



# THE THREE KINGDOMS

## THE SHU HAN

CRISES ON THE ORIENT

**GRAND CRISIS MANAGER: WILLIAM YANG GOODWIN '25**

**CHAIR: LUCAS SILAJ '25**

**CO-CHAIR: MICHAEL FOSTER '27**

**CRISIS DIRECTOR: RHODES LEE '25**



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## LETTER FROM THE GRAND CRISIS MANAGER

**Dear Delegates,**

I'm excited to present to you all the first three-way Joint Crisis Committee in BC High Model UN's history. I'm proud to serve as the Grand Crisis Manager for this committee, and am honored to be working alongside my good friends Lucas Silaj, William Remley, Rhodes Lee, KinJia and KinYuan Wong, and once again with Junior Martins on this extraordinary committee. These fine gentlemen have been hard at work for the last few months to bring to everyone a truly amazing crisis experience.

This JCC may differ slightly from a more standard crisis committee, and I hope that you all take this into consideration while doing your research and thinking about strategy before the conference begins. For the purposes of these differences, we have written guides and overviews of expectations—which you can find listed in the document below or contents above.

About me: I'm a senior at BC High, a member of Romero House, and I have been involved in BC High Model UN since I was in seventh grade. I was a Crisis Assistant as a freshman and sophomore under the then-Crisis-Director Zain Khan '24, and last year a Director for an advanced committee. Outside of MUN, I'm a varsity skier and sailor, a member of the Dever Players, and the President of Dungeons and Dragons club. Outside of school, I'm an avid reader, aspiring writer, and an inchoate practitioner of the Kunwu *jian* and related martial arts (some of which served as inspiration for aspects of this JCC.)

My goal here is to create an engaging crisis situation, testing and pushing your creativity, strategy, and adaptability in the backroom while maintaining an air of calculated thoughtfulness, well-spent intention, and pro-Dynastic cunning in the front room. I want to help you all dive into your interests, develop your characters' arcs, and watch everyone develop throughout the day as delegates.

I'm excited to see you all in March to reshape, rethink, and reimagine ancient China's history. And, I urge you to remember as you prepare for the JCC—**there are no limits to what you can accomplish.**

Here's to a great conference,

*William Yang Goodwin '25*

*Liaison Officer*

*Grand Crisis Manager*

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## LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

**Hello all,**

My name is Lucas Silaj, and I will be the Shu Dynasty's chair in BC High's first ever three-way JCC. I want to acknowledge the hard work everyone has put into this project since October. We have put incredible effort to make this possible, and I hope that all our hard work pays off for you all during committee day!

I want to thank my co-chair, Michael Foster, and Crisis Director, Rhodes Lee, for working very hard on working with me in making the Shu Dynasty great! They have been beyond helpful, much like everyone else involved in staffing for this committee. My goal for you all is to have the most engaging committee possible, and I cannot wait to see everything unfold!

About myself: I am a senior at BC High, a member of both Bowman and Romero Houses. I have been involved in Crisis since I was a sophomore, and one of the Co-Directors for last year's JCC. Now, I run the Middle School Model UN here at BC High. Outside of MUN, I do community service, am a big gamer, and am the service officer for BC High's National Honor Society. Again, I am thrilled to see how you will navigate this unique committee!

See you all very soon,

***Lucas Silaj '25***

*Assistant Minister of Arrupe Delegates*

*Chair, Shu Dynasty*

[lt.silaj25@students.bchigh.edu](mailto:lt.silaj25@students.bchigh.edu)



## LETTER FROM THE CO-CHAIR

**Dear Delegates,**

My name is Michael Foster and this is my first year on the dais. I am very excited to be joining BC High in their 33rd conference for Model UN this year. I am co-chairing with my friend Lucas Silaj, and I am very happy to be engaging in the topic of the Shu Dynasty, one of the Three Kingdoms in ancient China.

My experience with Model U.N. has been almost nothing but exceptional. I have made many friends and participated in many different conferences. I learned a great variety about debate, politics and their importance in relations on the Earth. I feel that Model U.N. has had a very strong impact on me and how I view the world, and I hope that it has for you all also.

Outside of Model UN, I am on the Ultimate Frisbee team, a member of BC High Investment club, and many more activities outside of school.

I invite everyone to come and enjoy our conference!

Sincerely,

*Michael Foster '27*

Co-Chair, Shu Dynasty

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## LETTER FROM THE CRISIS DIRECTOR

*Dear Delegates,*

Welcome to BCHMUN 2025! My name is Rhodes Lee and I will be your Crisis Director for the Shu Dynasty during this committee.

I am a Senior at BC High and a proud member of Bowman House! I have been participating in Model UN for 3 years now and have had great times at different conferences in and out of state. Outside of Model UN, I am involved with Math League, Junior Achievement, St. Louis Project, and I am really good at chess. This is my first committee where I am Crisis Director, so I am really excited about this. I would like to go over some general rules for this committee.

Try not to be offensive and note that racism, homophobia, and other forms of hate speech is not tolerated. I ask you to try to be respectful. I'm sure we won't have any problems because I know you all will be great but please remember these rules. This committee is very unique, so I can't wait to see your ideas. I am super excited to meet you all and read your directives and crisis notes!

See you soon,

*Rhodes Lee '25*

Crisis Director, Shu Dynasty  
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# CRISIS GUIDE

## A General Guide to Model UN Crisis Committees

Model UN Crisis Committees differ from traditional General Assembly (GA) simulations by introducing fast-paced, dynamic scenarios requiring quick thinking, diplomacy, and most importantly, adaptability. This guide provides an overview of how to approach crisis committees, including a run-down of the structure, along with some strategies and skills needed to succeed.

