

EXALTED THIRD EDITION: XIANXIA

A Guide to Using Exalted 3e for Xianxia Games

Numerous genres of Chinese literature and concepts from Greek and Indian mythology informed the setting of Exalted. One of the most direct and relevant of these is Xianxia, which focuses on immortals who gather or “cultivate” qi and advance levels of being towards godhood. In Xianxia, rather than receiving one’s potential for enlightenment from a divine template - an Exaltation - anyone can theoretically learn to cultivate essence and gain power. Unlike Enlightened Mortals, Cultivators are capable of learning incredible feats of might and magic, equivalent to sorcery and charms and the equal of any Exalted. Indeed, in some versions, they vastly outstrip the Exalted, but such games would benefit from a more narrative system. Exalted works well for a relatively more “grounded” Xianxia experience, which is what is presented here.

This document will present a way to modify the rules for Exalted 3e for the purposes of a Xianxia game, as well as some advice on the genre and an optional setting, presented in a linked document here.

[Ladders of Heaven - A Xianxia Setting](#)

It will be necessary to possess a copy of the Exalted 3e Core Rules and the Exigent sourcebook.

CHARACTER CREATION

In game terms, a Cultivator is built not unlike a Solar-tier Exigent. As a result, they are created with the Celestial Exigent rules, have access to the Adamant Circle of Sorcery, and may either select charms from an existing tree or else create their own.

Everyone has the potential to become a cultivator. In practice, the passion and drive to climb is rarer, and access to the means to do so thinner still. While it benefits from mental and/or physical ability, personal attention, the right cultivation method, and personal teaching can overcome any barrier of ability, age, or circumstance if they and their teacher are determined enough. Attempts to systematize or automate the process have and will always fail because it’s too bespoke, but there have been schools and methods developed over time that work for some.

A sect is a group of disciples and cultivators working together and can loosely be divided into martial and mystic types. The martial kind practice magical martial arts, while the latter initiate into sorcery. Rarer are the ones made entirely out of those with supernatural heritage or blessings from the same. The cultivation method you use is largely a narrative contrivance and is represented by piecing together different Exalt advantages and Anima effects. Some schools chug elixir pills like candy, while others seek worthy foes.

STEP I: CONCEPT & CASTE

Decide on your concept. Some examples:

- Outer Disciple to a cultivation Sect
- Trainee to a singular Cultivator
- Adopted by a supernatural being
- Chosen by a god
- Student at a school of sorcery
- Reincarnated individual gaining memories of having been a Cultivator
- A dying cultivator passed on their gifts to you
- Naturally gifted and broke through on your own. Rare, but it happens
- Secretly taught by an exiled immortal
- Child of a god seeking to join their parent in Heaven
- Supernatural creature, like a half-demon or magical creature, discovering their innate potential

Next, decide if your character (or the entire team) will be starting as mortals or not. The rules for starting as mortals are found on page 125 of the Exalted 3e core book. There are additional rules presented here for **Trainees**, who are mortals who have been trained but not learned to sense and manipulate essence consciously yet. They are "half-a-step" to it, however, and just need the right kind of push.

When upgrading mortals into cultivators, it's rarely a sudden process, unlike Exaltation. See the **Tempering Elixir** for an example of how to elevate a mortal. The base benefits described by elevating mortals on page 125 of the core, such as charms, attribute points, and so on should be free but spread out.

CULTIVATION METHOD

Cultivators have neither aspects nor castes. Instead, they have Cultivation Methods. This is a set of protocols, exercises, meditations, spells, and so on that permit one to accumulate essence and develop. Some are incomplete and can only take you to a certain Essence level, while some are called Universal Laws and enable the full range. For character purposes, this is backstory or a potential plot point later on rather than something mechanical.

It is recommended that all Cultivators be built as Ability-Based Exalts, to use the existing Charm trees available to other Exalt types, and to only create custom Charms as needed. If an Exalt type uses an Attribute- or Essence-based Charm tree and a player wants a charm from it, create a custom version. Generally speaking, Cultivators tend to have a common range of abilities.

However, it is permissible to go full on Exigent play and let players create fully custom trees for their Cultivators. This is entirely up to your group, though it is a lot more work. This also makes it a lot harder to share charms and abilities between one another. This is very much *not* recommended for new players.

