

# 百花 One Hundred Flowers

Philosophical Adventures in Warring States China  
By Ben Lehman

(if you have trouble reading some of the text, here, it is because your reader doesn't support Unicode. You are just missing some Chinese that's used for color.)

## Introduction:

China is in chaos. Once the greatest civilization in the world, unified under the righteous Zhou dynasty, it has fallen into internal strife and conflict. Barbarians nip away at the borders. The royal family is all but prisoner in their own court, and powerless to stop their own feudal dukes from declaring themselves kings and warring amongst each other. Peasants starve, scholars are executed -- everywhere is anarchy and strife.

And yet, in this cesspool of human misery, flowers have bloomed. New philosophies and philosophical schools have sprung up out of the social chaos, each with their own answer to societies ills. A new class of scholar-sages, called the *Shi*, wander the land. Some call for an enlightened ruler, others for a shrewd politician, still others for the firm guiding hand of a tyrant. Which philosophy, and which state, will prevail? History gives us the answer, but at the time it was anything but certain. Invent your own philosophy, enter to chaos of the Warring States, and see how you fare in these tumultuous times.

For a more factual historical sketch see:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warring\\_States\\_period](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Warring_States_period)

## Components:

- 1 Playing Board
- 7 *Shi* Pieces
- 35 influence tokens
- 20 rulership plaques
- some judgement tokens
- A deck of cards
- An opaque cup or mug or bowl for each player.

## Component Descriptions:

**Playing Board:** A map of warring states China, circa 400 BC, with extra spaces on the edge of the board for the five barbarian tribes. A dotted line connects the state of Yueh with the barbarian land of Chaoxian.

**7 *Shi* pieces:** These are ordinary pawn-like pieces, in seven distinct colors.

35 Influence tokens: These are wooden disks, 5 in each color, marked with 官 on one side.

20 Rulership plaques: One for each State.

Judgement Tokens: 150 or so stones in Clear, Red, and Black.

A Deck of Cards: 70 cards. Each card contains the following elements:

- 1) An adjective (drunken, corrupt, forthright, dishonest, simple, wise, etc.)
- 2) A profession (peasant, scholar, sage, foreigner, official, soldier, etc.)
- 3) A State and it's name or just a character. (For instance, the state of Qin and it's name 秦, or just the character 胡)
- 4) Each card will also be colored to show its suit: Wine, Incense, Self, Rice, Ink.

### Outline of Gameplay:

#### 1) Setup

- a) Each player chooses a pawn and takes all the influence tokens of its color.
- b) Each player establishes a philosophy or picks a pre-existing one, and describes the *Shi* and his *Companion*.
- c) Give each player a number of Morality tokens of each shade equal to twice the number of players in the game +1. For instance, in a four player game, each player would have 5 stones of each shade.
- d) Starting with the oldest player, each player chooses a State that they will portray during gameplay, taking the rulership plaque for that State. Go around until there are no States remaining. Every player must select a Major State as their first choice.
- e) Deal out ten cards into the center of the table, face down. These cards define the *Political Situation* of the game.
- f) Each player, again in order of age, randomly chooses three of the *Political Situation* cards and looks at them. Afterwards, they are set under the board, and may not be seen again until the game is over.
- g) Each player chooses one of the states that he has rulership over, and places his pawn there.
- h) Start the game! The oldest player goes first.

#### 2) In a turn

- a) If any player has two or less *Judgment Tokens* of any type, they must announce this now, and how many are remaining.
- b) The active player moves his pawn into an adjacent state where he is not *Exiled*. If he has *Rulership* or *Governance* over that state, he may move again (but not a third time.) If the pawn ends in a State where the player has *Rulership* or *Governance*, the remainder of the turn is skipped.

c) The player with *Rulership* over that state that the pawn occupies deals each player five cards from the deck to each player.

d) The player with *Rulership* over the state selects two cards to form the *Problem* of the State, and one or two cards to be *Attributes* of its ruler. She discards the remainder.

e) The player with *Rulership* over the State and the player whose *Shi* and *Companion* have entered the state role-play out a number of scenes, with the other players interfering via card-plays. The details of this will be described later.

