



Qin

*You're a Hero.
Will you be a Legend?*

Qin, the Warring States

Qin, The Path of Tao

Qin - the role-playing game encourages you to explore a rich and fascinating historical setting. In this Ancient China of the Warring States, doomed to disappear into dictatorship and bureaucracy, there is still the opportunity for you to become a legend...

Political intrigues, battles, quests, magic and mythical creatures await !

As a hero questing for adventure, glory or immortality, you will leap from roof to roof, duel against the expert swordsmen of Chu, plot against the rulers of Qin or Zhao, create pacts with spirits or discover the fruits of the Immortal Isles, decipher oracles carved on jade Bi or tortoise shells, direct your troops to assault fortresses, seek wise taoists to benefit from their learning, drive out phantoms or rely on the power of Chi to accomplish high deeds, worthy of the Divine Masters.

Knight-errant or mercenary, robber or fleeing courtesan, exorcist or alchemist, simple footman or general, destiny calls you all to enter the legend of this forgotten China.

Heart of Jade is born

Su Yi hid to the stone floor in surprise. In the darkness, she could only vaguely glimpse her surroundings. A stuffy, pungent smell of earth assaulted her nostrils. Further away, she could hear water dripping. She suddenly felt cold and noticed the smoke-like wisps of breath dancing by her face. The voices of the kidnappers had faded away, but she still felt like she was not alone...

"Put this fang away, little girl, it does not impress me."

The voice sounded raspy and soft, like that of an old man, and yet it vibrated with supernatural power.

"They are mercenaries working for Fist of Bronze. They destroyed my village and murdered the townspeople. Their Master is after me because of some Sign, whatever that is. I'm tired, hungry and cold. Please don't let them find me, whoever you are."

"The Sign ? Could it be ? At last..."

"What on earth are you talking about ? And who are you ? "

Out of the darkness, a gigantic maw suddenly erupted, stopping only inches from the girl's face. She jumped back, and her dagger fell to the floor with a ringing sound.

Su Yi felt a pang of desperation, but it soon led place to anger.

"Can you grant me revenge? Can you destroy my enemies, make them suffer, lacerate their bodies and tear their souls to shreds ? Can you do that, Dragon ? "

"Silence, child ! Learn ! Pick up your dagger and get prepared. I will guide your hand. Observe and admire the power of the Tao !"

"Ready ? First lesson: strike with the swiftness of the wind..."

Forty yards below her, she could now clearly distinguish the four troopers that had been pursuing her. Tired of the chase, they had sat down against the rocks, quarrelling over who was responsible for losing trace of their prey. Their iron weapons were resting on the ground, a grave negligence. She felt only a cold determination, the dagger in her hand an extension of her own body.

"Concentrate. You know what needs to be done. Spirit and body must be as one, a single energy focused towards a common goal. Victory. Be as swift as the wind. Are you ready ?"

She took a deep breath and prepared herself for the leap. Su Yi was no more. From now on, Fist of Bronze would learn to fear Heart of Jade.

Then she realised she had been reborn.

The History of the Empire

The primordial egg gave birth to Pangu, the first being. Through him were born the Sky, home of the Gods, and the Earth, home of the mortals.

Soon, the people gathered under the guidance of the three Majestic Ones, and despite the rebellion of the Warlord Gonggong nearly destroying the world of yore, harmony finally prevailed thanks to the wisdom of the Gods. The people were finally united.

The mythical Yellow Emperor was the first enlightened ruler of an empire that covered all things under the Sky. First of the Five Sovereigns, his reign was followed by that of rulers as wise and benevolent as himself, and the Empire prospered.

Then followed the time of the great mortal dynasties: the Xia came first, then the Yin, and finally the Zhou. In succession, they received the Celestial Mandate from the Emperor of Jade, Ruler of the Gods.

But the power of the Zhou dynasty waned and the ambitious and traitorous Emperor's vassals took their independence and created their own kingdoms in the name of the Dragons they revered. Many believed that the Empire had fallen into the invisible grasp of a malevolent sect dedicated to the power of death and disorder...

