

Artifacts of Dragon Pass

Six magic items to give added meaning to your Runequest campaign

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In *Runequest*, many basic magical devices and ideas for further items are given, but the more legendary artifacts (such as Harrek's cloak) are only hinted at. In this article, I have listed some of the artifacts found in my *Runequest* campaign, along with their histories and backgrounds. I hope these will prove useful to other referees, and help to make the game even more interesting.

The Ring of Black Fang:

History: In the early years, some 100 years after the invasion of Pavis by Trolls, there lived a legendary bandit called Black Fang (his cult is dealt with in *Runequest*). Among his many treasured devices of both magical and mundane powers was a ring, said to have been given to him by the renowned shaman Tethak the Clever. Rumored to have been made from the bones of a dragonewt king and a magical crystal of great power, the ring had many abilities, and Black Fang used many of his own powers to shape the ring to his needs. He became so enamored of the treasure, perhaps because of the enchantments Tethak had carefully woven into it to gain Black Fang's confidence, that he would never let it leave his sight. Yet he did not fall under its influence, and Tethak began to worry that perhaps the bandit's will was too great for the shaman to control, even with the mighty ring. In the end, he decided to try to take the ring back from Black Fang, for he now feared its power in the thief's hands, but Black Fang, enraged at someone trying to take his treasure, slew him in a short battle.

Over the years, Black Fang and his ring became well-known and well-feared. His constant raids on Pavis, with his now greatly expanded band of brigands, terrified the people, and finally they called upon the great Hero, Athanlar, who was passing through Pavis on his journey to Sartar, to capture or kill Black Fang. Athanlar disliked the idea of stopping on his journey to Sartar (for he had pressing business of his own there), but he agreed to kill Black Fang if he met him along the way. To help increase his chances of having such an encounter, he disguised himself in rich garments and brought along an old mule, so he looked like little more than a harmless, old merchant. Then he set out from Pavis across the Long Dry.

Sure enough, the bandit could not resist robbing the seemingly harmless but rich old traveller, and when Athanlar was but a few miles away from Pavis he was suddenly surrounded by brigands. When he caught sight of Black Fang, he flung off the disguise, revealing his true identity. The brigands, realizing that they faced not a doddering old merchant but a mighty hero, fled, leaving only Black Fang to face Athanlar. But Black Fang was not a coward, and he did not run or surrender himself as Athanlar had thought he would. Instead, he attacked the warrior, and there, in the parched stretches of the Long Dry, they did battle.

Black Fang fought valiantly, but in the end he was defeated by Athanlar's wrath. The hero slew him and captured his treasure, including the ring, for his own. Yet he was severely wounded, and the journey to Sartar was a long one. By the time he had passed Dwarf Knoll, he was waylaid by hostile Tusk Riders. Even then, he put up a mighty struggle, and many of the creatures fell dead before

his feet. Then Athanlar fell. When the end did come, he screamed such a terrifying final war cry that it routed the few remaining Tusk Riders, who fled without even checking to see if he was dead. His treasure was left behind, and the Ring of Black Fang was lost somewhere in the lands between Dwarf Knoll and Moonbroth, perhaps as far south as the Dead Place.

Since that time, members of the Black Fang Brotherhood have ever sought Black Fang's ring, for his spirit yearns for it and uses his followers to find it for him. They will be very interested in any rumors about it and will go to great lengths to obtain it, either by payment, thievery, or force. Ironically, if they ever do get the ring, it will probably mark the end of their cult, for recapturing the treasure is Black Fang's main purpose in supporting his followers, and he may have nothing to do with them after he has regained it.