f) After the role-playing scene(s), any remaining cards are discarded. The player who entered the state, as the *Shi*, gives advice to the ruler of the State about what should be done about his *Problem*.

g) All the players discuss the *Problem* and the *Shi*'s proposed solution, both in regard to how well it might resolve the problem, and how appropriate it is to the player's *Philosophy*.

e) All players except the active player secretly choose a *Judgment Token* from their stock. The players that don't have *Rulership* over the state all place their tokens, without revealing the color to the other players, into the active player's bowl. The player with *Rulership* discards his.

f) The player with *Rulership* reveals the King's judgment and returns the *Judgment Token* to their stock.

i) If the player is appointed *Governor*, represented by a clear stone they place their influence token character side up on the state, displacing all other influence tokens. All other philosophers are considered *Exiled*, with the exception of the one player who has *Rulership* over the state.

ii) If the player is *Favored*, represented by a red stone, they place their influence token blank side up on the state.

iii) If the player is *Disfavored*, represented by a black token, he is sentenced to die by the sovereign but, with the help of his *Companion*, narrowly escapes execution (feel free to elaborate on the exact method). Their philosophy is banned in the State, and the *Shi* and his *Companion* are *Exiled* and may not return.

g) Reshuffle the deck.

### 3) Endgame

a) When one player runs out of *Judgment Tokens* in a given shade, they must announce this. The game lasts until it reaches that player's turn. It ends before they make their move.

b) Also, if all non-barbarian states are influenced, the game ends. If all players are exiled from a state, it counts as being influenced for this purpose, as well.

c) Count the *Political Score*.

i) Reveal the *Political Situation* cards from below the board.

ii) Each player scores points for the States in which they have influence: Five points per major state, two points per minor state, and no points for barbarian states. In addition, the *Political Situation* cards affect scoring -- 5 points for each card with the state's name, plus extra points for special cards (detailed below.) If the player has *Rulership* over a state, that state's card counts 2 points for

them.

iii) The player with the highest total political score has won the *Political Victory*. Their philosophy will guide their states to control all of China, eventually leading to the unification of the nation under one empire.

d) Count the *Moral Score*

i) Each Clear stone in the player's cup counts for 5 points, each Red stone for 2 points, and each Black stone for no points.

ii) Each token remaining in their stock effects the score, as well. +1 points for each Black stone, -1 points for each Clear stone.

ii) The player with the highest total moral score has won the *Moral Victory*, and will be the center of mysticism and philosophy for ages to come.

e) Add together the *Moral Score* and the *Political Score*. Whomever has the highest total score has achieved the *Cultural Victory*. Their philosophy will come to dominate Chinese life, lasting for thousands of years, the center of the culture and nation.

f) Congratulate all the winners and clean up the pieces.

Some of the steps in the outline require more explanation. These things will be detailed here.

### **Create a philosophy, a *Shi*, and his *Companion*.**

The first thing that you must do is write down a basic statement which will form the core of your philosophy. For instance, the *School of Confucius* might be described as follows:

*In previous ages, the world was a better place. In the present day, the best thing to do is to stick as close as possible to the ancient rites and traditions. When the rites are properly practiced, people's relationships will naturally fall into a harmonious hierarchy -- sons obey fathers, wives husbands, younger brothers older brothers, and the world will be set right.*

Second, you must choose one suit that your philosophy is opposed to, and one that it central to it. These must be based on your core statement.

\* Wine cards are colored purple, and represent hedonism, creativity artistic endeavor, and a certain devil-may-care attitude.

\* Incense cards are colored yellow, and represent rituals, mysticism, spiritualism, ancestor worship, rites and religion.

\* Self cards are colored red, and represent personal interest, individualism, greed and warfare.

\* Rice cards are colored white, and represent farming, peasants, and the simple life.

\* Ink cards are colored black, and represent learning, scholarship, laws, bureaucracy, and so on.

