

Confucius

A board game for 3 to 5 players from 12 years upwards

WELCOME TO CHINA IN THE MING DYNASTY

Confucius is set in imperial China during the Ming dynasty, which lasted from the mid 14th to the mid 17th century. It was a period of restoration and reconstruction after the peasant rebellions that had overthrown the previous Mongol rulers of China. The government was re-established by the Emperor Hongwu under a new legal code stressing family relations and based on Confucian ideas. Using a vast standing army, areas of China under Mongol control and many adjoining territories were brought into the Empire through military conquest. The Empire also expanded its knowledge of the world through Zheng He's great oceanic voyages that may have reached as far as the Americas.



*It was considered unlucky to have an odd number of retainers in the retinue. **






In Confucius each player represents a Chinese family trying to extend its power in the government, the army and the navy through the subtle application of political and social influence, rather than through direct conflict. Money, the manipulation of government officials and the strategic giving of gifts so that rivals are obliged to help your family; these will be your weapons.

GAME COMPONENTS CHECKLIST

1 Confucius board	
30 Gift cards	One set of 6 coloured cards for each player
75 Markers	15 wooden barrels for each player
30 Army pieces	6 wooden pawns for each player
25 Action cubes	5 wooden cubes for each player
5 Play aids	Double sided cards of game information
24 Official tiles	Rectangular tiles (thick card with picture of official's head and coins)
6 Candidate official tiles	Rectangular tiles (thick card with picture of official's head and rectangle containing marker)
1 Confucius deck	66 cards illustrated with coins and licences
10 Emperor's Reward cards	Cards with emperor on the back
5 Foreign Lands tiles	Rectangular tiles (thick card with outline of country, coins and boxes)
25 Junks	Wooden ships (blue)
9 Great Wall pieces	Square chits (thick card with picture of part of the Great Wall)
17 Victory point chits	10 Ministry chits (green) with values: 4455667788; 7 Distant Land chits (blue) with values: 2233444
Turn marker	Grey wooden cube
This rulebook	

*Artistic notes in blue throughout

CONTENTS

WELCOME TO CHINA IN THE MING DYNASTY	1
GAME COMPONENTS CHECKLIST	1
OVERVIEW OF CONFUCIUS	3
SETTING UP THE GAME	4
Advanced Game	4
DESCRIPTION OF COMPONENTS	6
Gifts	6
Players' pieces	6
Junks	7
Turn Marker	7
Official tiles	7
Foreign Lands tiles	7
Confucius deck	8
Emperor's Reward cards	8
Great Wall pieces	8
Victory Point chits	8
SEQUENCE OF PLAY	9
 Count Gifts Phase	9
 Choose Chief Minister Phase	9
 Actions Phase	9
Actions in the Actions Box	10
Gift obligations	12
How to cancel gifts	13
Actions using Emperor's Reward cards	14
 Court Phase	15
 End of Round Phase	19
ENDING THE GAME	19
SCORING AND WINNING	20
During the game	20
At the end of the game	20
THE ADMIRAL VARIATION	20
A MINISTRY RESOLUTION EXAMPLE	21
CONFUCIUS – HISTORICAL NOTE: MING CHINA AND THE CONFUCIAN STATE	22
PLAYING CONFUCIUS: TIPS FOR NEW PLAYERS	23
INDEX	24
CREDITS	24

OVERVIEW OF CONFUCIUS

Your aim in Confucius is to dominate the Imperial Court of Ming China by gaining more victory points than your rivals. You earn victory points during the game by controlling ministries, discovering Distant Lands and conquering Foreign Lands. At the end of the game you may acquire extra points by appointment as Chief Minister, Admiral or General.

The game usually has between 7 and 9 rounds. During each round you will take 3, 4 or 5 actions to:

- ☞ Give gifts to your rivals to set up obligations restricting what they can do to hinder your plans;
- ☞ Gain resources in the form of money and licences for junks and armies;
- ☞ Spend your resources to obtain gifts, armies and junks, and to bribe officials, so that you can control the Ministries of the Army, Public Works and Finance;
- ☞ Discover Distant Lands;
- ☞ Conquer Foreign Lands.

You increase your support in the ministries by paying cash to bribe officials. Once all officials in a ministry have been bribed, control of the ministry is determined, and players with relatively weak influence have to throw their weight behind one of the other players. The two players with most influence in each ministry earn victory points through appointment as Minister and Secretary.

Your main resources come from Confucius cards, which provide you with both cash and licences. You obtain them through taxation or commercial income actions. You need both cash and licences to earn victory points from oceanic voyages of discovery and the invasion of foreign territories.

Building ocean-going junks requires cash; setting sail on voyages needs a licence for each junk. The first player to discover each Distant Land earns victory points, and all players who carry out a

successful voyage receive an Emperor's Reward card, which provides a bonus action.

If you want to recruit armies, you must pay licences, while deploying them into the field will cost you cash. Invasions of Foreign Lands can be carried out in partnership with other players, but must be completed within a time limit or they will fail. Successful invasions will earn you victory points, and even an unsuccessful invasion might get you an Emperor's Reward card.

You can supplement your influence in the ministries by nominating a loyal family member to a civil service post, but appointment is on merit, and students must compete in the Imperial Examinations. If there are two students for the Imperial Examinations at the end of a round, each player is obliged to pay to tutor one or other of the students. The student with most money spent on tutoring is appointed to a position in one of the ministries.

During the game the giving and receiving of gifts is a vital political and social activity. Besides determining the number of actions that each player has in the next round, the network of gifts affects the bribery of officials, the tutoring of students for the Imperial Examinations and the control of ministries. Some activities allow you to fulfil your obligations from receiving a gift, thereby cancelling its effect. Expensive gifts can even be used to petition the Emperor himself to carry out your wishes in his name (in the advanced game only).

At the end of the game you may be appointed to the high offices of Chief Minister, Admiral or General, which grants you extra victory points. Finally all victory points are totted up, and the winner is the player with the most points.

Before playing a full game we suggest that at least one player reads through the whole rule book, concentrating on the detailed description of how to play in the Sequence of Play section (page 9). All new players should read this Overview section and refer to the Play Aid. We recommend that players then run through two or three rounds, referring to the detailed rules to familiarise everyone with the game quickly.

SETTING UP THE GAME

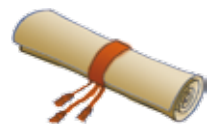
See the diagram on the next page.

1. Place the Confucius board in the centre of the table, so that all players can reach it easily.
2. Put the junks, the Great Wall tiles and the turn marker beside the game board.
3. Shuffle the Emperor's Reward cards and put them next to the board face down in a single stack.
4. Mix the 10 green victory point chits face down. For each ministry pick 2 of these chits at random. Put the highest value chit face up in the Minister space in the ministry and the other one in the Secretary space. Put the 4 unused chits back in the game box; they will not be needed for this game. Similarly mix the 7 blue victory point chits face down and place 1 chit face up in each Distant Land space. Put the 2 unused chits back in the game box.
5. Shuffle the 5 Foreign Lands tiles and put 1 face up in each of the tile spaces in the Foreign Lands Box. Put the remaining 2 tiles back in the game box; they will not be needed for this game.
6. Put the 3 candidate official tiles marked 'Any Ministry' face down in the candidate officials space in the Imperial Examinations Box. The order of these tiles doesn't matter, because they each have the same effect. Take the 3 candidate official tiles marked Bingbu, Hubu and Gongbu. Shuffle them and place them face down on top of the first 3 tiles. Turn up the top tile; this will be the first candidate official used in the Imperial Examinations.
7. Mix the 24 official tiles face down. For each ministry take 3 official tiles at random and put them face up in spaces 3, 4 and 5 in the ministry box. Stack the rest of the official tiles face down next to the board.
8. Give each player a Play Aid for reference.
9. Give each player a 1 cash, a 2 cash and a 3 cash Confucius card, then shuffle the rest of the Confucius deck thoroughly and place it face down next to the board, leaving enough room for a discard pile.
10. Give each player a set of 6 gifts, 15 markers, 6 army pieces and 5 action cubes of the same colour. Each player should then place the gifts with coins from 2 to 6 on them face down in their playing area; they are not yet available and cannot be played till purchased. Each player puts the gift with 1 coin (the wall-hanging) face up to show that it is available to be played; it does not have to be purchased. Put a marker (wooden barrel) for each player on the '0' space on the Score Track.