Favored and Caste Abilities

If going with Ability-based creation, select 5 Favored Abilities. Additionally, select 5 Caste Abilities that are shared with anyone who learns your method. For instance, a sect devoted to magical learning would certainly have Lore and Occult, while a physically oriented sect without Athletics and Brawl are unheard of. Sects devoted to magical beasts, gods, or bespoke training may have very different sets or even none and instead pick 10 Favored Abilities.

If permitted to change your Cultivation Method, these do *not* change with it for sanity reasons.

Advantages and Anima

As part of your Cultivation Method, you will either be selecting or creating special powers and anima effects. For this, you will select 1 Method Benefit shared by anyone who uses your Cultivation Method, 1 Personal Power that reflects your nature, and 3 Anima Effects.

Method Benefit (select 1):

This is usually a somewhat minor but useful power or bonus shared by anyone who is trained in your Cultivation Method. In theory, if allowed, characters can spend some time and effort learning another, but this should replace their benefit and take the same amount of effort to switch back.

Thematically, it should be related to the sect or teacher who imparted it. This could be as simple as 5 additional Merits for the members having high station, additional Attribute points (good for Attribute-based characters if allowed), additional Specialty picks for being cross-trained, or an improved cooperation and teamwork aptitude for a method focused on the harmony between yin and yang or other opposites. It can also be more sophisticated, like an ability to use leylines in a unique way, the ability to change sex on a whim, or even dematerialize like a spirit. If it's a powerful ability like that last one, it should come with a steep cost, like Aggravated damage or the like. One might even become a vampire like Abyssal Exalted.

This may even be a "racial" ability, though those are better represented with merits usually.

Personal Power Examples (select 1):

- Solar-style Supernal Abilities
- Lunar-style Shapeshifting
- Dragon-blooded Elemental Aura (improved to match Celestial abilities)
- Sidereal Arcane Fate and Astrology
- Any custom power on par with these

Anima Effects (select 3):

The normal rules for Exigents should be in effect here. Your anima should be unique to you, though your effects might share

something in common with anyone who shares your Method. This may even permit changing one or two effects if you change your method.

Important, Anima Effects are not gained until Essence 2.

Cultivation Experience

Characters can gain 2 Cultivation Experience through Expression and Role bonuses like Exigents and other Exalted. Select your conditions now. Cultivation Experience is treated similarly to Exigent Experience.

STEP 2: ATTRIBUTES

Unchanged. If starting Mortal, take note of their lower starting Attributes.

STEP 3: ABILITIES

Unchanged.

STEP 4: MERITS

Unchanged. For a game starting as mortals, consider a lower beginning total and receive your free starting points over time.

STEP 5: CHARMS AND SORCERY

Cultivators, as mentioned above, may select Charms from any tree with the following notes if they are Ability-based:

- **Solar and Sidereal:** Unchanged
 - That said, you are permitted to change them within reason, whether it's a cosmetic change for flavor or a more substantial change to fit your character. Sidereal Charms especially might demand tweaking
- **Abyssal:** Generally, these are just reflavored and edgy versions of Solar charms anyway. Treat as mirror charms if permitted
- **Infernal:** Yozi and Primordial charms are weird. Convert with best judgment if permitted
- **Lunar** (and other **Attribute-based**), convert to Ability-based
 - You may give them new prerequisites that preserve their intended balance if appropriate
- **Dragonblooded:** The first time you select an elemental charm, pick an element to be your primary one. You may switch between them like Dragonblooded do (but see Terrestrial Charms in the next bullet point.)
- **Terrestrial Charms** (Including **Dragonblooded**): Upgrade to be in line with Celestial Charms and change prerequisites
 - This deserves special attention. Terrestrial Charms tend to be very specific and limited in their application. What would

be most sensible is to take their charms as inspiration and create custom ones that achieve a similar goal, then use a Celestial Charm as a prerequisite if appropriate

- **Essence-based** Charms: Convert to Ability-based
- **Martial Arts**: Count cultivators as Celestial Exalted
- **Sorcery**: All Circles available
- **Necromancy**: Not available unless permitted in the setting. If so, by default limited to the Second Circle unless aligned with entropic essence, then flip like Abyssals

Modify as necessary for Attribute- and Essence-based Cultivators if permitted.

Weaker Cultivators

If you want an overall lower-scale game, base cultivators on Terrestrial Exigents instead. Limit Sorcery to Sapphire or maybe even Emerald Circle, with greater effects only possible through sorcerous workings.