Powers: The Ring of Black Fang has many powers which benefit its owner—but only when he *wears* it. These include:

1. His thieving abilities (all skills taught by thieves) are increased by 50% (even going over the normal 100% limit).
2. His Evaluate Treasures skill is increased by 25% (100% limit).
3. He will have knowledge of how to make blade venom up to potency level 20.
4. The gem on the ring acts as a combination power crystal and does not have to be attuned by itself (see below). Its powers are Sensitivity (POW 8) and Spell Resisting (POW 4).
5. The ring is a matrix for two battle magic spells: Invisibility and Disruption.
6. As a side-effect of its unusual composition, the ring causes all dragonewts of the crested or beaked stage to feel uneasy in the presence of it. They will be loath to attack the wearer because they will feel as if he has "a great, hidden power," but they will not befriend him either. Dragonewts of higher stages will also feel uneasy but they will recognize the source of their feelings and may react hostilely (use "hostile" column of reactions table) to the thought of a human wearing the remains of some of their kings on his finger.

The benefits listed above only apply if the ring is worn. Unfortunately, wearing the ring has some disadvantages as well:

1. The ring must be attuned (as per power crystals) before it can be used. Its power is 15 (12 from the crystal, and 3 from the innate magic of the ring itself). Failure to attune it causes a loss of only 1 power point, but it has a 20% chance of attracting the attention of Black Fang's spirit. The first time he notices it he will not appear, but, after that, each attempt to attune it that fails has an 80% chance of making him appear, and each use of one of the ring's beneficial powers has a 5% chance (not cumulative) of attracting him. If he appears, he will attack the player (spirit combat) with a power of 21.

2. As is the case with many artifacts, the owner will become more and more loath to part with the ring as he owns it longer. Once it is attuned, the owner must successfully make a saving throw versus his power to leave it behind. Furthermore, for every point of power the ring has above the player's, a 5% penalty is given to the saving throw. Every use of the ring involving wearing it for an hour or more also decreases the chance of success by 5%. If the saving throw (POW x 5, with modifications) isn't made, the player will want to keep the ring with him.

3. The character loses all bonuses to thieving which the ring gives

him when he attempts to use the skills on a shaman (loss is only temporary—the bonuses return when he uses the skills on someone else). In addition, the ring's power (15) is added to the player's to find his stealth penalty for high POW when he tries to use the skills on a shaman (again, this effect is temporary and only applies to skills used against shaman). This little precaution was placed in the ring by Tethak—he never really trusted Black Fang.

4. Unless the owner is already a thief, he will develop definite kleptomaniac tendencies. When in a position to easily steal something, he must successfully roll his intelligence times five or less on percentage dice or attempt to steal the item. This compulsion is not automatic—it has a base 10% chance of occurring plus 5% per point of POW the ring has above the character, plus another 5% per use of the ring that involves wearing it for an hour or more (much the same as disadvantage 2, above).

The Ring of Black Fang looks much like a normal piece of jewelry at first glance. It is ivory in color with a large, amber crystal in the center and black runes around the gem. When worn, it seems to melt into the background (fade, so that it looks like part of the wearer's hand); a Spot Hidden Items attempt must be made successfully to notice it

The Impenetrable Shield of Kiahn:

History: Many years ago, there lived in the land of Esrolia a mighty priest (of a now unknown cult) named Athman Kiahn. He was a clever and powerful mage, but for all that he was a coward at heart. Thus, he seldom did heroic deeds and few knew of him in his early days.

One day, as he was travelling from Nochet City to New Crystal City, he came upon a scene of great carnage. A Band of Broos from the Haunted Lands had apparently attacked a passing merchant caravan, looting it and killing the people in it. Curious and eager to find overlooked treasure, Kiahn began searching through the remains. Unfortunately, his overeagerness got him into a great deal of trouble, for the battle had been more recent than he thought: Several Broos were also still searching the wreckage, and they attacked him with renewed fury when they saw him searching for treasure. Fearful for his life (as always), Kiahn used his greatest magical incantations to ward off the attack. In the end, the leader of the Broos surrendered, and he begged Kiahn to let him and his few remaining followers go free. At this, Kiahn began to think of himself as a great and powerful hero, and he demanded a great treasure from the Broo in exchange for his life. Reluctantly, the chaotic creature gave up a great jewel that he had captured from the merchants, and Kiahn allowed him to leave as he had promised.

