

What qualities can make Tabletop Role-
Playing Games more appealing to new
players?

BY

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Abstract

Tabletop role-playing games (TRPGs) have more than 40 years of history and have achieved far-reaching influence, especially in countries where English is the primary language. However, even though many new games appear every year, TRPGs still do not occupy a dominant position in the game market. Most gamers prefer video games and board games to TRPG. The aim of this project is to use qualitative analysis to investigate which parts of TRPG design prohibit players from engaging with TRPGs, and then to create a novel TRPG that addresses these design problems. This project will combine newly formulated design elements into a game designed to attract new players and ensure that player engagement is sustained in subsequent play. The project focuses on the example of China, where many people play video games and board games, but few know about or play TRPGs. Therefore, this research will mainly study the gaming behaviour and feedback of Chinese participants to study what methods can attract Chinese players to TRPGs.

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Introduction

Unlike the strong interest in TRPG in foreign markets, China has not yet seen many publications of TRPG games. Searching for TRPG on China's largest shopping website, Taobao, will show two examples of sales information about TRPG games and searching for Dungeons and Dragons will show one sales link. Most of the links are for dice sales. And searching for TRPG and D&D in China's largest forum, Zhihu, you will find that 6,297 people have followed TRPG and 10,595 people have followed D&D. Compared with China's current population of 1.4 billion, this number is very small. It can be seen that TRPG has a very small proportion of China's game market.

The definitions of TRPGs vary. According to Zagal and Deterding (2018), role-playing games (RPGs) are hard to define because of the diversity of forms and styles. Unlike computer role-playing games (CRPGs) and live-action role-playing games (Larps), TRPGs are also known as "pen and paper" role-playing games (RPGs) (White, et al., 2018). TRPG refers to tabletop role-playing games, originally evolved from wargaming. A tabletop role-playing game is a form of role-playing game (RPG) in which participants use paper and pen to describe the actions of a character through speech. Playing TRPG is a way to explore oneself and connect to other people (Coe, 2017).

Many researchers have studied the impact of game design on player engagement from different perspectives. Players will always involuntarily draw cultural elements they participate in into the game (Ilieva, 2018). The unpredictability of the game adds fun to the game. (Adams & Dormans, 2012). Although many researchers and game designers try to explore how to design games to make it easier for new players to learn from the perspective of game design, it is still a challenge for designers to attract more new players who are unfamiliar with this game type. Many indie games also start from shortening the game time to solve the problem. Therefore, culture, including language and theme, rules and social interaction have become the reasons that attract players to start and persist in playing games. This research will explore how to focus on these factors to design TRPG to make it more attractive to new players, which expands the TRPG market to foreign countries.

Aims and objectives

The main aim of this research is to develop a tabletop role-playing game that could continuously encourage players to keep playing. In order to develop the game, this research will recognize the

following design criteria:

1. Create a set of criteria for game design to improve engagement of players to:
 - a. Situate the research within the current body of literature on game design. Focus on game element design that could be used to help players keep playing.
 - b. Discuss current situations of TRPG gameplay in China. Identify suitable game design techniques to address them.
2. Utilize the collected data and theory to make a prototype and continue to research through design to generate new knowledge of designing games and assessing how players react to and interact with the prototype to:
 - a. Develop a suitable game and create the design output of a TRPG
 - b. Test and discuss how final output compares to the criteria developed over the research period and answer the research question.

Thesis Structure

To reflect the research aims and objectives, the thesis is divided into the following chapters: literature review, methodology, design criteria, prototyping, prototyping test, refinement, user testing, and discussion.

Literature Review

This chapter addresses the first aim of situating the research through background study and a literature review.

Methodology

This chapter illustrates the method used in the research to prove the accuracy of the conclusion.

Data Analysis

This chapter analyzes the data and information obtained in the questionnaire survey and interviews in order to summarize the factors that need to be paid attention to in the design process.

Design Criteria

This chapter summarizes the TRPG game design standards suitable for Chinese players based on the precautions obtained from previous analysis of the data of Chinese players.

Design Phase

This chapter is divided into four parts, the initial prototyping process, prototyping testing, second prototyping and second prototyping testing, in order to solve the problem that affects the participation of Chinese players.

User Testing:

This chapter is to promote the refined game to more players, so as to discover and summarize more rules and conclusions.

Discussion:

The second aim of the second objective is met in the discussion chapter of the thesis, where the final output is compared to the criteria.

Context:

Literature review

This literature review covers relevant game design techniques around TRPG, design concepts related to board games, and articles discussing certain factors that can increase player engagement, and then analyzes questionnaire data and interview surveys, which applies these factors to the TRPG type. This research analyzes and studies TRPG game design from two aspects: how to stimulate the interest of new players and how to keep players playing. And then explores the appropriate methods to attract new Chinese players to a wider range.

What elements can engage players?

James Ernest (2011) argues that the one thing any game needs is 'engagement,' which he defines as 'a reason to play' and also 'the reason you keep coming back.'

Rules: The rules of the game can attract players to a certain extent. Rules are the core component of a game (Adams & Dormans, 2012), and the unpredictability of the game, such as the mechanism of the dice, will add fun to the game. (Adams & Dormans, 2012). Complex game mechanics will bring more uncertainty, and these uncertainties will attract players and make the game more interesting (Adams & Dormans, 2012). However, overly complex game rules will reduce players' motivation to learn new games. Garfield (2013) reveals that if learning a new game is too difficult players will give up trying. On one hand, the complexity of the rules will attract players' attention. On the other hand, it can also cause confusion and form obstacles.

Language: Daviau (2013) concludes that language and graphics will be the first two things that appear before starting a game. Translations into different languages will affect how players feel about the same game. For a movie or video game, language differences will become part of the movie or game. However, as a game using paper and pen as tools, the primary medium of TRPGs is language: written texts (such as the rulebooks), and verbal discussion (among the players during gameplay). So, the first task in understanding TRPGs is to read the rules. The main rulebook for the current edition of the most famous TRPG, Dungeons & Dragons (D&D) (Mearls et al, 2014) has 313 pages to read. For players who are not native English speakers, this initial task can be a daunting one. According to Ahmadi (2017), enough motivation will become a tool to help people read. Lin and Wong found that people who read English as their first language will be more efficient than

reading foreign language materials and will encounter fewer obstacles in the reading process. Therefore, language would be a design direction for the project.

Visual Guide: Graphic design is often related to the communication of information in social life (Frascara, 1988, as cited in Cornish & Goodman-Deane & Ruggeri & Clarkson, 2015). Images convey information to users in a variety of ways. Kirsh (2015, as cited in Whitton & Whitton, n.d.) said that the visual design of a game can affect the player's acceptance of most games, and it can also help the learning process. According to the research of Whitton and Whitton (n.d.), the visual design of educational games can help players better accept the game and learn quickly. This also applies to TRPGs that require a lot of reading.

What features can keep attracting players?

Social reason: There is currently no relevant survey summarizing players' TRPG game time. According to the Limelight survey (2021), in order to study the impact of games on society and life, 4,000 video game players from China, Germany, India, Indonesia, South Korea, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Vietnam, who were 18 years and older, were surveyed in 2020. The results show that the average weekly computer game time for players is 8 hours and 26 minutes. This means one hour a day to play the game. The study also found that between 2020-2021, the impact of the epidemic promoted an increase in game play, and even led to six consecutive hours of games. However, under normal circumstances, the lack of game time that players have still needs to be resolved. One potential way is reducing the time for players to learn a new game.

On the other hand, Kaye and Bryce (2014) found that players' positive emotions after social games are significantly higher than those of solo games, which indicates that players are more inclined to have organized multiplayer game activities. At the same time, players believe that too little social contact will lead to decreased concentration during the game. Many players also regard improving their game level as one of the motivations of the game. This is also consistent with China's current TRPG market. TRPG is not mature enough in the Chinese game market, and there are few players; therefore, if new players cannot quickly find enough groups to learn the game, they will not be able to start the game and their motivation for gameplay will decrease.

Culture: As a game genre that originated in the West, TRPG is more inclined to Western culture. Ilieva (2018) pointed out that players will always add the culture they have experienced to the

story during the game. Nikolaidou (2018) also believes that familiarity with game settings and an understanding of the world view can help players immerse themselves in the game faster. Therefore, choosing a story and theme that is close to the player's growth background will have a positive effect on the player's motivation for the game.

Methodology

Aims and objectives

This research focuses on the design of TRPG games in China, as there is no existing research on how tabletop role-playing games can attract Chinese players.

The first aim is to understand the current research and related theories of TRPG design and apply some theories to the Chinese game market. Literature review, interview and questionnaire are three main methods used for this process. The literature review can help me better understand the design philosophy of the current TRPG game market. Interviews and questionnaire surveys can help me more practically understand the needs of Chinese players for the TRPG game type.

The second aim is to develop a game with collected data and theory, and test how Chinese players react and interact with the game. Through prototyping, playtesting, A/B testing and follow-up interviews, the game prototype is continuously improved, and the game is improved without departing from the original aims in order to meet the criteria established at the initial stage of the research.

What qualities can make TRPG more appealing to new players?		
Aim 1: Collect relevant data and summarize the current research results on TRPG design.	Objective 1: Situate the research within the current body of literature on game design. Focus on game element design that could be used to help them keep playing.	Methods: Literature Review Interview with game designers
	Objective 2: Discussion of current situations of TRPG gameplay in China. Identify suitable game design techniques to address them.	Literature Review Interview with players Questionnaire for Chinese players

Aim 2: Utilize the collected data and theory to make a prototype and continue to research through design to generate new knowledge of designing games. Assess how players react to and interact with the prototype.	Objective 3: Develop a suitable game and create the design output of a TRPG.	Thematic analysis
	Objective 4: Test and discuss how final output compared to the criteria developed over the research period and answer the research question.	Playtesting A/B Testing Refinement

Method:

Interviews and questionnaires: this method can better help respondents express their different views on gameplay and game design. The first session is to distribute questionnaires to Chinese players via the Internet. Then later, learn about TRPG game design-related concepts and precautions through interviews with game designers. In the previously collected questionnaires, ten players were selected to conduct semi-structured interviews online or face-to-face.

Research through design: according to the research of Ramirez (2017), building a set of standards at different stages of the project to make design decisions, evaluate the results, and report the project, helps to make the research more systematic and draw clear research conclusions. Frankel and Racine (2010) believe that designing research can help researchers discover broader knowledge and conclusions, which is helpful for follow-up research. So this research will use this method to create a set of criteria to conclude a universal method of designing games, which helps me discover a broader knowledge.

Prototyping: The physical realization of the product is a key feature of the design process (Hanington & Martin, 2012). Use research results to understand the mechanics of TRPG and collect interviewees' feedback to ensure the theme and setting through interviews. Prototype a tabletop role-playing game based on the conclusion of the literature review and interviews.

