

MEDITATIONS OF THE IMPERIAL MYSTICS

BY CLINTON J. BOOMER AND JASON NELSON





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WHAT YOU WILL FIND INSIDE MEDITATIONS OF THE IMPERIAL MYSTICS (5E)

Meditations of the Imperial Mystics is a delightful expansion of the martial arts and mysticism wielded by the 5th Edition monk class, but it goes far beyond into the mystic arts of magic and how it blends with the power of ki. You will find in these pages a quartet of ancient and erudite texts that bring numinous enlightenment to those that read them. When your heroes discover fragments of mystic lore from ***Body Outside Body***, ***Instructions of Yin-Blood and Thundering Yang***, ***Prayers of Empty Flesh and Undying Ki***, and ***Seven Ghost Needles***, they are uncovering mysteries from the greatest masters of the mind across fantasy Asia. The tomes within this product are evocative and richly detailed, with history and character that makes them far more than a collection of dusty pages that deliver intriguing possibilities for introducing novel applications of the rules of your favorite role-playing game, and present over two dozen feats, spells, and options to enrich your 5E heroes with amazing Asian-inspired accents.

The Legendary Games tradition is to combine rich story and background, innovative layout, beautiful aesthetics, and excellence in design that is second to none. This product is the latest in that tradition, and we hope you enjoy using it as much as we enjoyed making it. Game on!

- Jason Nelson



BOOKS AND MAGIC

Magical tomes, codices, manuals, librams, and grimoires are a staple of fantasy fiction and fantasy gaming, as repositories of lost secrets or forbidden lore. Whether semi-historical or Lovecraftian and outré, books hold a certain fascination as windows into the past, or into the mind of another. In gaming terms, however, books have mostly hewn to one of two archetypes: the book of spells or a book that grants a permanent boost to an ability score or character class. There is a great deal of additional design space here, however, to broaden the parameters of what a book can be. Surely a book can contain spells that can be learnt and studied, but it can do more than this, and for that matter it can open up spell options even for classes that usually do not use spellbooks. For that matter, if studying a book can increase your ability scores through gainful exercise or clear thought, or in past versions of the game could add a level of experience in a class, why not books that could teach you other secrets that you could continue to use to improve yourself.

This product explores books that cross over through both of these design goals, while also continuing to explore the idea introduced in the companion product *Tomes of Arcane Knowledge*; that is, that a spellbook need not be a book at all. Surely books and scrolls are the most common way to record such prophecies and discoveries for posterity, but cultures, traditions, and genres can demand far more magnificent, mysterious, or horrible media for the recording of great wisdom. *Meditations of the Imperial Mystics* is rooted in the sensibilities of Asian-inspired traditions, and thus these tomes represent the cultures implied in such campaigns in their form as well as their contents.

Much of the lore in this product relates to the use and expenditure of ki, which can be as narrowly focused as the monk and ninja classes or as broad as you wish, using the expanded ki rules in *The Way of Ki*. However, this product does not require *The Way of Ki* to be useful to your campaign. The foundational Ki Meditation feat mechanic is reprinted here for your convenience, but you may refer to that product if you wish to make ki a core feature of your campaign.

FRAGMENTARY TOMES

Each of the “tomes” within this product, regardless of whether it is an actual book, contains secret knowledge that is not accessible to the general public. Whenever you introduce one of these items, you must consider how to handle the proliferation of that knowledge. While wizards must learn their spells from study, that limit on accessibility works differently for sorcerers and does not apply at all to a class like clerics. While there is not a compelling rules-based reason to deny such classes access to the spells contained herein, the flavor of discovery of a new tome is clearly lost a bit if these secrets are freely available.

You can, of course, rule that the spells contained within these books (or similar books such as those in *Tomes of Arcane Knowledge*) are unattainable without direct access to the tome in question. Even for classes with fewer restrictions on their spell choice, like clerics or sorcerers, the rarity of these spells makes them functionally inaccessible. While in theory they could be learned, a supplicant priest or experimenting sorcerer might never think to try the feats these spells achieve. While a deity could grant the spells if asked, it doesn't necessarily volunteer that information unless properly asked or propitiated.

If you do want to introduce new rules contained herein without giving out the entire item, you could rationalize this on the basis of corrupted or fragmentary versions of a secret text. As an item of treasure, bits and pieces of legendary works can provide an interesting alternative to gold, jewels, and standard magic items. This can be an excellent method for introducing PCs in pursuing a legendary item or tome, whetting their appetite with one or more secrets from the original, perhaps even making them flawed in some way. For that matter, they could find a famous tome literally split in two, with some secrets intact and a partial clue to others that are lost but could be rediscovered if only the other part of the book could be recovered.

The same idea can be applied to new ki feats contained within any of these tomes, considering these new feats to be unavailable unless a character has access to one of these tomes, or to someone with access to at least a fragment of this knowledge. The idea of training to gain skills, feats, and the like is a return to a concept more popular in earlier versions of the game, but

need not be as mechanically thoroughgoing as it was in those days. Using this option for feats simply creates a small niche of limited-access abilities that grounds the characters a bit more in a textured campaign setting, where everything is not simply uniform and universal, but where some things can be had only with a bit of effort, making their discovery a reward in itself.