Kiahn had little need of great monetary wealth, but being a clever man, he saw a way in which the jewel could be of great help to him. That night, as he rested at the site of the battle, he made a great ceremony and sacrificed the jewel to his god, thinking that this would put him in his deity's favor. His god was well pleased with the sacrifice and he spoke to Kiahn, telling the priest that he would give him one great device of power to be chosen by him. Kiahn thought this over carefully and, as befitted his true nature, asked for an impenetrable shield of great magical value. The god knew of Kiahn's cowardly ways and they pleased him not, but he did not wish to break his promise with the priest. Thus, he gave Kiahn the great shield, but then told him: "I now grant you a shield of surpassing power. In the hands of a true hero it will be nigh impenetrable, but in the hands of a coward it will fade." This did not bother Kiahn, for he now considered himself a great and brave hero, and, in truth, he had indeed grown somewhat overconfident and arrogant.

Perhaps it was this overconfidence that overshadowed his wisdom. By this time, Kiahn had quite forgotten about the Broos. But they had certainly not forgotten him. As soon as he had left the priest's sight, the Broo leader had vowed to return and reclaim the jewel. So it was that, during the night, as Kiahn rested amid dreams of heroic deeds, the Broos attacked him suddenly by surprise. Leaping to his feet, Kiahn raised the shield and prepared to fight the Broos to the finish. But in his heart he was afraid, and, as he prepared to do battle, he was shocked to realize that the shield was gradually fading away into nothingness. This made him all the more afraid, and he

turned to flee from his attackers. At this, the shield disappeared completely, and the Broo leader, in his anger, threw a great spear, impaling and killing the priest.

The Broos searched quickly for treasure, but the shield was so transparent that it could hardly have been seen in daylight, let alone the darkness of midnight. So, they left without finding the mystical artifact. Since that day, the shield has rested there near the Haunted Lands, on the road between the cities of New Crystal and Nochet. Many rumors say that it was found and then lost again later by several other heroes whose bravery was not enough to sustain the shield, but few doubt that the shield is still somewhere in Esrolia or the Haunted Lands.

Powers: The Impenetrable Shield of Kiahn appears to be a normal, medium shield at first glance, and it counts as one for training, encumbrance and strength required. However, careful inspection will reveal that it is not made of bronze, but of some other, unknown metal (though it looks like bronze at first glance). The shield has many magical powers which function when it is carried:

1. It absorbs up to 18 hits of damage (i.e. it counts as an iron medium shield).

2. Its base parry percentage is 50% to start with (plus bonuses and training the character has), and it can parry critical hits at half that skill level (i.e. if the character had a total skill level of 60% with the shield, he would have a 30% chance of being able to parry a critical hit). Its chances of a critical parry are normal for its skill level.

3. It can be used to attack (counts as normal medium shield; see page 100 of *Runequest*) with a base 25% chance of success. It can also, due to its rounded shape, be thrown like a discus (normal damage of 1d6, plus one-half character's strength damage bonus), but, in this respect, it is somewhat inaccurate and has only half (rounded up) the usual chance of hitting (base 13%—bonuses are cut in half, too). When thrown, the shield will return to its owner at the end of that melee round (like a boomerang); he must roll his dexterity times five or less on percentage dice to catch it, and, if he doesn't, he must make the roll again. If he fails it a second time, the shield hits him (roll for hit normally; only half usual damage); if he makes it the second time, it lands on the ground 0-5 (1d6 minus 1) meters from him. Dexterity required, range, and rate for throwing it are 12, 60, and 1/MR respectively.

4. The shield has a natural Shimmer spell cast on it which functions at all times (and works for the player holding it) and which is compatible with other spells. The shield is also the matrix for the following spells: Countermagic 2, Protection 4, and Dullblade 2. Note: Shimmer counts as a Shimmer 2 spell.

5. It cannot normally be destroyed in any manner, except in ways used to destroy artifacts of all types (see end of article).