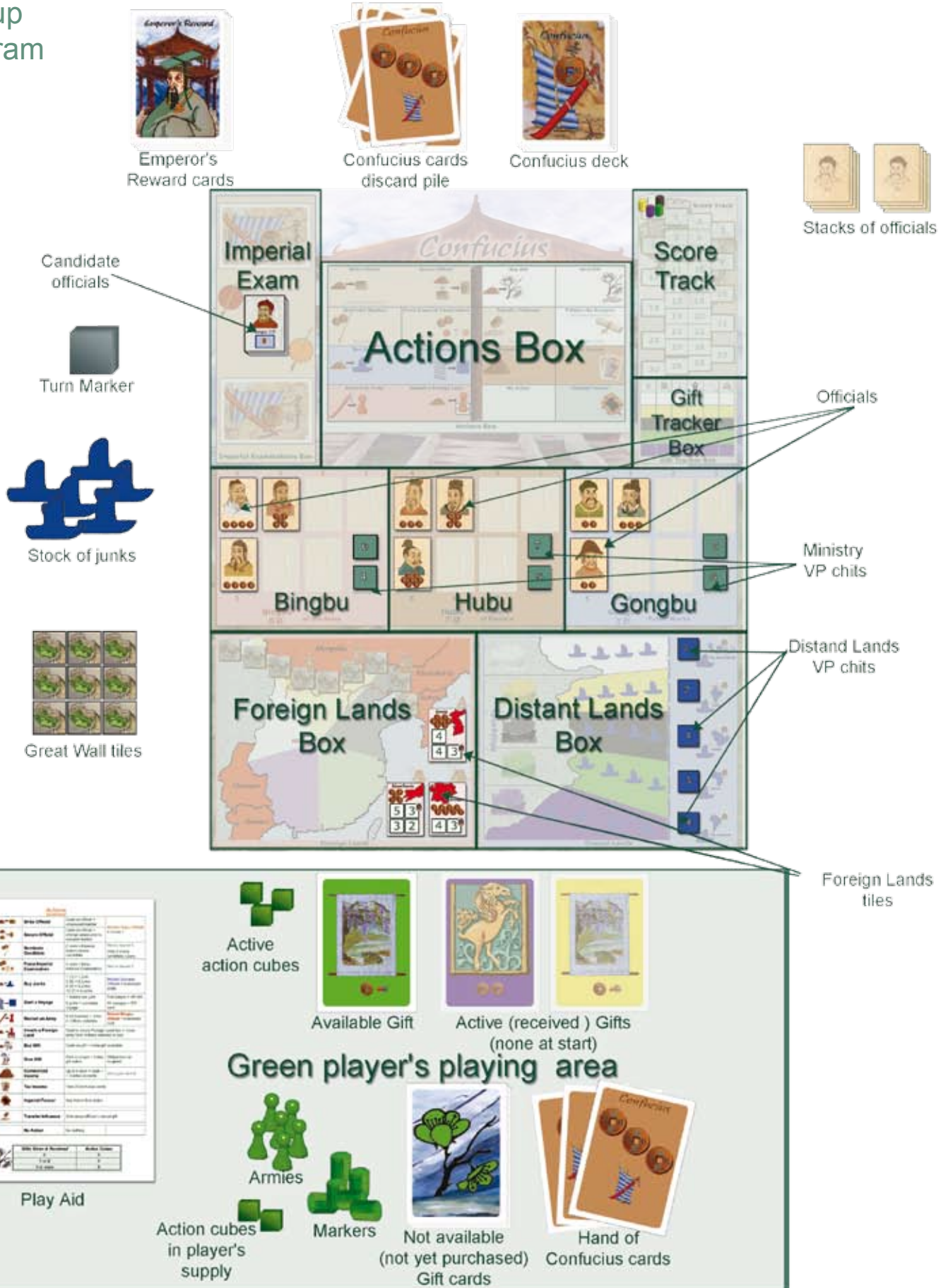
Advanced Game

If players have not experienced *Confucius* before, we recommend that you ignore all references to Petitioning the Emperor; this action is only used in the advanced game.

Once players have played *Confucius* at least once, the Petition the Emperor rules should be added. This is the only difference between the basic game and the advanced game.



Set up diagram



We recommend that you put your active action cubes for the round, available gifts and received gifts next to the board, so all players can see them. Other players should know how many Confucius cards you have, but not which ones they are. The remainder of your playing pieces should be kept away from the board to avoid confusion.

DESCRIPTION OF COMPONENTS

Gifts

Each player has a set of 6 gifts (cards with a background of the player's colour). The number of coins on the card is the value of the gift, and for the gifts worth 2 to 6 this is also the purchase cost. The gift with 1 coin is available at the start of the game without having to spend an action or money to buy it. The other gifts must be purchased before they can be used.

A gift can be in one of these states.

- ☞ **Not available:** not yet bought, so not in play. Store these face down in a pile in your playing area. You can look at your 'not available' gifts at any time.
- ☞ **Available:** bought, so can be given to another player. Keep available gifts face up in front of the owning player.
- ☞ **Active:** given to another player and not cancelled; also called 'given' or 'received'. Keep active gifts face up in front of the recipient. Whenever you give a gift, put one of your markers in the Gift Tracker Box. The top row shows the value of the gift, the other rows are the colours of the players.
- ☞ **Cancelled:** given to another player, then subsequently removed from the game. Whenever a gift you have given is cancelled, remove your marker from the Gift Tracker Box.

The giving and receiving of gifts has several advantages. The total of gifts given and received determines how many action cubes you will be able to use in the Actions Phase (see page 9). If you have given a gift to a rival player, the recipient is restricted in what he or she can do against you, and in some circumstances that player is obliged to help you (see page 12).

Players are not allowed to exchange or trade gifts, Confucius cards, markers or any other components, except as explained in the rules. However, players can negotiate informally about actions.

Players' pieces

MARKERS

These markers are used to show your influence on officials, appointment as Minister or Secretary in a ministry, successful voyages to Distant Lands, students in the Imperial Examination, gifts you have given in the Gift Tracker Box and victory points on the Score Track. You start the game with 15 markers. This is not a limit; in the unlikely event that you run out, use an alternative.

ACTION CUBES

Using action cubes is the main way that you take actions in the game. You use between 3 and 5 each Actions Phase.

ARMY PIECES

Each player has 6 army pieces that can be used for foreign invasions. Once you have placed all 6, you cannot place more armies.



Gift cards

The particular bird shown on the coat and the quality of stitching indicated the rank of the official.



Markers



Action cubes



Army pieces

Junks

There is a common supply of junks. You use these whenever you buy junks or sail on voyages of discovery. If all 25 junks are in play, no more can be purchased until some are returned to the supply.

Turn Marker

Used in the Actions Phase to keep track of whose turn it is. Using this marker becomes important later in the game, when players have different numbers of action cubes and Emperor's Reward cards.

Official tiles

There are 24 official tiles. These are placed face up with the coins showing in the ministries as instructed in the Set Up and Sequence of Play sections. They have a number of coins printed on them, which shows the cost to bribe that official. An official can be:

- ☞ Unbribed - no marker on it;
- ☞ Bribed, but unsecured - a marker on its side. An unsecured official can be taken by another player through a Bribery Emperor's Reward card action, winning an Imperial Examination or by petitioning the Emperor.
- ☞ Bribed and secured - a marker on its end. A secured official cannot be taken by another player.

There are also 6 candidate officials, who only come into play as a result of Imperial Examinations. The marker on a candidate official is always placed on its end to show the candidate official is secured.

