

CONTENTS

CHINA	2
Notes on the programmes	5
New key powers	5
<i>Understanding the programmes for users of other games</i>	6
Gods	
Cheng Huang - land and home	7
Guan Di - war and justice	8
Guan Yin - mercy and compassion	9
Lei Gong - thunder and punishment	10
Long Wang - Dragon Kings of water	11
Nu Gua - ancient creator and mender	12
Shou Xing - longevity and good fortune	13
Wen Chang - writing and literature	14
<i>Mrs Character</i>	15
Xi Wang Mu - queen of immortality	15
Yanluo Wang - king and judge of the dead	16
Yi - divine archer and sun god	17
Yu Huang - Jade Emperor of heaven	18
Zhang E - moon goddess	20
Heroes	
Huang Di - legendary emperor	21
Pan Gu - primal giant	22
Sun Wukong - irrepressible monkey king	22
<i>The Eight Immortals:</i>	
Cao Guojiu - commanding aristocrat	24
Han Xiang - impetuous seer	25
He Xiang - lighter-than-air lady	25
Lan Caihe - contrary musician	26
Li Tieguai - crippled healer	27
Lü Dongbin - crusading scholar	27
Zhang Guolao - ancient sage	28
Zhongli Quan - portly marshal	29
Monsters	
Feng Huang - phoenix	31
<i>The Scarlet Phoenix</i>	32
Gui - hungry ghost	31
Jiang Shi - hopping corpse	33
Qilin - Chinese unicorn	33

Legends Walk - Truth & Justice Edition only includes three pantheons, in the interests of keeping the book a manageable size, but of course there are many others from cultures around the world. So welcome to the first in a series of add-ons detailing some of these, with compact descriptions of the mythic entities and power programmes for your LWTJ game.

We're beginning with the Chinese pantheon, adapting a product called *Jade and Ink* that came out for *Legends Walk Original Edition* in 2006. As it's likely to be less familiar to most readers there's quite a lot of detail for these programmes.

PANTHEON: CHINA

Written and designed by Tim Gray

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CHINA

It's a country large enough to swallow all of Europe, with a variety of peoples and languages, containing one fifth of the people on the planet. So it's only proper to pay some attention to its mythology.

The Chinese name for China is *Zhong Guo (jawng gwaw)*, "middle kingdom/country", from the days when it saw itself as the centre of the world. The western name "China" comes from the Qin (*cheen*) dynasty of emperors, under which the lands were first united in the 3rd century BCE. From then until 1912 it was a centralised state ruled by an emperor, the "Son of Heaven", and administered by a bureaucracy of officials who passed public examinations based on knowledge of the philosophical classics. The provinces had greater or lesser degrees of autonomy as the strength of the centre varied. The emperor's right to rule was said to be granted by the gods, known as the Heavenly Mandate, and could be withdrawn if a ruler were not virtuous.

China's historical and literary traditions have been written in essentially the same language for over 3000 years. In ancient times there were cults of the ancestors and a great variety of deities. These were influenced by the philosophical systems of Confucianism, founded by Confucius (551-479BCE), and Daoism, said to have been founded by Laozi (*laow-dzuh*) at roughly the same time; and later by Buddhism arriving from India. The Chinese also incorporated elements from the lands into which they expanded. This provides a fascinating mixture of beliefs. The official religion was Confucianism, but most of the mythology's deities are of Daoist origin, or of folk religion organised by Daoism. As well as communicating with the representatives of various departments of heaven the household could report to their ancestors' tablets at the household shrine and these could intervene with the bureaucracy on the family's behalf.

Between 1949 and the 1970s the government of the People's Republic of China took a hostile attitude to religion, seeing it as backward. Religious buildings were converted for secular use or even destroyed.

The new constitution of 1978 guaranteed freedom of religion with certain restrictions, and recently there has been a big programme to rebuild Buddhist temples. The Communist Party reacts against any group it perceives as challenging its power, and will not allow its members to practice religion (and membership is required for high level posts). Most modern Chinese report no religious affiliation, but hundreds of millions believe in folk traditions, ancestor worship, feng shui and suchlike, and there are still Buddhist and Daoist communities. (There are also significant numbers of Christians and Muslims.) So while the mythic traditions of China no longer have such a central place in the country's life, they do live on.



Hierarchy and order

Despite the long and literate history we do not have much clear material on the mythology. In 213BCE a government minister persuaded the emperor to have all books burned, apart from technical works on agriculture, medicine and such, on the basis that scholars' fixation on the past stifled innovation. Twenty years later the decree was lifted and the scholars of the time reconstructed the literature, adjusting it to support their own viewpoints and bring the old sources into line with Confucian theory. Much was lost.

The product was a pantheon organised just like the imperial administration on Earth, with departments to control every aspect of the world and human activities. Hierarchy and order were the guiding principles. The gods kept comprehensive records, made reports and issued directives. Depending on how well they perform their duties they might be promoted, lowered in rank or even dismissed, to be replaced in post by another. Earthly emperors, too, could issue decrees changing the rank, status and

will cowardly minions unless they beat the TN.

