



EPISODE FOUR: POISON MAGIC (TRADITIONAL CHINESE WITCHCRAFT)

Model Code of Ethics for Malevolent Craft

In Tinkering Bell #4, we cover poison magic, which is the English translation for a form of traditional Chinese or Taoist black magic, in other words, malevolent spell-crafting. This modality of craft is also referred to as Gu Dao (蠱道) or Gu Shu (蠱術) [Long form: 蠱道巫術 or Gǔ Dào Wū Shù]. You might also find it translated as Ku.

Link to the Practicum: <https://benebellwen.com/2017/10/27/ku-or-taoist-poison-magic-tinkering-bell-series/>



Malevolent craft is energy work or spell-crafting performed with the specific intent of injuring another or bringing harm to another, irrespective of what your reasoning might be. In my own practice, I don't consider malevolent craft per se, but rather I frame it as retaliatory craft.

That's because one of my personal bright-line rules of craft is to never intend harm to another without justification. If someone gives you the stank eye, inconsiderately shoves you in a crowded area, even says something unkind to you in a public space, or in their own little corner of the universe, quietly hates your guts, I hope you will be big enough to ignore it and move on with your life.

As a bright-line model rule, someone's words are never justifiable grounds for inflicting retaliatory craft. No matter what I say about you or to you, words alone shall not constitute

enough reasoning for you to spell-craft malevolently. On the other hand, words that actually inflict injury, such as slander, libel, and legally defamatory remarks where there is no access to justice for you through the regular legal system and standard channels, may be grounds for poison magic. Words or media that arise to an unconscionable invasion of privacy for which you have tried every means of recourse and mediation to no avail might also be grounds for poison magic.

I would be rather aggressive and insistent that all practitioners of craft abide by that simple rule: do not engage in malevolent craft unless actual, measurable harm has been sustained by you. Your *feelings* getting hurt is *not* actionable grounds for retaliation.

Beyond that, I recognize that bright-line rules of ethical conduct will vary from practitioner to practitioner, and certainly from tradition to tradition. Your cultural indoctrination is also going to be influential over what you consider justifiable grounds for retaliatory craft. So here are my rules and the model rules I would advocate for.

Never Used on the Defenseless. If you are aware that you are in a privileged position over the other, that you are stronger, more capable, or more powerful than the other, then no matter what that other does to you, do not engage in retaliatory craft against that person.

The Objective is to Restore Balance. Your purpose for retaliatory craft is never to hurt, per se, but rather, to restore balance, which you acknowledge may as a consequence include harm to the other. There's a nuanced distinction there, however. Your intention isn't to hurt. Your intention is to restore balance. Nonetheless, harm might happen in the process of restoring that balance. Hurting is incidental to the objective, not the direct objective.

Severe Miscarriage of Justice. I only consider retaliatory craft if there has been a severe miscarriage of justice. Someone giving everybody else in the room a cupcake and you not getting a cupcake doesn't count. A severe miscarriage of justice is one that the overwhelming majority of people in your community would agree with you constitutes a "miscarriage of justice." Again, it has to rise beyond your feelings getting hurt.

Self-Defense Justification. I'm guided by legal elements for the self-defense justification. Are you acting in response to an imminent harm? Is your fear of harm reasonable? Are you exerting a proportionate response to the imminent harm? As I might re-interpret "stand your ground" laws for craft, it would be about someone invading my personal space, interfering unreasonably with my personal liberties or my pursuit of happiness.

All Legal, Governmental, and Institutional Channels Have Been Exhausted. All other "regular" or standardized means of putting an end to the interference must have been attempted by the practitioner before resorting to retaliatory craft.