A bribed official gives you discounts dependent on the official's ministry (see page 10).

INFLUENCE AND SENIORITY

A player has influence in each ministry equal to the number of officials he or she has bribed in that ministry.

Each official has a seniority indicated by the number next to his space on the board. The most senior official is number 1 (highest seniority); the most junior is number 7 (lowest seniority). Seniority is used during the Ministry Resolution Step, if two or more players have equal influence (see page 17).

Foreign Lands tiles

These tiles show the foreign lands that players can invade. Each one has from 2 to 4 army boxes, each of which can be occupied by 1 army piece. The coins indicate the cost of deploying an army from the military colonies to the Foreign Land tile.



Junks



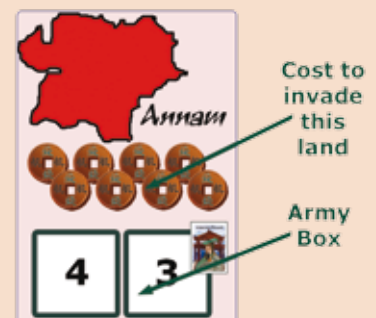
Turn Marker



Official tile



Candidate Official tile



Foreign Land Tile

Confucius deck

The Confucius deck consists of 66 cards, 22 each of three types: 1 coin and 3 licences, 3 coins and 1 licence, 2 coins and 2 licences. You discard Confucius cards to pay for things, such as junks and armies, using each card as either cash (a number of coins) or licences.

When the end of the Confucius deck is reached, shuffle the discard pile to make a new draw deck.

No change is ever given for Confucius cards. You may voluntarily pay more than the minimum required amount.

Emperor's Reward cards

You receive one of these bonus cards as a result of a successful voyage or from specific Foreign Land tile boxes when an invasion is resolved. Each card gives you an extra action.

There are 10 Emperor's Reward cards. Once they have all been taken, no more are available.

Great Wall pieces

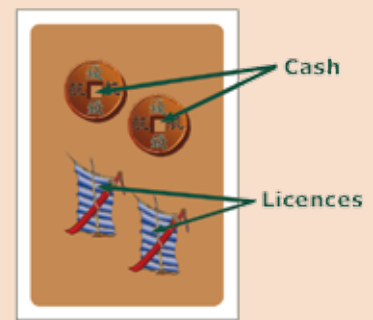
One Great Wall piece is placed on the Great Wall Track at the end of each round. The Great Wall Track acts as a timer for the game, which ends in the End of Round Phase once the ninth Great Wall piece has been placed, unless one of the other game end triggers has happened earlier.

Victory Point chits

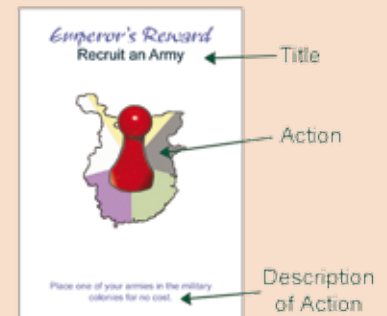
Green victory point chits are placed during set up in the ministries, blue ones in the Distant Lands. The ministry chits range from 4 to 8, the Distant Land chits from 2 to 4. When you win one of these chits, take it and place it in your playing area.

You can also score victory points by successfully invading foreign lands and by appointment as Chief Minister, Admiral or General at the end of the game.

Whenever a player scores victory points, adjust the player's marker on the score track.



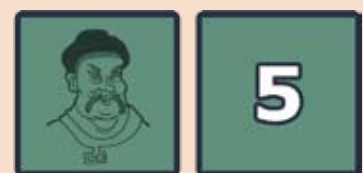
Confucius cards



Emperor's Reward cards



Great Wall pieces



Ministry Victory Point chits



Distant Land Victory Point chits

SEQUENCE OF PLAY

Each round of Confucius follows a set sequence of play summarised here and given in detail below:

Count Gifts Phase: determine how many action cubes each player has for the Actions Phase, which is dependent on the number of gifts given and received.

Choose Chief Minister Phase: the previous Chief Minister chooses a new Chief Minister.

Actions Phase: players take it in turns to take one action until all players have passed.

Court Phase: the next part of the Great Wall is built, then the Imperial Examinations may be held, ministries may be resolved and the success or failure of invasions decided.

End of Round Phase: more officials are placed in ministries, players discard down to 4 Confucius cards in hand and get back their action cubes.

Count Gifts Phase

Count the gifts that each player has both given and received. You can work this out easily from the Gift Tracker Box on the board. First check that the markers in the Box are correct by looking at the active gifts in front of each player. Then tot up the number of your coloured markers in the Box and add in the number of markers in your row.

Your total of gifts given and received determines how many action cubes you will be able to use in the Actions Phase. These are called your 'active action cubes'.

Gifts given and received ...	Active action cubes ...
0	3
1 or 2	4
3 or more	5

Choose Chief Minister Phase

In round 1 choose the Chief Minister randomly. In rounds after the first round the player who was the previous Chief Minister must choose any other player as the Chief Minister for the new round.

The new Chief Minister places one of his or her active action cubes on the Imperial Favour space in the Actions Box.

Actions Phase

Actions are indicated in the spaces of the Actions Box or on Emperor's Reward cards.

Players take it in turns to perform one action, continuing clockwise several times round the table until all players have finished their actions and passed. The player to the left of the new Chief Minister takes the turn marker and the first action. Once all players have completed their actions and passed, the Chief Minister takes the Imperial Favour action, which is always the last action of the round.

Game example

We follow a typical game as an illustration of the rules.

Example - Count Gifts in round 1

Each player has given and received no gifts, so gets 3 active action cubes.

Example - Count Gifts

Black has given 1 gift and received none, so will get 4 action cubes.

Green has given 2 gifts and received 2 for a total of 4, so will get 5 action cubes.

Purple has given 1 gift and received 1 for a total of 2, so will get 4 action cubes.

White has neither given nor received a gift, so will get 3 action cubes.

Yellow has given 1 gift and received 2 for a total of 3, so will get 5 action cubes.

Example - Choose Chief Minister

White was the Chief Minister in the previous round and chooses Black to be the new Chief Minister. Black places one of his active action cubes in the Imperial Favour space in the Actions Box.

On your turn, if you have at least one unused active action cube, you must take an action, either from those shown in the Actions Box or using an Emperor's Reward card. If you have no active action cubes left, you may take an action using an Emperor's Reward card, take the Transfer Influence action (which costs no action cubes) or pass. Once you have passed, you may not take further actions in this Actions Phase, with the exception of the Chief Minister performing the Imperial Favour action.

After you have taken an action or passed, give the turn marker to the next player to take an action, usually the player to your left. Players who have passed will be skipped. Continue until all players have passed.

ACTIONS IN THE ACTIONS BOX

For most actions in the Actions Box, the first time in the Phase that you take the action, you place one active action cube into the action space, then carry out the action. If you choose the same action for a second or third time in the same Phase, then you must place two cubes into the action space to take that action again. Other players' choices do not affect the number of cubes you have to place. Action spaces that do not follow this rule are described in the specific section for that action.

Paired actions

There are three sets of paired actions: Bribe Official and Secure Official, Buy Junks and Start a Voyage, Recruit an Army and Invade a Foreign Land. If you have already taken one action from a pair in this Phase, and in the same Phase you want to repeat the action for a second or third time, or to take the other action in the pair, you must play two cubes.

Bribe Official

This action is paired with the Secure Official action. Each official can only have one marker on it except during the Ministry Resolution Phase.

Pay the cash shown on the official tile to place one of your markers on the official. Place your marker on its side to show it is unsecured. If you have one or more bribed officials in Hubu, reduce the cost by 1.

An unsecured official can be taken by another player through a Bribery Emperor's Reward card action, winning an Imperial Examination or by petitioning the Emperor.