## What is a Crisis Committee?

A Crisis Committee simulates a high-stakes political, economic, or military situation where delegates represent specific characters or countries, often within smaller groups. These crises evolve rapidly, with new events, problems, or developments being introduced in real-time, which require immediate action. Unlike GA sessions, where discussions are slow-paced and consensus-based, crisis committees focus on quick, decisive moves and seizing the initiative.

## Key Elements of a Crisis Committee

- **The Crisis Itself:** A real or fictional scenario (e.g., a war, political upheaval, or natural disaster) that forms the central problem to resolve. Unlike a GA, each delegate has powers of their own, called "Personal Powers" or "Portfolio Powers."
- **Committee Structure:** Smaller groups with 10-20 delegates, each representing a unique position. This can be a country, or in our committee, a single person.
- **Crisis Updates:** Frequent updates from the backroom (people running the crisis behind the scenes) that alter the scenario. These could be unexpected events designed to throw you off, but most of the time they will be updating you on the happenings of the other committees.
- **Directives:** Delegates submit "directives," which are formal written instructions to handle the crisis. These directives can be individual or collective and can cover diplomatic, military, economic, or political actions. Directives will be covered in more depth later.
- **Personal Crisis Arcs:** Individual characters may have personal goals or ambitions that affect their actions and influence how they interact with the crisis.



## THE STRUCTURE OF A CRISIS COMMITTEE

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### Overview

The procedure in crisis committees varies from other types of committees you may be used to. There are some key differences in the committee, which will go through different crisis steps in debate. It is important to note that this is only an overview with general guidelines and that chairs/co-chairs have the right to make any procedural changes they see fit during the committee.

### General Debate

- I. Debate will always open with a roll call; to which all delegates respond “present” or “present and voting”.
- II. Crisis committees are generally less uniform in debate, with NO motions for speaker’s lists.
- III. Rather, the primary forms of debate in crisis committees are round robins, moderated caucuses, and unmoderated caucuses.
- IV. Due to the nature of a smaller-sized committee, delegates can offer a point of inquiry, without permission from the chair, as long as someone else is not speaking.
- V. Speeches are usually much briefer (20-30s), so it is not recommended to yield your time to other delegates.

### Moderated/Unmoderated Caucuses

- VI. Moderated caucuses are formal debates, and the chair will individually recognize delegates to speak by raising their placard.
  - A. When motioning for an Unmoderated Caucus, you must clarify the topic, total time, and speaking time.
  - B. If there are not enough speakers, delegates can speak multiple times in a single moderated caucus.
  - C. If there are no other points or motions, the debate defaults to a moderated caucus of the chair’s discretion.
  - D. Example: “Motion for a 5 minute moderated caucus with a 30 second speaking time on XYZ” (Colloquially, a “five-thirty.”)
- VII. Unmoderated caucuses.
  - A. Traditionally the total time of Unmoderated Caucuses ranges from 5-10 minutes at a time.
  - B. Crisis Committees have less unmoderated caucuses than General Assemblies.
  - C. During the time allotted during an Unmoderated Caucus, delegates are allowed to freely walk around and collaborate with other people.
  - D. Unmoderated Caucuses are normally used to write, and merge directives.
  - E. Example: “Motion for a 10 minute Unmoderated Caucus”

### Round Robins

- VIII. Round Robins are typically used as an alternative to the speakers list.
- IX. In a round robin, every delegate has the chance to speak, and the order is determined by where you are sitting around the room.
- X. Speaking times are generally limited to 30 seconds or less.





- XI. Round robins can be found most useful after a major crisis event/update, in which they will often be looked upon favorably by chairs.
- XII. Example: "Motion for a 30 second round robin".

### Directives:

Committee Directives: Submitted on behalf of the entire committee and requires collaboration from multiple roles. They can range from military actions to diplomatic solutions. **In a BCHMUNC XXXIII crisis committee, a Directive requires a minimum of 3 sponsors and a maximum of 5.** The other specifics are left to individual Chairs' discretion. The Portfolio Powers of a directive's Sponsors will be considered regarding the directive's execution, but Directives differ from Personal Directives in the fact that a Directive alone may carry the weight of the committee, or in our case, the resources and **will of the Emperor**.

Personal Directives: Submitted individually by delegates, these are often actions like espionage, moving troops, etc., but can be anything possible per your portfolio powers. Best used to progress your own goals—known as your "crisis arc". Examples of effective Personal Directives and common mistakes delegates often make are listed below, in the **Writing Effective Notes** subsection.

Joint Personal Directives: The bread and butter of experienced crisis delegates, a Joint Personal Directive (JPD) is a way to write a Directive without needing it to be brought to a full committee vote. This is best used when two or more delegates need to combine their personal powers to achieve something, ie. a joint military maneuver, outfitting an army with new gear, or taking out an opponent with one-two combo in one fell swoop.

Press Releases: Public announcements that can be used to influence other delegates or the direction of the crisis. In our JCC, this can be an important way to communicate with the opposition, as **Press Releases are broadcasted to the other committee(s) and to the general public.**

### Key Skills for Success

In general, strategies good for a GA are good for a crisis committee. But the next few are especially important.

- **Adaptability:** Unlike traditional MUN, crisis committees shift rapidly. You need to be flexible and able to adjust your strategies as new information is revealed.
- **Creativity:** Think outside the box. We reward bold, innovative actions.
- **Diplomacy:** Even though crises are fast-paced, diplomacy is still at the heart of every MUN committee. Make alliances, maintain relationships, and know when to compromise.
- **Management:** handle pressure well, and be able to make quick decisions that balance both your personal arc and the greater needs of the committee.