There followed a period of constant warring, but also of great intellectual progress, which saw wise thinkers like Lao Zi or Kong Fu Zi spread their teachings throughout a land devastated by the violence that the seven powerful Warring States inflicted on each other.

The Warring States

Seven large kingdoms occupy the land which was formerly the Empire of Zhou. They all have but one goal : to conquer the other kingdoms in order to recreate the Empire under their rule. Warfare, but also spying, diplomacy and economy are the weapons of this century-long conflict.

Qin is the most powerful of the kingdoms. It used to be semi-barbaric, but harsh reforms have contributed to its rise. Its ruthlessly effective administration is a powerful tool allowing its resources to be focused towards the conquest of its rivals.

Zhao is a kingdom strongly influenced by the people of the bordering steppes. Its powerful cavalry and flourishing economy make it a state both respected and feared.

Chu was formerly an enemy of the Empire prior to its dislocation. It is now one of the major powers among the kingdoms, with the largest and most exotic territory.

Qi is the kingdom of scholars and well-read men. Libraries and universities dot its land, and the ruler neglects military power in favour of cultural richness.

Yan, located at the extreme North-East, fights constantly against barbarian raids but must all the same deflect the invasion attempts from rival kingdoms.

Wei used to be a flourishing land, but its power has faded and it now constitutes an easy prey for its rapacious neighbours.

Han is circled by more powerful kingdoms and tries to keep its integrity through diplomatic means, its military strength might being the most limited.

Magic in Qin

It's important to keep in mind that its practitioners don't see Chinese magic as supernatural : it is their greater knowledge of the Laws governing the universe that allows them to perform such feats. It is therefore considered normal and relies on the understanding and use of Chi, the universal source of power. However, the ways of magic are many and varied.

Wizards, Shamans and Taoists

Taoism is a direct inheritance of religious practices of the Priests of the Primordial Dynasties. The primordial religion teaches respect for the Natural Order, following the will of the Gods as interpreted through the reading of symbols, and the observation of religious rites honouring the ancestors. In the Warring States, most of those who practise magic are Taoists. There are still Shamans and Sorcerers, however, from the village healer to the old wise hermit.

Outer Alchemy

One of the most fabled goals of Taoism is the search for immortality. One way to attain that goal is rumoured to be the creation of a Pill of long Life. The one who swallowed such a pill would supposedly live ten thousand years.

Inner Alchemy

Another means of reaching Immortality is to create a Vital Principle using one's body as an alchemical laboratory.

At its pinnacle, this mystic art allows the manipulation of the elements in their purest form. It becomes possible for the alchemist to perform magical feats like creating fire, surrounding oneself with a sphere of protective water, commanding the branches and roots of trees, moving underground at high speed, etc.

Divination

In ancient times, the main instruments of divination were tortoise shells or flat animal bones. Thrown in a fire, these objects cracked, and the sorcerer interpreted these cracks according to their knowledge.

Discerning signs and symbols and gazing at the Heavens and the stars are also a crucial part of divination as is, of course, the I Ching, the Book of Changes.

Exorcism

The exorcist protects the world of the living against spirits. He practises his art with constant regard to the Balance of the World : life is Yang, death is Yin, and it is not a good thing to let the dead return to haunt the living.

Spirits and creatures

Spirits are very common in Qin, and natives of the Warring States regard them as an integral part of their daily life.

Jiang shi are Chinese vampires, similar to zombies. They sport long fangs and blue nails, they are filthy and move about by hopping.

Emo are demons, often recognised by the single or double horn jutting from the center of their forehead.

Youling, also called **Gui** are ethereal, vaporous ghosts, and generally take the appearance of beautiful women luring men to rob them of their Yang fluid.

Taotie are flying heads, their lower jaw missing but their teeth pointy and sharp-edged. These demons are rapacious and terribly clever. In all circumstances they are to be avoided, for their devouring hunger leads them to slaughter and dismember any human beings they come across.

