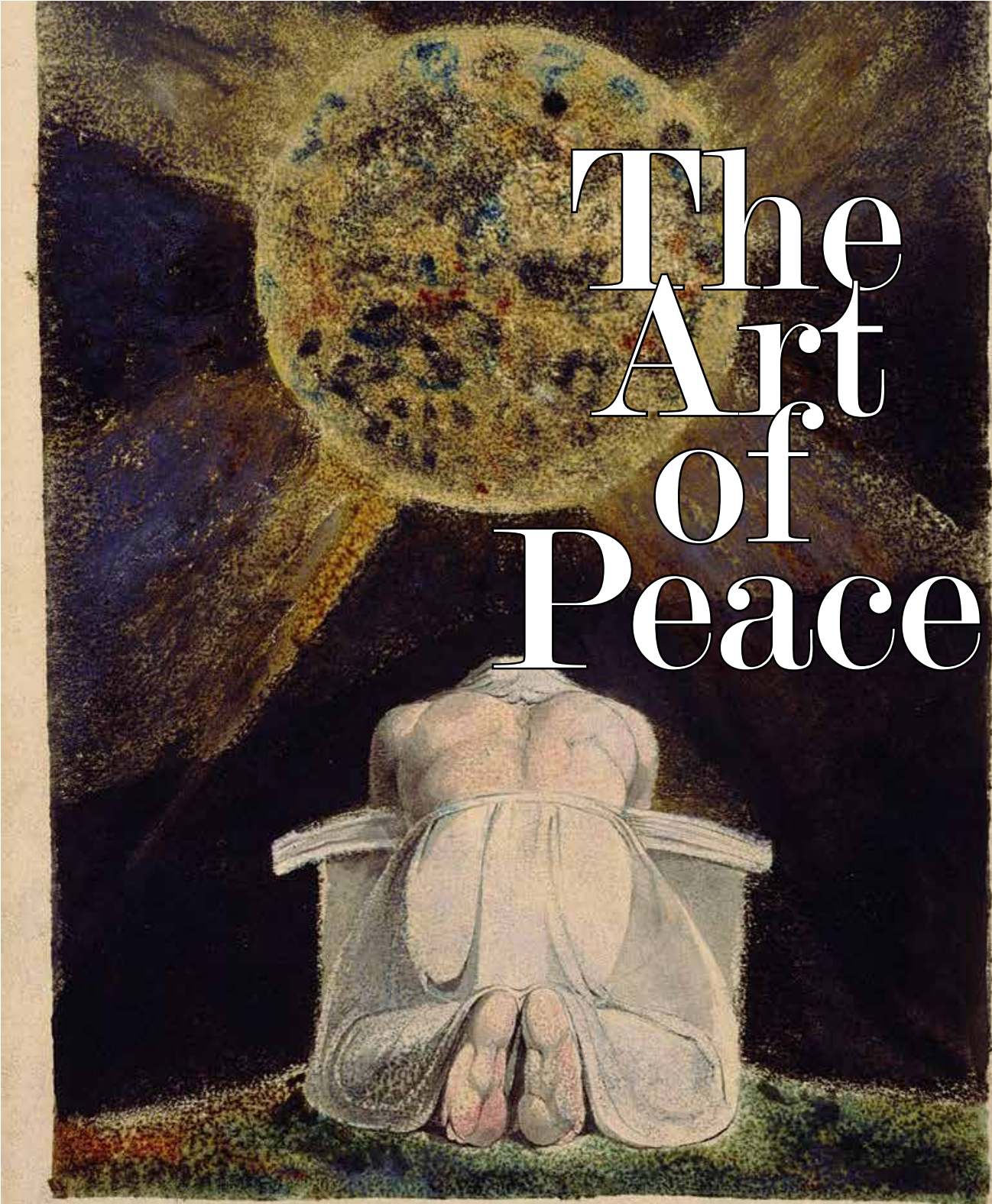




The Art of Peace

By Josh Gentry

Ki—the spiritual energy of life—spirals greater than the largest galaxy and smaller than the tiniest insect. It subtly flows throughout the universe, bringing forth awareness and power.