KI FEATS

While monks possess a baseline pool of ki points and class abilities that can be activated using them, most users of ki rely on the use of feats to focus and channel their use of ki. For characters without a pool of ki points, this can be facilitated by taking the following prerequisite feat, previously described in *The Way of Ki*:

KI MEDITATION (Ki)

Prerequisite: Wisdom 13 or higher

You can meditate to tap into inner reserves of power and focus, gaining the following benefits:

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When you take a short or long rest, you can meditate for one hour to gain a temporary point of ki that lasts until you expend it or take a long rest. If you already have ki, you do not gain this benefit.
- Choose a single skill you are proficient in or set of tools you are proficient with. While you have at least 1 point of ki, your proficiency bonus is doubled for any roll you make that uses the chosen proficiency. When making a skill check for the selected skill or tool, as a bonus action you can spend 1 point of ki to gain advantage on that skill check.

As in *The Way of Ki*, you will see rules for ki-related feats that reference Wisdom as the default ability score. Your DM may allow certain characters to use a different ability score, depending on the circumstances in which those characters utilize ki energy. If your 5E campaign allows characters to use a different ability score to determine their ki-related effects, you may substitute that

ability score for Wisdom for the purpose of feat prerequisites as well as the DCs and effects of ki-related feats and abilities.

The Way of Ki also contains information regarding methods for every character class to acquire and gain additional ki points through the use of vows and substituting ki feats for other class features. This information is not necessary if you wish to reserve ki abilities to the classes that officially use ki, but these rules allow you to greatly expand the scope and use of ki in your game and to model a cultural tradition where ki is just as popular and important as arcane and divine magic.

BODY OUTSIDE BODY

Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)

The rough pages of scraped vellum comprising this tome are pressed between covers of embossed teak, loosely bound with sinew and skeins of braided twine. Within, scrawled characters twine around diagrams of spirit-centers and spiritual pathways between the mind and the universe. An engraved medallion of brilliant green jade serves as a bookmark fob as well as a warding device for the book. This text within is an exploratory narrative plumbing the auras that permeate the silent twilight sea between heart and mind, both the mystic emptiness within each individual's spiritual space as well as the conjoined communion that links dreamers and the dream of reality itself. This surrealist panegyric deals with the science of focusing one's ki in order to become sensitive to the patterns of joining that emanate from the wellsprings of time and space, to read the past, present, and future that occur simultaneously in the flow of probability. This is not entirely a surrender of rationality to postrealistic Gnosticism, for in the reading of other-time and the resonant auras within this world, one can learn much about what exists both near far, even learning to hurl one's own consciousness heedless through the maelstrom to the quiet shores of elsewhere and elsewhere, thence to draw back with the gleaned wisps of knowledge beyond the reach of normal senses.

Benefit: Study of this tome grants an expanded awareness of patterns in the universe and how to unlock them in a way that manifests success. If you study *Body Outside Body* for 1 hour (which may overlap with preparing other spells), for the next



24 hours when using any spell contained in the tome, you may cast that spell as one level higher than its base level without expending a higher spell slot. If a spell within the tome does not have an enhanced effect at a higher level, instead treat your spellcasting ability score modifier as though it were 2 higher for the purpose of determining save DC or spell attack bonus.

In addition, the jade medallion preserves the book from rot and decay and also grants it an Armor Class and hit points as if it were a medium-sized, resilient stone object rather than one of wood and paper (AC 17, 18 (4d8) hit points). The enchanted jade purifies the book as well. Any poison or contagion applied to the book is neutralized within 1 minute. The charm's virtue extends in part to a creature carrying the book, granting advantage to saving throws against disease and poison as long as the book is carried. This bonus does not apply if the book is carried in an extradimensional space, and the bonus does not apply if the medallion is detached from the book.

Ki Powers: Study of this tome allows you to select a number of rare feats that are little known outside the devotees of *Body Outside Body* and its teachings.

AURA ABSOLUTION (Ki)

Prerequisite: The ability to have at least one ki point

You can rechannel the flow of ki and manipulate the auras of yourself and others, gaining the following benefits:

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- While you have at least 1 point of ki, your alignment cannot be discerned by spells or other effects that would divine your alignment. Additionally, when you are affected a spell or effect that would normally determine your alignment, you can use your reaction and 1 point of ki to register as an alignment of your choosing for the duration of that spell or effect. All other spells and magical effects treat you as if you were of the chosen alignment.
- By meditating for 1 hour and spending 3 points of ki, you can cleanse a target's aura, removing all curses affecting one creature. Alternatively, you can reverse a magical alignment change affecting one creature.

DREAM TRAVEL (Ki)

Prerequisite: Proficiency in Intelligence (Arcana), the ability to have at least one ki point

You've learned to travel to other places through the Dimension of Dreams, gaining the following benefits:

- While you have at least 1 point of ki, you have advantage on saving throws against spells and effects that would put you to sleep against your will or that would alter your dreams.
- While sleeping, you can spend 1 point of ki to bring yourself and a number of willing, sleeping creatures equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 0) through the Dimension of Dreams and to a desired location. During travel through the Dimension of Dreams, you and your companions form dream-selves that have a normal travel pace of 50 miles per hour. While in the Dimension of Dreams, you and your traveling companion's physical bodies remain where they sleep. Once your destination is reached, your physical bodies and dream-selves fade away and your physical bodies reform at your destination. If a sleeping creature is awoken before they reach their destination, they awake at the location where they fell asleep.