*The core of Confucius's philosophy is about service to others and society, and plus it is decidedly stodgy, so we choose "wine" as our opposed suit. The key suit is a little trickier -- it could be "incense" because of the school's focus on ritualism, but we decide on "ink" because of the emphasis on learning, writing, and study.*

Lastly, you must describe your *Shi* and his *Companion*. Your *Shi* is likely an elderly Chinese man. The *Companion*, however, is a person or being that represents the ideals of your philosophy, whatever they may be. Further, your *Companion* has reaped the benefits of study beneath the *Shi* -- he has great abilities, perhaps even magical powers, which come from his perfect adherence to your philosophy in all its tenets.

*Historically, Confucius lived during the Spring and Autumn Period (two centuries before Baihua is set), so we decide to have someone else as our Shi (normally, the Shi is the founder of the school). We write down this description:*

*Lao Wen An old man, but still hardy, a little stodgy and prone to practicing rites with the utmost propriety. He never compliments his students.*

*As for the companion, we just invent a student whole cloth. His name is Xiao Lei. And we need to describe him a bit. Looking at the Confucian analects, we see a constant theme of hidden strength, so we decide that he will be big and powerful, but prefer to solve conflicts through propriety and discussion. We write down: A mighty, gentle, learned giant of a man, his true strength comes from his morality.*

## **Role-playing scenes--**

Role-playing scenes are the core of the game, which the rest revolves around. This is the most important section.

When a *Shi* arrives in a state that he does not *govern* and his player does not have *rulership* over, a role-playing scene ensues.

First, the player who has rulership over the state assumes the role of the Duke or King ruling over the state. He deals five cards to each player, including himself. Then he looks at his five cards, and from them selects a problem for the state and the personality of the ruler.

The problem is produced by selecting two cards and using the description from one and the role from the other. For instance, the player could select "Drunken" and "Official," and the problem would be a drunken official, or perhaps a great many drunken officials. He keeps these cards hidden from view.

Then, from the remaining cards, he selects one or two to be personality traits for the ruler of the state. For instance, the ruler could be "Wise" and "Wealthy," or simply

could be "Lecherous." In some cases, this could constitute a secondary problem in the state. He places these cards face up on the table -- the reputation of the ruler is well known.

For the first scene, the *Shi* and his *Companion* are called into the court of the ruler. The ruler explains that he has called them to his state because he has had certain difficulties but, before he can explain them, the *Shi* informs the ruler that they are already aware of his problems, and have determined the solution to them. Astounded, the king asks how this can possibly be the case. The companion begins his story.

Now, the scene shifts to the *Shi* and his *Companion* entering the state. The player with rulership over the state sets the scene, and plays the citizens of the state as they interact with the Companion, played by the active player. Through a series of one to three scenes, the Companion attempts to discover what is wrong with the state, through use of the keen insights and robust power that your philosophy has granted him.

If this goes on for more than one scene, the ruler should deal one new card to each player between scenes.

During this time, any player can interrupt by slapping the table. They can then play down a single card from their hand. Every other player, in turn order, may play a second card if they so wish. If no other player plays a second card, nothing happens, the card is discarded, and play resumes. If any other player plays a second card, they read the description from one card and the role from the other (their choice), and such a character must be introduced into the scene immediately.

After the scenes have played out, a final scene is staged, again at the court of the ruler. The Companion has finished his tale, and now the *Shi* speaks, explaining the fundamental nature of the problem and proposing a solution to the ruler. The ruler asks him as many questions about the solution as is necessary to understand it, and then the scene ends and judgment begins.

### **Judgment--**

As soon as the last scene closes, all the players discuss both the Companion's actions and the *Shi's* solution. When they feel that they have discussed the problem enough, all players but the active player take a judgment token from their supply. The player with rulership is deciding what the ruler's reaction to the *Shi's* solution will be, taking into account the personality traits that he has assigned himself. The other players are judging how closely the actions of the *Companion* and the judgment of the *Shi* matched the player's stated philosophy.

The other players (not the active player, not the ruler), secretly add their tokens to the cup of the active player, not looking inside and not showing the shade of their

token to anyone else. After everyone has added their tokens, the active player may look in and see the result.