Playtesting: Game testing is a key step for games (Moreno-Ger, Torrente, Hsieh & Lester, 2012). As

Looney reviews (2013), a good game must be played over and over before designers can be sure that it works. So a five-people game test group was conducted to play prototype many times, to collect suggestions, feelings, and attitudes about game prototypes. Use data from the game test team to further improve the game.

A/B Testing: Using A/B testing can effectively test whether visual guidance can help players understand the game. Collect player feedback to improve the project.

User Testing: The final method is to distribute the complete game to more gamers, observe and interview the invitees for suggestions and problems encountered.

Data analysis methods:

Thematic analysis is the most commonly used form of analysis in qualitative research. It is useful when trying to find the theme across a dataset (Clarke & Braun, 2012). According to the research of Clarke and Braun (2012), thematic analysis is divided into six stages: familiarizing yourself with the data, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing potential themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. Through analysis of these six phases, a sophisticated and comprehensive thematic analysis of the research is generated.

Data Analysis

Questionnaire

In order to study the views of Chinese gamers on TRPG and the playing situation a total of 88 Chinese players accepted the questionnaire survey online (see appendix 1.1). The questionnaire asked the players about TRPG understanding and the playing situation in detail. At the same time, players were asked about their views on other types of games, which summarized some interesting game designs and provided ideas for subsequent prototype design. According to the results of the 88 questionnaires, there were a total of 81 valid questionnaires. It is worth noting that 14 players misunderstood the definition of TRPG. The games they played were not in the category of TRPG. For example, Citadel, Chinese Poker, Werewolf, Monopoly, etc. are all board games. Therefore, 33 of the 81 valid questionnaires had not heard of TRPG. Of the 48 players who understood the genre of TRPG games, 27 had never played TRPG. When asked why the players had never played TRPG, their answers can be roughly divided into the following four situations. Ten players thought there were no friends to play with, eight people think TRPG is difficult to learn, five people did not have

enough time to complete the TRPG game, and another six people were not interested in the type of TRPG game.

Among the 21 players who had played TRPG, Dungeons & Dragons and Call of Cthulhu were their main games. When asked why not try a new game, there were roughly three answers: no friends to play together (6 people), no time (6 people), and no interest in other games (6 people).

In order to better design games for Chinese players, the questionnaire also included surveys on different elements of the game.

The first factor was language. As the previous literature review shows, out of the 81 valid questionnaires, 62 people thought that language was an obstacle to starting the game, and 78 thought that Chinese games could effectively stimulate their motivation to play games. Therefore, as a research project for Chinese players, designing a game in Chinese will be more helpful.

The second game element is cultural background, which involves game themes, so in the questionnaire, we asked what game themes the players were interested in. Twenty-two interviewees looked forward to games with Chinese cultural themes, 28 players wanted mythological elements in the game, and 12 players were interested in Western fantasy. Surprisingly, 25 players wanted the game design to be based on a real historical story. So, in this project, we decided to use Journey to the West as the story background of the game.

The third factor is the social factor for the length of the game. Of the 48 people who knew the TRPG game type, 12 gave up playing TRPG games because they didn't have enough time. When asked about the expected duration of the game, most of the players expected to have 1 to 2 hours of game time every day. At the same time, due to work and family reasons, game time is often greatly shortened. In order to solve this problem, shortening the game time of each session will be an option.

Through the questionnaire, we also found that many players thought that video tutorials or illustrated guides were helpful. 27 players hoped to learn the game through visual guidance, so that they could quickly understand and master the game mechanics and story background.

Interview

After the survey, 10 Chinese players were randomly selected from the 81 players to conduct online and offline one-on-one interviews. All interviews are conducted in Chinese. Through more detailed

interviews with players, more suggestions on game design were made. First of all, for the designation of game rules, players were more inclined to concise game rules but hoped that the rules could be interesting. All players believed that easy-to-understand game rules could help them master the game and increase their interest in the game. When asked about the game themes they were interested in, they tended to play games with Chinese culture as the background, because they were familiar with Chinese culture and could better use their imagination to make interesting game behaviours. At the same time, some players with TRPG experience believed that complicated game rules may prevent new players from approaching the game. But to those familiar with the basic flow of the game, the complexity of the game rules would not diminish their interest in the game but may make the game experience more exciting. What they really care about is the way they guide players in understanding the game. The way to introduce the game is simple and fun enough to effectively reduce the pressure of the player when learning the game for the first time. All players believed that visual guidance could effectively help players understand the story.

At the same time, I contacted three TRPG designers currently located in Wellington, and met them through offline interviews for one-on-one interviews (see appendix 1.2, 1.3 and 1.4). Each designer put forward their own opinions and suggestions based on their design experience. As a game design for novice players, the simplification of the game rules could indeed help players understand the game, and a theme of the game close to the audience can also help them better understand the content of the game. At the same time, they all mentioned that visualizing the rules of the game can greatly help players understand the game flow and the content that the game wants to express. There is currently little research in this area. As one participants reveals, it is a challenge to translate a text version of the rule into images or comics (M. Davie, personal communication, May 8, 2021). In addition, they believed that new players did not understand the characteristics of TRPG's use of imagination to tell stories, and how to guide them to expand their imagination will also be a research direction that attracts players. According to one participant, the feature of TRPG is the unexpected things (M. Sands, personal communication, March 16, 2021). In other words, the progress of the game is very dependent on the player's imagination. Being able to participate in the game effectively and promote the development of the game could well mobilize the enthusiasm of the players. Participants also gave a lot of suggestions on game design. For novices, familiar themes will indeed increase their enthusiasm (M. Davie, personal communication, May 8, 2021). Another participants suggests that It is also a good design method to learn from

other game elements and integrate them into your own games (H. Cameron , personal communication, April 26, 2021).

Design Criteria

TRPG design: Through the previous literature review, the collected data is integrated and analyzed. The next step is to find out a set of criteria for designing a TRPG. A specific consideration is the elements needed to design a TRPG. As a type of tabletop game, TRPG is similar to board games in many aspects. Its special feature is that the high degree of freedom of the game allows players to do any behaviour based on their imagination. Under the restrictions of the rules of the game, all the players' choices are feasible and allowed.

According to Zagal and Deterding (2018), Tabletop Role-Playing Games should adhere to the following criteria:

1. The player designs and controls one or more characters in the game.
2. Players describe their characters' actions through speech.
3. Players can improvise within the rules.
4. The result of certain actions is determined by the rules of the game.

Engagement: In this research, we analyzed what design elements could improve engagement. Receiving player feedback through self-reporting and analyzing the concentration of the player's behaviour during the game will be used to measure the player's concentration. Therefore, in conjunction with this research, the design criteria was to use player feedback to understand the player's attitude when first contacting the game, and to observe the player's performance during the game session to specifically analyze the player's concentration. It should also be noted that this research will explore how to increase the player's interest in the first contact with TRPG, and how to keep the player's interest in the game is also a purpose of this research.

Game Analysis

As a prerequisite for designing games, playing games is a very important part. In this way, at the beginning of the research, I played a lot of TRPGs and analyzed some situations that may occur in the process of getting started and subsequent play of TRPG from the perspective of a novice player. Although these games all follow the basic elements of TRPG games, there are obvious differences in rules, mechanisms, and game styles. Therefore, I will summarize the different elements of

different games and integrate the different elements into one. In this research, I focused on *Dungeons and Dragons*, *Fate*, *Fiasco*, and *Powered by the Apocalypse*.

By playing four different games and analyzing the themes, rules and game mechanics, we can understand the more detailed design concepts of each game, evaluate each element according to the design standards, and summarize the factors suitable for novice players.

The first game, *Dungeons and Dragons*, was first published in 1974 by TSR and has been published by Wizard of the Coast since 1997. As one of the most famous TRPG games, *Dungeons and Dragons* has undergone multiple revisions and change. And because of the release of the Open Game License, role-playing designers can use the elements in D&D to make their own prototype of games. The game has a primarily Western fantasy world view, detailed character construction and game process guidance. Players design their own characters according to the given race, which means human, elf, dwarf, etc., class and other elements, and create the story under the guidance of the DM. The core mechanism of the game is to roll dice with 20 sides, add ability modifiers and compare the result with a target number to determine whether the action of the character is successful. *Dungeons and Dragons* is developed from tabletop wargaming, the rules of the game have to be detailed enough that the rules are very numerous and complicated.

This research mainly uses D&D as the main body of the prototype design, including the design of the character sheet, the ability of the character, and removal of race and class, all borrowed from the contents of the fifth version of D&D. But tries to avoid designing overly complex rules and use simple rule design to reduce the difficulty of entry.

The second game is *Fate*. *Fate* was first published in 2003 by Fred and Rod. It has its roots in Steffan O'Sullivan's FUDGE (1992), which first introduced the special dice and core mechanic. After three revisions, the fourth edition was published by Evil Hat Production in 2013. Players can design their characters without restrictions of race or class. The character of the player still follows the guidance of GM to create the story. Another key feature of *Fate* is that many character features are defined more as narrative descriptions (rather than simply numbers against a set skill or ability).

This research will borrow the *Fate* dice design as one of the game mechanics. *Fate* uses the game setting of symbol dice. There are two plus signs (representing plus one), two minus signs (representing minus one), and two blank sides (representing 0). Each player rolls four dice, adds the result to their own skill value, and compares the result with the target points to determine

whether they have succeeded. At the same time, think about whether there is a better way to avoid the complicated calculation caused by the dice result, and express the dice result concisely according to the characteristics of symbol dice.

The third is a tabletop role playing game-design framework called *Powered by the Apocalypse*. It began with *Apocalypse World* developed by Vincent Baker & Meguey Baker in 2021. And then the core engine was adapted for use in many other games, with the encouragement of D. Vincent Baker. The PbtA game has other important elements: it is sometimes called an "archetype" game, because the player can choose from a series of character scripts based on the game's story background. The outcome of the dice is not simply success or failure. Instead, every action will produce possible results, even a "failed" roll will produce a specific storyline. In addition, PbtA games emphasize the relationship between the characters in various mechanical ways.

In this research, it was planned to use the same settings to provide players with multiple options to choose from. But this was abolished in the subsequent design. At the same time, the relationship between the characters in PbtA is used to strengthen the relationship between players.

The last game, *Fiasco*, is an indie game designed by Jason Morningstar and published by Bully Pulpit Games in 2009. Unlike the other three games, it does not focus on battles or adventures. Instead, it is a collaborative story-telling game and the mechanics are about generating stories. Each player has four dice. Before the game starts, the dice are thrown to form a dice pool. Each player chooses the number of points to set the story background and the relationship between the characters, and then tells the story according to the colour of the dice. At the end of the game, the colour of the dice determines the outcome of the player.

Fiasco has an interesting mechanic: it emphasizes the relationship of the players and lets them take over the narration with very simple rules. So simple rules and relationships could be potential directions of prototyping.

By analyzing these four games and the previous questionnaire data, five suitable game design criteria for new players were chosen:

- Provide players with interesting and familiar story backgrounds

- Design concise game rules for players

- Strengthen the relationship between the characters to affect the gameplay mechanism

Design the usage of dice to reduce unnecessary calculations

Conceive a design that can guide players well and simplify the learning process.