DISCOUNTS

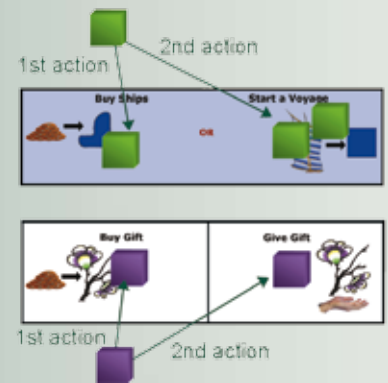
A bribed official gives you discounts dependent on the official's ministry. If you have one or more bribed officials, you gain discounts as follows.

- ☞ In Bingbu - armies cost 4 licences to recruit instead of 6.
- ☞ In Gongbu - junks cost the cash indicated in this table:

Number of junks	Normal cost	Discount cost
1	1	1
2	3	2
3	6	4
4	10	7

- ☞ In Hubu - the Bribe Official, Secure Official and Emperor's Reward card Bribery actions cost 1 cash less.

Example of actions using action cubes



Green must place two cubes for the 2nd action, because he has already carried out this paired action in this phase. Purple pays one cube per action, because Buy Gift and Give Gift are not paired actions. However, if Purple had taken the Buy Gift action again as her second action, this would have cost her two cubes to take it the second time.

Example of actions

Green is sitting to the left of Black (Chief Minister), so starts the Actions Phase. He places a green action cube in the Buy Gift space, pays 3 cash and turns up his 3 value gift.

Purple has no Confucius cards, so she places a purple cube in the Tax Income space and takes 2 Confucius cards.

White places a white cube in the Bribe Official space, paying 2 cash to place a marker on an official in Bingbu. He plans to give away his influence on this official, so that he can cancel Purple's gift, which is preventing him from extending his influence in Gongbu.

Yellow puts a yellow cube in the Buy Junks / Start a Voyage space and buys 3 junks, giving her a total of 5. She pays 6 cash and puts the junks in the yellow shipyard.

Black also chooses the Bribe Official action and places a black cube in the Bribe Official space. He pays 4 cash to bribe an official in Gongbu and places a black marker on the official.

Secure Official

This action is paired with the Bribe Official action.

Pay the cash shown on an official tile that already has your unsecured marker on it to secure the official. Turn your marker onto its end to show it is a secured official. If you have one or more bribed officials in Hubu, reduce the cost by 1.

A secured official cannot be taken by another player. It can only be affected by the Petition the Emperor action with the 4 value gift.

Nominate Student

This action cannot be played in the first round of the game. You cannot take this action if both student spaces in the Imperial Examinations Box are already occupied, or if you already have a marker in a student space.

Pay 2 cash to place one of your markers on an empty student space in the Imperial Examinations Box.

Force Imperial Examination

This action cannot be played in the first round of the game.

Pay 2 cash to force an Imperial Examination (see page 15) to happen in the Court Phase of this round.

Buy Junks

This action is paired with the Start a Voyage action.

Pay cash to buy from 1 to 4 junks. Take the junks from the common supply and place them in the shipyard of your colour. The discount costs apply if you have one or more bribed officials in Gongbu.

Number of junks	Normal cost	Discount cost
1	1	1
2	3	2
3	6	4
4	10	7

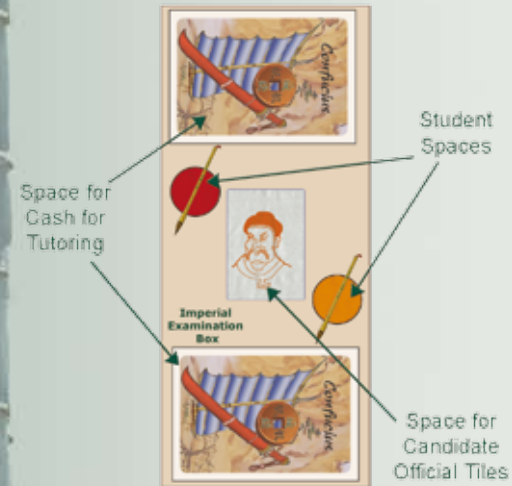
Start a Voyage

This action is paired with the Buy Junks action.

Start a voyage with 1 or more of the junks in your shipyard. Pay 1 licence per junk setting sail. Move the junks from your shipyard into the ocean spaces of your colour.

Every fifth junk from your shipyard completes a voyage of discovery by reaching a different Distant Land. When you have completed a voyage, place one of your markers in your choice of Distant Land and return all 5 junks to the common supply. Junks which are not part of a complete voyage to a Distant Land remain in the ocean spaces; you can use them in a subsequent action to complete another voyage. You may complete more than one voyage for one voyaging action.

The first player to reach each Distant Land takes its chit and receives the victory points indicated on it. As long as there are cards in the



Imperial Examinations box

Example - Start a Voyage

Yellow starts a voyage with 6 junks, paying 6 licences. She returns 5 of the junks to stock and places a yellow marker in the Africa space. She places the 6th junk in a yellow ocean space.

She receives the victory points chit for reaching Africa first and an Emperor's Reward card for the completed voyage.

Later, Yellow buys 4 more junks. When she sets sail on another voyage, she places them with her remaining 1 from the previous voyage in the ocean space and claims India. She removes the 5 junks to stock and puts a yellow marker on the India space. She takes the victory points chit for India and a second Emperor's Reward card. She is well on the way to becoming the Admiral, as each of her markers in the Distant Lands counts as 5 junks on voyages.

Emperor's Reward card stack, each time you reach a Distant Land, you receive an Emperor's Reward card. You can only carry out one voyage to each Distant Land. You can voyage to Distant Lands discovered by other players and receive an Emperor's Reward card, as long as Emperor's Reward cards remain available, but only the first player to reach each Distant Land will gain the victory points.

Recruit an Army

This action is paired with the Invade a Foreign Land action.

Pay 6 licences to place one of your armies from your stock into the military colonies space with your colour. One action recruits one army. Each player may recruit a maximum of 6 armies.

If you have one or more bribed officials in Bingbu, you pay 4 licences to recruit an army instead of 6.

Invade a Foreign Land

This action is paired with the Recruit an Army action.

Pay cash as indicated on a Foreign Land tile to move one of your armies from the military colonies to an empty box on that tile. One action moves one army. Each box can be occupied by only one army, but more than one player can supply armies to a single invasion (see page 18).

Buy Gift

Choose any one of your 'not available' gifts and pay the cash shown on it to turn it into an 'available' gift. Show that it is available by placing it face up in your playing area.

Give Gift

Choose one of your 'available' gifts and place it in front of another player. This makes it an 'active' gift, and you should add one of your markers to the square on the Gift Tracker Box that corresponds to the value of the gift and the recipient's colour. If that player already has an active gift from you, remove the old gift from the game.

GIFT OBLIGATIONS

If a player has an active gift from you, that player is restricted, as follows:

1. The recipient cannot give you a gift of inferior value; a gift of the same value is acceptable and sets up mutual obligations between you and that player. If you receive a superior value gift from someone who has an active gift from you, then the inferior value gift is cancelled; remove the gift from the game and take the marker off the Gift Tracker Box. The superior value gift is now active and sets up an obligation between you and the new giver; add that player's marker to the appropriate space on the Gift Tracker Box.
2. If you have at least one bribed official in a ministry, and the recipient's influence in that ministry already equals or exceeds yours, then the recipient cannot bribe more officials in that ministry. 'Influence' is the number of bribed officials; seniority is not relevant here.
3. If you have a student in the Imperial Examination (see page 15), then the recipient must aid your student with at least one Confucius card. If the recipient has a gift from players controlling both students, then the recipient must aid the player who gave the highest value gift. If the gift values are equal, then the recipient must choose between the players involved. The recipient may cancel the gift by paying an extra two Confucius cards to aid the giver's student; remove the gift from the game and take the marker off the Gift Tracker Box.
4. If the recipient has to give up influence during a Ministry Resolution (see page 17), and you have influence in that ministry, then the influence must be supplied to you. If the recipient has gifts from two or more players with influence in the ministry, then the recipient must supply the influence to the player with the highest value gift; if the gift values are equal, then the recipient must choose between the players involved in the tie. If the recipient has given up influence in this way, the gift is cancelled; remove the gift from the game and take the marker off the Gift Tracker Box.

