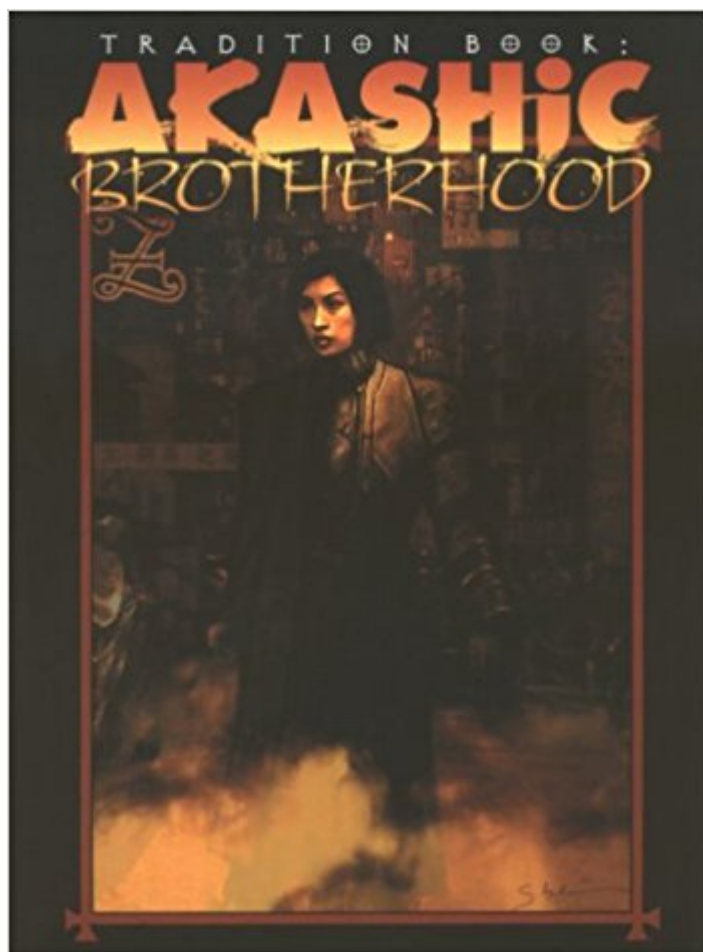


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Tradition Book Akashic Brotherhood R *OP (Mind's Eye Theatre)



Synopsis

Warriors and sages, the mages of the Akashic Brotherhood bring thousands of years of martial prowess and philosophy to the Traditions. The Warring Fists discipline their minds and hone their bodies to perfection. As the Akashic Record tells, however, one must fight for true virtue without being consumed by violence. How can young mages battle for a world free from technological rule while maintaining peaceful enlightenment? There is a puzzle worthy of a true master.

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Customer Reviews

Warriors and sages, the mages of the Akashic Brotherhood bring thousands of years of martial prowess and philosophy to the Traditions. The Warring Fists discipline their minds and hone their bodies to perfection. As the Akashic Record tells, however, one must fight for true virtue without being consumed by violence. How can young mages battle for a world free from technological rule while maintaining peaceful enlightenment? There is a puzzle worthy of a true master.

The first of the revised Tradition Books for Mage: The Ascension, this book is simply overflowing with intriguing information on the Akashic Brotherhood. The Akashayana were somewhat shortchanged in the core revised rulebook for Mage: They are stereotyped as nothing more than bald-headed monks or super-ninjas. That falls far short of the truth. This Tradition Book includes detailed descriptions of the sects within the Akashayana, including the Li-Hai (rebels who find the

stereotype of robed monks to be laughable) and even the Roda d'Oro, a non-Asian branch of the Brotherhood. An excellent set of expanded rules for Do is included. Further, the views and goals of the Akashics are explored: Those who see only self-torturing ascetics are failing to understand the point. The goal of the truly enlightened is not to punish the body, but rather to cease to be distracted by it. Best of all, most of this information is given in the format of a beautifully written story which fills the book from cover to cover. The prose is breathtaking, and seeing Akashic students and masters as they confront a crisis definitely gives greater insight into the Brotherhood. Further, within the story, a dark secret is revealed: A war begun a hundred lifetimes ago, and which rages even today; a war that could destroy the Traditions. Unfortunately, this book is not always formatted in an easily understandable manner. The dialogue includes many specialized words used by the Brotherhood, but often the meaning of these words does not appear until halfway through the book. This maintains a sense of mystery in the story, but can also be extremely frustrating. Further, the book often refers to *Dragons of the East*; if you haven't read that sourcebook, you will probably be frustrated by the frequent appearances of "For more information, see '*Dragons of the East*'." All in all, however, an excellent book. Its strengths easily compensate for its shortcomings. This book might have earned five stars, but I give it four stars because of the confusing layout. Bottom line: If you play Mage and you intend to have even a single Akashic Brotherhood character, this book is a must-have.

Good stuff here!

White Wolf has a mediocre track record with the non-european, and is particularly dismal when it comes to India, China, Japan, Korea. But it is not damning by faint praise to say that the author of this book, and another superb book, *"Dragons of the East,"* has single-handedly reversed this situation and given us a marvelous, fascinating, playable look into the far east. This book is great. It has an intricate description of Do, it has really fun, playable factions with fascinating orientations solidly within the chinese philosophical framework-- not that you have to know chinese philosophy or history to get them. Why only three stars? I have a couple problems with the book. For one, like so many White Wolf books, it includes a great deal of in-character fiction. In fact, a tremendous amount. If you want to read fiction, that's one thing, but this is a game book, and I'm tired of White Wolf doing things this way just because they have a bunch wannabe-fiction-writers, but lack the guts and coordination to say anything definitive. This book's fiction is actually good, but darnit, it's not why I spent money for it! Every word of fiction is a waste of space, as far as I'm concerned. As far

as this goes, I've half a mind to recommend *Dragons of the East* *instead* of this book, because it has a lot less of this sort of thing. Secondly, I'm protesting the decision to lump all kinds of distinct movements into one group. There's the obvious problem of putting the Wu Lung in the Brotherhood-- patently absurd, but probably dictated by a committee. Then there's the fact that we're slinging Bonin, Jains, Hinayana, Zen, Moism, Legalism, Taoism, Confucianism, Shinto, all into one group and then insisting, as the book does, that the Akashayana Sangha isn't just a motley of unrelated groups. Yes, Zen and Han Fei Tzu had heavy Taoist backgrounds. Yes, some of the other groups were synthesized together in popular movements, in later periods. But, come on. There's material for at least four major traditions here. Worse than the Dreamspeakers, this is. So why assert that they're all of one thought? Also, as the prior reviewer pointed out, what's up with the incessant barrage of terminology? It's cute, I mean, but it's a major obstacle to understanding. But honestly, the book is great. Don't play an Akashic without it!

Some have complained that this Tradition Book, like many of White Wolf's books about Eastern cultures tries too hard to group them all together. Personally, I don't think they did such a bad job of it. They DID give a brief overview of various eastern religious and philosophical beliefs. And they gave a better picture than the Karate Kid, monks or ninjas. They explain the philosophy of the Tradition in a way that is interesting (and gave me quite a few plot ideas as a Storyteller). The book itself is well written in a style that is both informative and entertaining. The details of the Himalayan War and information about Do alone have made this book well worth the price. My only complaint is the book's many references to 'Dragons of the East'. This book is absolutely necessary if you want to have any kind of Akashic character NPC or player in your game.

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