

# Alternate Beginnings for **FENG SHUI** Action Movie Roleplaying Campaigns

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Players, being the pesky critters that we all know and love - - and let's face it, that we can't really do without - - are always looking for an edge. . . A way to be one up on you, the poor, over-worked GM. And players are not above reading the rules, even when they know you don't want them to. Perhaps even *especially* then. *Feng Shui* players are no different in this regard from players of any other system.

This article suggests one way for a canny *Feng Shui* GM to stay several steps ahead of his players on this matter. *Feng Shui* players, particularly those who have already played the game, are no doubt familiar with the game's unusual cosmology, and the all-pervasive Time War that rages between the four main Junctures. One easy way to liven up a new *Feng Shui* campaign for experienced (or even jaded) players is to start them off in a Juncture other than the contemporary one. But why stop there? The players all know that it's the same Juncture - - but if you make whichever of the other three Junctures you're using the contemporary one, and adjust the positions of the other Junctures accordingly, you can really knock your players for a loop. This is true especially if you start them off slowly, with a few adventures in the home Juncture before they get to the Netherworld and discover what you've done.

The four basic Junctures of the *Feng Shui* background are located in 1996 (the contemporary Juncture), 69 AD, 1850 and 2056. Each of these is described to some extent in the *Feng Shui* rules, as well as in the supplements describing the dominant groups in each era: *Thorns of the Lotus* for the 69AD Juncture, *Blood of the Valiant* for the 1850 Juncture and *Seeds of the New Flesh* for the 2056 Juncture. Considering each of those other three as the contemporary Juncture,



the others move:

- For the 69 AD Juncture, the new points in time accessible are at 1859 BC, 77 BC and 129 AD.
- For the 1850 Juncture, the same points are at 77 BC, 1744 AD, and 1910 AD.
- Finally, for the 2056 Juncture, the relevant dates are 129 AD, 1910 AD and 2116 AD.

This gives a total of six new Juncture locations - - 1858 BC, 77 BC, 129 AD, 1744 AD, 1910 AD and 2116 AD. As described in Chapter 16 of the *Feng Shui* rules, the dominant group in each of these Junctures partially determines where the majority of the world's Chi sites can be found, and how the flow of Chi affects the world. The mechanics of this are described at greater length in the tables at the conclusion of this article. Some of these Junctures are home to groups not described in the *Feng Shui* rules, mostly due to the fact that many of them no longer exist. (Or, in the case of the 2116 Juncture, they do not yet exist). Briefly, these groups are:

- **The Rising Sons**, a break-away faction of the Jade Wheel Society that wishes to see the Japanese develop political power and Arcanowave technology in the first half of the 20th century. They are the impetus behind Japan's rapid modernization and expansionism during the first half of the twentieth century, which is the way they seek to gain control over many of the key Feng Shui sites in the Far East.
- **The Servants of the God-King**, a priestly caste of Ancient Egypt that maintained the power of Egypt through their figurehead Pharaohs for over three millennia with their understanding of the Chi flows of the river Nile. Unfortunately for them, they are largely incapable of expanding these teachings to work in other lands outside Egypt. Alexander the Great was guided by their teachings, which his advisors were able to expand upon to some extent. But his death prevented him from completing his Chi-based conquests.
- **The Navigators** are a sort of Renaissance era Dragons. This group is inspired by the works of Marco Polo and other such travelogue writers. They are a predominately European group (although they do have numerous members from nations all along the great Silk Routes) that have a limited understanding of Chi, and who seek to make that knowledge available to others. Unfortunately for them, the writers they follow are often charlatans, or misled by the Ascended - - while there are places like El Dorado and the Kingdom of Prester John, these fabled lands exist only in the Netherworld. The chroniclers of these lands might believe them to exist in the real world, but they demonstrably do not, and thus, the uninitiated world dismisses their works as pure fantasy. Where the truth cannot be suppressed or distorted, the Ascended (through the Order of the Wheel), control many publishers, which makes such writers easily found and silenced.
- **The Martyrs** for Potemkin are a loose group composed entirely of Abominations. They worship the memory of Battlechimp Potemkin, but they have perverted his teachings. While Potemkin sought only to destroy all technology, the Martyrs believe that he intended for all humanity to be destroyed, and for the Abominations to inherit the Earth. Although they have limited Chi power, many of them are innately able to enter the Netherworld, and they are a serious danger to all times and places.