FATE LINK (Ki)

Prerequisite: Mindlink feat

When you link auras, you conjoin your destinies, gaining the following benefits:

- When establishing a mindlink with a willing creature, you can double the ki point cost to grant the creature a +1 bonus to AC and saving throws as well as resistance to all damage. Also, each time it takes damage, you take the same amount of damage. This effect lasts until either creature in the mind link drops to 0 hit points. If the creature is unwilling, the cost is instead tripled.
- By spending 1 point of ki and an action, either creature in a Fate Link can absorb a condition affecting the other, transferring that condition onto themselves. The following conditions can be transferred: blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, and stunned. Additionally, by doubling the ki point cost you can instead transfer a new condition as a reaction. You cannot transfer a condition to yourself if you are immune to that condition.

MINDLINK (Ki)

Prerequisite: Proficiency in Intelligence (Arcana), the ability to have at least one ki point

You can knit your aura with another's, allowing you to share thoughts and spirit. You gain the following benefits:

- As an action, you can spend 1 point of ki to create a spiritual and mental linkage with another creature you touch that lasts until you take a long rest. If the creature is unwilling, it must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier) to avoid being linked. You can sense the direction and distance to the creature you are linked to and what, if any, conditions they are affected by. By spending an additional point of ki, you can grant the linked creature the same benefits in relation to you.
- You can spend a further 2 ki points as an action to establish a telepathic link with a creature linked to you. For one hour, you and the creature you are linked to can communicate telepathically. The communication is possible over any distance, though it can't extend to other planes of existence.

MINDWORM (Ki)

Prerequisite: Mindlink and Sensitivity to Psychic Impressions feats

By forcing your consciousness into another's mind, you bridge the gap between spirits and gain the following benefits:

- If you detect the presence of the charmed condition or enchantment spell using Sensitivity to Psychic Impressions, you can spend 1 additional ki point as a separate action to read the trace thoughts of the creature that created the effect. You know the creature's thoughts at the time it created the effect, but not its present state of mind. Alternatively, you may spend 2 ki points to try to establish a Mindlink with the creature that created the effect. If your Mindlink succeeds, you can spend 1 ki point at any time to read the surface thoughts of the linked creature. When you read their thoughts, the creature may attempt a Wisdom (Insight) check (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier) to detect your mental intrusion. If the creature successfully detects your intrusion, they are granted another saving throw against your Mindlink with advantage. They may repeat this saving throw once per minute until the link is severed.
- When you target a creature with whom you share a Mindlink using a Divination, Enchantment, or Illusion spell, that creature has disadvantage on their saving throw.
- You can use this ability in the same way against a creature whose tracks you have examined using Sensitivity to Psychic Impressions.

OBJECT READING (Ki)

Prerequisite: The ability to have at least one ki point

You can read the latent energies of inanimate objects and gain the following benefits:

- As long as you have at least 1 ki point, you can use your action to see a faint aura around any object you handle that bears magic, and you learn the school of magic, if any. The aura remains visible to you as long as you are studying the object.

- By further studying the object for an hour and spending 1 ki point, you can determine whether the object has been consecrated or desecrated, as with the hallow spell. Alternatively, you can instead determine the object's properties and how to use them, whether it requires attunement to use, and how many charges it has, if any.
- By meditating upon the nature of an object for 1 hour and spending 2 ki points, you can learn a brief summary of any significant lore about the object or you can gain advantage on the next ability or skill check you make with the object within the next 24 hours.
- You can examine tracks left by a creature and spend 1 ki point to receive a clear mental image of the person or creature that made those tracks. This image includes any telling features or expressions and any gear or creatures it was carrying at the time the tracks were made.
- As an action, you can spend 1 ki point to determine if a creature you touch is charmed or under the effect of an enchantment spell. You can spend 2 additional ki points to then learn the precise nature of the condition or spell.

Spells: *Body Outside Body* can be read by wielders of common magic and used to glean knowledge of the following spells: *arcane eye*, *astral projection*, *aura alteration**, *clairvoyance*, *detect evil and good*, *dream*, *paradox**, *plane shift*, *Rary's telepathic bond*, *scrying*, and *sending*.

* New spell described below.

RADIAL NAVIGATION (KI)

Prerequisite: The ability to have at least one ki point

You can unspool threads and loci of your personal aura to faultlessly retrace your path. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- While you have at least 1 ki point, you have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks to avoid getting lost.
- As an action, you can spend 1 ki point to create a psychic homing beacon for yourself at a specific location. You know the exact direction and distance to the beacon, regardless of distance. You further consider the location of any of your beacons to be "very familiar" for the purpose of teleport. This beacon lasts until you take a short or long rest.

SENSITIVITY TO PSYCHIC IMPRESSIONS (KI)

Prerequisite: The ability to have at least one ki point

You can read the lingering imprints left behind by sapient beings and gain the following benefits:

- While you have at least 1 ki point, you have advantage on Wisdom (Survival) checks made to track and Wisdom (Insight) checks to detect if a creature is charmed or affected by an enchantment spell.