## WRITING EFFECTIVE DIRECTIVES

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**Be Specific:** Clearly outline the goal of the directive, the steps necessary to achieve it, what personal powers are contributing, and your best-case ultimate end goal of the directive.

**Coordinate with Allies:** When submitting directives, the more people the better. Working closely with other delegates to ensure your directive gains the necessary support.

**Anticipate Countermoves:** Be strategic by thinking ahead. How might the opposition respond to your directive? Consider crafting backup plans in case your initial strategy fails, and outline those in your directive as well.

**Keep Things Close:** **Your personal powers should be some of your closely guarded secrets.** It can make for a powerful negotiating point if they are revealed, but doing so could allow someone else to know your weakness and begin to tear down your arc.

### Writing Crisis Notes

Notes are the main component which separate traditional committees from those with crisis elements. You receive one or two notepads at the start of the day, in which you write plans, actions, questions, plots, etc. Think of this as writing to your private secretary who is able to act on your behalf outside the committee.

The dais will periodically collect these notepads and forward them to the backroom to respond to your note. If you use your notes effectively, you'll be able to promote your private interests, build alliances, use or even expand your portfolio powers, and obtain new resources for the committee.

Ultimately, notes build your importance and power in committee. With a series of well written notes, you can take the spotlight of the committee. The next "crisis break" can be about you and your plans, which is a good goal to have. When your notes are causing crisis breaks, you become more influential in the decisions of the committee.

Remember the following when writing notes:

The Three Rs: Resource, Request, Reason.

(credit: University of Chicago, <https://munuc.org>)

- I. **Resource:** All you need to do is state a reminder of what you already have. While this does not need to cover everything, it should be relevant to the next part of the note.
  - A. "I would like to access my granaries and *tael* reserves in Chengdu."



- II. **Request:** Keep requests small for the most part, these are more likely to be granted. Ask for anything which is an extension of your current resources. In addition, notes should **not** be addressed to the crisis staff. They instead should be addressed as a letter might: to a character, such as a secretary, servant, or general, within the simulation setting.
  - A. “Recruiters should be hired with the silver, and they should attempt to rally two armies of spearmen.”
  
- III. **Reason:** This final part is the most important in your note. It provides a justification for your request and gives the dais more insight into your ultimate strategy.
  - A. “One army of spearmen will rendezvous with Ma Teng, the Unyielding Tiger of Liang, at our border with the Wei, and join his armies there. The other army will be left in reserve in Chengdu, defending the city and training the skills.”

### Example Note A

It hits all of the points above!

Dear Secretary Ming,

I would like to access my granaries and *tael* reserves in Chengdu. Recruiters should be hired with the silver, and they should attempt to rally two armies of spearmen. One army of spearmen will rendezvous with Ma Teng, the Unyielding Tiger of Liang, at our border with the Wei, and join his armies there. The other army will be left in reserve in Chengdu, defending the city and training their skills.

General Yao, (any other parties involved)

### How the Backroom Might Reply

Not only did the request get approved, you even received an additional option to strengthen your soldiers.

The recruiters were hired using two units of our *tael*, leaving seven in the treasury. The soldiers were received by the Unyielding Tiger at the border, and the other army is training outside of our capital, Chengdu.

The commander of the army commented to the messenger that his novice recruits are having trouble with poor weaponry and armor—and is requesting the lord three *tael* to outfit his men. If you do so, their power will surely increase!



### Example Note B

It is missing all the above!

To Crisis,

I would want to attack the border of Wei quickly and swiftly, and please execute our emperor to put myself on the throne.

### How the Backroom Might Reply

The request went through. but you got severely punished for the lack of specifics and reason for your actions.

You have sent three armies of trainee infantry on an expedition to the Wei border. Your men ran into armies led by your ally Ma Teng, the Unyielding Tiger of Liang, but began fighting them, confusing them with the enemy. One army was obliterated by the general's defending forces, while the other two, fleeing, suffered heavy losses due to illness and hunger.

You hired an assassin off the farmer's market, promising him one *tael* upon completion of the task. The attempt on the emperor's life went unnoticed, as his attempt to poison the emperor with extra salted pickles left him uncomfortable—but not dead.

### Tips, and Common Pitfalls to Avoid

**Tunnel Vision:** Don't become so focused on your personal arc that you ignore the broader crisis. You need to keep one eye on the larger committee while advancing your individual plans.

**Overcomplicating Directives:** While creativity is important, overly complex directives can slow down the committee or confuse the crisis staff. Keep your ideas clear and actionable.

**Acting Too Quickly:** While crisis committees reward fast action, acting too quickly and rashly can lead to poor outcomes. Take time to assess the situation before acting: slow is steady, and steady is fast.



## COMMITTEE-SPECIFIC MECHANICS

Due to the nature of this committee, there will be a number of mechanics designed by the Crisis Staff that will be in each frontroom in order to ease the burdens on the delegates' minds.

After all, the Three Kingdoms is a period of war, and this JCC is first and foremost a simulation of how that war could have gone. For this purpose, each Delegate will have command of their represented character's portfolio powers.

You can find your portfolio powers at the end of this document.

### IMPORTANT!

This committee will be fast paced. In the interests of time, crisis notes may be **emailed** to the backroom staff. For more information regarding this, or general pre-committee questions, email the Grand Crisis Manager of the Three Kingdoms and the Crisis Director of the Conference at [w.yang-goodwin25@students.bchigh.edu](mailto:w.yang-goodwin25@students.bchigh.edu) and [kj.wong26@students.bchigh.edu](mailto:kj.wong26@students.bchigh.edu).