Design Phase

Prototyping #1

After analyzing four games, the next step is to make a preliminary game prototype.

The first step is to determine the theme of the game, which is the background of the story. As a case study, this research will focus on the Chinese player community as the research object. According to previous questionnaires and interviews, 35% of the respondents hope that Chinese culture will appear, and 20% like games based on mythology. Therefore, this research chose Journey to the West, which is well-known by Chinese players, as the story background of the game.

The second step is to determine the rules of the game, combine the previous analysis of the four different styles of TRPG, select the advantages of each game to integrate and simplify the game rules. Taking Dungeons and Dragons as the main game rule reference the initial character design was based on Dragon and Dungeons. According to the content of Journey to the West, it was divided into four races (human, animal, insect, and demon), and six professions (warrior, wizard, priest, shaman, scholar, and assassin). However, re-examining the design concept, the game is an introductory game. The main purpose of the game is to simplify the rules of the game and allow new players to start quickly. Therefore, the design of the player's custom character was deleted and replaced with the four characters, Monkey King, Pig Bajie, Drifting and Tang Sanzang. The design of character race, occupation, etc. was deleted, and the character's character was simplified to the character set by the four characters. Players did not need to make any changes to the character design, they could start the game directly.

The third step is to design the game mechanism to make it more friendly to the player. This step includes three main designs: dice design, ability check, and combat session. As the core mechanism of the TRPG game, the dice system is designed to refer to the symbolic dice of Fate, with four portraits of the four characters as the four faces of the dice, and only the need to count the number of times the portrait is thrown as the final result, which simplifies the judgment of each calculation. Each character has five abilities: Strength, Reaction, Tools, Intelligence, and Charisma. Every five ability scores are one modifier. The number of dice is the number of modifiers of the character. The dice held by the player is called the Hero Dice. (See Figure 1)



Figure 1 Hero dice

By contrast, the villain played by the GM will use the "Evil Dice", which is a six-sided dice and has three monster faces and three blanks. The two different dice designs are designed to increase the player's probability of success. However, in the actual test, it was found that the number of dice used by the two parties was not the same, so the increase in probability was not obvious, and it would increase the complexity of the game. Therefore, the design of the Evil Dice was deleted.

During the ability check, the player will throw five dice, and according to the difficulty of the task, the player needs to throw a sufficient number of portraits to be successful. This step refers to the *Powered by the Apocalypse*, and the player will know the specific dice result needed. In addition, as the level increases, the player can add a corresponding number of dice according to the level, thereby increasing the probability of success.

The combat session will be a completely different game mechanism. Players need to allocate their own ability scores to offense and defense, and cause damage or reduce defenses based on the difference in offense and defense values.

Most players hope that the game time is between half an hour and two hours. Therefore, according to the original *Journey to the West*, the game is divided into 81 chapters for players to choose. The game time for each chapter is about two hours.

The last step is to design accessories related to the game, including the character sheet (See Figure 2). As one of the important tools during the game, the character sheet is designed with reference to *Dungeons and Dragons*, but it is more concise and clearer. The basic information of the four players is provided above directly.

ROAD TO SCRIPTURE CHARACTER SHEET

Name Tang Sanzang Phase Water

Strength 1

Reaction 1

Tool 1

Intelligence 1

Charisma 1

Hero Dice 5

Hit Point 10

Spiritual Point 1

Speed 30 feet, Fly 30 feet, Swim 30 feet

Inner Weakness
When the team has a total of 80, 60 and 40 Spiritual Points, Tang Sanzang gains a special spiritual bonus point of +3 to any one ability. If the Spiritual Point is reduced and then returns to this number again, Tang Sanzang will not get the reward again.
When the team reaches a total of 40 Spiritual Points, Tang Sanzang's God's Blessing trait is strengthened, so that it reduces damage taken by 2.
When the team has a total of 70 Spiritual Points, Tang Sanzang's Clone trait will be strengthened, and the Hit Point recovery range when the clone dies is expanded to 10 feet.

Traits
God Bless: As the second disciple of Tathagata Buddha, Tang Sanzang is blessed by all Buddhas. All damage he receives is reduced by one.
Clones (Water): Tang Sanzang can summon one clone, a duplicate of Tang Sanzang, to help him complete tasks. The clone has 3 Hit Points, and its defense is always the same as the Intelligence of Tang Sanzang, and its defense is always 0. When the water clone dies, the characters within 5 feet of the clone will regain the same amount of Hit Point as the intelligence of Tang Sanzang. This trait can only be used once a day and only one clone can exist at the same time. The summoned clone cannot use any of Tang Sanzang's traits.
Water Holy: Tang Sanzang is protected by water elements. All characters within five feet of him can recover 1 Hit Point every round.

Relationship

Tang Sanzang often relies on Sun Wukong's advice. So when Tang Sanzang is within ten feet of Sun Wukong, he can add a bonus of one Hero Dice to any ability check.

Equipment
Ten-Wheeled Tin Rod (attack range is 35 feet)

Note

ROAD TO SCRIPTURE CHARACTER SHEET

Name Sun Wukong Phase Gold

Strength 2

Reaction 0

Tool 1

Intelligence 2

Charisma 1

total scores 6

Hit Point 12

Spiritual Point 0

Speed 40 feet, Fly 90 feet, Swim 20 feet

Inner Weakness
In the course of the game, when Sun Wukong's Reaction increases, he will overcome his weakness and become stronger.
When Sun Wukong's Reaction reaches 4, his clone trait will be strengthened, and he can summon 2 clones to help him.
When Sun Wukong's Reaction reaches 5, he can add 2 to any Ability Score.

Traits
Shapeshifting: Sun Wukong can transform into any creature, but doing so does not increase or decrease his attributes. This trait can only be used three times a day.
Clone (Gold): Sun Wukong can summon one clone, a duplicate of Sun Wukong, to help him complete tasks. The clone has 3 Hit Points, its offense is always the same as the Intelligence of Sun Wukong, and its defense is always 0. When the clone dies, a dazzling glare will erupt, and an opponent within 10 feet of the clone will be unable to act in the next round. The affected opponent is chosen by the player. This trait can only be used once a day and only one clone can exist at the same time. Summoned clone cannot use any of Sun Wukong's traits.
The Refuge of the Gods: Sun Wukong can choose to summon one God each time to help him influence the battle. Each summoned god can only exist for one round after being summoned and cannot attack or be attacked. Gods can activate one effect from the following options:
1. Directly cause 5 points of damage to one opponent
2. Restore 5 health points to a character
3. Reduce all enemy defenses in this round by half.
This trait can be used twice a day.

Equipment
The Compliant Golden-Hooped Rod (attack range is 30 feet)

Note

ROAD TO SCRIPTURE CHARACTER SHEET

Name Zhu Bajie Phase Wood

Strength 2

Reaction 0

Tool 2

Intelligence 1

Charisma 0

total scores 5

Hit Point 10

Spiritual Point 0

Speed 30 feet, Fly 40 feet, Swim 50 feet

Inner Weakness
When Piggy manifests a female character who is attractive, he will want to please her, even if she is an enemy. During the journey, players should try to increase the Charisma of Zhu Bajie to prevent him being charmed by opponents.
When Zhu Bajie's Charisma reaches 5, he can add 1 to any Ability Score.
When Zhu Bajie's Charisma reaches 5, he can directly intimidate the enemy without comparing the Charisma of both parties.

Traits
Clone (Wood): Zhu Bajie can summon one clone, a duplicate of Zhu Bajie, to help him complete tasks. The clone has 3 Hit Points, and its offense is always the same as the Intelligence of Zhu Bajie, and its defense is always 0. When the wood clone dies, it will inflict damage on any enemy within 5 feet. The damage inflicted is equal to the enemy's own Intelligence points. This trait can only be used once a day and only one clone can exist at the same time. The summoned clone cannot use any of Zhu Bajie's traits.
Intimidate: If Zhu Bajie's Charisma is lower than an opponent's, he can intimidate that enemy within 10 feet with a scary look, inflicting 2 points of damage on it. All enemies who are intimidated will choose to attack Zhu Bajie in the following round.
Rough Skin: Zhu Bajie's thick skin protects him from any kind of harm. All damage received by Zhu Bajie is reduced by 1 point.

Relationship

In the four-person team, the person Zhu Bajie fears most is Monkey King, so Zhu Bajie will try to avoid mistakes in front of him. Whenever Zhu Bajie fails an ability check within ten feet of Monkey King, he can reroll the dice. This reroll can only be done once per ability check.

Equipment
Nine-Tooth Rake (attack range is 20 Feet)

Note

ROAD TO SCRIPTURE CHARACTER SHEET

Name Monk Sha Phase Earth

Strength 1

Reaction 1

Tool 3

Intelligence 1

Charisma 0

total scores 6

Hit Point 12

Spiritual Point 0

Speed 30 feet, Fly 30 feet, Swim 30 feet

Inner Weakness
Monk Sha is the most loyal disciple, but lacks many of the magic powers of his companions. He is so loyal that he never questions Tang Sanzang's words or instructions, even though Tang Sanzang might sometimes be a monster in disguise. The player's task is to make Monk Sha stronger so he can protect Tang Sanzang and the others.
When Monk Sha's Strength reaches 4, his weapon holding trait will improve and can hold up to three weapons.

Traits
Weapons holding: Without needing any materials, Monk Sha can make weapons with five elemental attributes. Building a weapon will take one action. Only he can use the weapon made. All weapons made by him cause only 1 point of damage but also cause additional effects (see below). Monk Sha can only hold one weapon at the same time. When he makes a third weapon, he must discard one of the other weapons he has made. The weapon will automatically disappear after he uses it or discards it.
Golden Blade: When Monk Sha uses this weapon to attack, bright light bursts from the blade, stunning the enemy hit by the weapon on the second and on the third turn.
Wooden Blade: When Monk Sha uses this weapon to attack, the wood element in the weapon will absorb the enemy's vitality, and its offense and defense are reduced by 1 for the rest of the round.
On of Water: When Monk Sha uses this weapon to attack, he can reduce 2 Hit Points of damage to any character.
Fire Spear: When Monk Sha uses this weapon to inflict damage on an opponent, it causes them to catch on fire. For the next three rounds the opponent will lose 2 Hit Points each round. During the time, the fire cannot be extinguished.
Stone Blade: When Monk Sha is holding this weapon, he gains a +3 bonus to defense. When Monk Sha attacks with this weapon, his opponent hit by this attack is shocked, and their defense is reduced to 0 until the end of the round.
Weapons master: Monk Sha can carry out a corresponding number of attacks according to the number of weapons he holds (including weapons he made and his own weapon).
Clone (Earth): Monk Sha can summon one steel clone, a duplicate of Monk Sha, to help him complete tasks. The clone has 3 Hit Points, its offense is always the same as the Intelligence of Monk Sha, and its defense is always 0. When the steel clone dies, the clone will explode and have the speed of flames within 5 feet nearby. This trait can only be used once a day and only one clone can exist at the same time. The summoned clone cannot use any of Monk Sha's traits.
Earth Barrier: The Wizard built a light of the desert, he can change the terrain. He can make a 10 feet long wall within 40 feet of the player. The wall blocks sight and all magical effects. The wall has 100 Points equal to Monk Sha's Intelligence and is 10 feet high, 6 feet thick. When the wall is created, any creature standing in the location of the wall will be affected by the top of the wall.