AURA ALTERATION

4th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (three holy symbols of different alignments, melted or otherwise fastened together)

Duration: 10 minutes

You alter the alignment aura of the target creature (you may target yourself) by one step. Each step of alteration moves the target creature's alignment aura one step along either the law/chaos or the good/evil axis. If this spell is used more than once on the same creature, the effects overlap and do not stack. The target's actual alignment is not affected; however, all alignment-based effects and spells treat the target as if their alignment was the aura you choose rather than their actual alignment.

At Higher Levels: When you cast this spell using a spell slot of 5th level or higher, you can either alter the target's alignment one additional step or increase the duration by 20 minutes for each slot level above 4th.

PARADOX

6th-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (an hourglass filled with diamond dust worth 500 gp)

Duration: Instantaneous

At any point during your turn, you may cast this spell to slip backwards in the time stream, undoing any actions you have taken so far during that turn and erasing their effects. Any actions taken by other creatures that occurred reactively during your turn as a result of your actions, including attacks of opportunity and readied actions, are similarly undone and their effects negated. Resources expended for any actions negated by the *paradox* are restored to their unused condition, including spells cast, daily uses of abilities, consumable magic items or charges, or anything else, as though they had never been used. You cannot alter any action or its effects that occurred prior to your current turn, and you cannot cast this spell if you have already been affected by an effect that prevents you from taking actions or casting spells.

INSTRUCTIONS OF YIN-BLOOD AND THUNDERING YANG

Wondrous item, legendary

This elaborate scroll is backed by slats of green bamboo tied with elaborately knotted silken thread. Affixed to its face are strips of fibrous pale-bleached paper upon which are painted row after row of spidery calligraphic quatrains extolling a perverse and corrupted philosophy of the interrelated duality of all things. Traditional understandings of yin and yang focus upon their inherent balance and the necessity of embracing that ever-turning wheel of reality as light turns to day and thence back to night, revealing by turns warmth and chill, masculinity and femininity, gentleness and strength. The blasphemous scrawling of the *Instructions of Yin-Blood and Thundering Yang*, however, contain nothing of the sort, as this tome is dedicated to the exploitation of disruptions and imbalance within the foundational energies of ki.

The *Instructions of Yin-Blood and Thundering Yang* actually comprise two separate disquisitions on the nature of reality, written not just in counterpoint

but literal reverse of one another on the same scroll. With meticulous and even maniacal precision, if at times tortured poetic metaphor, the innumerable interlocking characters of the *Instructions of Yin-Blood* form one text concerning the distortion and malleability of cool, yielding yin when read normally, but when turned upside down and the characters read in reverse the inverted pictographic text forms an entirely different text, the *Instructions of Thundering Yang*, concerning the eruptive nature of the fractured foci of overchanneled yang. In keeping with the violation of balance inherent in the *Instructions*, one cannot comprehend both at the same time but only in warped isolation from one another.

Though this ancient scroll itself is unique, its teachings are merely rare as over the centuries its secrets have been copied and recorded many times, being held sacred among the darkest of vengeance-fueled cults, monasteries, and ninja clans.

Risks: Studying the *Instructions of Yin-Blood* aspect of the scroll for one week allows you to unlock its secrets with a DC 15 Intelligence or Wisdom ability check (your choice). If the check fails, your eyes begin to develop lace-frosted cataracts and your fingers develop frostbite and a permanent chill. You permanently suffer from one level of exhaustion. If you are immune to exhaustion, you instead have disadvantage on all Dexterity ability checks, saving throws, and attack rolls. This is a curse effect and cannot be dispelled or otherwise removed without first removing the curse.



Benefits: If the above check succeeds, from that point on you can meditate upon the scroll for 1 hour to better weather cold environments. You can travel comfortably in conditions of extreme cold (up to -50 degrees Fahrenheit) for the next 24 hours. In addition, after meditating your spells ignore resistance to cold damage and your unarmed strikes deal an additional 2 (1d4) cold damage.

If you can cast spells, you can spend 1 point of ki as a bonus action to cause a spell you casts to deal cold damage instead of the spell's normal damage type.

In addition, you can opt to infuse that spell or ki ability with a slick portion of your own living spirit as a bonus action. When you do this, you take 4 (2d4) points of damage, plus the level of the spell being infused for spellcasting or 2 (1d4) extra damage if you are using a ki ability. You can only affect any specific use of a ki ability or spell with a single type of yin-blood infusion. You can infuse these abilities in one of the following ways:

Disruptive Yin: Creatures damaged by the ability must make a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier) to cast spells for 1 round. This also disrupts the ability to wield ki for 1 round, and creatures attempting to use ki must make a Wisdom (or equivalent ki-determining ability) saving throw with the same DC.

Dolorous Yin: Creatures damaged by the infused ability or spell must succeed a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + Wisdom modifier) or become poisoned for 1 round.

Focused Yin: The DC of the infused ki ability or spell is increased by 1.

Ki Powers: If you are able to use ki, you can meditate upon the *Instructions of Yin-Blood* in order to gain access to special ki abilities. In order to utilize one of these abilities, your combined levels in monk and any other classes that grant the use of ki must meet the listed minimum level.