### Portfolio Powers

**Portfolio powers are the public powers and resources your position has.** For example, a general might have command of an army of soldiers. These troops' movements and activities would be up to the sole discretion of the general commanding them. Or, a governor of a certain area would have the ability to levy taxes on the population or requisition food from the peasantry to add to their own coffers. Or, a lord of a city would have great influence over the local economy, thus giving him the ability to raise, train, reinforce, or bolster an army of its own.

Of course, limits apply. A division of soldiers trained in a city would only obey their City Lord so long as they remained close to the city, fed and happy. To go further, for instance, a proper general would be needed to keep the men in line. Yet at the same time, these generals would be helpless if their armies were to go hungry—perhaps as a consequence of getting on the wrong side of a Governor—or without provisions—if the City they hailed from is conquered.

The portfolio powers that your positions hold are not detailed in this Background Guide; they will be provided to you at the start of committee. However, general information about each position's powers are provided at the end of this document, in the "Character Portfolios" section.

Your portfolio powers are your greatest strengths, and potentially your greatest weaknesses. It is hereby advised that you keep your powers secret from everyone, be they friend or foe.



## Resources

A nation's resources form the cornerstone of its ability to sustain its people, defend its borders, and expand its influence. While many aspects of a nation's economy could be considered, for simplicity, we focus on two key resources: Money and Food. These serve as the dual pillars of survival and growth, influencing every facet of governance, diplomacy, and war.

## MONEY

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"Money makes the world go round."  
- Matshona Dhlwayo

Measured in *tael*, money represents the economic power of a nation. It is a versatile and critical resource, serving purposes that extend far beyond simple trade. A healthy treasury ensures the smooth operation of a nation's Cities and provides leverage in the political arena.

### Functions of Money:

- Urban centers rely on money to fund services, maintain public order, and sustain infrastructure. A City without funding becomes a breeding ground for unrest, crime, and decay.
- Soldiers demand wages, and mercenaries expect timely payment. Without money, morale plummets, desertion rises, and loyalty wanes.
- Bribes, tributes, and gifts can often open doors that swords cannot. Many officials, in order to do their duty, may demand a "gift."
- Investments in technology, infrastructure, and education rely on a steady flow of currency, enabling a nation to stay competitive. These advances allow for the training of better-equipped and stronger soldiers.

### How to Gain Money:

- A City Lord or a Governor may impose taxes on their citizens. This money includes many sources: profits, merchants' bribes, property, food, etc.
- The Capital province, as an economic hub, produces an extremely large amount of money that is stored in national coffers, able to be accessed as a part of a Committee Directive.
- A General may pillage or sack an enemy City or Province, and receive resources from their defeated foes.



## FOOD

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"If you keep your armies out in the field for a long time, your supplies will be insufficient. When your forces are dulled, your edge is blunted, your strength is exhausted, and your supplies are gone, then others will take advantage of your weakness and rise up."

- Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Food represents the agricultural and logistical backbone of a nation. It sustains the population, ensures the productivity of laborers, and supplies armies during campaigns. Unlike money, which is highly flexible, food has a more direct and immediate impact on survival.

### Functions of Food:

- A well-fed populace is a happy and productive one. Food shortages lead to famine, which can cause unrest, migration, and even rebellion.
- Soldiers in the field require consistent rations to maintain their strength and morale. A poorly supplied army is more likely to lose battles, even against inferior foes.

### To gather Food:

- Provinces under the control of a Governor or Regional Advisor grow staple crops, and fish in nearby rivers/oceans.
- A General may raid an enemy Province, and receive Food from the villages and towns that they plunder.

### Balancing Money and Food

A prosperous nation finds equilibrium between these resources. Excess wealth without adequate food leads to hunger and instability, while an abundance of food without money stifles growth and limits military or diplomatic options. In order to secure victory in conflict, leaders must strategize to ensure that neither resource is neglected.

- Sustained military campaigns require both a steady stream of gold *tael* to pay soldiers, and a surplus of food to keep them fed.
- A Governor or Regional Advisor can focus their provinces' efforts on *either* Money or Food, but not both.

Effective resource management is not just about accumulation but distribution, preparation, and foresight. A wise ruler understands that the true strength of a nation lies in the careful stewardship of its resources.



## ARMIES

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"The strength of a nation lies not in its wealth but in the mettle of its warriors."  
- Zhizhi Tongjian

Armies are the backbone of a nation's power, a projection of its will on the battlefield and beyond. They safeguard borders, enforce sovereignty, and serve as instruments of conquest or defense. An army's strength, morale, and discipline can determine the fate of a nation.

### Functions of Armies

- Protection and Defense: Armies are the first line of defense against external threats. They secure borders, protect vital cities, and ensure the safety of trade routes.
- Instruments of Expansion: A well-maintained and strategically deployed army can claim new territories, crush uprisings, and impose a nation's influence on its rivals.
- Maintainers of Order: Soldiers may also serve as enforcers of law and order, suppressing rebellion, quelling riots, or imposing martial law when needed.

### Maintaining Armies

To maintain an effective fighting force, leaders must address several key considerations:

- Recruitment: Soldiers are drawn from the populace, trained to fight, and organized under the leadership of skilled generals. A nation's ability to recruit depends on the quality of its Cities, which each may muster a *Standing Army* of a size listed in the table below.
- Equipment: Armies require weapons, armor, and siege equipment. A poorly equipped army is vulnerable, even if its numbers are vast. Investment in armories and technological advancements improves the efficacy of soldiers in battle.

### Mobilizing Armies

A General, Governor, or Regional Advisor may call upon troops under their command to mobilize for war or defense. Armies can be a part of a City or Province's *Standing Army*, dispatched to respond to immediate threats on the home front, or sent on campaigns with a General to achieve long-term objectives.