HOW TO CANCEL GIFTS

You can cancel a gift you have received in the following ways:

1. **Give a superior value gift:** The inferior value gift is removed from the game. The superior gift sets up an obligation between you and the other player.
2. **Use the Transfer Influence action in an unresolved ministry in favour of the giver:** The gift is removed from the game. Note that the Transfer Influence action does not require payment of action cubes, but is still the player's action on his or her turn in the Actions Phase.
3. **Pay two extra Confucius cards (total of three) to tutor a student in the Imperial Examinations.** Regardless of the success of the supported student, the gift is removed from the game.
4. **Temporarily give influence to the giver during Ministry Resolution.**

When you cancel a gift, remember to remove the marker from the Gift Tracker Box.

Transfer Influence

This action does not cost any action cubes.

Replace your marker on an official in an unresolved ministry with the marker of another player (taken from that player's supply), leaving its status (secured or unsecured) the same. This action cancels an active gift from the other player; remove the gift from the game and take the marker off the Gift Tracker Box.

Petition the Emperor

Advanced game only. This action cannot be taken in the basic game.

You must play two action cubes to take this action.

Remove from the game one of your available gifts with a value of at least 2. The effect of this action depends on the gift used up:

 Ceramic tile - value 2: Re-assign ownership of junks.	<i>Remove your 2 value available gift from the game:</i> Move 2 junks from any player's shipyard to any other player's shipyard, including your own. Does not affect junks in ocean spaces.
 Vase - value 3: Replace a student.	<i>Remove your 3 value available gift from the game:</i> Remove your choice of marker from a student space in the Imperial Examinations Box and put one of your own markers in its place. If you already have a student, this will result in your family having both students.
 Coat - value 4: Swap officials.	<i>Remove your 4 value available gift from the game:</i> Swap an official tile with your marker on it with another official tile of equal or lower seniority (7 is lowest), taking any markers with them. Both officials must be in unresolved ministries and can be from the same or different ones. This action affects all types of official (ordinary officials, candidate officials, unbribed, bribed and secured officials).
 Necklace - value 5: Re-deploy army.	<i>Remove your 5 value available gift from the game:</i> Move any single army piece on an unresolved Foreign Land to another box on any unresolved Foreign Land tile, including the one it is currently on.
 Junk - value 6: Replace influence.	<i>Remove your 6 value available gift from the game:</i> Replace any unsecured marker on an official with a secured marker from any player's supply, including your own.

Commercial Income

Each player can take this action only once per round.

Pay up to 4 cash. Take cards from the Confucius deck equal to the number of cash paid plus 1.

Tax Income

Take 2 cards from the Confucius deck.

No Action

This always costs only one cube.

Do nothing.

Imperial Favour

Only the Chief Minister takes this action. The Chief Minister places an active action cube in this space in the Choose Chief Minister Phase, but the action happens at the end of the Actions Phase. Players do not place action cubes in this space during the Actions Phase.

Before taking the Imperial Favour action, the Chief Minister should check that all players have completed any other actions, then take the turn marker.

As the last action of the phase the Chief Minister takes any action in the Actions Box, including one already taken this round, ignoring any action cube costs. All other restrictions on the actions apply.

ACTIONS USING EMPEROR'S REWARD CARDS

Taking an action using an Emperor's Reward card is optional and does not cost action cubes. You may play an Emperor's Reward card action instead of passing or taking an Actions Box action, whenever it is your turn in the Actions Phase. To take an Emperor's Reward card action, do what it says on the card, then put it back in the game box; it cannot be re-used. Finally, pass on the turn marker.

Any number of Emperor's Reward cards can be used during an Actions Phase, each one counting as a separate action. You can keep the cards between rounds. They do not count against your hand limit of Confucius cards.

Bribery

Gift obligations do not apply to this action.

You may bribe an official in the ministry named on the card or, if that ministry has been resolved, in any unresolved ministry.

EITHER: Place one of your markers from your supply on its side (unsecured) on an unbribed official;

OR: Choose an unsecured official owned by another player and pay the cash shown on the tile. If you have one or more bribed officials in Hubu, reduce the cost by 1. Remove the other player's marker and replace it with one of yours from your supply, on its side to show it is unsecured.

Later in the Actions Phase...

Yellow chooses the Start a Voyage action, but must pay 2 action cubes, because she had already bought junks earlier in this phase.

Purple drew only 1 value cash cards on her Tax Income action, so she carries out the Commercial Income action; she only has to pay 1 Action cube, because this is a separate action from getting taxes; also note that each player can only get commercial income once per round.

Example - Imperial Favour

Once all players have passed, Black (as Chief Minister) gets to play the Imperial Favour action. He chooses to bribe another official; normally this would cost 2 action cubes, because he bribed an official earlier this round but the Imperial Favour action can be used to carry out a single cube or double cube action. He pays the required cash and places his marker on the official.



Gift

Choose one of your 'not available' gifts and turn it into an 'available' gift for no cost. Show that it is available by placing it face up in your play area.



Extra Action

Take any Actions Box action except the Imperial Favour action without playing any action cubes. This can be a 0, 1 or 2 cube action and can be a repeat of a previous action. All other restrictions on the actions apply.



Cash

Take 4 cards from the Confucius deck.



Recruit an Army

Place one of your armies in the military colonies for no cost.



Emperor Insulted!

A minor foreign ruler has insulted the Emperor. You can avenge him by conquering his lands.

Place this card face up in your playing area and move one of your armies from the military colonies to the card for no cost. You gain 2 victory points.



Court Phase

The Court Phase has four steps, which are played strictly in this order:

- ☞ Build the Great Wall
- ☞ Imperial Examination
- ☞ Ministry Resolution
- ☞ Invasions

The last three steps will only happen if specific triggering events have occurred in the game. If the triggering event has not occurred, skip that step.

BUILD THE GREAT WALL STEP

Place a Great Wall piece on the leftmost empty position on the Great Wall Track. The Great Wall Track acts as a timer for the game, which ends in the End of Round Phase once the ninth Great Wall piece has been placed, unless one of the other game end triggers has happened earlier.

IMPERIAL EXAMINATION STEP

The Imperial Examination Step happens only if either or both of these trigger events has occurred during the Actions Phase:

- ☞ *Both student spaces are occupied.*
- ☞ *A player has played the 'Force Imperial Examination' action.*

The game ends once all the candidate officials have been used.

If the student spaces are occupied by markers from different players, then all players must pay to tutor one or other of the students if possible. Starting with the Chief Minister and going once round the table clockwise, each player who has at least one Confucius card must choose one student and play one or more Confucius cards to tutor that student. Place the Confucius cards face down in the space next to the student.

Players with no Confucius cards cannot aid either student.

Each player tutors one student only.

If you have received a gift from a player with a student and you have any Confucius cards, then you must play at least one Confucius card to tutor that student. You may play an additional two Confucius cards to tutor that student, in order to cancel the gift; remove it from the game and take the marker off the Gift Tracker Box.

If you have received gifts from both players with students and you have any Confucius cards, you must pay to tutor the one from which you have received the most valuable gift. If gifts are of equal value, you may choose either student.

Winning the Imperial Examination

If there are students from different players, the winner is the player whose student has received the most cash. If cash for tutoring is equal, then the player with the student on the red space wins.

If only one student space is occupied, or both students are from the same player, then no Confucius cards are played (even to cancel a gift), and that player wins the Examination.

The winner takes the candidate official tile and places it into the ministry indicated on the tile. He puts his marker on top, on its end to show that it is a secured official. The candidate official tile must be placed in any available empty space in the indicated ministry if possible. If no empty space is available, then the candidate official can replace any unbribed or unsecured official in the indicated ministry; remove the old official from the game and return any marker to the owning player.