Learning one of these abilities requires 8 hours of study with the *Instructions of Yin-Blood* and the permanent sacrifice of 1 point of ki. This permanent ki point sacrifice is waived if you perform a ritual sacrifice of a sentient humanoid. The victim must be slain with cold and/or necrotic energy damage alone. Thenceforth, you can use the selected ability whenever desired, choosing from the following abilities for which you meet the listed minimum effective spellcasting level:

chill Touch or *ray of frost* (1 ki point, minimum level 4th), *ice storm* or *vampiric touch* (2 ki points, minimum level 8th), *cone of cold* or *darkness* (3 ki points, minimum level 12th). By doubling the ki point cost, you can use *vampiric touch* as a ranged spell attack (30-foot range) rather than a melee spell attack.

When you have learned the use of one or more of these powers, you can activate them even when you have exhausted your ki. If you have no points of ki remaining, by quickly meditating for 1 round you can regain 2 ki points at the cost of having disadvantage on either your Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution ability checks and saving throws (your choice) until you take a short or long rest; however, these ki points may only be spent on the abilities provided by the *Instructions*.

Spells: The *Instructions of Yin-Blood* can be used as a traditional spellbook, containing the following spells: *blight*, *chill touch*, *cone of cold*, *darkness*, *ice storm*, *inflict wounds*, *ray of frost*, *wall of ice*.

Instructions of Thundering Yang: By reversing and inverting the scroll, you can read the scroll in its opposite, the *Instructions of Thundering Yang*, a treatise on the magnification of natural life-giving energy, light, and vitality into focused eruptive and explosive force and power. In most respects, the *Instructions of Thundering Yang* work similarly to the *Instructions of Yin-Blood*, but rather than being focused on powers of darkness and cold they instead harness the power of the burning sun and the raging storm.

Risks: Studying the *Instructions of Thundering Yang* is as dangerous as studying the dark arts of its counterpart. A failed Intelligence or Wisdom ability check leaves you permanently deafened rather than suffer a level of exhaustion. If you are immune to the deafened condition, you instead have disadvantage on all Strength ability checks, saving throws, and attack rolls. This is a curse effect and cannot be dispelled or otherwise removed without first removing the curse.

Benefits: Studying the *Instructions of Thundering Yang* for 1 hour inures you to warm temperatures. You can travel comfortably in conditions of extreme heat (up to 140 degrees Fahrenheit) for the next 24 hours. In addition, after meditating your spells ignore resistance to lightning or thunder damage and your unarmed strikes deal an additional 2 (1d4) lightning or thunder damage (player's choice).

If you can cast spells, you can spend 1 point of ki as a bonus action to cause a spell you cast to deal lightning or thunder damage instead of the spell's normal damage type.

In addition, when using these feats you can opt to infuse that spell with a pulsating portion of your own living spirit as a bonus action. This functions identically to infusing disruptive yin, dolorous yin, or focused yin, as described above, except the creatures affected by yang infusions must roll Strength saving throws instead of Constitution.

Ki Powers: If you are able to use ki, you can meditate upon the *Instructions of Thundering Yang* in order to gain access to special ki abilities, just as you can from the *Instructions of Yin-Blood*. You can waive the permanent sacrifice of a ki point by ritually sacrificing a sentient humanoid, slain by fire, lightning, and necrotic damage alone. The abilities you can learn from studying the tome are as follows: *firebolt* or *shocking grasp* (1 ki point, minimum level 4th), *burning hands* or *fireball* (2 ki points, minimum level 8th), *chain lightning* or *sunbeam* (one beam only) (3 ki points, minimum level 12th); however, all of these effects deal half lightning and half thunder damage in place of any fire damage they would normally deal.

When you have learned the use of one or more of these powers, you can activate them even when you have exhausted your ki. If you have no points of ki remaining, by quickly meditating for 1 round you can regain 2 ki points at the cost of having disadvantage on either your Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution ability checks and saving throws (your choice) until you take a short or long rest; however, these ki points may only be spent on the abilities provided by the *Instructions*.

Spells: The *Instructions of Thundering Yang* can be used as a traditional spellbook, containing the following spells: *burning hands*, *chain lightning*, *daylight*, *fireball*, *fire bolt*, *sunbeam*, *sunburst*, *thunderwave*.

PRAYERS OF EMPTY FLESH & UNDYING KI

Wondrous item, legendary

This banned philosophical text has been replicated in fragmentary form in any number of heathen scrolls and unhinged manuscripts, but the original and complete *Prayers of Empty Flesh & Undying Ki* was graven by its anonymous author upon an innocuous prayer wheel, to be spun while intoning mystic meditative chants. As the prayer wheel is spun, however, the engraved verses do not simply repeat but actually seem to unspool with every turn. As the chant becomes a droning dirge, the chanter begins to understand the Path of Empty Flesh, a dangerous hypnagogic quasi-mystical state through which practitioners may ignore terrible damage to their earthly bodies by focusing purely on the will of the Undying Ki. The layered text embedded within the prayer wheel contains terrifying rites and ceremonies dedicated to the transcendence and mortification of the living vessel, and prolonged study is said to drive the student to madness, a suicidal obsession with uncovering the deepest mysteries of the *Prayers* contained in the prayer wheel's uttermost core, only to discover a gnawing nothingness that leaves the weak-minded gibbering and mutilated wretches, often maimed or fatally wounded by their own hand.



To unlock the deeper secrets of the Path of Empty Flesh, you must chant with the prayer wheel for one hour each day; if you possess the Ki Meditation feat or prepares divine spells, this study may coincide with those rituals. Studying the *Prayers of Empty Flesh & Undying Ki* allows you to gain a series of extraordinary—and eventually supernatural—benefits as the mysteries within are contemplated, understood, and subsequently put into practice. Once each secret is analyzed and adopted, the shape of the next tantalizing secret begins to become clear.

