

# Project CHUPA

Version 0.03

*The generic, modular RPG system with the cinematic feel!*



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This document is for the reference and evaluation of the Core System design by members of the Dragon's Landing Podcast forums only. Until a version 1.0 has been officially released, use of these rules and the system as a whole is prohibited without written authorization by Chuck Tinsley or Lonnie Ezell, owners of the Dragon's Landing Podcast. At such time as the first version is officially released, the allowable licensing will be made known and the system will be available for everyone under the terms of the agreed-upon license only.

## **NOTE:**

Any phrases or characters appearing in **blue type**, show the changes or additions to the core rules between the previous version and the most current version. If you're looking for what's been ripped out – you're on your own.

## **HISTORY**

December 8, 2005 – The initial idea is presented on the forums.

December 11, 2005 – Version 0.02 released to the forums. Includes the basics, Attributes and Skill systems.

December 15, 2005 – Version 0.03. Incorporates Keys and Secrets from *The Shadow of Yesterday*. Added Health Points, and more on Skill Resolution., some reorganizing of content and a Table of Contents.

# *Table of Contents*

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# *The Basics*

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## **The Core Mechanic**

Whenever you attempt an action that has some chance of failure, you roll one -- or more -- ten-sided dice (d10). To determine if your character is successful, do this:

- Roll one – or more – d10. If more than one die is used, keep only the single highest value.
- Add any relevant modifiers.
- Compare the result to a target number.

If the result is equal to, or higher than, the target number, your character succeeds. If the result is less than the target number, your character fails.

## **Dice**

When a die roll is necessary, it will be described with an expression such as “3d10k1 + 3,” which means you should “roll 3 ten-sided dice, keep only the single highest value, then add 3.” This would result in a number between 4 and 13. The first number tells you how many dice to roll. The number after the “d” tells you what type of die to use. The number after the “k” tells you how many of the dice results you should keep. For the majority of rolls you will be asked to “keep 1.” Since this is the default result desired, most times the “k1” will be left off. Any number after that represents a value that is to be either added to, or subtracted from, the result of the die roll.

## *Attribute Scores*

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### **Attributes**

Attributes are the first aspect in the trinity that represents a complete character. They are intended to demonstrate who that character is when they were born and how they have developed both mentally and physically since then. Three Attributes form the core of the system: Physical, Mental, and Social. A fourth Attribute will vary from system to system. In a fantasy setting it might be Magic, which would represent the inherent part of the character that can manipulate magic. In other systems it might be The Fold – the ability to fold space and help propel the ships through the final frontier. In the case that a fourth attribute is used, it should be an attribute inherent to all the characters in the game, even if some characters may never develop that skill. Some systems may not require a fourth Attribute.

**PHYSICAL** - This is a measurement of everything related to your character's physical body. It measures raw muscular strength, agility and coordination, health, and resistance to disease and damage.

**MENTAL** - This is a measurement of everything related to your character's mind. This includes how smart they are, how quickly they can grasp new concepts, and their ability to adapt to new situations. It also measures how much resistance they have to other people's manipulations, pressure, or bullying, as well as their determination and willpower.

**SOCIAL** – This is a measurement of the character's ability to interact in social events. It includes how outgoing they are, how well they can handle criticism, and their ability to lie without being detected, sell snake oil or even interact in diplomatic circles.

**SPIRITUAL** – This fourth Attribute is given as a default value. It is likely to change from game system to game system. It might refer to the character's ability to cast magic, clerical or arcane. It might be a character's ability to use psionic powers. It can be whatever your system and world needs it to be.

Attributes have a maximum value of 6.

**Note: Purchasing Attributes was moved to the Character Creation section below.**

### **Sub-Attributes**

Each attribute contains three Sub-Attributes: Power, Finesse, and Resistance. The definitions are intended to provide a complete, yet broad, description of the Attribute.

**POWER** - how much you can affect things, how forcefully. In Physical, this would mean not only raw strength, but also a knowledge of how to swing the fist properly and create the best impact. In Social, it would refer to how much impact you have on those around you, similar to charisma, but also could include things such as intimidation or political influence.

