

## 97. Magic System Designer's Notes

When the Magic Book of DragonQuest was planned, each College was to be introduced in a short essay, providing a brief background for the College and general instructions as to the individual behavior of Adepts of the College. These introductory essays have been included for the new Colleges in Arcane Wisdom, but due to space limitations, the majority were left out of the original books (only Naming Incantations, Earth Magics, Black Magics, and Greater Summoning retain some of this information). Those original notes are summarized below for the entertainment of all DragonQuest players and GM's.

### Ensorcelments and Enchantments

E&E deals with the stuff of fairy tales, legend and lore, and the kind of magic we all thought of when we were children. It mainly deals with the use of magic to change people's viewpoints. To ensorcel someone is to place him under a long term charm, to gradually alter his attitude or beliefs. To a member of this College, the amount of magic in an area would be more critical than for other Colleges. GM's may give Adepts of this College greater advantages in a high-mana area and greater disadvantages in a low-mana area (adding or subtracting from his Base Chance is recommended, in addition to the Fatigue cost adjustments). Places of Power are important to this College, as these locations would contain much pent-up magical energy. Enchanters would always be searching for bits of arcane lore to aid them in their endeavors. They are knowledgeable in the use of True Names as Namers are, and could be able to use them to aid their power, but not to the degree that Namers can. These Names would be learned through research or from a Namer.

This type of magic would be reminiscent of the King Arthur stories, with their special places (the Lady of the Lake, for example). These Adepts would know a great deal about these legendary places and would be great sources of information.

A suggestion for an additional ritual would be a rather unusual one. The ritual would be designed to ensorcel someone, and would be performed over a long period of time, being activated only when the Adept was actually in the presence of the person ensorcelled. GM's could experiment in this area to increase the specialness of this College.

### Sorceries of the Mind

This College deals with the imposition of will by one individual over another. The power of the mind is the primary interest of these Adepts, and they strive through discipline to achieve their goals. The source for this College was the Deryni series of books by Katherine Kurtz. Players familiar with those books will find many parallels, and using them as guides for interpretation would not lead them astray. The amount of mana in an area would not affect Adepts of the mind as much as the other Colleges; the effect of mana level should be lessened. Their minds act as foci for the mana, and they therefore require less to perform their spells.

An important point to remember is that their Talents are always on, and never need to be activated. This is a College which attempts to quantify psionics into a magic system, and should not be filled with those props and trappings traditionally associated with magicians, such as wands and staffs. These Adept would find such finery distracting.

### Illusions

This is closely allied in spirit and philosophy with Sorceries of the Mind, except it needs much more mana to make the spells work. Amounts of mana should affect these Adepts in the same manner it does Enchanters. Discipline is again important, as the essence of their work is the imposition of their will over the will of the viewer, making them believe in what is not. No specific work was the inspiration for this

College. In answer to the ever present theoretical question, the illusions do actually exist; they are not simply inside the viewer's mind.

### **Naming Incantations**

The essay in the original mentions just about all, except for a few things. GM's and Namers must establish a very close relationship in any campaign for this College may be the focal point of magical knowledge around which the other Colleges revolve. Their power resides in their knowledge. That is their single most valuable weapon, and they will guard it fiercely. If a character developed a new spell within a campaign, the local Namer would strain every sinew to ascertain all the information about it he could, so he may be able to find the proper method of disarming it. The establishment of this College would in all likelihood be tied very closely to the "creation time" in any world, due to this nature of being a guardian of sorts. While appearing disarmingly simple, this College may be the most powerful College in the game if played properly. Mana level would affect these Adepts normally. The inspiration for this College is the Earthsea Trilogy, by Ursula K. LeGuinn.

### **Air Magics, Water Magics, and Fire Magics**

These adepts use mana to penetrate their respective elemental planes releasing power stored there and altering their element on this plane. Mana level would affect them all normally. To them, the elements are living entities to be respected and used. In their normal states, elements are things of wild natural beauty. What is unnatural is an Adept controlling that element, shaping it in a way nature did not intend (the thunderstorm is a natural thing; the Air magician summoning it to a new location is unnatural). Therefore, elemental magicians have more than just a healthy respect for their own element and would not use it in a frivolous fashion under any circumstances. This is not to say they all would behave in this manner; simply that this could be the philosophy of the majority.