## 1858 BC

At this stage of world history, the systematic study of Chi sites is very poorly

advanced. Chi sites are scattered more or less equally around the world, with a slightly greater than normal concentration of them in the Middle East and Eastern Mediterranean. The Servants of the God-King - - the priests who control the Pharaohs of Egypt from behind the scenes - - maintain their centuries old power through an understanding of Chi. Some philosophers and priests in the eternally squabbling Greek city states also understand it, although the Greek obsession with relics of sorcerous power has led them down a path of easy but limited power, and less understanding. In the Far East, the original sorcerers who will form the nucleus of the Eaters of the Lotus are yet unborn, and their predecessors waste their power in pointless squabbling. No one faction dominates, largely due to the fact that the few factions which do exist are too small and too scattered to amass much power. In fact, the majority of the world's Chi sites are controlled by groups - - or more commonly, individuals - - who have but a single such site to their names.

The sole exception to this is the kingdom ruled by the Hsia dynasty in what will one day be China. Under the cunning leadership of Shao K'ang, many Innerwalkers have been organized into an elite force, a combination of espionage, commando and geomantic functions. Although they do not seek to expand Shao's territories, they guard those which he does rule with great fervor, and work to keep the surrounding states off-balance and incapable of united action against him.

## **77 BC**

Although almost two millennia have passed, Chi is still not well understood in the West. The nascent Roman Empire in the Occident regards the study of Chi as a mere superstition, and thus turns its back on the greatest power in the world. The Servants of the God-King are still going strong, having co-opted the Ptolemaic dynasty after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great. In the next few decades, they will make one last effort to bring the Romans around, but after the deaths of Julius Caesar and Cleopatra, their influence wanes rapidly. As a result, Chi power sites in that part of the world are beginning to lose their power.

In the Orient, things are somewhat different. Gao Zhang has begun his rise to power, and the Eaters of the Lotus are making a name for themselves, although still few in numbers and more thinly spread than they will be. Nevertheless, they are clearly a rising power to those who know, and the world is slowly changing in response to that fact. Partially under their influence, the Han dynasties that rule China are pursuing expansionist policies - - at present, there is a drive inland, and many of the Chi sites of Sinkiang and Tibet are threatened by the plans of Gao Zhang.

## **129 AD**

By this point, the Servants of the God-King are a spent force. Some knowledge remains among the Druids of the British Isles, focussed by their standing stones and stone circles - - but the Romans are persecuting them with a will, and are destined to succeed in eliminating them almost entirely over the course of the next two centuries. Meanwhile, in the Far East, the Eaters of the Lotus are coming under ever increasing fire from their opponents, and their power is waning. At this point, they are happy to build slowly and carefully, awaiting the day that they will rise again. Thirty years from now, the Eaters of the Lotus will stretch forth their hand once more, and regain their lost power, only to wind up, eventually, being suppressed yet again. This pattern will repeat itself with only minor variations for centuries to come.

The power of the Eaters of the Lotus slowly diminishes as the political and military might of Chinese rulers increases. Even so the Eaters of the Lotus will remain strong for centuries to come, finally being crushed by the Mongol invasions.

On the far side of the world, several Native American cultures have developed some understanding of Chi, although they have not systematized this knowledge to any great extent, and many sites remain undiscovered. Furthermore, the relatively small size - - and predominantly nomadic cultures - - make them not much of a threat. Even so, the Eaters of the Lotus occasionally send agents to the West coasts of both North and South America, to prevent the possibility of a threat arising from that direction.