**FINESSE** - how well you can affect things, how careful you are. Under Physical it shows how nimble and agile you are. Under Spiritual it might show how complex you can get when manipulating weaves of magic.

**RESISTANCE** - your ability to resist those effects. Under Physical, it would show your resistance to poisons and colds and general health. In Mental, it could apply to ability to think for yourself and not be influenced by actions around you, or your ability to ward off psionic attacks.

Attribute Definitions have a maximum value of 10.

**Note: Purchasing Sub-Attributes was moved to the Character Creation section below.**

## *Skill Scores*

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### **Skills**

Skills are the second aspect of the character definition trinity. They define the learned abilities of a character. They provide a measure of how well the character can brawl, drive a car, bake a cake or cliff dive. Unlike many other systems, Skills in Project CHUPA are meant to be general categories, not specific traits. For example, combat skills might be Melee, which shows how well the character can use hand-to-hand combat weapons, such as knives, staffs, bottles and chairs. There are not separate skills for each weapon.

There is no set limit on the number of skills that are allowed in a group, though smaller groups with broad skills are preferred.

Skills have a maximum value of 10.

### **Skill Groups**

Skills are grouped together into Skill Groups to represent either a collection of skills commonly known to a particular trade or career path, or to represent similar skills, such as combat skills. Some example groups (taken from a test game on the forum) might be as follows:

#### General

- Awareness - Physical senses of all kind, spotting, listening.
- Communicate - Non-confrontational social interaction, convince, bribe, befriend.
- Survival - Physical skills, swimming, climbing, wilderness skills.

#### Military

- Interpersonal - Hand To Hand combat, from brawling to attacking with a monofilament blade.
- Battlefield - Ranged weapons, pistols, rifles, smaller heavy weapons.
- Starship - Used to gain advantage in combat, plan military actions and for things like disarming an opponent.

#### Police

- Investigate - Searching, finding clues, focused looking for things.
- Authority - Interrogation, commanding, intimidation.
- Apprehend - Chasing, running, capturing people. Also, non lethal combat.

#### Academic

- Sciences - Analyzing results, planning to build new things.
- Arts - Sociology, history, general knowledge.
- Research - Computers and dealing with the Knowledge Web.

#### Pilot

- Operate - Drive any vehicle.
- Repair - Fix technological devices.
- Showboat - Ship mounted weaponry, from laser cannons to planet buster torpedoes.

#### Fold

- Navigation - Work out Fold Space calculations for a safe journey.
- Local - Manipulate the local Fold Space around the character, perform small tricks.
- Sense - Pick up changes in Fold Space without extra equipment, sense incoming objects.

## Skill Mastery

Increased chances of success are realized by four (4) Skill Mastery levels: Novice, Apprentice, Journeyman, and Master. The Skill Mastery levels provide for greater chances for success, and lower chances for failure, at higher Mastery levels.

Once a number of points have been spent on skills within a single Skill Group equaling the number of skills within the group, the player can choose one (1) skill within that group to advance to the Apprentice level. Every time a player has spent enough skill points within that group to, once again, equal the number of skills within the group, they have the choice of either advancing the same skill to Journeyman, or advance a different skill to Apprentice.

For example, Peter has a character he is developing to be an infantryman in a space RPG using the example skill groups above. Since his focus will be fighting, he has the following skills at character creation:

### Military

Interpersonal	X X X X O	O O O O O	A__ J__ M__
Battlefield	X X X O O	O O O O O	A__ J__ M__
Starship	X O O O O	O O O O O	A__ J__ M__

Since he was given 8 points to spend in this group, and there are 3 skills in this group, he would receive a new Mastery level after 3 points were spent, and again after 6 points were spent. He pictures the character as a man with a death wish who takes his rage out on the battlefield. He prefers to be in the midst of the blood and gore of hand-to-hand combat. Thus, Peter decides his character would be specialized in only Interpersonal combat. He advances Interpersonal to Apprentice with the first, and then to Journeyman with the second.

For each level of Mastery in a skill, an extra 1d10 is added to the skill check roll.