If the stone that they give is black, the meaning is that the philosophy has been totally perverted or abandoned. The *Shi* is a hypocrite, his *Companion* a mere thug. Clearly, if even the originator of the school cannot apply the philosophy, it is untrue and worthless. Black stones are worth no points.

If the stone that they give is red, the meaning is that the philosophy was clearly stuck to, but perhaps was a bit too inflexible or a bit too flexible. The world is a complicated place, and difficult to understand. While the philosophy has not totally failed, it has not come away looking any better. Red stones are worth two points.

If the stone that they give is clear, the meaning is that the the *Shi* and *Companion* have shown a deep insight into the philosophy, above and beyond the stated concerns. Their penetrating moral vision will last for the ages, and will be recorded for future generations to study. Clear stones are worth five points.

After that, the ruler reveals his token, and then discards it from the game.

If the stone is black, the ruler rejects the *Shi*'s pathetic solution, and is enraged at the companion's irresponsible actions. They are sent to be executed but, with the Companion's abilities, manage to barely escape with their lives. They may not enter the state again, nor may they attempt to influence it.

If the stone is red, the ruler has favored the *Shi*'s advice, but not yet embraced his philosophy. Place an influence token, blank side up, on the state. The philosophy is favored for now, but others may come to the state influence things in a different way. If there is already an influence token present, return it to its player.

If the stone is clear, the ruler has embraced the *Shi*'s philosophy whole-heartedly. The *Shi* is appointed as Prime Minister, and all other philosophies are outlawed -- their scholars executed, their books burnt. The player places an influence token, character side up, on the map, and all other players are considered *Exiled*, with the exception of the player who has rulership, who may move through but not attempt to influence. If there was previously an influence token on the state, return it to its player.

If the player has already placed five influence tokens, and is called upon to place another, they may elect to move an influence token on the board or to not place one at all. If they do not place an influence token, none of the other effects of the ruler's judgment occur (other players are not exiled, other tokens are not returned.)

When playing out scenes, there are a few extra rules to keep in mind.

Rule 1: The Companion is Invincible

The Companion has studied the philosophy well. Indeed, he is its exemplar. Among whatever other powers and insights that this grants him, he is completely invincible. Nothing whatsoever can kill the Companion, and he can only be injured if the player wants him to be. Further, he is mystically empowered. Anything that his player says he does, he can do with ease and aplomb. Some companions have a subtle power, gaining strong insight into others through simple observation, or gaining respect through proper behavior. Others can fly on clouds, breath fire, or change their shape. As long as the action is appropriate to the *Shi's* philosophy, it can and will be done.

#### Rule 2: The Ruler is the State

Every inhabitant of the State, from its lowliest peasants to the feudal ruler himself, is played by player with rulership over the state. Furthermore, they describe and control the surroundings, environment, etc.

If multiple players would be needed to make a scene more convincing (say, for instance, that a peasant couple is arguing: it would be awkward to play both sides of the argument), the player with rulership can assign certain parts to other players, but he still retains final say over their actions.

#### Rule 3: Mastery is Protection

The Key Suit represents a strong philosophical affinity to that aspect of life, and with philosophical understanding comes utmost mastery. In addition to being able to play cards of their Key Suit in the ordinary way, a player may spend a card of their Key Suit at any time to *Counter* another card of the same suit. Both cards are discarded, and play continues as if neither of them had been spent.

#### Rule 4: Opposition is Interruption

The Opposed Suit represents some aspect of life that the philosophy disdains and does not participate in. Thus, they are powerless with regard to it. Cards of that suit may not be spent as ordinary cards.

However, this opposition represents a basic vigilance towards all things. A player may expend two cards of his opposed suit to interrupt the Companion's story at any time. They may then take the role of a scholar of their philosophy in the court of the ruler and voice an objection to the story, complaining that it is hypocritical, contradictory, untrue, or simply morally bankrupt -- all in an attempt to turn the ruler against their rival, of course.

### **Appendix 1: Special Political Card Effects**

京 (Capital): Influence in the Zhou Capital is worth +6 points, and +2 points to whomever has Rulership over it. (The state of Zhou, despite being the titular capital of China, was an irrelevant minor state throughout the period. But it didn't



have to be that way.)

