

Legacy gems

Magic that grows with the wielder

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Introduction: In the world of Tem, gems hold extraordinary powers. Their properties are given in Appendix 4 and Appendix 5 of the *Visitor's Guide to Kalderesh* (pp 545 – 546). What follows is a subsystem for incorporating gems into magic items.

Overview: When properly cut and magically aligned, certain gems can be incorporated into specially-crafted magic items, bearing runic sockets, enhancing and focusing the gem abilities in ways that reflect both the gems' innate properties and their wielder's growing mastery. The combination of the original magic, the wielder's capability, and their dedicated use determines the item's full potential.

Gem capacity by magic item size

The number of gem sockets a magic item can hold depends on the size of the item.

Table: Gem capacity

item size	examples	number of gem sockets
tiny	ring, amulet, brooch	1
small	dagger, wand	2
medium	sword, shield	4
large	staff, robe	6

Gem installation

A suitable gem is one worth at least 1,000 gp. It needs to be flawlessly cut by an expert who is able to align the cut facets with the gem's various magical axes.

To install a gem, the character must succeed on a relevant skill check of their choice (e.g., gem-cutting, spellcraft, or another logical proficiency). The exact skill and modifiers are determined by the player (or NPC) and must be approved by the DM based on the situation.

Installation requires a 3-hour ritual and 100 gp in materials.

Failure during installation causes the gem to shatter and become irrecoverable. However, the magic item and its socket remain intact and unaffected, ready for a new gem to be installed.

Reconfiguring gems

Reconfiguration is only possible during level-ups, reflecting the wielder's deepening connection and understanding of their gem-enhanced item. The wielder must spend time in contemplation and study, strengthening the bond with their item. This process requires a small expenditure of 50 gp per socket in rare materials, representing the physical and mystical effort involved in reshaping the item's power.

During reconfiguration, the wielder can adjust how accumulated bonuses are distributed, such as shifting a bonus from "to-hit" rolls to "damage" rolls or modifying protective attributes. Gems may also be removed and replaced, or empty sockets filled with new gems. Each newly inserted gem triggers a fresh installation process, following the standard rules for socketing gems.

Magic item power

The ultimate power of a magic item depends on how it was originally crafted as well as on who the user/wielder is. Total Power = item's original magic bonus + Character Level bonus + Mastery bonus.

Table: Character level bonus

character level	bonus
1 – 5	+1
6 – 8	+2
9	+3
11	+5
13	+7

+1 each odd level thereafter

Table: Mastery bonus

time used	bonus
days	+0
months	+1
1 year	+2
5 years	+3
10 years	+4
20+ years	+5
40+ years	+6
80+ years	+7
100+ years	+8

+1 for each century thereafter

Allocation of bonuses

These total bonuses can be distributed across different abilities. For weapons, this might include combat bonuses to hit and damage. Protective items like armour and shields can enhance AC and saving throws. Additional special abilities can be added based on the installed gems' powers (Visitor's Guide to Kalderesh, pp 545 – 546).

Bonuses can be allocated to appropriate rolls and saves, provided they match the gem's thematic powers.

When first installing a gem or gaining a bonus from character level or mastery, the wielder allocates these bonuses across abilities or effects (e.g., "to-hit," damage, saving throws, AC, special abilities, skills).

Bonuses are fixed once allocated. However, during Reconfiguration (see Reconfiguration gems), the wielder may redistribute bonuses to reflect their evolving bond with the item.

Wedding Gifts

Over a century ago, the exiled craftsmen and loremongers of House Golya uncovered the secret of binding Dojkan gems to magical items in such a way that bearer and item could grow in power together. They referred to these gem-enervated items only as "wedding gifts", a subtle reference to their dream of returning home to Agopea. Only the initiated knew the true origin and proper names of these powerful items.

When vast gem deposits were discovered in Dojka in 4555, it seemed at first merely another stroke of fortune for House Golya, one of the four Agopean noble houses. Exiled from their homeland decades earlier, they had already established themselves successfully on this island. The gems, they thought, would simply add to their wealth and power.

But within months, something extraordinary was noticed. Master gem-cutters working with certain specimens reported unusual properties - resonances with magical energies unlike anything previously documented. House Golya, still bitter from their exile and dreaming of eventual return to power, recognised the strategic potential immediately.

A secret research facility was established, hidden in the mountainous interior. Over the next five years, Golyan artificers made breakthrough after breakthrough, developing a revolutionary method of combining precisely-cut gems with specially-crafted magical items. The items' powers grew with their wielders' experience - something entirely new in magical theory.