**Note: Skill Resolution has been moved to Conflicts, below, and renamed to Conflict Resolution.**

## *Secrets & Keys*

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Secrets and Keys form the third aspect of the character definition trinity. Where Attributes define the physical and mental properties of the character, and Skills represent all of the abilities they have learned over the years, Secrets and Keys fill the gap and venture into the darker, more mysterious and wonderful aspects of the character.

### **Secrets**

Secrets are special abilities a character can learn that augment abilities. These are often preternatural, sometimes magical, and always better than normal. In order to use Secrets, points from a pool are normally spent, meaning that Secrets can be used a limited number of times before that pool is refreshed.

Secrets can be better explained with an example:

#### **Secret of the Hidden Pocket**

This character is adept at hiding objects on her person. No matter how carefully searched the character has been, she may pull an inexpensive, small (hand-sized) item off her person with a successful Stealth ability check. There is no need for the player to have written this item on the character sheet previously. Cost: 1 Instinct.

Some Secrets will be open for all characters to take. Other Secrets are “closed” – they are only available to certain races or professions.

### **Keys**

Keys are the primary method of increasing a character's abilities. These are goals, emotional ties, or vows a character has. By bringing these into the story, the player gains experience points (XP) she can use to advance the character, increasing pools and abilities, or learning new Secrets and Keys.

Again, an example will illustrate this better:

#### **Key of Conscience**

Your character has a soft spot for those weaker than their opponents. Gain 1 XP every time your character helps someone who cannot help themselves. Gain 2 XP every time your character defends someone with might who is in danger and cannot save themselves. Gain 5 XP every time your character takes someone in an unfortunate situation and changes their life to where they can help themselves. Buyoff: Ignore a request for help.

The buyoff shown above is a special bit about Keys. Whenever a player has a character perform the action shown in one of the buyoffs, the player can (this is not mandatory) erase the Key and gain 10 XP. Once bought off, a character can never have the same Key again.

Unlike abilities and Secrets, the number of Keys a character can have is limited. A character can have no more than five Keys at one time.

## *Character Creation*

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### Purchasing Attributes

During character creation, a player has a set number of points to spread through the Attributes. These points are not distributed in the Sub-Attributes. If the system is using only the three core Attributes, the player receives eight (8) points. If the system is using the full four Attributes, the player receives ten (10) points. These points may be placed however the player desires.

#### OPTIONAL DISTRIBUTION METHOD:

**4 Attributes** - For quicker character creation, the player may put 4 points in the primary Attribute, 3 in their secondary Attribute, 2 in the tertiary Attribute and 1 in the remaining Attribute.

**3 Attributes** - For quicker character creation, the player may put 4 points in the primary Attribute, 3 in their secondary Attribute, 1 in the remaining Attribute.

### Purchasing Sub-Attributes

For each Attribute, the player has three times (3x) the number of points in the Attribute to distribute among the three Sub-Attributes. These points may be placed however they desire. Repeat for each Attribute.

### Purchasing Skills

A character begins play with a certain number of points to spend in their various skills. The amount of these points is to be determined by the GM before play begins. Since each system will likely have varying numbers of skills, they will provide you with the correct number of skill points to start spending.

### Purchasing Secrets and Keys

Before play, players can choose one Secret and one Key for their characters.

### Further Advances

Lastly, players start with a number of advances (chances to improve) for their characters. This is determined by the group before play, depending on how powerful characters are to be at the beginning of the game. The standard number is five. To figure out how to spend them, read below.

### Character Advancement

During the game, each player character will get experience points (XP) for meeting the player's goals for that character's story and the GM's goals for the overall story. These experience points are converted to advances, usually at a rate of five XP to one advance. Each advance that you get can be banked toward improving your character's Sub-Attributes, Skills, Secrets, and Keys. The costs are found in the table below.

<b>Advancement Table</b>	
Increase a skill by 1 point	1 advance
Increase a Sub-Attribute 1 point	3 advances
Add a Secret	1 advance
Add a Key	1 advance

You can never increase the same thing twice in a row. That is, you cannot increase the same Skill or Sub-Attribute twice in a row. You need to increase something else in between. In addition, you cannot buy two Secrets or two Keys in a row.