If the indicated ministry has been resolved or it contains only secured officials, the winner can replace any unbribed or unsecured official in any unresolved ministry.

In the unlikely event that all officials in all ministries are secured, then the winner cannot place the candidate official, and it is removed from the game.

Gift obligations do **not** restrict the placement of candidate officials.

All cash used for tutoring is discarded. Return the losing student's marker to the owning player's supply.

Finally, turn up the next candidate official tile in the stack. If the ministry indicated on the tile has already been resolved, remove the tile from the game and turn up the next one.

Note that the Imperial Examination Step may trigger a Ministry Resolution.

If the last candidate official tile has been won, the game ends at the end of this round.

Example - Imperial Examination

Yellow and White have students for the Gongbu candidate official.

Black has received a gift from White, so he must aid White. He places a 1 cash card face down next to White's student.

Green hasn't received a gift from anyone and has no Confucius cards, so he cannot aid either student.

Purple has no gifts, but she has only 1 card, and it is a 3 cash. She chooses to give it to Yellow's student.

White has gifts, but not from Yellow, so he aids his own student, choosing to pay 2 cash.

Yellow has received a gift from White, so she must aid White's student and not her own. She pays only 1 cash, but that is enough to give White's student the victory, 4 to 3.

All the cash is placed in the discard pile.

White places his candidate official in a blank space in Gongbu and puts one of his markers on it.

If there had been no blank spaces in Gongbu, then White's candidate official could have replaced a Gongbu official owned by another player, as long as that official was not secured.

MINISTRY RESOLUTION STEP

The Ministry Resolution Step happens only if all seven official spaces in one or more ministries contain an official or candidate official tile, and all the tiles have a player's marker on them. If more than one ministry is to be resolved, then resolve them in left to right board order (Bingbu, Hubu, Gongbu).

Each marker in the ministry represents one influence for the owning player. If there are more than two players with influence in the ministry, the player with least influence has to temporarily give up influence to one of the other players, until there are only two players left. The player with the most influence at that point will be appointed its Minister; the second player will be appointed Secretary.

Ministries are resolved as follows:

1. Place all the markers in the ministry on their ends to show that they are all now secured.
2. Count up the number of markers in the ministry for each player.
3. If only one player has influence in the ministry, that player is appointed both its Minister and Secretary.
4. If only two players have influence in the ministry, the player with most markers is appointed the Minister and the other player the Secretary.
5. If more than two players have influence in the ministry, then the player with least influence must temporarily give all his or her influence to another player. The player with the least influence is the one with the least markers. In the case of a tie for least markers, look at each tied player's most senior official in the ministry; the tied player with least influence is the one whose senior official has the least seniority, shown by the highest number next to the official space.
6. The player with least influence must temporarily give all his or her influence in the ministry to another player using the following priorities:
 - 1st To the player participating in the ministry resolution, from whom he or she has received the highest value gift. If the player with least influence has received equal value gifts from players with influence in the ministry, he or she must choose between them. Giving up influence in this way cancels any gift received from the player who gained the influence; remove the gift from the game and take the marker off the Gift Tracker Box.
 - 2nd To any other player participating in the ministry resolution.

Indicate that influence has been temporarily given by placing an unsecured marker of the new player's colour alongside the owner's secured marker on the official tiles. Occasionally, this may mean that a temporary marker from one player is replaced by a temporary marker from another player. The player who has temporarily given up influence is eliminated from the ministry resolution.

7. Re-calculate the influence of the remaining players by adding up both their secured and unsecured markers in the ministry.
8. Continue to eliminate players with least influence (as in point 6 above) until only two players remain, then resolve the ministry as in point 4.

Example - Simple Ministry Resolution

Gongbu is being resolved.

Black and Purple both have 3 officials, while Green has 1. Green has a 3-coin gift from Purple and a 4-coin gift from Black.

Green has the least influence, so he must give up his influence temporarily. As his gift from Black is superior to his Gift from Purple, he must give his influence to Black; he puts one of Black's markers on its side next to his own marker.

Black wins 4 to 3. Purple has to settle for Secretary, while Black takes the Ministerial post.

Black's gift to Green is cancelled and put back in the game box, and Black takes back his temporary marker on Green's official.

For a more complex example of Ministry Resolution, see page 21.

The Minister takes the victory point chit on the Minister's space in the ministry, adds this number of victory points to his or her total and places a marker on the Minister's space. The Secretary takes the victory point chit on the Secretary's space in the ministry, adds this number of victory points to his or her total and places a marker on the Secretary's space. The Minister and Secretary markers are counted when working out who will be the Chief Minister at the end of the game.

Finally, remove all the temporary unsecured markers from the resolved ministry. The influence on the officials reverts to the original players. No more changes to the resolved ministry can be made.

See page 21 for a more complex example.

If all ministries have been resolved, the game ends at the end of this round.

INVASIONS STEP

The Invasions Step happens only if either or both of these trigger events has occurred during the Actions Phase:

- ☞ At least one Foreign Lands tile has an army in each of its boxes.
- ☞ The Great Wall pieces have reached a soldier icon on the Great Wall Track that matches the icon above the Foreign Lands space. This will happen on the 4th, 6th and 8th rounds. If the tile has been resolved already, ignore this trigger event.

An invasion succeeds if a Foreign Lands tile has an army in each of its boxes. If an invasion must resolve owing to the Great Wall Track trigger event, but not all of its boxes contain an army, the invasion fails.

If an invasion succeeds, each player who has an army on the Foreign Lands tile gains the victory points indicated in the army's box. Adjust the Score Track appropriately.

If an invasion fails, no victory points are awarded.

Regardless of the success or failure of the invasion, the player with an army in the box with the Emperor's Reward card icon gains an Emperor's Reward card, when the invasion resolves.

Finally, turn over the resolved Foreign Lands tile and put the invading armies on it to show it's finished; armies cannot be re-used. These armies are counted when working out who will be appointed General.

Example - Successful Invasion



Example - Unsuccessful Invasion



End of Round Phase

The End of Round Phase has three steps, which are played strictly in this order:

- ☞ Place more official tiles
- ☞ Discard Confucius cards
- ☞ Return action cubes to players

PLACE MORE OFFICIAL TILES STEP

For each ministry that has at least one empty space, take one random official tile from the stack of officials and place it, face up, choosing the empty space with the lowest number. Skip any ministry which has no empty spaces.

DISCARD CONFUCIUS CARDS STEP

Each player with more than four Confucius cards must choose and discard down to four.

RETURN ACTION CUBES TO PLAYERS STEP

Check for the end of the game (see below). If the game has not ended, return the used action cubes to the players and start the next round.

ENDING THE GAME

The game ends in one of three ways:

- ☞ If all ministries have been resolved; or
- ☞ If all candidate officials have been won; or
- ☞ If all 9 Great Wall pieces have been placed on the Great Wall Track.

In the last two cases, there may be unresolved ministries. Resolve these ministries using the usual Ministry Resolution rules. At the end of the resolution, if two players have equal influence in a ministry, the player with the most senior official is appointed Minister, and the other player is appointed the Secretary.

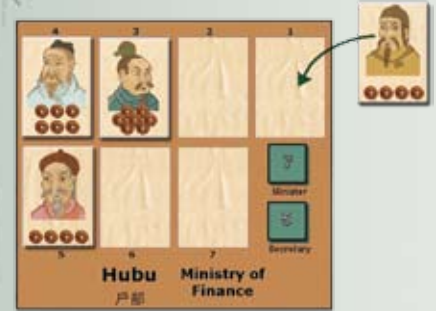
Once all Ministries have been resolved, appoint the new Chief Minister, Admiral and General as follows.

The Chief Minister is the player with most markers in the ministries, counting the marker on each official and the markers for Ministers and Secretaries. If there is a tie, the Minister of Hubu is appointed Chief Minister instead, even if the Minister of Hubu is not one of the tied players.

The Admiral is the player with most junks on voyages. Count 5 for each marker on a Distant Land space and 1 for each junk in an ocean space, but do not count junks in shipyards. If there is a tie, the Minister of Gongbu is appointed Admiral instead, even if the Minister of Gongbu is not one of the tied players.

