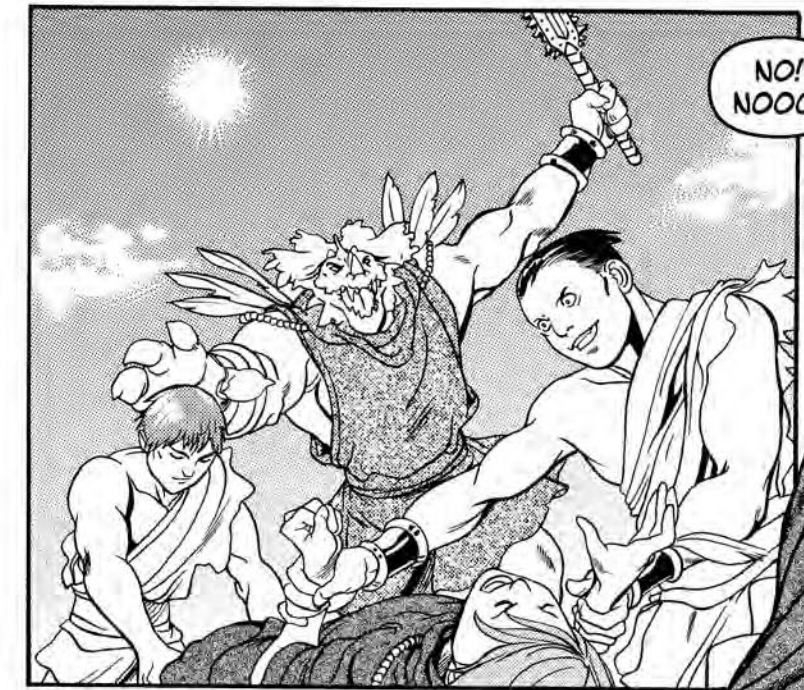
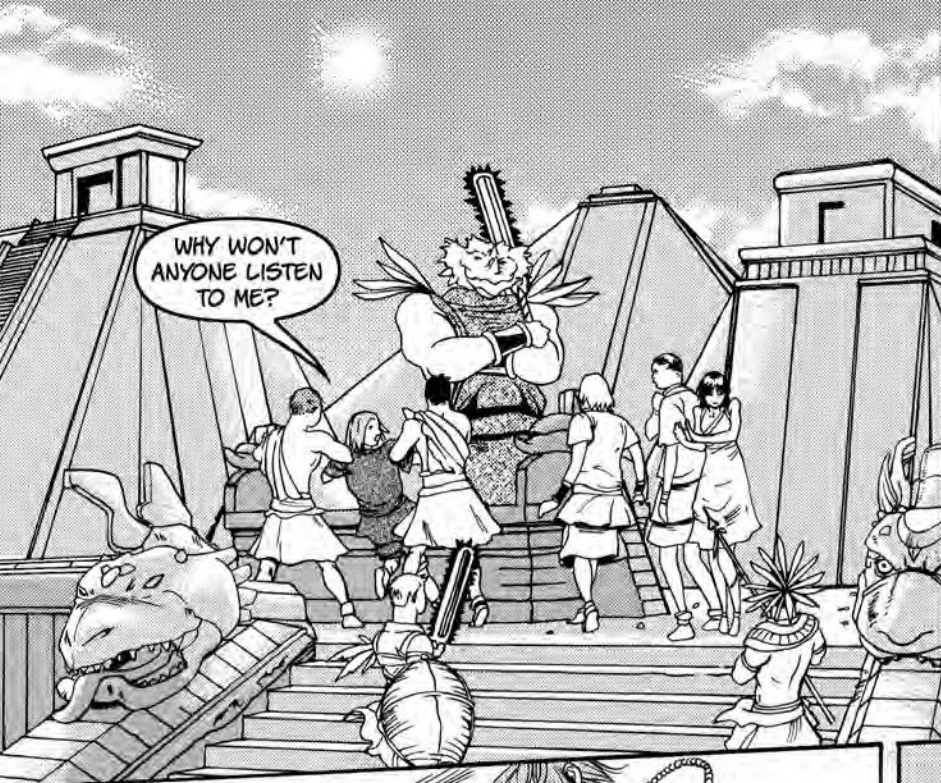
**Keywords:** None

**Duration:** Permanent

The Dragon King is immune to the effects of Lethe and need never roll to resist it. This is a perfect effect. He exudes a mobile shadowland around himself out to 500 yards. When anyone dies within it, he senses it, gaining information about the deceased as though he had observed her with Pierce the Black Veil of Anicca. He also gains a mote, as his body summons and absorbs frozen wisps of death Essence.