## 1744 AD

The destruction of the last Native American civilization two centuries earlier removed the last serious threat to the power of the Ascended (and wiped out the only remaining stronghold of the Four Monarchs). The rationalist, scientific worldview that they espouse is gaining ground, and Chi power is weakening. This Juncture is characterized by European imperialism, largely at the behest of the Ascended, and for the purpose of wiping out opposing power groups and de-powering their Chi sites. Ironically, in doing so, the Ascended are creating the very conditions that led to the rise of both the Guiding Hand and the Rising Sons.

The power of the Ascended is close to absolute in the East. The only organized resistance comes from the Navigators - - and they are losing ground on an almost daily basis as the powerful nations of Europe bring ever greater amounts of the world under their control. Still, the Navigators have some life left in them yet, especially if they can succeed in making contact with the Dragons, and allying themselves to that group.

## 1910 AD

The 1910 Juncture is a Juncture in flux. The growing power of the Rising Sons, a largely Japanese-based faction group of the Jade Wheel Society, is unseen but greatly influential at this time. They seek to create a society and a technology not too dissimilar from that of the Architects in 2056. Already, they have gained much Chi power from the capture of several strategic sites in the Russo-Japanese War five years earlier, and they are behind increasing Japanese imperialism as well. Their major opponent is the Guiding Hand, and the eventual Japanese invasion of China in 1930's is the final and most overt phase of the conflict between the two. Fortunately, very few members of the Rising Sons survive after 1945 - - and the majority of them are re-absorbed by the Jade Wheel Society.

At this time, the Order of the Wheel (and to a lesser extent, the Jade Wheel Society also) is slipping from the grasp of the Ascended. A combination of technological advance and nationalist fervor is leading to increasing division within the ranks of the Ascended's servitors - - divisions their enemies try to exploit while the Pledged desperately try to stem the tide of history. In three years time, when the First World War begins, it will be obvious to even the most fanatical Pledged that they have failed.

## 2116 AD

It was a long and hard struggle, but the Jammers finally defeated the Architects. Unfortunately, in doing so, they pretty much ruined the world. Although World War Three was not a thermonuclear war, the devastation was nearly as great. Most of the planet resembles Europe after the end of World War Two. The cities are largely ruined, and the wilderness encroaches more by the day. The remaining humans cower in fortress towns, rarely with populations exceeding a single thousand people. Much knowledge of Chi has been lost, and there is no one group that can claim ascendancy. Isolated factions of the Architects, the Jammers and the Dragons still survive in the rare locations that still have a functioning modern technology, and each of them imagines that they are alone. Few venture into the blasted wasteland outside the cities, which is the domain of the Abominations. Millions of them, freed from all control and restraint, doing nothing but feeding, fighting and mating. Most of those who still live in the fortress-like townships consider themselves fortunate that the Abominations hate each other even more than they do the humans - - or else their protecting walls would soon fall before the beast. In truth, these conditions are just what the Four Monarchs have been waiting for, and in the wilderness areas, they are slowly building both Chi power and military strength. They're dominating or destroying the Abominations, and planning a reckoning. Of course, things might not go the way they plan - - if the Martyrs for Potemkin have their way, every human being on the planet will soon be nothing but a memory.

### **Modifiers for Arcanowave gear by Juncture**

1858 BC: -3  
77 BC: -1  
129 AD: 0  
1744 AD: +3  
1910 AD: -1  
2116 AD: -1

### **Supernatural Creature Action Value Modifiers by Juncture**

1858 BC: +4  
77 BC: +2  
129 AD: +2  
1744 AD: -1  
1910 AD: -3  
2116 AD: -1

### **Abomination Action Value Modifiers by Juncture**

1858 BC: +3  
77 BC: +1  
129 AD: +1  
1744 AD: 0  
1910 AD: -1  
2116 AD: +2

### **Sorcery Action Value Modifiers by Juncture**

1858 BC: +4  
77 BC: +2  
129 AD: +2  
1744 AD: 0  
1910 AD: -2  
2116 AD: +1

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