### The Power of Leadership

A great army without capable leadership is like a blade without a hilt. Generals and commanders shape the destiny of battles through tactics, strategy, and charisma. Victory often depends on their ability to outmaneuver opponents, inspire troops, and adapt to unforeseen challenges.

An army is both a nation's shield and its sword, a symbol of strength and resilience. To wield it wisely is to secure the future; to misuse it is to invite ruin.





## HISTORICAL CONTEXT

*“It is a truth universally acknowledged that an empire long united will fall apart.”*

Chinese Civilization has long stood the test of time. Beginning around 2100 BCE, the mythical Xia Dynasty brought on and established the dynastic tradition that has, until very recently, held firm. However, as with many systems, it is fraught with peril. This cycle is powered by court culture; court culture arises from child emperors and regencies. When an Emperor dies with a young son, the son is unable to rule on his own. As such, power is given temporarily to court **eunuchs**, who acted as **regents** in those days. These regents often would also use their power corruptly: accepting bribes in exchange for government positions, allowing political infighting within the court, and conspiring to increase personal influence to the detriment of subject and sage. Weaknesses in these dynasties from infighting and exploitation of the population led to the destruction of many such, including the Xia, Shang, Zhou, and Qin—which preceded the Han.

The Han (206 BC - 220 AD) was put into power after the overthrow of the bloody Qin Dynasty following the Warring States period (475 - 221 BC). Many advancements were made in the first centuries of Han rule, leading many to believe it as the onset of a great Chinese Golden Age. Despite this, corruption in the government was rampant. Dissent among the nobility led to the assassination of officials like *Han Gaozu*, exploitation of the common people led to famine, hunger, and death in the countryside—and after four centuries, unrest finally became rebellion.

The Yellow Turbans’ revolt in 184 AD—fueled by peasant unrest and the rhetoric of **Taoist** leader *Zhang Jue*—shattered the empire through the heartland. The peasants amassed into war-bands tens of thousands in size, and in the capital, the massacre of court eunuchs in 189 AD left the child-emperor himself vulnerable. Regional warlords like *Cao Cao*, *Dong Zhuo*, and *Sun Jian* rose to prominence in what would become the Wei, Shu, and Wu kingdoms, respectively. The central authorities, puppeted by tyrannical eunuchs, relied on them and their standing armies to suppress rebellion. Wielding power far beyond the reach of **Luoyang**’s long arm, they began to vie for dominance amongst themselves.

And, in the late second century, there was another issue of transition. The Han’s strength had long been eroded by the time of the Yellow Turban revolt—the only thing keeping them in power was the continued presence of their “**Son of Heaven**.” But, without the military might, economic wherewithal, or political capital to protect him: in an analogy first used by *Han Gaozu*, “the deer was loose.” He holding the **Mandate of Heaven** had left his cover, and now the chase was on.

The first to begin the hunt was *Dong Zhuo*, the **Gansu** warlord who had been observing events from outside of the capital with relish. Receiving word on the emperor’s movements,



he intercepted the fleeing boy and his retinue. Plotting to instate himself into power, before a year had passed, *Dong Zhuo* had browbeat all of his opposition and commenced a nighttime regime shift. With the city burning, he seized the opportunity and immediately declared himself as the new regent. The original Emperor, *Shaodi*, was deposed, carted out of Luoyang, while his younger brother *Xiandi* would reign as *Dong Zhuo*'s puppet.

The new child-emperor remained under *Dong Zhuo*'s control even as turmoil swept through the kingdom. Massive droughts and famines killed thousands, and nomadic raiders pillaged many villages and towns. The government officials and regional leaders still in power began overtaxing the peasants, worsening the disaster. "Bandits and rebels had sprung up everywhere," say the records of the **Zhizhi Tongjian**, some armies of which boasted numbers approaching 50,000.

Such bandits, though, were insignificant when compared to the great lineages and noble factions who, while protesting loyalty to the Han, resented *Dong Zhuo* and began to mobilize against him at the end of the second century AD. With power bases in the outer provinces, and the economic strength to attract able scholars and mighty generals, these clans regressed into archaic states that drew their roots from the **Spring and Autumn** period almost half a millenia ago. In order to gratify their territorial ambitions, they gathered behind the banners of the Shu, Wei, and Wu kingdoms, and openly declared that they would be aimed at claiming for themselves the title of *ba*, or "**hegemon**," over the **Middle Kingdom**.

Threatened, *Dong Zhuo* decided to abandon Luoyang. He would retreat to the old capital of **Chang'an** in the Wei valley, a fortress city nearer to his own homeland. As he fled, however, Luoyang was ransacked and burnt to the ground again, its population of 500,000 herded west at sword-point. Dissent claimed thousands of lives along the way and, finally Chang'an too was plunged into chaos when, in 192 AD, *Dong Zhou* was struck dead by his own bodyguard, creating a power vacuum.

The next decade brought no respite from bloodshed, as Chang'an was repeatedly sacked by avenging armies and ravaged by famine. The emperor in turn was passed back and forth between handlers, then married to an empress, and finally offloaded back to the ruins of Luoyang. From there, he was whisked off east to Xu—a coastal region near **Shandong** dominated by the wily *Cao Cao*. As of 196 AD, *Han Xiandi* was under the Cao family's protection, and would remain so until his death in 234.

The young Emperor bestowed upon *Cao Cao* the title of duke of Wei in 213 AD and prince of Wei in 216, officially endorsing what would come to be known as the largest of the Three Kingdoms. When *Cao Cao* died due to an illness, his son, *Cao Pi*, took control. *Cao Pi* quickly forces the emperor to abdicate the throne in 220 AD, declaring himself emperor of the new Wei Dynasty. After such a handover, they could reasonably claim to be in possession of the Mandate of Heaven, and thus the sole legitimate successors of the Han.