# *Conflicts*

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## **What is a Conflict?**

Conflicts happen whenever one person wants something and someone else opposes them. It could be an intergalactic battle between two starships, scaling a wall without being seen by guards, or an argument in the Roman Senate.

## **Health Points**

Health Points represent the character's physical, mental, social and spiritual (or magical, etc) health. Whether we are physical exhausted, hurt, or simply mentally drained from hours of magical research, our current ability to perform is hampered in nearly everything that we do. All of these forms of exhaustion and pain are abstracted into Health Points.

### **Finding our maximum Health Points**

Your current maximum Health Points can be found by adding together the total points in each of the Attribute Resistance scores. For example, Peter has the following Resistance scores: Physical Resistance (5), Mental Resistance (4), Social Resistance (3), and Spiritual Resistance (2). His current maximum Health Points are 14.

This value increases whenever new points are added to any of the Resistance scores, or through bonuses given by items, magic, technology, etc.

### **Taking wounds**

During conflict resolution, a failure may result in the loss of Health Points. It must be stressed, however, that these losses do not just indicate physical damage, but also Mental, Social, or Spiritual. Suffering from a loss of an extremely important argument in the Roman Senate would remove Health Points just as much as getting stabbed in the gut.

### **Wound Levels**

Each situation or item will have a Wound Level generally ranging from 1 to 3. For example, the GM might decide that the importance of the issue involved in the Roman Senate argument was crucial enough to your character that losing the argument would have a Wound Level of 3.

### **Recovering Health Points**

Health Points can be recovered in several ways. Special situations may arise where your GM would award you Health Points as a bonus for success.

A full night's sleep will recover a number of Health Points equal to your highest Resistance Score.

If the character has recently suffered a tremendous Social or Spiritual setback that resulted in a loss of Health Points, the GM may award a number of Health Points equal to the applicable Resistance score if the character experiences a large success in that same area. Taking our Roman Senate as an example: our Senator was trying to convince the Senate that action should be taken on a highly controversial subject. Being shot down, he lost 3 Health Points because of his loss in Social confidence, or Resistance. Later that day, our Senator discovers another plan of his has come to fruition in a surprisingly good way. Since he has a Social Resistance of 5, the GM can elect to award him up to 5 Health Points because his confidence in his Social skills have been restored. In this case, the GM would probably limit the award by matching the 3 Health Points that he lost. If our Senator had only had a Social Resistance of 2, then he could have only used 2 of the 3 Health Points that he was awarded. The remaining Health Point would be permanently lost.

A character's Health Points can never be higher than their Maximum Health Point score, even if an award or rest would put them above that number. Any remaining points are unusable, and therefore lost.

## Conflict Resolution

Skill checks are resolved by rolling 1d10 and adding the value of the Skill and the relevant Attribute or Sub-Attribute, plus any other bonuses that may be appropriate, such as for higher-quality tools or materials being used.

Skills are not tied directly to a specific Sub-Attribute. Instead, it is up to the GM to choose the appropriate Sub-Attribute for the situation. A situation often will be able to be solved using several different approaches, and the GM, paying attention to the player's description of how they want to accomplish the task, will have the flexibility to choose the best one.

For example, Lt. Johnson needs to get his men across the small chasm that blocks their path to safety. He sees two options available to him. He can either use his Sciences skill combined with Mental Finesse to design and build a bridge with cut branches and vines, or use Sciences with Physical Power to find the right tree to topple, while understanding where he needs to break it to have it fall in the correct place, and not falling into the chasm. Since the enemy is also closing in hard on their position, he decides that toppling the tree is the only realistic option.

His Physical Power score is a 3, and his Sciences Skill is a 4 (Apprentice.) So he rolls 2d10k1 + 3 + 4. (2d10 because of his Apprentice Mastery level, 3 for Physical Power and 4 for Sciences.) He rolls the dice and gets a 5 and an 8. He keeps the single highest result (8), adds his skill and attribute values and has a total of 15. If he would not have had any Mastery levels in Sciences, he would have rolled 1d10, gotten the five, and had a result of 12 (5 + 3 + 4.)