The Shield of Kiahn has one disadvantage. It will only function in the hands of a very brave person. Cowardly acts or comments will cause it to fade, as will going for great lengths of time without a battle, until the character has redeemed himself by performing a brave act (at which time it will reappear entirely). Fading causes the shield to turn slowly invisible, so that each melee round that cowardice is shown (or each day after one that the player goes without doing something brave or getting into a fight) causes it to lose 5% of its parry probability (since the user can't see his shield properly to parry with it). The shield will also lose 1 point of hit absorption and one-half point of battle magic spells (from each matrix) at the same rate. When the shield is totally gone (no parry chance or hit absorption), it will fall from the user's hand (or, rather, through his hand) and be quite impossible to find again until it regains some substance. Regaining substance normally (i.e. without any brave acts) requires 1 day, plus 1 day per 5% parry and 1 point of hit absorption lost. The referee must use his own discretion to determine when cowardice is shown in acts or comments.

The effect bravery has on the shield has one advantage: When very brave acts are performed, the shield gains strength and increases in hit absorption (only) by 1 point per melee round, up to a maximum of six bonus points. These points fade afterwards at a rate of 1 per normal turn. This applies only to extremely courageous and/or foolhardy acts (not just talk).

The Wands of Ectal:

History: Ectal Miranth was a Lhankor Mhy priest of great learning and power. He had an insatiable hunger for magic of all kinds, and he went to great lengths to gain many different spells of battle magic, hoping one day to know them all. However, he soon realized that he was limited in the number he could ever truly know (for only the gods can know all of the many spells of battle magic), so he set about to make a collection of great wands to hold all of the knowledge of spells he could find. Over the years, with the help of some of his associate priests, he gathered together many spells and placed their matrices on the wands. Afterwards, he created several spells of his own and also placed these on what he called the Great Wand. Finally, having found all of the spells he could in the area of Pavis, he set out across Prax to do more research, taking the wands with him. He never knew for sure what happened to him, for he was never seen again, and the priests of Lhankor Mhy, though they wanted the wands back, had no desire to go searching for a seemingly unstable "wild sage." Over the years, the wands turned up separately in various places, and, by now, they must surely be scattered all over Prax.

Powers: In all, the wands of Ectal contain nearly every spell of basic magic known (all 57 spells listed in *Runequest* and *Cults of Prax*) plus 3 battle magic spells that Ectal created himself (with the help of the priests of Lhankor Mhy, of course). Each wand appears to be a slim but very sturdy silver rod about one foot long and one-half inch in diameter, covered with various runes. Each wand contains five spell matrices (except for the Great Wand—see below) with the appropriate foci for them. To find what spells are present on a given wand, simply roll percentile dice, cut the result in half, and consult the battle magic spell list in *Runequest*. A result of 50 indicates the spell *Sleep* from *Cults of Prax*.

Since no two wands ever have any of the same spells, there are ten basic Wands of Ectal. In addition, Ectal spent several years researching other cults and finally created The Great Wand. This wand contains ten spell matrices (with appropriate foci): the seven spells of other cults listed in *Cults of Prax* (excluding *Sleep*, of course) and the three spells Ectal created (which the referee should design for himself)! This wand was, not surprisingly, his favorite, and he kept it with him at all times.

Note that all variable spells on Wands of Ectal will have their maximum possible power, or a power of 6, whichever is lower.

The priests of Lhankor Mhy would certainly like to get their hands on the wands (it is rumored that they already have three of them, but seek the Great Wand in particular), and they will be very interested in learning how to acquire any of them. They will not usually try to take them by force unless they are fairly sure they will be successful, but they do consider the wands to be rightfully theirs (since one of their priests made them and took cult time and money to do so).