For fifteen years, a small but steady stream of these powerful items was created. House Golya kept production limited and knowledge of the technique restricted to their most trusted craftsmen. Each item was a masterwork, preserved carefully in family vaults - resources for the day they would reclaim their homeland.

By 4575, the decision was made to scale back production further. The risk of discovery was too great. The few who knew the secrets passed them only to selected family members, while the items were hidden away in secure vaults.

The arrival of Ursinican Sympathists in 4608 marked another shift. As Dojka's culture became more militaristic, the research facility was converted for military purposes. The gem-magic secrets were preserved, but production had effectively ceased.

Through the following decades, House Golya built their alliances carefully, preparing for eventual invasion. The gem-enhanced items remained their hidden advantage, known to very few outside the family's inner circle.

But by 4691, an ironic twist emerged. Malanthean researchers, working independently with Dojkan gems, were on the verge of rediscovering the technique. As war broke out, House Golya faced a dilemma: their allies were about to recreate something they had perfected over a century ago. The crude prototypes Malanthea was testing were far behind the refined versions sleeping in Golyan vaults.

Timeline

4555	Initial discovery of gem deposits
4560 – 4575	Active production ("Golden Age") [15 years]
4575 – 4608	Very limited, declining production [33 years]
4608 – 4691	No production (ceased after Ursinican arrival) [83 years]
4691 – 4696	War. Malanthea develops prototypes. Golya uses ancient items covertly. Some old items surface in key battles
4696	War ends; Becsul & Golya lead Greater Agopea. Golya establishes new research facilities
4696 – 4727	Consolidation period, production slowly restarts. Golya develops independent from Malanthea.
4727	Kalderesh/Becsul/Golya drive out Malanthea – gem-enhanced items key to victory
4730	United Agopea under House Golya ("New Golden Age"), who has full control of both old and new production.

Examples

Aadite Silver Mace of Truthseeking: A silver-headed mace bearing three gems in spiral settings along its haft: blue lapis pulses with wisdom's light, black onyx gleams with stored knowledge, and white moonstone radiates calming energy. The fourth setting remains empty, its runic circle dormant. Wielded by a 7th-level priestess for five months, the mace's growing bond (+1 Character Level, +1 Mastery bonus = Total +2) enhances her pursuit of truth and judgement. The bonuses are allocated: +1 to hit, +1 to damage when striking creatures of deception or chaos (the weapon's magic and gems working in harmony).

The same silver-headed mace, now wielded by a 13th-level High Priestess for ten years, its three gems blazing with accumulated power. The blue lapis, black onyx, and white moonstone have grown in potency through long use (+7 Character Level, +4 Mastery bonus = Total +11). The bonuses are now allocated: +3 to hit, +3 to damage, +2 to saves against deception and lies, +2 to Wisdom checks involving truth-seeking, and +1 to turning attempts against creatures of chaos and deception, demonstrating both martial and spiritual growth.

Salaah's Amulet of Inner Sight: A single purple amethyst rests in an intricate silver setting, its deep purple depths swirling with clairvoyant energy. Worn by a newly-initiated 5th-level seer for three months, the amulet's nascent bond (+1 Character Level, +1 Mastery bonus = Total +2) channels basic divinatory power. The bonuses are allocated: +1 to Wisdom checks involving prophecy and divination, and +1 to saves against illusions and mind-affecting magic.

The same silver amulet, its amethyst now pulsing with decades of mystical resonance. Having guided the visions of a 9th-level seer for twenty years, its power has grown profound (+3 Character Level, +5 Mastery bonus = Total +8). The bonuses are allocated: +3 to all divination attempts, +2 to Wisdom checks, +2 to saves against illusions and mind-affecting magic, and +1 to initiative when casting divination spells, the gem's powers of peace and clairvoyance fully expressed through long use.

Shield of High Lord Tors the Blue: Starting as a standard Shield +2, adorned with green agate and off-white pearl in opposing settings (two settings remain empty), their protective and calming energies complementing the shield's innate magic. Used by an 8th-level paladin for six months, the shield's developing bond (Base +2, +1 Character Level, +1 Mastery bonus = Total +4) enhances defence. The bonuses are allocated: +2 from base magic to AC, +1 to AC, and +1 to saves vs fear effects, the gems' protective and calming influences beginning to manifest.

The same Shield +2, now carried by a 15th-level paladin for five years, its green agate and pearl radiating intense protective energy. Through long service (Base +2, +9 Character Level, +3 Mastery bonus = Total +14), the shield has become a formidable defence. The bonuses are allocated: +2 from base magic to AC, +4 additional to AC, +3 to all saving throws, +3 to saves vs fear and confusion effects, and +2 to protective ability checks, the gems' powers of protection and calm fully expressed through years of faithful use.