This resulting number is compared to the Difficulty Number the GM has assigned the task. If it equals, or is greater than the Difficulty Number, the skill check is a success. If it is lower than the assigned Difficulty, the roll is a failure.

If the highest value on any of the dice is a one (1), then the GM is encouraged to find something bad that might happen because of the roll. It might not happen until the next round, or it might not become apparent until farther in the future.

For example, Lt. Johnson successfully makes the tree-bridge, but rolled a one (1) on both of his dice. While the result is successful, the GM might decide that he did not judge the sturdiness of the tree as good as he should have. The tree has a hairline crack in the center of it now, resulting from the impact of the landing, and will collapse if enough weight is put on it. The GM secretly rolls 1d10 and gets a 6. He decides that when the sixth man is crossing, the tree snaps.

### STANDARD DIFFICULTY NUMBERS

Simple	7
Easy	9
Medium	12
Taxing	16
Heroic	20
Impossible	25

## Additional Conflict Resolution Examples

These examples have been taken directly from discussions on the forums, and are mostly the work of stickman. (Thanks!)

### **The Dance**

**Peter:** I'm going to take Lady Marid's hand and dance with her, wooing the room with my courtly skills. I actually want to impress her father, Count Marid.

**DM:** Okay, well I'd say that's Physical Finesse + Etiquette, and as it's a waltz I'll make it a Taxing difficulty.

**Peter:** I was hoping to use my Social Finesse instead, I'm not worried about being perfect, just being impressive with my manners. How does that sound?

**DM:** That's fine, I thought you wanted to impress them with your moves. That sounds good, but it's made slightly more difficult by Lady Marid who seems to want to rather more than a single dance ...

**Peter:** Oh great, I do *not* want to annoy Viscount Yander by being overtly familiar with his fiancé, so I'm going to be dancing with as much distance between us as possible.

**DM:** That'll make it harder?

**Peter:** No problem.

**DM:** So, you're dancing politely with Lady Marid in an attempt to impress her father. That's a Social Finesse + Etiquette roll against a modified taxing difficulty. If you succeed Count Marid will be impressed, if you fail then .. he's still impressed but Lady Marid will be besotted with you.

**Peter:** That's evil!

**DM:** I know, that's my job Now, is that ok?

**Peter:** How about if I fail then Lady Marid's fiancé Viscount Yander will think I've committed some wrong doing and seek satisfaction?

**DM:** Heh, yep, that sounds good too! Ok, we'll go with that.

**Peter:** Well, I rolled and got a total of 20! I don't think Yander saw anything he wouldn't approve of.

And so on. . There is room for negotiation between DM and players, which hopefully means that the player gets to roll with attributes and skills they agree are pertinent and they know the risks (to some extents) before they roll.

### **The Bridge (and further clarifications)**

Peter is crossing an old rope bridge when his enemies begin sawing at the ropes, so he begins running for the side. The DM specifies that on a success he makes it to the side, on a failure he's on the bridge as it breaks.

In either case there is little concrete fact. If he gets to the side, he might still be ambushed. If the bridge snaps with him still on it, the DM can call for another conflict to grab something before falling, or give him a chance to dive into the crocodile infested waters below ..

One of the key concepts here though is listening to the undercurrent (or in fact stated goals) of the players. If the player is talking about wanting to escape from the prison block they're in, you need to decide if this means a single conflict or a series of them. One effective way to do this is to have the player choose success and failure terms, as often they'll be more than happy to let you know which they'd prefer. An additional useful thing here is that when you want bad things to happen, players are often far more willing to think of cool bad things to happen to their own characters that you are as a DM, because *they* came up with it. That means they've already imagined that situation coming to pass.

For example, you're playing a Peter the knight in a fight and it's going badly for you. The DM states that a critical hit lands, and asks you what that means. Now obviously for some players, they'll just want the least damage they can get away with, and the DM can handle that. But for others, it's a chance to make their character more interesting. Some people might decide 'the blow lands across Peters face, scarring him horribly', and that's cool (the image of the once handsome knight now marked by his dreaded foe) but for some players, they might not be able to buy into that and prefer Peter have his hand slashed, a bone shattered or some other dark fate.