Worse still, there is always a gate into the Labyrinth somewhere within the character's shadowland. Sometimes it is tiny—sometimes large enough for a man to enter. If the Dragon King tarries in one place, bad things *will* eventually emerge.

Worst of all, when the character decides the time is right, he may decide his death (or dissolution of his ghostly form) shall finally send him to Oblivion forever. The unholy glory of this sacrifice causes a brilliant blue explosion of soul fire that levels everything within (Essence) miles, obliterating all structures not reinforced by the magical materials, and dealing 10 unsoakable levels of aggravated damage to creatures caught in the area. The shadowland then settles in place, filling the affected area permanently. The decision to sacrifice himself to Oblivion cannot be coerced through unnatural mental influence.





# CHAPTER FOUR

# STORYTELLING

Dragon Kings are unusual and distinctive characters, but they have some elements in common with other character types in **Exalted**. They possess fractured memories of past lives, they are extremely rare in the world, and they are treated as pariahs by mortal society. But most other characters share one common factor: they are all human in appearance, with human emotions and desires and basic cultural touchstones. Dragon Kings have none of these, which may make it difficult for players to identify with or play them as effectively as they might like and for Storytellers to effectively stage events around them. The temptation may be to treat them as if they were normal humans or, alternatively, savage monsters without personality. Storytellers should guide players in finding ways to make the role of Dragon King as unique and satisfying as any other.

This chapter is aimed primarily at Storytellers. It gives advice on fitting Dragon Kings into an existing **Exalted** series as player characters and running a series centered around a clutch of Dragon King characters. Finally, Storytellers will find thematic suggestions and a few sample series ideas.

## DRAGON KINGS

Like any other new storytelling element, Dragon Kings bring with them new issues that will require a little planning before fitting them into your series. Their First Age memories, the need to disguise their appearance and their maturation process are a few of the things Storytellers must be prepared for before play begins. Players will depend on *you* to make all the elements of the series fit just so, and while a truly gifted Storyteller might shoehorn the Dragon Kings into her series on the fly with little effort, it wouldn't hurt for the rest of us to exercise some forethought. Talk to your players about the issues presented below and how they relate to the kind of story you all want to tell and the kinds of characters they want to play.

Players should understand how some of these issues may affect other players' enjoyment and be onboard with the need to compromise when the need arises. If, for instance, a Dragon King character integrated into a circle of Exalts continually refuses to use a disguise when traveling in the city, the circle will be constantly harangued wherever it goes. Every session

will inevitably revolve around the Dragon King causing trouble for everyone else, almost certainly to the detriment of other characters' plots and goals. Soon, there will be much out-of-character question-begging regarding why the troublesome character is permitted to remain in the circle at all if he is going to be so disagreeable. The player may insist that his Dragon King is proud of his identity and is able to tolerate the fear and narrow-mindedness of townsfolk and all of the distractions caused by his presence, but it's a sure bet that the character's behavior, and likewise the player's, won't be so engaging and fun for everyone else around the table.


### DRAGON KINGS IN CREATION

It may be difficult to imagine the citizens of Creation surprised by the sight of anything, considering the number of strange and astonishing gods, creatures and spirits common to their world. Mortal societies in *Exalted* are not, however, as homogenous and sophisticated as one might at first suppose, and while there are places where mortals live with and walk amongst gods, for the most part, these beings manifest in human form when dealing plainly with their subjects and neighbors, only appearing in other, more monstrous forms when they intend to spread fear and chaos. Dragon Kings do not have this luxury, as least not naturally. They cannot pass for ordinary mortals at all. They *look* like monsters and can be just as ferocious. People react to the sight of them in the same way that they react to anything that appears threatening and fearsome—with fear, distrust, awe, etc.