The Medallion of Chaos:

History: Few beings, mortal or otherwise, know from where this ancient artifact came. It is suspected that it was the device of some powerful chaotic lord, for it is obviously not a commoner's trinket. It may well have been left over from the I Fought We Won Battle at the end of the Greater Darkness, for it was first seen in the Snakepipe Hollow region. Rumors of it have existed since the beginning of Time, but many believe that it is, in actuality, only a copy of the original device that started the rumors: the medallion known to be in existence is powerful, but not the terror that the earlier rumors made it out to be. In any event, many people believe that it is still somewhere in the area of Snakepipe Hollow, but only those few totally chaotic creatures who wish power and those few obsessed chaos-haters who wish to destroy it still seek out this evil artifact.

Powers: The Medallion of Chaos is made almost totally of red and black jewels which hold together magically in the shape of the Chaos Rune. Attached to the two upper branches of the rune-shape is a long golden chain, so the medallion can easily be hung around a person's neck. Wearing the medallion gives the owner several powers:

1. The wearer immediately gains the ability to use one chaotic

feature (roll on the Chaotic Features table, page 110 of *Runequest*) as if he were a chaotic creature himself. Every time the necklace is taken off and then put on again, a different chaotic feature will be gained (though the old one is, of course, lost as soon as the necklace is removed), so the owner will never know what his chaotic feature will be until he puts on the medallion (this indicates how truly chaotic the device is). The ability is only usable when the necklace is worn (it disappears when the medallion is removed, to be replaced by another one when it is put back on).

2. When attacking any member of a Lightbringer cult or any troll, the wearer's weapon (or spell, if it is a spell that does hit point damage) will do maximum possible damage (bonuses due to strength/size are rolled normally).

3. The medallion acts as a spell matrix for battle magic. However, due to its chaotic nature, a different spell matrix appears each time the old one is used once. To see which spell matrix is on it at any given time, roll percentage dice, cut the result in half (round up) and consult the list of battle magic spells. A result of 50 (roll of 99 or 100) indicates that, instead of a spell, the wearer gets another chaotic feature (in addition to the usual one for wearing the medallion) until the medallion is removed (when another spell matrix appears).

4. The medallion will inform the wearer of the presence of any draconic being (dragon, dragonewt, dream dragon, etc.) within two hundred feet (60 meters) by glowing faintly, feeling warm to the touch, and getting brighter and hotter as the creature gets closer.

5. The medallion acts as a power storage crystal with space of 10. However, there is a 10% chance every time the medallion is put on that one point of power will be drained from it to appease the chaos gods. If it should lose a point but doesn't have one, the player loses it (permanently).

All of these benefits are only gained when the medallion is worn. However, wearing the medallion has several disadvantages as well:

1. All draconic beings, trolls, and members of cults which are especially sworn to destroying chaos (Orlanth, Aldya, etc.) will note the aura of chaos around the wearer and will always use the hostile column for reactions (page 107 of *Runequest*).

2. Non-chaotic beings which put on the medallion have a 20% chance of losing 1-3 POW points permanently (roll as for spirit combat: 01-10=3 points; 11-40=2 points; 41-00=1 point).

3. The owner will become increasingly reluctant to part with the medallion. Use the same procedure as in disadvantage number two of *The Ring of Black Fang* (see above) to see if he can leave it behind or not (except that the medallion's POW is counted as 10, not 15). When the medallion has control over the character (i.e. he has no chance of being able to part with it), he will become totally chaotic and will permanently gain the last chaotic feature the medallion gave him. He will put on the medallion (if it is not already on) and refuse to remove it from then on. In all respects, he will have become a chaotic (and very dangerous) being.

The medallion would be worth quite a bit even without its magical powers, since it is made of jewels. The referee must set the price (count as heirloom or ancient jewelry). Selling such an item may prove difficult, however: Chaotic creatures will seek to steal it for themselves, and unchaotic ones will seek to obtain it somehow to destroy it. Anyone openly admitting to owning it is inviting trouble of the worst kind.