Vulnerabilities

- Blue Skin - marks you as a Meta, with ensuing social effects.
- Easily Offended - certain things trouble you so much that they erode your Qualities, particularly composure: excreta, the blood of certain animals (for instance dogs), actual or pictured sexual behaviour, anything tainted by powers of uncleanness.
- Ugly - affects social interactions.
- Weather Signs - strong emotions manifest as minor weather conditions nearby, marking you as a Meta.
- Wings - tied to Flight, marking you as a Meta with possible social effects.



In droughts the people sought the help of the Long Wang. Sometimes there was a procession with a dragon effigy. In villages the people visited the most important temple with an ample sacrifice. If that didn't work within a few days they moved the god's statue to the roadside on the basis that this would be unpleasant for a water creature, motivating it to act. If rain came the god received another sacrifice. The Long Wang were also approached to stop rain to prevent floods. They had jurisdiction over funerals too, and if a mistake was made in the rites the people appealed to them.

Aegis

- Water (+ in, on or beside a body of water; - in dry conditions, eg desert, hot summer day, burning building)

Required Powers

- Aquatic*

Qualities

- Strength, Agility, Ingenuity, Awareness, Geophysics, Leadership, Armour (scales), Claws

Optional Powers

- Command Water Creatures - you can issue verbal commands to creatures that live in water, and they will understand and be inclined to obey. Their normal inclinations remain, eg most are wary of danger, and a roll of MOD plus normal social skills might be needed for persuasion.
- Control Water*
- Flight* (wingless)
- Universal Energy*

Vulnerabilities

- Needs Water - you become debilitated if a while goes by without immersing yourself in water.
- Reptilian Appearance - tied to Armour - a Meta marker affecting social interactions.
- Water Signs - your body oozes water when you're under emotional stress - a Meta marker affecting social interactions.

Long Wang

(lawng wahng) The Dragon Kings were water creatures and bringers of rain, the embodiment of the concept of yang. They reported directly to the Jade Emperor, who told them how much rain to give each region. The most important were the four brothers who ruled the four seas of which the earth was the centre. Each lived in a Crystal Palace with his Ministers, an army of fish, crabs and crayfish, and watchmen who policed the sea bottom. They had many temples but were not worshipped as much as the local Long Wang - every watercourse and well had one. There were also celestial dragon kings and dragon kings of the five cardinal points.

The dragon image still commands a lot of respect in Chinese culture. Chinese dragons were benevolent creatures with a long, snake-like body, scaled skin, horns like those of a deer, and taloned feet. They flew among the clouds without wings.

It's said that Huang Di, the Yellow Emperor, had the snake as his emblem and every time he conquered another tribe he incorporated part of its totem beast into his own, creating the image of the dragon. He was immortalised in dragon form.

Zhang E

(*jahnɡ uh*, also Heng 〇 or Chang 〇 or other variations) She was the goddess of the moon, where she lived in the Palace of the Great Cold. She was shown as a very beautiful young woman; so much so that in poetry a pretty woman was said to be as if she had come down from the Moon. She often wore regal garments and carried the disc of the moon. She was regarded as an embodiment of yin.

Zhang E was the sister of an unruly water god driven off by Yi the Archer. Yi was entranced by her beauty and they married. After Yi shot down nine of the ten suns, the pair were exiled from heaven and condemned to live as mortals (see Yi's entry). Zhang E persuaded Yi to ask Xi Wang Mu, the Queen Mother of the West, for the elixir of immortality. She provided enough to let two people live forever, but only enough to make one person truly immortal. Zhang E thought about taking it all herself, but worried the gods might be angry if she abandoned her husband. An astrologer suggested that she could escape to the moon. On swallowing the elixir she floated up to the moon but found she had been turned into a toad.

On the moon she kept company with a white hare or rabbit, more anciently said to live there preparing the elixir of immortality, and a woodcutter who'd been banished there for offending the gods. In some accounts Yi pursued his wife furiously and the hare fought him, making him promise not to harm her. Some say Zhang E did regain her human appearance and thenceforth lived in the palace of the moon (she's certainly shown as a woman, not a toad). The most common version of Yi's story says that the gods restored his divine nature and installed him in the Palace of the Sun as the yang to balance Zhang E's yin. He visited his wife once in each lunar cycle, causing the moon to shine with an extra brilliance.

Aegis

- Moon (+ when moon is out; - in bright sunshine)

Required Powers

- Beauty*

Qualities

- Ingenuity, Awareness, Subterfuge, Night Vision

Optional Powers

- Call Cold - makes it cold in the nearby area. This can only be normal scale.
- Immortal* (ceiling Good)
- Moon Immunity* (full vs darkness-based attacks, MOD vs cold)
- Shapeshift* (Toad)

Rabbit (*pretty much has to be a rabbit or hare*)

- Qualities: Unarmed Fighting
- Confer Immortality - you can give someone else nearby the *Immortal** power at your Rank, lasting Rank duration. You can't use it on yourself.
- Intelligence*

Vulnerabilities

- Nocturnal - your natural rhythm is to be active at night and sleep during the day. This kicks in if you undertake active exploits in daytime, targeting focus, coordination and alertness.
- Unwanted Admirers - your beauty tends to attract attention wherever you go, bringing gifts, marriage proposals, and sometimes obsession. This can certainly mess up social situations.
- Vulnerable to Dryness - as a former water spirit and, let's face it, amphibian you are particularly susceptible to harm that has a drying effect.