Obviously, Dragon Kings cannot live for long among mortals without some kind of assistance. While there are numerous mundane ways to dazzle, distract, confuse, inebriate or otherwise trick people into not seeing Dragon Kings for what they are, these efforts cannot always succeed, depending as they do on the gullibility or thickness of their marks, and the successes are always short-lived. At the end of the day Dragon Kings still seem to be scaly, reptilian beasts—anyone with eyes will be able to see as much. The only reliable solution for a Dragon King wishing to move in mortal society is to use some supernatural measure to conceal his appearance or to alter the minds of those seeing him. The third dot of the Shimmering Water Path, Guise of the New Form (see p. 59), is perhaps the most common form of disguise, at least for those Dragon Kings who have knowledge of this power. The necklace of Solar charisma (see p. 25), an artifact that allows mortals to look upon the wearer without fear or distrust, is also useful for maintaining a low profile among humans.

The need for a good means of disguise should be demonstrated early on in play if not immediately addressed. A close call with the Wyld Hunt, an angry mob or some powerful enemy should drive the point home quickly. In any case, Storytellers should be used to characters assuming alternate identities. Solar and Sidereal Exalted spend most of their time incognito, while other Exalt types usually find it useful at times to disguise their true nature, if not their faces.





The consequences for not using an effective disguise are potentially disastrous. Mortals may run in fear at the sight of an undisguised Dragon King. Warlike folk may foolishly attack to protect their communities, or summon powerful spirits to their aid. While Dragon Kings are quite a bit more powerful than ordinary mortals and need have little fear of attack, facing large numbers of angry or frightened mortals and whatever allies they call up could very well be problematic.

On the other hand, since mortals will likely not be able to identify Dragon Kings as such and may not even have heard of their legend, they might mistake Dragon Kings for some other kind of being, such as gods, elementals, lesser elemental dragons or minions of the Celestial Hierarchy. Mortals may cower in fear or prostrate themselves before the Dragon Kings, showering them with prayers or offerings. While some Dragon Kings may take pains to set these simpletons straight, others will see and pursue the (at least) short-term advantage of humoring their false beliefs and try to pass themselves off as such. And why not? They would not be the first to avoid a tragic outcome by pretending to be a divine being. This ruse may actually work for a while, and it can make for a fun, ironic story, as a Dragon King learns exactly how demanding mortals can be of their gods and takes all he can get from his new minions while doing his best to keep them from suspecting the truth. Nothing lasts forever, though, certainly not such a lie. Once discovered, the mortals' reaction should be understandably extreme. Those duped will do their best to have their revenge at any cost. Should the people's real god (or otherwise divine being such as a Lunar patron) discover the ruse, the Dragon King will, at the very least, be in for some serious explaining, a long, difficult penance (such as a period of servitude) or an extremely short *mêlée*.

While it is possible to be accepted (eventually) and even loved, warm relations with any mortal civilization will be hard-won. And without friends or any way to disguise their appearance, Dragon Kings are bound for trouble and will surely, sooner or later, attract unwanted attention without any hope for help.

Short of deception, Dragon Kings may also avert potential conflicts by traveling with other very powerful beings, such as a known Solar Exalted or some other highly respected or feared person who can command or subdue the populace with her presence. They will have to stay close to this guardian at all times, however, to avoid harassment. This strategy can be an effective one, but Dragon Kings may unintentionally endanger their friends and associates by association, furthering the need for some careful forethought before blindly marching into a town.

Finally, Dragon Kings moving in mortal society must also contend with the fact that their own comfort will not be easily attained. Mortal establishments, even if they can somehow accommodate them for the night, don't stock Dragon King food and drink, and making use of mortal-sized beds, tables and chairs is awkward at best. Most Dragon Kings must become accustomed to sleeping on the floor. Furnishings, clothing,

jewelry and other items appropriate to their size and shape can be manufactured, but at a high premium.

## CREATING A HISTORY

All Dragon Kings, whether conscious of it or not, have a unique link with their past lives and can, with experience and discipline, remember ancient deeds and events. It will be helpful for both the player and the Storyteller to have a good idea of where the character has been, which important personages he once knew and at least a few of the great deeds he performed. Ancient Dragon Kings who have been revived in the present Age, in addition, have direct experience of the First Age and perhaps some of its valuable secrets. This presents some unique challenges for Storytellers. What are these memories? Who were they in their former lives? What sort of civilization did the Dragon King characters exist in (as there was surely more than one Dragon King culture) and what kind of technology did they have? While it is not necessary to have all of the answers before play, the Storyteller should have some notion of the character's past.