Equipment
Crescent Moon Spade (attack range is 30 feet)

Note

Figure 2 Character Sheet

Prototyping testing #1

This was done with the help of the 5-person team formed before as a test team for game playability. All of them have been given the playtesting information sheet and consent (see appendix 1.5 and 1.6). Four of the players had not played TRPG games before. All players start the game from scratch, and their suggestions are more about the game's guidance for novice players, the simplification of game mechanics, and the balance of game difficulty. A scripted scenario with some illustrations was provided for the Prototyping process. (See Figure 3) (see appendix 1.6). It contains some situations and suggestions that GM may need according to players' different choices.

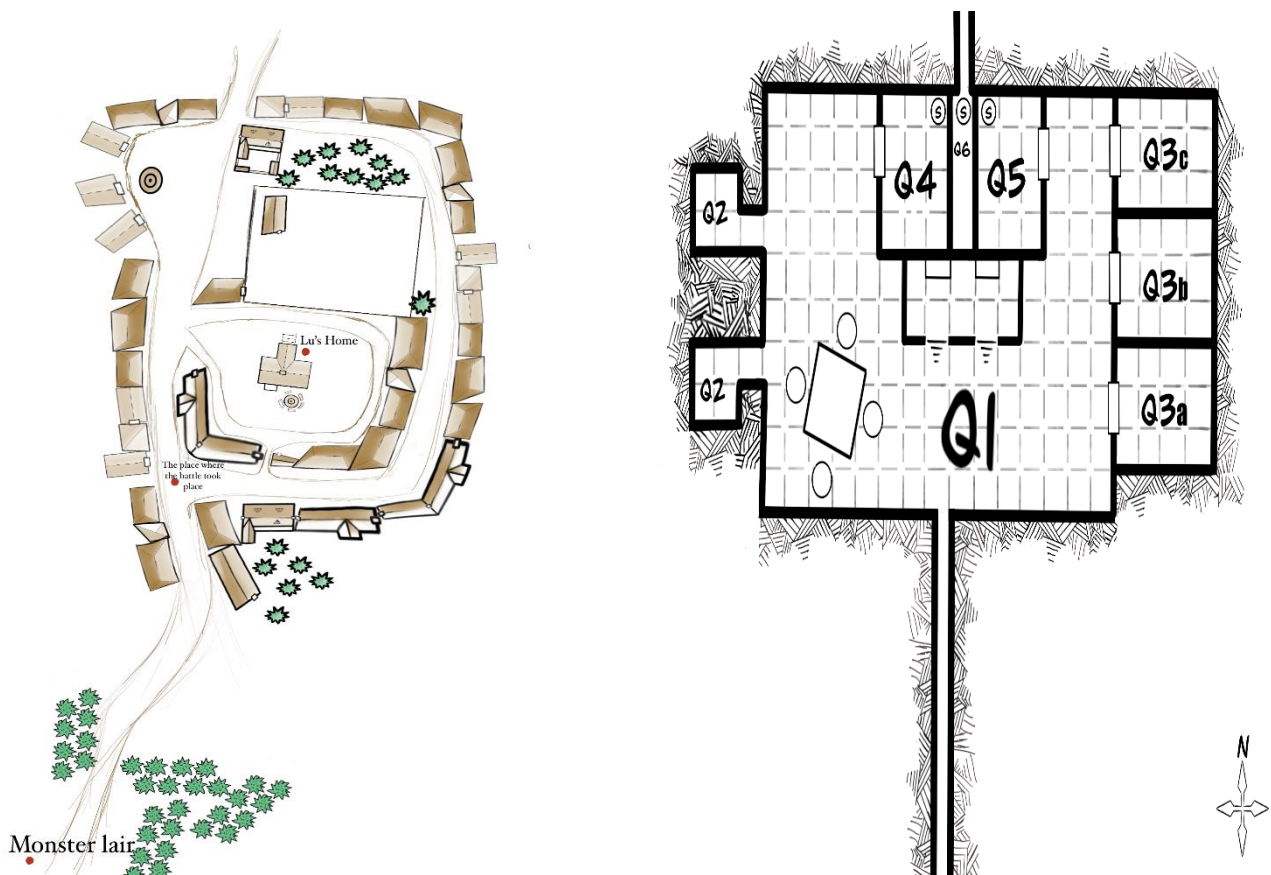


Figure 3 Scenario Map

After many times of playing, after the players have mastered the game proficiently, the suggestions and opinions put forward are more inclined to add elements that make the characters and the story more vivid and full, test which mechanism is more suitable, and detect the missing parts in the game process.

In the prototyping test, it was found that, due to the excessive value of the offense and defense, the player could have little impact on enemies each round. In addition, the offense and defense are reset each round and the combat session often lasts for one to two hours. Therefore, it needs to be modified in the subsequent design. Another major problem is that players only need to throw five dice to check the results during the ability check. The original aim is to reduce the difficulty of the player's operation. However, the player feedback was that the character upgrade is meaningless. The flow of the game has not changed too much due to level upgrades, it has completely become a dice-rolling game. At the same time, the character's own abilities are already very powerful. Players don't often use spells in the game. However, while learning the rules, players need a long time to read and understand the role and method of spells, which is inconsistent with the simplified game process in the game criteria.

Another important suggestion that players put forward during the prototype testing phase is that they hope to simplify the learning process. Even if the rules have been simplified, reading a lot of text is still a big obstacle to learning a new game. The solution to this problem is to design a rule statement in the form of a comic in the second prototyping session.

Prototyping #2

According to the prototype test, the game was modified in many places.

The first was to modify the ability score setting. In the game, before the test, every five ability scores is one point of modifier, represented by the number of dice. The player's ability score is only used for spell release and reduction of defense in the combat session, while the modifier is mainly used for the ability check. The refinement of the ability score is removing the modifier setting. In the previous version, the player upgrades had little effect on the modifier, and character upgrades during actions also could not intuitively affect the success probability of the missions. Therefore, only the ability scores were used, so that the scores obtained each time had practical meaning and value.

In the previous test session, the player feedback was that the ability check was too monotonous, and at the same time did not reflect the gameplay well. So, referring to Fiasco's dice usage, the game will use the dice pool system. Because of the removal of the modifier setting, the player's ability scores are the numbers of dice held. In the ability check, the GM holds a certain number of dice corresponding to the difficulty coefficient. Both sides roll the dice and compare the number of

portraits rolled. The one with more faces succeeds. This kind of contest between players and GM can greatly increase the fun and unpredictability of the game. Therefore, when modifying the design of the combat session, I considered using this antagonistic dice usage because in the second prototype design, I realized that the ability check and the combat were two different dice mechanisms, which would confuse the player's understanding of the game mechanism to a certain extent. Therefore, the new combat gameplay is that after the player allocates the offense and defense, they throw the same number of dice as the offense or defense and compare the results to create an effect.

Another change is about spells. With reference to the magic part involved in Dungeons and Dragons, according to the five elements in Chinese traditional culture, it is divided into five attribute spells. Since the player's usage rate of spells is not high during the actual gameplay, it will increase the difficulty of entry, so this part was removed and some of the spells were added to the character traits, which could simplify the game while also retaining the interesting part of the spell part.

In response to the player's visual guidance feedback during the first prototyping test, a comic version of the rule book was drawn in the second prototype production stage. (See Figure 4) The initial idea was that the player did not need to read the text description. With the help of the comics and the character sheets given, the players could quickly understand the core steps in the game process and play a role in quickly starting the game. With the help of game characters such as Monkey King and Zhu Bajie as the protagonists of the comics, it could better drive the reading of the players. At the same time, the visual setting could better allow the players to understand the character's personality and how to play the game.

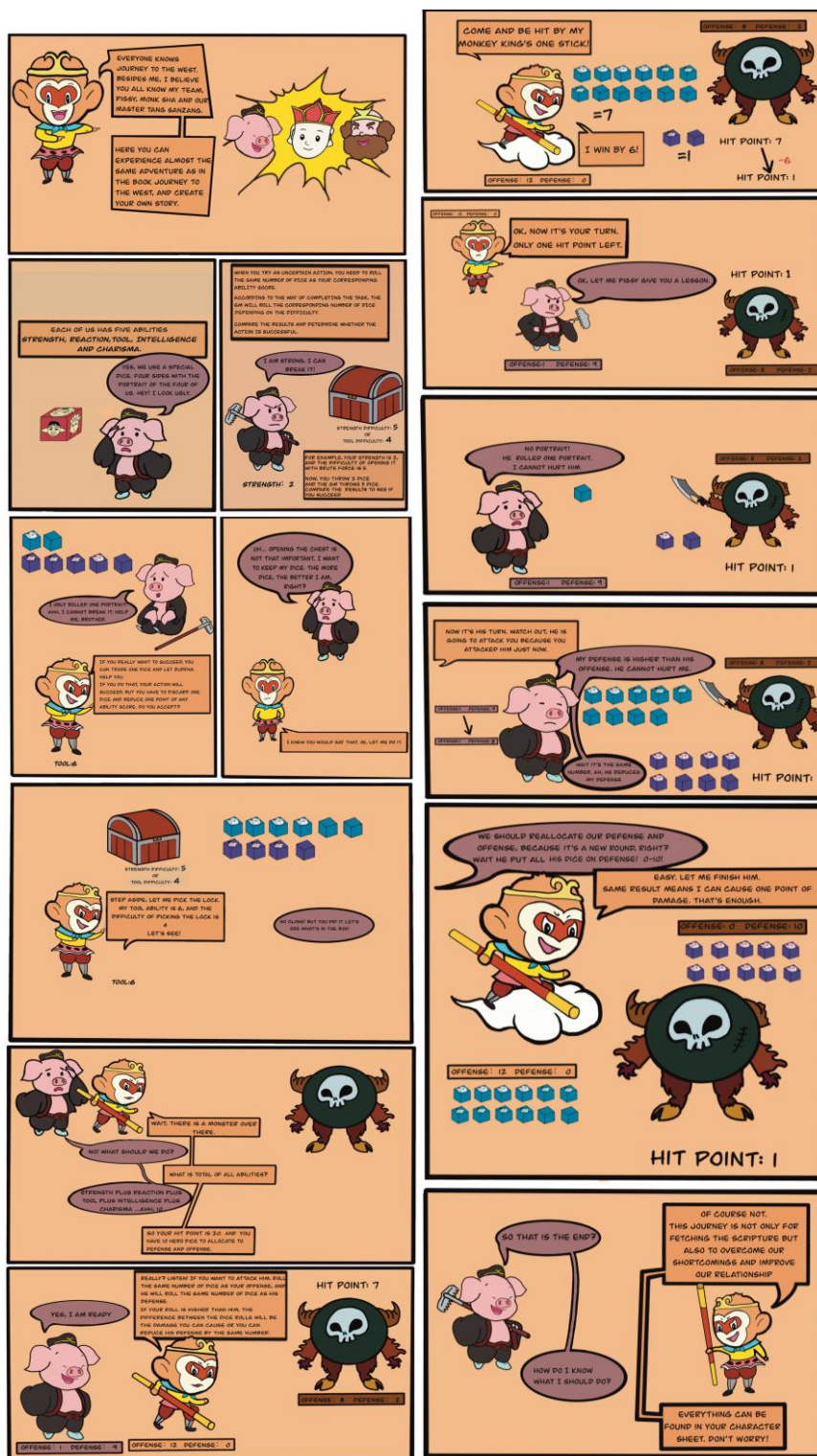


Figure 4 Comic Guide

At the same time, the previous style of the character sheet is Western, which had also been revised at this stage. The rule book was also re-edited in the form of publications and is constantly revised.