Risks: Studying the *Prayers* risks the development of a minor addiction to its use, although you may make a Wisdom saving throw (DC 12) to resist the addiction each time you study the text. The nature of the addiction is determined by the DM, although it should revolve around a fixation with the knowledge inside the tome.

Benefit: Upon first meditating upon the *Prayers*, you gain advantage on Constitution saving throws to avoid suffering from exhaustion. When you meditate upon the *Prayers* the next day, your understanding of the physical body deepens. When you are at 0 hit points and dying, you can choose to automatically stabilize. You must finish a short or long rest to regain use of this ability.

- After meditating upon the *Prayers* once every day for a week without succumbing to the addiction, the true power of the Secret Path of Empty Flesh is revealed. Further meditation enables the chanter to gain one of the following benefits: Your AC when not wearing armor becomes 13 + your Dexterity modifier. If you have the unarmed defense class feature, you also add the ability score modifier appropriate for your feature.
- When you are at 0 hit points and stable, you can use your action to immediately spend a Hit Die and regain hit points equal to the number rolled. You must finish a short or long rest to regain use of this ability.
- Whenever a creature rolls a critical hit against you, it must roll again and use the second die to determine if it hits or not. If the creature still hits you, it does critical hit damage.

Ki Powers: If you have the ability to use ki, you can meditate upon the *Prayers of Empty Flesh and Undying Ki* to cast the following spells by spending 1 or more points: *steal dying breath** (no ki point cost, minimum level 4th), *false life* (1 ki point as a 1st level spell, minimum level 4th), *rage against death** (1 ki point, minimum level 6th), *false life* (2 ki points as a 2nd level spell, minimum level 8th), *doom harvester** (2 ki points, minimum level 10th), *death ward* (3 ki points, minimum level 12th), *empty flesh** (3 ki points, minimum level 14th).

* New spell described below.

If you have levels in more than one class that grants ki, those levels stack for the purpose of determining her caster level. In order to utilize one of these abilities, you must meet the listed minimum level. Each time one of these spells is used, you increase the save DC of your next Wisdom saving throw to resist addiction by 1 point.

In addition, in a small ritual that takes 1 round to complete, you can spin the prayer wheel in a metaphysical focusing chant to boost your magical abilities. Upon completion of the chant, you consider your spellcasting ability score modifier as though it were 1 higher for 2 (1d4) hours. The ritual takes a toll your physical body and imposes disadvantage on Constitution ability checks and saving throws. This ritual includes the chance of acquiring a major addiction unless you succeed a Wisdom saving throw (DC 16). This focusing chant also grants you 1d3 temporary ki points, which can exceed your maximum number of ki points but must be used within 1 hour or they are lost. Other than ability score reduction, the effects of this focusing chant do not stack if the chant is repeated.

Spells: The *Prayers of Empty Flesh and Undying Ki* include several rare cleric spells that manipulate the power of ki as it straddles the borders of life and death, undergoing contortions of the mind, body, and spirit in its anguish. Each spell can be learned with one day of study and an Intelligence (Religion) or Intelligence (Arcana) check with a DC of 10 plus twice the spell's level; if you have the ability to use ki, you have a +5 bonus on this check. If the check fails, you are unable to master the spell and cannot try again until three days have passed.

DOOM HARVESTER

4th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Self

Components: V, S, M (an empty pouch of skin)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

You feed upon the suffering of those around you. Each round at the end of your turn you regain hit points equal to the number of creatures within 10 feet of you that are charmed, frightened, or poisoned. This healing applies until the beginning of your next turn. Each affected creature provides only 1 point of fast healing, regardless of how many conditions affect it.

If you have ki, you may increase the range of this effect by 5 feet per point of ki you spend when casting the spell. In addition, you may choose to gain 1 temporary ki point at the beginning of your turn rather than gaining fast healing. If you choose this effect, you gain only 1 ki point, regardless of the number of affected creature within range. These ki points are lost if not used before the end of the spell's duration.

EMPTY FLESH

5th-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Touch

Components: V, S, M (an empty pouch of skin)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 hour

You suppress the vital processes in the target, suspending respiration, bleeding, and autonomic function while sustaining life through the target's ki rather than its physiology. The target gains immunity to damage caused by blood loss, disease, drowning, exhaustion, poison, and effects that would cause you to sleep or that require ingestion or inhalation. The effect of any poison is delayed until the *empty flesh* spell expires. The effects of any potion, elixir, or similar magical liquid consumed while using *empty flesh* are similarly delayed. Once the spell expires, all potions and poisons take effect simultaneously. *Empty flesh* provides the target with immunity to ability score reduction to Strength, Constitution, or Dexterity, and the target has a 50% chance to negate any critical hit or precision-based damage such as sneak attack damage. In addition, the target takes half damage from necrotic and radiant damage.

While affected by *empty flesh*, the target suffers the effects of the poisoned condition (but are not poisoned) and takes a -4 penalty to their initiative. If you are adjacent to the target, you can spend 1 point of ki as a bonus action to negate this condition until the end of the target's next turn. If the target has ki, she may spend 1 point of her own ki as a bonus action to negate this condition for 1 minute.