Also worth noting are the effects of the facts of history on their psyches. It is not as if the Dragon King race was defeated in some ancient war and is now subservient to an outside master. This would at least offer hope. The truth is far more wrenching to the mind. Dragon Kings are practically gone from Creation. Relationships with other Dragon Kings take on a whole different dimension when the four or five in your clutch are the only others you are ever likely to meet. Love and friendship are fragile concepts for mortals; for Dragon Kings they are potentially devastating. Most protect each other fiercely, even those with whom they quarrel, for fear of losing anyone.

## MEMORIES

Revealing memories as a Dragon King ages and gains more experience and Essence can be challenging for any Storyteller. Since a Dragon King may derive much of his identity from these fractured past-life memories, fair consideration should be given to the player's conception of his character's history and the themes of the series.

Be as specific as you can when presenting fractured memories, and it's best to make the details you do present matter. It's obviously not sufficient to tell the player, "You're experiencing a memory of the Battle of Agulin..." especially if the character or player has never heard of such an event. Likewise, Dragon Kings are not likely to start remembering First Age census data; rather, they could, but there are more interesting ways of presenting memories than as simply as a collection of information. It would be more dramatic and fitting to describe the memory of *poring over* census data on a chilly night, the lights dim, and the sudden sound of breaking glass from the street below as a blinding shard of light blasts through the darkness and in steps... Nail down a few details and clearly relate the remembered experience. It may only amount to a few seconds of memory, but the vividly described sounds and sights of war, a distinctive battle cry,



the flash of a familiar pair of eyes, will echo in the Dragon King's mind and the player's consciousness.

Storytellers have a lot of options regarding when it is appropriate to reveal a character's fractured memories and what to present. Some might reveal fragments of a long, involved memory over one or more play sessions, while others might wait for a dramatic point during the story to reveal a long dream vision. Other options for appropriate times may be after a significant expense (or gain) of Essence, following or as a part of Dragon King philosophical training (as lessons may involve learning to consciously retrieve memories), during meditation or prayer to the Unconquered Sun or simply as a result of uncannily familiar experiences. Dragon Kings with the assistance of a Solar Exalt with the requisite Charms have it a little easier. As Dragon Kings gain more Essence and advance through the stages of life, these memories will come more fluidly.

Because of their memories, Dragon Kings can be valuable sources of information. While Sidereal Exalted may be unwilling for many reasons to share ancient secrets, Dragon Kings may not be so circumspect. In this way, Dragon Kings, whether they are protagonists or supporting players in a series, can function as a portal to the distant past, a way for characters to discover bits of truth about the history of Creation. Keep in mind, however, that this is an entirely subjective source of information, filtered through the senses, sensibilities and emotions of the Dragon Kings. Memories are *malleable*, and potentially untrustworthy as sources of information. And even if they are accurate, not all of the Dragon Kings' memories are valuable. The treasure troves of times past have likely been looted. Thousand-year-old machines need repair, and without *that* specific knowledge, potentially potent artifacts are valuable only as museum pieces even if a Dragon King can identify them.

Finally, Storytellers should not change memories once revealed (that would be cheap and unfair and will likely enrage the player), but it is certainly possible that a given memory may be flawed, incomplete or subject to interpretation. Memories are not facts; they are experiences filtered through the senses and (usually) imperfectly recalled. Use this plot device to create suspense and keep the player guessing. You can create a chain of memories that progressively lead to more precise knowledge about past lives, but that may, at times, lead the character to false conclusions. You never want to say that a character remembers event *x*, and then say later on that he doesn't. That's just cruel. You *can*, however, say that he later remembers event *y*, which casts doubt on whether what he thinks he remembers as event *x* is true.

## DRAGON KING SERIES

Players may take on the roles of either modern or ancient Dragon Kings. There are no limitations on what stage in which to begin, but the Essence requirements for each stage do somewhat restrict newly created characters' knowledge and maturity, with most beginning play at the apprentice or, at most, the reborn stage. Thus, Dragon Kings must grow into


most of what power they attain through play. This is true of any character in **Exalted**, but given the power differential between Dragon Kings and other characters, and the fact that they begin play with incomplete minds, it is important to mention the significance of *growth* in Dragon King characters. While the Celestial Exalted, for example, presumably have fully formed, if perhaps naïve, personalities right out of the gate, modern Dragon Kings may have just spent decades in a savage state, without even language or the barest culture, and even ancients have to go a long way to reach their true potential. Dramatizing the progression of Dragon King consciousness and the discovery of their history can be fun and interesting for Storytellers and players alike. The following points will make the journey more rewarding.