All elemental manifestations on this plane (a campfire, a windstorm, a lake) contain elemental creatures with which these Adepts would be familiar. Knowledge of these creatures allows the Adept to bind that element into shapes and purposes that are of the Adept's own desire. The same creatures inhabit any stable manifestation, and an Adept would come to know these creatures on an individual basis. Thus, when summoning a water elemental while standing on the shores of the Southern Sea (for example), the Water Adept knows (or certainly should know) the identity of the elemental he is summoning, for the Southern Sea would certainly have no more than one or two such large elementals, and their Generic and Individual True Names may even be known to the Adept. The GM is encouraged to treat these powerful elemental manifestations as NPC's, and establish interchange in a meaningful way between the creatures and elemental Adepts. On the other hand, a bucket of water (again for example) would certainly have no more than a few "water sprites" inhabiting it, and while these elemental creatures could be bound, their powers would be limited. Generic and Individual True Names of all powerful elemental creatures within an Adept's element would be of great aid to these Adepts, and GM's should encourage these avenues of thought.

These Colleges were inspired by classic myth.

### **Earth Magics**

All of the preceding on the elemental Colleges equally concerns this College, with the following additions. Pacifistic Earth mages are patterned after Rhadagast the Brown from Tolkien's work, and receive their power as described above. Druidic Earth mages augment their elemental power by the sacrifice of human life, for they have discovered the secret of the spilling of human blood. The constant spilling of human blood over a long period of time in an area increases the level of Mana in that area. Druids use this fact to increase their power. GM's should carefully judge the role-play of characters joining this branch, for the thought patterns necessary for the Druid may be difficult to integrate into a campaign without causing unrest (to say the least).

## **Celestial Magics**

While only one College, these three divisions should be treated as entirely separate entities by the GM, since members of different branches might not be overly fond of one another, since each would feel the members of the other branches were perverting the source of their power, the elements of Night and the Stars. Mana is used by all these Adepts to control and bind this power into forms which they may use. Levels of mana would affect these mages normally. Props and costumes would be especially important to these Adepts, and they take great pride in their magic items, ceremonial robes, and so forth. The Star Mages are patterned after the Elven magic appearing in the Lord of the Rings. Dark Mages use those elements in Night which all being naturally fear, using this natural fear to augment their own power. Shadow Mages, patterned after Shadow Jack created by Roger Zelazny, walk the thin line between the powers of light and dark, using the advantages of both.

When not specifically stated, GM's may interpret Star Mages as being on the side of Light, Dark Mages as being on the side of Darkness, and Shadow Mages as being on neither side. This would not be an incorrect assumption, but it is entirely up to each GM in his world to implement this division in a way that suites his tastes. One recommended method is to carefully divide which spells may be used by each division, and this allotment may align these mages by itself.

## **Necromancy**

These Adepts gain their power by the study of death, which also instructs them about the living. Sauron in the Lord of the Rings would have to be considered the ultimate Necromancer, and these mages -- while not necessarily aligned with the Powers of Darkness -- are usually on the side of it for no other reason than that "evil" usually kills more people than "good." Mana levels affect these Adepts normally.

Necromancers feel very calm about death and do not fear it. Rather, they feel it is an ally, for the fear of death augments their power and allows them to work with greater freedom. Long-lived sentients such as Elves annoy them, for they feel such creatures are cheating the inevitable. It may be incongruous, depending on a GM's world, to have an Elf choose to be of this College. To rationalize that anomaly may take some doing. The greatest wish of a Necromancer is to become undead and thereby to live on. In this manner he will have both eternal life and eternal death. Necromancers will establish communications with the planes where the dead reside through their talents and their rituals. They will gain much information concerning the living through this interchange, which will aid in augmenting their earthly power.

## **Black Magics and Greater Summoning**

These Colleges both have lengthy essays to convey their essential intent, except to say that Black magicians are normally affected by mana level, while Greater Summoners would be affected by mana supply in the same way as Enchanters are.

## **Shaping Magics (Third Addition)**

The guidelines provided for the Shapers assume fairly conventional magics will be most common. The GM must carefully adjudicate the more unusual items, particularly those that seem to defy standard classifications. As such items are conceived and brought to term by the Adept, we recommend they cost additional Endurance from the Adept and any assistants, in any amount decided by the GM. An Adept who thoroughly investigates the feasibility of the Shaping should have a general idea of the cost.