Trainees

As an option for a beginning to a game, mortal characters may be Trainees - someone who has already started down the path of Cultivation. Start them with either 5 Martial Arts charms (count as Terrestrial until elevated to a cultivator), Emerald Circle Sorcery and 4 spells, or 5 Charms depending on the source of their learning.

Trainees have a Personal Essence pool of 10 and heal like mortals.

STEP 6: INTIMACIES AND THE GREAT CURSE

Intimacies are unchanged.

The Great Curse is specific to Exalted, but Cultivators have a related issue known as Deviation. This involves their meridians running out of control, becoming blocked off, or tangling when you behave in ways contrary to your nature and morality. Trainees do not suffer this issue. In a way, this is similar to Dragonblooded Limit Breaks but a little more intense.

Optional: Demonization

If desired, cultivators can instead advance Limit like Solar Exalted and call it Demonization. While not recommended, the game won't fall apart, it'll just mean that every so often the *setting* will explode as powerful figures demonize. This is perfectly acceptable in many Xianxia settings! You should also use similar Triggers and Conditions.

DEVIATION TRIGGERS

All cultivators and spirits share the following triggers:

- If a Major Intimacy is seriously threatened, harmed, or destroyed.
- If someone or something prevents you from following your Defining Intimacy.
- If innocents are harmed as a direct or close indirect result of your actions.
- All players should also pick one other moral, ethical, or personal condition.

If you receive a trigger, the GM will either say that you will suffer Deviation or ask if you want to enter it. In either case, the following effects happen:

- You gain 2 points of Cultivation Experience
- The GM will select one of the Deviation Conditions detailed below

DEVIATION CONDITIONS

Essence Sickness

As their meridians tangle, reverse, and seize, the cultivator is struck with a powerful fever, cramps, dizziness, nausea, and/or a number of symptoms that renders them virtually incapable for the better part of a day. It takes time and sometimes help to untangle and is treated like a Disease with no possibility of resisting the initial contraction. It has two main effects, the Major Symptom being incapacitation and the Minor Symptom being -3 to all actions.

Duration: Session (1 day). Essence Sickness can be ended early by receiving medical care with a difficulty of 5, but the character will still suffer the Minor Symptom until the day has passed.

Limit Break

Driven to the breaking point, the cultivator's personality traits become overwhelming and force them into an emotional state that they cannot control. In this state, you might hurt others physically or emotionally as appropriate and engage in destructive, catatonic, or other unhealthy states. Active breaks involve you attempting to fix something, break something, hurt something, etc, while Inactive ones involve retreat into seclusion or guilt. You can hold yourself back from betraying your Defining Intimacy if you choose, but you'll be single-minded in your focus. You can avoid hurting your Intimacies, but not if they stand in the way.

Duration: Scene. An active Limit Break can be ended early if you incapacitate or seriously harm any Intimacy, are forced to question your actions (such as being confronted with the results), or because another character persuaded you. If you're experiencing a passive Deviation, you can be brought out of it if an Intimacy spends time with you, convinces you to act, or if one is seriously hurt or incapacitated.

Meridian Blockage

The tragedy of the event causes a blockage in an important area in the Cultivator's meridians. Until resolved, they cannot spend notes, activate a supernatural ability that isn't passive, or perform Shaping actions.

Duration: Indefinite, minimum 1 Scene. Meridian Blockage can be ended by taking a scene to address it, either through medicine, drugs, overcoming a challenge, psychotherapy, or the like. Some cultivators last years in this state.

STEP 7: BONUS POINTS

Unchanged. Note that mortals start with a different number of bonus points.

STEP 8: FINISHING TOUCHES

Unchanged according to a Celestial Exigent. Mortals start with the traits described on 125 of the core book.

ADVANCEMENT

Each Essence level is labeled from 1-5 and requires facing a Breakthrough (see below) to achieve. The levels describe how you experience essence:

Essence Sensing is the basic status of being a Cultivator, giving you a pool and other benefits. You *do not* receive Anima Effects at this level, and your Anima has no iconic form until you reach the next stage.

Foundation indicates that you have mastered the basic techniques of your Cultivation Method and formed a basis of essence with which to develop your divine self. Gain your iconic anima form and your Anima Effects.