RAGE AGAINST DEATH

3rd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you make when you or an ally you can see would drop to 0 hit points

Range: 30 feet

Components: V, S, M (a drop of your blood)

Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

When an ally within range that you can see drops to 0 hit points, you can spend 1 point of ki to cast this spell. You can cast this spell on yourself if you are about to drop to 0 hit points. The target instead drops to 1 hit point and any ongoing damage ends. In addition, the target gains a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls, but takes a -2 penalty to AC. In addition, every time the target hits with a melee attack it gains 1 temporary hit point; these temporary hit points stack with themselves but not with any other source of temporary hit points.

STEAL DYING BREATH

2nd-level necromancy

Casting Time: 1 reaction, which you make when a creature within range that you can see dies

Range: 10 feet

Components: V, S

Duration: Instantaneous

When a creature within range of you that you can see dies, you can cast this spell to trap a portion of its fading life essence, restoring 1 point of your own ki. If the target had the ability to use ki in life and had at least 1 ki point at the time of its death, you instead restore 2 points of your own ki. These ki points are temporary and dissipate if not spent within 1 hour.

If the target is later returned to life, takes a -4 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and ability check for the next 24 hours; this is in addition to any penalties gained from *resurrection* or similar spells. A successful Constitution save negates this effect.

SEVEN-GHOST-NEEDLES:

Wondrous item, legendary

This lengthy treatise is bound in black-lacquered bamboo and inscribed on silk-sewn rice paper pages in a mix of careful calligraphy, elaborate woodcut and brush-painted illuminations, and fantastically detailed diagrams and scrawled marginal notations. The tome contains the researches and analects of generations of acupuncturists, herbalists, healers, and meditative practitioners on the science of energetic flows throughout and the union of body, mind, and spirit. The *Seven-Ghost-Needles* combine the study of physiology with meditative metaphysics as a means of relieving stress, healing injuries, improving blood flow, and enhancing vitality of every kind. In the practice of the *Seven-Ghost-Needles*, the *ki* of the practitioner is joined with that of the patient, helping to guide the flows of their inner energies into greater harmony and redirecting it to the proper *dantians* or energy centers in the body: the lower *jing*, middle *shen*, and upper *wuji*. Similar to the prana energy and chakras of other energetic healing traditions, these *dantian* energy centers control aspects of the mind, body, and spirit and when disorganized or out of balance can contribute to ill health. Those who master the



secrets of the *Seven-Ghost-Needles* use their skills in acupuncture to focus the power of their spirit to bring healing and relief to those in need.

Benefits: Consulting the *Seven-Ghost-Needles* for one round grants you a +2 bonus to Wisdom (Medicine) checks, and grants you advantage on Wisdom (Medicine) checks if you use a set of acupuncture needles (treat as a healer's kit). This bonus is doubled on Wisdom (Medicine) checks for long-term care.

If you have a set of acupuncture needles and are proficient in the Wisdom (Medicine) skill, during a short rest you can roll a Wisdom (Medicine) check to reduce a creature's exhaustion level by 1 (DC 10 + double the target's current exhaustion level). In addition, by performing a small medical procedure that takes 1 round to complete, you can remove the blinded, charmed, deafened, paralyzed, or poisoned conditions if they were caused by a spell or ability. You must make a Wisdom (Medicine) check with a DC equal to the original spell or ability's DC. If the check succeeds, the target can attempt a new saving throw against the effect with advantage. Success on this save removes the condition.

Feats: In addition to the above, the book contains the seven secrets of the *Seven-Ghost-Needles*. By studying the book for 54 hours over a period of 7 days or fewer, you can take one of the following feats as a bonus feat. The feat cannot be used if the book is not in your possession, and only one creature at a time can gain a bonus feat from the book. In addition, if you study the book as described above, you can select any of the feats contained within it the next time you are eligible to choose a feat.

BLOCK FLOW (KI)

Prerequisite: The ability to have at least one ki point

You can use your own ki to block the flow of another's, gaining the following benefits:

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- Whenever you have advantage on a melee attack roll and hit, you can use a bonus action to prevent the target from spending ki points for a number of rounds equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 0). In addition, after blocking the target's ki flow, you can spend 1 ki point to suppress any benefits the target has for having at least 1 ki point.

CELL ADJUSTMENT (Ki)

Prerequisite: Proficiency in Wisdom (Medicine), the ability to have at least one ki point

Your unity of ki allows your own cells and those of others to mend more rapidly. You gain the following benefits:

- As long as you have at least 1 ki point at the start of a long rest, you regain all spent Hit Dice at the end of a long rest.
- When you or an ally within reach roll a Hit Die to regain hit points during a short rest, you can spend at least 1 ki point to regain an additional number of hit points equal to your Wisdom modifier (minimum 0). For each ki point you spend beyond the first, you can grant this extra healing to another creature within reach.
- When you hit another creature with a melee attack, you can spend 1 ki point to turn the creature's own cells against them. The target must succeed a Constitution saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier) or be poisoned until the end of your next turn.