The Mighty Blade of Kamax:

History: Little is known of this powerful weapon, for its place in history was a small one. It is said that it was found by the mighty warrior Kamax the Unbeaten on one of his journeys through Snakepipe Hollow and the outer edges of the Lunar Tarsh. He named the blade "Moonglow," for it shone with a pale, bluish glow when an enemy was near, and he took it back to his home at Wintertop with him. Once there, he decided that, armed with his mighty new weapon, he would gather together a band of valiant men and journey into the Urland Marsh in hopes of destroying the chaotic creatures, who had been raiding his home from the swamp, once and for all.

At first, his mission was apparently a success, but suddenly he disappeared and was never heard from again. Legends say that one of his men escaped the marsh, and, in his dying breath, told of the band's encounter with a mighty demon of chaos. Apparently, Karnax the Unbeaten was finally defeated, and the demon claimed

Moonglow for his own. Yet he soon found that he could not, being a creature of chaos, use the sword himself, so in the end he cast it away, and it was lost forever in the Urland Marsh.

Powers: The sword Moonglow appears to be a normal, if somewhat elaborately decorated, broadsword, and is treated as one for all purposes unless noted otherwise below. Chaotic creatures cannot use it (just as elves and trolls cannot touch iron). The benefits of this sword are as follows:

1. Its base chance of hitting is 50% (plus any bonuses the owner might have) and it does a critical hit when 10%, instead of 5%, of the number needed is rolled (i.e. base 5% chance of a critical hit).

2. Moonglow can “slash” an opponent (see page 100 of *Runequest*), and when it does so, the character can remove it again with the same chance as he has of hitting with it. Note, therefore, that critical hits with Moonglow do slashing damage in addition to ignoring any armor the opponent has.

3. Moonglow does double damage against chaotic creatures when it hits them, and it can Detect Chaos and Detect Enemies as per the battle magic spell Detect Enemies (with no POW loss, of course). It will glow brighter as enemies and/or chaotic creatures get closer.

4. Moonglow is intelligent (IQ of 12) and has a power score of 16, which its owner can use freely and which is gained back in the same way a character gains back power (4 points per six hours). In this respect it is similar to an allied spirit or regenerating power storage crystal.

Moonglow has two disadvantages as well:

1. Its abilities and power score radiate magic and give the user a 5% penalty using stealth skills.

2. Because the sword is intelligent, it must be friendly toward a character to work for him. The sword’s reaction is rolled, just like it would be for a non-player character who is encountered, when it is first picked up. Greedy, cowardly, or chaotic creatures roll on the hostile column. Most creatures roll on the neutral column. Very brave and good warriors roll on the friendly column. Subtract 5% from the roll for every point of charisma above 12 the character has, and 1% for every point of power he has.

If the end result indicates the sword is friendly, the character has a new artifact. If the result is dislike or hatred (example: 86 or higher on the friendly column), the sword will attack the character (use spirit combat rules—if the sword is defeated it will work for the player until its POW is 16 again, when it will attack him again). Any other reaction will mean that the sword either wants to be taken to Wintertop (if it’s more on the friendly side) and will help the players until it gets there (it may also be persuaded—i.e. another reaction roll with a subtraction of 10%—at this time with Oration, promises of gifts such as jewelled scabbards, etc.), or that it wants to be left alone (if it’s on the more unfriendly side) and will attack characters who keep bothering it. Moonglow will be extremely loyal and trustworthy to its friends.

Note that Moonglow can communicate telepathically with anyone who holds it, but cannot speak in any other manner. Also note that Moonglow has a deep hatred of the demon that killed Kamax, and the blade will try to persuade its owner to kill the creature if they get near Urland March and it thinks its owner is strong enough (Moonglow doesn’t want to see its new master get killed too, though).

The Crystal Egg of the True King:

History: Little is known of this mystical jewel, for it is not a human device, but a dragonewt artifact. It is kept hidden away in the dragonewt nest-city (where the dragonewts are reborn), so no humans have ever seen it (thus, it is unlikely that non-dragonewt players will get their hands on it. . .). Legends tell that this small, egg-shaped crystal was given to the dragonewts by the true dragons shortly after the Dragonkill Wars. It is said that on the day when the dragonewts need leadership the most, the egg will grow and hatch into the greatest Inhuman King ever born. In the meantime, it is guarded jealously in the Temple of Inhuman Kings, and is next to impossible to get, even for Runelords.