Karma is a form of ki that manifests in daily life and history. Negative karma is a pattern of pain and ill deeds that repeats itself in forms like ignorance, vengeance, poverty, and war. Positive karma is sown by acts of kindness and righteous thought.

In a world of violence and vicious magic, monks of the Shifting Flow and the Watchful Gate audaciously dream of peace. They recognize that cycles of suffering can only be disrupted by reorienting one's own intentions and actions. When evil threatens an innocent village, initiates of these traditions see mercy as the best path to soothing its twisted spirit.

Monks are not harmony's only advocates. As the world becomes more civilized, peace-loving people dispatch envoys and traveling diplomats to negotiate lasting tranquility. Even characters who pride themselves on their martial prowess can learn new, nonlethal battle techniques.

Such is the art of waging peace.

Way of the Shifting Flow

Followers of the Way of the Shifting Flow hold that murder corrupts one's karma, and that mercy should be considered for even one's bitterest enemies. When forced to fight, these monks turn a creature's own life energy against them. A creature's ki collects in nodes on the body called chakras, which serve to disperse and regulate the creature's energy. Initiates can sense the flow of *ki*, and when they strike at a creature's chakra points, the creature loses control of its fighting energy. The most powerful of these monks need not kill a vanquished foe, for such monks can remove a vanquished foe's ability to fight—*permanently*.

Disrupt Ki

Starting when you choose this discipline at 3rd level, your attacks pinpoint your enemies' chakras, disrupting their offensive capabilities. Whenever you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, you can spend 1 ki point to disrupt that creature's ki until the end of its next turn.

While a creature's ki is disrupted, it suffers the following penalties:

- It cannot spend ki points or superiority dice.
- It has disadvantage on attack rolls.
- Its save DCs are reduced by 5.

Block Ki

Starting at 6th level, when you use Disrupt Ki, you may instead spend 2 ki points to make the effect last longer. While the target's ki is disrupted, it must make a Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns. The target's ki remains disrupted until it succeeds on the saving throw.

Demanifestation

Starting at 11th level, you become so attune at tracking the flow of mystical energy, that you can manipulate your ki to disrupt magic. You learn *detect magic* if you do not already know it, and may cast it at will. Additionally, you may spend 4 ki points to cast either *dispel magic* or *remove curse* as an action, or *counterspell* as a reaction.

Sever Energy

Starting at 17th level, you gain the ability to permanently damage a creature's chakras. When you hit a creature with an unarmed strike, you can spend 5 ki points to sever creature's connection to magical and fighting energy. The creature must a Constitution saving throw.

On a failure, the target's ki is severed, which means:

- The creature cannot make attacks.
- The creature also cannot cast spells or use magical capabilities that require a save or make an attack. Any attempt to use these offensive capabilities automatically fail, and the creature loses any actions involved.
- If the creature causes damage by other means, it takes twice as much psychic damage in return.

The creature's ki is severed permanently, unless you restore the creature's ki within three days. If you and

the creature are on the same plane, you may restore its ki as an action, which ends the effect harmlessly. The creature's ki can also be restored by a *wish* or *miracle* spell cast within a week.

On a success, instead the creature's ki is disrupted, and it must make a Constitution saving throw at the end of each of its turns, and it has disadvantage on such saving throws. The target's ki remains disrupted until it succeeds on the saving throw.

You must wait three days or restore the creature's ki to use this feature again.

Way of the Watchful Gate

You follow a monastic tradition that views negative karma as something that exists not because people act incorrectly, but because the original state of the world was one of ignorance and violence. It is therefore their duty to create positive karma and let it increase through natural remanifestation. A common mantra of this tradition is "gentleness arises from the watchful gate." In layman's terms, patience and awareness in the face of danger will create opportunities for right action.