Prototyping testing #2

Still relying on the 5-person team previously formed as a test team for game playability since they have more knowledge of the previous version of the game, the purpose of this test is to compare the changes in the game and propose whether the modified part meets expectations.

The first is the reading of the comics. Compared with text, comics really help testers focus on the game better. The unification of ability check and combat game mechanism greatly reduces the time for players to master the game. The time for repeated sessions of the game, such as combat, has been greatly shortened. GM has more time to describe the story instead of repeatedly throwing dice. At the same time, the removal of Spell did not affect the progress of the game. Generally speaking, the difficulty of the game, the degree of repetition, and the difficulty of reading the rules have all decreased.

User testing

The first step in game testing is to determine which players can be tested. First, these gamers need to be Chinese gamers, and secondly, they must be over 16 years old. As some respondents in the previous questionnaire were interested in game testing, I contacted these players and conducted online and offline game testing. All file provided to gamers are in Chinese and English. (See Figure 5)

Playtesting

The game test includes a pre-test interview, game test, and post-test interview. The game interview before the test was voice recorded, some photography of the game test session was taken, and the player's feedback after the test was recorded in text. Players were provided with an information sheet and consent forms before the test.

The purposes of the game test were:

- To assess the effectiveness of the rulebook and whether the player is motivated enough to learn the game
- To determine if the game is attractive and interesting to participants
- To determine what specific feedback novice players can provide to enhance the game to understand how the game can be improved

It is different from the previous game test. This tested game is more developed towards the complete gameplay process. The focus is on designing a game scene for testers to complete. Players can provide more comprehensive and detailed feedback through a more complete game experience.

The game test took place in May and June, and a total of 15 players participated. They put forward their views on the overall feeling of the game and different parts of the game.

The first is to test the difficulty of entering the game. This part focuses on testing whether the player has enough motivation to learn the game. This part was assessed at playtesting through

both observation and the post-test interview. The research in this area is divided into two groups. The first group starts the game by reading the text rules, and the other group learns the game according to the provided comics.

Observation of the testers was the main method of testing the effectiveness of information transmission. The fact that the user can smoothly play the game and complete the tasks without problems throughout the game shows that the rule book is sufficiently concise and clear.

In addition to the above-mentioned observation of the tester's performance during the game, the interviewer after the test can more intuitively understand the problems encountered by the player during the reading process. By asking interviewees whether the game was difficult to understand, most of the answers we got were "okay", and "the text is too long and would lose focus in the later stage." This indicates that another way to introduce rulebook easily would be necessary.

This research also tested comic books explaining the core rules of the game. The visual presentation of the rule book will greatly help players understand the rules of the game and the character's personality. In order not to be affected by previous game experience, four other players who had never played the game were invited to read the comics. After each player finished reading the comics, the game was played immediately. Feedback was collected through observation and post-test interviews.

This part is divided into two test methods. The first observes the time taken by the two groups of members to read the rules, and then observes the player's specific situation during the game. When counting the time spent by the player reading the rules, the text version of the manual provided for the player only contains an explanation of the core game mechanics in the first two chapters. Through statistics, it is found that the reading time of comic rules is significantly shorter than that of reading text. The average duration is 10 minutes. It takes up to half an hour to read the text version of the manual.

Next is to observe the player's mastery of the rules during the game. Group members who understand the rules through comics had a better grasp of the basic rules of the game. Although there are cases where the game was paused, to ask about the rules of the game, by re-reading the comics, you can quickly understand the specific rules, and it will not seriously affect the game. However, another group of players who understood the rules by reading the text version of the rules book had a relatively poor gaming experience. Even after reading the rule book, some players

still didn't understand the game mechanics, and it took longer to review the rule book, and sometimes they couldn't find the information they needed.

We conducted post-interviews for the two groups. The members of the comic group answered that "comics are more interesting and can be further improved, but it is indeed helpful for game understanding", "I can quickly find what I need." The answers of the group who read the text version included "the text version is very detailed", "examples can help me understand", "there is too much text to concentrate, and I always forget it, and it is difficult to find the specific location if I look it up again."

The second part is the fun of the game. This part is to check whether the player has enough interest in playing the game and is willing to continue playing in the future. Observing players' behaviour during the game, it is evident that players managed to solve problems by themselves and discussed with each other actively. By asking players' opinions after the test, several players thought the game was interesting. They had not played TRPG Before. "The experience was attractive, and there were no obstacles during the game" and "I did help in the team." This reveals that players immersed into the game and it felt appealing during the experience of the game.

Aesthetic appreciation was important in the design of the comic. Tests have shown that the creation of comics in games is largely successful, but this is a possible future development in areas that require further design. When asked about their feelings about the comics, many testers thought that the comics still had a lot of room for improvement, but they helped a lot in game understanding. One tester replied, "The character is very cute, which motivates me to watch it. At the same time, the characters inside have their own style for the introduction of the rules."

The third part is to detect where the game can be improved. Designing a game is a long-term process. Since Chinese players are the subject of this research, the game will be translated into Chinese and English versions. English is not my first language, and a lot of text output was not localized during the game design, and there will be many errors. This is an area that still needs to be modified in the subsequent design process.

Discussion

The purpose of this research was to find the elements that could attract and continue to attract new players to play TRPG, and to design a game to verify the research point of view. There were two main purposes. The first was to investigate which traits can attract players to start playing TRPG, and the second goal is to explore which game designs can make players have a sustained interest in the game. Based on literature reviews, questionnaires and interviews, the experiment put forward the design criteria for TRPG games. Design standards are established to provide guidance for game design, starting with game themes, cultural background, game rules, game mechanics, and social factors.

By comparing the final prototype design with the design standards, most of the design standards were reached. The design process conceives how each standard will be implemented, and the final output meets the design requirements in some places, and meets the design requirements in other aspects, but further improvements are needed as follows:

- Provide players with interesting and familiar story backgrounds

- Design concise game rules for players

- Strengthen the relationship between the characters to affect the gameplay mechanism

- Design the usage of dice to reduce unnecessary calculations

- Conceive a design that can guide players well and simplify the learning process.

This research shows that the presentation of the game rules will help players understand the game to a large extent, because the visual design will not only reduce the difficulty of understanding the rules, but also can vividly convey the content and themes that the game wants to express to the players. In the interview with Hamish Cameron, a TRPG designer, he mentioned that the story background of the game and the complexity of the rules will not affect the learning of experienced players. The simplification of the rules, the interest of the story and the unique design of the game mechanism can make new players willing to try to a certain extent. However, the key to attracting players to continue to play is the way the players guide the game.

The comics in this research helped players understand the rules and gameplay of the game to a large extent. Compared with the traditional text description, the player will understand the theme

and style of the story according to the different language styles of the protagonists during the process of reading the comics. This will stimulate players' interest and willingness to try. And in the subsequent game session, players can also participate in the game better, and will not lose interest because they don't understand the rules of the game.

In the second test session of the prototype design, the four players tested already knew the story background of the prototype and the specific gameplay. Even though the game mechanics had been greatly changed, with the help of the comics, they did not exert pressure to re-understand the rules. At the same time, compared with reading the rules for the first time, the time-consuming process of understanding the rules was reduced.

User testing for a wider audience further confirmed previous conjectures and hypotheses. Simplification of game rules, perfect rule guidance, and relatively familiar game themes are all features that attract players. However, the current version of the game doesn't include much guidance for the GMs and only a series of detailed adventures were provided to guide the GM into running the game. How to help the GM understand and host a new game would be another direction of future research.

Conclusion

This research was a study of TRPG game design for Chinese gamers. The research answered the research question, "What qualities can make TRPG more appealing to new players? " in two parts: which elements can attract players and how to design.

The first aim was to summarize the game standards that can attract players. These standards are formed by summarizing the literature on TRPG research and collecting statistics from Chinese gamers. The judging criteria involved the game theme, cultural background, game rules, social factors and game mechanics. The theme of the game was close to the Chinese players, the simplification of the game rules, and the reduction of the time spent in the game are all the design criteria summarized in this research that could effectively increase the player's engagement.

The second aim was to apply the standard to TRPG game design. Data analysis and background research were used to summarize valid information to help design games for Chinese gamers. According to player feedback, the initial research part of the game suggested a comic designed for the rules of the game as a visual presentation for user testing. User test results show that the game basically met the design criteria mentioned above, which can improve a player's engagement in the game.

This research has shown that TRPG can be designed to better attract Chinese gamers. However, the interviewees in this research were all Chinese gamers, so the conclusions drawn are applicable only to Chinese user groups. How to better apply this theory to all gamers still needs a lot of testing and research.

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Appendix

Appendix 1.1 - questionnaire

1. How do you score your English reading ability.
2. Please write down some games you have played recently, such as video games, table games, and table-based role-playing games (any game you played)"
3. Have you ever played a computer role-playing game (CRPG)? Please list some of the games you have played.
4. What do you think is the difference between RPG and other types of games?
5. Have you ever heard of table-top role-playing games (TRPG), a desktop form of role-playing games played by language descriptions in which players play a role and grow in the game?
6. Have you ever played a table role-playing game (TRPG)?
7. Why didn't you try to play this kind of game?
8. How many times have you played a table-level role-playing game (TRPG)?
9. Please list the table-based role-playing games (TRPGs) you have played.
10. What other TRPG have you ever heard of but haven't tried?
11. Why don't you play these games?
12. What do you think is the difference between a tabletop role-playing game (TRPG) and a computer role-playing game (CRPG).
13. What was the reason you first started experimenting with table-based role-playing games (TRPG)?
14. Are you still playing this type of game?
15. Why don't you continue to play this type of game?
16. What kind of game theme is more attractive to you? Please list 2-3.
17. Do you think there is room for improvement in the TRPG rules of the game? Or which TRPG rules have you played more interesting to you?