胡 (barbarians) : Barbarian states are all worth +5 points. If you have influence in 4 or more Barbarian states, get an extra +10 points. If you have rulership over a barbarian state, +1 point.

晉 (jin): If you have influence in any two of Han, Zhao or Wei, gain +6 points. If you influence all three, +10 points. If you have rulership over any of the states, +2 points. (Historical note: Han, Zhao and Wei were once, together, the state of Jin)

连横 (lianheng): Whoever has influence in Qin gains +1 point for each other territory that they influence. +2 influence for rulership over Qin. (Historical note: the "horizontal alliance" supported to Qin ascendance.)

合纵 (hezong): Whoever has influence in Qin gains +1 point for each Major State influence by another philosophy. +2 influence for rulership over Qin. (Historical note: the "vertical alliance" was a last-ditch effort to stop the Qin ascendancy.)

并吞 (annexation): if you have influence in two adjacent states: +4 points, three adjacent states are worth +6, four states +8 points and so on.

圍魏救趙 (attacking Wei to save Zhao): If you influence a state adjacent to Wei, but do not influence Wei, +4 points. (Wei was very warlike, but often found itself invaded while its armies were away on campaign.)

小洲 (small states): All lesser states are worth +2 points, +1 for rulership.

长城 (great wall): Any non-barbaric state along the Wall -- Zhongshan, Yan, Zhao, Wei, or Qin -- gives +2 points. (The Great Wall was already partially constructed at this time.)

海 (ocean): Any state bordering the ocean -- Chaoxian, Yan, Qi, or Yue -- gives +3 points.

## **Appendix 2: List of Cards**

If this contest were graded on presentation, and if I had the time, I would have real cards. But I don't.

Wine

Drunken / Craftsman / Zhao

Drunken / Beggar / Jin

Drunken / Beggar / Barbarians

Drunken / Musician / Lu

Rebellious / Artist / Qin  
Rebellious / Poet / Chu  
Rebellious / Beggar / Xiongnu  
Lecherous / Craftsman / Zhongshan  
Lecherous / Beggar / Donghu  
Lecherous / Poet / Chu  
Insane / Craftsman / Yan  
Insane / Beggar / Chu  
Raucous / Musician / Qi  
Raucous / Craftsman / Han

Ink  
Corrupt / Official / Zhao  
Corrupt / Courtier / Yan  
Corrupt / Scholar / Xiongnu  
Corrupt / Scholar / Yue  
Corrupt / Scholar / Nanhu  
Wise / Official / Chu  
Wise / Official / Shu  
Wise / Courtier / Donghu  
Nosy / Official / Hezong  
Nosy / Courtier / Ba  
Harsh / Courtier / Zhenghu  
Harsh / Scholar / Barbarians  
Obsequious / Official / Nanhu  
Obsequious / Scholar / Zhongshan

Incense  
Forthright / Elder / Shu  
Forthright / Noble / Zhao  
Forthright / Sage / Yue  
Forthright / Mystic / Chu  
Enlightened / Noble / Yan  
Enlightened / Elder / Han  
Traditional / Noble / Qin  
Traditional / Noble / Qi  
Traditional / Elder / Qin  
Traditional / Sage / Annexation  
Mysterious / Elder / Zhenghu  
Stern / Sage / Wei  
Stern / Elder / Han  
Stern / Mystic / Ba

Rice  
Simple / Wife / Zhao  
Simple / Wife / Chaoxian

Simple / Peasant / Capital  
Bereft / Peasant / Chaoxian  
Bereft / Peasant / Song  
Bereft / Peasant / Ocean  
Hungry / Wife / Zhou  
Hungry / Peasant / Zhou  
Hungry / Peasant / Lianheng  
Hungry / Peasant / Qi  
Despairing / Peasant / Capital  
Despairing / Peasant / Teng  
Despairing / Peasant / Wei  
Leprous / Wife / Capital