The General is the player with most armies in play, including those in Foreign Lands, on the Emperor Insulted! card and in the military colonies. If there is a tie, the Minister of Bingbu is appointed General instead, even if the Minister of Bingbu is not one of the tied players.

Example - Placing official tiles



Example - Scoring

Yellow has scored 4 victory points for her Secretary appointment, plus another 4 victory points for each of the two Distant Lands that she reached first. At the end of the game, she also receives 1 victory point for the Admiral, having most junks on voyages. She has the respectable total of 13 victory points.

Black managed to get a 6 victory points Minister and a 4 victory points Secretary, together with 6 victory points for Foreign Lands (4 for Annam and 2 for Mongolia). He also became Chief Minister at the end of the game by having most markers in the ministries. Total: 17 victory points.

Green gained 7 victory points for a Minister, 2 victory points for a Distant Land, but was heavily involved in the failed invasion of Korea, so only scores 9 victory points.

Purple was narrowly beaten in two ministries, scoring just 5 victory points for her one Secretary, plus 4 victory points for a Foreign Land (Mongolia); she has a total of 9 victory points.

White scored 7 victory points for a Minister, 3 victory points for Distant Lands, 8 victory points for Foreign Lands, including the Emperor Insulted! card and 1 victory point for the General. Total: 19 victory points.

White wins by 2 victory points.

If White had not scored the Emperor Insulted card, then his total would have been reduced to 17 victory points; Black would then have won the game under the Chief Minister tie break, because White and Black would have tied on 17 victory points each and Yellow was the Admiral (the first tie break).

SCORING AND WINNING

Players score victory points during the game and at the end. The winner is the player with the most victory points at the end of the game. If two or more players have equal victory points at the end of the game, the tied player who is the Admiral wins. If no tied player is Admiral, then the tied player who is the Chief Minister wins. If no tied player is Chief Minister either, then the tied player who is the General wins. If no tied player has any of these offices (very unlikely), then the game is a draw.

DURING THE GAME

When receiving victory points during the game, adjust the markers on the Score Track immediately, as follows:

Action ...	Victory points on ...	Range of victory points ...
First player to reach each Distant Land	Distant Land victory point chit	2 to 4
Successful invasion	Box on Foreign Land tile	2 to 5
Minister or Secretary for each ministry	Ministry victory point chit	4 to 8
Avenging the insult to the Emperor	Emperor insulted! Reward card	2

AT THE END OF THE GAME

At the end of the game you score victory points as follows:

Chief Minister, Admiral and General	1 victory point each
-------------------------------------	----------------------

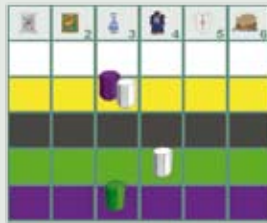
THE ADMIRAL VARIATION

Prior to the start of the game players may agree to play this variant to the rules.

If two or more players have tied for most victory points at the end of the game, the Admiral wins, regardless of whether the Admiral is one of the tied players. This variant increases the power of the Admiral and makes it possible for this player to win with relatively few victory points. It represents a triumph for the capitalist interest over the Confucian and significantly changes Chinese history, making it likely that China will dominate the world before the Europeans.

A MINISTRY RESOLUTION EXAMPLE

Bingbu is being resolved (see diagrams); all markers are placed on their ends. Yellow has two officials (seniorities 1 & 6), White has two (2 & 5), Black has one (3), Purple has one (7) and Green has one (4). Green and Yellow have received gifts from White. Yellow has also received a gift from Purple. Purple has received a gift from Green. Black and White have no gifts.



First look for the players with least influence: Black, Green and Purple each have one. For the tie-break we look at seniority; Purple's most senior official is only 7, so Purple has the least influence.

Purple must give her influence to Green, because this is the only player who has given her a gift. She shows this by adding Green's marker on its side next to her marker on the official. Purple is now eliminated.



There are still four players involved. Yellow, White and Green have two, while Black has one. Black has the least influence (he is the only player with one). He has no gifts, so he can choose to whom he donates his official. He chooses Yellow, who now has three influence.



Now Green and White have two influence and Yellow has three. However, looking at the most senior officials of Green and White, Green's official is the least senior (the number 4 versus number 2), so Green is deemed to have the least influence. He must give his two officials to White, because only White and Yellow are still in the resolution and he has a gift from White and none from Yellow.



Result: White wins the Ministry with 4 officials and Yellow is second with 3.



Commentary: White's skilful deployment of gifts to Green and Yellow ensured that he would win the Ministry, even though he started with only two officials.

CONFUCIUS – HISTORICAL NOTE: MING CHINA AND THE CONFUCIAN STATE

Confucius is not an historical simulation game, but many of the game's mechanics are reflections of the reality of Ming China.

Founding the Ming Dynasty

Exploitation by the Mongol Yuan dynasty (1271-1368) caused the collapse of the Chinese economy, resulting in popular uprisings throughout the mid-14th century. Zhu Yuanzhang, a young peasant gifted with both charisma and military skill, led the most successful rebellion in central China. By 1368 he had occupied Nanjing, driven the Mongols from the region and captured Beijing, the Yuan capital. That year he proclaimed himself Son of Heaven, taking the name Hongwu and becoming the first of the Ming dynasty emperors.

Re-conquest and expansion

The early years of the Ming dynasty saw the re-conquest of China from the Mongols and expansions into neighbouring Mongolia. The Ming Emperors Hongwu (1368-1398) and Yongle (1402–1424) raised vast armies that gave them control not only of the whole of China, but also of Manchuria and Vietnam. They also mounted military expeditions into central Asia.

The regions now known as Yunnan, Guizhou and Guangxi on the southwestern frontier were conquered and settled with military colonies, which, together with similar colonies in the north, were the foundation of the huge armies deployed by the Ming. However, the frontier forces, which were often controlled by imperial princes and high-ranking bureaucrats, were a potent source of instability, as they provided various factions with control over the country's military might. This threat was realised soon after the death of Hongwu, when his successor sought to curb their power.

After a period of civil war, Zhu Di, one of Hongwu's uncles, assumed the throne as the Emperor Yongle and began a period generally accepted as one of the most brilliant in Chinese history.

Government, economy and society

The Emperor Hongwu re-established a form of Confucian government through a new code of laws, the *Daming Lu*, based on respect for the family, a meritocratic civil service and a renewed commitment to classical Chinese rites. In addition he attempted to control China's population by fixing each family's social role to peasant, soldier or craftsman. Three main ministries of the government, Hubu, Bingbu and Gongbu respectively, governed these roles. The system proved unsustainable, owing to the ineffectiveness of the civil service and the political impossibility of imposing a rigid structure throughout the expanse of a country with hugely diverse local customs.

However, the biggest problem facing the new emperor was the economic chaos caused by the depredations of the Mongols. In response Hongwu carried out an impressive overhaul of Chinese agriculture, including massive land reclamation, which virtually trebled grain

production in twenty years. His approach to economic reform was coloured by the first Ming emperor's distrust of the merchant class, prompting him to try to restrict their economic and political power. Despite the efforts of Ming governments, an upsurge in commercial activity began in the early 16th century, and many mercantile families were able to convert their financial muscle into political power by paying the exorbitant sums needed to train their own supporters as scholar-officials, recruited through the imperial examination system, which had been established as long ago as the 6th century.

Despite his ostensible commitment to Confucian values, the first Ming emperor tended towards despotic control of his court, a stance motivated largely by his fear of usurpation. This fear led him to outlaw all attempts to criticize him or his policies, even by ministers whose stated goal was to promote the more efficient operation of the state. Later Ming rulers continued Hongwu's tendency toward arbitrary and absolute rule, which undermined the more Confucian systems of checks and balances that characterised government institutions of earlier periods.