18. Which way do you think designers can better guide you to learn to play with a new TRPG?
19. TRPG is a wide variety, a game may take a few days, may soon end. How long do you prefer to use to end all the processes of the game?
20. Do you think language will be an obstacle for you to try a foreign language game?
21. If the game contains Chinese, are you more motivated to carry on?
22. Would you prefer to play the game alone or collectively?
23. What else do you have to add to the game?
24. Please provide more personal information about you. What is your age?
25. What is your gender?
26. Which country are you from?
27. What language can you master?
28. If you would like to participate in a later game test or if you have some insights about TRPG, please fill in your email or other information that you can contact below.



What qualities can make TRPG more appealing to new players?

INFORMATION SHEET FOR interviews

You are invited to take part in this research. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

Who am I?

My name is David Liu and I am a Masters student in Design innovation at Victoria University of Wellington. This research project is work towards my thesis.

What is the aim of the project?

This project will study which characteristics make TRPG more appealing to new players, and design a game based on this.

Your participation will support this research by helping provide information on players' experiences with TRPGs and gaming in general .. This research has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee 0000029055.

How can you help?

You have been invited to participate because You have some experience in game play.. If you agree to take part I will interview you in a public place such as a cafe. I will ask you questions about Tabletop role-playing games and other gaming. The interview will take between 15 minutes and 1 hour. I will audio record the interview with your permission and write it up later. You can choose to not answer any question or stop the interview at any time, without giving a reason. You can withdraw from the study by contacting me at any time before January. If you

withdraw, the information you provided will be destroyed or returned to you.

What will happen to the information you give?

You will not be named in the final report, but your organisation will be named (provided you have the authority to agree to this on behalf of the organisation).

Only my supervisors and I will read the notes or transcript of the interview. The interview transcripts, summaries and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed on 12/07/2025.

What will the project produce?

The information from my research will be used in my Masters report

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question.
- ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the interview.
- withdraw from the study before January.
- ask any questions about the study at any time.
- be able to read any reports of this research by emailing the researcher to request a copy.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact me:

Student:

Name: Huayu Liu

University email address:

liuhuay@vuw.ac.nz

Note: students should not provide personal cell phone numbers

Supervisor:

Name: Dylan Horrocks

Role: Senior Lecturer

School: Victoria university of Wellington

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Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Victoria University of Wellington HEC Convenor: Associate Professor Judith Loveridge. Email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.



What qualities can make TRPG more appealing to new players?

CONSENT TO INTERVIEW

This consent form will be held for *five* years.

Researcher: *Huayu Liu, School of Design Innovation, Victoria University of Wellington.*

- I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.
- I agree to take part in an audio recorded interview.

I understand that:

- I may withdraw from this study at any point before *January*, and any information that I have provided will be returned to me or destroyed.
- The identifiable information I have provided will be destroyed in *January*.

- Any information I provide will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor.
- I understand that the findings may be used for a Masters report.
- I understand that the recordings will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor.
- My name will not be used in reports and utmost care will be taken not to disclose any information that would identify me.

Yes No

☐ ☐

- I would like a copy of the recording of my interview: *if it is recorded and going to be offered* Yes No
☐ ☐

- I would like a copy of the transcript of my interview: *if it is recorded and going to be offered* Yes No
☐ ☐

- I would like a summary of my interview: *if one will be produced and going to be offered* Yes No
☐ ☐

- I would like to receive a copy of the final report and have added my email address below. Yes No
☐ ☐

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Contact details: _____

Appendix 1.4 - interview for TRPG designers

1. Which country are you from?
2. What language do you use?
3. Can you speak other languages?
4. When is the first time you heard about TRPGs?
5. When and why did you start playing TRPGs?
6. How long have you designed TRPGs?
7. What TRPGs have you designed?
8. What is the difference between TRPGs and other game types? What are its special features?
9. What is the difference between TRPGs and CRPGs?
10. Are there any aspects we can learn from CRPGs that could help when designing TRPGs?
11. How do you develop your design from an initial idea to a playable game?
12. Which elements do you consider the most important?
13. What is your philosophy during designing a game?
14. How do you think the development of video games has affected players' attitudes towards TRPGs?
15. How do you think we can attract new players to TRPG?
16. How do you use playtesting to shape your game design? Could you give some examples?
17. What do you think are the barriers that put people off playing TRPGs ?
18. What features do you think can attract players to continue playing?
19. Will the length of the game become a reason for players to give up the game?
20. What themes or genres do you think are more attractive to players (such as western fantasy, horror, history or other theme)? What are the some of the issues in certain themes that make people give up playing?
21. What are some things that you think make rules/format more appealing to new players ?
22. Some players may give up playing TRPGs, because some players whose English is not their

native language cannot read the rules of the game. Do you think that if the game uses the language version of player's country, they will have more motivations to play?

23. Do you have any other thoughts or advice you are willing to share?



What qualities can make TRPG more appealing to new players?

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS IN USER TESTING

You are invited to take part in this user testing group. Please read this information before deciding whether or not to take part. If you decide to participate, thank you. If you decide not to participate, thank you for considering this request.

Who am I?

My name is Huayu Liu and I am a Masters student in Design innovation at Victoria University of Wellington. This user testing is work towards my thesis.

What is being tested?

This product is for will study which characteristics make TRPG more appealing to new players, and design a game based on this. It has been developed by Huayu Liu. Your participation will support this research by testing the playability and appeal of my prototype TRPG.. The product is intended for use by anyone interested in trying TRPGs..

This user testing project has been approved by the Victoria University of Wellington Human Ethics Committee 0000029055.

How can you help?

You have been invited to participate in this user testing because You responded to an open call for play testers on game message board . If you agree to take part you will be part of a group with description of others in the group, which will take place at Victoria university or via Zoom and take Between 2 and 4 hours. You will be asked to use the game which we will provide. We will make notes of your use of the game. We will invite the group to be interviewed after about your experience of using the product. We will video record the whole process of the game with your permission and write it up later.

You can stop the user testing at any time by letting us know and your data will be destroyed or returned to you. You can withdraw from the group interview while it is in progress, however it will not be possible to withdraw the information you have provided during the interview as it will be part of a discussion with other participants.

The user testing group is confidential. That means that after the user testing group, you should not communicate to anyone the identities of other people in the group or the information they provided.

What will happen to the information you give?

This research is confidential. This means that the researchers named below will be aware of your identity but the research data will be combined and your identity will not be revealed in any reports, presentations, or public documentation. However, you should be aware that in small projects your identity might be obvious to others in your community include this statement.

Only my supervisors and I will read the notes or transcript of the user testing group. The transcripts, summaries and any recordings will be kept securely and destroyed on 12th July 2025.

What will the project produce?

The information from my research will be used in my Masters report

If you accept this invitation, what are your rights as a research participant?

You do not have to accept this invitation if you don't want to. If you do decide to participate, you have the right to:

- choose not to answer any question;
- stop the user test at any time;
- withdraw from the group interview while it is taking part, however it will not be possible to withdraw the information you have provided up to that point;
- ask any questions about the study at any time;
- read over and comment on a written summary of the focus group;
- be able to read any reports of this research by emailing the researcher to request a copy.

If you have any questions or problems, who can you contact?

If you have any questions, either now or in the future, please feel free to contact me:

Student:

Name: Huayu Liu

University email address:

liuhuay@vuw.ac.nz

Note: students should not provide personal cell phone numbers

Supervisor:

Name: Dylan Horrocks

Role: Senior Lecturer

School: Victoria University of Wellington

Phone: 04 4633837

dylan.horrocks@vuw.ac.nz

Human Ethics Committee information

If you have any concerns about the ethical conduct of the research you may contact the Victoria University of Wellington HEC Convenor: Associate Professor Judith Loveridge. Email hec@vuw.ac.nz or telephone +64-4-463 6028.



What qualities can make TRPG more appealing to new players?

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN USER TESTING GROUP

This consent form will be held for *five* years.

Researcher: *Huayu Liu, School of Design Innovation, Victoria University of Wellington.*

- I have read the Information Sheet and the project has been explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction. I understand that I can ask further questions at any time.
- I agree to take part in a user testing group.
- I agree that the group will be video recorded.

I understand that:

- I acknowledge that I am agreeing to keep the information shared during the user testing group confidential. I am aware that after the group interview, I should not reveal the identities of the other members of the group or the information they shared.

- I can withdraw from the user testing at any time.
- I can withdraw from the group interview while it is in progress, however it will not be possible to withdraw the information I have provided up to that point as it will be part of a discussion with other participants.
- The identifiable information I have provided will be destroyed on *23rd July 2023*.
- Any information I provide will be included in a final report but the observation notes will be kept confidential to the researcher and the supervisor
- I understand that the results will be used for a Masters report.
- My name will not be used in reports and utmost care will be taken not to disclose any information that would identify me.

Yes	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| • I would like a summary of the focus group: | Yes | No |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| • I would like to receive a copy of the final report and have added my email address below. | Yes | No |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Signature of participant: _____

Name of participant: _____

Date: _____

Contact details: _____

Appendix 1.6 – scripted scenario

1. Introduction

Welcome to Level-Top Mountain, after saving princess in the Kingdom of Baoxiang, master travels towards to the Western Regions to fetch the scriptures for Buddhism. Our story begins when master and three disciples are trying to get through the mountain.

Level-Top Mountain is one of the 81 adventures during journey to the west designed for characters to experience the adventure.

2. Story overview

Level-Top Mountain is a chapter that happens in the journey to the west. In this chapter, players need to overcome two of the most dangerous monsters in the book. These two monsters are very clever and cruel. Their goal is catching Tang Sanzang and eat his flesh to be immortal, so they will catch all the monks who come to the Level-Top Mountain. Their two subordinates, Onleye and Tweye are stationed near the village and catch all monks appear in the village. Monks are hard to escape from their hands. They are aware of the route of Tang Sanzang and wait for them for a long time and being ready to deal with every one of the team. Characters have no other way to avoid them but overcome these two monsters.

a. Scripture of Buddhism

In ancient Chang'an, emperor tried to spread Buddhism to all residents. Due to his devotion, immortals leave an invitation for emperor to fetch the scripture which can revitalize the kingdom. The person who are willing to go will be immortal. No one wants to go because of the danger during the trip. Only Tang Sanzang has no fear and volunteer himself.

b. Level-Top Mountain

Tang Sanzang, known as the reincarnation of Golden Cicada, was the second disciple of mighty Buddha. Rumour says eating his flesh can be immortal and great increase one's ability. Two monsters living in Lotus Cave ate every monk they saw to reach their aim.

They ordered their two subordinates, Onleye and Tweye to be stationed near the village, and all the monks who appear in the village will be caught and sent to their cave.