Modern Dragon King characters have no body of cultural tradition upon which to draw when players are designing their personalities, Motivation and goals. Dragon King society is long vanished, and they have, as individuals, probably emerged into consciousness by chance, isolated from the glory of their legacy. They are frequently alone or amongst others as ignorant as themselves. Moreover, even those with mentors, and therefore access to at least some information about the distant past, may find that they don't particularly value—or actually resent—traditional Dragon King values and history as that of a failed and pathetic race, choosing instead to blaze a unique path through their own time. As such, modern Dragon Kings are more blank slates than their ancient counterparts and tend to be more generalists in their Abilities, as they must master many skills on the fly simply to survive.

Modern Dragon Kings living in extant, insular societies that have somehow preserved some ancient traditions and exist far from hostile mortals are the exception, as these are more likely to be part of a complex social order and have a distinct role in it. These characters tend to possess a more specialized set of Abilities.

Ancient Dragon Kings finding their way to the present probably have had the benefit of a traditional upbringing, education and perhaps careers before being put into stasis and thus tend to be much more specialized in their Abilities. As such, Creation is a surprisingly frightening, alien place that bears no resemblance to their own time and in which they now have to struggle to survive. They may have more of their wits about them than their modern counterparts, but even the wisest Dragon King savant would be hard pressed to thrive in such unfamiliar surroundings. Moreover, most Dragon Kings placed in stasis were carefully selected for their skills and given specific missions to accomplish once awakened. Upon waking, they likely find their directives impossible or irrelevant and their expertise of little value.

Keep in mind that not all ancient Dragon Kings are counted among the wise. Their maturity, erudition and judgment largely depend on the age at which they were put in suspended animation. An apprentice who snuck into the stasis chambers and woke up in the present day may pretend, and to a certain degree believe, that he knows more than he



actually does about the First Age and Dragon King traditions, but he is really is not much more developed or sensible than his modern counterparts.

The Chosen, or *olchilike*, are rare indeed. Achieving this honor (or curse, depending on the circumstance) should be the result of multiple sessions of play in which a character proves himself through craftiness and hard-fought battles. The quest should also have dramatic depth, in that becoming an *olchilik* is not something to be lightly pursued or an opportunity to be leapt upon. Many gods have no inclination to waste their time with inexperienced Dragon Kings who have little to offer them. Less powerful gods may be willing to join with any Dragon King, though most of these are hardly worth the trouble, being not much more powerful than the Dragon King himself. A further challenge will come in persuading the god to take part, and even if successful, the Dragon King may not get exactly what he bargained for. The god may not be very complicit, may have a dangerous agenda or generally may be more trouble than not. Low Essence Dragon Kings must be careful, because a treacherous possessor can easily subsume them.

### DRAGON KING CLUTCHES

Dragon Kings may gather together in clutches for many reasons: self-preservation, to pool resources to start a new Dragon King society or to undertake some other goal or quest. Such groups tend to remain together for decades, and readily accept other Dragon Kings into their fold.

There are only four breeds of Dragon Kings, each of which hails from a particular terrestrial direction. It is likely, and logical, that Dragon King clutches sharing the same origins will be of the same breed. This could lead to overlapping character concepts if the Storyteller and players do not give due consideration to the creation of a well-balanced clutch. For instance, a clutch of four Anklök with similar goals, Abilities and Motivations won't offer much opportunity for individuals to demonstrate their uniqueness and will likely soon become tiresome for everyone. A good Storyteller can remedy this before it becomes a problem by encouraging players to accentuate the differences in their characters' personalities, appearances and goals. There is a lot of room for variation, even within the breeds themselves. With a little forethought, imagination and cooperation, the players' clutch will be a well-rounded and interesting set of characters.

That said, it is fine for characters to overlap *a little*. It can even be fodder for healthy rivalries between characters that the Storyteller can build upon, creating tension and drama and keeping the game fresh. Just make sure the character competition remains friendly and does not spill over into conflict between players.

### CROSSOVER

Creation is a dangerous place for Dragon Kings. Mortals shun and fear them, and most powerful beings tend to avoid or even persecute them unless they have a good reason for tolerating their company. There is little perceived worth in hitching one's wagon to a beggar, a skulking vagabond

or a pariah whom the least of men will not acknowledge. Storytellers should stress that those who aid the Dragon Kings are rare individuals, usually those with no influence in society to lose or those too powerful to care about such things, such as Solar Exalts.