Around the world

The Ming dynasty's reconstruction of the economy included the planting of huge numbers of trees, over 50 million in the Nanjing area alone, so that a new ocean-going fleet could be built. Under the Emperor Yongle several spectacular overseas expeditions were launched, demonstrating China's status as the world's leading maritime power. The expeditions organised between 1405 and 1433 by Zheng He, one of Yongle's leading eunuchs, consisted of huge fleets with as many as 20,000 crew and soldiers, which effectively functioned as large floating settlements. By contrast the early European explorers had ships a fifth the size of a Chinese junk and fleets of only a handful of ships. Zheng He's voyages reached Java, Sumatra and the other spice islands, India, the Red Sea, the Persian Gulf and the east coast of Africa. Some even claim that these fleets crossed the Atlantic to the Americas and completed the first circumnavigation of the globe.

However, from the end of Zhen He's life the Chinese government withdrew from these activities, and China never regained its maritime supremacy. Piracy quickly became rife in the southern oceans, and although it did not diminish trading activity, it transferred trade advantages to new interlopers in the later Ming period, including European powers from the late 16th century. This withdrawal was to some extent a conscious decision of the Chinese government, owing to the great expense of the expeditions, conflicting demands on the treasury and a perceived threat to traditional Chinese society.

Crisis, insurrection and collapse

From the end of the 16th century the Chinese court spent excessively and regardless of the political and economic consequences. It financed long, indecisive and mainly defensive wars, magnificent tombs of its emperors, and

lavish allowances to the relatives of the imperial family. Although this last practice reduced the risk of rebellion amongst the imperial nobility, it proved to be cripplingly expensive. Lack of money forced the government to increase taxes on both commerce and the peasantry, provoking large scale rebellions between 1627 and 1644.

The Manchus replaced the Ming during the 17th century, ultimately capturing Beijing in 1644 by taking advantage

of the general chaos in northeastern China. The invaders profited from the economic and social woes of the later Ming period, as they were able to recruit confederates and collaborators from within the Chinese administration and army. Although the southern Ming overthrew their Manchu conquerors in the 1670s, this 'Rebellion of the Three Feudatories' was crushed in 1681, and the Ming dynasty came to an end.

PLAYING CONFUCIUS: TIPS FOR NEW PLAYERS

Confucius is a medium to heavy game, and we advise new players to read at least the overview in the rulebook before starting to play. We suggest that a new group playing Confucius might want to play a couple of practice rounds, referring to the rules, before starting on a full game.

Maximising actions

Confucius is an action based game, and the number of actions you get depends on gifts given and received. You start with 3 actions in a round. If you've given and received 1 or 2 gifts, you get an extra action; if you've given and received 3 or more gifts, you get 5 actions. It's a good policy to make sure that you get 4 actions in the second round, which you can do by giving away a gift in the first round. Hoping that another player will give you a gift may end in disappointment, so it's useful to plan to give one. Having a gift on hand at all times is helpful forward planning.

Early bribery and strategy

Bribing officials brings immediate rewards in the form of discounts. An official in Gongbu awards you discounts on buying junks, in Bingbu it gets you discounts on army licences, and in Hubu your bribing is cheaper. Plan to bribe a relevant official before the action for which the discount applies.

These discounts will suggest a strategy – voyaging, invasions, ministries or a mixed strategy. It is preferable to have a strategy and stick to it, rather than having no strategy at all.

Gifts

The network of gifts is an essential part of Confucius. If your plan is to control one or more ministries, you may have to prepare to cancel a gift or two from rivals. There are many ways to do this, giving up a cheap official in a less important ministry is one, giving a superior gift is another, payment of extra cash for tutoring is a third, and finally (and perhaps not so helpfully) giving influence during Ministry Resolution is a fourth.

Merely having the most officials in a ministry won't necessarily win you any points, because gifts may force players to give up their influence during Ministry Resolution. So, keep a careful eye on the Gift Tracker Box to check who's connected to whom. Having more senior officials will help you with tie-breaks, so try to get these, even if the bribery cost is greater.

Remember that the number of gifts given and received will adjust the number of actions all players get for the next round, so deciding whether to give or to cancel a gift has a few implications. Sometimes cancelling a gift is not worth it, if your actions next turn are reduced.

Voyages and invasions

Voyages and invasions are not influenced by gifts, so provide an outlet if you are temporarily stymied in the ministries. However, these areas can be very competitive, and there are usually more points available in the government; you're unlikely to win without some points from ministries. Both these activities are races, so plan to win some points and don't commit if you're not prepared to see it through. For example having junks in the shipyard or armies in the military colonies at the end of the game is a waste of actions.

Imperial Favour

You cannot guarantee that you will get the Imperial Favour, because it's dependent on the decision of the Chief Minister. If you do receive it, take advantage of its ability to use a double cube action for only the single cube. This might enable you for example to bribe an extra official cheaply.



Many images in Chinese art symbolise a wish for the future of the person to whom the representation was given.

Wisteria for high
official rank

Toad for wealth

INDEX

Action cubes 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 19
Actions Box 9, 10, 14, 15
Actions Phase 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 14, 15, 18
Admiral 3, 8, 11, 19, 20
Advanced game 3, 4, 13
Advantages of gifts 6
Armies 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 18, 19, 22, 23
Army boxes 7
Bingbu 4, 10, 12, 17, 19, 21, 23
Bonus action 3
Bribe 3, 7, 10, 11, 13, 14, 23
Buy Gift 10, 12
Buy Junks 10, 11
Cancel gifts 6, 12, 13, 16, 17, 23
Candidate officials 1, 4, 7, 13, 15, 16, 19
Cash 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 14, 15, 16, 23
Change 8
Chief Minister 3, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 23
Choose Chief Minister Phase 9
Commercial Income 3, 14
Confucius cards 3, 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 16, 19
Confucius deck 4, 8, 14, 15
Count Gifts Phase 9
Court Phase 9, 11, 15
Discounts 7, 10, 11, 23
Distant Land 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 19, 20
Emperor's Reward cards 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 14, 18
Emperor Insulted 15, 19
Ending the game 19
End of Round Phase 8, 9, 15, 19
Force Imperial Examination 11, 15
Foreign Lands 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 12, 13, 18, 19
Game components 1
General 3, 8, 18, 19, 20
Gifts 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 21, 23
Gift Tracker Box 6, 9, 12, 13, 16, 17, 23
Give Gift 10, 12
Gongbu 4, 10, 11, 16, 17, 19, 23
Great Wall 1, 4, 8, 9, 15, 18, 19

Hubu 4, 10, 11, 14, 17, 19, 23
Imperial Examinations 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16
Imperial Favour 9, 10, 14, 15, 23
Influence 1, 3, 6, 7, 10, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19, 21, 23
Invasions 3, 6, 8, 10, 12, 15, 18, 20, 23
Junks 1, 3, 4, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 19, 23
Licences 3, 8, 10, 11, 12, 23
Markers 1, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21
Military colonies 7, 12, 15, 19, 23
Minister 3, 4, 6, 8, 9, 10, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23
Ministries 3, 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 23
Ministry Resolution 7, 10, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 23
No Action 14
Nominate Student 11
Obligations 3, 12, 14, 16
Officials 1, 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 21, 22, 23
Overview 3
Paired actions 10
Petition the Emperor 3, 4, 10, 11, 13
Play aids 1, 4
Recruit an Army 10, 12, 15
Rounds 3, 9, 14, 18, 23
Score Track 4, 6, 8, 18, 20
Scoring 20
Secretary 3, 4, 6, 17, 18, 19, 20
Secure Official 7, 10, 11, 13
Seniority 7, 12, 13, 17, 21
Sequence of Play 2, 9
Set up diagram 5
Start a Voyage 10, 11, 14
Students 3, 6, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16
Tax Income 10, 14
Transfer Influence 10, 13
Turn Marker 1, 4, 7, 9, 10, 14
Tutor 3, 13, 16
Unsecured official 7, 10, 13, 14, 16
Victory points 1, 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 12, 15, 18, 19, 20
Winner 3, 16, 20

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