Accumulation is the long process of cycling essence through yourself to begin forming your inner core of divinity. This is often the most difficult level, and you are certain to face one or more Tribulations during it.

The **Golden Core** is the magnum opus, the realization of a perfected inner alchemy that flows without end as you create a spiritual heart for yourself. This renders the Cultivator immune to biological age.

As a **Demigod**, a Cultivator is a world-striding warrior, a sovereign within their own self. Severe Tribulations are certain as your enemies in Heaven seek to stymie or end your rise.

When a Cultivator becomes a God, they flare in a great iconic display seen across the realm, ascending to Heaven in a blaze of glory. They are able to dematerialize and remain so as long as they wish according to the traits of that ability.

- 1 - Essence Sensing
- 2 - Foundation
- 3 - Accumulation
- 4 - Golden Core
- 5 - Demigod

There are currently no rules for Essence 6+. You might consider looking at 2nd Edition for ideas until and unless some are released.

BREAKTHROUGHS AND TRIBULATIONS

Breaking through to higher levels of being is difficult. There are both internal and external threats that must be faced when cultivating, and failure to meet them can be a major setback. In the genre, these are referred to respectively as Breakthroughs and Tribulations.

A Breakthrough is a situation in which the cultivator runs into a roadblock in their internal spiritual development and has to push through it, which can involve a combination of alchemy, exercises, meditation, new experiences, or instruction.

Another form of Breakthrough is of a personal or emotional block, and these can be the hardest to overcome, as they involve confronting deep-rooted issues, accepting guilt for one's bad actions, or facing a hard truth. Some people never overcome these and stall out.

On the other hand, a Tribulation is a kind of divine test. Cultivators fight against their karma as mere mortals and so invoke both the backlash of fate and the ire and even fear of the gods. While gods may help and even teach cultivators, there's always going to be some out there who see your rise and take exception. What can happen is extremely broad - you may be forced to become a mortal for a time, carry out a quest, face a terrible monster, or any number of things. It should be both personal and deeply challenging.

In game terms, both should be triggered on the path to raising Essence levels beyond 1 and potentially at any other point at which a cultivator is rising in power. This will be part of the story of raising that level and achieving a new kind of being. It's also perfectly acceptable to simply impose one as a story event.

CHARMS

ALL CHARMS

As noted above, Cultivators may select from any Charm tree or create their own. The Solar tree should be used as the main example for Ability-based cultivators, with Charms from other trees being taken and modified to fit within the framework. It may be necessary to change certain Solar charms to have a different flavor at your and the GM's discretion.

Note that gods, demons, and other supernatural beings all have access to the same suite of charms as you do, but often they will have a leg up due to having longer lifespans. Still, lots of them get lazy and don't advance very far.

EAGLE-WING STYLE

Replace this Charm with the following:

Cost: 5m, 1 wp (to activate only), -- (if you possess the 5-dot Flight merit, to activate only), 2m (commit)

Mins: Athletics 5, Essence 3

Type: Reflexive

Duration: Indefinite

Prerequisite Charm: Mountain-Crossing Leap Technique

When this Charm is first activated, the Cultivator leaps 2 range bands into the air. From then on, they may commit 2 motes to fly freely as though they possessed the 5-dot Flight merit, allowing them to hover and engage in all applicable movement and combat options. There is no penalty to combat or other tasks for possessing wings like the merit. Those *with* the merit only pay 1 mote for the activation cost (in order to leap or reactivate in the air) and are unaffected by the penalties of the Flight merit while it is committed. In addition, the Cultivator may spend 2m to channel a burst of speed, allowing them to rush or disengage from appropriate distances.

If she fails to activate the Charm, gets knocked off-course or otherwise begins to fall, Eagle-Wing Style cannot be reactivated until she touches down and is able to leap again, unless you possess the Flight merit, in which case it can be reactivated at will once per scene or if disrupted by an external force. Eagle-Wing Style can be activated at the apex of Mountain-Crossing Leap Technique, in which case it costs only four motes to activate. One may use Unbound Eagle Approach to recover from a fall and glide or use other relevant Charms and abilities that prevent or protect from falling. If you do, this counts as reaching the ground, and you may reactivate in the same action.

When you select this charm, unless you already have wings, you should pick one of the following options:

- A set of magical wings that don't have to move appear from your aura (like the Travelers from Genshin Impact)
- You manifest your aura when moving quickly (like DBZ.)