Any object enchanted for a specific short- or long-term purpose (e.g. driving the snakes out of Ireland, slaying the dragon Fafnir, etc.) should have its own Individual True Name. The enchantment of an item to be the bane of a particular entity must involve that entity's Individual True Name when it is created. Other limits can be set for purposes of campaign balance: restricting the possible shaping to certain celestial conjunctions; requiring the participation of fantastical or extra-dimensional entities inimitable to

the target entity; requiring a token of some sort from the target entity (e.g. a scale from the dragon a sword is forged to defeat); etc.

### **Rune Magics (Third Edition)**

Remember that the efficacy of the Rune depends on centuries of use; thus, few new Runes will be found; this is an important limit of this College.

If the GM wishes, Runes can be differentiated by culture. If so, the Runes of each culture should be considered a different College, and Rune magicians of one cannot learn the Runes of another without paying the standard penalties for changing Colleges. Additional totem spirits for different cultures can be added by the GM. Although the original inspiration for this college is Norse and Celtic, the same basic structure can be adapted to African, Amerid, Oceanic, and other cultures as well.

### **Magic System Reminders**

The following explanations and definitions are meant to provide quick access to cogent in the DragonQuest magic system that may be susceptible to misunderstanding.

### **Talent Magic**

Whenever the workings of a talent require a percentile dice roll to determine the results of the talent's use, only one attempt will usually be allowed per situation. For example, if an Adept who attempts to Detect the Aura of an entity fails, he may not attempt to continue to detect the entity's aura again during that encounter. GM's will have to judge for themselves parameters whereby the Adept may try again. Some suggestions include Time (waiting until 24 hours have passed), Rank (waiting until the Adept has raised his Rank in the talent), and Lunar Phase. Carefully examination of each specific talent will yield inspiration as to how to limit its use. The stricture of attempts must be implemented because a talent takes effectively no time to activate and, thus, a player could continually roll dice until he receives a favorable result and, with full justification, state that as the previous activity had taken no time to accomplish. Whenever a talent such as those of Sorceries of the Mind (which require no dice roll to activate) are used, the GM should assume that they are "on" at the time and the player need not "activate" them in order to use them.

### **Spell Magic**

The modifiers found in 27.7 apply only to spells. They do not apply to talents or rituals.

### **Ritual Magic**

If a ritual backfires (a roll normally 40 or more over the Base Chance), the Backfire Table is not consulted unless it is specified by the individual ritual. In most circumstances, rituals will state any particular backfires associated with them; if not, the GM is free to invent an appropriate backfire result.

### **General Knowledge**

An Adept entering any College except Naming Incantations must have a Magic Aptitude equal to the number of General Knowledge Spells and Rituals plus the two counterspells of his College (e.g., to join Water Magics, a character must have an MA of 17, 14 for the spells, 1 for the ritual, and 2 for the counterspells). Ritual Cleansing and Ritual Spell Preparation do not count toward this total.

Any additional spells or rituals added must comply with rule 34.6.

### **Active Resistance**

If the entity which is actively resisting the workings of a spell is one of the targets of the spell (or the only one), the entities Magic Resistance is subtracted from the Cast Chance of the Adept casting the spell. If a number of entities are the targets, only the highest MR in the group is subtracted. If the entity is not a target, his active resistance has no effect whatsoever.

### **Passive Resistance**

Any conscious entity in possession of all its faculties may choose not to passively resist the workings of a spell.

### **Ritual Spell Preparation**

This cannot be used to prepare rituals, only spells.

### **Investment Ritual**

For an invested object to be activated, it must normally be held in one hand. It takes only one Pulse for the spell stored in the object to be activated and released. When being used, a Cast Check is again made, and a backfire may result, affecting the entity using the item.

### **Rank Gain**

A character must have attempted a talent, spell, or ritual during the immediately preceding adventure to use Experience Points to advance in Rank with the specific talent, spell, or ritual. Any GM who ignores this rule takes game balance into his own hands, and the designer disavows any knowledge of his actions.

### **First Addition Owners**

As you may know, DragonQuest has been printed in a Second Edition, and Arcane Wisdom has been issued in total concordance with that Edition. Thus, all page references, case references, and so forth are keyed to the Second Edition. In that Edition, the combat rules were modified and a Tactical Movement Rate (TMR) replaced Action Points. If you are using the Action Point system, you will have to convert TMR to APA. Whenever used in an equation, a straight (one for one) conversion will suffice; otherwise,  $APA = TMR + 5$ .