Much of the same could be said for the founders of the other two kingdoms of the period, however. From the east, *Sun Cei* had contested *Dong Zhuo's* 189 AD claim for Han succession. Then *Sun Quan*, his near-invincible brother and successor, reconstituted the region of Wu in the lower **Yangtze** basin as the second of the Three Kingdoms. Appointed king of Wu by *Han Xiandi* and later declaring himself the legitimate emperor, Sun Quan extended his Wu dynasty's authority to all China below the Yangtze, even including parts of northern Vietnam.

The third and final kingdom to emerge during this tumultuous era was Shu, established in the rugged lands of Sichuan. *Liu Bei*, a distant relative of the Han imperial family, styled himself as the righteous protector of the Han legacy, though his claims to power were no less self-serving than his rivals. With the aid of his brilliant strategist *Zhuge Liang*, *Liu Bei* secured the western provinces and declared himself emperor of Shu in 221 AD. Despite its lofty ideals, Shu was the smallest of the three kingdoms, hemmed in by mountainous terrain and plagued by limited resources, which left it at a strategic disadvantage compared to the Wei and Wu.

Though each kingdom professed allegiance to the *legacy* of the Han, they were locked in relentless conflict over supremacy. The era of the Three Kingdoms (220–280 AD) became one of the most legendary periods in Chinese history, filled with tales of cunning strategy, heroic warriors, and high politics. The period, in truth, epitomized the chaos and splendor of dynastic China at its zenith. It was not until the rise of the Jin dynasty that these kingdoms would be reunited, but the legacy of the Wei, Wu, and Shu live on.

### **Timeline:**

- 206 BCE - Han Dynasty established
  - Established Chinese culture
  - Centralized gov
  - Adopted Confucian ideology
  - Longest lasting empire
- 184 CE - Yellow Turban Rebellion
  - Han government was weakened due to internal corruption
    - Eunuchs abused their power and influenced their masters due to the trust put in them.
    - 12 of the most influential eunuchs were referred to as the 10 Attendants.
  - Warlords gain power
  - A social movement to help the poor was formed



- The movement was religiously influenced, primarily by the Tao
- Led by Zhang Jue and his two brothers, Zhang Bao and Zhang Liang.
- The rebellion, and information regarding it was leaked to Emperor Ling
  - Leaked from Tang Zhou due to being excluded from future plans.
- Originally preached peace, however it turned into a military rebellion.
  - Said that the Emperor had lost the Mandate of Heaven
  - Used the eunuchs as examples of corruption
- The rebellion was put down by Cao Cao and his army
  - No clear number of deaths, ranges from multiple thousand to hundreds of thousands.
  
- 189 CE - Powershift
  - Emperor Ling of Han is killed in the rebellion
  - Eunuchs are massacred leaving a power vacuum
  - Dong Zhuo takes control of Luoyang
    - Luoyang was the capital city
  - Kills new emperor in favor of his brother
    - Emperor Shao was replaced by Emperor Xian, his brother as a puppet
  
- 190 CE - Coalition against Dong Zhuo
  - Dong Zhuo was heavily disliked due to his tyrannical and cruel nature
    - Was disliked by both warlords and regular citizens
  - Warlords launched a campaign against Dong Zhuo
  - Dong Zhuo flees and destroys Luoyang
  
- 192 CE - Dong Zhuo Assassinated
  - Power vacuum
  - Warlords fight each other
    - Cao Cao, Yuan Shao, Sun Jian, Liu Bei
  
- 200-207 CE - Cao Cao secures power
  - Battle of Guandu
    - Fight Between Cao Cao and Yuan Shao
    - Cao Cao was victorious in this turning point battle
  - Another Attack was launched by Cao Cao shortly after the battle
    - Internal struggle after the death of Yuan Shao
      - 2 brothers: Yuan Shang and Yuan Tan



- Yuan Tan defects to Cao Cao, Yuan Shang runs away and is killed soon after
- Northern China
  - 207 CE - Cao Cao has taken control over and united most of Northern China in his campaign
  
- 208 CE - Battle of Red Cliffs
  - Cao Cao vs. Liu Bei and Sun Quan
  - Cao Cao lost and retreated
- ~209 CE - Emergence of the three kingdoms
- 220 CE - final Han emperor abdicates in favor of Cao Pi who declares himself king of Wei
- 221 CE - Liu Bei declares himself king of Shu Han
- 222 CE - Sun Quan declares himself king of Wu



## TERMS TO KNOW

### **Eunuch (宦官)**

A castrated man who typically served as an official in the inner palace, often holding significant political influence in Chinese imperial courts.

### **Regent (摄政者)**

A person appointed to govern in place of a monarch who is a minor, absent, or otherwise unable to rule.

### **Yellow Turban Rebellion (黄巾之乱)**

A major peasant revolt against the Han dynasty in 184 CE, inspired by Taoist beliefs and dissatisfaction with corruption and famine.

### **Luoyang (洛阳, *homonym*, “setting of the sun”)**

The capital city of the Eastern Han dynasty, serving as a political and cultural hub for centuries. During the Three Kingdoms period, the capital of the Wei.

### **Taoism (道教, *lit.* “study of the way”)**

A Chinese philosophical and religious tradition emphasizing harmony with the Tao (the Way), nature, and the universe.

### **Abdicate (退位)**

(For a monarch) To formally renounce or relinquish the throne or authority.

### **Son of Heaven (天子)**

A title used by Chinese emperors to signify their divine right to rule as intermediaries between heaven and earth.