Ox-BODY TECHNIQUE

Use the Solar version.

SORCERY

Necromancy is not normally available in Xianxia, as it reflects the peculiar magic of Abyssals and Exalted's Underworld, but this is up to the GM to determine for their setting. Instead, you might consider incorporating appropriate Necromancy spells into Sorcery.

If using the World of Foundation setting below, it may be available to those who have become associated with entropic essence.

SUMMONING

As previously detailed, spirits have no clean distinctions between god, elemental, and demon. Remove the Summon Elemental spell and note the following information.

While spirits *can* take any kind of charm, the ones who can be summoned at First Circle will only have Spirit charms. Higher circle spirits may have more plus their remarkable powers. In settings that don't have Calibration, use the New Year instead or other significant once-a-year period for Third Circle spirits - for instance, it might be that Third Circle demons can only be summoned at the Winter Solstice and Third Circle Elementals at the Summer Solstice. There is no requirement to start summoning a First Circle spirit at dusk, but it always takes 4 hours.

WORKINGS THAT GRANT IMMORTALITY

As noted previously, flawless immortality against age is granted on achieving Essence 4. However, it's possible to use workings to grant alternative and lesser forms of immortality through sorcerous workings.

In the case of managing aging, the key is that it shouldn't be as good as the Golden Core, existing as an option for people below that point, and they require flaws. It should be something that needs to be renewed, such as youth potions, or come with strict limits, such as never being able to leave a certain manse or with a weakness.

Immortality against other forms of harm should be even more costly. Keep in mind that there exist entire trees of charms and lists of artifacts that exist to keep people from getting killed, so any solution that comes out of a working should be deeply flawed or limited.

Still, as noted in the book, this should not usually be a total dealbreaker. If players want to pursue such an option, make it *interesting* rather than punishing.

Here's an example of a working that villains might use that *is* very punishing:

Immortality of the Body

Sapphire Circle Sorcerous Working

Known in some cultures as the *Sentinel Rite*, the *Eternal Guardian*, or the *Rite of Unbroken Flesh*, this working grants one or more Essence 3 or lower subjects near total immunity to injury and age. Those who are affected by it heal almost instantly from health lost, do not tire, and do not suffer from any form of deprivation. Despite this, it is known by at least one more name: the *Curse of Immortality*. This might seem an odd title in a world that greatly desires such things, but there's a secret that not everyone knows, which is that while the spirit is already eternal, its integrity is *not* without proper development. The soul requires growth and change in order to develop, and this ritual freezes the essence flows of a person in place rather than creates the perfect circuit of the Golden Core.

So affected, a person's body and brain also find it difficult to change, and while their memories develop - with difficulty, meaning they suffer a kind of fog given enough time - they can neither improve their attributes nor learn new skills. They might slowly improve their existing ones, but time takes its toll in other ways, and cultivation cannot be advanced under these circumstances. Also, those touched by this may never physically enter the Hidden World, as their body resists being changed to a pattern of essence; any entity sufficiently powerful to force it would have to break the binding entirely.

Starved of growth and running past its time unnaturally, the spirit will begin fragmenting into its parts as if the person had died. This happens either slowly across decades or is accelerated by taking damage. Being "killed" by anything that doesn't undo the binding is a temporary state, but it is deleterious to the soul when bound so tightly. It also takes access to rich essence to rebuild, such as a demesne, spirit stones, or longer with time. When the point of no return is reached, only a few paths remain:

- Become essentially a living automaton, clinging to purpose but having lost identity. Unlike created automata, there's enough of a soul there to keep them from developing, making this the greatest horror of all
- Sufficient experiences of coming back to life may give the sentinel the realization that they can steal essence from others to hasten their recovery. This normally takes the form of some flavor of vampirism, which over time transforms the curse and the sentinel into one of the undead. This is a roundabout way of breaking the spell in a way, as the new nature replaces the old
- Becoming trapped in a circumstance where regeneration is impossible. One can only hope that the gods will find and take pity on such a terrible fate

- Break the binding. If done early enough - or with a potent enough Working - the subject might even survive

PCs shouldn't be inflicting this on people as a general rule. Cultivators only use it on either their worst enemies or on people they intend to misuse. Summoning and binding spirits is a far more humane way to handle such things, as they do not generally mind being bound to tasks for long periods and do not suffer for them.