Storytellers should take care when matching Dragon Kings up with more powerful characters, as they can quickly be outclassed as their compatriots seek challenges that they themselves can barely hope to overcome. Dragon Kings, whose natures are wholly natural and not augmented by Celestial favor or any superhuman blood-borne potential, are weaker than most Dragon-Blooded. With this in mind, Storytellers should provide achievable challenges for all characters in a mixed circle without seeming to bend the story to accommodate the weakest of the lot or leaving the less powerful as no more than spectators. It should also be recognized that the Dragon Kings' relative weaknesses are potentially dramatic advantages. Wherever they go in Creation, they are almost certain to be at a disadvantage, and hence never be at a loss for opportunity to prove themselves able to overcome such hardships through cleverness, carefully acquired allies or heroic feats of battle.

Dragon Kings are natural allies to Solar Exalted, due to their affinity with the Unconquered Sun. Tales of the Anathema bring comprehending Dragon Kings out of hiding to search for and aid them. Ancient Dragon Kings are a better match, power-wise. Some Dragon Kings have First Age memories of Celestial Exalted comrades. They may even share certain First Age memories with Solar Exalted whom they knew in previous incarnations. It is not unusual for such Dragon Kings to seek out and join Exalted circles. Solars who know the proper Charms can even help modern Dragon Kings by awakening their First Age memories. Dragon Kings may find similar kinship with Abyssal Exalts, though long-lasting friendships are unlikely.

Terrestrial Exalted who are not outcastes are unlikely companions for Dragon Kings unless, however rare, neither of them know the nature of the other and of their kind's history. The Scarlet Empire has no official stance on Dragon Kings, for that would mean admitting their existence, but even those Dynasts in the know consider them politically inconsequential. The Wyld Hunt may be set on them if it is convenient to do so, but under normal circumstances, it is not considered worth the cost in time and resources to pursue their destruction. Dragon King devotion to the Unconquered Sun is certainly a barrier to any kind of friendship with followers of the Immaculate Order. Outcastes, on the other hand, can make for excellent companions.

Sidereal Exalted know that the Dragon Kings' day has passed and that they will never rise again as a great civilization. As such, most Dragon Kings are largely beneath their notice, except perhaps as curiosities. Only very powerful Dragon Kings of a mind to assist the Gold Faction are given consideration. The Bronze Faction pays attention to them in proportion to their perceived threat level, but because most Dragon Kings exist on the periphery of Creation, they





come into contact with these Sidereals only infrequently. Those Dragon Kings living in Yu-Shan are not thought to be significant personages, being the holders of sinecure titles and ostensibly ineffectual roles. While these reptiles occasionally surprise their more powerful peers with brilliant political maneuvers, the reigning attitude regarding Dragon Kings in Yu-Shan (when they are thought of at all) is that they are guests of slight consequence.

Lunar Exalts can make excellent companions for Dragon Kings. Being expert guides and skilled at living off the land, friendship with a Lunar may save a Dragon King's life. Since Lunars commonly dwell on the outskirts of society, they are perhaps the most likely Celestial Exalted type the Dragon Kings will meet.

Historically, Fair Folk and Dragon Kings have little love for one another. While there may be brief moments of cooperation, with the Fair Folk's hostility to Creation and their roll in the downfall of Dragon King civilization, friendships seem impossible. There are rare Fair Folk who love and defend Creation, however, so the raksha cannot be completely ruled out as companions.

**THEMES**

The main concept of a Dragon King-centered series is that the protagonists are trapped in an alien, though slightly familiar world that their kind once ruled. Of course, this the same basic

plight faced by the Solar Exalted. Because they are both throwbacks to a bygone era, the themes for Dragon King-centered games are superficially similar to those in Solar series.

For ancient Dragon Kings and those modern ones with First Age memories, Storytellers should impart how uncivilized and disappointing the world has become in comparison to the glorious past of their memories. Everywhere they look, they see wars and treachery. Even the gods seem to have abandoned their care for Creation. Were the Dragon Kings cast down so that this poor world should come to be? Is this just? Try to describe their experiences though this kind of filter. Emphasize decay, corruption and immorality such that some Dragon King characters, if they are so inclined, feel embittered and resentful toward humans and their civilization.