### **Mandate of Heaven (天命)**

The divine right or approval believed to be granted by heaven to a just ruler, which could be revoked if the ruler became despotic or ineffective.

### **Gansu (甘肃, *lit.* “sweet solemnity”)**

A province in northwestern China, historically important as part of the Silk Road and for its military significance during the Three Kingdoms period.



**Zhizhi Tonjian (资治通鉴)**

A comprehensive Chinese historical text, compiled in the Song dynasty, covering the period from the Warring States to the Five Dynasties (403 BC – 959 AD). Used as a source for this document.

**Spring and Autumn Period (春秋时期)**

A period in Chinese history (770–476 BC) during the Zhou dynasty, characterized by political fragmentation and the emergence of regional states.

**Hegemon (霸, or ba)**

Also translated as “overlord.” A dominant leader or state that asserts control or influence over others.

**Middle Kingdom (中国)**

A term used to describe China. In ancient days, China was considered above the Mortal realm but below the Heavens: thus, the Middle Kingdom.

**Chang'an (长安, lit, “extended peace”)**

An ancient city in what is now Xi'an, significant as a political and cultural center during the Late Han. Used as a stronghold by Dong Zhuo as he fled Luoyang.

**Shandong (山东, lit, “east of the mountains”)**

A coastal province in eastern China, under the control of the Cao family. Used as refuge for the boy-emperor Han Xiandi in the last years of the Late Han.

**Yangtze (长江, lit, “long river”)**

The longest river in Asia, running through central China, vital for trade, agriculture, and transportation. Control of the Yangtze River was strategically important during the Three Kingdoms period.

**Yellow River (黄河)**

Known as the "Cradle of Chinese Civilization," this river is central to China's earliest history and culture. Flooding of the basin was a common occurrence for most of China's history, until construction of the Sanmenxia dam began in the twentieth century with help from the Soviet Union.



## CURRENT STATE OF THE DYNASTY

Liu Bei declared himself the mighty emperor of the newborn Shu Dynasty. He promised peace and justice through his new empire for millennia to come. He chose the fearless and honorable Zhuge Liang as his great military general.

Liu Bei facilitated some when orchestrating the Shu Dynasty—something never witnessed before. Loyalty to the people. In the capital, a small protest forged into an enormous revolt known as the Capital City Revolt. With the genius tactics implemented by Zhuge Liang, the Shu Dynasty was saved, but what Liu Bei does stuns everyone. He sympathized with the leaders and members of the organization.

He called them “the true faces of China”. Instead of banishing them, murdering them, he praised their efforts of wanting best for their beloved holy nation. After confronting the leaders—who were Taoist—of the unnamed organization, he found true potential, potential that has not been seen in average men.

Liu Bei gave these honorable men the important roles of leading the brand new White Lotus Guard. These men were given the task of monitoring the Shu Dynasty, keeping peace and order. Crowds cheered for Liu Bei. Clearly his unorthodox ethics saved the Shu Dynasty gracefully. Surely he will live in the glimmering peaks of heaven. Liu Bei then learned of the durable conditions of the Shu Dynasty because of the honorable Zhuge Liang. Zhuge Liang was ordered by the wise Liu Bei to set up strategic defensive points in case of sudden invasion.

Three nomad attacks shortly emerge: two from the east, one from the north. The Shu defended them gracefully, wiping out their opponents with ease. The Shu lost just 50 soldiers in these attacks, but Liu Bei still honored their service, and gave them each beautiful funerals. Respect only kept increasing. Fright filled the White Lotus Guard in the west however. Unknown people came in and raided two villages, and with the limited troops there, they could not de-escalate the situation, and reported it. Liu Bei and Zhuge Liang were surprised, but never afraid. They set new defenses in the west. They wait for new attacks to arrange possible negotiations. The nation appeared safe, until the extraordinary happened.

Disease ravaged the rice fields in the Shu—half of the fields were destroyed. The population shortly went down. Liu Bei did not back down. He ordered scientists to research, and in no time, he found the cause and cure of the disease. The cabinet was distraught by this however. They pleaded to Liu Bei to set future plans—especially possible trade agreements since the Shu Dynasty barely trades—to deal with such a crisis, if something similar arises, who knows what could happen—especially in war time.

As Liu Bei directed actions to the improvements of science and diseases, he read reports of the rival dynasties, the Wu and Wei, becoming more hostile. He communicated to Zhuge Liang, and ordered him to create precautions immediately.





## CHARACTER PORTFOLIOS

### Governors

*Governors each oversee multiple cities composing one region. Each region under your influence can produce money or food. If all of your cities produce the same resource, the total amount increases. In addition, all lands conquered by armies of your Dynasty must be placed under a Governor's control.*

Gongsun Zan: In your glory days commissioned by Han Xiandi as the General of the Vanguard, you took it upon yourself after the fall of the Han to instate yourself as the **Inspector of You Province**.

Liu Biao: Formerly the mighty General Who Guards the South, then afterwards the **Inspector of Jing Province**, you've fought the armies of Cao Cao and his cronies for decades. Great warlords like yourself are needed by your Dynasty to continue to rebuff the advances of your sworn enemies, the Wei.

Yang Yi: **The Chief Clerk of the Imperial Chancellor, you are tasked to oversee the core lands of the Shu.** Good friends with Zhuge Liang, you have aided him with logistics and human resources since the first of the skirmishes with the enemies to your north. Rewarded with a post with more power, the emperor asks you to continue your excellent career of service to the great Shu Han.