Here's an example that players can use without the same qualms:

Elixir of Youth

Sapphire Circle Sorcerous Working

Requiring rare materials and a complex brewing process that, if done incorrectly, are certain to poison the imbiber, this elixir can shave years off of a person's life. Over the course of days or weeks, requiring a healthy diet and exercise, their body will recover from some of the damage age has inflicted. The ambition level affects how much can be affected, with 1 being a few years, 2 being a decade or so, and 3 being several decades. An Adamant Ambition 1 working can restore someone who is on the verge of death instantly to the prime of their life.

PANOPOLY

ALL ARTIFACTS

The Five Magical Materials are not necessary for artifacts, and so they should not have Resonance. If you're converting artifacts from Exalted, be sure to incorporate any Resonance in a way that is appropriate and preserves the utility of the artifact. Any material can be suitable so long as it is inherently magical, and there are examples of pretty much anything of this sort to be found, whether wood or stone or leather.

SPIRIT AND MONSTER CORES

All supernatural beings possess a kind of Core which, at Essence 4+, can be developed into a Golden Core. The lesser version possessed by any supernatural being does not permit immortality, at least not the same kind. Supernatural creatures are very long-lived, and while lesser spirits may not suffer the wages of time they can become spiritually burdened. The former may die if they do not achieve true immortality after centuries or even millennia (with some few living only a few short years) while the latter undergo a kind of renewal, a reincarnation of sorts that leaves them changed. Some spirits may even choose to be born as a different kind of being, though this is not inherently more noble or better than achieving immortality on their own terms. This is what happens to spirits who are killed in battle as well.

In either case, after renewal or death all such entities leave behind a core of accumulated power, which usually takes the form of a colored magical pearl, gemstone, or other remains such as crystalized bones, a seed that can grow into a tree, or the like. These are highly prized among cultivators as key ingredients in artifacts and elixirs, and immoral cultivators may even hunt down intelligent beings for them. Even if the entity will come back, they are never the same, and this should be treated with the same moral weight as murder.

It's no more unethical to take the cores of unintelligent beings than it is to eat meat, though some would say both are, and in either case overhunting can have major negative effects on the environment. It's generally considered morally acceptable to take the cores of those who have died naturally or in the course of life and war as well (assuming the cause of violent death wasn't *you*,) at least if they don't intend a greater purpose for it. Most cultivators will respect the final wishes of such beings.

Cultivators who have achieved the Golden Core *also* leave behind these treasures. Those who haven't, unless they are or have become a supernatural being, have cultivation bases too diffuse to drop one.

Eating Them: It's usually advised not to eat a core without first preparing it, but if you're determined to swallow one like candy, be prepared to survive the changes wrought on your body. This is a bit like taking a **Forming Pill** (see below,) but much more dangerous

FIREARMS

In many settings, guns are available. Treat as a Flame Piece (pistol) or Firewandb (rifle) but with Piercing instead of Flame, Archery (Medium) for pistols and Archery (Long) for rifles. Accessories and rapid fire can improve various statistics, but try not to get bogged down in detail. It is *not* possible to use mass produced firearms for artifacts; they *must* be handmade by a master artisan as normal for artifacts.

While obviously in real life firearms offer many variable levels of ammunition types and quantities, treat all of them as having an effective ammunition of 6 before needing to reload. This makes them better than crossbows, technically, but with more specialized tools to upkeep. This is effectively a narrative excuse; your gun can have a larger or smaller magazine in reality, but you get six shots.

CRAFT: FIRST AGE ARTIFICE

This skill depends heavily on the setting. If there's magitech, this is the skill for it.

FLYING WEAPONS

A common staple of Xianxia are flying weapons that fight on their own and/or permit the user to fly on them. This requires the user to use Graceful Crane Stance or a similar ability to successfully ride, but it's a legit option for a weapon's evocation. If used for attacking, it should simply be adding a ranged option to a melee weapon, unless it can fight entirely on its own which would make it like a familiar or ally.

MYSTICAL BODY ART

Common in many Xianxia stories are means of refining the body to create mystical effects. Most of this is already covered under Charms, but it should be permissible to create special artifacts that are part of someone's body through a visible focus. This can take the form of tattoos (whether ink or some form of magical metal banding or the like), scarification, implanted gemstones (such as hearthstone slots), or similar permanent body modification. This is an advantage - they are harder to remove - and a disadvantage - you can't lend them out, which more or less balances out. In general, these shouldn't be used for double-dipping, like having a tattoo on your chest that gives you armor and then wearing armor. In those circumstances, you should effectively only benefit from the best one. Exalted Essence is too narrative of a system to make that sort of thing workable.