Watchful Guardian

Starting when you choose this discipline at 3rd level, you learn to watch your enemies closely, and time your sidesteps with clever counterattacks. If you use the Dodge action on your turn, adjacent enemies provoke an opportunity attack from you when they take the Attack action.

As a part of this reaction, you may spend 1 ki point to instead attack with your Flurry of Blows.

Aura of Patience

At 6th level, you gain proficiency with Perception checks and Wisdom saving throws if you are not proficient already.

Additionally, whenever you and or a friendly creature within 10 feet makes a Perception check or a Wisdom saving throw, the creature gains a bonus to that roll equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum +1). You must be conscious to grant this bonus.

At 16th level, this aura extends to 30 feet.

Still Mind

Beginning at 11th level, you can swiftly achieve a meditation-like focus that activates latent energy. As a bonus action, you gain the effect of an *enhance ability* spell with an effect of your choosing that lasts for 1 minute. You must finish a short rest before you can use this feature again.

Gates Open and Shut

Starting at 17th level, you align yourself so thoroughly with protective intention that you can manifest the philosophy of the "watchful gate" in a literal sense. You may spend 6 ki points to cast either *force wall* as an action, or *banishing smite* as a bonus action.

Background: Envoy

When you spoke, you found that people really listened. You honed this skill, and soon you carried the voice of your people to distant lands. As a diplomat, you aligned yourself with the goals of your community or cause, and represented their interests abroad.

Some envoys maintain regular contact with their homeland, while others set out with long-term goals. Either way, you deliver your peoples' message to the world at large, and negotiate agreements in their name. With dutiful persistence and tact, you may find yourself presented with unique opportunities not afforded to those less trustworthy.

Choose a community or cause, and work with your GM to determine the nature of your advocacy. Are you a foreign dignitary, appointed by a lord to

foster friendship abroad? Or are you the representative of a beleaguered village, sent forth to acquire resources and foreign aid? Perhaps you have taken up the mantle of a social movement, developing contacts to spread a new philosophy or humanitarian effort.

Skill Proficiencies: Diplomacy, History

Languages: Two of your choice

Equipment: A journal of your notes regarding meetings and contacts, a letter of introduction from your affiliate institution, a bottle of black ink, a quill, a set of common clothes, a set of fine clothes, and a belt pouch containing 15 gp

Institutional Affiliation

No matter the nature of an envoy’s work, he or she will not get an ear without references to vouch for his or her reputation. Thankfully, you already have several key contacts within an important institution, and your ties with them color your advocacy. You can work with the GM to determine a specific organization with which to affiliate, or you can choose or roll on the table below to determine an institution with which you affiliate in general.

d6	Institutional Affiliation
1	Aristocracy
2	Clergy
3	Military
4	Academia
5	Commerce
6	Organized crime

Feature: Liaison

You are familiar with the inner workings and protocols of your affiliated institution. Whenever that institution or organization is present in a community, you can call on them for small favors in good faith. Such favors may include providing you food and lodging, as well as directing you to other reputable (or at least non-hostile) contacts and resources. If your affiliates can provide additional services if they are in a position to do so, but may request favors or fair payment in return.

Suggested Characteristics

Envoys, from simple messengers to high ambassadors, must learn to deal with a variety of people and to find victory in consensus. As likable as some envoys try to make themselves, few benefit from universal appeal. How an envoy relates to others - and why - often determines the character of his or her success.

d8	Personality Trait
1	I love meeting new people! I jabber with both nobles and farmers like I’m one of their own.
2	I don’t speak fancy, and I think big ideas are better than big words.
3	I am confident and articulate in public... and it’s exhausting.
4	I love to hear myself speak! I can wax philosophic on the complexities of almost any situation. That’s presuming I know what I’m talking about. Which I like to think I do, of course. But then again, there is always a modicum of doubt in mortal knowledge. On that subject...
5	I always carry pen and stationery. I scribble notes or draft letters at any free moment.
6	Diplomacy is the game is polite confidence. The loser, darling, lacks either wit or self-control.
7	I never leave home without my checklist. Hair styled? Check. Fancy belt? Check. Pocket square? Check!
8	The more I travel, the more incorrigible of a flirt I become. Kiss me, I’m <i>foreign</i> !