When an excess of Yin fluid stagnates in the vicinity of an inauspicious area (an ancient battle-field, a charnel house, etc.), monsters known as **Wang xiang** may appear. These creatures possess corpses and become fierce red-eyed undead recognisable by their sharp claws and emaciated bodies. They crave for live flesh and will easily decimate entire villages if there is no one to stop them.

According to an old legend, any creature bathed in starlight for ten thousand years will attain the wisdom of Man. **Yao** are such animals, and they can adopt human form at will. They are facetious rather than malicious, they like to trick humans for fun, but are rarely cruel. Many tales talk about such creatures falling in love with mortals and marrying them. Animals most likely to become Yao are foxes, monkeys and snakes, and more rarely spiders and crows.

Long, Chinese dragons, are celestial creatures, symbols of power, wisdom and sovereignty.

Kilin are the mounts of Immortals and heroes, chimeras with wings of fire, bodies of horses and stag antlers.

Fenghuang are fabulous birds supposed to symbolize harmony in a couple. Their tails shine with all the colors of the rainbow.



The Character

In Qin, a character is defined by several components which determine what he is, what he can do, what his strengths and weaknesses are, etc. Here is a description of the various components :

Aspects

Aspects define the innate capacities of the character, his characteristics. They range from 1 (weak) to 5 (legendary).

Wood is a mental aspect representing intelligence, cunning, memory and perception as well as a capacity to reflect and concentrate.

Fire is a social attribute, representing the inner flame of the character, his charisma, intuition and inspiration.

Metal is a martial attribute, it measures the pugnacity of the character, his strength, constitution and warrior spirit.

Water is a physical attribute measuring agility, speed and suppleness of the character.

Earth is a mystical attribute, measuring a sixth sense, the will and the inner force, the bond established between the character and the mystical forces of the universe, the Tao.

Secondary Aspects

These Aspects are all derived from the primary aspects detailed above.

Chi is a measure of the inner force of the character. It allows him to surpass himself and fuel the powers of the Tao.

Passive defense : represents the difficulty to hit a character during an attack.

Vitality measures the vital energy of the character. It is split into five states (*Healthy, Bruised, Lightly wounded, Severely wounded, Fatally wounded*). Each state after Healthy causes a penalty to be added to the threshold of any actions undertaken by a character suffering that level of wounds.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The Strengths are favours that destiny bestowed upon the character whereas Weaknesses are his negative features, the areas in which he is fallible.

Talents

Talents are the acquired skills of the character and are rated from 0 to 4 :

0	Inexperienced
1	Apprentice
2	Experienced
3	Expert
4	Master

Talents are divided into five categories : mental (Calligraphy or Medicine), social (Eloquence or Intimidation), martial (the various combat talents), physical (Horsemanship or Climbing) and mystical (Talents related to the Tao).

The Tao

The Tao represent the laws of the universe which govern the workings of the world. Some heroes are able of channelling their Chi in order to influence these laws, to divert them for their own benefit and thus to accomplish the feats that will make living legends of them.

A proper use of the Tao allow feats such as ignoring gravity; moving faster than any mortal, suffusing an object with one's inner force, noticing things that no eye can normally see, etc.

The Tao are organized into 4 levels, each allowing the character to perform increasingly powerful feats, which are useable in various circumstances. These feats should not be restrictive and there should be many ways to use a given feat. The keyword here is creativity.



The rules

The Yin / Yang Dice

The Qin rules are based on the use of the Yin/Yang Dice (YyD), which are no other than two ten-sided dice (d10), one black (Yin) and the other white (Yang).

Throwing YyD consists of throwing these two d10 and subtracting the result of the lowest from the result of the highest. A result of 0 on either of the dice is to be read as zero and not as ten.

If both dice give the same result, it's considered as a critical success, unless both results are 0, in which case it's a critical failure.

Simple Tests

When the result of an action undertaken by a character is uncertain, it must be resolved by a Simple Test.