Embedded armor that doesn't count as being armored for the purposes of martial arts should be similar to Silken Armor.

VOID RING

Artifact 2

There are many varieties of this common tool used by cultivators to carry their possessions, though the most common is a ring. Void Rings permit the user to store items in an extradimensional space created by the ring. Strictly speaking, it has no space limit, but it can only contain items that can be conveniently carried by the user; also, magical items cannot be contained if they are sapient, have motives committed, or have a strong association with another user. Items can be retrieved by memory, and should the user die or the item be destroyed they will be released at random times and places over a large area near the ring. It takes an action to put anything in or take anything out of the ring, making it a poor choice for weapons and armor that might be summoned and equipped more quickly with a charm. The concept of Elsewhere does not generally exist in most Xianxia settings, but it can; work with your GM on deciding.

ALCHEMY

A staple of Xianxia is creating pills and elixirs that can have a wide variety of effects. In general, these should be created with Thaumaturgy, Craft: Alchemy, or Sorcerous Workings, the scale and difficulty of which depends on the nature of the desired elixir. Magical ingredients and their processing are an excellent obstacle, or obtaining them may be a story.

As a set of rough guidelines, consider the following:

- Relatively minor or cosmetic effects, like a salve that will help mortals heal quicker or provide a minor bonus to certain activities in return for a penalty, should be a Basic Project.
- More powerful effects, equivalent to single-use charms and lesser spells, are Major Projects.
 - These can be Thaumaturgy rituals, too, if your character only knows how to make the one type.
- Effects on par with single use strong artifacts, powerful charms, or the like are Sorcerous Workings. Don't use Artifact rules.

FORMING PILL

Basic Alchemy Project

A common name for a variety of elixirs used by various cultivators for the purpose of assisting less gifted students reach the point of being able to gain Essence. In game terms, this lets them stop being an Extra and gain the trainee abilities above over a period of weeks or months and regular infusions of the elixir, but it's largely intended as a narrative contrivance to either be part of a backstory or to let players help a specific person advance.

While the formulations vary enormously and are tailored to the subject, the universal ingredient of forming pills are the blood or other products of a supernatural beast. This can be willingly given, and indeed that's how most supernatural beasts prefer to elevate their own disciples. Undiluted, this both takes longer and deeply changes the subject, turning them into a half-supernatural being themselves. The refined forming pill also conveys some transformations, but these are usually minor and cosmetic except by

complication.

TEMPERING ELIXIR

Major Alchemy Project

One of several methods to awaken qi awareness and one commonly employed by martial sects, this alchemical formula is made by sequentially heating numerous natural and seven magical herbs to produce a paste that is rolled into balls and fed to a student. The process of creating takes several hours and requires precise control of temperature, timing, and liquid content, plus a dangerous final stage with potentially explosive results. The ingredients can be obtained with a Resources 2 purchase (for the mundane ones) while the remainder must be cultivated, found, or traded for with a story. Two of the magical ingredients must be antipodes - fire and ice, positive and negative, so on, with their combination being explosive.

They are created as a Major Alchemy project, requiring 4 hours and Difficulty 4. A large number of doses can be created at once with access to material; consider a small swatch of herbs to be enough for one person.

Tempering pills are powerful and dangerous. One to three of them must be given to a disciple with sufficient physical and spiritual development to survive. After taking them, they will have to engage in appropriate exercises and meditations according to their cultivation method to both use and study the magical power contained therein. Done successfully, this process elevates a disciple to a cultivator, adds 1 to each category of Attributes, gains a dot of Essence, and shaves years off their life if past their prime. This benefit can only be gained once, and it is presumed that player characters who start as cultivators have either already benefited from something like this or otherwise worked around it. Failure will result in death.

This is merely a way to mechanically represent a mortal becoming a cultivator - do not stack those benefits.

Pills can be made safer by increasing the difficulty to 6. These can be given to people of less developed abilities, but they still need to be able-bodied, which is why less physical sects prefer other methods, and be trained in the appropriate methods. This allows for someone who is old, sick, very young, or those who have only recently been introduced to a cultivation method but show great promise anyway.