Celestial Exalted, on the other hand, stand out from the rest of Creation. They remind the Dragon Kings of past glories and inspire them to pursue their own potential to perform heroic deeds themselves. Dragon Kings are naturally attracted to them, and even young modern Dragon Kings who have not yet remembered the Chosen from times past should feel uplifted in their presence, especially in the presence of Solars, who can inspire hope by their very existence, sometimes even bringing Dragon Kings to tears of joy and sadness combined for an Age long lost. Other Exalted, especially Abyssals, may be mistaken for Solars, as Dragon Kings can sense the Exalted Essence, even though it is corrupted.

There is much drama implicit in the Dragon King concept, but don't let it pigeonhole them. No character should be equal to a few stereotypes. Just remember that, for every Dragon King consumed with the desire to rebuild the empire or obsessed with rescuing his savage brothers, there are a dozen just trying to make their way in the world to survive however they may. The point is that while these lofty concerns may very well be in the minds of any given Dragon King, they likely do not consume them.

### CREATING A DRAGON KING SERIES

One of the challenges when creating a Dragon King series will be to avoid making it resemble "depowered Solars in dragon suits," because many of the themes can seem similar to those of Solar-based games. With a little forethought, however, Storytellers should be able to make their Dragon King series unique.

First, decide on what scope your series will have at the onset. A large, Creation-trotting game can be a fun romp and have a truly epic feel, but it can feel thin, as few locations can be dealt with in detail. It is also a lot of work for the Storyteller to draw up new maps and create new Storyteller characters every few sessions. Most will want to limit their scope somewhat, focusing on one of the terrestrial directions or even smaller regions. For series centering on hidden Dragon King societies, the region may be quite small. Such games cut out the wider world, but they have no less potential to be epic, and there is nothing stopping the Storyteller from changing the scope later. Here are a few examples of possible locations and scopes for Dragon King series:

**Dragon King Society:** These are isolated adventures, a la *The Lost World*, where the outside world is unknown and vice-versa. In series of this kind, Creation at large is unknown or irrelevant, as it is set in a region removed from human society. A lost island in the Western Ocean or hidden Shangri-La-like civilization concealed amidst the volcanic haze in the Southern mountains are good possibilities for plausible locations,

but there are many other alternatives (though the Blessed Isle should probably be avoided). This kind of series could accommodate any number of plots, depending on the society (or societies) the Storyteller creates. Political intrigue, mystery and epic warfare are all possibilities, among many others.

**Dragon Out of Time** (see *Planet of the Apes*, *The Time Machine*, *The Man Who Fell to Earth* for inspiration): The Dragon Kings once ruled Creation. But not anymore. While everyone else may, once they understand their origins, consider them throwbacks to an ancient time, they, for the most part, do not see things that way. This sort of series deals with a small number of ancient Dragon Kings being revived in the ruins of a lost laboratory or underground bunker. Nearby may be one or more mid-sized cities. Series of this kind deal with the characters exploring their new world and coming to terms with their race's plight, finding allies and basically making their way in the modern day. It is an open-ended scenario that can grow, change or move as the Storyteller wishes.

**Noble Savage** (see the *Tarzan* series of books and movies): Modern, savage Dragon Kings are brought as slaves to one of Creation's metropolises. A few of these spontaneously gain Essence and become the player characters. The Dragon Kings simultaneously learn about mortal society and themselves, making secret allies, escaping bondage and becoming heroes.

**Military Conquest:** This series focuses on a movement on the periphery of Creation to breed an army of Dragon Kings and have them reclaim their dominance of Creation. It can include a mixture of ancient and modern Dragon Kings (as well as differing Exalt types). The scope is limited at first, as the clutch maneuvers to consolidate power and put down local chieftains, but it can grow in time to a truly epic scale, depending on how successful the movement becomes. The plan is madness, of course, but a force of this kind, especially with the help of one or two Celestial Exalts, can meet with a lot of success, so long as the participants don't get too greedy.

#### EXPERIENCE COSTS

Trait Increase	Cost	Training Times
Essence	rating x 8	(rating) months
New Path	7	(Min. Ability + Min. Essence) days
New Favored or Breed Path	6	(Min. Ability) days
Path	rating x 5	(rating) weeks
Favored or Breed Path	rating x 4	(rating) weeks ÷ 2
Terrestrial Circle Sorcery	12	1 month
New Terrestrial Circle Spell	12	(spell circle) weeks

**Note:** Except for those traits listed above, Dragon King characters increase traits at the same cost and training time as Solar Exalted do (see *Exalted*, p. 274, for details).