A simple test consists in adding the scores of the appropriate Aspect and Talent to the results of the YyD. The total must then be compared to a Success Threshold (ST) determined by the game master depending on the difficulty of the task undertaken. If the total is higher or equal to the ST, the action is successful. If not, it's a failure. The difference between the total and the ST is called a Margin of Success, it's a measure of how successful an action is.

In summary : **Aspect + Talent + YyD > or = ST.**

If the result of the YyD is a critical success, the action is automatically successful no matter what the odds, and the character earns a number of Chi points equal to the result of the dice. If a margin of success is needed, again, the result of the dice is used. A critical failure always results in something disastrous to be determined by the Game Master.

Here is the scale of the Success Thresholds depending on the difficulty of the action :

Difficulty

3	Childlike
5	Easy
7	Average
9	Difficult
11	Very difficult
13	Heroic
15	Legendary

Opposed Tests

When two characters accomplish an opposed action, they both carry out a simple test against ST determined by the Game Master, then their margins of success are compared. The one with the higher margin wins. A Critical Success always wins over a simple success, no matter what the margin is.

The Combat System

When combat occurs, the game master must be especially attentive to how time passes inside the game, segmenting it into turns and exchanges.

A **Turn** is the time it takes for a character to carry out a number of actions equal to 1 + his level in the martial Talent being used. For example, a character who is Experienced (2) in his martial Talent will be able to perform 3 actions during a turn.

An **Exchange** is the amount of time between the action of the protagonist with the highest initiative and the action of the protagonist with the lowest initiative.

Here is how combat is handled :

Initiative

Each protagonist **rolls for initiative by adding his Water score to the results of a YyD roll**. If two protagonists end up with the same result, the one with the highest Water aspect has initiative over the other.

If the two protagonists' Water Aspects are equal, then their actions will be simultaneous.





Protagonists then act in order of decreasing initiative, one after the other, each performing one action at a time until the end of that exchange. Those protagonists who are able to perform additional actions then start a second exchange, then a third and so on until all protagonists have performed all their actions for the turn, in which case the turn ends and a new turn starts.

Attack

A protagonist who wishes to attack an opponent must roll a **Metal + Martial Talent + YyD** against an **ST equal to the opponent's passive defense score**. If the roll is successful, the attack has succeeded.

Defense

A protagonist whose Passive Defense is overcome by an attack can choose to further defend himself. In order to do that he must roll a **Water + Appropriate Talent + YyD** against an **ST equal to the total score of the attack**. If successful, the defender is considered to have fended off the attack. In order to attempt such a defense, however, the protagonist must use one of the actions he has available for the current turn.

Movement

A protagonist who wishes to move significantly during a turn must spend **an action in order to cover a number of yards equal to his Water level**.

Damage

If an attack succeeds and is not defended, the damage it inflicts is **equal to the Metal Aspect of the attacker + the weapon's Damage Score** to which the **Margin of Success of the Attack roll** can be added if and only if the Yang dice scored higher than the Yin dice or the roll is critical. This total is reduced by the defender's armour rating if applicable. The protagonist who

inflicts the damage ticks the corresponding number of boxes of Vitality and applies the corresponding penalty, if any, to all subsequent rolls.

Once every protagonist has acted for this exchange, a new exchange begins. Protagonists act in the same order of initiative. Once every protagonist has used up his available actions, a new turn begins, starting with a new initiative roll.

Combat Maneuvers

A basic Martial Talent covers the use of simple strikes with the associated weapon. A seasoned martial artist, however, knows how to rely on more spectacular techniques that may also result in different effects. These are called Combat Maneuvers. Each level of a given Martial Talent allows the use of these maneuvers if the combatant has learned them.

Using such a maneuver usually increases the ST by +1, and only one maneuver may be used per action.

Relying on Tao

Tao can be useful in combat as well as in other circumstances. Most Tao don't require the expenditure of an action, but improve an action already undertaken.

Using a Tao requires the expenditure of a number of Chi points equal to the level of the effect used. It is possible to combine the use of several Taos on a same action. The Chi expenditure is then cumulative.

It's possible to use a Tao in combination with a Combat Maneuver.