3. Monsters

a. Onleye

Tweye and Onleye were originally two little wolves in Level-Top Mountain. His mother was also slaughtered by the hunters. Since then, two brothers started to hate human beings and swore to revenge for their mother. Onleye is not strong, but extremely smart. He doesn't like to kill opponents directly, but to torture his prey with tactics.

b. Tweye

Tweye and Onleye were originally two little wolves in Level-Top Mountain. His mother was also slaughtered by the hunters. Since then, two brothers started to hate human beings and swore to revenge for their mother. He is a cruel hunter and like to kill target without hesitation.

c. Golden Horn King

Golden Horn King is a brutal monster whose goal is to catch and eat Tang Sanzang to become immortal. His base is a cave called Lotus Cave, which is hidden in the mountain.

The Golden Horn King is a smart and brave fighter knowing how to defeat enemies with his brother 'Silver Horn King'.

d. Silver Horn King

Silver Horn King is the younger brother of Golden Silver King. He also lives in Lotus Cave and is waiting for Tang Sanzang to appear.

Not like Golden Horn King, Silver Horn King is relatively cautious. He has four items help him to fight. All those who oppose them must be extremely careful.

e. Hu A' qi

He is an uncle of these two monsters and younger brother of their mother. He is a very ordinary monster transformed from a fox. He looks like a great fighter but actually not good at fighting and very timid.

f. Nine Tailed Vixen

As the mother of Golden and Silver Horn Kings, Nine Tail Vixen is a respected person among the little monsters. She is good at disguising herself and knowing how to avoid fight. Although she is not good at fighting, her intelligence is high and knows how to trick others.

4. Running the adventure

5. Adventure structure

Level-Top Mountain consists of an adventure included in Journey to the West, providing players with the opportunity to familiarize themselves with Level-Top Mountain Village, the monsters' pursuit of Tang Seng, and the description of the monster cave.

In chapter 1, the characters arrive at the Level-Top Mountain village, where they first hear about monsters. Players need to defeat the monsters in the nearby lair to win the trust of the villagers, after which the players can act in the village according to their wishes.

In chapter 2, the characters explore their new residence, where ghost calls can often be heard.

In chapter 3, master and three disciples decide to set off. At this time, the two monsters hear the news that the outpost had been destroyed and learn that Tang Seng had arrived. The two monsters decide to catch Tang Seng with a trick. The player's task is to protect Tang Sanzang from being captured and defeat monsters as soon as possible before they escape.

Chapter 4 describes the lair of the story's monster, Golden Horn King and Silver Horn King.

Thwarting these monsters doesn't require the characters to invade their lair, so it is possible to complete the adventure without this chapter coming into play.

6. Life in Level-Top Mountain

Village life is challenging to run, when your player characters are willing to wander. Keeping the characters in Level-Top Mountain, where the action is, required that they feel at home. To that end, here are some points to keep in mind:

- No one has ever helped these villagers, so they do not believe any outsiders unless your player character does something really helpful.*
- Nothing can be bought or sold in Level-Top Mountain due to the threat of monsters. But if they trust your characters, they will do their best to support you.*

7. Level-Top Mountain village is ruled by monsters for a long period. No villagers will disobey their command. So, it is not very possible to find clues if the person is timid. Also, some villagers may leak your whereabouts to the monsters that characters need to be very cautious.

Chapter 1: Lair in the Village

1. Where to Start

This adventure assume that all characters have already formed a team and travelled to the Level-Top Mountain. All player characters first come to this place and find a small village with smoky smoke. All player characters decide to have a look at the village and ask for some food.

a. Street Robbery

As the characters are walking in this small village, a fight breaks out. Read the following to set the scene:

The village is very small and clean, but a few people is outside. When they see you, all of them run back to their home. you can notice a lot of eyes looking through the window and observing you.

Every villager looks weak and lack of food. Suddenly there is a noise happen nearby. A team of four small monsters is grabbing a villager's crop. That villager fights with them without fear, he swings his sword and prevent monsters come closer to his food. Other villagers see this happen, but no one tries to help because you can hear another team of monsters is coming towards here to help Onleye.

The monsters are two members of nearby lair. The one with the eye patch is the leader, Onleye. The villager they are fighting, Lu Jin, is a human hunter. He is trying to take back his food. What do you do?

b. Getting involved

If the characters choose to help, because Buddhism advocates helping others, then their helping behaviour will make them each get one spiritual point.

The fight happens in the village (see map 1.2). Everyone discusses the battle order before combat. But the fight is almost over by the time they join. Lu Jin has only 4 hit points remaining and is about to fall into unconscious soon.

Two monsters' goal is to rob the food, when one of the following two situations occurs: Onleye's health drops below 4 or the monsters get the food, The player can kill him in the round when his HP drops to 4, otherwise Onleye will order the other soldier to protect him and quickly escape from the secret tunnel. Due to the obstacles of the soldier, the player cannot catch him.

If player characters help Lu in the combat, regardless of whether the food is taken back, he will invite characters to his house and tell more details about those monsters. Characters will have a long rest and all effects will be erased.

Remember how the characters deal with Onleye in this scene. If he survives, the characters might meet him again in the lair of monsters.

More is coming.

If characters choose to help Ju Lin, in the fourth round of the fight, trouble arises as the reinforcement are coming.

A rapid roar sounded from the south, and a monster comes from the south. It has the same appearance as Onleye, except that he can see things clearly with both eyes. Seeing his brother, Onleye laughed unscrupulously. At this time, there was an exclamation in the crowd, "It's Tweye!"

Tweye looks at villagers, and when he sees Tang Sanzang, his face showed a surprised expression. Suddenly he points his finger at Tang Sanzang. Due to his brother's actions, Onleye also found Tang Sanzang. He shouted excitedly: "He is a monk, brother, let's take him away now!"

The Tweye, which currently has 8 hit points, is holding a mace staring at characters. Once the Tweye walk into the battlefield, he is the last one of battle.

During the battle, they will order the soldiers to take food, and two monsters' target is Tang Sanzang. As long as one character survives, the monsters cannot take Tang Sanzang away. When the hit point of all players drops to 0, Lu Jin will bravely rush to the character and desperately protect Tang Seng. The monsters were repelled by Lu Jin, but Lu Jin also lost consciousness due to his injuries, and could wake up after the player character kills two monsters.

When the hit point of one of the monsters is reduced to 4, they will not continue to try to catch Tang Sanzang and grab food but run away quickly. Their soldiers will do their best to prevent the characters from getting close to the dying leaders.

If any of the disciples are reduced to 0 hit points during the fight, some brave villagers will step forward to stabilize them.

Meeting Lu's Family

Warm Welcome

If characters beat the monsters away, Lu Jin will thank characters for their help and invite your player characters to his home and meet his sister. He will say gratefully: "You guys really helped me a lot. Come sit down at my house, my sister is still at home waiting for me to bring the food back. I can cook some meals for you all."

Lu Jin is known as a brave fighter in the village and always fought back when monsters invaded the village. Lu Jin is a man who cares for his family. After his parents are eaten by monsters, his sister is everything to him.

After entering Lu Jin's home, he takes off his coat and hangs the hat on the wall. A little girl of about five- or six-years old rushes out of the room and hurriedly runs back behind him after seeing the four masters and disciples. "Don't be afraid, these people are good people, they just helped me," he turns his head to look at the characters again, "This is my sister, our parents were eaten by monsters, and she has been with me ever since. My name is Lu Jin, this is my sister Lu Ling. This is called Level-Top Mountain. Two monsters suddenly appeared here two years ago. They occupied Level-Top Mountain and every month they brought a team to snatch our food and take our villagers for food. I know I am unable to drive them away. I beg you to help my village eliminate these monsters. I can prepare food for you. When you defeat all the monsters, I will give you everything I have."

Icy House

If Lu Jin falls into a coma in order to protect Tang Sanzang, his sister will take him away and invite the players to her home.

After entering Lu Jin's home, the girl takes off Lu Jin's coat and hangs the hat on the wall. She holds back her tears and says: "I am his sister, our parents were eaten by monsters, and I have been with him ever since. My name is Lu Ling, this is my brother Lu Jin. This is called Level-Top Mountain. Two monsters suddenly appeared here two years ago. They occupied Level-Top Mountain and every month they brought a team to snatch our food and take our villagers for food. I know I am unable to drive them away. I beg you to help my village eliminate these monsters. I can prepare food for you. When you defeat all the monsters, I will give you all the money in our village." After speaking, Lu Ling turns and goes into the kitchen.

Lu Ling prepares meals for each role and a place to stay for everyone. Characters who want to discover the meal must make a Reaction check and GM need rolling 2 dice. On a success, a

character discerns that Lu Ling is honest and she provides all food he has to your player characters. According to the description, the two monsters are cruel demons. They often went down the mountain to snatch food from the villagers. The weak among the villagers who resisted them died, the strong will suffer serious injuries and become bedridden. No one knows how they came to the mountain, but everyone is afraid of them. This is why they didn't dare to help in the battle just now. According to some hunters who have entered the mountain, there is a cave for monsters living by the lotus pond on the south side of the village. These monsters always take away monks who appear nearby. They recommend that the characters could start their search there.

c. *Hanging back*

If the characters don't interfere in the brawl, Tang Sanzang would blame himself for sitting idly by, believing that his actions are contrary to Buddhism. At this time, his spiritual point is reduced by one. However, Zhu Bajie is happy that he avoids fighting, he can get one Hero Dice.

Since the player will not intervene in the battle, Onleye knocks Lu Jin out and command his crew to bring all of Lu's food back to the cave. Tweye will come to the village to check the situation. Lu's six-year-old sister will pick him up and take care of him, but he will not be wake up during the whole scenario. His sister will not believe any others until you destroy the nearby cave.

After several rounds of fighting, Lu Jin was knocked to the ground with a punch and lost consciousness. The surrounding little monsters took the opportunity to snatch Lu Jin's food, and they dragged bags of food greedily. Onleye looked at Lu Jin on the ground with disdain. A rapid roar sounded from the south, and a monster comes from the south. It has the same appearance as Onleye, except that he can see things clearly with both eyes. At this time, there was an exclamation in the crowd, "It's Tweye!"

The monsters have taken away the food. Tweye walks at the end and looks at villagers, and when he sees Tang Sanzang, his face showed a surprised expression. Suddenly he points his finger at Tang Sanzang. Due to his brother's actions, Onleye also found Tang Sanzang. He shouted excitedly: "He is a monk, brother, let's take him away now!"

The Tweye, which currently has 15 hit points, is holding a mace staring at characters. Once the Tweye walk into the battlefield, he is the last one of battle.

During the battle, two monsters' target is Tang Sanzang. As long as one character survives, the

monsters cannot take Tang Sanzang away. When the hit point of all players drops to 0, all players will be caught in its cave, and everyone have to reduce their spiritual points by half.

When the hit point of one of the monsters is reduced to 4, they will not continue to try to catch Tang Sanzang but run away quickly. Their soldiers will do their best to prevent the characters from getting close to the dying leaders.

If any of the disciples are reduced to 0 hit points during the fight, they will lose consciousness and faint in the village. They need to use spiritual points to resurrect.

A villager will take them in but will not reveal any information about the monsters. Players can ask for information in the village, but each time they ask, they need to do a Charisma ability check and GM will roll 3 dice. On a success, they can know the specific information of the monsters.