Self  
Dishonest / Maiden / Chu  
Dishonest / Soldier / Capital  
Dishonest / General / Yan  
Wealthy / Soldier / Song  
Wealthy / Maiden / Teng  
Angry / Merchant / Attacking Wei to save Zhao  
Angry / Merchant / Lu  
Angry / Maiden / Wei  
Shrewd / General / Wei  
Shrewd / Merchant / Qin  
Shrewd / Maiden / Small States  
Shrewd / Foreigner / Great Wall  
Greedy / Soldier / Qi  
Greedy / General / Han

### **Appendix 3: Map**

Likewise, I would have a really cool map of China with all the states drawn in with their romanized and character names and the Great Wall drawn in and such. But not enough time.

See the map at this address for a rough geography:  
<http://map.huhai.net/16.jpg>

Chu connects to: Nanhu, Ba, Qin, Han, Song, Ten, Lu, Qi, Yue  
Qin connects to: Ba, Shu, Zhenghu, Wei, Han, Chu  
Zhao connects to: Wei, Qin, Zhenghu, Xiongnu, Donghu, Yan, Zhongshan, Qi, Wei  
Yan connects to: Chaoxian, Donghu, Zhao, Zhongshan, Qi  
Wei connects to: Zhou, Han, Qin, Zhenghu, Zhao, Qi, Song  
Qi connects to: Yen, Zhao, Wei, Song, Lu, Chu, Yue  
Han connects to: Zhou, Qin, Chu, Song, Wei

Barbarian States

Chaoxian connects to: Yan, Donghu  
Donghu connects to: Chaoxian, Xiongnu, Yan, Zhao  
Nanhu connects to: Shu, Ba, Chu, Yue  
Xiongnu connects to: Donghu, Ya, Zhao, Zhenghu  
Zhenghu connects to: Xiongnu, Zhao, Wei, Qin, Shu

#### Minor States

Zhongshan connects to: Yan, Chao  
Shu connects to: Zhenghu, Qin, Ba, Nanhu  
Ba connects to: Chu, Nanhu, She, Qin  
Yue connects to: Chaoxian (one way), Qi, Chu, Nanhu  
Zhou connects to: Han, Wei  
Song connects to: Chu, Ten, Lue, Wei, Han  
Teng connects to: Lu, Song, Chu  
Lu connects to: Qi Song, Teng, Chu

### Appendix Four: Other Games

**Short Game:** Use only the 7 Major States plus the Zhou capital. The other states cannot be entered nor can they be influenced.

When looking at political cards at the beginning of the game, players discard the cards of Minor or Barbarian states (and also 胡 and 小洲 cards.) They draw new cards to replace these. If any such cards remain at the end of the game, they are not counted for scoring.

**The Evening Game:** Appoint one player to be the Duke of Qin. This player deals cards and draws for a problem and a personality as normal. All other players are Shi and Companions that have come to the court of Qin to gain positions as advisors. Play out scenes with each player as normal, with the Duke of Qin deciding the order. After each Companion scene, give every player two new cards (to a maximum of five.)

After all players have played their scenes, they take turns suggesting solutions to the Duke's problem. Afterwards, have a philosophical discussion as normal, and each player is in turn judged by the other philosophers. Then, the Duke of Qin decides on one of the solutions presented. The philosopher who presented that solution is made Minister, and the others are all executed. However, whomever scored the most points in the judging nonetheless has the moral victory, cold comfort that that may be in the grave.

**The Tactical Game:** Do not use the Rulership plaques or the Judgment Tokens. When a *Shi* moves into a new state, instead of playing out the action or advice, turn up a single card. If the card is the key of the philosophy, the *Shi* is appointed minister. If the card is opposed to the philosophy, the *Shi* is exiled. Otherwise, the *Shi* gains influence in the state. When all non-Barbarian States are influenced, the game ends. Only count for the Political victory. If all players are somehow exiled

from a state, it counts as influenced.

### **Appendix Five: Just for Ralph**

I believe this qualifies strongly for Chairman's Challenge #1.

In addition, since you are really playing a *philosophy* more than a *person*, it might qualify for Chairman's Challenge #2. But that's a little sketchier.