EBBING FLOW (Ki)

Prerequisite: Proficiency in Wisdom (Medicine), the ability to have at least one ki point, Wisdom 15 or higher

You sense the fluctuations of the life forces around you and can influence that life force to hold on or slip away. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- As long as you have at least 1 ki point, you instantly know whether a creature adjacent to you is dead, dying, alive, or undead. If you have at least 3 ki points, you are aware of the location of any living hidden or invisible creature that is adjacent to you. You can spend 1 ki point as a bonus action to extend this awareness to 5 feet times your Wisdom modifier (minimum 1) until the end of your next turn.
- By spending 1 ki point, you can use an action to touch a living creature that has 0 hit points and stabilize it. Alternatively, you can cause it to start or resume dying.

INVERT FLOW (Ki)

Prerequisite: The ability to have at least one ki point

You have learned how to channel your ki into another to disrupt the flow of their ki, gaining the following benefits:

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- When you hit another creature with a melee attack, you can spend at least 1 ki point as a bonus action to disrupt the flow of the target's internal energies. The creature must succeed a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier) or suffer disadvantage on ability checks and saving throws for a single ability score of your choice. For each ki point spent beyond the first, the duration increases by 1 round.

LENGTHEN FLOW (Ki)

Prerequisite: The ability to have at least one ki point

Your frequent meditation has given you absolute control of your body. You gain the following benefits:

- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- As long as you have at least 1 ki point, your body processes afflictions more slowly. After being exposed to a disease, poison, or takes damage due to blood loss, the interval between taking damage or making a saving throw is doubled. You also can hold your breath and go without food or water for twice the normal duration.
- When you would be affected by a disease, poison, damage due to blood loss, or suffer a level of exhaustion, you can spend 1 ki point as a reaction to delay the effect until the end of your next turn. You can do this in consecutive rounds to continue delaying the effect.

RECENTER FLOW (Ki)

Prerequisite: The ability to have at least one ki point

You can refine your ki through your inner energy fields, giving you greater control over your emotions, the strength of your spirit, and the power of the world around you, granting you the following benefits:

When you fail a saving throw against a Divination, Enchantment, or Necromancy spell or when a spell or magical effect would cause you to teleport against your will, you can use your reaction and spend 2 ki points to reroll that saving throw and take the better result. If the effect does not allow you to roll a saving throw, you can instead use your reaction and spend 2 ki points to delay the onset until the end of your next turn. You can do this in consecutive rounds to continue delaying the onset of a harmful spell.

RESTORE FLOW (Ki)

Prerequisite: The ability to have at least one ki point

You are adept at channeling your ki to unblock misplaced ki. You gain the following benefits:

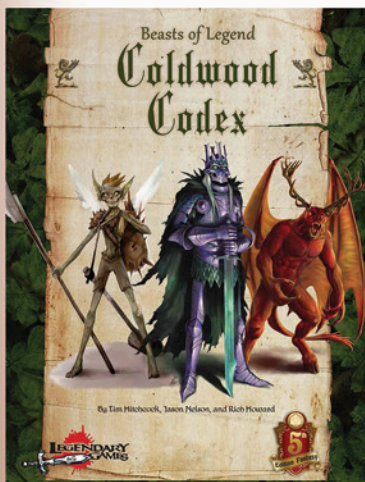
- Increase your Wisdom score by 1, to a maximum of 20.
- As an action, you can touch a creature that has been targeted with the Block Flow or Invert Flow feats and spend 1 ki point to negate the effect of those feats. You can also negate the effect of a monk's quivering palm class feature this way. Alternatively, you can spend 2 ki points to remove the paralyzed, poisoned, or stunned conditions from the creature you touch.
- By increasing the ki point cost by 2, you can use this feat on yourself even if you would normally be prevented from spending ki points or otherwise prevented from taking actions.

SWITCH FLOW (Ki)

Prerequisite: Ebbing Flow feat, proficiency in Wisdom (Medicine), Wisdom 17 or higher

You can strongly influence a life force to linger or fade away and gain the following benefits:

- As long as you have at least 1 ki point, you can perceive creatures with 0 or fewer hit points, as well as creatures that have died since your previous turn, as though you had blindsight with a range of 30 feet. Additionally, you can use an action to touch a living creature that has 0 hit points to stabilize the creature or cause it to start or resume dying.
- By spending 4 ki points, you can use an action to touch a living creature with 0 hit points to cause it to regain 5d8 hit points. If the creature has died within the last round, you can spend an additional 4 ki points to restore it back to life. Alternatively, you can use an action and spend 2 ki points to touch a dying creature to kill it instantly and gain temporary hit points equal to your level.
- By spending 2 ki points, you can touch a corpse to bar its spirit from returning. Anyone casting a spell or using an effect that would communicate with the dead creature, return it to life, or turn it into an undead creature must succeed a Wisdom saving throw (DC 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Wisdom modifier) or else the spell fails and the casting is lost.



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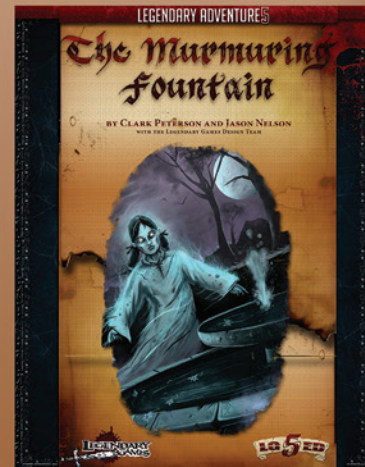
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