Powers: The greatness of the Crystal is not so much in its powers, as in its future, but it has several special abilities:

1. Whoever holds the Crystal has assured control over *all* dragonewts (not dragons, however). Though they may hate the thief who takes the gem, they will not kill him while he holds it (for fear of it being damaged) and they will do almost anything he says. They may well try to steal it back when he isn’t holding it, however.

2. The egg already has some of the entity of the king it will grow to be. Though it is only semi-conscious (intelligence of 10, only half of what it would be when he awakens), it has an innate power of 28! Thus, though it is easily influenced, it is dangerous to carry around, for it often uses its power on a whim, and usually somewhat foolishly. Indeed, it is almost like a child who is too powerful for his own good. Because of its high power, it subtracts 15% from the bearer’s stealth.

3. The Crystal is able, at the order of its owner, to cast a blinding light, affecting all but the bearer in a 30’ radius. This light will blind all beings in the area for 1-8 melee rounds, and they can do nothing during this time.

4. The Crystal can be used as a spell-storing crystal (limit is, of course, 10 points), and can cast spells on its own with its power (gained back at a rate of 7 points per six hours). Sometimes it will cast spells by itself, without orders from its owner.

5. The crystal puts up a constant Protection 2 spell around its owner and itself and can put up Countermagic 2 if ordered to by its bearer (these do not count towards its spell limit, but Countermagic 2 does cost it points to cast).

Carrying the crystal has several disadvantages—in addition to the possibility of it using the wrong spell at the wrong time:

1. Stealing the Crystal will cause a character to become the sworn enemy of all dragonewts and similar creatures forever after, and even men will dislike him because he will be damaging relations between humans and dragonewts. By stealing the Crystal, the player is also running the risk of attracting even worse enemies—such as the dragons themselves, who gave the Crystal to the dragonewts.

2. There is a 2% chance (not cumulative) every time a power of the Crystal is used by the bearer (5% if the power is used against a draconic being—and this is cumulative) that the king will gain temporary consciousness. If this occurs, his/its intelligence will jump to 20, and he will attack the thief as if by spirit combat. However, if he wins (which is what will most likely happen), he will not kill the character, but will be in *complete* control of him (for the character’s body will live, but his spirit will be gone for good) and will cause him to take the Crystal back to the dragonewt city (at which time he will go back into slumber, leaving the character dead). If he loses, he will drop back into his unconscious state (IQ 10) and will regain his power at half the normal rate.

If and when the king regains consciousness, there is a 2% chance that he will stay that way permanently, in which case the egg will grow and the True Inhuman King will be born (referee should decide on appropriate attributes for those that aren’t listed here). Note that this could be something of a historic event, and should be carefully controlled by the referee (if it ever occurs).

The gem is orangish in color and is about three times the size of a normal egg (about eight inches tall). It pulsates warmth and light and gives off a definite aura of power.

This artifact has been included more for historical significance (or heroquesting) than for actual usage—it is very unlikely that any player would ever get his hands on it.

Final Notes:

Obviously, these and all other artifacts will be extremely rare and difficult to find; the referee must place them with the utmost care. As noted in *Runequest*, magic items of legendary power should be objects of epic quests, not a casual evening’s entertainment.

Also, finding some artifacts (such as the *Medallion of Chaos*) may not necessarily be a good thing, and players may end up wishing to destroy them. Destroying an artifact is *extremely* difficult, and the referee must decide what measures must be taken to do this. *Divine Intervention* (by a god at least as powerful as the one who made the artifact, if any) or the fiery breath of a *true* dragon are two possibilities. Remember that artifacts are one-of-a-kind items, so once one is destroyed, it should not reappear again in the campaign.