Fei Yi: **Once the Prefect of the Scribes, and now the Inspector of Yi province**, you are looked down upon by your fellow inspectors. After all, they gained their posts by rending the blood of your Dynasty's enemies, while you merely carried favor with the son of Liu Bei. But as they are tasked to project power out, you, due to your extensive connections, are powerful on the homefront.

Lui Sen: **Born into a peasant family, and now the Administrant of the Central Pillar**, you care about the commoners of your region. Starting off as a minor officer, you worked your way up through society in a rags-to-riches fashion. A small but important governor, your province is the last line of defence before the capital province, which is directly north of your province.

### Inspectors

*Inspectors serve at the city level. They are Mayor-type figures. Cities are economic centers, producing Money, but also are important rallying points for the armies of a Dynasty, grounds where a military may be recruited and trained. All present Inspectors belong to the Wei Province.*

Kong Rong: The Yellow Turbans razed your prefecture of Beihai to the ground. You gained your position as **Palace Counselor, and lord of great Hanzhong** by vowing to exterminate the last of their so-called wizards and misfit mobs. But you are savvy and wise, also: a descendant of the sage Confucius.

Fa Zheng: **The Administrator of Shu Commandery, Prefect of the Masters of Writing, and General Who Spreads Martial Might.** The titles for you, Fa Zheng, are numerous. A good friend of Liu Bei and



Zhuge Liang, your keen foresight and brilliance in formulating strategies earned you many accolades.

## Generals

*Generals are tasked with leading forces of soldiers to defend their Dynasty's interests, though the means they do so may vary. Not only can they command their own bannermen, by Directive, a General may marshall the forces of the Dynasty itself.*

Ma Teng- **You are the Unyielding Tiger of Liang**, a fearsome warrior whose fury knows no bounds. With your battle-hardened resolve, you lead your forces into the fray with a confidence that crushes all opposition, and in horsemanship, if you were to claim yourself the second-best, no mortal would dare claim himself the first.

Zhang Fei - **You are the General Who Breaks the Ranks, Master of Chariots and Cavalry, and second of the Five Tiger Generals.** Every sword you swing, strategy you make, and victory you claim is in unwavering service to your friend Liu Bei, and the Shu Han's Mandate Of Heaven. Your fearsome presence shatters the resolve of your enemies, and your relentless strength inspires courage in those who gaze upon your banner.

Huang Zhong - **You are the General Who Defies Time, and fifth of the Five Tiger Generals.** Your experience and wisdom inspire and calm your soldiers, instilling confidence in the face of overwhelming odds.

Ma Chao - **You are Ma Chao the Splendid, the Guardian of the Northwest, fourth of the Five Tiger Generals.** Your mastery of cavalry maneuvers and defensive formations makes you a stalwart protector of Shu's borders.

Zhao Yun - **You are the Dragon of Changshan, the General Who Shines Like Silver, third of the Five Tiger Generals.** Your heroic and daring strikes can turn the tides of war, and you trail flame across your enemies' fields like the dragon you were named after.

Mi Fang - **You are the administrator of Nan Commandery, general under Liu Bei**, as your brothers were before you. Not as mighty as the Tiger Generals, nor as intelligent as the capital sages, you attempt to make up for these as best you can with craftiness and treachery.

## Specialists



*Specialist roles encompass all who do not fit into the traditional roles outlined above. Whether this be a crafty prince or cunning princess that controls capital politics, to priests and shamans that claim to spread vicariously the will of the divines, to mighty warriors and wise sages whose deeds seem almost magical—they are listed as a Specialist.*

Princess Wenxiang - **The favored daughter of Cao Pi and his first wife, Lady Zhen**, you are familiar with and doted on by the officials in the Shu court. Seeking to please you, and by extension, your father, there is little you cannot influence within the high walls of Chengdu.

Zhuge Liang - **Master strategist, hidden dragon. You are a peerless genius whose intellect rivals the greatest minds in all of China's long history.** You see patterns in the stars, in the clouds, and in the minds of men, and you are feared by the enemies of Shu for your almost mystical foresight.

Guan Yu - **You are the God of War, the General Who Rides Alone, first of the Five Tiger Generals.** Your unshakable resolve and mighty strength seem to be only limited by the heavens above.

Kho Jaw-Long - **Once upon a time, you were a trusted lieutenant and protege of Zhang Jue, the Taoist wizard in command of the Yellow Turban rebellion.** Now grown, you offer your services and skills you learned from your former master to the Shu Han, in hopes that they will pardon you for your past crimes.

Lian Rui - Blessed with a knack for medicine since your childhood, you were taken in and raised by the Liu family, in hopes to marry you to a promising warlord. Now older, appointed the **Chief Palace Healer**, and much more skilled with the mystic alchemy you always had a talent for, you must choose whether to embrace the Shu Han or to reject them.

## Foreign

Dae Kong - **The exile prince of the Qiang to the west**, you are said to be a descendant of the mythical god named the Flame Emperor, who was defeated by the Yellow Emperor. You, in your travels, stumbled upon the Shu, and out of some generosity or curiosity, have decided to accompany them for this step of your journey.

རྣམ་ལུགས་འཕེལ་བའི་དབང་པོ་ལྷ་མོ་ (Gyatso Wangchuk) - **A roving Elder from the Sect of Cloudy Mist** in Tibet, you are on a mission to fulfil the quest given to you in a dream by a god: called Avalokiteśvara, Chenrezig, or Guanyin. If you see the eastern ocean, comprehend the Noble Truths, and cultivate the Way, you will be blessed with Buddhahood.



## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER

1. What is the proper call to action against the Wei and Wu Dynasties?
2. How do we use our unique terrain and positioning to our advantage?
3. How do we deal with disease, famine, or trade because of our geographical isolation?



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