Here are some information, player characters can get:

These two monsters often go down the mountain to snatch food from the villagers.

The weak among the villagers who resisted them died, the strong will suffer serious injuries and become bedridden.

No one knows why they come to this mountain, but everyone is afraid of them. This is why they didn't dare to help in the battle just now.

There is a cave for monsters living by the lotus pond on the south side of the village.

These monsters always take away monks who appear nearby.

d. Search for monster lairs.

As the characters travel to the lotus pond, they hear the voice of a group of monsters chatting in the distance:

When you walk near the lotus pond, you find yourselves standing at the entrance of a cave.

Towering giant trees surrounds the lotus pond and the cave. Several huge rocks are pressed on the broken trunks, and animal bones are scattered outside the cave. Some wheat looted from the village is also scattered on the ground. The smell of decay is in the air, and crows hovers in the air. At this time, you hear noisy chats from the cave, a group of monster soldiers about to patrol the mountain. They are some young monster soldiers, leisurely walking out of the hole, and throwing stones at each other. What do you do?

Go kill the monsters!

This is a reckless decision. But Monkey King likes being reckless. He likes this decision very much. In the following combat, his offense and defense points will increase by 2 points and his order of combat is ahead of everyone, while the other characters' battle order is behind the soldiers and their defense will decrease by 1 point.

The characters decide to attack this group of soldiers, and the order of each soldiers is behind Monkey King but ahead of other characters:

Monkey King quickly jumps out from behind the stone and kills a soldier with his rob. The remaining four soldiers are very surprised. They quickly run to the cave. Two of the monsters lose their swords while running away. They can only draw out bows and arrows and jump to the entrance of the cave. they shoot arrows at the characters. Although their arrows are very inaccurate, they still prevent you from entering the cave. Two soldiers trembling and brandishing their big swords look at you nervously.

Due to the noisy battle outside the cave, in the third round of the battle, six more monster soldiers rush out of the cave and quickly form a two-by-three array. three archers stand at the end, three soldiers hold swords. Onleye and Tweye will also come out of the hole to join the battle on the seventh round of the battle. Both of them have recovered hit points at this time.

The battle takes place outside the cave. Onleye and Tweye don't want the player characters to know the secrets in the cave. When the two monsters feel that they can't stop the player characters, they will choose to blow up the cave. So when Onleye and Tweye are killed, the player cannot enter the hole. There are no monsters in the cave at this time.

Hide and Wait

Since the player character chooses to avoid the battle, they will not face the five monsters that go out on patrol. And it won't disturb the monsters in the cave. They could walk into the cave in a safe way. And in the ninth round of the battle, the five monsters will come back.

You hide behind the huge rocks near the cave, listening to the team of soldiers walking further and further until they disappear into the woods. You decided to head into the cave. There is only one path in the cave, and a few torches are inserted on the wall covered with moss. You can follow this light and dark path to the depths of the cave.

e. *Caught by Monsters.*

If the player characters are defeated in the village, they will all be taken to the monster's lair to wait to be killed. Monkey King is detained at Q3c, Zhu Bajie and Drifting are detained at Q3b, while Tang Sanzang was detained at Q3a with Lee:

You wake up in a cell, you found that you are locked up in different cells, the ground is covered with insects, and the walls are covered with large and small spider webs. The bones of the dead villagers are still in a pleading posture. A monk is also being held in Tang Sanzang's cell, and he hasn't awakened yet. He is wearing a robe which is in tatters, but he doesn't seem to be traumatized. You all notice that your weapon is missing.

2. *Monsters Lair*

This lair (see map 1.3) is just a simple cave, including two storage rooms and three cages. All the doors in the lair are unlocked. They assume that no human would be brave to come into the cave.

Q1. *The Lobby*

The first thing the monsters enter after returning from a trip is this hall, where the monster soldiers will report today's results to the two kings. The high platform in the middle of the hall is where the two kings rest. If characters don't attack the soldiers just outside the cave, then there are four monsters sleeping on the table at this time.

A huge hall appeared in front of you. On the high platform in the middle of the hall in front of you are two chairs made of stone. The chairs are covered by tiger skin and wolf skin respectively. It looked terrifying in the dim light. On the left-hand side is a stone table and four stone chairs. There is still leftover food left on the table.

Q2. *Storage Closet*

On the far left of the hall are two storage rooms. They are filled with a lot of food and tools. All looted weapons are also stored inside. The weapons that the soldiers usually use are also piled together. If characters don't attack the soldiers outside the cave, in each room, there is a monster soldier guarding the storage room.

Q3. *Monster Cell*

On the right side of the hall are three cells, which contain humans captured by monsters. Only the bones in the two cells remained in the posture of prayer before death. In Q3a, a monk called Lee is arrested. This person has practiced spells for many years and has survived to the present.

If player characters want to escape from the cell. They can try to break through the cell which requires a Strength ability check that GM need rolling 4 dice or crack the lock which requires a Tool check that GM will roll 2 dice.

a. Roleplaying Lee

Lee is unarmed. Due to the torture of the monsters, the clothes are ragged, but the mental state is still healthy. It is easy for him to believe the players characters.

One year ago, he fell into the trap of monsters carelessly, and with his own powerful strength, he persisted until now.

Seeing the humans in the nearby village being caught and eaten, he has been waiting for a chance for revenge. So after your player characters help him get out of the prison, he will choose to join them.

If the player asks why he was caught:

I am very eager to go to West Regions to learn more orthodox Buddhist knowledge. Therefore, I went to the Western Regions alone, but I was trapped by these monsters' traps and captured in this cave. I have practiced spells since I was a child, so they couldn't kill me. They thought that I was related to a group of monks who is going to West Regions to fetch Buddhist scriptures. But I don't know them, I have never heard of this group of people.

Q4. Onleye's Room

This room belongs to Onleye. If Onleye survives from the last battle, he is resting and recovering.

Onleye is good at using spears and double blades. He doesn't have the same strength as Tweye, but he can use a variety of spells and is better at using strategy.

Q5. Tweye's room

This room belongs to Tweye. He is stronger than Tweye, so he hasn't suffered too much damage and has recovered his health. Tweye uses two big knives, and both knives are immersed in poisonous liquid all year round. There is also a gourd around his waist, as long as he chants a spell,

he can suck the enemy into the gourd.

If Onleye died in the last battle, Tweye can only fight alone, but for revenge, his offense will rise by three points.

Q6. Secret Tunnel

This tunnel is hidden behind the walls of two rooms of Onleye and Tweye that can be found with a successful Tool ability check which GM will roll 3 dice. When the door is opened, the player can enter the secret tunnel, which leads directly to the final monster's lair.

Competing Lu's Quest

Returning to the Level-Top Mountain Village with two monsters' head marks the end of this introductory quest. All that remains is for the characters to collect their rewards.

Rewards

When the characters return to the village carrying the heads of the monsters, Lu Jin and Lu Ling has already waited with the villagers at the entrance of the village.

a. Plenty of food

If the characters kill two monsters successfully all villagers will be grateful to the characters and do their best to offer a great food for them. Player characters will become heroes in the village. They can live in the village and move freely in the village. Lu also provides all the food to the player character, but in this case, Lu's food will almost be eaten. if the players accept, they will get food for 14 days.

b. The Guide Ahead

Lu Jin and Lee both express their gratitude. Lee will company the players characters to the next village. If characters do not accept Lu Jin's food, Lu Jin will escort the player a distance and tell them the direction to the next village.

And in the face of temptation, all characters do not choose to accept it greedily. All characters get one spiritual point.

3. Level Advancement

All character will receive 1 spiritual point.

4. *Monster list*

Monster warrior

Hit Point: 10

Speed: 40 feet,

Strength: 1; Reaction: 1; Tool: 0; intelligence 0; charisma: 0

Special traits:

Fearless: The minions are not afraid of death and will fight for Onleye and Tweye to death.

Actions:

Swing a sword: The monster warrior wields the sword in his hand, which can cause damage to all enemies within a five-foot radius around it.

Shooting arrow: The monster warrior uses the bow and arrow on his back to attack the enemy. The range of the bow and arrow is 20 feet.

Onleye

Tweye and Onleye were originally two little wolves in Level-Top Mountain. During a predation process, Onleye was shot in the right eye with an arrow by the hunter, and his mother was also slaughtered by the hunters. Since then, two brothers started to hate human beings and swore to revenge for their mother.

Finally, after thousands of years of cultivation, they cultivated into two little monsters. And occasionally they met Golden and Silver Horn Kings and became their followers.

They hunted down all the hunters who came to the woods for their mother. Compared with Tweye, Onleye is relatively thin, but extremely smart. He doesn't like to kill opponents directly, but to torture its prey with tactics.

Tweye is proficient in the language of animals and humans. He is good at using double blades and will choose to hide its whereabouts in battle and assassinate opponents in the dark.

Hit Point: 12

Speed: 40 feet, fly 50 feet, swim 30 feet

Strength: 1; Reaction: 2; Tool: 2; intelligence 3; charisma: 1

Attribute: Water

Language: Human, Animals

Special traits:

Telepathy: When Tweye is attacked, Onleye is able to perceive his brother's situation and quickly arrive at the battlefield in three rounds.

Top Killer: When Onleye hide himself, player needs to succeed on a Reaction check and Onleye will roll 3 dice to avoid being found.

Actions:

Multiattack: Tweye makes two attacks when using weapons.

Assassination: If Onleye is not found, its next attack will directly cause three points of damage and appear himself.

Tweye

Tweye and Onleye were originally two little wolves in Level-Top Mountain. During a predation process, Onleye was shot in the right eye with an arrow by the hunter, and his mother was also slaughtered by the hunters. Since then, two brothers started to hate human beings and swore to revenge for their mother.

Finally, after thousands of years of cultivation, they cultivated into two little monsters. And occasionally they met Golden and Silver Horn Kings and became their followers.

They hunted down all the hunters who came to the woods for their mother. He also obeyed the orders of the Golden Horn King and arrested all the monks he met.

Tweye is proficient in the language of animals and humans. The red gourd pinned to his waist is a magic weapon made by the Golden Horn King based on his own props.

Hit Point: 15

Speed: 40 feet, fly 50 feet, swim 30 feet

Strength: 2; Reaction: 0; Tool: 1; intelligence 3; charisma: 1

Attribute: fire

Language: Human, Animals

Special traits:

Telepathy: When Onleye is attacked, Tweye is able to perceive his brother's situation and quickly arrive at the battlefield in three rounds.

Wolf claw: When Tweye uses its claws to scratch a creature, it causes laceration and deals an extra 1 damage to it.

Weapon master: When Tweye uses weapons, he can deal with any situation flexibly. In the round of attack with a weapon, defense point increases by 2.

Actions:

Multiattack: Tweye makes two attacks when using weapons.

Red Gourd: Using Red Gourd as a magic weapon, Tweye can reduce the defense of any target by 3 points in this round.