d6	Ideal
1	Freedom. Personal liberty empowers people to make the best decisions. (Chaotic)
2	Order. My work helps ensure social stability. (Lawful)
3	Profit. I am more concerned with my influence than the nature of my work. (Neutral)
4	Prosperity. Raising up the least of us helps everyone. (Good)
5	Sabotage. Compromise weakens my enemy's position, and puts me at advantage. (Evil)
6	Progress. It is best to be on the right side of change. (Any)
d6	Bond
1	I've seen corruption at work, so I am suspicious of those with authority.
2	I keep a letter from a friend that's passed, but I can't bring myself to read it.
3	Happy people fill me with total joy. It is they I truly serve.
4	I occasionally receive generous donations from an unknown patron.
5	I like morning walks in villages and towns, so I can listen to the people start their day.
6	My affiliated organization does not know who I really work for...
d6	Flaw
1	Years of difficult service have left me cynical and short-tempered.
2	I'd rather lie than admit I'm wrong.
3	I cannot resist an invitation to drink, party, or partake in sensual pleasures.
4	People say I have no personality. I'm just a talking head. Isn't that funny? Ha. Ha. Ha.
5	I feel like I carry the weight of the world. How much more anxiety before I'm crushed?
6	People who disagree with my prerogatives are obviously selfish and ignorant.

Variant Envoy: Vizier

Unlike the wide-casting envoy, you work to advise and guide the judg-

ments of a choice few. Powerful people have heeded your words, and perhaps you can even hear your own voice echoed in the new social landscape. Even so, politics are a fickle game. If you are not with your sworn liege, perhaps your services may have been granted as a gift to one of your companions, or perhaps your waning influence has forced you abroad.

Warriors of Peace

Traditions that advocate peace, such as the Shifting Flow and the Watchful Gate, have altered the beliefs of those they've encountered. Warriors who adopt new philosophies adapt their fighting style to better fit their path. The following maneuvers can be learned by any character with superiority dice.

Maneuvers

These new maneuvers focus on defense, safety, and de-escalation strategies.

Defensive Shove. As a bonus action, you can expend a superiority die to shove an adjacent friendly creature out of harm's way. It moves 10 feet in the direction of your choice, and until the start of your next turn, it can add the superiority die to either its AC or a save the next time it is targeted by an attack or spell.

Double Time. When you move, you can expend one superiority die. Until the end of your turn, your speed increases by the result times 5 feet.

Inner Calm. When you make a saving throw to end an ongoing effect, you can expend one superiority die to add the result to your roll.

Living Shield. When an adjacent friendly creature you can see takes damage, you can expend one superiority die as a reaction. The damage the friendly creature takes is reduced by twice the superiority die result, and you take half that damage.

Perimeter Scan. You can expend a superiority die as a bonus action to make a Perception roll, adding the superiority die to the result. Until the start of

your next turn, can also add the superiority die to the next damage roll you make against a creature you detect in this way.

Pinning Shot. When you hit a creature with a ranged weapon attack, you can forgo the damage roll and expend one superiority die to instead push the target. If the target is Large or smaller, you push the target a distance equal to the roll result times 5ft, and it must make a Strength saving throw. On a failed save, the target is immobilized until the end of your next turn.

Watchful Gaze. When you or a friendly creature that can see and hear you roll for initiative, you can expend one superiority die to add the result to one such creature's initiative roll. You may do so after you see the roll result, but before turn order is determined. You may expend multiple superiority dice in this way, but only one per character.

Watchful Strike. When you ready an action to attack, you can expend a superiority die. You add the superiority die to the attack's damage roll, and to your AC if you are attacked before your attack triggers.

Author - Josh Gentry
Editor - James Haeck
Artist - William Blake
Layout - Justin Buell